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Early Chinese Religion

Part One: Shang through Han (1250 BC-220 AD)

Edited by

John Lagerwey and Marc Kalinowski

BRILL

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Cover illustration: Detail of the inner coffin of Zeng Hou Yi discovered at Suizhou Leigudun (Hubei), painting and lacquer on wood, ca. 433 BC. Rights reserved. Provincial museum of Hubei (Wuhan).

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John Lagerwey
Marc Kalinowski

CHRONOLOGY OF DYNASTIES AND PERIODS

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Zhou (1045–256 BC)
  Western Zhou (1045–771 BC)
  Eastern Zhou (770–256 BC)
    Spring and Autumn (770–482 BC)
    Warring States (481–222 BC)[2]
Qin (221–207 BC)
Western (Former) Han (206 BC–8 AD)
Xin (9–24 AD)
Eastern (Latter) Han (25–220 AD)

[1] The present work covers primarily the period from 1250 BC on, when written materials first become available.

[2] These are traditional dates, not followed by all authors in these volumes. It will also be noticed that the Warring States outlasts the Eastern Zhou.

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INTRODUCTION

John Lagerwey and Marc Kalinowski

Over the course of the 5th–3rd centuries BC, dramatic changes took place in what we now call China. Insofar as these changes led to the founding of the first unified empire in Chinese history—the Qin, from which we probably derive the name "China"—we may say that the essays in these two volumes are about the cultural birth of "China."

But before exploring these transformations in detail, it will be useful for the reader to understand the unique nature of the book he holds in his hands. It is not a standard history, in which each successive period is unfurled before the eyes of the reader in a unilinear account. It is, rather, a multidisciplinary endeavor, with chapters devoted to archaeology, philosophy, divination, sacrifice, mythology and many other specialized topics. This approach is in the first place a reflection of the resolutely broad definition of religion discussed briefly in the conclusion below. It is also the result of ongoing discoveries of new materials which have regularly created whole new fields of investigation and, in so doing, have renewed the interests and methods of historians of ancient China. Ritual inscriptions of the Shang (1600–1046 BC) and Zhou (1045–256 BC), manuscripts on bamboo and silk from the Warring States (481–222 BC), Qin (221–207 BC) and Han (206 BC-220 AD), as well as the wealth of new information derived from architecture and funerary archaeology —all represent new specialties which help resolve uncertainties and fill in the fragmentary picture provided by received texts. For the earliest periods, these discoveries in fact represent all we have, other than some legends and historicized myths. These new developments have in turn been accompanied by and contributed to signal advances in the field of philology and textual criticism. Criteria for dating texts have been refined, and our knowledge of the functions and modes of diffusion of writing before the Han dynasty has increased considerably. Interestingly enough, archaeological discoveries have helped give new value to transmitted texts, and paleographers and specialists of the manuscripts found in tombs are often among the most ardent proponents of the current tendency to fix the date of composition of texts once thought to be

late or apocryphal as early as possible. Even if we do well to avoid the excesses of certain reconstructions, received texts as a whole remain an irreplaceable source for the study of ancient China.

This is all the more so in that the documents discovered in tombs are often in deplorable or fragmentary state. In addition, each corpus gives witness to conceptions and practices which have to do with functional contexts, making a simple diachronic assessment extremely difficult. For example, as Robert Eno quite rightly remarks, comparison of Shang and Zhou pantheons on the basis of recovered contemporary textual sources is at present simply not a feasible project, precisely because the function of the Shang oracle bone inscriptions is utterly different from that of the Zhou bronze commemorative inscriptions. We must also take into account the fact that excavated texts are not direct expressions of the realities they represent: they use rhetorical procedures which correspond to precise social constraints and ideological motivations and therefore require every bit as much interpretive prudence as received texts. Finally, the further along in time we go, the more abundant the sources become and the more they diversify and include larger segments of society. What might therefore at first glance seem to be the progressive popularization of practices once reserved to the ruling elites proves in fact to be an illusion caused by our lack of information about the customs current outside the elite in the Shang and Zhou. In the same manner, the term "common religion" now widely used to refer to the practices revealed by the Warring States and Han manuscripts has more to do with the fact these practices belonged to the private sphere than that they were truly popular or common to all levels of society.

Another problem that needs to be evoked at the outset is that of periodization. It is of course customary to count Chinese time in dynasties, and the very title of this book conforms to that custom: coverage begins with that part of the Shang dynasty for which we have written sources (1250–1046 BC) and ends with the fall of the Han in 220 AD. The Zhou dynasty is in turn traditionally divided into Western (1045–771 BC) and Eastern (770–256 BC) Zhou, and the latter yet again into the Spring and Autumn (770–482) and Warring States periods. It is well known that such political time lines are of limited relevance to a religious or cultural—or even an economic or social—history. Both the battle of Muye (ca. 1045 BC)—which marked the start of the Western Zhou—and the self-proclamation of King Zheng of Qin as First Emperor (Shi huangdi) in 221 BC were events destined to have a major

impact on the future, but the power of inertia characteristic of religious institutions and practices meant that the passage from one context to another was progressive, and the truly major breaks, at least in this regard, often took place a good while later. For example, we know that the sacrificial liturgies of the first Zhou kings were modeled on those of the late Shang. The consensus of archaeologists and art historians today is that the real transformation of the material and functional modalities of the ancestor cult did not occur before the Western Zhou "ritual reform" of the 9th century BC.

Similarly, archaeological discoveries from the Warring States and the beginning of the Han have revealed that the year 221 BC did not constitute a break as emblematic and radical as we are accustomed to thinking: a calendar discovered at Mawangdui (168 BC) identifies the "first year of the [First] Emperor of Qin" as the year 246 BC, when he succeeded his father on the Qin throne, and not the year of his self-proclamation as emperor 25 years later. These discoveries, together with the studies of historians over the last several decades, have tended increasingly to show that the break with the intellectual and religious traditions of the Warring States does not become final until the second half of the 1st century BC—precisely at a time when, at the end of the Western Han (206 BC–8 AD) and during Wang Mang's Xin (New) dynasty (9–24 AD), there is a "return to Zhou institutions."

Though hardly without meaning, the dates which mark the beginning and the end of the Eastern Zhou remain poorly defined. The entire period is viewed by some as an era of transition, not to say a mere hyphen between the ancient kingdoms and the early empire, while for others it is the crucible in which the distinctive traits of Chinese civilization were formed and matured. If we ignore the ideological assumptions which underlie both visions, it is clear that both contain a grain of truth and that the term "axial age" so often used for this critical phase of the historical development of China is by no means misplaced.

The transfer of the Zhou capital toward the east around 770 BC represents the start of a long process of decomposition of the system of lineage privileges and alliances which characterized the regime of political and territorial domination created by the first Zhou kings. Over the five centuries of the Eastern Zhou, increasingly large principalities struggled for hegemonic power over the entire area under the influence of the Zhou kings. During the Warring States period, these principalities became independent states with powerful monarchs reigning

over a hierarchy of high officials, prefects and local officials. To one of them—King Zheng of Qin—would fall the privilege of founding the empire at the end of a long war of conquest that bore a heavy cost in human lives. Among the most important changes that occurred during the Eastern Zhou are a major rise in population and expansion of territory, the multiplication of important urban centers and the increasing secularization of the practice of government. The first speculation about man and his place in society began toward the end of the Spring and Autumn period. After Kong Qiu 孔丘 (Confucius; 551–479 BC) and his disciples, defenders of traditional values and of a humanism based on education, ritual practice and moral amelioration, various schools of thought and wisdom developed and engaged in ongoing debates in the princely courts of the 5th to 3rd centuries BC. Religion, science and technology all underwent unprecedented change.

Thus what happened in China's "axial age" took time, centuries even. But that it was very early on understood as a cataclysm may be seen in the phrase ascribed to Confucius to the effect that "the rites were in disarray, and music had collapsed" 禮壞樂崩. It is because of this cataclysm that so many of the 24 essays in these two volumes explore the question of before and after. Not that there was no continuity between before and after, but that the late Eastern Zhou provides the indispensable key for understanding the history of early Chinese religion and culture, as we shall try to suggest in what follows.

Shang and Western Zhou (1250–771 BC)[1]

From Robert Eno's very careful account of the Shang "pantheon" we get our first lesson in sources: 60 per cent of all recovered oracle bones date to the reign of Wu-ding (r. ca. 1250–1192 BC), and virtually all our knowledge of Shang gods comes from his reign. Starting with his son Zujia, most of the rich pantheon disappears, and with it the great variety of rituals as well. The rituals are reduced to a cycle of five performed on a regular basis for the dynastic ancestors, all of whom are identified by posthumous names that include the day in the Shang

[1] Traditional Shang dates are ca. 1600–1046 BC. With the exception of Alain Thote's brief foray into the Neolithic period and the early Shang, the account in these volumes begins with the appearance of "texts"—the oracle bone inscriptions—around 1250 BC.

"week" of ten days on which they were to receive sacrifice. So regular is the calendar of sacrifices that, in the late Shang, the word for "year", *si* 祀, refers to the sacrificial cycle. The pantheon Wu-ding sacrificed to was "unquestionably dominated by the lineal ancestors, distant and near," together with some of their heir-bearing consorts. It also included such "nature" gods as River and Mountain, as well as Di 帝 (Lord), a god distinguished from all others by the fact that, like the Shang king, he "ordered" (*ling* 令), and by the fact he was not sacrificed to even though his powers would seem to have been extensive: over warfare and victory, weather and harvest, and over the fate of the capital city. For Eno, however, this is insufficient evidence to speak of Di as a high god comparable to Tian 天 (Heaven) in the Western Zhou.

Eno makes interesting comments on the pluricultural context of the civilizations of the Central Plains and surrounding regions at the end of the second millenium BC. His discussion of the controversial issues of shamanism and the predominance of astral cults is clear and nuanced. The description of the process of regularization of the ritual protocols provides Eno an opportunity to discuss David Keightley's famous hypothesis on the "proto-bureaucratic" nature of the Shang state. Without calling it entirely into question, he makes arguments that tend to show that, at bottom, the power structure created by the Shang kings remained throughout the period covered by the inscriptions a "kinship-based patrimonial organization" underpinned religiously by the age-based hierarchy of the ancestral pantheon. Recently published inscriptions of a prince from Wu-ding's time suggest that princes, like the king, had the right to divine and interpret the oracle bones, but it was apparently the prerogative of the king to communicate with Di and to worship the natural powers.

In his survey of ritual from Shang through Han, Mu-chou Poo makes the observation that offerings in the Shang could be burnt (*liao* 燎), sunk into water (*chen* 沉) or buried (*mai* 埋), implying that the recipients of these various offerings lived in heaven, water or the earth. This suggests that, nearly two millennia before the Daoist ritual of "throwing the dragon slips" (*tou longjian* 投龍簡) to the divine officers of heaven, earth, and the waters under the earth, there already existed some sense of a three-layer universe and of adapted modes of communication with each layer.

Alain Thote describes changing burial practices and related beliefs over the entire Shang-Zhou stretch. The dimensions of Shang royal tombs, their layout and the wealth of furnishings they contained as

well as the traces of numerous human sacrificial victims around them together reveal the exceptional status of the king at the top of the social pyramid, at the point of contact between human society and the world of the gods. Tombs were also places of worship, as can be seen from the architectural vestiges above the only royal tomb to have been discovered intact, that of Fu Hao (d. ca. 1200 BC), principal wife of Wu-ding. The fact this otherwise quite modest tomb was associated with no fewer than 16 human victims and contained 210 ritual bronzes, 755 amulets of jade and 134 bronze weapons gives some idea of the colossal Shang investment in the tombs of the royal elite.

If the changes that occurred after the Zhou conquest in the mid-11th century were not immediate, they were nonetheless decisive for the future evolution of political doctrines and religious ideologies. The first of these changes is the appearance of the notion of Heaven, which had an immense impact on conceptions of dynastic legitimacy and on the constitution of a cosmic theology based on natural cycles and the interpretation of presages. According to Eno, Heaven and the "mandate" associated with it (*tianming* 天命) represents a "fundamentally new element of state religion: a theodicy." The earliest reference to the Mandate of Heaven, on a bronze inscription dated 998, claims the Zhou founder King Wu (Martial) "permitted no excess; at sacrificial rites, he permitted no drunkenness," by contrast with the Shang, who "sank into drunkenness." The second major change, the ritual reform already alluded to and which, in Martin Kern's words, was "first discovered by Jessica Rawson and later significantly elaborated upon by Lothar von Falkenhausen," is shown by Alain Thote to be reflected in changing grave goods: from the start of the Zhou, *gui* 簋 vessels for cereals became indispensable, while vessels for ale dwindled in number until they disappeared altogether. Graded sets of bells and chime stones were added, representing at once dramatic musical change and a clear social hierarchy. But perhaps most significant of all is the fact that "almost all references to animals other than the dragon disappeared from the vessels." Decoration of the bronzes, based almost exclusively on the dragon motif, became so highly abstract it has been referred to as "geometrical."

In his chapter on Western Zhou ancestor worship, by innovative reading of received and recently discovered texts Martin Kern brings rich new nuance to the scholarly consensus on the Heavenly Mandate and the ritual reform. Once again, ongoing discoveries are vital: a 2001 list of 5,758 bronze inscriptions from the late Shang and Zhou is already out of date because "numerous new finds, some of them spectacular,

have been added to the record." They make it possible to divide the dynasty into early (ca. 1045–957 BC), middle (956–858 BC) and late (857–771 BC) periods. He begins by noting that the linked notions of the Heavenly Mandate and the Son of Heaven (*tianzi* 天子) appear only rarely in the early period, and the "formulaic pair 'King Wen and King Wu' (*Wen Wu* 文武)" not at all. It is in the middle and above all in the late period that all three concepts become clearly central: "The commemoration of origin, and with it of the religious legitimacy of the entire dynasty, created an ideal past as a parallel reality to an actual experience of loss and decay." It is on this idealization that, several centuries later, Confucius and his disciples would build.

Kern does not contest the dating of the ritual reform but profoundly enhances our understanding of it by his analysis of textual aesthetics and the "space of the ancestral sacrifice." He suggests, first, that the famous *zhaomu* 昭穆 array of ancestral tablets referred originally to the placement of the tablets of kings Zhao (r. 977–957 BC) and Mu (r. 956–918 BC) to the left and right of that of King Kang (r. 1003–978 BC) in what is called in the bronze inscriptions "Kang's palace." References to this and other "palaces" (*gong* 宮) are far more frequent in the inscriptions than the more familiar term "temple" (*miao* 廟). The fact both administrative appointments and ancestral sacrifices took place in this "palace" implies the utter imbrication of the political and the religious, as does the link between banquet and ancestral sacrifice in the "Court hymns" of the *Shijing* 詩經 (*Book of songs*). Relying on the work of anthropologists and linguists, Kern underlines the "striking overlap between the language of poetry, the aesthetics of ritual and the ideology of memory" as expressed in these hymns. As for the speeches of the early kings in the *Shujing* 書經 (*Book of documents*), they are not taken from Zhou archives but are imagined (as is also the case in the much later *Zuozhuan* 左傳):

> The speeches fit precisely into the historical context of mid- and late Western Zhou times when the practice of the ancestral sacrifice was expanded into a much broader culture of commemoration that increasingly fused religious service with political purpose. This is the time of the grand commemorative banquet hymns as well as of court rituals that were no longer addressed to a small group of clan members but to a much broader political elite.

In his survey of the bronze inscriptions "initially hidden deep inside the vessel and hence not visible for the human eye or at least very hard to discern," Kern comes back to the ritual reform, concluding his description of the standardization of the bronzes and the subsequent

stability of design over the last century of the Western Zhou by citing von Falkenhausen: "Archaistic referentiality in the typology and ornamentation of ritual bronzes would have been but a minor manifestation of a consummately history-conscious ritual ideology." Kern detects the same features in the language of the inscriptions and suggests the aesthetic features of the court hymns in the *Songs* "seem parallel to late Western Zhou bronzes." In like manner, the earliest texts in the *Documents* are not about history but about the selective memory of history as perpetuated in the context of the ancestral sacrifice: "This memory remained alive as long as it was perpetuated in the ever renewed performance of the ancestral sacrifice and court banquets."

In short, there was a reorientation of royal worship toward the living, and the ancestral sacrifice became, to use the expression of Pierre Nora, a "place of memory."[2] We may add that the fact cereals became central to this sacrifice no doubt reflected not just economic but religious change: the Zhou ancestor Houji 后稷 was the god of cereals.

The centrality of the ancestors throughout the royal period should not occult the gods and the rites celebrated in their honor. The contribution of Kominami Ichirô is in this regard essential, for in his study of the *she* 社 (the altar of the god of earth or territory) he shows that the worship of territorial gods was the indispensable counterpart of the ancestor cult. Kominami's chapter starts with a question: why is the place name Botu 亳土, Earth of Bo, so widespread in North China? In the oracle bones, Botu clearly refers to an earth god who receives sacrifices. Later texts identify it as the Shang territorial god, and Kominami uses these texts to suggest Botu refers to the Shang practice of carrying a clod of earth from their home Botu altar into battles of conquest and then, if victorious, mixing this "ancestral" earth with local earth to make a new Botu altar. Shang expansion was expressed religiously by the transfer to each new frontier post of the earth god altar—and of the tablets of the ancestors, but only after the creation of the altar.

[2] The parallel with the Pentateuch and the Psalms as described by Artur Weiser is also striking: "The cult of the feast of Yahweh, the heart of which was the revelation of God at Sinai, was the native soil on which the tradition of the *Heilsgeschichte* concerning the Exodus, the revelation at Sinai, and the conquest of the land was formed and cultivated." Through the ritual repetition of salvation history at the annual feast, it "became a new 'event'. The congregation attending the feast experienced this as something which happened in its presence, and thereby participated in the assurance and realization of salvation which was the real purpose of the festival." See Artur Weiser, *The Psalms: a commentary*, tr. Herbert Hartwell (London, 1962), p. 26, n. 2, and p. 28.

The great attraction of this hypothesis is that it implies that, from the beginnings of Chinese written history, there was a fundamental complementarity between these two modes of worship, that of the ancestors and that of the earth as territory. Kominami adds to the attractiveness of his hypothesis by his exploration of the links between the character for "Bo" in Botu and the character *fu* in the term "spreading earth" (*futu* 敷土), a term that refers to the magic, swelling earth stolen from heaven by the Great Yu's 大禹 father Gun 鯀 in order to put a stop to the flood. As Mark Edward Lewis shows in his chapter, the flood and related tales of Yu's labors constitute one of the most important myth cycles in early China.

Eastern Zhou (770–256 BC)

The collapse of royal political authority in the Eastern Zhou may be seen from the fact sumptuary rules were no longer followed and distinctive regional traditions were free to develop. According to Alain Thote, prototypes of the tomb as microcosm first appear in the state of Qin which, in the tomb of Prince Jing (d. 536) also has the biggest tomb so far discovered, with no fewer than 166 human victims. Substitute grave goods, later referred to as *mingqi* 明器 ("spirit artifacts"),[3] began to appear in Qin tombs from around 700 BC and pottery models from the 6th century. In Chu tombs, which were far more lavish than those in Qin, earthenware models of ritual vessels first appeared in the 8th century, and they were of a higher quality. Starting in the 5th century, Chu also contributed to the creation of the tomb-home, as can be seen in the tomb of the marquis Yi of Zeng (d. 433), composed of several rooms through which the soul could circulate as in a house. In the 4th–3rd centuries BC, rich tombs came to be covered by a tumulus, and ever more attention was paid to the preservation of the body. Ritual bronzes declined in quality and finally disappeared, replaced by items of daily life, and the food in the tombs was now provisions, not offerings. Finally, human victims disappeared and guardian monsters made

[3] Also translated "brilliant" or "luminous artifacts" in these pages: as Constance Cook reminds us, the philosopher Xunzi (ca. 310–215 BC), already, explained that the word *ming* "'made clear' (a pun on the double meaning of *ming*) the separation between the dead and the living." Cf. below, the remarks about "bright spirits" and the "Hall of Light."

their appearance inside the tombs. Together, these changes reflected a world in which the power and prestige of ancestors had declined precipitously, and the living were concerned to ensure that the deceased were comfortable in their new "homes," but also that they would not come back to haunt the living.

The Eastern Zhou was characterized not only by the collapse of royal power and the rise of powerful states on the periphery—states that would eventually fight to the finish until only the one state of Qin remained—but also by the emergence of newly powerful lineages in the various states and the rise to prominence of the *shi* 士 class which had formerly occupied the bottom rung of the aristocracy. It was a time, in short, of political volatility and social mobility, when "the rites were in disarray, and music had collapsed." According to Constance Cook, this "caused a shift from historical to mythical founder deities and a focus on nature worship." In her analysis of the religious nuances of what is traditionally understood as an investiture rite (*feng* 封), Cook highlights the role of founder cults along with the growing importance of territorial cults (*she* 社 and *sheji* 社稷) and the progressive transformation of lineage ancestors into national gods. The most important factor of change, however, was no doubt the newly powerful states that were not a part of the Zhou kinship system. Qi and Qin, for example, claimed descent respectively from the sage kings Tang (founder of the Shang) and Yu. This meant that participation of all collateral branches in joint worship of the apical Zhou ancestor no longer had any political meaning.

In his account of the *meng* 盟 (covenant) ritual by means of which the Zhou states engaged in sworn alliances, Mu-chou Poo provides further insight into the Zhou pantheon. After drinking the blood of the sacrificial victim, the parties to the contract buried the covenant text with the victim. The commitment to the covenant was expressed in a curse, an example of which Poo quotes from the *Zuozhuan* 左傳 (the Zuo commentary):

> Should any prince break these engagements, may He who watches over men's sincerity and He who watches over covenants, [the Spirits of] the famous hills and [of] the famous streams, the kings and dukes our predecessors, the whole host of Spirits, and all who are sacrificed to, the ancestors of our twelve states with their seven surnames: may all these intelligent Spirits destroy him, so that he shall lose his people, his appointment pass from him, his family perish, and his State be utterly overthrown!

In another case, it was the River that was called to witness. In short, interstate relations were, in these examples, "guaranteed" by a pan-

theon that seems to have been constructed very much like that of the Shang king Wu-ding, with its combination of territorial and ancestor gods. Interestingly, the early 5th century BC examples of such political covenants found at Houma make no mention of any gods other than the ancestors, perhaps because they had to do only with the domestic politics of the state of Jin.

The *Zuozhuan* or commentary of Mr. Zuo on the *Chunqiu* 春秋 (*Annals*) of the state of Lu provides both Yuri Pines and Marc Kalinowski some of their most important materials, the first for his study of early Chinese historiography, the second for his analysis of divination in the Eastern Zhou. Pines begins by noting that the earliest documents containing historical narratives are the early Western Zhou bronze inscriptions referred to above. The events described in them were reported in highly selective manner so as to please their addressees, the ancestors, and the *Annals* carries on that tradition of ritually appropriate recording of events based on scribal reports probably kept, like the tortoise plastrons, in the ancestral temple: "Through their staunch preference for ritual reality over historical facts, and through their judgment of political actors, the court scribes and their employers hoped to preserve the deteriorating ritual order intact." With the appropriation of the *Annals* by Confucius or his disciples, history writing bifurcates into "sacred" and "secular" traditions. Entries in the *Annals* were now understood as messages addressed not to the ancestors but to living contemporaries, and their stylistic particularities were interpreted as a politico-ethical commentary on the course of events. The *Annals* rapidly acquired the status of a canonical text, and the first commentarial traditions appeared. In the *Zuo commentary*, history became a mirror aimed at supplying members of the educated elite with a working knowledge of past events: "Its protagonists routinely invoke the past in a variety of court or interstate debates, and their superior knowledge of former events becomes a useful polemical weapon." According to Pines, the *Zuo*'s detailed account of events that are recorded in lapidary and ritual fashion in the *Annals* enables the reader to see how ritual has skewed history and thereby undermines the authority of the canonical text.

In his chapter, Kalinowski provides the first complete study of the 132 accounts of divination in the *Zuo commentary*. He then compares these narratives with records of actual divinations found in Chu manuscripts of the 4th century BC. The respective rhetorical characteristics of these two different kinds of sources reveal significant changes in the way in which the mantic arts were perceived and practiced in the courts of

the period. Kalinowski underlines the rise in importance of astrology and of omen interpretation to the detriment of turtle and milfoil divination, as well as on the increasing participation in mantic operations of non-official specialists, thanks especially to the *Yijing* 易經 (*Book of changes*). He suggests that these changes reveal a religious conflict between the sacrificial liturgy of the diviners using ancient tortoise and yarrow stalk methods and the cosmological and calendrical conceptions which underly the predictive procedures used by astrologers and interpreters of omens.

But most interesting of all is the fact that, in the *Zuozhuan*, the truly efficacious diviners are prescient counsellors who know history and understand human nature. When there is a conflict between a diviner and a counsellor, it is always the latter who wins:

> This appropriation of divination by worthy counsellors is all the more evident as most of the speeches attributed to them in the *Zuozhuan* are composed in an oracular style which anticipates the events to come without any recourse to a particular technique. The authors of these "predictive discourses" appear as gifted with innate foreknowledge, and they provide the narrator with an indirect but effective weapon for criticizing traditional forms of technical divination... Over against the techniques of the scribes and diviners, they prone a form of intelligence which consists in seeing the premises of future change in present situations.

The Baoshan "divinatory and sacrificial records" of 316 BC described by Kalinowski in the second half of his chapter reveal to us a high official of the state of Chu engaging in regular divination about the year to come, much as the Shang kings did when divining about the coming ten-day "week." The aim of these divinatory rituals was less to divine the future than to know what sacrifices to make and to whom they should be addressed:

> The recommended rites can be sacrifices of animals or food destined, as here, for the direct ancestors of the consultant, or for the mythical heroes of Chu, or for nature deities and local or domestic gods. The proposals also mention non-sacrificial rites of conjuration and exorcism of evil spirits as well as various observances such as fasting.

In the course of a little more than two years, the no fewer than 12 diviners consulted on behalf of the official proposed sacrifices to the ancestors and the gods involving a total of 70 animals, "among them 36 pigs, 23 sheep, 9 oxen, 6 dogs and a horse."

While Kalinowski's chapter focuses on the changes in the status and functions of diviners in the 6th–4th centuries and Fu-shih Lin's chapter

on shamans (*wu* 巫)[4] covers the entire ancient period, Lin shows that a dramatic drop in the status of the shamans occurred at much the same time as that of the diviners. In the Shang, the word *wu* referred at once to a divine figure, a kind of sacrifice and a person with a special status or function. The *wu* could also be used as a sacrificial victim. For the early Zhou we have no information, but the *Rites of Zhou* include a "chief shaman" in charge of male (*xi* 覡) and female shamans (*wu*) who perform a wide range of rituals, including exorcisms, sacrifices and rain dances. Lin cites Warring States and Han texts that show the involvement of shamans in healing, divining, fortune-telling and black magic of various kinds. Throughout the Western Han, they continued to hold official positions in the government, as they clearly had in the various feudal states in the pre-imperial period as well.

None of this, however, prevented them from coming under systematic attack by virtually all thinkers of the Warring States period. The *Zuo commentary* has a counsellor ask a duke how exposing to the sun a "foolish woman"—his way of referring to a *wu*—could possibly end a drought. Xunzi speaks of male and female shamans, respectively, as "cripples" and "hunchbacks," suggesting they were abnormal and contemptible. Han attacks are even more virulent, with the *wu* being described as cheats and purveyors of "sinister practices" (*zuodao* 左道). But the most telling explanation of their precipitous decline in status comes from a famous tale recounted in one of the early chapters of the *Zhuangzi* 莊子. In it, Liezi, disciple of a master of the Dao, encounters a shaman whom he thinks is even more powerful than his master. His master has the shaman come in to "physiognomize" him on several successive days, each time showing the shaman a different aspect of his internal world. Each time, the shaman sees not the reality of the master of the Dao but only what the master lets him see. The last time what the master shows him is so terrifying that the shaman runs off too fast for Liezi to catch him. Chastened, Liezi goes home and, for three years, replaces his wife at the stove and feeds the pigs as though they were humans.

In short, the once powerful *wu*, whose techniques had been universally feared and required, had now a challenger in the practitioner of

[4] The term *wu* is nowadays usually translated as "spirit medium" or "shaman." If by "shaman" is understood the Siberian shaman, the translation is totally misleading, but the term "spirit medium," which evokes ethnographic accounts of such mediums in modern Chinese religion, is hardly better. Both here and in Lin's article "shaman" has been used as a matter of pure convention and convenience, and the reader is therefore invited to focus above all on the ritual functions and changing social status of the *wu*.

self-cultivation techniques. "Self-cultivation," writes Romain Graziani, "presupposes without explicitly stating it a deep faith in human moral liberation and in the possibility of perfecting oneself." At the same time, because the standard context for the production of texts was the courts of the various lords, not only was the ruler the ideal reader, the subject of self-cultivation himself was imagined in terms of the metaphor of sovereignty. While Graziani concludes that this implies, in the end, that "the literati of the ancient world had given precedence to the king over the self, and valued subjection over subjectivity," he also recalls that the *Zhuangzi* is "in open conflict with the social models of wisdom and virtue elaborated in the Ru schools." But what is perhaps most important in Graziani's account is that it underlines the importance of the discovery and exploration of subjectivity—the interior—to a rounded understanding of the Warring States transformation of the Chinese world:

> Self-cultivation leads to the interiorization of social and ritual values... It consists of an ever-ascending path wherein one's basic vital energy (*qi* 氣) is transformed into quintessential energy, or vital essence (*jing* 精), which is itself, in turn, converted to spiritual energy, or Spirit (*shen* 神)... [These texts were] like a declaration of independence of the human mind from divinatory procedures... and an affirmation of personal power over one's surrounding objective conditions.

While negativity about desire and emphasis on self-discipline make comparison with Stoic spirituality a natural move, in stark contrast with the self of Western philosophical and religious traditions that of the self-cultivation texts is never seen as in inner conflict "between reason and feeling, desire and will, the animal and the reasonable parts within us." With respect to "moral stipulations and ritual norms," Graziani sees a significant difference between Confucian and Daoist currents of self-cultivation. In texts like the *Wuxing pian* 五行篇 (*Book of the five kinds of action*; late 4th or early 3rd century BC), self-cultivation is "intimately linked to the practice of social virtues... [and] vital impulse and ethical tendency are fundamentally one." It is a precondition for truly virtuous action that the five social virtues be interiorized. In the *Zhuangzi*, by contrast, the ideal person "wanders in the land of non-being," and there is an "irretrievable breach between social values and vital élan, between individual liberation and the necessity to conform to one's role in society." The conflict between these two currents of self-cultivation is most apparent in their contrasted attitudes toward physical beauty:

> By the complementarity of moral self-cultivation and penal policy, the former producing complete and radiant bodies, the latter mutilated and

> crippled ones, both Confucianism and Legalism play on the same keyboard of aesthetic values in a different mode…The *Zhuangzi* depicts compliance to the rites and laws as a means to cripple one's inborn nature…The Sage's serene indifference to outward contingencies is praised as the privilege of amputated men. Amputation is a stroke of luck that frees one.

We may recall here Xunzi, who refers with infinite disdain to "hunchback shamanesses and crippled shamans." In one fundamental regard, however, texts from these conflicting currents agree on one basic idea, namely, that the self is "the totality of its concrete aspects, not an immortal ontological reality distinct from the body." There is "no Cartesian opposition of mind and matter," and intentionality, so central to Western reflection on the self as an "autonomous agent," is irrelevant to the Chinese discovery of self as "a purely vital activity." Graziani therefore insists throughout on the impersonal character of the cultivated self—precisely what, as we shall see, Levi underscores in his analysis of the Dao and the image of the ideal monarch as a transcendent self evolving beyond the realm of forms.

In his chapter, Mark Csikszentmihàlyi looks at the relationship between self-cultivation and ethics. Ritual, for the elite, is no longer about buying the assistance of the gods with sacrifices but about ethical training and socialization. Proper ritual attitudes—fear, awe, yielding and reverence—help produce virtuous dispositions and channel behavior into non anti-social forms. According to the *Lunyu* 論語 (*Analects*), for example, to serve one's parents without reverence is not a moral action. What Csikszentmihàlyi calls "material virtue texts"—texts like the *Wuxing pian* recently discovered in tombs from the late Warring States and early imperial periods—affirm that these learned attitudes in turn have physical effects on the *qi* (energies) of the body, producing a "white mind and lustrous body." Luster refers to jade, and the eyes are a "window on the soul." "White mind" is the title of a chapter in the *Guanzi* 管子and refers to growing "closer to the spirit world" through self-cultivation. In general, whiteness and brightness refer to the spirit world, as in the terms "bright spirits" (*mingshen* 明神) and "Hall of Light" (Mingtang 明堂). Mencius 孟子 refers, similarly, to "radiantly bright" *qi*. He also claims that sincere people always move others, while Ying Shao 應邵 (fl. 203) explains that sincerity enables avoidance of misfortune: "By returning to sincerity and relying on righteousness, 'examining one's interior without guilt,' then outside things cannot move one, and disasters will be turned into good fortune." The "Zhongyong" 中傭, a chapter of the *Liji* 禮記 (*Book of rites*), says the sincere person

has foreknowledge and a spirit-like capacity to change and adapt. The *Lüshi chunqiu* 呂氏春秋 (*Annals of Sire Lü*) explains that true sincerity, together with consolidation of one's inner nature (through self-cultivation practices) enables the person to communicate with Heaven and "move the nature of water, wood, and stone. How much the more so someone made of blood and *qi*? For all those who work at persuasion and governing, nothing is as good as sincerity." Thus at the very beginning of the imperial period are the paths of ritual and physical self-cultivation conjugated to produce a model of spiritual eliteness in which social ethics, political power and bodily health converged.

One of the pre-conditions of this unitary spiritual path to nobility was the emergence of the notion of *qi*, a notion that made it possible to think in the same terms about the universe as a whole, the course of the seasons, human health and ethics. In his chapter on the evolution of medical theory, Li Jianmin says that "wind" replaces demons as the principle explanation of illness from the Warring States on. One of the earliest medical classics, the *Suwen* 素問 (*Plain questions*), "proposes that in general all disease originates from the changes of the six *qi* and that physicians must observe the disease mechanisms and not violate the principles of the movements of the six *qi*." Contemporaries, says the *Suwen*, "have lost compliance with the four seasons and go against what is appropriate in the cold or in summer heat." Ghosts and demons do not disappear altogether from the medical classics, but they are seen above all as the cause of "withdrawal" and "mania," that is, psychological illness. Even strange dreams are explained in physiological terms, as the result of fear caused by lack of blood and *qi* in the heart that leads to dispersal of the spirit when asleep. In this context, belief in spirits and ritual cures was seen as preventing patients from trusting doctors and being cured by them. By contrast, "nurturing life"—self-cultivation—was the natural way to avoid illness.

Csikszentmihàlyi cites texts which show how this unitary theory of *qi* and the seasons comes to expression in both the realm of physical self-cultivation and social ethics. The Way of Pengzu to good health and long life is summarized in a text found at Zhangjiashan as "producing in spring, maturing in summer, harvesting in autumn and storing in winter." Xunzi, in his treatise on music, draws on the same seasonal/climatological model:

> Creating in spring and maturing in summer, this is benevolence 仁. Gathering in autumn and storing in winter, this is righteousness 義. Benevolence is close to music and righteousness to ritual. Music is a

> matter of honesty and harmony, and so one leads the spirits by following Heaven. Ritual is a matter of segregation and appropriateness, and so one lodges the demons by following Earth. Thus when the sages created music they did it by echoing Heaven, and when they designed the rites they did it to match the Earth.

As Li Jianmin says, it has become "hard to distinguish between climatology-cosmology and medicine."

Mark Lewis begins his chapter with a synthesis of modern studies of early Chinese mythology, which he sees as all sharing the assumption that the authors of antiquity who transmitted the myths were in fact trying to hide or eliminate them. Modern scholars have therefore taken it to be their brief to recover the reality hidden behind the rationalizing and historicizing versions of the myths. Lewis' own approach, which he refers to as "positive," aims, rather, at making explicit the meaning of the myths and legends as revealed by the roles they played in the social context in which they were written down, primarily during the Warring States. In the writings of that period, for reasons already mentioned in connection with Graziani's study of self-cultivation, a central place was given to the mythology of statecraft, which appears in tales in what would become the classics as well as in philosophical texts that refer constantly to the legendary sovereigns, sage kings and enlightened ministers of antiquity. Thus the tales of Yao 堯 and Shun 舜, two emperors of high antiquity said to have transferred power to virtuous ministers rather than to their sons, show how the "end of kin-based empire brought into conflict heredity and talent." The emerging class of thinkers and persuaders—the future literati—used these myths to advance the cause of the non-hereditary principle. The background for the tales of Yu 禹 taming the flood, by contrast, is the "restructuring of a unified world" in the Warring States: "In this schema the flood, and the primal chaos with which it is linked, stand for all the criminality, bad government and intellectual deviance that threatened the social order." Yu is also the "mythic prototype for the god of the altar of the soil" and, as the father of the founder of the first "dynasty," the Xia, the legitimator of lineage and the hereditary principle. Shennong 神農 (Divine Farmer), a god of agriculture who appears late in the Warring States era, represents an "agrarian utopia prior to the state," while the Yellow Emperor (Huangdi 黃帝), "originally a dragon spirit deity of the storm," in defeating the Fiery Emperor, Chiyou 蚩尤, a drought spirit and prototype of the exorcist who protects tombs, negates the latter's martial prowess and signifies the "rejection of the old aristocracy":

> The innovations of the Yellow Emperor...gave mythic origins to the elements of the new style of warfare that had emerged. These included the reliance on infantry armies composed of peasants...and the incorporation of these armies and specialists into a state order defined by the semi-divine ruler and his ritual performances.

In sum, the chapters of Thote, Cook, Poo, Pines, Kalinowski, Lin, Graziani, Csikszentmihàlyi, Li and Lewis all reveal different aspects of the Warring States transformation. These changes may be summarized as a process of rationalization and interiorization. The rationalization process—the creation of a kind of "unified field theory" built on the notion of *qi*—ran parallel to and no doubt to a certain degree reflected ongoing economic and administrative rationalization. That this is so may be seen from the fact that, from 300 BC on, we begin to catch glimpses of an underworld bureaucracy for the dead comparable to that which is also emerging above ground. The fact the dead, in this context, were not ancestors in heaven with power to help but ancestors underground with power to harm may explain as well the increasing concern to create for them a new home and to ensure, by various means such as "spirit artifacts" and exorcism, their separation from the living. The changed status of the dead also explains, suggests Cook, why the elite "moved away from ancestor gods to search for immortality or sagehood," that is, how rationalization took the form, in elite individuals, of a process of interiorization particularly visible in the self-cultivation and philosophical texts.

The chapter by Vera Dorofeeva-Lichtmann on a series of texts and *tu* 圖, symbolic diagrams, that, from the 4th century BC into the early Han, sought to produce "orderly and hierarchically structured schematic representations of the world" reveals the same process of rationalization and unification at work in the development of a new administrative vision of "China." The most famous of the texts, the "Yugong" 禹貢 ("Tribute of Yu") chapter of the *Book of documents* and the *Shanhai jing* 山海經 (*Classic of mountains and seas*), are directly linked to the myth of Yu. But if the latter creates a series of "itineraries" in which sacrifices to the gods play a central role, the "Tribute of Yu" is "a purely administrative tour" that, by following Yu on his travels through the respective provinces to drain them of their overflowing waters, recreates the Chinese world as a magic square of 3 × 3 = Nine Provinces, that is, a territory that, while divided, remains an organic whole: a sacred space owing nothing to kinship and (virtually) everything to abstract, administrative rationality. The absence of the gods in the recently discovered 4th

century BC *Rong Cheng shi* manuscript, in many ways parallel to the "Tribute of Yu," would seem to indicate that this purely administrative view is a product of the Warring States.

The chapter by Jean Levi attempts an overarching religious explanation of the manner in which these multifarious Warring States changes occurred. He begins his account with the "archaic system" of the Zhou, which he summarizes as "the politico-cosmic structuring of society by means of sacrifice." He shows concretely what he means by an analysis of the sacrifice to Heaven and the "cascade of leftovers": two red bulls were prepared for the sacrifice, one for Heaven and the second for the divine ancestor of the Zhou, Houji. The bull for Heaven was shot by the king, its blood presented as an offering and then the whole bull burned. The second bull, on the contrary, was cooked and then served to ever-widening circles, with each successive group eating the meat left over by the preceding, hierarchically superior group. To be a "meat-eater" (*roushizhe* 肉食者) thus meant having a fixed placed in the sacrificial and kinship hierarchy—only kin could worship the common ancestor and, therefore, rule over a territory—and it meant being obliged to those above one, the source of one's meat. That in such a shared ritual culture the ancestors were "really present" we can imagine from the tale in the *Zuo commentary* related by Constance Cook, in which the lord of Jin falls ill after watching the ancestral sacrifice (*di* 禘) in the state of Song: "Participation in another's *di* sacrifice could be dangerous; the dancing invoked powerful spiritual influences." It was this perfect system whose "rites were in decay and music in collapse" in the Eastern Zhou.

The collapse of this system was the inevitable result of the disintegration of the Zhou polity, in which power was based on kinship and the worship of the common ancestor provided the religious linchpin of society. But the very perfection and coherence of the system most certainly explains why, in the period of transition to the bureaucratic empire, so many thinkers sought to extract from the system its ethical, aesthetic and intellectual principles in order to create a system suitable to the new environment. We have already alluded to this in our introduction of the chapters on self-cultivation. Yuri Pines has elsewhere drawn attention to the development of philosophical reflection on ritual in the *Zuo commentary*.[5] Reading together here the chapters by Pines

[5] Pines, *Foundations of Confucian thought: intellectual life in the Chunqiu period (722–453 BCE)* (Honolulu, 2002).

and Martin Kern suggests how the centuries-long practice of ritual commemoration of ancestors evolved into Chinese historiography.

But perhaps the most critical transformation is that rendered possible by the differentiation between the two bulls. By distinguishing Heaven from the Ancestor and his "communion" meat, the sacrifice to Heaven revealed itself to be at once the source of all leftovers and the recipient of none: it was outside the system and transcendent, in exactly the same manner the Dao would be in imperial China. The tight link, in the Zhou system, between "qualitative and hierarchical structuring of space around centers of sacrifice," and the collapse of that system and the subsequent "departmentalization of territory" would require a "new religious organization corresponding to a more abstract space and time." Through an innovative reading of two 3rd-century BC texts, Levi shows how "the word Dao refers to absolute generality that is infinite extensiveness":

> Even though each of the ten thousand beings obeys its own norm, the Dao shows no partiality. That is why it cannot be defined. Being without definition, it does nothing and, without doing anything, there is nothing that is not done. That is what is involved in the system of administrative circumscriptions…A world in miniature and a miniaturization of the world, the state administration tended to apply to society the same abstract and objective laws, from which all human arbitrariness had been eliminated, as those which governed the motion of the planets and the alternation of the seasons.

"The rite, the norm and the Dao" in the title to Levi's chapter refers to the Confucian, Legalist and Daoist traditions. What he shows is how these radically different sensibilities and programs, in conflict during the Warring States, are melded at the end of the period into a unitary vision in which "the functioning of the state is linked to the spontaneous course of the world." The myth of the Yellow Emperor, already evoked by Mark Lewis, is one expression of "the exaltation of the Whole, a metaphysical projection of the unified and centralized empire under construction, inextricably linked to the affirmation of the preeminence of the center over the periphery." Described as having four faces and being the "unique man," the Yellow Emperor embodies sovereignty over space-time by virtue of his occupation of the center, that is, his "domination of the four directions from a strategic point which does not belong to ordinary space": like Heaven in the archaic sacrificial system and Dao in the new philosophical system, the center is transcendent.

Similarly, the Son of Heaven in this new system is like the man of the Dao in the Zhuangzian story recounted above: he

> must be careful never to display to others anything but the polished mirror of the unconditioned…He then leaves the universe of the senses for the transcendence of being. He is self-effaced in non being, vanishes into an unfathomable void, fuses with the Principle which gives shape to all shapes. In a word, he achieves the transcendence of the Dao. Emanation of the cosmic law, he strips himself of all definition.

Qin and Han (221 BC–220 AD)

Michael Puett presents three collections of ritual texts that purport to be—and to some degree are—from the Zhou era, but which, as collections, date to the Han. As such, they are in the first place testimony to the intellectual meaning of empire: imperially sponsored sifting through and editing of approved—in this case, ritual—texts. In terms of content, they also show the continuing importance attached to ritual as a form of self-cultivation and a source of social order: "Of all the ways of ordering humans, none are more urgent than the rites," says the *Book of rites*, the one of the three that came to be counted among the Five Classics. The same text explains the difference between worship of the dead at the tomb and in the ancestral temple in terms of the different components—"material" and "spiritual"—of the person. It is the spirit-*qi* which, "now lacking the corpse, ascends to the heavens" to become "radiant brightness," from whence it is summoned for regular sacrifices in the temple. The *Rites of Zhou* begins each of its six sections with the affirmation, "It is the king who establishes the state." Both texts played major roles in the court debates at the end of the Western Han to be mentioned below. The *Yili* 儀禮 (*Rites and ceremonies*), third of the *Sanli* 三禮 ("three ritual texts") which Zheng Xuan 鄭玄 (127–200) is the first to have considered together as forming a coherent system of ritual, was, according to Michael Nylan's chapter, "the single *Rites classic* (*Lijing* 禮經) for most of Han."

Nylan's account of classical learning (*jingxue* 經學) in the Han aims to undo the traditional narrative which made of Confucianism a kind of national religion based on the Five Classics and the thought of Dong Zhongshu (trad. 176–104 BC) starting under Wudi (r. 140–87 BC). While she does acknowledge that during Wudi's reign the Ru 儒 began

to advise the emperor on critical matters of state—in particular, ritual centers like the Hall of Light and the *feng* 封, *shan* 禪 and suburban sacrifices—the Five Classics were not even constituted as a fixed group of texts in the Western Han, let alone the foundation of a state orthodoxy. Ru-classicists—not necessarily "Confucians"—did play a major role in a court conference in 51 BC on the relative merits of interpretive traditions of the classics and in court debates over religion in 31 BC, but these Ru achievements "were partly due to the success with which the Ru portrayed themselves as diviners of portents and prodigies." Only gradually, over the entire four-century span of the Han, did "text-based skills—specifically the ability to recite, read, cite, explicate and compare and correlate the *jing* (classics)—assume an ever larger part in defining the Ru classicist."

At the beginning of the Eastern Han, Yang Xiong 揚雄 (53 BC–18 AD) played a vital role as promoter of a return to the teachings of Confucius in the *Analects* and of Five Classics learning. He insisted, first of all, that the purpose of study of the Five Classics is the learning of ethical values that alone provides "true independence": "By contrast, the rival *jing* are objectively inferior, being both less versatile in application than the Five Classics and less suited to the all-important tasks of governing the self and governing others." For Yang, the ultimate goal was the recovery of the Zhou system of rites and music. This goal was consistent with his "demonization" of the Qin, "really a covert critique of mid-Western Han," that is, of Wudi's centralization of power. After the Wang Mang interregnum, the much weaker Eastern Han found in the apocryphal texts (*chenwei* 讖緯) the idea that the "uncrowned king"—Confucius—had predicted the rise of the Han and asserted the divine right of the Liu family to reign: "This legitimation supposedly offered by Confucius…had the Eastern Han trace its line to a sharp break with Qin traditions and the Ru's concomitant rise to power under Wudi." This is the Confucius that Mark Lewis refers to in his chapter as "the most important mythic figure of all, prototype of the worthy scholar who fails to find a worthy ruler to employ him." But if "attempts to synthesize Five Classics learning dominated many court-sponsored activities and private initiatives" in the Eastern Han, Nylan sees no evidence for the triumph of what used to be called "Han rationalism." Rather, "the old Ru preoccupation with ritual practice never abated."

Marianne Bujard's account of state religion also shows far greater continuity between Qin and Han than the traditional, "demonizing" narrative allowed. At the outset, the Han simply took over the Qin system,

which involved sacrifices to hundreds of territorial gods throughout the empire, as well as supreme sacrifices in the ancient Qin capital of Yong. The Han are simply said, for cosmological reasons, to have added a fifth Lord on High (Shangdi) to the four the Qin already worshiped in Yong, placing the Yellow Emperor in the center. The First Emperor of the Qin was also the first to perform the *feng* and *shan* sacrifices which, for him as in 110 BC for Wudi, involved not just a claim of legitimacy addressed to Heaven and Earth but also prayers for personal immortality. The greatest innovation under Wudi, the worship of Taiyi 太一 (Great One) done for the first time in 113 BC, was introduced at court by rivals of the Ru, the *fangshi* 方士, or "masters of techniques," including those for attaining immortality. In this new supreme cult, the Yellow Emperor was shifted to the southwest, corresponding to the "middle" of the year, and Taiyi took his place in the center. As already mentioned, the Ru were very much involved in the debates under Wudi about these ritual innovations, seeking to convert the Taiyi sacrifice into one to Heaven, the emperor's "father," and thereby to make of it a kind of ancestor worship. But they lost out to the *fangshi* and did not gain the upper hand until Wang Mang, who addressed the now suburban sacrifice to Huangtian Shangdi Taiyi 皇天上帝太一: Great One, Lord on High of Brilliant Heaven. Performed next in the year 25 AD by Emperor Guangwu, the founder of the Eastern Han, it became the central sacrifice of empire right down to 1914. The altar used by Guangwu was that first designed for the worship of Taiyi in 113 BC.

Led by the prime minister Kuang Heng and relying on arguments taken from the *Book of rites*, the Ru were also involved in the court debates of 31 BC that led to a (very temporary) reduction in the number of state-sponsored sites of worship from 683 to 208. The Ru sought also to reduce the number of ancestor temples built in memory of the various emperors, as by the time of Yuandi (r. 49–33) there were no fewer than 176 such temples. The Ru succeeded as well in getting Wang Mang to build a Hall of Light in 4 AD, and sacrifices were continued there until the hall was destroyed in the year 219. In Bujard's view, because these various reforms were all seen as based on the classics, the status of the classics was thenceforth intimately linked to political legitimacy.

Yuri Pines concludes his discussion of the *Zuo commentary* by comparing it with its great rival, the *Gongyang commentary* 公羊傳. For Pines, what the *Zuo* had desacralized the *Gongyang* resacralized by treating it as a text authored by Confucius: "The *Gongyang* authors go to great lengths to preserve the integrity and infallibility of the text upon

which they comment." Pines sees this as the expression of "a unified world ruled by a powerful Son of Heaven," that is, the empire. In his chapter on the *Gongyang commentary*, Joachim Gentz likewise begins by discussing the religious origins of what he says was the single most important classic in early Han. But he then goes on to link the compilers' methods with the rational attitudes and religious skepticism derived from the teachings of Confucius and his disciples. As he points out, "its emphasis is on human control of the process of rational interpretation, not on divinatory reading," and it was in fact "a further step away from anthropomorphic religion." This "step away" refers to its

> introduction of new religious concepts such as Heaven, original *qi* and systems of cosmological correspondences… [which] have nothing in common with the earlier personified concepts of Heaven, ghosts and ancestors who dominated human affairs through their personal will.

As it is precisely these elements of Han religion that have traditionally been referred to as Han "rationalism," Gentz' observations are of the utmost importance to our understanding of how imperial religion, building on the Warring States changes, was in fact utterly different from the kinship-based system of the Zhou. The bureaucratic empire simply could not be built on ancestor worship, not even of the "purely symbolic" kind the Ru sought to impose on the Son of Heaven: it required worship of an abstract, impersonal and universal kind that only the new *qi*-based cosmology and calendrical astrology could provide. It is this radical and ongoing transformation of state religion in the Han that explains why, as Fu-shih Lin shows, the *wu*, who still enjoyed official positions under the chamberlain for ceremonials in the Western Han, were in the Eastern Han shifted into the domestic treasury, "in charge of the small sacrificial rites of the palace": the old, anthropomorphic religion was dead.

Well, almost. It was dead on the level of the state, but it was thriving on the local level, as both Bujard and Lewis show in their surveys of local cults. Among the most interesting of these local cults are those to immortals such as Wangzi Qiao 王子喬, whose devotees are described as singing hymns to Taiyi and meditating on the viscera, that is, engaging in self-cultivation practices that link them to the worship of the same high god as was worshiped by Emperor Wu. A stele to the Lord of the White Stone 白石公, dated 183 AD, reveals a group of libationers (*jijiu* 祭酒)—a term used for priests in the Heavenly Master movement that was at that time in its infancy—together with local officials getting

involved in efforts to win official recognition for their local cult. Just as in the Song dynasty (960–1279 AD), the court ordered an inquiry, which then engendered a new report, and so on, till the local cult was either accepted for registry among state-recognized and supported sacrifices or rejected. Such information, of which we have precious little, lifts a corner of the veil on the religious aspects of the center-local relationship and suggests, here, a continuity going back at least to the Warring States as seen in the early chapters of the *Classic of mountains and seas* and continuing right to the end of the imperial period. Lewis, who also details the emergence of local cults to sage kings such as Yu, summarizes his account of local mythology as follows:

> It is not surprising that immortals and hermits, both associated with the mountains and wild areas just beyond the city and clearly distinguished from the state-sponsored exemplars on the sacrificial registers, became local benefactors and the deities of cults devoted exclusively to the well-being of a specific town or small region. In the stories, the recurring theme of tensions with kings and high officials likewise expresses the particularist, local nature of many of these cults.

Insofar as local cults were integrated into the register of sacrifices, they also constituted a part of the cost of the state sacrificial system, and it is this aspect that Roel Sterckx examines in his chapter. He notes that, in the Han ritual canon of the *Three rites*,

> a religious culture is unveiled in which sacrificial goods are quantified in terms of tribute or conscript labor, a society where status was defined in terms of ritual expenditure and where piety to the spirit world was translated into a detailed complex of material symbolism ranging from the measurement and value of ritual jades to the color and flavor associated with the cuisine offered up to the spirit world and shared in ritual banquets.

In other words, in the Han, insofar as ideal ritual culture came to be thought of in terms derived from what were in fact Zhou texts, it was a ritual culture based on a gift as opposed to a market economy. This corresponds, of course, to what Levi writes of the creation of obligation through the distribution of the sacrificial leftovers. But it was in contradiction with many of the economic changes that had occurred in the Warring States and continued into the Han. Thus when the *Guanzi* speaks of "establishing sacrifices to restrict entrance to mountains and marshes," Sterckx reads this as "turning mountains rich in ores and wood into sacred sites and so tabooing access to them for ordinary people."

That this led to considerable tension over the status of merchants—a matter discussed by Fu-shih Lin because some *wu* came under Wang Mang to be classified for tax purposes with merchants and shopkeepers—may be seen in the *Yantie lun* 鹽鐵論 (*Discussions on salt and iron*), a Western Han text that complains the wealthy were using singers and actors to usurp the sacrifices to the mountains and streams, turning people aside from the fundamentals of agriculture. The *Discussions*, which recounts the court debate of 81 BC over the establishment of state monopolies in salt and iron, reveals a fundamental contradiction between the emerging state market economy and its theoretical ritual framework.

But let us look also at the question of the religious economy simply in terms of the cost to the state, for this was at the heart of the drive in 31 BC to reduce the number of sites of worship and "return to classical simplicity." Beginning in the Shang, the state had at its disposal a veritable armada of specialists engaged in divination and sacrifice, and they clearly mobilized considerable amounts of wealth. An early Zhou oracle bone asks, "Shall we sacrifice one hundred Qiang people (a nomadic enemy tribe) and one hundred sets of sheep and pigs to [High King] Tang, Great Ancestors Jia and Ding, and Grandfather Yi?"[6] Sterckx cites an example in which the state of Lu was forced by the state of Wu to supply it with 100 sets of sacrificial victims. He also quotes the *Book of rites* to the effect that goods for the service of the spirits were part of taxes, and one-tenth of the produce of all land was to be set aside for the sacrifices. In the *Rites of Zhou*,

> the centrality of the sacrificial economy emerges in the task descriptions of the main office in the department of Heaven, the grand steward (*dazai* 大宰). Sacrifices rank first among the statutes he implements in towns and dependencies assigned to dukes, ministers and grandees. Furthermore sacrifices are the first among measurements used to determine the state's expenses, and sacrificial provisions rank first among nine types of tributary goods to be collected by the feudal state.

Sumptuary expenses on funerals and graves was a social and economic reality that occasioned considerable contention among the different currents of thought. While Mozi 墨子 called for simplicity in funerals

[6] Cited on p. 43 of Robert Eno, "Deities and ancestors in Shang oracle inscriptions," in Donald Lopez, ed., *Chinese religions in practice* (Princeton, 1996), pp. 41–51.

and mocked the rival Ru as funeral specialists primarily attracted by the food they could eat while performing, Guanzi thought lavish funerals were good for the economy. Starting in the Warring States era, lists of grave goods were meticulously compiled and inserted in the grave. "Spirit artifacts" came to be mass produced: according to Sterckx, a kiln near Chang'an could fire 8000 items at once.

In the Western Han, several hundred households were in charge of shrines and sacred peaks, and thousands of the imperial tombs. Twelve years prior to Wudi's *feng* and *shan* sacrifices, all towns around the mountain and the mountain itself were presented to the throne by the local king, who received a whole district in compensation. When in 110 BC auspicious omens were reported on the Central Peak, 300 households were set aside to furnish the wherewithal for the sacrifices to the god of the mountain:

> As is clear from the above, the organization and management of the religious economy was a task handled by an elaborate system of bureaucrats and government offices specially dedicated to the task. There existed no clearly articulated division between ritual tasks and other labor in early China.

The last four chapters and the last part of Mu-chou Poo's chapter have in common that they deal not with state religion but with religion as practiced at the various levels of society. The question, of course, is, which levels? Do the "daybooks" (*rishu* 日書) discovered in such numbers in Qin and early Han tombs represent a religion common to all, or should we speak of an "elite common religion"? Mu-chou Poo and Liu Tseng-kuei draw heavily on these new sources, and both authors agree that they are, to cite Liu's conclusion, "the complex product of popular belief and the theory of interaction between heaven and humans." That is, they very clearly belong to their times, when widely shared—and inevitably elite—theories of the mutual influence (*ganying* 感應) of humans and nature required of people that they adapt their behavior to the natural cycles of seasons and months, but also ensured that, without the help of any religious specialists, people could have a very real impact on their fate. Liu therefore concludes that "people needed only to master its rules in order to enjoy space to act and to choose whether to go toward or to avoid. They could even use methods that converted the inauspicious into the auspicious." Poo ends on a very similar note: "What this entails is the assumption that certain material objects and bodily postures and actions possess an innate power, as though they are

a part of the world order that need only be appropriated and utilized by human beings." As texts which "empower" human beings to deal with the unknown and the potentially dangerous, it does not seem excessive to apply to them the term "humanistic."

The readers of Poo and Liu will discover the extraordinary anthropological wealth of the daybooks and related source materials. What we should like to underline here is the links between these chapters and those on mythology, shamanism, medicine and tombs. Yu appears frequently in the daybooks as a model: to be imitated by travellers and avoided by those about to marry. The Red Emperor (Lord), who is probably identical to the Fiery Emperor mentioned by Lewis and Kalinowski, is a god in charge of punishment, so on days when he "approaches"—descends to earth—people should stay home and avoid purposeful activities. Seven days before the annual sacrifice to all gods in the eighth month, people should not visit families who were in mourning or where a child had just been born. There were taboos on pronouncing the word "death" or "to die," and graves were called "homes for ten thousand years." Avoidance of the death date and name of the deceased were already generalized, and this at once ensured the divine status of the dead and kept them at a distance: "The living belong to Chang'an, the dead to Taishan." Days to avoid planting are the death days of such gods as those of the fields and the master of rain. Shamanizing cannot be done on the five *chou* 丑 days because on them the Lord of Heaven (Tiandi 天帝) killed the divine shaman Wuxian. Being the height of *yang* 陽, which was poisonous—Li Jianmin cites Wang Chong to the effect that ghosts (*gui* 鬼) are *yangqi, yang* energies, and notes that many diseases were related to heat—the fifth month was a bad month, with many taboos: against giving birth, roofing a house or taking office. The fifth day of that month was the most dangerous of all, an occasion for Nuo 儺 exorcisms. After examining other festivals, Liu concludes as follows:

> It would seem, then, that, contrary to the popular image, Han festivals were not at all about carnival-like joy for a good year. Seen through the lens of the taboos, it was about being careful to the utmost lest one commit a fault. Festivals were times of crisis, and the taboos were rules for getting through the narrows. Not only did people worship the gods with sacrifices at this time, they often avoided disaster by not going outdoors and did their best not to disturb the *yin, yang* and five agent energies. This is reminiscent of the way the Han handled natural catastrophes. For example, on the two solstices, officials did not handle public work and military movements were halted.

This, too, is what has traditionally been referred to as "Han rationalism."

The discovery of tens of thousands of Qin and Han tombs and the painstaking work of archaeologists on these tombs has contributed substantially to our understanding of the importance of the funerary culture of the early empires. As Michèle Pirazzoli-t'Serstevens puts it, "We may say that the tombs, their décor and their furnishings together constitute a compendium of the cosmological beliefs, the conceptions and the rites linked to death, but also of the myths, divinities and demons that peopled the Han imaginary world." Like the study of political institutions, that of funerary culture identifies the last century of Western Han as a major turning point, with the appearance of the custom of burying husband and wife in the same tomb and the emergence of the house-tomb—purely symbolic until the 2nd century BC—as the universal mode of sepulture. What the latter implied in religious terms was the primacy of tomb over ancestral temple and of the individual over the clan: what more telling illustration could be found of the dramatic changes that had occurred in Chinese society?—the collapse of Zhou rites and music gave way not just to a bureaucratic empire ruled by a mystified Son of Heaven, but also to a world of individuals whose memory could be perpetuated as had been, in the past, that of founder ancestors like Houji or sage kings like Yu. This is, therefore, the time to refer to the invention of the biography by Sima Qian 司馬遷 (ca. 145–90 BC) which, according to Yuri Pines, "epitomizes a change of mentality from the lineage-oriented to an individual-oriented notion of continuity and immortality." To Sima Qian, who in his autobiography compares himself to Confucius, it was also about the righting of injustice: the historian, by his judgments, could reverse the injustices of history. In sum, the new literary genre conjoined concerns about justice and immortality, ethics and "survival."

The historian's cult of immortality, if to some degree rooted in the same world of self-cultivation as that of the more explicitly religious immortals, was also quite clearly the tardy offspring of the culture of memory described by Martin Kern for the Western Zhou. The oldest representations of religious immortals occur in the tombs of Mawangdui, where they are pictured in swirling clouds that represent *qi*. Their iconography has matured by the end of the Western Han, when they are typically shown riding a dragon, with wings and big ears, surrounded by clouds and fantastic animals. They also appear on mirrors whose inscriptions describe them as "roaming through the empire and wandering among the four seas." In the 2nd century AD, they appear

with Xiwangmu 西王母 and Dongwanggong 東王公. Xiwangmu is well known from texts of the 2nd century BC as the goddess of the paradisiac Mount Kunlun 崑崙 in the distant west. In his chapter on religious mass movements in the Eastern Han, Grégoire Espesset recalls the earliest known such movement, in 3 BC, when people set out en masse from Shandong to go to the Western paradise of Xiwangmu. In tomb decorations, she appears first in tombs in Henan right around the beginning of our era. From there, her image gradually diffuses, reaching its heyday in the 2nd century, when she is shown from the front, majestic and seated on a mountain, sometimes with immortals and the gates of paradise to either side.

The impact of cosmological notions becomes clear in tombs of the Eastern Han. The tumulus covering imperial tombs, for example, went from rectangular (earth) in the Western to round (heaven) in the Eastern Han. What Pirazzoli calls a "cosmological program" takes over the tombs of the metropolitan region from 50 BC on, and the tomb becomes a kind of cosmic mandala, surrounded and protected by the heraldic animals of the four directions. Celestial symbols such as the sun and moon, in swirling *qi*, appear on the ceiling from the end of the Western Han. But stars give way in the 2nd century AD to heavenly deities and auspicious signs, with an increase in anthropomorphic gods: personified representations of the gods of thunder and lightning, wind and rain, who also had a place on the altar of the Eastern Han imperial sacrifice to Heaven, no doubt in tablet form, however. All depend on the Lord of Heaven (Tiandi), whose messengers they are. Like Taiyi in the Han, this Lord of Heaven is linked to the Big Dipper, which on occasion serves as his chariot. The prevalence of Xiwangmu (west) in the company of her rather unimpressive "mate," Dongwanggong (east), in 2nd century AD tombs is likewise a reflection of the rising impact of cosmological thinking.

The Eastern Han is also marked by the generalization of the catacomb-tomb, a structure made of small bricks or stone which could be reopened either to bury another person or to conduct regular worship. This may be partly responsible for the exorcistic texts called *xiaochuwen* 消除文 that appear in a limited number of tombs in Shaanxi and Henan in the years 92–190 AD, with the peak occurring 156–90. They refer to the need to prevent the living from being "contaminated" (*zhu* 注) by the dead, and to the exorcist as the "messenger of the Lord of Heaven" (*tiandi shizhe* 天帝使者). The *hun*-souls 魂 are said to go to Liangfu, near Taishan, which becomes the capital of the dead, while the

po-souls 魄 go either to the Yellow Springs or to Haolishan, at the foot of Taishan. Together with the paradise of Xiwangmu, suggests Pirazzoli, these texts "express the eschatological preoccupations of the period and, more generally, the religious anxiety that characterized the 'disordered landscape' of north and central China at the end of the Han."

Another feature of this period is the spread throughout China of the commemorative stele described by K.E. Brashier. Such steles "tied the dedicatee's particular identity into an existing web of cultural symbols...where ancestral cult and public memory overlap." While this mode of recording was perceived by its users as related to the bronze inscriptions of high antiquity, it in fact confirms what we have already observed about the culture of memory in the Western Han biographies. But again there was a difference: the steles were not about righting injustice but about holding up "a model for the age, a pattern for officials." As such, they cannot be separated from the Eastern Han recommendation category "filial and incorrupt" (*xiaolian* 孝廉) as a means to acquire office and what Pirazzoli refers to as the "institutionalization of filial piety" at the end of the Han. One of the more interesting features of these steles is the genealogies they contain, which usually mention a distant first ancestor, then jump to ego's near ascendants: "Such a division of ancestors seems parallel to the ancestral cult ideal in which a distant clan progenitor was worshipped at the head of the hall whereas the more recent ascendants were represented on either side." Common elements in the biographies—a great Heaven-conferred disposition, mastery of a classical text, recommendation as "filial and incorrupt," and withdrawal from office to mourn parents—reveal the degree to which Confucian values had come to dominate elite discourse and, no doubt, practice. The stele for a woman emphasizes her being the mother of a lineage and her "ritual service for more than 30 years." All three steles studied by Brashier compare their subjects to figures of the classical past: the Duke of Zhou, the dynastic mothers of Shang and Zhou and Yan Hui.

In his survey of Eastern Han mass religious movements, including that of the Heavenly Masters destined to become the core of religious Daoism, Grégoire Espesset proposes the following hypothesis:

> There must be a connection between such phenomena as the "ethicization" of the religion of the elite and the massive expansion of popular religious activities on the one hand, and the strengthening of a body of canonical learning and the emergence of alternative forms of knowledge on the other.

By "alternative forms of knowledge" Espesset means the so-called *chenwei* "weft" or "apocryphal" texts, but also the sudden appearance of revealed texts like the *Taiping jing* 太平經 (*Scripture of Great Peace*). A first example of these links is the rebels of the Yellow Turban revolt of 184 AD who "liken the Dao of their leader to the Great One of central yellow (Zhonghuang Taiyi 中黃太一)"—a clear indication of the degree to which a popular mass movement had incorporated elements we have encountered in the context of elite religion and thought: Taiyi and the yellow center. Referring to the stele inscription which mentions visualization of Taiyi by adepts, Espesset links it to an *Annals* weft text which "regards the Great One as 'the seat of the Heavenly Emperor of the North Pole,' that is, another central and pivotal location. In addition, the fragment states that Taiyi's radiance contains 'primordial pneuma.'"

In short, beginning with the movement involving Xiwangmu in 3 BC, these new religious forms are in no way resurgences of local cults to anthropomorphic gods. They are thoroughly "modern" movements, rooted in now centuries-old self-cultivation practices and contemporary cosmology and speculation. They are at once reflections of a bureaucratic empire in which clan solidarity and ancestor worship had at least in part given way to the worship of immortals and sage kings and of the "eschatological preoccupations" generated by the gradual disintegration of the empire in the 2nd century AD. Nowhere is all this clearer than in the *Scripture of Great Peace*: "In the weft fragments, Great Peace is a positive characteristic of an idealized early Zhou dynasty." Given the wide variety of such groups, Espesset prefers to avoid speaking of them as "Daoist," but "all had bureaucratic, imperial institution-influenced organizations and vocabulary."

If we have placed Li Jianmin's chapter at the end of these volumes, it is because his examination of 2nd century AD changes in medical theory leads him naturally to look beyond the collapse of the Han in 220 AD and into the Period of Disunion. Li notes that the *Shennong bencao jing* 神農本草經 (*Materia medica of the Divine Farmer*), "from around the Eastern Han period integrated the theory of *qi*, centered on wind, with the theory of demonic haunting." No fewer than 50 substances in this *Materia medica* have to do with such haunting (*sui* 祟):

> Particularly noteworthy is the fact that diseases of demonic haunting like ghost infixation (*guizhu* 鬼疰) are most common…Ghost infixation is a disease that was passed on from a dead person to a living person through contagion by hidden corpse *qi*, in severe cases to the point of killing off entire households.

Li then looks at the *Scripture of Great Peace*, with its notion of "inherited burden" (*chengfu* 承負), according to which "unceasing disease was the result of sins committed by the ancestors." For Li, these are notions characteristic of the late Eastern Han that reflected a social order once again in decay. Already in a Warring States manuscript, a dead soldier entreats the lord of the underworld Wuyi 武夷君 to allow him to go home to receive his family's sacrificial offerings, and a 239 BC manuscript asks a divine director of destiny to allow a dead person to return from death. But these early glimpses into the spiritual underworld nowhere suggest that the sins of the ancestors could be passed on to future generations. The Han-era *Neijing* 內經 (*Classic of internal medicine*) contains no infixation or corpse disease, but a Sui (589–617) text contains 99 different kinds of such disease! In between, Tao Hongjing 陶弘景 (456–536 AD) distinguishes it as an "internal disease" caused by "outside perversities" (*waixie* 外邪)—ghosts—quite different from "externally arising diseases" caused by wind or cold.

These disparate facts inspire the following thoughts: First, the traditions of moral introspection that had been developed in the self-cultivation texts had provided an opening for a sense of guilt. Second, the ancestors had become individualized along with the rest of society in the Warring States. Third, ancestors were no longer the charismatic founders of states, they were the recently dead of local families. But what the ancestors had lost in political they had gained in psychological power because, the process of interiorization continuing to do its work, it had led to the discovery of the self as a place where ancestral dramas also continued to play themselves out to their inevitable conclusions: justice in the form of retribution (*bao* 報) was inevitable. Finally, as we saw above, the discovery of the individual cannot be separated from that of the collectivity: mass peasant armies and warfare; vast, abstract territorial units and their populations; mass religious movements. But the basic social fact of Chinese society remained the family and the clan, and this had been mightily encouraged by the ethics of filial piety and its repeated expression in steles, biographies and the metaphor and attendant rites of the Son of Heaven. Thus when, once again, "the rites were in decay and music in collapse," it took the form of a fixation on death, graves and dead ancestors:

> People's fear of death was such that they needed only to encounter it for the disease to break out. All five types of infixation disease listed above were complicated, persistent and incurable. Once they had broken out, new outbreaks would occur whenever the patient suffering from the disease

> attended a funeral, saw or touched a coffin or corpse or even just smelled corpse *qi*...The art of delivery from infixation, fundamentally different from acumoxa and medicinal therapy, consisted in presenting petitions to confess one's own and one's ancestors' sins...(Infixation disease) was all the more threatening to people because the family was at its core, and the disease attacked and spread within the household.

Thus did religious and social change manifest itself as well in changing medical theory.

In conclusion

In conclusion, we would like to evoke quickly two things: first, the nature of the advances on previous accounts that the essays published here collectively represent; second, the differences of perspective that the various essays embody.

Past accounts of early Chinese religion have tended to present ancestor worship as central and to have linked this to accounts of modern Chinese religion from anthropological sources. Many of the chapters here, but especially those of Eno, Kern, Cook, Levi and Li enable us to give a nuanced historical gradation to this account and, above all, to see early Chinese ancestor worship for what it was: an expression of political power and legitimacy that was by definition sumptuary and therefore emphatically not an integral part of some kind of universal, unchanging Chinese religion. The gradual recovery of the constantly evolving historical record—both through new materials and through new ways of reading the old materials—enables us to see why the *Book of rites* declared, famously, that "the rites do not go down to the people." The rites of ancestral sacrifice will not go legally down to the people until the mid-Ming.[7]

If for the Western Zhou we have virtually no sources for anything other than ancestor worship, and if for the Shang the sources provide glimpses of a complex array of non ancestor gods for only one reign, that of Wu-ding, Kominami reminds us that the worship of the earth god existed already in the Shang as well, and Cook shows how this worship developed at the end of the Zhou. The *Zhouli* 周禮 (*Rites of Zhou*)

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[7] See David Faure, *Emperor and ancestor: state and lineage in South China* (Stanford, 2007).

gives classic expression to the relationship between the ancestral temple (*miao* 廟) and the earth god altar (*tan* 壇) in state religion by placing them respectively to the left (east, *yang*, rising sun: lineage continuity and life) and right (west, *yin*, setting sun: war and death) of the palace, as institutions representative of the civil and military components of the state.[8] It is these complementary institutions which may be shown to have survived and remained fundamental to the practice of religion in China, even on the village level and right down to the recent past. They may also be contrasted as expressions of time as lineage verticality and of space as territorial horizontality.[9] Together, they provide concrete and practical ways of thinking about space and time in Chinese terms that are at once social and historical.

The third point worth underlining is the notion of "religion" itself that this book, with its multiplicity of disciplinary approaches, assumes, namely, that religion is more about the structuring values and practices of a given society than about the beliefs of individuals. The place allotted the individual is in any case of necessity small for the early period of Chinese history, for want of sources. Here, it is only in the chapters of Graziani and Csikszentmihàlyi on self-cultivation that, timidly, the individual practitioner appears—and we learn that the aim of such individual practice is to interiorize traditional ritual attitudes or to become a sovereign subject in union with an impersonal Dao. But most of the chapters in these volumes are about religion as a social and political force, organizing the state and social memory by means of ritual practices and in accord with changing values. In such a resolutely anthropological perspective, the taboos studied by Liu Tseng-kuei and clearly practiced by a wide range of people over centuries are every bit as interesting as the restless search of Han emperors for an appropriate form of supreme sacrifice.

Fourth, by organizing these volumes as part of a larger project that stretches from the first written records in ca. 1250 BC down to the reunification of the empire in 589 AD, we have committed ourselves to standing back from the detail in order to see the patterns of long-term

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[8] See Edouard Chavannes, "Appendice: Le dieu du sol dans la Chine ancienne," p. 511, in *Le T'ai-chan: essai de monographie d'un culte chinois* (Paris, 1910), pp. 437–525.

[9] Cf. the chapter of Martin Kern: "As the king received his mandate from the spirits and extended it downward to his officials, he received their reports and presented his political and military feats both 'vertically' to his ancestors and 'horizontally' to his political community."

change. We have already mentioned how Li Jianmin's article points toward the disjointed future that will be the subject of the next two volumes. This reminds us that the larger project is less about some stable system we might call "early Chinese religion" than it is about the periodic collapse of such systems and how, from the disassembled fragments of the old something radically new is laboriously constructed, thus providing a social and psychological foundation for the next phase of political integration. In the pages above, we have isolated rationalization and interiorization as the two fundamental strategies of the practice of reconstruction. We apply them here to our analysis of the central period of historical change covered by these volumes: the Warring States. The two volumes to come will apply them to the next period of political disarray, the Six Dynasties.

Finally, a word needs to be said about differences in method and perspectives. Two basic approaches that some consider incompatible are present in the essays published here: the historical/material and the anthropological/ideational. The most determinedly historical/material approaches are quite logically those of the archaeologists, for the discipline of archaeology consists in constant training in patience, in not rushing to judgment, in trying to let new materials speak for themselves as much as possible rather than forcing them into a pre-existent theory. Given the ever-growing impact of archaeology on the field of ancient China studies, it should hardly come as a surprise that this same prudential attitude often characterizes essays that use the new manuscript materials. It is to this necessary prudence that we have spoken above in our methodological introduction. On the other end of the scale are chapters by authors like Kominami and Levi: the first makes use of a traditional philological approach that reads texts of widely different periods as part of a single "book"; the second makes use of recent anthropologically inspired studies of sacrifice in ancient Greece to read texts such as the *Rites of Zhou* that all agree are late idealizations but that Levi parses anew in order to find his sociological way back into the heart of early Zhou ancestral sacrifice. Whether or not the audacious conclusions of these two authors win widespread acceptance, there can be no doubt but that their ideas merit the debates they will inevitably occasion.

A second major fault line that runs through the chapters in these two volumes is that between those who, at one level or another, continue to subscribe to a more or less traditional notion of pre-imperial schools of thought and those who have set out quite determinedly to deconstruct

this idea as a projection of Western Han views onto the pre-imperial record.[10] If we have sought out contributions from representatives of both approaches, it is because we believe their very incompatibility will serve as a salutary reminder to all readers that, in the human sciences, we are always and ever in the realm of interpretation.

[10] See Mark Csikszentmihàlyi and Michael Nylan, "Constructing lineages and inventing traditions in the *Shiji*," *T'oung Pao* 89 (2003), 59–99.

SHANG AND WESTERN ZHOU (1250–771 BC)

SHANG STATE RELIGION AND THE PANTHEON OF THE ORACLE TEXTS

Robert Eno

Introduction

The earliest voice that speaks to us from the Chinese past is the voice of the Shang 商 dynasty oracle texts, divination records inscribed on animal bones and shells by mantic specialists in the service of the kings and princes of the late Shang royal house. Their earliest words date from about 1250 BC, and the oracle texts are virtually the only written legacy of any Chinese era before the armies of the Zhou 周 brought the Shang dynasty to an end about 1046 BC.[1] For this reason, we tend to see the Shang as ancestral to the culture of later eras and to search its texts for clues to the origins of Chinese religion. The goal of this chapter is to compose an outline portrait of Shang "state religion" and its pantheon of deities, and the interest of this exercise naturally relates to the position of the Shang as China's first historically documented state.

But there are at least three respects in which we must be cautious when we approach this project. One of these pertains to the nature of the oracle texts themselves. The texts are entirely concerned with matters whose divination was of moment to the Shang ruling elite, but that does not mean that all the religious features they reveal should be considered part of a state religion. While some aspects may principally

[1] A small number of brief inscriptions on bronze vessels begin to appear in the early 11th century BC, and an even smaller corpus of 11th century non-Shang oracle texts, discussed below, has been found at sites of the predynastic Zhou. While these sources are important, they are dwarfed by over a million micro-texts in the Shang oracle corpus.

For convenience, I will use dates proposed by the recent Xia-Shang-Zhou Chronology Project (Xia-Shang-Zhou duandai gongcheng zhuanjiazu 夏商周斷代工程專家組, *Xia-Shang-Zhou duandai gongcheng 1996–2000 nian jieduan chengguo baogao* 夏商周斷代工程 1996–2000 年階段成果報告 [Beijing, 2000], pp. 86–88). These dates continue to provoke strong debate among scholars, and no proposed dates for China prior to 841 BC may yet be considered authoritative. In recognition of this, all such dates are marked *circa*. Exceptionally, Chinese characters are included in the references in this chapter (note of the editors).

reflect state functions, other aspects clearly pertain to lineage or personal practice that was likely general among the Shang elite, or even the non-elite. The distinctions among these dimensions are not clear; we can neither identify the evidence of the oracle texts with "Shang religion" as a general category, nor, because the perspective of the texts is confined to the royal house, exclude particular aspects from a portrait of state religion.

Secondly, in analyzing state religion, we must begin by admitting that the nature of the Shang state is itself poorly understood. Monumental royal tombs, stocked with Bronze Age wealth and scores of victims slaughtered in *en suite* burial, testify to the enormous power commanded by the Shang ruler in a stratified society of sharp class distinctions. The complexity of settlement patterns and military activities coordinated with remote garrisons indicate a high degree of functional specialization and territorial control characteristic of advanced states. But the oracle texts indicate that the late Shang state did not possess territorial integrity, relied for military action on allies as much as subordinates, and apparently required that the ruler frequently tour a vast geographic range of places to maintain the political integrity of the state. We need to bear in mind how these ambiguities in our understanding of the nature of the Shang state may affect our interpretation of what constitutes "state religion" in the oracle record.[2]

Finally, we need to be critical in assessing how features of Shang religion may be ancestral to later religious traditions, and wary of projecting into the texts later concepts in whose origins we may be interested. China came late to writing, and the Shang, which established dynastic power about 1600 BC, was preceded by a range of cultures, known through the archaeological record. During the 3rd millennium BC, some of these exhibit a scale of material distinctiveness, urbanization and social complexity that suggests development toward state formation and regional civilization.[3] These early civilizations cannot speak to us,

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[2] The most detailed exploration of the nature of the Shang state is David Keightley's "The late Shang state: when, where, and what?" in Keightley, ed., *The origins of Chinese civilization* (Berkeley, 1983), pp. 523–64, which focuses on the lack of territorial contiguity. More recently, Robin Yates has explored this issue with reference to the concept of the city-state ("The city-state in ancient China," in Deborah Nichols and Thomas Charlton, eds, *The archaeology of city-states: cross cultural approaches* [Washington, 1997], pp. 71–90), and a useful overview of relevant scholarship appears in Li Liu and Xingcan Chen, *State formation in early China* (London, 2003), pp. 15–25.

[3] The broad "urban revolution" of the 3rd millennium BC is described in Xiaoneng

but it is clear that they were not all subsumed within the Shang state, and it is likely that important religious and intellectual traditions we encounter in later texts may be the legacies of other traditions as old or older than the Shang and independent of it. When we look to the oracle texts for information about China's religious past, we must bear in mind that the Shang may be only one of many ancestors of Chinese civilization. Before turning to the oracle texts directly, I would like to explore this last issue in more detail.

The pluralistic model of Chinese cultural origins

Traditionally, the origins of Chinese civilization were analyzed in terms of a linear model dating back to the *Shiji* 史記 (Records of the historian), China's earliest historical narrative, completed by Sima Qian 司馬遷 at the turn of the 1st century BC. Significant stages of development were linked to a series of universal dynasties, the Xia 夏, Shang and Zhou, all of which flourished in China's Central Plain (Zhongyuan 中原) region. Even after the advent of archaeological research in China during the early 20th century began to reveal culturally idiosyncratic sites of significant social complexity in other regions, the model of hegemonic Central Plain civilizations remained dominant. The linear model tends to create high expectations that Shang oracle texts may exemplify in incipient form a very broad range of religious elements typical of later Chinese ideologies.

First recognition of the importance of addressing questions of cultural evolution in a pluralistic framework emerged in the late 1970s, and is generally attributed to the archaeologist Su Bingqi 蘇秉琦. His approach has resulted in a portrait of China during the Neolithic and early Bronze Age that envisions a number of cultural macro-regions.[4] In

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Yang, "Urban revolution in late prehistoric China," in Xiaoneng Yang, ed., *New perspectives on China's past: Chinese archaeology in the twentieth century* (New Haven, 2004), vol. 1, pp. 99–143.

[4] The general impact of Su's ideas on the field are surveyed in essays collected in Su Bai 宿白, ed., *Su Bingqi yu dangdai Zhongguo kaoguxue* 蘇秉琦與當代中國考古學 (Beijing, 2001), especially Wang Tao 汪濤, "Chuangjian Zhongguo kaogu xuepai—Jian tan xifang kaogujie dui Su Bingqi xueshu sixiang de renshi" 創建中國考古學派—兼談西方考古界對蘇秉琦學術思想的認識 (pp. 30–36). See also, Yan Wenming, "The cradle of Eastern civilization," in Xiaoneng Yang, ed., *New perspectives on China's past*, vol. 1, pp. 49–50, 57. Kwang-Chih Chang notes the impact of Su's ideas on revisions of his own standard textbook on Chinese archaeology in "China on the eve of the historical

an adaptation of Su's model, Zhao Hui 趙輝 suggests that a fundamental change in the dynamic between the Yellow River Valley and surrounding regions occurred during the 3rd millennium BC. On the basis of pottery typologies, Zhao suggests that in earlier eras, the dominant Yangshao 仰韶 culture of the Central Plain exercised a radiating influence, at least in terms of material culture, but that this direction reversed with the rise of certain dynamic cultures outside the Central Plains region.[5] Most prominent among these rising cultures was the Liangzhu 良渚 culture of the Yangzi delta region. The Liangzhu case can serve as an example of some central problems in the interpretation of Shang data.

Liangzhu culture, dated ca. 3300–2000 BC, developed on the basis of dynamic precursor cultures in a region of plentiful resources. It is best known for finely carved jades that were buried in exceptionally lavish tombs located on hills that were partially man made. Excavation of sites surrounding these tombs reveals large settlements that include networks of walls and moats that divide the settlement into districts surrounding a central core of "palace" and "altar" foundations, leading to comparisons with Aztec civilization.[6] From an early stage Liangzhu culture exhibits strong tendencies toward social stratification that culminate in features such as monumental tombs and human victims associated with their burials. As described by Shuo Zhi 朔知, stratification includes networks of settlements that appear configured for military security as well as elite control.[7] Late in the culture's development, there is a shift of central place and the establishment of what appears to be a large garrison enclave, itself exhibiting social stratification, on the northern bound of the culture's influence. Shuo concludes that these phenomena indicate a 3rd millennium BC polity that exhibits structures of centralization, nodal settlement and border defense characteristic of a territorial state.[8]

period," in Michael Loewe and Edward L. Shaughnessy, eds, *The Cambridge history of ancient China* (Cambridge, Eng., 1999) [hereafter, *Cambridge history*], pp. 57–58.

[5] Zhao Hui, "Yi Zhongyuan wei zhongxin de lishi qushi de xingcheng" 以中原爲中心的歷史趨勢的形成, *Wenwu* 文物 2000.1, pp. 43–45.

[6] Dong Guangjin 東廣錦, "Liangzhu wenhua gucheng guguo yanjiu" 良渚文化古城古國研究, *Dongnan wenhua* 東南文化 1994.5, pp. 50–57.

[7] This description is based on Shuo Zhi, "Liangzhu wenhua de chubu fenxi" 良渚文化的初步分析, *Kaogu xuebao* 2000.4, pp. 421–50.

[8] Shuo Zhi, "Liangzhu wenhua," p. 444. It is tempting to view the Liangzhu culture, with its broad regional reach over territories that seem subject to political coordination from a series of central places, as a "civilization," in Norman Yoffee's sense of an ideology and culture for which the sustaining of a state is its principal *raison d'être* (*Myths of the archaic state: evolution of the earliest cities, states, and civilizations* [Cambridge, Eng., 2004], p. 17).

Its material influence, in the form of jade working, is felt far into the Chinese interior, and its decorative motifs are widely seen as ancestral to far later Shang bronze forms.[9]

Liangzhu culture disappears from the archaeological record quite suddenly, and the successor culture that comes to occupy the Yangzi delta region exhibits none of the advanced features of the Liangzhu polity. Virtually simultaneous, the established Longshan 龍山 culture that had spread over the 3rd millennium from Shandong through the Central Plain left the Shandong region, directly north of the Liangzhu cultural horizon, to be replaced by a culture exhibiting far fewer features of development toward state structure.[10] Shortly thereafter, in the Central Plain, the archaeological Erlitou 二里頭 culture that is widely viewed as the historical Xia 夏 dynasty emerges.[11]

The issue for the interpretation of Shang culture is this: If polities already exhibiting features of territorial states were well established in regions marginal to the development of early states in the Central Plain, what necessity would there be for the sophisticated elements of culture, including religious traditions, to reach or have major impact on the Shang in order for them to emerge independently at a later time?

The regions ultimately evacuated by the Liangzhu and Shandong Longshan cultures came to be viewed by the Shang and the succeeding Zhou 周 dynasty (ca. 1046–256 BC) as the domain of various groups of the Yi 夷 people, a linguistically distinct group resistant to the political and cultural hegemony of Central Plain cultures through a long period of gradual assimilation, ongoing until the Qin unification of 221 BC.[12] Many religious innovations of the final centuries of

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[9] Lothar von Falkenhausen, "Review: Wu Hung, *Monumentality in early Chinese art and architecture*," *Early China* 21 (1996), p. 187.

[10] See Yu Weichao's 余偉超 precis, "Longshan wenhua yu Liangzhu wenhua shuaibian de aomi" 龍山文化與良渚文化衰變的奧秘, *Wenwu tiandi* 文物天地 1992.3, pp. 27–28.

[11] The relation of the extinction of the Liangzhu and Shandong Longshan cultures to the establishment of the Erlitou Culture is unresolved. Chen Shengyong 陳剩永, relying on a speculative mix of correspondences in material remains and associations of the putative Xia founder Yu 禹 with the Yangzi delta, has argued that the Central Plains Xia was precisely the removed Liangzhu state (*Zhongguo diyi wangchao de jueqi* 中國第一王朝的崛起 [Changsha, 1994]).

The historicity of the Xia and the identification of the archaeological Erlitou Culture with the Xia Dynasty is a hotly debated topic. I am not qualified to enter that debate, and in maintaining an agnostic approach, I am refraining from specifying for the Xia absolute dates determined by the Xia-Shang-Zhou Chronology Project.

[12] My association of the Yi of Shandong with the cultures of the Yangzi delta is based on analysis developed in Chia-li Luo, "Coastal culture and religion in early China: a

this period, such as those associated with the rise of *fangshi* 方士 and "five forces" cosmologies, and the articulation of complex mythologies of cultural origins coincide with increased contacts with these regions, particularly the Yangzi delta, and given the sparse evidence that these religious elements played an earlier role in the cultural horizon of the Central Plain, we may need to look to Yi cultures associated with none of the "Three Dynasties" for their ancestral forms, rather than to Shang oracle texts.[13]

This does not mean that Shang state religion may not exemplify the elements of later religious traditions; it does mean that to assert a strong claim for identification of these elements must involve critical analysis and a high threshold of evidence. As we will see in our discussion of Shang religion, claims that individual spirits noted in oracle texts correspond to figures from later myths are frequently asserted with great strength, and the same sometimes holds true for assertions about detected seeds of *yin-yang* or five elements thought.[14] Some of these strong claims rest on strong evidence, but most should probably be asserted with caution. The larger part of what we need to know to describe how Shang religion relates to later ideology likely lies beyond the information we now possess.

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study through comparison with the Central Plain region," PhD dissertation (Indiana University, 1999), pp. 51–67. For a warning against using the term Yi anachronistically prior to the Zhou, and for the possibility that the origins of the Shang lay in Shandong regions ascribed to the Yi, see David Cohen, "The Yueshi culture: the Dong Yi, and the archaeology of ethnicity in Early Bronze Age China," PhD dissertation (Harvard University, 2001), pp. 4–12. Naturally, if the Shang were derived from a context that generated the Yi culture (a theory first developed by Fu Sinian 傅斯年), this specific example would not apply.

[13] I have sketched the case for this speculative argument in, "Selling sagehood: the philosophical marketplace in early China," in Kenneth Lieberthal et al., ed., *Constructing China: the interaction of culture and economics* (Ann Arbor, 1997), pp. 72–73. On the difficulty of correlating Shang data to later ideology, see Aihe Wang, *Cosmology and political culture in early China* (Cambridge, Eng., 2000), pp. 24–5.

[14] The tendency to employ late mythology to interpret archaeologically recovered data is pervasive in studies of the Chinese Neolithic and Early Bronze Age. See Li Liu, *The Chinese neolithic: trajectories to early states* (Cambridge, Eng., 2004), pp. 9–10.

Approaching Shang oracle texts

The field of oracle bone studies tends to be highly specialized, in part because reading the texts requires specialized training and the volume of texts to be explored is very large, but also because the Shang art of divination by bone and shell involved many facets, each subject to elucidation by modern technical scholarship. Histories of the field of oracle bone scholarship have been numerous in China since 1955, when Dong Zuobin 董作賓 published a monograph recounting the first 50 years of oracle text studies. The 1999 publication of *Jiaguxue yibainian*, many times the size of Dong's book, is a measure of the growth of the field.[15] Dong was also the author of the first systematic overview of the texts, organizing them chronologically and building structures to allow systematic analysis in his 1945 work, *Yin lipu* 殷曆譜.[16] Among the most influential texts that followed were Chen Mengjia's 陳夢家 *Yinxu buci zongshu* 殷墟卜辭綜述 in 1956 and Shima Kunio's 島邦男 *Inkyo bokuji kenkyū* 殷墟卜辭研究 in 1958.[17] In the West, the indispensable tool that has educated scholars in the field has been David Keightley's 1978 monograph, *Sources of Shang history.*[18]

Before we examine the evidence of the texts concerning Shang state religion, we will summarize some broad recent trends in the larger field of early China studies and look at some basic formal features of the oracle texts themselves.

Scholarly context and recent developments

Two major issues have tended to dominate the direction of scholarly debate in the early China field in recent years: the relationship between

[15] Wang Yuxin 王宇信 and Yang Shengnan 楊升南, eds, *Jiaguxue yibainian* 甲骨學一百年 (Beijing, 1999).

[16] Dong Zuobin, *Yin lipu* (Lizhuang, Sichuan, 1945).

[17] Chen Mengjia, *Yinxu buci zongshu* (Beijing, 1956); Shima Kunio, *Inkyo bokuji kenkyū* (Hirosaki-shi, 1958).

[18] David N. Keightley, *Sources of Shang history: the oracle bone inscriptions of Bronze Age China* (Berkeley, 1978). Robert Thorpe has noted in a recently published book that generations of students of the oracle texts have been trained by Keightley through this text (*China in the Early Bronze Age: Shang civilization* [Philadelphia, 2006], p. 271). As will be evident in the citation pattern of this chapter, Keightley's many works have laid foundations for scholarship in virtually every area of the field.

archaeologically recovered data and the accounts of historical texts, and the chronology of Chinese history prior to 841 BC, which has long been unsettled and a frequent field of study.

I have already raised some issues connected to the interpretation of archaeologically recovered evidence through the lens of later sources; scholarship of the past decade has focused on a specific aspect of that relationship, pertaining to the dating of received texts used in such interpretations. In this regard, the dominant position in the early China field from the second quarter of the 20th century was occupied by a school of thought known as *yigu* 疑古, or "doubting antiquity," characterizing a skeptical view holding that most received accounts of the distant past were in fact post-Qin fabrications or deliberate distortions, serving various interests of their authors or of the imperial state.[19]

In recent decades, accelerating during the 1990s and the current decade, archaeologists have found in pre-imperial tombs dated as early as the 4th century BC caches of texts that match received versions that the *yigu* approach had maintained to be of much later date. The cumulative force of these discoveries has been to raise the credibility of attempts to interpret archaeologically recovered evidence in terms of the historical outlines drawn in received texts. The 1995 publication by Li Xueqin 李學勤—perhaps the most influential scholar of early China in the People's Republic of China—of the book *Zouchu yigu shidai* 走出疑古時代, or "coming out from the era of doubting antiquity," signaled that the skeptical methodology of mid-20th century scholarship was no longer a dominant trend in China.[20]

Li Xueqin has also been the central name in the second major preoccupation of the field: settling controversies over the absolute dating of

[19] Leading names associated with the rise of this view are Gu Jiegang 顧頡剛 in China and Bernhard Karlgren in the West.

[20] Li Xueqin, *Zouchu yigu shidai* (Shenyang, 1995). Li's book is basically a collection of previously published studies, but the lead essay, which shares the title of the book, constitutes a manifesto rejecting as passé the methodologies of the *yigu* approach. This paradigm shift, if it may be so termed, has had varying impact outside of China, and some scholars in the West remain wary of correlations between archaeological evidence and the testimony of received texts. For a pronounced example, see Robert Bagley, "Shang archaeology," in *Cambridge history*, pp. 124–231. In practice, the discipline and persuasiveness of such correlations must be assessed individually, based on rigor of argumentation and the degree to which claims are asserted with certainty matching the strength of evidence presented. However, researchers trained in the *yigu* approach, of which I am one, can no longer dismiss the evidence of received texts on the basis of a presumed late date of composition.

the Xia, Shang, Zhou dynastic sequence. The nature of this work divides into two facets: the impact on the field of the Chinese government's commissioning of the research as a government-sponsored project, involving scores of scholars under deadline to produce an absolute chronology within a short time frame, and the acrimonious debate that has ensued over the specific chronology that the project adopted.

Ironically, one of the key texts that has been used in support of the rejection of the *yigu* approach—the *Zhushu jinian* 竹書紀年, a chronicle recording events from the reign of the Yellow Emperor through about 300 BC, whose redactions were long thought spurious but which contemporary scholarship has proved highly useful—has been at the center of attacks on the Xia-Shang-Zhou project's method and outcome, since the dating offered in the *Zhushu jinian* text was largely bypassed.[21]

It would not be appropriate to ignore one other broad development in the field that has had a major impact on oracle bone scholarship. Since the 1970s and accelerating in recent years, the archaeological recovery of a very large corpus of Warring States and early Han manuscripts written on bamboo, silk and wood, has created increasing interest in paleographic studies, and this has benefited the field of oracle bone studies, where new materials have not been frequently added to the existing corpus, and also Zhou bronze studies, where new inscriptions continue to be published in great numbers. The recent translation into English of Qiu Xigui's 裘錫圭 massive 1988 text on paleographic principles and methods, *Wenzixue gaiyao* 文字學概要 is a reflection of this trend, which has raised the quality of paleographic work on oracle texts.[22]

Within the field of oracle bone studies, the 1980s produced a wide variety of important collections and indexes that allowed for dramatic acceleration in research, and subsequent years have produced a broad

[21] For the project's proposed chronology, see n. 1. For analysis of the *Zhushu jinian* and its redaction history, see Edward L. Shaughnessy, *Rewriting early Chinese texts* (Albany, 2006), pp. 131–256, and, for its relevance to the departure from the *yigu* paradigm, pp. 257–63. Examples of the use of the text in assailing the chronology project include David S. Nivison, "The Xia-Shang-Zhou chronology project: two approaches to dating," *Journal of East Asian Archaeology* 4.1–4 (2002), pp. 359–366; He Bingdi 何炳棣 and Liu Yu 劉雨, "Xia-Shang-Zhou duandai gongcheng jiben silu zhiyi—Guben 'Zhushu jinian' shiliao jiazhi de zai renshi" 夏商周斷代工程基本思路質疑—古本 "竹書紀年" 史料價值的再認識, *Yanjing xuebao* 燕京學報 n.s. 14 (2003), pp. 1–30.

[22] Qiu Xigui, *Wenzixue gaiyao* (Beijing, 1988; rev. ed., Taipei, 1994); *Chinese writing*, Gilbert Mattos and Jerry Norman, trans. (Berkeley, 2000). It should be added that the proliferation of recovered texts has led to the establishment of important online databases and scholarly sites devoted to these materials and their analysis.

range of topical monographs, as well as plentiful articles in standard archaeological journals and the now-revived occasional journal *Guwenzi yanjiu* 古文字研究.

Two developments in the field are particularly worthy of note. One concerns the resolution of a technical issue of great significance that involves re-dating certain parts of the oracle bone corpus, implying a major re-orientation in our views of the evolving religious ideology of the Shang royal house. The scholarly question and its resolution are discussed later in this chapter; once again, Li Xueqin was at the center of the controversy. After publication of a comprehensive study of this new model by Li and Peng Yushang 彭裕商 in 1996, the field has generally adopted the dating revision proposed by Li.[23]

The other major development that should be noted is the publication of a newly discovered corpus of over 500 inscribed turtle plastrons—excavated in 1991 near the primary site of the late Shang capital—recording divinations apparently made by or on behalf of a prince of the Shang house. These inscriptions greatly add to our ability to analyze Shang religion and society from a perspective different from the Shang king's; because I will introduce them in some detail below, I will postpone further discussion here.

The form of oracle texts[24]

Oracle texts exist as inscriptions on "oracle bones," ox scapulae and turtle shells that were used for divinatory purposes.[25] Virtually all known Shang inscribed oracle bones have been excavated from a region near Anyang, in northeast Henan, which was the site of the last capital of the Shang state, generally referred to as Yinxu 殷墟, occupied as the royal central place from about 1300 BC until the Zhou conquest.[26] Oracle

[23] Li Xueqin and Peng Yushang, *Yinxu jiagu fenqi yanjiu* 殷墟甲古分期研究 (Shanghai, 1996). Li's hypothesis, which pertains to inscriptions of the Li 歷 diviner group, is adopted here.

[24] The brief description that follows does not examine details of material preparation, turtle shell inventory information, and "marginal" text that can provide important additional information. For a careful analysis of these features, see Keightley, *Sources of Shang history*, pp. 6–27.

[25] Exceptional cases of oracle texts inscribed on other types of animal bones are discussed in Wang Yuxin et al., *Jiaguxue yibainian*, pp. 239–43.

[26] The oracle texts refer to the capital site as Dayi Shang 大邑商: "great city of Shang." Yin 殷 appears to be a Zhou name for the Shang people. On the puzzling nature of the Shang capital, see Kwang-Chih Chang, *Shang civilization* (New Haven, 1980), pp. 69–73; Keightley, "The late Shang state," p. 533.

bones are by no means a phenomenon confined to the Shang capital; use of scapulimancy by the broadly dispersed Neolithic Longshan cultures of 3rd millennium BC North China is well documented, and sites associated with the Xia, such as Erlitou, have also yielded many examples. But *inscribed* oracle bones appear to have been an innovation of the late Shang court.

The inscriptions generally record information pertaining to the timing and topic of the divination. They allow us to form a picture of the array of spirits toward which divinations were directed, and reveal much about royal religious practice, as well as a variety of features of late Shang history and society.

Bones and shells used for divination were carefully bored on the reverse side with systematic hollows so that they would crack upon the application of a heated instrument. The shape of the cracks or the sounds made in cracking constituted the data elicited by the diviners. Subsequently, a trained scribe carved on the obverse (and sometimes the reverse) a notation of the issue divined (known as the "charge").

A very large percentage of the oracle texts are structured on the basis of a simple form, including several elements, any of which may fail to be present: a preface, including a date and the name of the individual presiding over the divination act; the charge, that is, the topic of divination; following the charge, there sometimes may be a record of the king's prognostication, and in a subset of these cases, a verification of the ultimate outcome of events (if this element is present, the king's foreknowledge is as a rule confirmed); finally, a postface, noting the time when the divination was made (month of the year or year of the king's reign) and, if the divination was made at a place remote from the capital, a notation of that place, may end the inscription.[27] The vast majority of oracle texts conform to this template, although very few include all of them.

The following text provides an illustration of an oracle text including all these elements:

[27] There are, of course, exceptions. For example, a notation of the place divined may be part of the preface. Other elements, such as numbers sequencing the cracks and notations of whether some were auspicious or endorsed as responses to follow, frequently appear; unless included within the sequence of main elements, I do not treat these as part of the core inscription. On the limits of the generalization that royal prognostications were confirmed see David N. Keightley, "The oracle bone inscriptions of the late Shang state," in Wm. Theodore de Bary and Irene Bloom, eds, *Sources of Chinese tradition* 2nd eds (New York, 1999) vol. 1, pp. 17–20.

1. [癸]亥卜爭貞 / 旬亡禍 / 王𡆥曰有祟 / 旬壬申中師姬 / 四月

Cracking on [*gui*]*hai* day, Zheng divined / about whether the coming
Preface
week would have no disaster. / The King prognosticated saying, "There
Charge Prognostication
will be disaster." / On the week's *renshen* day a disaster occurred at the
Verification
Zhong encampment. / Fourth Month.[28] (*HJ* 5807)
Postface

Note that in the preface, the date is specified according to a Shang formula known later as the "stem-branch" sexagenary system. This system formed a basic grammar of time-keeping in the Shang, preserved in later eras. Included were ten "stem" counters (*jia* 甲, *yi* 乙, *bing* 丙, *ding* 丁, etc.); one cycle of this series formed a ten-day "week." The stems were combined with twelve "branch" counters (*zi* 子, *chou* 丑, *yin* 寅, *mao* 卯, etc.), pairing odd with odd, even with even, to form a cycle of 60 days sorted into ten weeks. In (1), the first graph is missing from the oracle text, but may be identified as *gui* 癸, the final member of the "stem" series, because it was on the last day of the week that divinations concerning the week to come were inevitably made.

The stem counters of the sexagenary system are significant for Shang religion because they served not only to mark time, but also to organize aspects of the royal ancestral temple cult. Each ancestor worshipped was assigned one of the ten stems as a temple title—part of the name by which they are known to history—and we are able to deduce from

[28] The inscription uses three different graphs, each carrying some sense of a negative event. The distinguishing senses among them are unclear, and I have rendered all as "disaster." For the source notation *HJ*, see n. 31. Here, as in all subsequent translations, I render the charge as a notation of the topic of divination, rather than as a question or statement addressed to the spirits. Current practice in China tends to employ the question form, while in the West, statements are more usual (see the symposium on this matter, led by articles by Qiu Xigui and David Nivison, in *Early China* 14 [1989], pp. 77–172). Written charges were not addressed to the spirits, but were generally intended as notation records for the members of the divination workshop (Keightley, *Sources of Shang history*, p. 45; see also the discussion in n. 126). The possibility exists that divination by scapulimancy involved complex liturgical formulas, such as those preserved in texts dating from the Warring States era, that were not represented in the "bureaucratic" notation of the oracle texts (see Zhang Shichao 張世超, "Shi-zu buci zhong jige wenti yinfa de sikao" 𠂤組卜辭中幾個問題引發的思考, *Guwenzi yanjiu* 古文字研究 22 [2002], p. 31).

Oracle text inscriptions bear no marks to indicate how they should be parsed, and interpreters vary in their readings. Texts considered in this chapter will be marked to reflect the readings I have used as the basis of translation.

the oracle texts that there existed a general rule that scheduled cult was offered to ancestors on the days of the week corresponding to their temple names.

Many divinations are found in the form of paired charges, one positive and one negative, often symmetrically cracked and divined on a single bone at a single time. This practice is particularly strong among oracle texts that date from the early portions of the corpus.[29]

Dating the texts

The regularity of oracle text form was extremely helpful in allowing analysts to decipher Shang graphs, and its conventions are critical in addressing issues of dating. Only a few years after the first excavations at Anyang, Dong Zuobin published his finding that it was possible from a variety of clues to sort the oracle texts according to a rough chronology. Using such keys as the names of diviners specified in many oracle texts and references to the ever-expanding array of royal ancestors receiving cult as the generations passed, it was possible to group some texts into products of the reigns of individual kings, and then to assign other examples on the basis of evolving character forms, scribal handwriting and other features.[30]

The periodization of oracle texts reveals substantial changes over the period from the reign of the earliest ruler to have bones inscribed, Wuding 武丁 (r. ca. 1250–1192), to that of the last Shang king, Di-xin 帝辛 (r. ca. 1075–1046), known in later texts by his personal name Zhou 紂. In terms of our interests, these changes include a profound shift in religious practice, as seen in the oracle texts, and in the composition of the Shang pantheon. We will consider these changes and their significance, but initially we will explore the inventory of spirit entities that appears in the oracle texts without reference to them.

[29] Keightley has speculated interestingly on the significance of this paired format and of its less frequent use over time; see "Shang divination and metaphysics," *Philosophy East and West* 38.4 (1988), pp. 373–78, 387–88.

[30] For a full discussion, see Keightley, *Sources of Shang history*, pp. 94–133.

The pantheon in Shang state religion[31]

General structure

The term “Shang pantheon” is used to denote those spirit entities that appear in the oracle texts as objects of sacrifice or as forces whose future intentional actions were topics of divination.[32] While there remain many instances where interpreters differ about whether a particular graph represents a spirit object of sacrifice and, if so, what spirit the graph might represent, the main contours of this pantheon are generally agreed on. In terms of quantity of members and frequency of text concern, this pantheon is unquestionably dominated by the lineal ancestors, distant and near, of the Shang royal house. Pre-dynastic and dynastic Shang kings and their heir-bearing consorts are the spirits of paramount concern in the religion of the oracle texts.

David Keightley has analyzed the membership of the Shang pantheon as including six different types of spirit entities, which Keightley calls “Powers,” a useful term that I will adopt here.[33] Keightley’s categories can be conceptually divided into two levels: (A) those populated by

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[31] The following abbreviations for standard oracle bone references will be used in documenting this discussion:

HJ Guo Moruo 郭沫若, Hu Houxuan 胡厚宣, eds, *Jiaguwen heji* 甲骨文合集, 13 vols (N.p.: Zhonghua shuju, 1978–82) (references are to oracle bone rubbing numbers).

Y Yao Xiaosui 姚孝遂, Xiao Ding 肖丁, eds, *Yinxu jiagu keci leizuan* 殷虛甲骨刻辭類纂, 3 vols (Beijing, 1989) (references are to page and register).

Tunnan Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan kaogusuo 中國社會科學院考古所, *Xiaotun nandi jiagu* 小屯南地甲骨, 2 vols (Shanghai, 1980, 1983) (references are to rubbing numbers, as recorded in *Y*).

White Hsu Chin-hsiung, *Oracle bones from the White and other collections* (Toronto, 1979) (references are to rubbing numbers, as recorded in *Y*).

Ying Li Xueqin 李學勤, Qi Wenxin 齊文心, Ai Lan 艾蘭 (Sarah Allan), eds, *Yingguo suocang jiaguji* 英國所藏甲骨集; *Oracle bone collections in Great Britain* (Beijing, 1985) (references are to rubbing numbers, as recorded in *Y*).

HD Yinxu Huayuanzhuang Dongdi jiagu 殷墟花園莊東地甲骨 [Liu Yiman 劉一曼, Cao Dingyun 曹定雲, eds] (Kunming, 2003) (references are to rubbing numbers; editorial comments cited as *Huayuanzhuang* and page).

[32] The term “pantheon” is misleading if it is construed in parallel to, say, the Greek or Egyptian examples, which include a relatively fixed dramatis super-personae, predictably deployed in myth and art as well as worshipped in cult. Such a Chinese panoply may be suggested by myths recorded in much later documents, but not by the oracle texts. In this context, the term “pantheon” refers only to an inventory of significant spirits implied by oracle text references.

[33] Keightley, “The making of the ancestors: late Shang religion and its legacy,” in *Religion and Chinese society*, John Lagerwey, ed., (Hong Kong, 2004), vol. 1, pp. 5–6. This description tracks very closely a consensus view.

the ancestral members of the core Shang lineage, and (B) those whose members stand in uncertain or no relation to the core Shang lineage. The categories include:[34]

A. Pre-dynastic Kings of the Shang people
   Shang Dynastic Kings
   Heir-producing ancestral consorts
B. "Former Lords": human spirits outside the Shang lineage core
   Nature Powers
   Di 帝, a supreme Power

Among the most fundamental issues in analyzing the religious system of the Shang is how the oracle texts reflect royal association with a universal set of spirit entities that would have enhanced claims of political legitimacy in an ethnically diverse polity. Conversely, we may ask to what degree the religious interests of the texts are restricted to worship of ancestors of the royal Zi 子 clan—a form of practice that may not have differed in kind from ancestral worship in non-royal clans, and which would entail less obvious utility as a politically legitimizing instrument. If we are to characterize all or some of the ideology reflected in oracle texts as state religion, we must be able to see how it could have served effectively in support of the state and its rulers.[35]

This issue will help organize our discussion, which will begin with consideration of pantheon members in category (A).

Core lineage ancestors

Pantheon members in category (A) were ancestors of the Shang royal house whose spirit tablets stood on the altars of the Zi clan temple complex at the Shang ritual center. For us, the best-known individual among them would be the king that the oracle texts call Da-yi 大乙 and whom later received texts call Cheng Tang 成湯, the leader known for his overthrow of the Xia ruling house, establishing Shang dynastic control sometime about 1600 BC. Da-yi is the senior Power among the Dynastic Kings; at the time of the earliest oracle text, about 20 of

[34] For purposes of discussion here, I have rearranged the order of Keightley's scheme.

[35] This view of the essential character of state religion is drawn from Peter L. Berger, *The sacred canopy: elements of a sociological theory of religion* (New York, 1969), p. 36.

his successors had followed him in death, and nine more were added during the two remaining centuries that the Shang kings ruled. But Cheng Tang was not the founder of the lineage association to which all Shang kings belonged. The lineage was established six generations earlier by an ancestor known in the oracle texts as Shang-jia 上甲, and it was his tablet that would have stood at the apex of the Zi clan temple complex.[36] Shang-jia and the five succeeding firstborn clan leaders form the earliest stratum of what may be called the core lineage. Later text sources, such as the *Shiji*, tell us that they were ruling leaders of the Shang people when they owed allegiance to the Xia, and we therefore call them "Pre-dynastic Kings."

Although the oracle texts indicate that worship of pre-dynastic and dynastic kings shared many features, and, in particular, that Shang-jia was a focus of lineage cult, the other Pre-dynastic Kings are treated as relatively minor figures. These five ancestors, together with Shang-jia, appear to share a graphemic feature of interest: all bear names that may picture in written form their temple spirit tablets. Shang-jia, for example, seems to be denoted by his cyclical "stem" temple name superimposed on the tablet (⊞), while the others combine a stem with the tablet frame ⊐ or stand 丅 (modern *shi* 示). A collective term, "The Six Spirits" (*liu shi* 六示, more literally, perhaps, "the six spirit-shrines"), groups them in some inscriptions, with Shang-jia being distinguished from the others, who are called "Lesser Spirits" (*xiao shi* 小示):

> 2. 丁未貞・𠦪年自⊞六示牛・小示汎羊・
>
> Cracking on *dingwei* day; divined about requesting harvest [to Powers] from Shang-jia through the Six Spirits with an ox, *ji*-sacrificing a sheep to the Lesser Spirits. (*HJ* 33296)

In light of the shared features among these six and distinctions in the treatment between them and dynastic kings in worship, we are justified in dividing the two pantheon groups as Keightley suggests:

[36] According to the *Shiji* 史記, the founder of the Zi lineage was Xie 契, who was seven generations senior to Shang-jia (Zhonghua shuju ed., 1.91–92). However, judging from the oracle texts, ancestors prior to Shang-jia do not seem to have been represented within the temple shrine complex. It may be that the Shang ruling house saw itself as a branch of a larger descent group possessing the Zi lineage name (*xing* 姓), of which Shang-jia was the founder. On the relation between the core lineage temple complex and temples for other Powers, see Zhu Fenghan 朱鳳瀚, "Yinxu buci suojian Shang wangshi zongmiao zhidu" 殷墟卜辭所見商王室宗廟制度, *Lishi yanjiu* 歷史研究 1990.6, pp. 6–7.

1. Shang-jia and five successor clan leaders
↓
2. Da-yi and all succeeding Shang rulers[37]

The remaining members of these sectors of the pantheon are consorts of Shang kings.[38] The ancestresses worshipped appear to include only those who gave birth to children who ultimately succeeded to the Shang throne. This means that in some cases, several consorts of a single king are included—presumably, each having given birth to one or more brothers who took the throne.[39]

In general, ancestral Powers were capable of a wide variety of actions. As we see from (2), Pre-dynastic Kings could influence weather and crops, but this seems not to be true for dynastic kings and royal consorts.[40] All ancestors could, however, affect the king's person and outcomes of events in the human sphere.[41]

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[37] The Shang succession of kings did not follow a rule of primogeniture until its final generations, and about a dozen of the Shang kings did not belong to a "trunk" line of lineage leadership, since they did not themselves give birth to kings. (On the change in succession practice, see Zhu Fenghan, "Yinxu buci suojian Shang wangshi zongmiao zhidu," p. 15.) Distinctions in worship pertained between the main and subsidiary sectors of the lineage, but we will not consider these here. (See Keightley, "The making of the ancestors," pp. 16–18.) An important but unclear issue concerning the relation between the kingship and religious practice is raised by the fact that it is difficult to discern any rule regarding which among a generation of brother-kings was succeeded by his son. In some generations, it was the first-ruling and presumably eldest brother, in other generations the last-ruling and presumably youngest. The conclusion would seem to be that the succession may have been determined by political, rather than genealogical factors, yet the pattern of worship appears to enshrine that political outcome in a lineage structure, which we would expect to be based on ascriptive roles. Kwang-Chih Chang addresses this issue by positing a multi-branch lineage structure with rules of rotating kingship (*Shang civilization*, pp. 176–89).

[38] I am not considering in this scheme a small number of inscriptions involving deceased brothers of an ancestral king who did not rule as kings themselves and deceased brothers of ruling kings. These inscriptions are found at *Y* 1469–1473; in some cases, references are to uncles of ruling kings who did themselves rule (see Shima, pp. 35–53).

[39] Chang Yuzhi 常玉芝, however, believes that the determining factor was not whether a woman bore an heir, but whether she was established as principal consort (*zhenghou* 正后) (*Shangdai zhouji zhidu* 商代周祭制度 [N.p.: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 1987], pp. 111–12).

[40] However, Da-yi does appear to control rain in one inscription (*Ying* 1757).

[41] The description Keightley offers depicting this belief in the "Preamble" of *Sources of Shang history* may be the most vivid literary re-creation of Shang religious practice that exists (pp. 1–2).

Other Powers

To the degree that deceased members of the Shang lineage were believed to be able to effect outcomes of moment to the Shang people as a whole, such as weather and war, they played a universalized role consistent with viewing their worship as an aspect of state religion, rather than as a facet of clan religious norms that the Zi lineage may have shared with other elite clans or non-elite groups. However, there are not, in total, many oracle texts concerning these royal lineage Powers that clearly suggest religious practice that would have legitimized the rule of the Shang kings in the eyes of people outside the Zi lineage. Consequently, we might expect pantheon members outside the core Zi lineage to demonstrate this function unambiguously. These ought to be the gods recognized by a general population, and the ability to interact with them and successfully influence them would have been central to the king's stature as a thearch.

We will begin our exploration of this sector of the pantheon from the Powers closest in resemblance to those within the Shang core lineage, the Former Lords.

The Former Lords

"Former Lords" translates a conventional term, *xiangong* 先公, used in oracle text scholarship to describe a diverse group of pantheon figures that appear to have been envisioned as the spirits of deceased individuals regarded as culture heroes in some way. Some figures in this group are, indeed, clearly historical, the most prominent example being Yi Yin 伊尹, known through later texts as the chief minister to the dynastic founder Cheng Tang. Others seem to have been drawn from legends that may or may not have had historical basis, but which, in textual redactions dating from later eras, include elements that are clearly mythical in character. The majority have not been positively identified.

Two members of this group are referred to multiple times in oracle texts as "High Ancestors" (*gaozu* 高祖). One of these, [illegible], a name we will transcribe as Kui 夔, is frequently understood to denote a figure whom the *Shiji* identifies as a source of the Shang lineage, Ku 嚳.[42]

[42] The identification of this graph with Ku was first proposed by Wang Guowei (*Guantang jilin* 觀堂集林 [1923; repr. Beijing, 1959], pp. 411–13), and is very well established. Scholars differ on the appropriate modern character equivalent. Keightley and many others render this name as Nao 夒, although Kui is a common proposal. In order to

According to the *Shiji* account, Ku's secondary consort gave birth to Xie 契, the Shang lineage founder, after swallowing the egg of a dark bird.[43] Despite the ambiguity of Xie's paternity, the ascription of ancestor status to Kui of the oracle texts would be cogent enough if this figure did represent Ku.

The second High Ancestor's name is clearly read; it is Wang-hai 王亥, a figure who appears in some texts of the late pre-imperial period, and who has been plausibly identified with the *Shiji* figure Zhen 振, the father of Shang-jia.[44] In the *Shiji* account of hereditary leaders of the Shang people prior to Shang-jia, Ku and Wang-hai are the first and last of seven generations of forbears. It seems likely that the remaining five are represented by other figures among the Former Lords, such as [illegible], 季, [illegible], and so forth, but efforts to make specific identifications have not generated a consensus.[45]

Regardless of these specific problems of identification, it seems safe to say that at least a portion of the Former Lord group should be understood as pictured in a quasi-descent relationship with the Shang royal house.[46] Kwang-Chih Chang has argued that inscriptions involving

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discuss the relation of this Power to the culture hero and king Ku 嚳, I am using the graph that seems most appropriate phonetically. However, it must be noted that neither of the most commonly proposed readings of the graph, *nao* (*nəu) nor *kui* (*gĭwei), entails a phonetic value that would confirm a relation to the word *ku* (*k'əuk). Wang read the graph as *jun* 俊 (*tsiwən), which is Ku's reported personal name; by asserting the direct identity of the oracle text graph with a received name for Ku, this avoids the phonetic issue, but it largely ignores the actual structure of the inscribed graph (Sarah Allan argues vigorously for Wang's choice; *The shape of the turtle: myth, art and cosmos in early China* [Albany, 1991], pp. 51–52). (Old Chinese phonetics are according to Guo Xiliang 郭錫良, *Hanzi guyin shouce* 漢字古音手冊 [Beijing, 1986].)

[43] *Shiji* 1.91, 111.

[44] For this identification, see Chen Mengjia, *Yinxu buci zongshu*, pp. 338–40. See also Gu Jiegang's study of Wang-hai's connection to the *Yijing*: "*Zhouyi* gua yao ci zhong de gushi" 周易卦爻辭中的故事, in *Gushi bian* 古史辨 vol. 3 [1930; repr. Taipei, 1970], pp. 5–9.

[45] See the discussions in Chen Mengjia, *Yinxu buci zongshu*, pp. 336–45 and Shima Kunio, *Inkyo bokuji kenkyū*, pp. 234–45. These discussions generally presume that late pre-imperial texts such as the *Shanhai jing* 山海經 and the "Tian wen" 天問 section of the *Chuci* 楚辭 preserve accurate information about the way the Shang pictured their lineage prior to Shang-jia. There are numerous inconsistent accounts of legendary history among texts of the pre-imperial era, and there is no reason to deny the possibility that among these there are reports that are either true or that transmit myths of more ancient provenance. However, it is also true that given this variety, the likelihood is not small that coincidental resemblances of names with graphs found in oracle texts may also create false clues.

[46] It is possible that this descent relationship included female "Former Lords" as well. Wang Hui 王暉 has argued that references to "Western Mother" and "Eastern Mother"

figures such as Kui and Wang-hai frequently associate cult offerings with the *xin* 辛 day, and therefore support traditional sources that report the clan of Ku as bearing the name Gaoxin 高辛.[47]

The two Former Lords who are explicitly named as High Ancestors, Kui and Wang-hai, seem to exercise the greatest range of power within this sector of the pantheon, and we see in the worship of them a range of authority that parallels or exceeds the greatest leaders of the Shang core lineage, Shang-jia and Da-yi, although Kui and Wang-hai are invoked far less frequently. They are able to influence the weather and harvests, provide aid and affect the person of the king. This set of roles is not evident for all in the Former Lord group. Moreover, in many cases the range of texts in which a member of this group is mentioned is so narrow that it is unclear whether the graph represents a spirit entity recognized with any consistency in Shang religious thought.

The application of the term High Ancestor to the most prominent of the Former Lords raises the question of what proportion of the entire group was, in fact, conceived as part of the Zi lineage, and to what degree this may call into question their function as universal spirits under royal control, useful in political legitimation. The issue may be highlighted by consideration of the one Former Lord whom we might expect *not* to have ties to the Shang lineage: Yi Yin.

Later textual accounts of Yi Yin, Cheng Tang's chief minister, either specify that he was initially a commoner of exceptional ability or that he was initially a minister of Jie 桀, the last ruler of the Xia Dynasty, who later abandoned his immoral lord and supported rebellion out of righteous motives. In either case, no affinal links to the Shang royal house are suggested. However, the treatment of Yi Yin in the oracle texts bears certain features in common with core lineage ancestors. His sacrifices seem consistently to be held on the *ding* day of the week, indicating that he possessed a cyclical stem temple designation not reflected

in the oracle texts refer to two consorts of Ku who are important to later accounts of ancient myths, Xi He 羲和 and Chang Xi 常羲 (*Shang-Zhou wenhua bijiao yanjiu* 商周文化比較研究 [Beijing, 2000], pp. 30–32). The evidence for these claims is very highly leveraged. See the more restrained assessment by Zhu Yanmin 朱顏民, who surveys the female members of the Former Lord group without finding evidence for strong claims about correspondences with received texts ("Yin buci suojian xiangong pei'ou kao" 殷卜辭所見先公配偶考, *Lishi yanjiu* 歷史研究 2003.6, pp. 3–19).

[47] Kwang-Chih Chang, "On the meaning of *shang* in the Shang dynasty," *Early China* 20 (1995), pp. 75–76.

in his name.[48] Most surprisingly, his consort was also worshipped as a Power and, like Yi Yin himself, played a controlling role with regard to natural phenomena.[49]

On the basis of these characteristics, a number of scholars have made arguments that Yi Yin was, in fact, either a member of a royal sub-lineage or worshipped as the leader of a collateral branch he founded through a marital link to the royal Zi clan.[50] Both approaches seem reasonable; however, neither is supported by evidence so compelling as to displace the more usual interpretation that Yi Yin's place in the pantheon is simply the result of exceptional services rendered to the state, rather than any real or putative lineage tie to the royal clan.[51]

Nevertheless, the line of argument that links a significant group of prominent Former Lords (and perhaps their consorts) to the Shang royal lineage brings into question the way in which this pantheon group may have been conceived as, or effective as, an aspect of "state religion," except to the degree that royal clan and state religion were identified.

One way to approach this question would be to picture the Former Lords not as members of an extended construction of the Shang lineage *per se*, but as figures represented in the pantheon for "reasons of state," adopted into the Shang lineage either to legitimize the royal clan's involvement in their worship, or because there existed already in the

[48] The Shang king Da-yi is also sometimes named without reference to his cyclical stem as Tang 唐 or Cheng Tang 成唐, the latter a clear variant of the name (成湯) by which he is known in received texts.

[49] Multiple names for both Yi Yin and his consort have complicated the determination of their relation to one another and roles in the inscriptions. For a clear analysis of these issues, see Wang Hui 王暉, "Yin-Shang shigan shizu yanjiu," 殷商十干氏族研究, *Zhongguoshi yanjiu* 中國史研究 2003.3, pp. 30–33. For an example of Yi Yin controlling weather, see *HJ* 32797; for his consort Yi Shi 伊奭, see *HJ* 34214. Yi Yin additionally possessed the ability to harm the Shang King (examples are listed at *Y* 977a; he is referred to in these texts as Huang Yin 黃尹).

[50] The former argument was elaborated by Kwang-Chih Chang in *Shang civilization*, p. 177. The latter argument has recently been proposed by Xiao Liangqiong 肖良瓊 ("Buci zhong de Yi Yin he Yi Yin fang Tai-jia" 卜辭中的伊尹和伊尹放太甲, *Guwenzi yanjiu* 古文字研究 21 [2001], pp. 14–23). The membership of Yi Yin in the Shang lineage seems to me more probable in light of the fact that cult worship of him is reflected in some inscriptions of the Zi 子 group diviners (*HJ* 21573–6). Zi group divinations were affiliated not with the king, but with a royal prince, and I will discuss evidence below that princes did not offer cult to any Powers outside their own ancestral lineage.

[51] See, for example, Zhang Yongshan 張永山, "Cong buci zhong de Yi Yin kan 'Min bu si fei zu'" 從卜辭中的伊尹看 "民不祀非族", *Guwenzi yanjiu* 古文字研究 22 [2000], pp. 1–5.

Shang the belief reported in later texts that spirits do not receive sacrifices offered to them by people not of their own lineages.[52] Alternatively, Itō Michiharu 伊藤道治 has suggested that these figures were independent deities worshipped by local cultures which the Shang absorbed in the process of state creation, assuming duties of efficacious service to these gods as a means of enhancing the legitimacy of their conquests.[53] If some of the Former Lords were widely revered as gods, by adopting such deities as their own ancestors, the Shang kings would have been making a very concrete claim to be regarded as thearchs, in the sense of rulers who are legitimate because divine in themselves. Unfortunately, Itō's attractive idea is difficult to confirm.

Nature Powers

"Nature Powers" include a variety of naturally occurring phenomena that seem, in one way or another, to be treated as deities in the oracle texts: the sun, the cardinal directions and their winds, the soil, and so forth. We would certainly expect these to have no connection to the Shang royal lineage, but once again, we will find the issue more difficult than we might expect.

By far, the most prominent figures in this sector of the pantheon are the Powers He 河, or the River Power, and Yue 岳, or the Mountain Power.[54] These are generally interpreted to denote the Yellow River and Mt. Song (Songshan 嵩山), the major peak in the central Henan region of the Yellow River Valley, in the vicinity of the capitals of the Shang state prior to the move to Anyang ca. 1300 BC, roughly 50 years before the earliest oracle texts. There is a strong tradition reported in later texts that those who rule a state are responsible for service to the major mountains and rivers in their territories, and these are sometimes

[52] The adage is noted in the *Zuozhuan* 左傳 (see Zhang Yongshan, "Cong buci zhong de Yi Yin kan 'Min bu si fei zu,'" p. 4).

[53] Itō pictures warfare among the Shang and their neighbors in terms of tribes "led" into battle by tutelary spirits, which were subject to capture and appropriation ("Shūkyōmen kara mita Indai no ni-san no mondai: In ōchō no kōzō, sono ni" 宗教面から見た殷代の二三の問題: 殷王朝の構造,その二, *Tōyōshi kenkyū* 東洋史研究 20 [1961], pp. 274–75).

[54] Keightley reads the graph for this Power, [illegible], as *yang* [illegible], interpreting the upper portion of the graph as the phonetic 羊. Yue is the most common transcription choice; for others, see Matsumaru Michio 松丸道雄 and Takashima Ken'ichi 高嶋謙一, *Kōkotsu monji jishaku sōran* 甲骨文字字釋綜覽 (Tokyo, 1994) [hereafter, *Sōran*], pp. 124–25.

explicitly described as spirits (*shen* 神).[55] It is reasonable to conclude that the Yellow River and Songshan were personified in this way.[56]

The River and Mountain Powers share features with the most prominent Former Lords, Kui and Wang-hai, in addition to frequency of mention. Perhaps unsurprisingly, they influence weather and crops.[57] In the case of the River Power, there is also an ability to harm the person of the king, though only one instance of this issue is recorded:

> 3. 壬寅卜殸 貞・河壱 王・
>
> Cracking on *renyin* day, Que divined about whether River would harm the King. (*HJ* 776)

Moreover, the River and Mountain Powers are linked directly to major Former Lords by being listed in series with them in a single inscription, for instance:

> 4. 戊午卜穷 貞・酒桒 年于岳、河、夒・
>
> Cracking on *wuwu* day, Bin divined about whether to offer wine and request good harvest of Mountain, River and Kui. (*HJ* 10076)

This linkage extends to other Former Lords, such as [illegible] (*HJ* 34185), and to Pre-dynastic Kings as well:

> 5. 辛巳卜貞・來辛卯酒河十牛卯十牢・王亥燎十牛卯十牢・田燎十牛卯十牢.
>
> Cracking on *xinsi* day, divining about whether on the coming *xinmao* day to make a wine offering to River of ten cattle and a slaughter offering of ten penned cattle, a burnt offering to Wang-hai of ten cattle and a slaughter offering of ten penned cattle, and a burnt offering to Shang-jia of ten cattle and a slaughter offering of ten penned cattle. (*Tunnan* 1116)

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[55] See, for example, *Zuozhuan* 左傳 (*Chunqiu jingzhuan yinde* 春秋經傳引得 ed., Harvard-Yenching Institute Sinological index series, supplement 11 [Beijing; Taipei repr., 1966]), 344/ Zhao 1/*fu*7.

[56] A few inscriptions suggest that delegations were occasionally sent to make offerings to the River Power at the Yellow River. If these reflect processions made to the former capital region to display continuing royal intimacy with the landforms associated with major Nature Powers, their state function in asserting ongoing territorial control would have been visibly public. We do not seem to see similar inscriptions for the Mountain Power, which makes the actual location of any such River ceremonies less clear.

[57] The River Power also seems able to grant "approval" (*ruo* 若), though texts indicating this are ambiguous, and may simply concern whether actions involving sacrifices or visits to the River Power will meet with approval in general (*Y* 488b).

The parallel sequencing of the three Powers suggests the possibility of an imagined descent line that extends back to Natural Powers, passes down through the Former Lords, and ends in the core royal lineage.[58] Indeed, Qi Wenxin 齊文心 has taken an inventory of all the instances where Nature Powers and Former Lords are linked to "High Ancestors," either in a single inscription or in an inscriptional set on a single bone or shell, and posited that the Shang construed all of these Powers as lineal forbears of the Shang line. As (4) implies, the Mountain Power would be included in this set, as would nine other figures, a number of whose identities are unclear.[59] Whether or not it is appropriate to claim that the Shang royal lineage was envisioned as including Nature Powers such as River and Mountain, there is no doubt that in terms of worship and spiritual function, we do not see the clear line dividing Nature Powers from lineage Powers that we might, in principle, expect.

No other figures ordinarily included in the Nature Power segment of the pantheon seem as sharply delineated as the River and Mountain Powers, and there is room for debate about the degree to which other members of this set were actually conceived as personified spirits with identities possessed of intentionality. There is evidence to support the inclusion in this group of a Sun Power, an Earth Power, Powers of the Cardinal Directions, Cloud and Wind Powers, and a number of others. However, there is so sharp a drop off in the volume of inscriptions, compared to the River and Mountain Powers, and the ambiguities of text

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[58] It is often asserted that the River Power is explicitly named as a High Ancestor, in the manner of Kui and Wang-hai (see, for example, Keightley, *The ancestral landscape: time, space, and community in late Shang China (ca. 1200–1045 B.C.)* [Berkeley, 2000], p. 105). There is an isolated inscription that supports this view: 辛未貞𣎵禾高祖河于辛巳: "On *xinwei* day divining about requesting crops of High Ancestor River on the *xinsi* day" (*HJ* 32028). (Wang Hui 王暉 cites a second instance at *HJ* 33339 ["Lun Shangdai shangdi de zhushen diwei ji qi you guan wenti" 論商代上帝的主神地位及其有關問題, *Shangqiu Shizhuan xuebao* 商丘師專學報 15.1 (1999), p. 63], but this is a misreading.) This well known text appears in a series of divinations, others of which name a single Power "High Ancestor" or a single Power "River." The likelihood is that the phrase "High Ancestor River" is in fact a fused reference to two Powers, one perhaps being Kui or Wang-hai. The association between the River Power and figures explicitly conceived as progenitors of the royal lineage is still strong, but the picture of River as itself an ancestor is not as clear as it might otherwise seem. (The interpretation of "High Ancestor River" has been subject to long debate. The issues are clearly laid out in Luo Kun 羅琨, "Buci zhong de 'He' jiqi zai sidian zhong de diwei" 卜辭中的河及其在祀典中的地位, *Guwenzi yanjiu* 古文字研究 22 (2002), pp. 6–12.)

[59] Qi's arguments are summarized in Wang Yuxin et al., *Jiaguxue yibainian*, pp. 599–600. A valuable discussion of the Former Lords appears in Chen Mengjia, *Yinxu buci zongshu*, pp. 336–345.

interpretation are so plentiful, that it is possible to argue that no other phenomena of nature may have been conceived as Powers possessed of responsiveness and intent, or that membership of other Nature Powers in the pantheon may have been transient and unstable. Because the issues underlying this debate have substantial impact on our picture of the pantheon and the range of those aspects of royal religious practice that extend beyond lineage worship to state concerns, they are worth examining in some detail.

Keightley and many others hold that the sun (日 *ri*) was viewed as a Nature Power and, indeed, that at the core of Shang religion was a "cult of the Sun."[60] The oracle texts do record sacrificial rituals offered in connection with the sun, but they read ambiguously:

> 6. 戊戌卜・內乎雀[illegible] 于出日于入日宰・
>
> Cracking on *wuxu* day about Nei calling upon Que to X-sacrifice a penned sheep to (at the time of?) the rising sun and to the setting sun. (*HJ* 6572)

On the primary interpretation offered here, the rising and setting sun (or more likely a single Sun Power at rising and setting) is receiving cult. But it is equally possible that the ritual is to be done at sunrise and sunset, with the object unspecified (not unusual for the [illegible] sacrifice). Because there are at most about ten examples of oracle bones recording this type of form, it is difficult to extrapolate from them a sun cult.[61]

There is external evidence that many interpreters view as powerful support for the sun cult theory. The well-known myth that in high antiquity there were ten suns, nine of which were shot from the sky by "Archer Yi," invites association with the Shang calendar of the ten-day week, denoted by cyclical signs corresponding to ancestral cult schedules. Sarah Allan has argued that Shang ancestors were "totemically identified with one of the ten suns," and that the history of the lineage was expressed through this myth.[62] Keightley's portrait of the Shang sun cult draws on this notion. He has explained the apparent disparity between the importance of this central lineage myth and the paucity of possible

[60] Keightley, *The ancestral landscape*, pp. 25–29.

[61] Relevant inscriptions appear at *Y* 427. The evidence and arguments are summarized by Chang Yuzhi, writing in Wang Yuxin et al., *Jiaguxue yibainian*, pp. 594–95. While Chang concludes that Sun was a Power and I, too, have elsewhere suggested as much, my current view is one of skepticism.

[62] Allan, *Shape of the turtle*, p. 56.

references to cult worship of the sun in the oracle texts by offering a new interpretation of a longstanding problem in the oracle texts: the apparent cult worship of a figure represented only by the cyclical sign *ding* 丁, which is written □ in Shang script. Keightley argues that in instances of this nature, □ is actually a short form of *ri* 日: the sun. If all such instances were added to the inventory of relevant inscriptions, the volume of texts concerning the Sun Power would be adequate to support the ascription of a sun cult to the Shang.[63]

Keightley's hypothesis will require a period of testing, particularly in light of new evidence that has emerged concerning the use of the graph □.[64] Given the complexities that seem involved with applying the Archer Yi myth to the structure of state religion, it is probably best to reserve judgment on whether a Sun Power should be included in the Shang pantheon.

But one aspect of (6) that does tend to support a general view of the sun as a Nature Power deserves further attention in light of our interest in the function of the religion of the oracle texts to serve the interests of state legitimation. The inscription indicates that a figure named Que is being called on to serve as the king's proxy in offering cult. The specific sacrifice, the [illegible], is one that is associated with offerings to the cardinal directions as well to the Former Lord Yi Yin.[65] This may strengthen the claim that rising and setting sun was conceived as a Power. Moreover, Que is elsewhere called upon to offer sacrifices to the River and Mountain Powers.[66] Zhu Fenghan 朱鳳瀚 interprets charges of this form as evidence that Shang kings strengthened their authority over branch lineages of the larger royal descent group by inviting their

[63] Keightley, "Graphs, words, and meanings: three reference works for Shang oracle-bone studies, with an excursus on the religious role of the Day or Sun," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 117.3 (1997), pp. 517–524. For different approaches to the role of □ in oracle texts, see Shima Kunio, *Inkyo bokuji kenkyū*, pp. 177–183, and Li Lixin 李立新, "Jiaguwen 'ding' zi kaoshi yu Huanbei Shangcheng yihao gongdian jizhi xingzhi tantao" 甲骨文 '□' 字考釋與洹北商城 1 號宮殿基址性質談討, *Zhongguo lishi wenwu* 中國歷史文物 2004.1, pp. 11–17.

[64] I refer to the apparent use of this graph to refer to the living king Wu-ding in the *HD* inscriptions. Li Xueqin has argued that in this context, the graph should be read *bi* 辟, in the sense of "ruler" ("Guanyu Huayuanzhuang Dongdi buci suowei 'ding' de yi dian kanfa," 關於花園莊東地卜辭所謂 "丁" 的一點看法, *Gugong Bowuyuan yuankan* 故宮博物院院刊 2004.5, pp. 40–42). While Li's solution may not prevail, it indicates that the range of interpretive opportunities on the issue of this graph has broadened.

[65] *Y* 939b–940a.

[66] *HJ* 4112, 4141.

leaders to participate in state cult under the king's sole control.[67] If he is correct, this would illustrate one manner in which the practice represented by the oracle texts served a state function, albeit one confined to a relatively narrow group.

The graph for the soil, *tu* 土, is often interpreted by scholars as representing an Earth Power. Again, the evidence is characterized by ambiguities. In almost all cases of the occurrence of *tu*, the graph may be interpreted without reference to a Power, as referring to territory or as representing the term *she* 社, which would denote, by analogy with later practice, the major outdoor sacrificial altar at the Shang capital site.[68] There does exists one inscription in which it does appear that the Soil is worshipped as a Power in parallel with the River and Mountain Powers (*HJ* 34185). However, 夒, usually, but not universally, treated as a Former Lord, appears in the series, and an argument can be made that in this context, the graph represents not Earth, but a Former Lord, Xiangtu 相土, a progenitor of the Shang house whom the *Shiji* identifies as the grandson of Xie 契.[69]

The cardinal directions represent a special case. Many inscriptions referring to these individually can be interpreted as invoking a locative use. Consider the following example and alternative renderings:

7. 燎于土宰・方禘・

a. Offer burnt sacrifice to the Earth Power and *di*-sacrifice to the Powers of the Cardinal Directions.
b. Offer burnt sacrifice at the Altar of the Soil and *di*-sacrifice toward the cardinal directions. (*HJ* 11018)

The evidence that allows adjudication between these types of alternatives is not decisive, and readings will tend to reflect the general theory

[67] Zhu Fenghan, *Shang-Zhou jiazu xingtai yanjiu* 商周家族型態研究 rev. ed., (Tianjin, 2004), pp. 182–83. In one such inscription, an associate of the Shang named Bi [illegible] is called upon to sacrifice to a lineage figure, Shang-jia (*HJ* 4047). These inscriptions employ rhetoric more generally connected with military mobilization in calling for religious service, and they are of great interest. However, only two men, Que and Bi, are associated with them, and there are only a handful of instances.

[68] Keightley treats *tu* (the Soil), along with the cardinal directions and other natural phenomena, as a Power in, *The ancestral landscape*, pp. 61–74. On the graph as *she*, see Li Xiaoding 李孝定, *Jiagu wenzi jishi* 甲骨文字集釋 (Nankang, 1965) vol. 13, p. 3987. Later religious ideology links *she* altars to personified spirits of the local region, and it is possible that this applied during the Shang, though oracle texts provide no clear indication of this (see Shima, *Inkyo bokuji kenkyū*, pp. 227–29).

[69] Some commentators, although by no means a majority, identify 夒 as Xie (see *Sōran*, pp. 490–91).

of Shang religious ideology adopted by the interpreter. But in the case of the cardinal directions, a unique pair of bones offers very strong support for the view of the directions as Powers. In these instances, the cardinal directions and their attendant winds are given names in a series of oracle texts inscribed together in the form:

> 8. 辛亥卜內貞・禘于南方曰微・風[曰]夷・𣌭年・一月・
>
> Cracking on *xinhai* day, Nei divined about whether to perform a *di*-sacrifice to the South, called Wei, its wind called Yi, requesting crops. [Divined in the] First Month. (*HJ* 14295)

Naming the directions in this way strongly suggests that these four figures are well delineated members of a pantheon of Powers. This conclusion is only slightly weakened by the fact that the second inscription set (*HJ* 14294), apparently contemporary with the first, uses the same formula, but in the case of the South, alters the names (in the process, naming the wind, rather than the direction, Wei), and reverses them in the case of the West, a confusion we might not expect among fixed pantheon members.[70]

A number of commentators have noted that these names are at least partially preserved in late pre-imperial text sources—there is no question that we are dealing with a tradition that is important enough to have survived for a millennium.[71] However, if we are dealing with sets of named deities, there is some question of their significance to the Shang, at least in terms of the oracle text data. We have only one case of these names being employed elsewhere in a sacrificial context: a sacrifice to the Power of the East, Xi 析 (*Ying* 1288).[72] It is a paradox that these names were important enough to be transmitted for a millen-

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[70] Keightley provides full texts and translations in *The ancestral landscape*, pp. 70–71.

[71] See, for example, Chen Mengjia, *Yinxi buci zongshu*, pp. 588–94.

[72] Two other possible examples concerning Xi exist: *HJ* 22213 and 34474. Matsumaru Michio 松丸道雄 has recently published an account of a previously unpublished fragmentary text that includes a reference to the Eastern Wind Xie 劦, a name that appears on both *HJ* 14294 and 14295. Matsumaru demonstrates that his fragment is a "practice" or training inscription, not associated with any actual purpose of divination, something that appears to be true of *HJ* 14294 ("Jieshao yipian sifangfeng ming keci gu" 介紹一片四方風名刻辭骨, Wang Yuxin 王宇信 and Song Zhenhao 宋鎮豪, eds, *Jinian Yinxu jiaguwen faxian yibai zhounian guoji xueshu yantaohui lunwenji* 紀念殷墟甲骨文發現一百週年國際學術研討會論文集 [Beijing, 2003], pp. 83–87). While this may appear to throw into question the importance of the inscription, in fact, it likely indicates that the directional and wind names were so basic to Shang cultural grammar that they were, so to speak, matter for elementary primers.

nium outside the context of state religion, but that the Powers that bore those names in the late Shang seem insignificant in the larger context of religion, as reflected in oracle texts.[73] As for the winds, apart from the inscriptions that name them, the strongest support for the view of the wind, or winds, as a personified Power is a fragmentary inscription that seems to refer to "Wind, the Envoy of Di" (see inscription (13) below). Again, the evidence makes it difficult to assert strongly that we see here a spirit entity that we should locate within a pantheon characteristic of Shang religion. Similarly, when considering the case for granting a Cloud Power pantheon membership, we have largely to rely on a single inscription that refers to Di Yun 帝雲 (*HJ* 14227), a phrase that has often been read as "the deity Cloud," but which may be interpreted without positing a personified spirit. Keightley, for example, reads the phrase as "Di's Clouds" and does not propose a Cloud Power.[74]

In summarizing the role of Nature Powers in the Shang pantheon, the safest conclusion is probably this: The River and Mountain Powers were important figures to the Shang state. Their roles were clearly defined, and they were probably associated with concrete geographic locations: the Yellow River and Mt. Song. The personification of the spirits of these places was likely to have been sharply drawn, and anthropomorphic features were probably assigned in ways that allow them to function in tandem with Former Lords and the most powerful human ancestors of the Shang, even if neither Nature Power was named as an ancestor per se. Otherwise, the world of nature most likely provided no clearly defined Powers comparable to these two, although the role of the sun in Shang religion remains a potential area of new knowledge.[75] Other

[73] In the recently published inscriptions from Huayuanzhuang, one plastron (*HD* 18) includes only four characters, each placed separately. Three simply read, "East," "South" and "West," but the fourth does not have the conventional word for North (*bei* 北). Instead, North appears to be represented by a character that bears some resemblance to the name of the Northern Wind: [illegible].

[74] Keightley, *The ancestral landscape*, p. 5.

[75] This does not exclude the possibility, clearly reasonable in light of later religious ideology, that hosts of personified entities in the form of spirits of hills and streams—not to mention of the human-created world of buildings, gates and rooms—were part of the religious consciousness of the Shang. For example, Du Jinpeng 杜金鵬 notes a possible instance of sacrifice to a gate in the oracle texts ("Huanbei Shangcheng yihao gongdian jizhi chubu yanjiu" 洹北商城 一 號宮殿基址初步研究, *Wenwu* 文物 2004.5, p. 56). Shang building foundations and interior sites are studded with pits in which animal and human victims were buried in sacrifice; whether the intended objects of sacrifice were spirits of these places, or whether these deaths were understood as general rites of sanctification is difficult to determine.

potential Nature Powers are most likely either ephemeral visitors to the pantheon or mirages produced by the difficult language of the oracle texts.[76]

Di, the High God

Above all other entities in the pantheon was a comprehensively powerful being called Di, who is usually referred to as the Shang "High God."[77] How Di was specifically conceived is one of the most interesting unresolved issues of Shang theology, and we will explore below some of the approaches that have been taken. But that Di did occupy preeminent status is indicated from the oracle texts themselves, which portray the control that Di exercises as being of a greater scale and more various than any other Power, and by post-Shang textual uses of the term, which give it a rough equivalence to the term Tian 天 (Heaven), a word that we do not encounter in the oracle texts and which thus seems a contribution of Zhou theology.[78]

Di's comprehensive power included an ability to affect large and small-scale natural phenomena:

9. 貞・不隹帝壱 我年・二月・/ 貞隹帝壱 我年・二月・
王𡆥 曰不隹帝壱 隹由・

Divined about whether Di will not harm our harvest. / Divined about whether Di will harm our harvest. [Divined during] the Second Month. (*HJ* 10124)
The King prognosticated and said: It shall not be that Di enacts harm. (*HJ* 10124r)

10. 貞・帝其及今十三月令雷・

Divined: about whether Di, reaching this [intercalary] Thirteenth Month shall order lightning. (*HJ* 14127)

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[76] Regarding this last point, in "Deities and ancestors in early oracle inscriptions" (in Donald Lopez, *Religions of China in practice* [Princeton, 1996]), p. 48, I discussed an apparent case of an asterism treated as a Nature Power, unaware that Li Xueqin had some years earlier argued convincingly that this was a misreading ("Lun Yinxu buci de 'xing'" 論殷墟卜辭的"星", *Zhengzhou Daxue xuebao* 鄭州大學學報 4 [1981], pp. 89–90). I take this opportunity to correct my error.

[77] The term Di is a part of all later religious traditions in China. It is used broadly as both a generic term for high spirits and earthly rulers. The distinctive role of supreme spirit is often signaled in later texts by the term *shangdi* 上帝 (High Di), but in the oracle texts this usage is rarely seen.

[78] While the graph 𠀘, which may be transcribed as 天, does appear in the oracle texts, it does not function in a way that could denote a Power.

Di affected the outcome of major political events:

11. 甲辰卜爭貞・我伐馬方帝受我又・ 一月・

Cracking on *jiachen* day, Zheng divined about whether if we attack the Ma tribe Di will provide support. [Divined during] the first month. (*HJ* 6664)

12. 丙辰卜殸 貞・帝隹其冬茲邑・

Cracking on *bingchen* day, Que divined about whether Di will bring an end to this city. (*HJ* 14209, 14210)[79]

In addition to possessing a broader range of abilities than other Powers, Di is also unique in being the only Power that "orders" (*ling* 令) events to occur.[80] For example, in (10), Di is pictured potentially ordering that there be lightning (or thunder). Similar inscriptions exist for rain and wind. This political metaphor may govern Di's relation with certain other Powers:

13. 燎帝史風一犬・

[Divined: about whether to] offer up by fire for Di's envoy Wind one dog. (*HJ* 14226)

14. 王又歲于帝五臣正隹亡雨・

[Divined: about whether] if the King offers cult through sacrificial dismemberment to the Five Ministers of Di it shall be correct and there will be no rain. (*HJ* 30391)

Although no more than ten such inscriptions have been detected, their suggestion of a proto-bureaucratic hierarchy with Di at the apex has been an emphasis of scholarly discussion about the structure of the Shang pantheon.[81]

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[79] These famous inscriptions are usually taken to be asking about the destruction of the Shang state, but as they are divined during the reign of the powerful king Wu-ding, they may more likely be divining about the need to shift the location of the capital city at a time before the Anyang site had established its history of longevity.

[80] Two partial inscriptions on *HJ* 14638 may be exceptions, depicting the River Power issuing an order.

[81] The issue of bureaucratic features of the pantheon is discussed below. In addition to passages concerning "Di's envoy Wind" and the "Five Ministers" we may wonder whether "Rain" and "Lightning," other terms that appear as objects of Di's commands, should not also be pictured as personifications subject to bureaucratic order. That this is not necessary to do is indicated by the use of the phrase, "Di will order much rain" (帝令多雨) on two bones (*HJ* 10976; 14136). Presumably, "much rain" was not a phrase subject to personification (and the notion of "the many rains" seems implau-

Di is also unique in being the only major Power invoked in the oracle texts that does not receive cult. This phenomenon is usually explained by referring to later textual traditions, which indicate that Di, or Tian, was too remote for living humans to sacrifice to directly. Instead, an intermediary, such as an ancestral ruler, was necessary to convey to Di the offerings of the living.[82]

The potential for Di to influence a broad range of critical natural and political phenomena, together with the post-Shang text tradition that identifies Di as the supreme spirit figure, an equivalent of Tian, support a near consensus view that Di was conceived as the High God in Shang religion. However, although Di clearly plays a unique role in the pantheon and may be pictured at its apex, precisely how the Shang conceived of Di is far from clear. A number of theories have been proposed concerning the spirit persona or identity that we should understand the Shang to have ascribed to Di, and these possibilities entail significantly different understandings of the nature of the pantheon as a whole, a situation we shall illustrate by considering three approaches.

1. *Di as the High Shang Ancestor Ku.* While most oracle text interpreters are not committed to the identification of Di with a specific named spirit entity or phenomenon, a substantial number take the position that the term Di is an alternative way of denoting the first ancestor of the Shang, Ku, who is referred to in later texts as Di Ku 帝嚳. As noted earlier, Ku is associated with the oracle text graph [graph], or Kui 夒, which in our taxonomy has been assigned to the Former Lord sector of the pantheon. Kui is named as "High Ancestor" in at least four inscriptions on separate oracle bones, and if the identification with Ku is correct, this corresponds to Ku's role as progenitor of the Shang lineage in the *Shiji* and other texts.

The proposal that Di and Ku represent the identical Power has been endorsed by prominent scholars, including, for example, Guo Moruo 郭沫若 and Ho Ping-ti. Its implications for our understanding of Shang theology are profound. If the High Power in Shang state religion, exercis-

sible), establishing that for Di, the object of command could be a phenomenon, rather than a deity. I have argued that the number of texts that point toward a model of a bureaucratized pantheon is far too small to support any strong claim for it as a feature of Shang religious imagination ("Was there a high god Ti in Shang religion?" *Early China* 15 [1990], p. 4).

[82] I discuss these interpretations in "Was there a high god Ti in Shang religion?" pp. 7–10.

ing control over the Powers of the natural world, is an ancestor of the Shang king, then the Shang kings would be easily seen as embodying in themselves an aspect of the divinity of the High Power Di, thearchs by birth. This identification of the Shang house with Di would, in essence, universalize the ancestral worship of the Zi clan, whose lineage ancestors would share control of events throughout the world below. Since we do, in fact, see some of the Shang ancestors exercising power over natural phenomena in oracle texts, the identification of Ku with Di would provide an underlying rationale for such a portrait.

The identification of Di with Ku is also attractive because it offers a way to bring greater coherence to the Shang pantheon and to elucidate in a systematic way the relationship between the ancestral and natural sectors of the pantheon. However, there are problems that must be overcome before this approach can decisively prevail. For example, the names Di and Kui are employed in the oracle texts quite differently. Di issues orders to other spirits while Kui does not. Di is frequently pictured sending down "approval" (*ruo* 若) while Kui is never so pictured. Kui receives cult while Di does not.[83] Moreover, as illustrated in (4) above, Kui is appealed to in series with other Powers in some oracle texts, suggesting a horizontal relationship that undermines any portrait of Kui as the apex of a structured pantheon.

While these problems remain, among scholars who address the issue of Di's identity, Ku (or Kui) is the figure that attracts greatest attention.

2. *Di as the Celestial Pole.* Recently, David Pankenier, whose research in Chinese archaeo-astronomy we will discuss further below, has proposed that Di was conceived as a function of astronomical aspects of Shang religion.[84] Pankenier's argument, which he asserts only as a speculative hypothesis, draws on a view that interest in the sky formed a basic structural feature of religious practice, both during the Shang and during the era of the preceding Xia or Erlitou culture, as reflected, for example, in the care with which foundations of palatial and ceremonial

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[83] Keightley has noted that among significant Powers, Di appears to share the fewest common traits with ancestral figures of the pantheon ("The making of the ancestors," p. 8).

[84] Pankenier's hypothesis is presented in "A brief history of Beiji 北極 (Northern Culmen), with an excursus on the origin of the character *di* 帝," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 124.2 (2004), pp. 211–36.

structures were aligned in relation to the North Celestial Pole as stellar precession led to a shift in the identity of the Pole Star.[85]

Pankenier notes that the true Celestial Pole lies in a region of the sky that is vacant of significant stars—"Pole Stars" are simply those nearest to this vacant apex—and suggests that for the sophisticated observers of the Shang, the location of the true pole was of critical importance. He illustrates how the oracle text graph for Di, 帝, can be projected on the north polar region of the ancient sky in such a way that its extreme points correspond with significant visible stars, while the intersection of linear axes at the center will map to the vacant Celestial Pole.[86]

Pankenier argues that Di was conceived as the Power dwelling at the true Pole, an idea familiar from later eras of Chinese religion, and he suggests a link with the concept of the supreme Power Taiyi 太一, which is now fully documented as early as the 4th century BC.[87]

By engaging the pantheon of the oracle texts so deeply with a tradition of religious astronomy that is well known only for a much later period, Pankenier suggests the possibility of a subtext of celestial organization underlying but largely unobservable in the oracle texts. While the expertise of the Shang in matters of calendrics and their observational interest in matters such as eclipses was remarked on by the earliest scholars of oracle texts,[88] we encounter in the inscriptions only occasional indications of interest in asterisms and other celestial phenomena. However, given the limited nature of the oracle text medium, it is not at all inconceivable that an interpretive key to its underlying theology lies outside the explicit divination texts.

There is no intrinsic contradiction between Pankenier's speculative identification of Di with a celestial phenomenon and the deity Taiyi and the theory that Di was the Shang progenitor Ku. Indeed, Feng Shi 馮時 has proposed just such an identification.[89] He argues that Ku and Di are

[85] The astronomical significance of the alignment of major structures at the Shang complex at Anyang has been argued in great detail in a series of articles by the archaeologist Shi Zhangru 石璋如, published in the *Bulletin of the Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica* (*BIHP*). For his hypothesis that the *gaitian* 蓋天 cosmological model influential in later eras is an artifact of Shang astronomy, see "Du ge jia shi *Qiheng tu*, shuo gaitian shuo qiyuan xinli chugao" 讀各家釋七衡圖, 說蓋天說起源新例初稿, *BIHP* 68.4 (1997), pp. 787–815.

[86] See Pankenier's star chart, "A brief history," p. 233.

[87] Pankenier, "A brief history," pp. 212–18.

[88] See Dong Zuobin, *Yin lipu* 3.1a.

[89] Feng Shi, *Zhongguo tianwen kaoguxue* 中國天文考古學 (Beijing, 2001), pp. 122–29.

indeed identical, and that Ku was not only the progenitor of the Shang, but the creator of the sun and moon, dwelling at the Celestial Pole. In terms of later texts, Feng too links Ku to Taiyi, but he goes in a direction different from Pankenier in linking Di equally to an iconographic representation of a squatting ceremonial figure found on jades from the Liangzhu culture of the Yangzi delta region.[90] If Feng were correct, we might conclude that the Shang rulers had appropriated a creation myth ultimately derived from a cultural background remote in both time and geographical location to link their royal house to a creation deity that was, perhaps, recognized universally over a broad range of regions and local cultures.[91]

Although Feng presents his model without the caveats Pankenier insists on, both proposals are speculative, relying heavily on correspondences between a limited range of clues provided by Shang data and well delineated myths or concepts found in texts of much later eras. While the evidence of exact correspondences between names of directional winds in oracle and later texts noted above demonstrates that received accounts certainly preserve traditions current during the Shang and relevant to the religious background of the oracle texts, claims for the relevance of late textual sources on specific issues must be judged independently. On this basis, Pankenier's proposal should inspire a careful search for data that may not yet have been recognized as supporting the celestial framework for the Shang pantheon implied by his ideas. This holds for Feng's theory as well, which must also overcome the problems, noted earlier, that are inherent in any identification of Ku and Di.

3. *Di as a generic term.* My own research has suggested a different direction for interpreting the status of Di in Shang religion. I have focused on the unusual distance that seems to exist between Di and living humans in the oracle texts, and explained it with reference to features of ancient written Chinese that provide no distinctions among singular, collective and generic nouns. My proposal is that the term *di* is used as a generic or collective term, assignable to any one Power or denoting groups of

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[90] Feng, *Zhongguo tianwen kaoguxue*, p. 128. The argument hinges on phonetic and semantic overlap between Ku's personal name Jun 俊 (*tsiwən) and the word *dun* 蹲 (*dzuən): "to squat."

[91] Wang Hui has proposed a similar model, identifying Ku with Di, but also asserting that Ku was the father of the sun and moon, while his consorts, Xi He and Chang Xi, were the mothers of the sun and moon. He does not, however, specifically locate Ku at the Celestial Pole (*Shang-Zhou wenhua bijiao yanjiu*, pp. 24–32).

Powers, or all Powers, collectively, and that the Shang pantheon thus does not, in fact, possess an apex uniting its various segments.[92]

This hypothesis depends on an analysis of oracle text usages of the term *di*. It is not controversial to claim that the term is used generically—some late Shang kings are routinely referred to by their cyclical stem designation, prefixed with the honorific *di*, during the generation when their sons rule as kings. Nor is there doubt about the collective use of the term when marked; for example, the phrase *shangxia di* 上下帝 (the *di* above and below) appears in the texts, and although the specific referents for the term are debated, the fact that *di* refers to a collection of spirits is unambiguous. Extrapolating these ideas into the remainder of the corpus requires an adjustment of interpretation, such that, for example, texts formerly read "Di orders X," be read, "The Powers order X." This hypothesis has the advantage of explaining the apparent absence of cult to Di without recourse to later texts, since *di*, as a collective term without delimited scope, would not be an appropriate reference for objects of sacrifice.[93]

The use of *di* in this way is related, under this proposal, to an etymology of the term that links it to kinship terminology applied to the relation between father and male heir, the term for the latter being denoted by *di* 嫡, a cognate graph.[94] This accounts for the use of the term generically to designate the deceased father of a king ruling as his immediate heir. It also suggests that the collective term may not include Powers that are not related to the core Shang lineage, descending from Shang-jia, or perhaps from the extended lineage, including figures such as Kui and Wang-hai.

An interpretation along these lines would weaken the basis for imputing a unifying structure to the pantheon. It would also shift to the successor dynasty, the Zhou, the religious innovation of a single supreme deity governing all aspects of the experienced world. But this proposal must overcome significant counter-evidence, the strongest appearing in a set of inscriptions on one plastron that place Di in a series with several named kings in the context of a "guest ritual" (*bin* 穷) wherein senior Powers host their juniors (*HJ* 1402). Within this set, Di appears as a host to the

[92] "Was there a high god Ti in Shang religion?" pp. 6–14.

[93] The fact that for certain forms of inscriptions, *di* is used only in parallel with collective nouns such as *duobi* 多妣 (the many consorts) is also explained ("Was there a high god Ti," pp. 12-13).

[94] Pankenier uses the same etymological argument ("A brief history," pp. 234–35).

next most senior king named (Cheng Tang), indicating both individual character and senior status.[95] The inscriptions on *HJ* 1402 are an obstacle to acceptance of the hypothesis of *di* as a collective term.[96]

These three approaches to the issue of the High Power Di illustrate the extent to which basic ambiguities exist in our understanding of the Shang state pantheon. These problems are further intensified by the fact that the shape of the active pantheon—that is, the world of Powers reflected in the oracle texts—changes over time. Shang religious practice does not appear to have remained static over the period of the oracle texts, and we need to consider what these changes were and how they affect our understanding of Shang state religion

The perspective beyond the king

The vast majority of oracle texts are the products of divination workshops under the direct authority of the ruling king. However, in 1991, a team of archaeologists from the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences discovered a cache of over 500 inscribed turtle plastrons east of Huayuanzhuang 花園莊, an area within the larger site of Yinxu, the last Shang capital. The Huayuanzhuang inscriptions were published in 2003, and they have the potential to broaden substantially our understanding of Shang ritual and religious practices, because they record divinations done or commissioned by a prince of the Zi clan, rather than by the king.[97] While these are not the first such inscriptions known—a substantial

[95] "Was there a high god Ti?" pp. 10–11.

[96] Clearly, my own view is that the inconsistency is isolated enough that the general hypothesis can stand, but others have interpreted this differently (see Michael J. Puett, *To become a god: cosmology, sacrifice, and self-divinization in early China* [Cambridge, Mass., 2002], p. 48), and I have not employed it in the general discussion here. It should be noted that the *bin* ritual oracle texts of this form, which appear on only three oracle bones, are anomalous under any interpretation of Di. With the exception of Di, all Powers involved are Dynastic Kings, Cheng Tang being the earliest. This would seem to imply, if Di is an individual, that he should be identified with Shang-jia, the Pre-dynastic senior member of the core lineage; yet to accept that Shang-jia is Di would invite all the objections that apply to the theory that Ku is Di. If we allow Di an identity beyond the lineage, supposing, as some do, that these inscriptions are rare records of indirect sacrifice through an intermediary to a remote high deity, we are left with the problem that the same form is applied to Powers that can receive cult directly, including, in a separate inscription, Zu-yi 祖乙, a trunk line king only four generations removed from the *bin* divination in question (*HJ* 1657).

[97] For publication information, see n. 31. About one thousand uninscribed shells were also recovered.

body of "non-regal" oracle texts (*fei wang buci* 非王卜辭) has been identified in the past—the Huayuanzhuang finds represent a uniquely large and coherent set of texts that reflects a religious perspective other than the king's.[98]

The master of the Huayuanzhuang oracle texts is referred to only as Zi 子: "the Prince."[99] The inscriptions record numerous sacrifices to the Prince's ancestors; they are members of the royal lineage whom we recognize. On the basis of the divination pattern, it would appear that the Prince was a lineal descendant of the 14th dynastic ruler, Wo-jia 沃甲, a king three generations prior to Wu-ding who was not honored as a member of the lineage trunk line.[100] The inscriptions appear to extend from a period during the life of Wu-ding's initial consort, Lady Hao (Fu Hao 婦好), with whom the Prince seems to have had a close relationship, to a period after the death of Wu-ding. The Prince apparently lived in the capital region, but visits from the king were events worthy of divination.

These new materials, together with non-regal inscriptions identified earlier, allow us to explore for features that may distinguish the oracle practices of the king, which we presume reflect "state" concerns, from those of the princes. Differences we can discern may help clarify which aspects of divination practice were uniquely tied to the king's political role. A survey of the texts suggests the following conclusions:[101]

1. Princes did not offer cult or prayer to figures beyond the Shang lineage ancestors. The Prince was active in worshipping a range of ancestors, but Nature Powers such as the River and Mountain Powers do not appear, nor does it seem that any Former Lords are included in the inventory of sacrificial objects.[102] We do not encounter Di.

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[98] I employ the awkward term "non-regal" to indicate that while the authority governing the texts was a member of the royal lineage, it was not the reigning king. On non-regal texts other than the Huayuanzhuang corpus, see Li Xueqin and Peng Yushang, *Yinxu jiagu fenqi yanjiu*, pp. 313–327. The authority governing Huayuanzhuang divinations was clearly a different prince from those involved in other non-regal inscriptions (*Huayuanzhuang*, 26).

[99] It is an unfortunate coincidence that the name of the royal clan, the term used for its princes, and the designation used for this prince, are all identical. "The Prince" will refer to the Huayuanzhuang prince.

[100] *Huayuanzhuang*, p. 28.

[101] The comments that follow are based on the Huayuanzhuang inscriptions plus oracle texts divined by Zi-group diviners collected in *HJ* and listed at *Y* 1492. Zi-group inscriptions were associated with a royal prince different from the prince of the Huayuanzhuang texts (see n. 98 above).

[102] My conclusion here differs from that of the *Huayuanzhuang* editors. They identify

2. Princes divine about natural phenomena, but do not seek to influence them. The Prince routinely divines about rain in anticipation of traveling, hunting, and so forth. But he does not pray (*ben* 𠦪) for rain,[103] nor is he concerned, in the texts, with the harvest.[104]

3. Princes do divine about matters of war, but probably only in terms of the impact of war on them personally. Among the most well-known inscriptions concerning war during the era of Wu-ding are those that divine about plans to send the consort Lady Hao to join in league with a Shang ally named Zhi Guo 沚 戓 in mounting a campaign against the Ba 巴 people. We see the Prince divine about a similar campaign:

> 15. 辛未卜・丁隹好令从白[illegible]伐卲・
>
> Cracking on *xinwei* day about whether [Wu]-ding will order [Lady] Hao to follow Elder Huo in attacking the Shao.[105] (*HD* 237)
>
> 16. 辛未卜・丁隹子[令]从白[illegible]伐卲・
>
> Cracking on *xinwei* day about whether [Wu]-ding will [order] the Prince to follow Elder Huo in attacking the Shao. (*HD* 275)

Kui (*Huayuanzhuang*, 1575), and a number of Former Lords not previously encountered. In my view, all three instances of the character they read as Kui probably employ the graph to represent a place name (*HD* 37, 63, 195). A graph that the editors interpret as the Dark Bird, mythical progenitor of the Shang (*Huayuanzhuang*, 1557), also is equally well taken to be a place name in its sole appearance (*HD* 3). Another possible Former Lord (*Huayuanzhuang*, 1582), encountered in *HD* 53, seems likely to be a verb of motion. There are, in the *Huayuanzhuang* corpus, three inscriptions that concern cult to a Pre-dynastic King, Shang-jia (*HD* 338, 459, 487). Otherwise, the Prince's sacrificial activity is confined to dynastic ancestors.

[103] The term *ben*, common in regal inscriptions, occurs only once in the Huayuanzhuang corpus (*HD* 187 [3]); the Power addressed is an ancestress.

[104] The *Huayuanzhuang* editors read *HD* 290 (4–6) as a divination set concerning astronomical phenomena, perhaps the timing of a stellar emergence or a solstice (1681). Their reading is plausible, but not necessary, and in light of the general absence of such concerns, I think more evidence is required before this line of reasoning can be pursued. A different text, *HD* 159, may provide further support, once it is fully understood. It seems concerned with a lunar phenomenon; the Prince's prognostication suggests he is tracking the moon in order to schedule a ritual.

[105] The identification of Ding with Wu-ding is made by the Huayuanzhuang editors, and is generally granted by those who have published studies of these texts. The implications of the fact that Wu-ding's cyclical stem designation could have served as a name for him in life, rather than being a posthumous designation locating him among the temples of the royal dead, are substantial, but more analysis of these new materials will be needed before these issues will be fully clarified. Zhi Guo is generally interpreted as meaning Guo of the Zhi territory/tribe; both the role and name of Elder Huo correspond closely, though the identity of the two figures is not certain (I follow the *Huayuanzhuang* editors in the reading Huo).

There is an ambiguity as to whether what is being divined about concerns what the king *should* do or what he *will* do. If the issue is the former, then the Prince may be divining as a participant in decision making, and the response conveyed by the spirits through the shell will be a matter of state concern. If the question raised in these two inscriptions (divined on the same day) is whether the king will choose to mobilize Lady Hao or the Prince, the issue would likely be one of personal concern to the Prince. Given that these inscriptions would stand virtually alone as divinations of state matters if the subject concerned what Wu-ding ought to do, the latter interpretation seems more probable.

These three principles, if the evidence bears them out, would lead toward a conclusion that in matters of state, such as ensuring good harvests and success in war, the king held a monopoly on oracular privilege. Moreover, the first principle suggests that among the Shang elite, at least, worship of Powers beyond the Shang lineage was a matter of state. These deities were not accessible to individuals—this was the thearch's prerogative.

However, a number of other features of the Huayuanzhuang texts broaden certain features of religious practice. For example, non-regal inscribed materials show that princes of the Zi lineages were equipped like the king with specialized staffs, expert in preparation of oracle bones, in divination and in writing skills. In the Huayuanzhuang corpus, the Prince is not only himself a trained diviner with specialist diviners under his authority, he is also trained to prognosticate, and in some cases, his predictions are verified.

17. 辛未卜・擒 ・子[illegible] 曰其擒 ・用・ 三麑・

Cracking on *xinwei* day about capturing [in the hunt]. The Prince prognosticated saying, We will have a capture. [This oracle was] employed. Three deer [were captured]. (*HD* 234)

18. 辛亥卜貞・玉羌又疾不死・ 子[illegible] 曰羌其死隹今・其[illegible] 隹今・

Cracking on *xinwei* day divining about whether Yuqiang's illness would not be fatal. The Prince prognosticated saying, Qiang will die today; disaster will occur today. (*HD* 241)

In (17), we see the Prince's prognostication borne out; as in the case of the king's prognostications, verifications in the Huayuanzhuang corpus confirm the Prince's power to foretell, though they are rarely recorded. In (18), the Prince seems to prognosticate from concern about a person under his authority, and there are numerous other such cases in the

corpus, suggesting that within his domain of authority, he played a role analogous to the king.[106]

Large numbers of bones and shells prepared for oracle use but uninscribed have been recovered from other sectors of the Yinxu site. Such materials generally display techniques of preparation less skilled than those we see in the products of royal oracle workshops, and the bone materials are less standardized, but these bones demonstrate that the religious practice of scapulimancy was likely very much a part of popular religious practice over a broad area and among sectors of society beyond the royal house.[107] What distinguishes royal practice is the evidence of literacy and its application to the record keeping of the inscriptions. The Huayuanzhuang materials, joined with other non-regal inscriptions, take us only one step from the king, but they do seem to assist us in assessing the dimensions of religious practice assigned to the king as concerns of state. They establish a likelihood that even if all Yinxu oracle bones were inscribed, we would not find that people more distant from the king prayed to Powers for harvest and success in war. If the Prince left those tasks to the King, it is likely that others did as well, understanding them as both his prerogative and as service only the king was able to accomplish.

Change and structure of the oracle text pantheon

The contraction of the pantheon

When Dong Zuobin published the earliest systematic periodization of Shang oracle texts, he perceived five distinct stages in their evolution, the first corresponding to the reign of the 21st dynastic king, Wu-ding,

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[106] For example, the Prince could issue orders (*HD* 125), an activity confined in other oracle texts to the king and to Di.

[107] See Liu Yiman 劉一曼, "Anyang Yinxu jiagu chutu jiqi xiangguan wenti," 安陽殷墟甲骨出土及其相關問題, *Kaogu* 1997.5, 61–71. We must bear in mind that uninscribed oracle bones have been found at widely dispersed sites that date from the late Neolithic. This was by no means a religious practice confined to the Shang people, much less the Shang royal house. Poo Mu-chou has claimed that without the context of broad social engagement in oracle divination, the use of the medium would not have served a legitimating function (*In search of personal welfare: a view of ancient Chinese religion* [Albany, 1998]), p. 27.

and the others each extending through the reigns of two of the remaining eight Shang kings, as follows:

Period I	Wu-ding 武丁 (r. ca. 1250–1192)	Early Era
Period II	Zu-geng 祖庚 (r. ca. 1191–1181)	
	Zu-jia 祖甲 (r. ca. 1180–1161)	Later Era
Period III	Lin-xin 廩辛	
	Kang-ding 康丁	
Period IV	Wu-yi 武乙 (r. ca. ?–1113)	
	Wen-ding 文丁 (r. ca. 1112–1102)	
Period V	Di-yi 帝乙 (r. ca. 1101–1076)	
	Di-xin 帝辛 (r. ca. 1075–1046)[108]	

Dong claimed that over this period, pyromantic religious practice had alternated in form between two schools, one of which divined about a very broad range of issues with regard to a spirit world populated with a wide variety of figures, and another which confined its concerns much more narrowly to divinations concerning the performance of sacrifices to royal ancestors. The former practice, the "Old School," prevailed during Period I, the reign of Wu-ding, and the first part of Period II, when Wu-ding's son Zu-geng briefly ruled. It was revived during the reign of Wen-ding in the latter half of Period IV. The "New School" was the innovation of Wu-ding's second son, Zu-jia, whose reign constitutes the latter half of Period II. Apart from the reign of Wen-ding, it prevailed through Period V and the close of the dynasty.[109] Although Dong's five-period scheme is still used today, conjointly with a categorization based on groups of named or unnamed diviners whose texts and their scripts share similar characteristics, Dong's model of religious contention between schools alternating in power is no longer accepted. A revision inspired by observations first made by Li Xueqin in the 1970s, which relocated a large set of oracle texts from Period IV to Period I and early Period II, has eliminated the "Old School" characteristics of Period IV. Scholars now see a single transition, distinguishing the practices of Period I and later periods. New practices are fully observed by the reign

[108] The dates for Zu-geng and Zu-jia adapt Keightley's scheme in "The Shang" in *Cambridge history* (pp. 240–41) to the *Xia-Shang-Zhou* project template, which gives no dates for kings Zu-geng through Kang-ding. The difference between the two approaches concerning the length of Wu-yi's reign is too great to adapt in this simple scheme.

[109] Dong Zuobin, *Yin lipu* 1.2b–4b.

of the second Period II king, Zu-jia; the brief reign of his elder brother Zu-geng plays a transitional role.[110] For purposes of simplicity, we can refer to Early and Later Eras in oracle text practice, understanding that within the Later Era, there continues to be some evolution.

The impact of this change in periodization on our view of the pantheon and the nature of state religion in the Shang is profound. Most simply stated, it is only in the Early Era that we see the full pantheon active in the inscriptions. For example, by rough count, Di appears in Later Era texts with about one-seventh the frequency of the Early Era and the proportion for the River Power is comparable.[111] By Period V, these Powers have virtually disappeared from the pantheon, as visible in the oracle texts.

Beginning with Period II inscriptions, we see a move to regularize worship of the core lineage ancestors, from Shang-jia down. A complex but coherent sacrificial calendar emerges, assigning to each ancestral king and heir-bearing consort a place in a sequence of rituals and distinct forms of cult offering, honoring ancestors on the day of the week corresponding to their cyclical stem temple names.[112] The core of this system was a set of five forms of cult offering, the set annually preceded by an initiating ritual, each of which ancestors received individually, taking their turns, in a cycle that came to extend over the entire calendar year.[113] By Period V, this system had developed into a topic of divination overwhelming all others. Oracle divinations concerning the wide variety of topics that characterize Period I had dwindled toward this focus on routine divinations about the sacrificial schedule.[114]

To interpret this change, we must bear in mind that Wu-ding, the sole king during Period I, is recorded in history as an exceptionally strong

[110] Keightley, "The making of the ancestors," 30–34. According to the analysis of Li Xueqin and Peng Yushang, the latest texts exemplifying a full range of early characteristics ("Li-group inscriptions") likely belong to the reign of Zu-geng, perhaps extending to Zu Jia (*Yinxu jiagu fenqi yanjiu*, pp. 267–68).

[111] These counts compare Period I with Periods III and V, using *HJ* dating schemes and accounting for the very different sizes of the corpus for each period.

[112] Not all heir-bearing consorts were included in this schedule: pre-dynastic consorts and those whose sons were not part of the royal trunk line were excluded. There seems to have been a distinction in sacrificial form between male and female ancestors; see Chang Yuzhi, *Shangdai zhouji zhidu*, p. 15. Chang's study remains the most definitive account of this system.

[113] These five rituals were designated by the terms *yi* 翌, *yong* 彡, *ji* 祭, *cai* 𡨦, and *xie* 劦.

[114] See Keightley, "Shang divination and metaphysics," pp. 381–82.

ruler. He is one of the few Shang kings to whom the *Shiji* devotes a narrative account, praising his ability to bring order to the state after a period of decline. Oracle texts indicate his long era was one of high military activity, and it appears that after his reign the power of the state moved into a slow decline.[115] Moreover, it is under Wu-ding's authority that the dramatic innovation of recording in writing all oracle interactions with the spirit world appears to have been initiated. Given that Period I texts account for almost 60 percent of the corpus recovered to date, while representing, at most, 30 percent of the duration of the oracle text era, it seems reasonable to view Wu-ding as a ruler with an unusually heightened concern about the spirit world, and one likely to encourage an expansive view of its population and of the king's responsibilities in relation to it. Keightley has described the transition in oracle practice in terms of the exceptional reforms of Wu-ding's sons, particularly Zu-jia, and regrets the paucity of information that might provide insight into the unusual personal character that would allow Zu-jia to play so revolutionary a role in Shang religion.[116] It may, however, be that Wu-ding was an aberration, and that his sons merely returned royal practice toward a pre-existing norm, while retaining the innovation of written oracle notation. In assessing the state religion of the Shang, we must allow for the fact that the synchronic portrait of the pantheon we have outlined here may be more representative of ideology and practice under a single exceptional king than of the Shang period as a whole.

The changes we can observe by comparing religious practice reflected in oracle texts of Periods I and V are subject to a variety of interpretations. They may have more to do with the status of scapulimancy than with religious ideology and practice per se. It may be that while matters pertaining to lineage were seen as appropriately divined through bones, other forms of divination came to be employed for matters more

[115] Keightley, "The late Shang state," p. 546; "The Shang," *Cambridge history*, pp. 288–89. This decline was very likely the continuation of a long-term trend. The move of the Shang capital to Anyang by Pan-geng, one generation and three kings prior to the reign of Wu-ding, is portrayed in the *Shang shu* 尚書 "Pan-geng" 盤庚 chapters as a response to undefined threats to the state, rather than as a move from strength, and the *Shiji* chronicle indicates that both Pan-geng and Wu-ding "revived" the health of the dynasty. The size of the probable previous capital complex at Zhengzhou 鄭州 not only suggests an earlier period of greater state power, but one in which the state's central place was appropriately located on prime religious real estate, near to both the Yellow River and Mt. Song.

[116] Keightley, "The making of the ancestors," pp. 30–34.

directly pertaining to the state. Alternatively, it may be that the state was increasingly viewed by the Shang kings in terms of their lineage Powers, either in the sense that religious ideology had enlarged the authority of these Powers, or that Shang kings had ceased to subscribe to the notion that other portions of the pantheon mattered.

While it may seem that this apparent abandonment of more "universal" Powers in favor of lineage figures should be interpreted as a relinquishing of state religion and the legitimizing role of the Shang king as a thearch, there is evidence that the lineage sacrifices of Period V were events in some sense in public view. It is during this era that we see the emergence of inscriptions on ritual bronze vessels, cast for individuals other than the king. In many of these vessels, the dating formulas employed make specific reference to the royal cycle of five regularly scheduled ancestral sacrifices. For example:

> On *wuchen* day, Qiangshi presented X (𦁛) a container of cowrie shells from X-hu ([illegible] 戶). Wherefore [I, 𦁛] have made this precious vessel for Father Yi.
> Dated the Eleventh Month, in the twentieth year of the king's reign, on the day of the *xie* cyclical sacrifice when a pig was offered to Ancestress Wu, the consort of Wu-yi.[117]

We cannot determine the relation of the person who commissioned this inscription to the king and the royal lineage. It could be that his interest in the sacrifice to Ancestress Wu indicates that he was her princely descendant by King Wu-yi. But if not, then this and similar inscriptions might signify that the sacrifices to Shang kings and consorts, whose schedule had grown to be so closely coterminous with the annual calendar that the late Shang word for "year" was *si* 祀, "sacrifice," had become part of the rhythm of the life of the Shang state beyond the Zi lineage.

Proto-bureaucratic features and the Shang pantheon

David Keightley, in a series of publications extending over several decades, has argued that various features of Shang religious practice exhibit "proto-bureaucratic" traits that may have been ancestral to later

[117] X *gui* 𦁛 毁; *Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng* 殷周金文集成 (Shanghai, 1984) vol. 8, #4144.

forms of religious and political ideology in China.[118] Changes in oracle text activity after Wu-ding's reign may be related to certain features of this tendency, including increased depersonalization of Powers, rationalization of the pantheon, routinization of divination practice and elimination of aspects not subject to regular schedules, and so forth. For Keightley, these changes take place within the context of a structure already exhibiting in Wu-ding's time features of hierarchy basic to bureaucracy, such as an all-powerful deity at the apex of the pantheon, who can "order" subordinates, and evidence that a major portion of the pantheon, the Shang core lineage, was structured according to strict criteria of seniority. While Keightley classifies the late Shang state as a patrimonial dynastic form and stresses the "proto-" nature of the bureaucratic features he identifies, his suggestion that these structures prefigure future cultural developments has been widely noted.[119]

Many aspects of Keightley's analysis are clearly accurate and will remain fundamental to our understanding of the oracle texts and royal religious practice. The increasing routinization of divination and the oracle records, and the strict hierarchy of age to which lineage Powers are subject in the context of cult worship are documented to a degree that virtually rules out the possibility that counter-evidence will emerge. If we associate bureaucracy with activities that require complete predictability and hierarchical structures, and that stipulate in writing certain types of expectations, the oracle texts certainly evidence these in increasing degrees.[120] The taxonomic impulse seems to grow throughout the corpus.

However, on a number of fronts, the interpretation of the pantheon and the relation of the living to it in terms of proto-bureaucratic ideol-

[118] I am drawing here on a lengthy progression in Keightley's thinking, and this brief characterization will not do justice to the nuance he has brought to these issues. The following publications are particularly relevant: "The religious commitment: Shang theology and the genesis of Chinese political culture," *History of Religions* 17.3–4 (1978), pp. 211–225; "Shang divination and metaphysics"; "The making of the ancestors."

[119] Keightley's typological characterization of the Shang state in Weberian terms appears in "The late Shang state," p. 554.

[120] Keightley enumerates the criteria he uses to measure bureaucratic features in terms of Weberian categories in "The religious commitment," p. 214, n. 12. Part of Keightley's view concerns what he sees as a "contractual" relationship between the living and ancestors offered cult, focused on the *ce* 𠕋 ritual, which in Keightley's view involved a pledge to offer cult provisional upon the granting of a prayer ("The making of the ancestors," pp. 9–10). The interpretation works well in most cases, and should be seen as supporting Keightley's broader arguments.

ogy is not unproblematic. Hierarchy without functional distinction and impersonality that assigns all importance to ascriptive features may in many ways be inimical to bureaucracy, using that term strictly.

If we examine the initial structures implicit in Period I texts, we find that the evidence for an ordered hierarchy with functional divisions does not seem strong. The "command structure" emanating from Di, in which Di can order other Powers, as opposed to ordering that phenomena occur, appears in so small a number of inscriptions that its importance, or even its existence, can be questioned. The most celebrated example of subordinates to Di, the "Five Ministers of Di," or "Five Great Ministers of Di," appear on no more than three bones datable to Period I and one datable to Period III.[121] Other inscriptions directly suggesting Powers subordinate to Di are equally rare; for example, the much quoted designation "Di's Envoy Wind" appears only once.[122] The notion that Di acted as the chief executive of the ancestral sector of the pantheon is also not well documented. Its chief support is Di's appearance in a single inscription set, discussed earlier, where he is the apparent senior figure in a hierarchical rite of hosting.[123] Given these problems, the only hierarchy that we may assert to have clear definition in the oracle texts, becoming more profound as the corpus evolves, is the age-based hierarchy of the ancestral pantheon. While this type of hierarchy may be impersonal, in the sense that in the oracle texts we sense no idiosyncratic character features among the ancestors, it is deeply personal in that it is based entirely on ascriptive traits of lineage association, typical of kinship-based patrimonial organization and antithetical to the social impersonality that distinguished bureaucratic organization.

If we search for functional distinctions among the members of the pantheon we cannot look to the latest period of inscriptions, since by the end of the dynasty the pantheon has been reduced to ancestors passively receiving cult. In earlier texts, although it is clear that there

[121] Period I: *HJ* 34148, 34149 (on the latter, the word "ministers" is actually assumed from context), *Tunnan* 930; the texts are dated to Period IV in *Y*, but they seem clearly to belong to the Li diviner group and should be assigned to Period I (I have not seen the *Tunnan* rubbing). Period III: *HJ* 30391. Four additional bones refer to *di chen* 帝臣 ("ministers of Di): *HJ* 217, 14223, 30298 and *White* 897, all Period I except for *HJ* 30298, which is dated Period III. On the transcription of *di wu X chen* 帝五丯臣, "Five X Ministers of Di," reading 丯 as *jie* 介, in the sense of "great," see Yao Xiaosui, *Xiaotun nandi jiagu kaoshi* 小屯南地甲骨考釋 (Beijing, 1985), pp. 77–78.

[122] *HJ* 14225. The inscription is fragmentary and open to other interpretations.

[123] *HJ* 1402. Puett offers an interpretation that lays stress on the role of these inscriptions in linking Di to the ancestral pantheon (*To become a god*, pp. 49–50).

are differences of function among the many Powers, the overlap is very broad. As we have seen, for example, Powers controlling natural phenomena include Di, Nature Powers, Former Lords, Pre-dynastic Kings, and even in one case, the Dynastic King Da-yi, whose reach beyond an expected role may reflect the force of the state founder's personal charisma. Reports of the activities of enemy tribes are made to a wide array of Powers, including the River Power, Shang-jia and other individual and collective members of Pre-dynastic Kings, Da-yi (called Tang 唐 in this context), Da-jia, Zu-yi and the Former Lord Yi Yin.[124] The Shang had no "God of Rain" or "God of War."

This does not mean that oracles were sought among the Powers at random. It is certainly true that when Wu-ding's tooth ached, only ancestors heard the report, and we might conclude that when the oracle texts worry about whether the River Power may "harm the King," they are concerned with the king's state interests, rather than his physical person.[125] There are clearly some distinctions made as to which Powers are appropriately engaged with particular areas of activity. But the evidence may not warrant suggesting that these features are precursors of aspects of Chinese society and religious ideology that are, in their age, profoundly bureaucratic.[126]

But questioning here whether the pantheon exhibits proto-bureaucratic features is not to dispute Keightley's assertion that divination practice itself reflects the emergence of preconditions for bureaucratic state structures, which seems profoundly correct. If we follow Keightley's insight, the true father of bureaucracy in China may be best conceived

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[124] These inscriptions are collected at *Y* 250.

[125] For divinations concerning toothaches, see *Y* 826–27a; see also *Y* 251a for reports off illness (*ji* 疾). The River Power's effect on the king is divined in *HJ* 776.

[126] There is, of course, the possibility that the oracle texts were not inscribed as records, but were themselves, together with the bones and shells, the medium of communication with the Powers. Olivier Venture has made a strong case against this idea, arguing that such a function would be anachronistic until a far later period ("L'écriture et la communication avec les esprits en Chine ancienne," *Bulletin of The Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities* 74 [2002], 34–65). Zhang Guoshi 張國碩 has adopted a similar point of view, but maintained that the inscriptions were not intended as enduring records, in the manner of an historical bureau, but were ephemera inscribed and preserved only so long as they related to the ongoing needs of the divination workshop. He proposes that the untidy "filing" method adopted for these materials—burial in pits—was the point at which their creators consigned them to the spirits in a gesture of sanctification ("Lun Shangdai jiagu buyong hou de chuzhi" 論商代甲骨卜用後的處置, Wang Yuxin et al., *Jinian Yinxu jiaguwen*, pp. 352–57).

as Wu-ding, the king who apparently first added clerks to the thearch's staff of specialists in spirit communication.[127]

Shang religion beyond the oracle texts

As mentioned at the outset, the size and richness of the oracle text corpus may convey a sense that it reflects the essence of Shang religion, or at least Shang state religion. But there is no reason to believe that all important aspects of Shang religious practice are represented in the oracle texts, and considerable reason to believe that some central features either escape the texts' view entirely or are substantially less prominent than would be the case if we could observe religious conduct and listen to the Shang people speak about the world of spirits. We have already seen an aspect of this in our encounter with the named winds of the cardinal directions. These figures appear in, at most, two recovered divination texts, implying a role of little significance. But the fact that these names emerge in received texts likely composed a millennium later demonstrates their resilience within some part of the tradition, even as the great gap in time between these records remains equally in need of explanation.

In concluding our survey of Shang state religion, we will briefly consider several aspects of religious practice that oracle texts alone do not seem adequately to document.

[127] We might go further and say that the employment of writing itself in the service of the state may be an innovation of Wu-ding's time, and while we may, of course, simply be missing records written on perishable materials from earlier eras or from contemporary sources apart from bone and shell, the absence of even bronze inscriptions until the final stages of the Shang tends to support a late date for the innovation of writing (William G. Boltz, "Language and writing," *Cambridge history*, pp. 106–8). The question of when writing emerges is an unsettled one. In 1993, publication of an inscribed shard from the Longshan site of Dinggong 丁公 in Shandong Province seemed to confirm a mature system of writing about a millennium earlier than the oracle texts (though one that bore no clear relation to Shang script); however, Cao Dingyun 曹定雲 has convincingly demonstrated that this was very likely a fraud ("Shandong Zouping Dinggong yizhi 'Longshan taowen' bian wei" 山東鄒平丁公遺址 "龍山陶文" 辨僞, *Zhongyuan wenwu* 中原文物 1996.2, 32–38).

Astronomical and milfoil divination

From the earliest analyses of oracle texts, it became clear that the Shang state possessed a profound knowledge of astronomy, expressed through the complex calendars that divination practices reflect.[128] However, although there are exceptions, particularly concerning issues of eclipses, we do not find numerous divinations concerning celestial events, asterisms, and so forth, and the degree to which the sky was a field of religious importance for the Shang is difficult to attest from the oracle texts.[129] Nevertheless, in a series of studies, David Pankenier has attempted to illustrate that many passages in received texts, when read in light of reconstructions of the night sky of North China in the 2nd millennium BC, demonstrate that interpretation of celestial phenomena was a central feature of Shang religious understanding.

Pankenier's case focuses on an association between documented astronomical events and the Shang-Zhou transition. In Pankenier's view, a Grand Conjunction of all five visible planets in 1059 BC formed a "text" that the Zhou subjects of the Shang interpreted as the shift of political legitimacy licensing them to prepare to overthrow the Shang royal house.[130] Pankenier illustrates how the entire, puzzling *Shiji* account of the ultimate conquest of the Shang by King Wu of the Zhou can be unpacked in terms of observations of the motion of the planets against a stellar field interpreted as a geographical analogue to China, an astrological template well attested from the Warring States era on.[131] Pankenier further demonstrates how the dates that the *Zhushu jinian* gives for the founding of the Shang suggest that a similarly extraordinary, though somewhat different, planetary conjunction, occurring in 1576 BC, was the impetus for Cheng Tang's overthrow of the Xia Dynasty. If Pankenier is correct, few aspects of religious ideology could be considered more central to state religion in the Shang than these astronomical issues.

Pankenier's view of the importance of astrology to the Shang finds some confirmation in the calendrical sophistication and interest in eclipses the oracle texts record. But we would expect far more than we

[128] Dong Zuobin, *Yin lipu* 3.1a–2b.

[129] See Keightley's comments in *The ancestral landscape*, pp. 28–29.

[130] These arguments are presented in David Pankenier, "Astronomical dates in Shang and Western Zhou," *Early China* 7 (1981–82), pp. 2–37. Pankenier notes that Grand Conjunctions occur at intervals of approximately five centuries, and are thus, for cultures observant of the sky, likely to be associated with portentous events.

[131] "Astronomical dates," pp. 14–16.

have. For example, according to Pankenier's model, retrograde planetary motion, which could not be predicted in the Shang, would have been of great importance in foretelling events, since the motion of the planets over the "map" of China that the stellar field represented would have been filled with portent. Yet we do not see divinations concerning these phenomena in the oracle texts. This may weaken the strength of Pankenier's theories, but it may be equally cogent to suggest that for certain types of information about the meanings of events or the shape of the future, the Shang state did not turn to the specialists of the bone divination workshops.

The existence of alternative divination methods during the Shang, perhaps employed for purposes different from those of oracle bones or by groups beyond the royal lineage, has been confirmed by inscriptions on ritual bronze vessels and some oracle bones of numerical signs ordered in "stacks" of three to six numerals. These were identified by Zhang Zhenglang 張政烺 as trigrams and hexagrams, the elements that during the Zhou era developed into the milfoil divination tradition of the *Yijing* 易經.[132] While there is no evidence to indicate how the *Yijing*, —generally viewed as a Zhou text—and Shang practice were related, the tradition reported in later texts that divination by turtle shell and milfoil were complementary seems to have been an aspect of Shang religious practice.

Animals in Shang worship

The most famous artifacts of Shang religious practice are the ritual vessels that bronze workshops at Anyang and elsewhere manufactured with astonishing skill. Bronze was the most advanced and costly technology of the time, and the Shang chose to invest a very high proportion of its most precious natural and human resources in this ritual industry, in service to the dead, who were nourished from these vessels.[133] It is very likely that the characteristic decorative motifs of these vessels,

[132] Zhang's report of his findings, originally published in *Kaogu xuebao* 1980.4, has been translated into English and published as Chang Cheng-lang, "An interpretation of the divinatory inscriptions on early Chou bronzes," in *Early China* 6 (1980–81), pp. 80–96. See also, Cai Yunzhang 蔡運章, "Shang-Zhou shishu *Yi* gua shili" 商周筮數易卦釋例, *Kaogu xuebao* 考古學報 2004.2, pp. 131–156.

[133] Kwang-Chih Chang has argued that the frequent movements of the Shang capital were dictated by the need for continued access to sources of copper and tin for the bronze industry (*The archaeology of ancient China* 4th ed. [New Haven, 1986], p. 367).

chiefly stylized and exploded forms of animal imagery, had religious significance.[134] While animals are very much a part of the oracle text landscape, in the form of targets of the hunt and sacrificial victims, and they provided, in their bones and shells, the medium of communication the spirits used, the oracle materials alone might not lead us to expect the fantastic, nearly exclusive, and increasingly pervasive presence of animal imagery on ritual bronzes.[135] We will close this overview of Shang state religion with a brief look at three different approaches to the significance of animals and of bronze imagery.

Shamanism in the Shang

Oracle inscriptions employ in a variety of ways the graph [illegible], which is generally taken to be a form of *wu* 巫: "shaman." Although instances of the graph are uncommon, the importance of *wu* in later religious practice has focused considerable attention on its presence in the oracle texts and the wider implications for Shang religion.[136]

Kwang-Chih Chang was, perhaps, the scholar most closely associated with an expansive view of the role of shamanism in Shang religion, and he focused on bronze decorative motifs, arguing that they could be interpreted as emblems of the shaman's ability to communicate with the spirit world through the medium of animals, an ability shared by diviners working with animal bones, who might also be viewed as shamans.[137]

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[134] Robert Bagley, building on the theories of Max Loehr, argues strongly that the animal motifs on Shang bronzes evolved from purely artistic imperatives, and that they carry no specific religious significance (*Shang ritual bronzes in the Arthur M. Sackler collection* [Cambridge, Mass., 1987], pp. 21–22). The success of Loehr's analysis of stylistic evolution in predicting the dates of excavated vessels, and its function in discouraging literal correspondences between imagery and myth, command respect. However, I do not think that it is necessary to reason from the cogency of stylistic evolution that religious factors must be excluded.

[135] For an overview of the role of animals in Shang life and religion, see Keightley's discussion in *The ancestral landscape*, pp. 107–13.

[136] For the list of relevant oracle texts, see *Y* 1119–20. The most frequent use is in the mystifying Period V expression 今𡆥 巫九备, which has yet to be explained. Some scholars relate the graph to the person of Wu Xian 巫咸, who appears as an historical figure in received texts. Feng Shi reads the *bin* ritual inscriptions, discussed earlier in connection with Di, as involving [Wu] Xian, rather than Cheng [Tang] (the graph on the relevant bone, *HJ* 1402, is, in fact, [illegible] [咸]), thus linking shamans with both dynastic ancestors and Di (*Zhongguo tianwen kaoguxue*, pp. 60–61).

[137] See especially his *Art, myth, and ritual: the path to political authority in ancient China* (Cambridge, Mass., 1983), pp. 54–55, 64–75. Among other prominent scholars who have emphasized this view are Chen Mengjia and Akatsuka Kiyoshi 赤塚忠 (see Keightley, "The Shang," p. 262, n. 59).

Since the Shang kings are often themselves named as the diviners in oracle texts, this approach suggests that Shang thearchy was based, in part, on the shamanic powers of the royal descent group. These issues highlight the degree to which we may not yet understand the numinous context of the divination process.[138]

This emphasis on shamanism, at least shamanism in the classical sense involving ecstatic trance and personal communion with spirits, has been rejected by Keightley, who has proposed that the term *wu* carried a meaning unrelated to spirit mediation in the Shang, referring instead to a set of directional Nature Powers.[139] While Keightley's proposal is speculative, the positive evidence for Shang shamanism—at least in religious forms sanctioned by the state—is indeed difficult to assess. Even if we grant that the oracle text term *wu* refers to a form of religious specialist, its meaning in a Shang context need not be equated with "classical" forms of shamanism in Western anthropological literature or with the *wu* we can observe in Chinese texts of later date.[140]

Totemism in the Shang

Many scholars believe that early cultures in China organized tribal identities around animal and other totems, and the Shang interest in animal imagery can be related to these issues. Specifically, received texts widely report the Shang origin myth that a consort of Ku conceived the Shang ancestor Xie upon swallowing the egg of a dark bird (*xuan niao* 玄鳥), and this is taken to signify that the Shang royal house was totemically linked to a species of bird.[141] As with the term "shaman," the meaning of the term "totem" in this scholarly context is frequently vague and unrelated to anthropological scholarship, but if we view the basic point

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[138] For example, Ken'ichi Takashima suggests that diviners understood oracle bones to be inhabited by a supernatural force, *min* 黽: "the numen of the bone," that rendered them efficacious and whose action was detectable to diviners and the king, as recorded in the king's prognostications or diviner marginalia ("Towards a more rigorous methodology of deciphering oracle-bone inscriptions," *T'oung Pao* 86.4/5 [2000], pp. 374–77).

[139] Keightley, *The ancestral landscape*, pp. 72–73.

[140] For a balanced assessment of these issues, see Lothar von Falkenhausen, "Reflections on the political role of spirit mediums in early China: the *wu* officials in the *Zhou li*," *Early China* 20 (1995), pp. 279–300. See also Victor Mair's argument that *wu* of the late 2nd millennium BC represented an Indo-European presence in China, and should be understood in terms of practices associated with *magi* ("Old Sinitic **m^{y}ag*, Old Persian *maguš*, and English 'magician,'" *Early China* 15 [1990], pp. 27–47).

[141] See Allan, *The shape of the turtle*, pp. 39–41, 46–56 (Allan herself seems to prefer a totemic emblem of the sun [p.56]). Note that the Qin 秦 origin myth reported in the *Shiji* also involves the generative agency of a dark bird (1.173).

to be that the Shang claimed an emblematic relation to birds based on a genealogy myth that distinguished them from other lineages or tribes, it is clear enough and finds support in received texts.[142]

However, the association of the Shang with birds is not well supported by either oracle texts or bronzes. Proponents of the theory frequently note that the cyclical-stem element in the name of the Former Lord, "High Ancestor" Wang-hai, whom the *Shiji* lists as a Shang ancestor, is sometimes written with a bird element in oracle texts (e.g.,). This is true, but the form is rare.[143] Moreover, the Former Lord , also termed a High Ancestor and generally identified with the Shang progenitor Ku, is clearly not pictured in bird form; the transcriptions most often proposed, *kui* and *nao*, both denote beasts. As for the evidence from bronze motifs, birds are certainly among the animals depicted, but they occupy no privileged standing among the images encountered on the vessels.

The assertion that the bird was a Shang totem is pervasive in scholarship and it would be difficult to disprove the claim. But if Shang religion did, indeed, entail a bird cult, it was an area of worship that lay outside the realm of the oracle texts.

Masks and ritual dance

Bronze animal imagery has been interpreted by Elizabeth Childs-Johnson as an evocation of animal masks worn by dancers in performances of Shang sacred ritual and music, and the resonance of the imagery to masks has been noted by others.[144] There are certainly elements of some oracle graphs, such as , that are suggestive of such a theory, and the significance of dance in the ritual panoply the texts report may be greater than usually acknowledged. The recently published inscriptions from Huayuanzhuang indicate with some frequency the Prince's involvement in dance:

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[142] For a reasoned overview of these issues, see Chen Zhi, "A study of the bird cult of the Shang people," *Monumenta Serica* 47 (1999), pp. 127–47.

[143] It appears in under ten percent of the inscriptions listed at *Y* 1245b–46.

[144] Elizabeth Childs-Johnson, "Review: Robert W. Bagley, *Shang ritual bronzes in the Arthur M. Sackler collection*," *Art Bulletin* 71.1 (1989), pp. 153–54; "The ghost head mask and metamorphic Shang imagery," *Early China* 20 (1995), pp. 79–82. Wu Hung refers to the motifs as masks, adopting the increasingly common view that they are derived from Liangzhu iconography (which he also links to bird totems); see *Monumentality in early Chinese art and architecture* (Stanford, 1995), pp. 34–44.

19. 丙卜・丁來見子舞・

Cracking on *bing* day about whether [Wu]-ding will come to see the Prince dance. (*HD* 183)

Moreover, the evidence of the Huayuanzhuang inscriptions suggests that one of the dances repeatedly performed was called by the dynastic name Shang.

20. 甲寅卜・乙卯子其學商 ・丁永・用・子尻・
丙辰卜・ 征 奏商・用・

Cracking on *jiayin* day about whether on *yimao* day (tomorrow), if the Prince should practice the Shang dance, [Wu]-ding will endorse it. Employ [this divination]. Zikao [should practice?].
Cracking on *bingchen* day (the third day) about whether to go on and perform the Shang dance. Employ [this divination]. (*HD* 150)

That the word Shang here does, indeed, refer to a dance, is confirmed by *HD* 130, which employs it as the object of the verb *wu* 舞.[145] Is it significant that the dynasty's title may have named a dance? We know that the Zhou employed dance as a medium for "inscribing" the story of their history.[146] Perhaps dance was a primary medium for the Shang to inscribe their history and religion, particularly before and during the infancy of written inscription.

Space does not permit a more detailed analysis of the role of dance in the oracle text corpus, and the degree to which oracle texts may support the validity of Childs-Johnson's theory of the relation of mask dance to animal imagery and, perhaps, to the way in which the Shang conceptualized and encountered members of the pantheon in a performance context, remains to be tested. My own view, however, is that this is a promising approach.[147]

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[145] While I believe the verb string of *xue* 學, *zou* 奏, and *wu* 舞 make the nature of the term *shang* clear in these contexts, the *Huayuanzhuang* editors argue for a very different reading (1593–94, 1618–19). It is certainly true that in other contexts, Shang functions as the name of a place or person.

[146] For example, the account of the founding of the dynasty described as a performance of the Wu 武 Dance in the "Yueji" 樂記 chapter of the *Liji* 禮記 is nearly identical to the narrative version enshrined as history in the *Shiji*.

[147] Robert Eno, *The Confucian creation of Heaven: philosophy and the defense of ritual mastery* (Albany, 1990), pp. 22–23, 195–97.

Religion and the transition to the Zhou

The displacement of the Shang royal house by the Zhou after 1046 BC marks an abrupt transition in a number of respects relevant to our inquiry. The most profound change is the emergence in the inscriptional record of the deity Tian 天, who represents an apex of superhuman power far more clearly delineated than is Di by the oracle texts. Accompanying this change is a new explicit concern attributed to the supreme deity: promotion to power of men of virtue with the ability to protect the state and its people. While traditional received texts ascribe this type of view to the Shang as well,[148] nothing in the inscriptional record confirms it.

The question of religious continuity

Traditional views of the Xia-Shang-Zhou progression presume that these eras represent stages in the evolution of a single culture, which we can retrospectively speak of as "Chinese." The Shang-Zhou transition is generally pictured as a matter of significant political change, but culturally, the Zhou people are understood to have adopted many Shang institutions well before the conquest, and to have contributed to further development, rather than to have imposed a new cultural order. There is no question that in certain aspects of material culture this is the case. For example, nothing so marks the Western Zhou in the archaeological record as its continuation of the Shang tradition of investment in bronze ritual vessels adorned with animal designs. However, it is not entirely clear to what degree it would be appropriate to claim "continuity" in the religious beliefs and practices of the Shang and Zhou.

Evidence from oracle texts
The oracle text record shows that the Zhou and Shang had a history of interaction, with alternating periods of alliance and enmity, and it appears that the Zhou may be viewed as, at periods, part of the Shang state, conceived in its broadest sense as a confederacy of allies.[149]

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[148] For example, the *Shang shu* 尙書, "Pan-geng" 盤庚 (I) text alludes to the "mandate of Tian": "Rather let us follow the glory of our former kings, and as sprouts shoot forth from a toppled tree, Tian will perpetuate our mandate in this new city."

[149] Keightley, "The late Shang state," pp. 529–32; Cho-yun Hsu and Katheryn Linduff, *Western Zhou civilization* (New Haven, 1988), pp. 41–49. For possible new evidence, see

In the area of religious practice, new evidence of deep continuities emerged in 1976 with the discovery of inscribed oracle bones at sites in the area of the pre-conquest Zhou homeland in Shaanxi Province, a region referred to archaeologically as the Zhouyuan 周原 ("Plains of Zhou"). The number of inscribed bones found was not large, and only a few had sustained, unbroken texts, but they apparently demonstrated that the Zhou ruler, presumably King Wen (Wen Wang 文王), sacrificed to the Powers of the late Shang rulers, and maintained shrines for them:

21. 癸巳卜・彝文武帝乙宗・貞・王其邵 祭成唐・鼎禦㚸 二女・其彝血牡豚三・由又正・

Cracking on *guisi* day [the day of] performance of an *yi*-rite at the shrine of Wenwu Di-yi; divining about whether the king, by performing a *shao*-sacrifice to Cheng Tang by means of an exorcism by cauldron using two female captive victims, and libation of the blood of three rams and three pigs, will in this way be correct.[150]

"Wenwu Di-yi" names the father of the last Shang king; Cheng Tang was, of course, the founder of the dynastic Shang. Other examples in the small Zhouyuan corpus also refer to sacrifices to Da-jia, Cheng Tang's grandson. Although these bones were recovered from the Zhou homeland site and are quite distinct from Shang oracle bones in both rhetoric and graph form, the fact that they record sacrifices to Shang royal ancestors has led some scholars to suspect that they must either have been produced by Shang subjects residing in the Zhou region, or have been produced at the Shang capital and carried west.[151]

Edward Shaughnessy has offered an interpretation, since echoed in the work of Wang Hui, that the Zhouyuan inscriptions reflect the fact that the Shang and Zhou ruling houses were marriage partners. Evidence in received texts indicate that King Wen's consort was a daughter of the king referred to here as Wenwu Di-yi, and if this has historical basis,

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Cao Dingyun and Liu Yiman, "Yinxu Huayuanzhuang Dongdi chutu jiagu buci zhong de 'Zhong Zhou' yu zaoqi Yin-Zhou guanxi" 殷墟花園莊東地出土甲骨卜辭中的 "中周" 與早期殷周關係, *Kaogu* 考古 2005.9, pp. 60–68.

[150] The inscription is catalogued as H11.1 (the first item of pit number 11). For a photograph and drawing, see Chen Quanfang 陳全方, *Zhouyuan yu Zhou wenhua* 周原與周文化 (Shanghai, 1988), illus., pp. 21, 59. My translation has benefited from Edward L. Shaughnessy, "Zhouyuan oracle bone inscriptions: entering the research phase?" *Early China* 11–12 (1985–87), p. 156.

[151] For example, see the responses by Wang Yuxin and Li Xueqin to the article by Shaughnessy cited in n. 150; *Early China* 11–12 (1985–87), pp. 164–76.

the inscription may show that the Zhou house had "adopted" the Shang ancestors, either through lineage customs that are unreported in later texts, or through the exceptional use of such adoption as a means of asserting that political legitimacy had shifted from the Shang to the Zhou branches of a single extended lineage unit.[152]

If the Zhouyuan oracle texts are the products of the pre-dynastic Zhou court, they show multiple levels of continuity with Shang practice. Beyond the evidence that the Shang temple system was replicated, the very fact that the Zhou added inscriptions to oracle bones marks a nearly unique cultural overlap between the two groups; only a very small number of inscribed oracle bones from the period of Shang rule have been found outside the Shang capital region.[153] This aspect of continuity has subsequently been confirmed by small finds of unquestionably Zhou oracle texts.[154]

However, these data from a small corpus of oracle inscriptions must be balanced against information attested by a broad range of received texts indicating that in the core cultural and religious frameworks of lineage organization and ancestor worship, Zhou and Shang practices differed fundamentally. While the Shang lineage and temple systems were ordered according to the cyclical-stem system, which organized both the ancestral pantheon by temple designation and the sacrificial schedule by corresponding day, the Zhou organized their lineages according to a system of alternating generations known as *zhao-mu* 昭穆.[155] While many early Zhou era bronzes refer to ancestors by cyclical-stem designations, others do not, and recent analysis by Zhang Maorong

[152] Shaughnessy, "Zhouyuan oracle bone inscriptions," pp. 161–62, and his "Surrejoinder" to comments, *Early China* 11–12 (1985–87), pp. 182–190; Wang Hui, "Zhouyuan jiagu shuxing yu Shang-Zhou zhi ji jili de bianhua" 周原甲骨屬性與商周之際祭禮的變化, *Lishi yanjiu* 歷史研究 1998.3, pp. 5–20.

[153] See Fang Hui 方輝, "Jinan Daxinzhuang yizhi chutu Shangdai jiaguwen" 濟南大辛莊遺址出土商代甲骨文, *Zhongguo lishi wenwu* 中國歷史文物 2003.3, pp. 4–7.

[154] These finds include Zhouyuan inscriptions that refer to a Duke of Zhou (Zhou Gong 周公) who may be the famous brother of King Wu (Li Xueqin, "Zhou Gong miao bujia si pian shishi" 周公廟卜甲四片試釋 *Xibei Daxue xuebao* 西北大學學報 2005.3, pp. 89–91), and a set from Hebei that refer to a Duke of Shao 召, perhaps another of King Wu's brothers (Cao Dingyun, "Xingtai Xi-Zhou buci nai Zhou chu Shao Gong zhanbu kao" 邢台西周卜辭乃周初召公占卜考, in *Sandai wenming yanjiu* 三代文明研究 [Beijing, 1999], pp. 91–100).

[155] The significance of the *zhao-mu* system has been much debated. For an argument that it reflects a long term structure of inter-marriage patterns, see Li Hengmei 李衡眉, "Zhao-mu zhidu yu Zhouren zaoqi hunyin xingshi" 昭穆制度與周人早期婚姻形式, *Lishi yanjiu* 歷史研究 1990.2, pp. 12–26.

張懋鎔 suggests that this confirms the persistence of distinct parallel traditions during the transition era after the conquest, when Zhou and Shang cultures coexisted in the context of a gradual unification as the new dynasty's traditions became established.[156]

Evidence from bronze inscriptions

While the newly recovered Zhouyuan materials suggest continuities, a far larger body of evidence is provided by Western Zhou bronze inscriptions, thousands of primary documents rich in narrative and comment. These seem to reflect a religious ideology very different from the oracle texts. For example, it is simply not possible to describe a Zhou pantheon on the basis of bronze inscriptions for the period of the Western Zhou (1046–771 BC)—apart from the single deity Tian, the bronzes are virtually silent concerning spirits other than the ancestors of those who commissioned the inscriptions. We occasionally find the familiar figure of Di, but the term seems to be fused with the new high Power, Tian, who is mentioned with considerable frequency.[157] Former Lords and Nature Powers have disappeared.

But we need to bear in mind that Zhou bronze inscriptions are not comparable to the oracle texts. They are not religious divinations; their primary purpose is to commemorate political and personal events leading to some reward for the vessel owner. They are not state documents; the men who commissioned these texts were members of a disparate elite class. Most had no lineage ties to the royal Ji 姬 lineage of the Zhou, and many seem to have been far removed from state power, both in rank and in geographical proximity. Ultimately, comparison of Shang and Zhou pantheons on the basis of recovered contemporary textual sources is simply not currently a feasible project. We can, however, say more about apparent comparisons of the structure of state religion, more broadly conceived.

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[156] Zhang Maorong, "Xi Zhou qingtongqi duandai liangxi shuo chuyi" 西周青銅器斷代兩系說芻議, *Kaogu xuebao* 2005.1, pp. 1–25.

[157] The earliest datable inscription to include reference to Tian is the He *zun* (𣪘尊), dated the 5th year of the reign of King Cheng, or about 1038 BC (on problems with dating, see Edward L. Shaughnessy, *Sources of Western Zhou history: inscribed bronze vessels* [Berkeley, 1991], p. 242, n. 51).

Tian's mandate and theodicy in state religion

The emergence of a new High Power in Zhou inscriptions appears to signal more than a change in nomenclature. There seems to be a fundamentally new element of state religion: a theodicy. If a central function of state religion is to legitimize the political order, an essential feature of the persuasiveness of that legitimation will be the way state religion aligns power with value by making moral sense of the will and action of supernatural forces.[158] In the case of the Shang state, it is far from clear that this was a significant religious element. Nowhere in the texts do we see clear indication that the Powers are beneficent. Particularly in the early phase of the texts, divination topics often envision Powers harming the king, despoiling the harvest and, in one case, bringing an end to the city of Shang. The Shang rulers seek advance approval for their actions—sometimes, it seems, obsessively—but there is no suggestion that the basis for approval will be anything other than the arbitrary inclinations of the Powers, influenced by the *do ut des* relationship maintained by the king. The king's religious legitimacy would depend, in such a case, on his care to consult and ability to read and carry out action conforming to the oracle, not on principles of morality.

Again, this may simply be a function of the nature of the oracle texts, and the theodicy of Shang religion may have been expressed through other media unavailable to us now. But in the case of the Zhou, there can be no doubt state religion is organized around a clear, central concept: the Mandate of Tian (*tian ming* 天命).

Received texts picture the doctrine of the Mandate as central to Zhou thought prior to the conquest, and as the motivation for King Wu's decision to overthrow the Shang. They also portray the Mandate as a central public rationale and issue for discussion in the post-conquest aftermath.[159] This may well reflect historical fact. The earliest reference to the Mandate appearing in the bronze corpus bears a date ca. 998 BC, nearly half a century after the conquest, but it articulates the concept with a clarity that seems to signal long development. The inscription quotes King Kang speaking to his high minister Yu:

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[158] Berger, *The sacred canopy*, pp. 53–54.

[159] See Edward L. Shaughnessy, "The Duke of Zhou's retirement in the east and the beginnings of the ministerial-monarchial debate in Chinese political philosophy," *Early China* 18 (1993), pp. 41–72.

> Yu! Brilliant King Wen received the great Mandate from Tian. When King Wu succeeded King Wen, he created a state, opening hidden lands, possessing all the four quarters, and setting right their peoples. In ceremonial affairs involving wine, oh! he permitted no excess; at sacrificial rites, he permitted no drunkenness. Hence Heaven in its greatness watched closely over its sons and protected the former Kings in their possession of the four quarters. I have heard that the Yin (Shang) lost the Mandate because the greater and lesser lords and the many officials assisting the Yin sank into drunkenness and so were bereft of their capital….[160]

Tian has taken on the role of ethical guardian, rewarding and punishing rulers according to the quality of their stewardship of the state. The relationship of the ruler to the High Power has now added to worship the fulfillment of an imperative to govern according to moral standards.

The articulation of this relationship between the ruling house and the High Power coincides with a reconfiguring of the state itself. Not only written accounts but the evidence of material culture indicates that during the post-conquest period, the Zhou rulers created an expansive, unified state far exceeding any prior polity in China, characterized by lengthy eras of military stability.[161] The innovation chiefly responsible for this success was probably the development of the *fengjian* 封建 system, in which the king delegated power and responsibilities to a network of dispersed hereditary lords.[162] However, for a geographically peripheral group such as the Zhou people to consolidate the conquest and build new state structures so rapidly, the articulation of a clear theodicy that could legitimate the new dynasty on religious grounds would have been a critical tool. Its success is signaled with the adoption of the designation of the king as the Tianzi 天子: "Son of Tian," a term that becomes pervasive in the inscriptional record from the reign of King Mu (r. ca. 976–922 BC) on.

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[160] Da Yu *ding* 大盂鼎; *Yin-Zhou jinwen jicheng* 殷周金文集成, vol.5, #2837.

[161] As Jessica Rawson notes, no comparable state homogeneity existed again prior to the Qin conquest ("Western Zhou archaeology," *Cambridge history*, p. 353). On the stability of the early Western Zhou, see Shaughnessy, "Western Zhou history," *Cambridge history*, p. 318.

[162] On the *fengjian* system, see Hsu and Linduff, *Western Chou civilization*, 147–85. On the term *fengjian* as distinct from "feudalism," see Li Feng, "Feudalism and Western Zhou China: an analytical criticism," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 63.1 (2003), pp. 115–44. The geopolitical dynamics of Zhou state building is elucidated with great clarity in Li Feng, *Landscape and power in early China: the crisis and fall of the Western Zhou, 1045–771 B.C.* (Cambridge, Eng., 2006).

Conclusion

The Confucian *Analects* teaches us that knowledge is clarity about what things you know and what things you don't, and in the case of Shang state religion, this is a difficult distinction to sustain. Based on the traditional narrative of history, we can understand the Shang as ancestral to later eras of Chinese culture and bring those expectations to our primary body of recovered contemporary data, the late Shang oracle texts. But archaeology has complicated our understanding of the cultural milieu surrounding the Shang state, and of the nature of that state itself, and this calls for increasing caution when interpreting Shang evidence in terms of cultural features typical of subsequent eras.

Moreover, the oracle texts were composed to answer questions very different from those we ask, and the portrait of the spirit world they convey seems unfocused and inconsistent in the terms of analysis we set. We can identify a broad range of superhuman Powers that includes both ancestors of the Shang royal house and non-ancestral figures. The relation between the groups and their overall governing structure, however, is unclear. During the last centuries of the Shang, when oracle texts were inscribed, a shift in the object of oracle divination occurred, with religious practice in that medium coming to focus almost entirely on a pantheon confined to royal ancestors and rituals of sacrifice to them. This trend makes it harder to find in the Shang oracle texts a clear indication of how religion legitimized the state in a systematic way. The focus on royal ancestors, to the eventual exclusion of more universal deities from the oracle record, and the apparent lack of a theodicy make it difficult to discern how religion assisted social control by fostering a view that Shang royal authority was ordained. However, other forms of religious practice existed during the Shang, and these may have provided features that ensured that the king's role as thearch was widely understood and viewed as basic to the order of life in the Shang polity.

Ultimately, the story the data tells highlights the transition of the Zhou conquest as a watershed in the articulation of clear legitimating structures of state religion. How much of this is a function of the disparity in the forms of evidence we have access to for the Shang and Zhou is a question future research must continue to address.

SHANG AND ZHOU FUNERAL PRACTICES: INTERPRETATION OF MATERIAL VESTIGES*

Alain Thote

The study of funeral customs and ancient societies from archaeological materials has been the subject of intense debate among scholars.[1] Generally, the practices associated with death are interpreted in terms of social rank, prestige or wealth, rather than from a religious point of view. The relationship between beliefs and burial practices as revealed by the discoveries is in fact difficult to establish, for there is not necessarily a religious explanation behind each funeral custom. Also, if the rites associated with death include gestures, words, songs and various material manifestations and, as such, form an essential part of the religion of the times, the archaeological approach has only the data from the material culture to go on, that is, the arrangement and content of isolated tombs and cemeteries. With these reservations, in the case of ancient China the data gathered during the excavations are exceptionally rich. They show that during the Bronze Age (about 1500–300 BC) the shape and content of the tombs show significant continuity. At the same time, certain periods were marked by great changes, even discontinuities in the transmission of burial practices. It is these periods which will retain our attention because, through the archaeological data, it is in them that the relation which men have entertained with death is more clearly evident.

During the Neolithic period funeral customs appeared which lasted until the beginning of empire in 221 BC. In the Fuquanshan cemetery,

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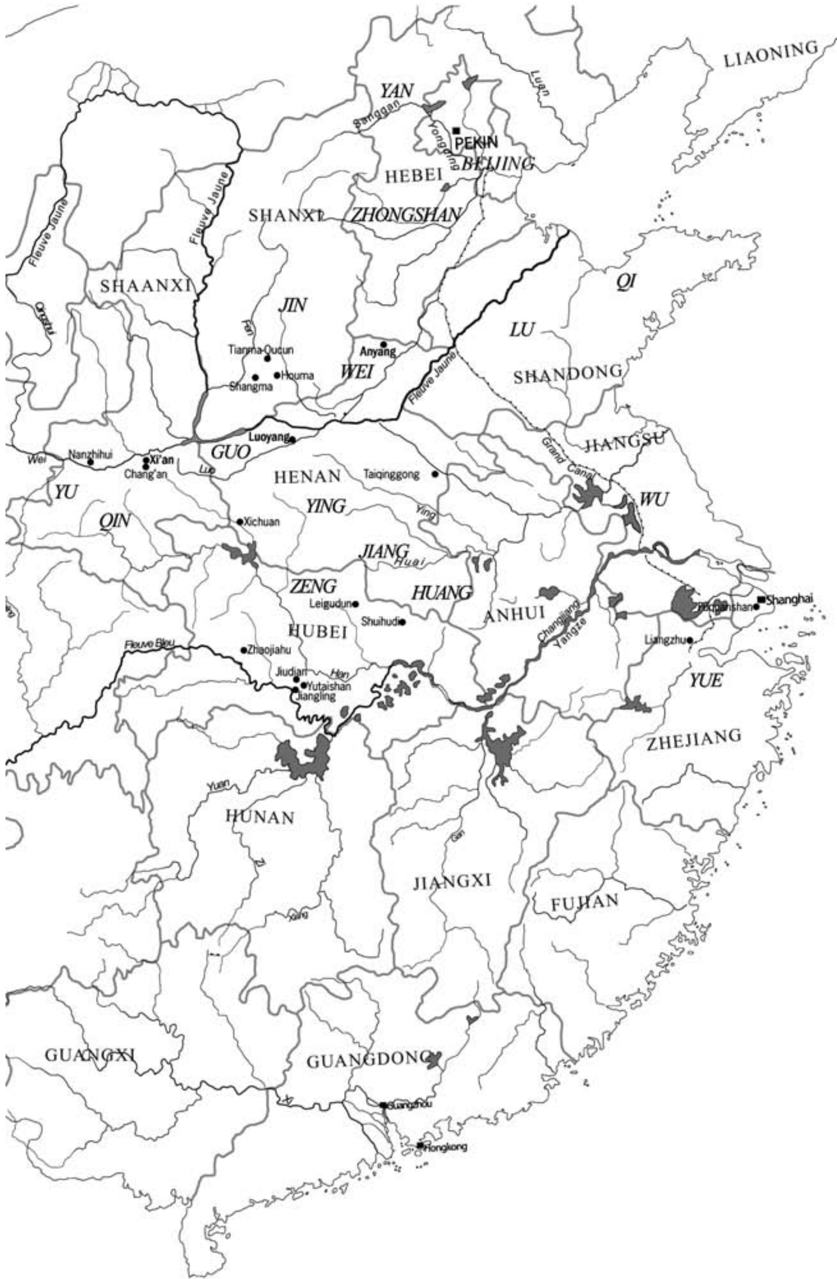
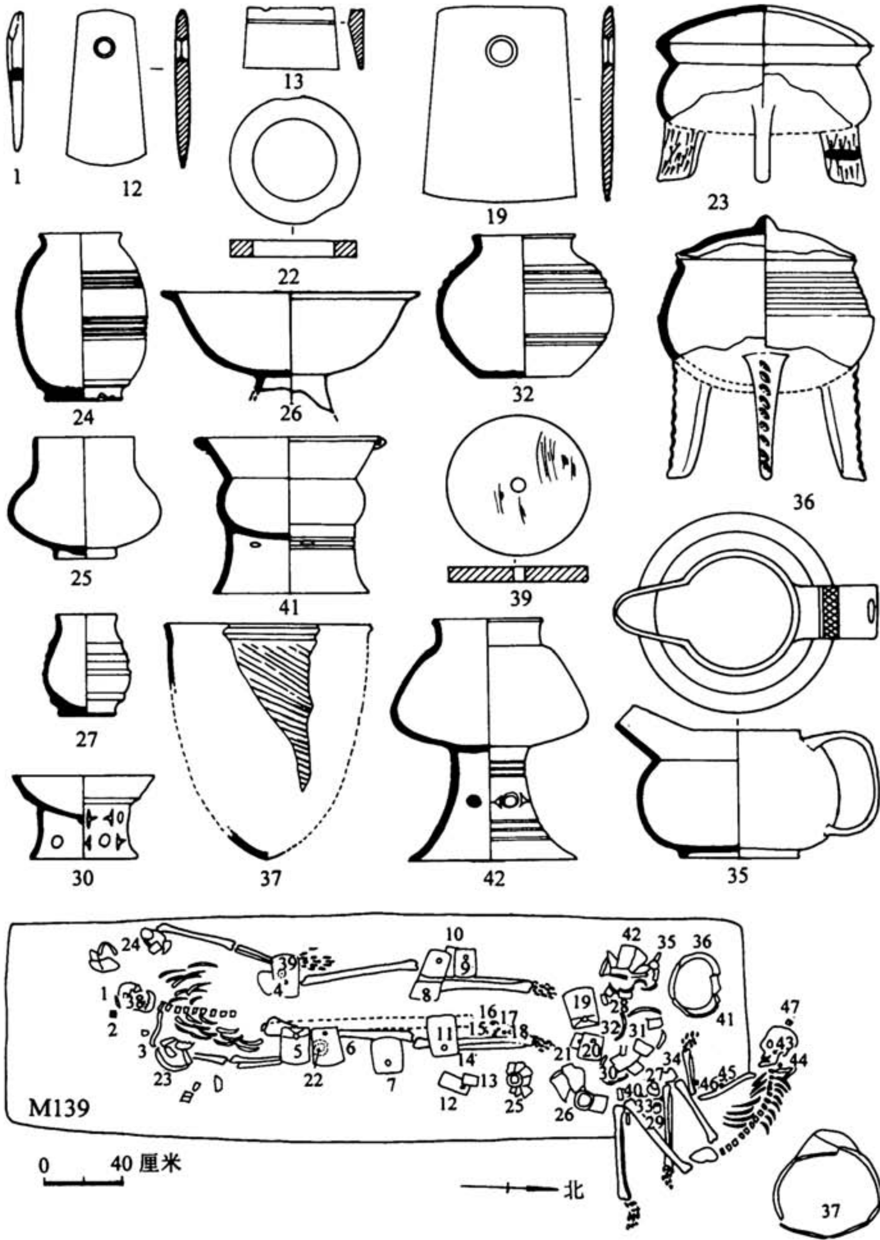
* Translated by Margaret McIntosh, this chapter is a modified version of a French paper, "Les pratiques funéraires Shang et Zhou. Interprétation des vestiges matériels," published by Editions Le Cerf in a book entitled *Religion et société en Chine ancienne et médiévale* (Paris, 2008).

[1] V.A. Alekshin, "Burial customs as an archaeological source," *Current Anthropology* 24.2 (April 1983), 137–45, and answers to Alekshin, 145–48; Henri-Paul Francfort, "More on burial practices and archaeology," *Current Anthropology* 24.5 (Dec. 1983), 666–67; K. Maurer Trinkaus, "Mortuary ritual and mortuary remains," *Current Anthropology* 25.5 (Dec. 1984), 674–79; Colin Renfrew, *Archaeology: theories, methods and practice* (London, 1991), pp. 358–63; Ian Morris, *Death-ritual and social structure in classical antiquity* (Cambridge, 1992); Alain Testart, *La servitude volontaire: essai sur le rôle des fidélités personnelles dans la genèse du pouvoir*, 2 vols (Paris, 2004).



Map of China (sites, historical names mentioned in the article). © UMR 8155 Centre de recherche sur les civilisations chinoise, japonaise et tibétaine (Juliana Holotova).



1. 玉锥形器 2, 3, 31, 45. 穿缀玉件 4–12, 19–21. 石钺 13, 28. 残骨器14, 40, 43, 46. 玉管 15–18. 小石卵 22. 玉镯 23, 36. 陶鼎 24, 25, 27, 29, 33. 陶壶 32, 34. 陶罐 35. 陶匜 37. 大口缸 38. 玛瑙琀 39. 小玉饰 41. 陶尊 44. 玉环

Fig. 1. Tomb 139 at Fuquanshan near Shanghai (plan and burial objects), Liangzhu culture (third millennium BC). Length 2.99 m, width 0.95 m. After Huang Xuanpei 2000, fig. 50 p. 63.

near Shanghai, where an artificial mound served as cemetery for members of the local elite for about a thousand years (late 4th-late 3rd millennium BC), the tombs consisted of a pit in which a wooden frame sheltered the dead and the burial goods (Fig. 1).[2] This wooden structure appears to be the prototype of the outer coffin (*guo* 槨) the construction of which would become much more elaborate in the Bronze Age. The burial goods, already rich, were primarily composed of weapons, elements of decoration and religious objects carved in jade, and earthenware pots and ivory objects (there were probably also artefacts in wood and other decaying materials). On this site of Liangzhu 良渚 culture, the tombs of the local elite were already grouped apart from the tombs of other members of the society.[3] This is even more striking in the Liangzhu cemeteries discovered at Fanshan and Yaoshan.[4] The number of grave goods and their variable quality allow us to establish distinctions in the treatment reserved for the dead.[5] Another example of the continuity of funeral customs, as the practice was carried on till the beginning of the empire, is a small object placed in the dead person's mouth in two tombs at Fuquanshan. One of them was in carnelian, the other in jade. The vessels, which probably contained food offerings, were placed at the head and foot of the deceased. Near the dead person or on his body were found jade axe blades, some of which were hafted at the moment of burial. Their presence may be interpreted in various ways, all non exclusive. The weapons symbolized without any doubt the deceased's status as warrior, as later on in the Bronze Age. They also materialized the prestige of a man capable of concentrating in his hands considerable wealth. Objects in jade, a material difficult to carve, require

[2] Huang Xuanpei, *Fuquanshan–Xinshiqi shidai yizhi fajue baogao* (Beijing, 2000).

[3] Li Boqian, "The sumptuary system governing Western Zhou rulers' cemeteries, viewed from a Jin ruler's cemetery," *Journal of East Asian Archaeology* 1.1–4 (1999), p. 253.

[4] The layout of Fanshan and Yaoshan cemeteries is characteristic of the Liangzhu culture. However, they differ in that their size, the mode of construction and the content of the tombs all indicate the tombs belonged to elite members of the highest status in the society. See Zhejiang sheng wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo, ed., *Yaoshan* (Beijing, 2003); Zhejiang sheng wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo, ed., *Fanshan* (Beijing, 2005).

[5] The presence or absence of human sacrifice could also be considered a sign of power or wealth. It is rare in Liangzhu cemeteries. However, the custom seems to have been initiated there before becoming an important religious phenomenon in the late Shang. Above tomb 139 at Fuquanshan and almost contemporary to it (around 3200 or 3100 BC), a woman was sacrificed. In this case, it is hard to define the relationship of the victim to the deceased, probably not a wife. See Huang Xuanpei, *Fuquanshan*, pp. 59–60, 63.

an exceptionally long time to make, and therefore indicate marked social inequalities characterizing a highly hierarchical organization. The idea the weapons served to protect the corpse, in a real or symbolic way, may also be envisaged. But in this case, what was the purpose of the protection? Was it against evil spirits? As regards the weapons and the numerous jade objects discovered in the tombs of the Liangzhu culture, the idea has been put forward that some individuals were "buried in jade"—a reference to historic times when, under the Han, from the 2nd to the 1st centuries BC, princes and members of the imperial family were dressed in suits of jade which completely covered the body. But it is not at all certain that as far back as the Neolithic period people already believed in the prophylactic properties of this rare stone. Jade did, however, represent the noblest material and was therefore used for body ornaments and prestige (or symbolic) weapons, as well as for the ritual objects that accompanied the dead (*bi* 碧 disks, *cong* 琮 cylinders). During the late Shang and the Zhou, jade amulets, plaques, and religious objects seem to play a slightly different role: concentrated in the inner coffin, very close to the body or, rather, in direct contact with it, they protected the body. When their original disposition has not been disturbed, they are still found in the places no doubt then considered as vital as, in the tombs of Chu royal members of the 4th century BC, at the top of the skull, all along the head and the hips, on his or her sexual organ, and on the feet.[6]

Shang modes of burial (ca. 1500–1050 BC)

Heir to traditions established since the late Neolithic, the burial practices of the Shang period also reveal several significant changes. First, there was a change in scale, especially evident in the late phase of the dynasty (ca. 1250–1050 BC), the so-called Anyang period after the site of the last capital in northern Henan. The royal tombs at Xibeigang show in their construction, their furnishings and the presence of hundreds of human sacrificial victims an increased social stratification and a considerable distance between the king and the rest of society.

[6] This is the case at Jiangling Wangshan tombs 1 and 2. See Hubei sheng wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo, *Jiangling Wangshan Shazhong Chu mu* (Beijing, 1996).

The Xibeigang complex

The royal tombs were divided into two groups of respectively seven (plus another unfinished one) and five graves to the north of the Huan river and the palace area at Xibeigang (Fig. 2).[7] Oriented north-south, give or take a few degrees, the pits were square or rectangular and provided with two opposing ramps or, for the largest, with four sloping ramps producing a cruciform complex.[8] The length of tomb 1217 was about 120 meters from its northern to southern end, while the more "modest" tomb at Wuguancun had a total length of about 45 meters (Fig. 3). The shaft, about ten meters deep, had nearly vertical walls pierced by the ramps. Not all the ramps go all the way down to the bottom level of the shaft, as their first function was probably to perform the rites which preceded the closing of the tomb. The walls of the wooden chamber along the four sides of the shaft formed a rectangular or cross shape. In the latter case the chamber had a door on its south side that must have allowed the coffin to be lowered and deposited inside the wooden construction once its structure had been covered by a roof. The space between the wooden chamber and the shaft walls was filled with rammed earth, providing a ledge or platform (*ercengtai* 二層台) scooped out with several small pits for funerary offerings and sacrificial human victims. A sacrificial pit *yaokeng* 腰坑 ("waist-pit") or several pits (tomb 1001) were hollowed out in the floor of the shaft below the chamber. Each of these small pits contained the remains of a man with a dagger-axe of the *ge* type. In tomb 1004, the cruciform chamber, with a height of about three meters, measured 12 meters in both length and width, including the arms. The Anyang royal tombs have been looted several times, but we know they contained vast quantities of rich burial goods placed all around the owner's coffin.

Once the king had been buried, the human sacrifices made, and the accompanying burials around and above the chamber carried out, the offerings—bronze ritual sets, chariots, wooden objects, jade orna-

[7] K.C. Chang, *Shang civilization* (New Haven and London, 1980), pp. 110–24; Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan kaogu yanjiusuo, ed., *Yinxu de faxian yu yanjiu* (Beijing, 1994), pp. 100–147; Robert Bagley, "Shang archaeology," in Michael Loewe and Edward L. Shaughnessy, eds, *The Cambridge history of ancient China: from the origins of civilization to 221 BC* (Cambridge, 1999), pp. 124–231.

[8] This cruciform plan matches the shape of one Chinese graph that frequently frames short inscriptions of the Shang period, called *ya* 亞 in Chinese. For examples of such a graph, see K.C. Chang, *Shang civilization*, p. 207.

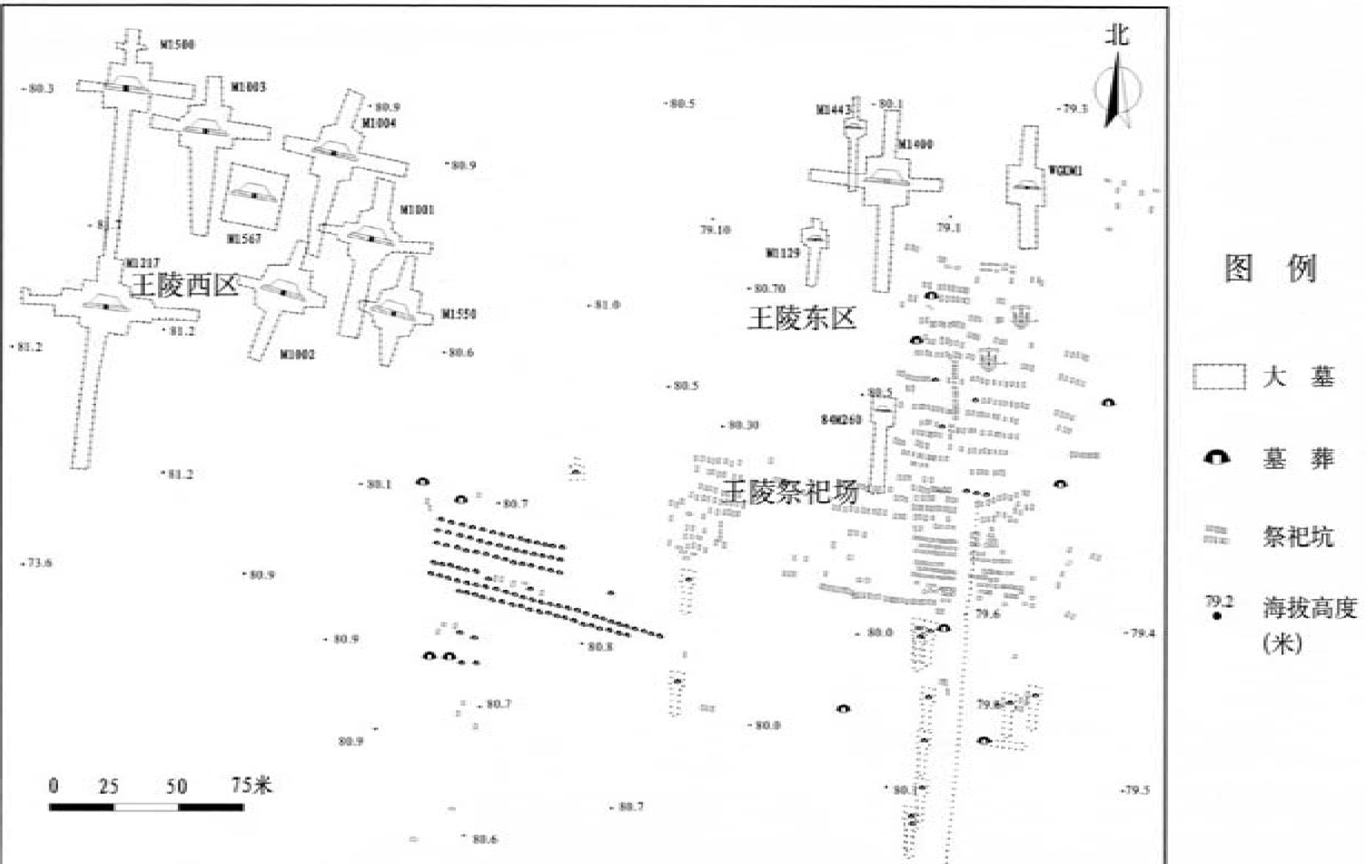


Fig. 2. Map of the royal cemetery at Anyang Xibeigang (Henan), near the Shang capital between ca. 1250 and 1050 BC. After *The Bulletin of the Institute of History and Philology*, Academia Sinica 42 (1970), pl. 13.

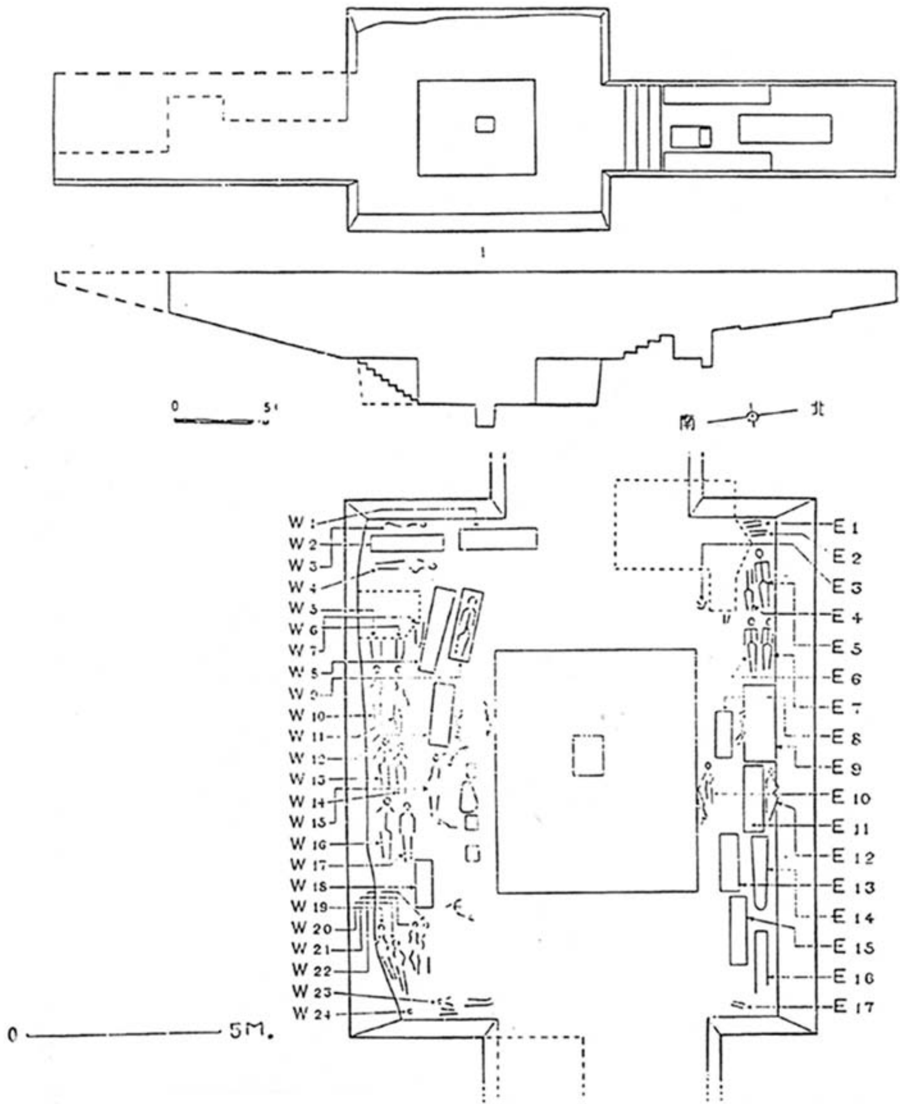


Fig. 3. Royal tomb at Anyang Wuguancun (Henan). After *Kaogu xuebao* 1951, V.

ments—were left in the grave and the pit was filled with rammed earth layer after layer so as to seal the tomb hermetically. Other victims were executed while the pit and access ramps were filled in, and then around the tomb as well. In the single royal necropolis of Anyang there were more than one thousand sacrificial pits and additional burials outside the main tombs. The sacrifices were made either during the funeral or at regular intervals after the closing of the tomb. With all these sacrificial pits and burials, death was present all around the votive temple and the royal tomb.

The tomb of Fu Hao

The tomb of Fu Hao 婦好, one of King Wu Ding's 武丁 wives who died ca. 1200 BC, was of modest dimensions by comparison with the royal tombs at Xibeigang (a pit 5.6 m x 4 m at the opening of the shaft, with a depth of 7.5 m and no access ramps). Since it still contained all its burial goods, it enables us to complete the data provided by the royal cemetery.[9] Above the pit, at the ground level of the Shang period, archaeologists have discovered the remains of a structure, probably a votive temple dedicated to the deceased where at regular intervals the usual sacrifices of the ancestor cult to her memory must have been done. In its layout, the tomb consisted of a pit with vertical walls, a wooden chamber (outer coffin *guo*), a shelf around the chamber at the level of the roof, and two niches hollowed out in the pit walls facing each other to the east and to the west and containing three human victims (in all, there were 16 victims in the tomb, eight of them in the outer coffin). If we compare the position of the humans sacrificed on the roof of the outer coffin with the ritual bronzes inside this coffin, we see that the human victims are concentrated directly above the bronzes.

At the place of the inner coffin the archaeologists have found traces of cinnabar, a red powder, rare and precious, which may have served to protect the corpse from decay.[10] This practice, quite common among the

[9] Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan kaogu yanjiusuo, ed., *Yinxu Fu Hao mu* (Beijing, 1980).

[10] According to much later sources from the Han period, cinnabar was associated with the idea of immortality. See Needham, Joseph, ed., *Science and civilisation in China*, Vol. 5, *Chemistry and chemical technology, Part II, Spagyrical discovery and invention, magisteries of gold and immortality* (Cambridge, 1974). Cinnabar has a bright red color and may be associated with the sacred. In the Shang period, it was not yet a medicine for immortality as it would be during the Han period.

elite, is well known from the Shang through the Western Zhou. From the 7th century BC, it gradually decreased and then disappeared around the 5th century BC. Despite its relatively small size compared with the kings' tombs, the tomb of Fu Hao contained 210 ritual bronzes, 134 bronze weapons, 755 jade amulets and other jade objects, as well as numerous other objects in bronze, bone, ivory, turquoise and stone, and 11 earthenware pots. One hundred and nine ritual bronzes were inscribed with the name of Fu Hao and therefore cast in her lifetime, whereas several other vessels were given to her at the time of her death. The furnishings comprised personal goods accumulated, or rather collected, during the deceased's life and, no doubt, objects offered at the time of the funeral. In the entire collection of burial goods it is not possible to distinguish the items that belonged to one of these categories.

Interpretation

On the basis of this superficial examination of the tombs of the Shang elite we may focus on a few traits characteristic of the religion of central China at the end of the second millennium.

The social pyramid

Members of the society at all levels seem to have been involved in the funerals of their leaders, particularly their king. The investment in time, labor and material goods for the building of the tombs and the supply of their furnishings is simply not quantifiable. For a single royal tomb, thousands of foremen, specialized craftsmen, workers, and slaves were mobilized for years. Moreover, as the Shang community was patrilinear, the difference in the treatment of kings and their wives was considerable. It can be measured in the size and form of the tomb, in the wealth of its furnishings, and in the number of human victims who accompanied the deceased. Although a queen such as Fu Hao enjoyed great prestige, the luxury of her tomb, one of the wealthiest of Chinese antiquity, is nothing in comparison to the tomb of a king.[11] As part of a lineage

[11] The tomb of Fu Hao had an outer coffin of 3.4 to 3.6 m wide and 5 m long. When compared with tomb 1217, the *guo* surface was ten times smaller. Its height was 1.3 m whereas the average height of the royal tombs at Anyang was around 3 m. The records in the oracle inscriptions concerning Fu Hao's life and deeds are testimony to her role as a general of the armies involved in campaigns against countries that the Shang

whose first ancestor was close to the supreme god Di 帝, the king possessed wide powers. During his lifetime, he was considered by all of his subjects as the foundation of the entire social organization, and he remained so even after his death.[12] His authority was political and religious, for the king was the link between the world of the living and that of the dead, with whom he was in constant communication during his lifetime, as we see from the oracle bone inscriptions (*jiaguwen* 甲骨文) discovered at Anyang. These facts are evidenced by the organization and the furnishings of his tomb.

Votive temple

Although the tomb of a king or a prince was hermetically sealed, it was apparently covered by a votive temple, allowing the sacrifices to be perpetuated. The tomb was one of the primary places where the ancestors were honored, and the sacrificial pits around the tomb no doubt delimited a zone accessible only to those who officiated in the temple, a place where living and dead could communicate.[13]

Function of the burial objects

In the tomb of a member of the Shang elite, the grave goods had two principal functions. The majority of the pieces represented the status, wealth and prestige of the deceased during his/her lifetime. At the same time, certain pieces such as the jade amulets were, by their magical virtues, supposed to protect the deceased. Among the burial objects, the sets of ritual vessels were of primary importance (Fig. 4). Vessels for a kind of beer dominated in the Shang period: according to type, they served to store the beverage (*hu* 壺, *pou* 瓿, *you* 卣, *lei* 罍, *fou* 缶), to pour it (*gong* 觥 or *he* 盉, ladles), perhaps to heat it, or to drink it (*jia* 斝, *jue* 爵, *gu* 觚). Some vessels of a simpler kind were used for cooking

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considered their dependencies but had rebelled against their master. She is also known for possibly having given birth to one king of the succeeding generation. See Robert L. Thorp, *China in the early Bronze Age: Shang civilization* (Philadelphia, 2005) 137.

[12] David Keightley, *The ancestral landscape: time, space, and community in late Shang China (ca. 1200–1045* BC*)* (Berkeley, 2000), pp. 99–100.

[13] Wu Hung argues that the size of the temple on Fu Hao's tomb was small compared with the large temple compound inside the capital. However, the tomb itself was small, and we have no idea of the size of the temples built over the kings' tombs. See Wu Hung, "From temple to tomb: ancient Chinese art and religion in transition," *Early China* 13 (1988), 86–90.

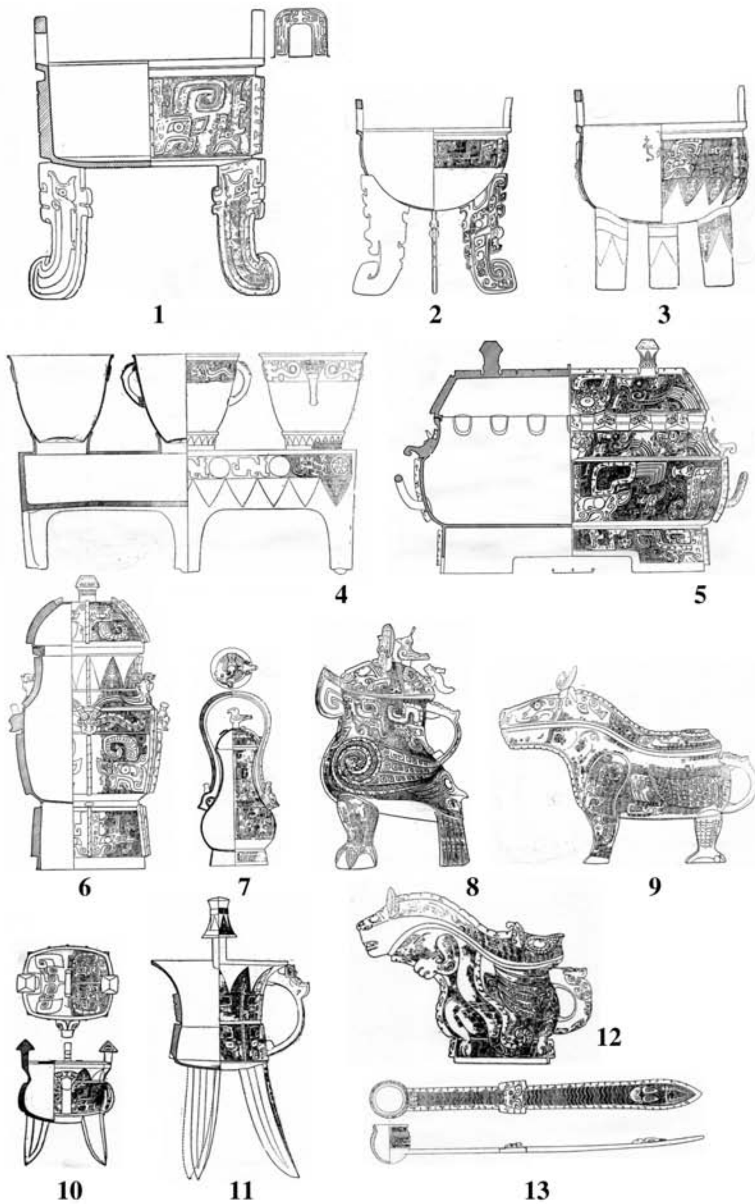

Fig. 4. Ritual vessels from a 210 piece set. Vessels for cooking offerings: *ding* tripods (Nos. 1, 2, 3), *yan* vessel for steam cooking (No. 4); vessel for unknown use (No. 5); vessels for beverages: *fanghu* (No. 6), *you* (No. 7), *zun* (No. 8), *jia* (Nos. 10, 11); water vessels: *guang* (Nos. 9, 12); ladle (No. 13). Tomb of Fu Hao, wife of King Wu Ding, Anyang (Henan), ca. 1200 BC. The reproductions are on the same scale (except No. 5). After Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan kaogu yanjiusuo, ed., *Yinxu Fu Hao mu* (Beijing, 1980), figs. 26, 30, 33, 36, 40, 42, 43, 44, 59, pp. 39, 45, 51, 55, 61, 63, 65, 68, 90.

meat offerings (*ding* 鼎, *li* 鬲, *yan* 甗) or for presenting (*gui* 簋) and consuming food offerings (*dou* 豆, *yu* 盂). Another important category of vessels is associated with the water for ablutions, either to store it (*fou*, *guan* 罐), pour it (*gong* or *he*, and later *yi* 匜)[14] or collect it (*pan* 盤). The diversity of the shapes and names actually corresponds to still more precise uses, unknown to us. They attest to the great sophistication of the sacrifices.

There existed a close correspondence between the sets of ritual bronzes deposited in the tombs and those used in the temples for the sacrifices to the ancestors, as shown by the transfer of vessels from temple to tomb. Their size and composition were the same. Presumably, this deposit in the tomb, varying in quantity and quality according to the wealth and status of the deceased, was a means for the clan to indicate to the gods as well as to the living the rank of the deceased in the next world. Once he (or she) had become an ancestor, the deceased would play a role of intermediary with Di (the Lord on High), seeking for his (or her) descendants the gracious benefits of the supreme deity.[15] This conception of the ties between the gods, the ancestors and humans was valid in the first place for the sovereign, but it applied as well to all the clans and great families linked by the hierarchic ties which united them within the society.

Human sacrifices and accompanying deaths

In the royal tombs and the other tombs of members of the court at Anyang, the human victims buried with the king were divided into two main categories.[16] In the first category, some victims were beheaded, or

[14] In fact, it is difficult to separate the pourers by their form, since some of them were used to hold water for ablutions and others to dilute water with beverages. In the same way, the exact function of each container is not always clear. As for the names, they are not always confirmed by the inscriptions, which are subject to variations. On the functions of the Shang and Western Zhou vessels, see Robert W. Bagley, *Shang ritual bronzes in the Arthur M. Sackler collections* (Cambridge, 1987); Jessica Rawson, *Chinese bronzes: art and ritual* (London, 1987); Jessica Rawson, *Western Zhou ritual bronzes from the Arthur M. Sackler collections*, 2 vols (Washington, D.C./Cambridge, Mass., 1990).

[15] On Di, see David Keightley, "The Shang: China's first historical dynasty," in Michael Loewe and Edward L. Shaughnessy, eds, *The Cambridge history of ancient China: from the origins of civilization to 221 BC* (Cambridge, 1999), pp. 252 ff.; also, in this volume, the chapter by Robert Eno.

[16] The different types of human sacrifice are well described in Robert Bagley, "Shang archaeology."

else were buried alive after having their limbs bound. For others, there was no particular arrangement. They were often placed pell-mell in the same pit, without any grave goods; sometimes their skeletons were found incomplete. They were propitiatory victims, chosen among the prisoners of war according to Shang oracle bone inscriptions, and doubtless also from among persons at the bottom of the social pyramid. Human offerings to the deceased were in no way different from the offerings of animals (birds, elephants, dogs, etc.), also sacrificed by hundreds throughout the royal necropolis. In the second category, the victims were buried in individual pits, sometimes with weapons (a halberd for example) and a set of bronze vessels. Probably they were considered as guardians of the deceased, meant to defend and serve him in the next world,[17] as attested by the location of the sacrificial burials at points where the main tomb was potentially in contact with the world of the living—access ramps on the *ercengtai* ledge surrounding the pit, or the ceiling of the *guo*—and the underworld (sacrificial pit *yaokeng* under the outer coffin *guo* at precisely the spot where the occupant's coffin was deposited in the chamber).

Possibly, like the owners of the sacrificial burials surrounding the main tomb the persons of the second category followed their master of their own free will, with the promise of a life in the next world similar to the one they enjoyed on earth and out of fidelity. They are not offerings in the proper sense, because these people have not been "offered" by one person to another (or to a god). There was neither change of owner nor conveyance of one person to another. The word "sacrifice" to qualify the act that enabled the individuals to accompany in death the person whom they served is no doubt inappropriate. Thus here in death the social relations which had existed in life between the tomb's owner and his personnel were perpetuated for eternity.[18] They symbolized his status.

Changes under the Western Zhou (ca. 1045–771 BC)

The Zhou conquest around 1045 brought several changes in the funeral customs, but these changes did not affect in depth the symbolism of

[17] Ibid., pp. 189–90.
[18] Alain Testart, *La servitude volontaire*, pp. 29–34.

the tomb. As before, at least in royal and aristocratic circles, the structure and the content of the tomb served to enhance the social status of the deceased, the position he occupied within his clan. The state of our knowledge remains partial, however. In particular, as of writing, no Zhou royal tomb has been discovered, and this limitation probably influences our analysis of the tombs of this period.

Aristocratic cemeteries

Like the Shang, the differences observed for the Zhou between the large princely tombs and the simpler tombs consisting of a pit without any burial objects remain considerable, but the rulers' tombs seem to have had comparable proportions from one principality to another, as if standards were followed by these lords, or else were imposed on them. Several aristocratic cemeteries have been excavated (in general, partially): those of Yan 燕 (near Beijing), Jin 晉 (at Tianma-Qucun near Houma in Shanxi),[19] Yu 𢐗 (near Baoji in western Shaanxi), Wei 衛 (Xunxian Xincun in northern Henan), Guo 虢 (Sanmenxia in western Henan) and those of aristocrats who belonged to the Zhou court and were buried near the capital in Chang'an county (Shaanxi) or near the secondary capital situated at Luoyang, Chengzhou 成周 (Henan).[20] Despite the

[19] Jay Xu, "The cemetery of the Western Zhou lords of Jin," *Artibus Asiae* 56.3/4 (1996), 193–231; Li Boqian, "The sumptuary system."

[20] For the cemetery of the Yan rulers at Liulihe near Beijing, see Beijing shi wenwu yanjiusuo, *Liulihe Xi Zhou Yan guo mudi 1973–1977* (Beijing, 1995). For the cemetery of the Jin rulers at Tianma-Qucun, near Houma, Shanxi, see Beijing daxue kaoguxi, Shanxi sheng kaogu yanjiusuo, "Tianma-Qucun yizhi Beizhao Jin Hou mudi di er ci fajue," *Wenwu* 1994.1, 4–28, "Tianma-Qucun yizhi Beizhao Jin Hou mudi di si ci fajue," *Wenwu* 1994.8, 4–21, "Tianma-Qucun yizhi Beizhao Jin Hou mudi di san ci fajue," *Wenwu* 1994.8, 22–33, 68, "Tianma-Qucun yizhi Beizhao Jin Hou mudi di wu ci fajue," W*enwu* 1995.7, 4–39, Jay Xu, "The cemetery of the Western Zhou lords of Jin," Shanghai bowuguan, *Jin Hou qizhen – Shanxi Jin Hou muqun chutu wenwu jingpin* (Shanghai, 2002). For the cemetery of the Yu rulers, near Baoji, Shaanxi, see Lu Liancheng and Hu Zhisheng, *Baoji Yu guo mudi* (Beijing, 1988). For the cemetery of the Wei rulers at Xunxian, Henan, see Guo Baojun, *Xunxian Xincun* (Beijing, 1964). For the cemetery of the Guo rulers at Shangcunling, Huaxian, Henan, see Zhongguo kexueyuan kaogu yanjiusuo, *Shangcunling Guo guo mudi* (Beijing, 1959), Henan sheng wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo, Sanmenxia shi wenwu gongzuodui, *Sanmenxia Guo guo mudi* (Beijing, 1999). For the cemetery near the main Zhou capital at Chang'an Zhangjiapo, see Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan kaogu yanjiusuo, *Zhangjiapo Xi Zhou mudi* (Beijing, 1999). For the cemetery near the secondary Zhou capital at Luoyang, see Luoyang shi wenwu gongzuodui, *Luoyang Beiyao Xi Zhou mu* (Beijing, 1999). For a more complete survey of these cemeteries, see Jessica Rawson, "Western Zhou archaeology," in Michael Loewe

distance that separates the sites, these tombs follow close models, with two ramps for the largest (total length about 35–55 meters), and one ramp for the others (or no ramp in certain cases). The cemetery of the Jin rulers comprises only two tombs with two ramps, which shows that the correspondence between tomb structure and the deceased's rank is not as systematic as is generally thought.

The first model, as seen at Zhangjiapo, resembles the tomb of Wuguancun at Anyang, with a rectangular pit containing the *guo* surrounded by a ledge. Two ramps situated in the same axis provided passageways to the tomb at the height of, or above, the roof of the *guo*: the south ramp is the longest, the north ramp has steps. This dissymmetry suggests that they possessed two distinct functions: the south ramp, which goes lower than the north ramp, served to bring the burial objects and the coffin into the *guo*, whereas the north ramp may have enabled a select audience to approach the place of burial during the funeral. These ramps and also the area situated above the *guo* contained several wheels of dismantled chariots, and even one whole chariot. In many cases, near the tombs there were pits containing sacrificed horses and chariots and, occasionally, the charioteer. The horses were killed in two ways: either a large number was buried alive (up to 45 horses), or they were killed before being carefully put in the pits. At Tianma-Qucun, the area where the tombs of the Jin rulers were found was reserved for the lords and their consorts, and the tombs are spaced apart. But this is not the case in the other contemporary princely cemeteries, where the large tombs were surrounded by numerous small tombs, whose owners were probably related to the princes.[21] The preferred orientation of all cemeteries is, within a few degrees, north-south, the deceased having his (or her) head to the north or, much less often, to the south (in rare cases another orientation was adopted). The content of the tombs from a typological point of view differs little from what is seen under the Shang, at least until about 900–850 BC: they contain everything symbolizing the rank of a prince, namely, a large set of ritual bronze vessels, the number of which is closely linked to status; jades in great quantity concentrated in the coffin; various musical instruments that

and Edward L. Shaughnessy, eds, *The Cambridge history of ancient China* (Cambridge, 1999), pp. 352–449; Lothar von Falkenhausen, *Chinese society in the age of Confucius (1000–250 BC): the archaeological evidence* (Los Angeles, 2006).

[21] Li Boqian, "The sumptuary system," pp. 256–57.

were part of the ritual furnishings, among them sets of bells occupying a more and more important place; and weapons.

Other princely tombs, of smaller dimensions, have only one ramp, to the south. Next are the tombs of officers who served the prince and, finally, there are tombs without any burial goods. Thus the whole, or nearly, of Zhou society is characterized by marked inequalities in the treatment of the deceased, giving the impression that sumptuary laws must have been imposed on the entire society.

First innovations in the burial practices

At two particular moments under the Western Zhou, changes appeared in the tombs: at the beginning of the dynasty, and then in the first half of the 9th century BC, together with vast changes in the political and social realms.

Construction of the tombs

The cruciform model disappeared at the beginning of the dynasty: the tomb of prince Chang Zi Kou 長子口, at Taiqinggong (Luyi county, Henan),[22] at the Shang-Zhou transition in the mid-11th century BC, is one of the very last to contain an outer cross-shaped coffin.[23] Given this example, it would seem the royal Shang tombs were not the only ones to have a *guo* on this model (although one cannot rule out that Chang Zi Kou had family or clan ties with the Shang). Of the two access ramps, north and south, the southern one descended to the level of the floor of the *guo*, a fact which has given rise to the idea that the *guo* had a door (as was already the case at Anyang in some of the royal tombs). This tomb also attests to the use of nested coffins, two in the present case, a custom no doubt established at the end of the Shang for the king and princes. This custom, closely linked to the rank of the

[22] Henan sheng wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo, Zhoukou shi wenhuaju, eds, *Luyi Taiqinggong Chang Zi Kou mu* (Zhengzhou, 2000).

[23] One cannot exclude the possibility that the tombs of the Zhou kings had a cruciform shape with four ramps. In fact, later on, in the second half of the 4th century BC, the Qin rulers seem to have chosen this particular shape for their tombs when they declared themselves kings. See Alain Thote, "Burial practices as seen in rulers' tombs of the Eastern Zhou period: patterns and regional traditions," in John Lagerwey, ed., *Religion and Chinese society*, 2 vols (Hong Hong, 2004), 1.84.

deceased, as later commentaries attest,[24] was used differently according to the principalities.

In contrast with Fu Hao's tomb, no traces of a temple above the tomb have been found. On the other hand, in the cemetery of the princes of Jin, sacrifices were carried out at the site of the tombs, which are marked by the presence of pits containing a sacrificial victim, or at times empty (but it is supposed blood was shed there), or yet again containing ritual objects in jade. Li Boqian has shown that these sacrifices differed in nature according to whether they were addressed to a prince or to his wife.[25]

Orientation

A northern orientation, as already stated, is preponderant in the princely cemeteries of the Western Zhou. For certain authors, this conforms to what the *Liji* 禮記 (*Book of rites*; ca. 200 BC) notes: if the head is turned toward the north, it is to let the soul go to the dwelling of the dead.[26] In fact, the following period, that of the Eastern Zhou (770–256 BC), was characterized by a number of different practices, incompatible with the indications of the *Liji*. Very probably, what is said in this work summarizes only one of these traditions.

Human sacrifices

At the beginning of the Western Zhou period, a complete change occurred in the practice of human sacrifice. They became rarer, in comparison with Anyang.[27] The protection of the tomb and the deceased no longer seems to have required the presence of persons sacrificed within or near the tomb (*rensheng* 人牲). However, accompanying persons *renxun* 人殉 (wives, concubines, servants, chariot driver) are still present in the tomb or near it, though less numerous.

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[24] Different cases are discussed by Guo Dewei using quotations from ancient textual sources in "Chu mu fenlei wenti tantao," *Kaogu* 1983.3, p. 250.

[25] Li Boqian, "The sumptuary system," pp. 269–70.

[26] Couvreur, Séraphin, *Mémoires sur les bienséances et les cérémonies* (Paris, rprt 1950), vol. 1.1, p. 204.

[27] According to Huang Zhanyue, the Zhou people did not perform human sacrifice before they came into contact with the Shang. The archaeological records show that a certain number of Western Zhou tombs contained sacrificial victims, and simultaneously that a few cemeteries of rulers and their families did not contain any. See Huang Zhanyue, *Gudai rensheng renxun tonglun* (Beijing, 2004), pp. 146–67.

Innovations in the furnishings

Inside the inner coffin, the number of decorative objects in semi-precious stone (jade, rock crystal and carnelian) and in faience (which appeared around 1000 BC) increased a great deal by the mid-Western Zhou, and even more during the late Western Zhou.[28] The face of the deceased was covered with a cloth—unless this was part of the shroud—on which were sewn plaques cut out of jade that together formed a large mask. Although the edges give the form of a head where all the parts of the face are indicated, the composition is abstract to a certain degree. The mask may have represented a protective deity or the face of the dead person as he was imagined to be in the next world, his features set for eternity. Here the interpretations can only be hypothetical. The decorative elements are composed of pearls, plaques representing birds, dragons, deer, fish, rare anthropomorphic figures and some hybrids. Several of these pieces are Shang, perhaps acquired by robbery of more ancient tombs. Lacking raw material, the artisans did not hesitate to carve the plaques again independently of their previous decoration, for the presence of jade inside the coffin was considered essential for prophylactic reasons. A difference from the Neolithic period is to be noted: the jade pieces from now on were to be concentrated on or close to the body, inside the inner coffin.

Reform of the sacrifice in the first half of the 9th century BC

Toward the middle of the 9th century, the burial furnishings underwent great changes, to the point that Jessica Rawson was able to suggest the idea of a ritual revolution during the reign of kings Yi 懿王, Xiao 孝王 or Yi 夷王, between 899/97 and 858.[29] Actually, the term "reform" is better suited, because the changes did not occur suddenly but in stages. In particular, the *gui* vessels containing the offerings of cereals became an indispensable component in the ritual ensembles as soon as the Zhou began to reign, while the vessels for alcohol diminished both in number and variety. From then on, vessels for solid food dominated the ritual sets (Fig. 5). But the ritual reform showed itself conjointly in various other ways: not only in the vessel types but also in the bronze decoration. Almost all references to animals other than the dragon

[28] Rawson, "Western Zhou archaeology," pp. 430–33.
[29] Ibid., pp. 433–40.

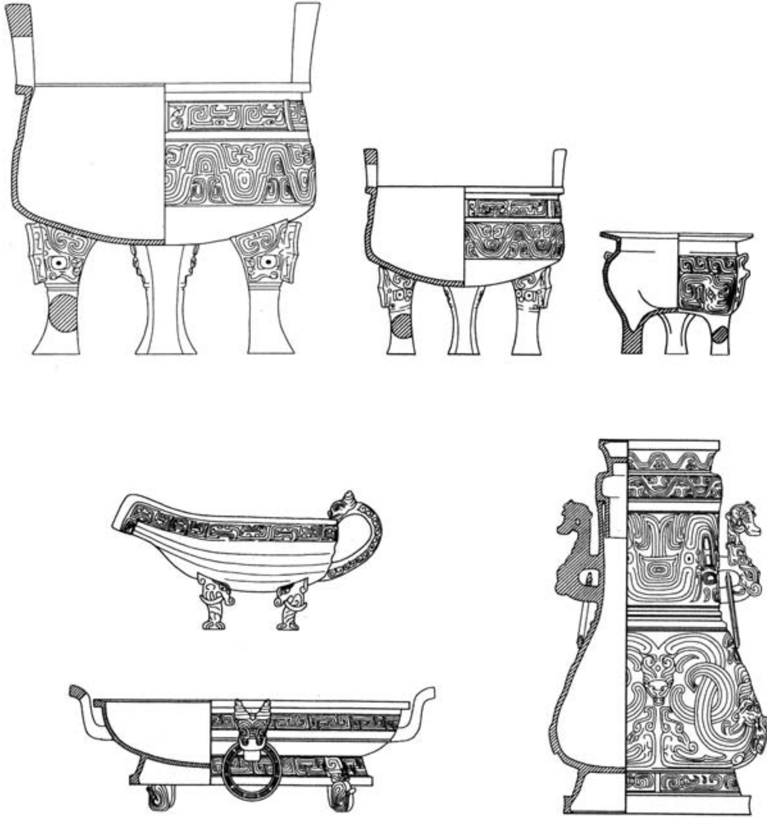

Fig. 5. Part of a set of ritual vessels discovered at Yangjiacun, Meixian county (Shaanxi). The cache comprised 27 bronzes: 12 *ding* tripods (left, above), nine *li* tripods (right, above), two *fang-hu* vessels of almost square section (right, below), one *pan* basin (left, below), one *yi* pourer (left, below), one *he* pourer, one deep basin. Early 8th century BC (ca. 786–785 or a little later). A part of the pieces of the original set, made up of several groups of bells, was found buried in another nearby cache discovered in 1985. After *Wenwu* 2003.6, figs. 19, 26, 30, 38, 44, 54, pp. 15, 22, 25, 31, 35, 41.

disappeared from the vessels, and most of the motifs that at first sight look abstract—scales, ribbons, volutes—are in fact derived from the dragon motif. This gives to the bronze vessels of the late Western Zhou a rather uniform and repetitive aspect. At the same time, series of identical *ding* vessels (generally of decreasing size) and *gui* tureens (of the same size) were used in proportion to the owner's rank. The repetition of similar vessels gives these sets a far more imposing aspect, allowing immediate evaluation of the wealth and status of a prince. According to Jessica Rawson, these changes indicate innovations in the ceremonies held in front of gatherings that were more numerous than before. Finally, sets of bells and musical stones are included, and these pieces are also subject to variation in accord with the social position of their owner.

These various changes perhaps materialized the desire better to control the princes by confining them within a strict hierarchy. By contrast, during the centuries following the fall of the Western Zhou in 771 BC the sumptuary rules were constantly exceeded by the princes. Also, it seems that the flourishing jade craftsmanship of the late Western Zhou was a direct consequence of the ritual reform: contrasting with the uniformity of bronze vessels, personal adornment became an important way for families to show their wealth. Ornaments are generally an important marker of gender, although some grave goods such as the masks sewn on shrouds and *ge* 戈 axe blades were common to men and women. Gender differentiation can be seen in the quantity of ornaments, in their shapes, and possibly in the colors of the components, which are more varied for women.[30]

The nature of the sacrifices made to the ancestors also changed: from then on, meats and cereals played a greater and beverages a lesser role. Several vessels bear inscriptions, but they make up only a very small part of the sets of bronzes, no doubt less than 1 percent. The inscriptions

[30] For example, tomb 92 at Tianma-Qucun contained 4000 beads, plaques and ornaments made of jade, faience, carnelian, etc. The woman's head was covered by two different masks. One mask (and probably the other, not described in the preliminary report) was displayed facing her head. Another category of ornaments is necklaces; they seem to be independent of gender, whereas others are specific to men or women. In particular, the small amulets in the shape of silkworms allude to weaving and are specific to women. In tomb 92, there are 16 of them, and they are part of a pendent composed of 238 elements (eight *gui* 圭 pointed plaques, 181 carnelian beads, 22 faience beads) suspended in two different layers. The total length of the pendent is approximately 30 cm. The lady also had another, similar pendent that was even richer, composed of more than 500 elements and suspended at the right side of her waist. See Beijing daxue kaoguxi, "Tianma-Qucun yizhi Beizhao Jin Hou mudi di wu ci fajue."

tend to become very brief after the ritual reform. One formula appears frequently, either in isolation or to conclude a text: "May my sons and the sons of my sons (all my descendants) forever preserve these vessels and use them eternally [for worship]." However, after having been used in the temples, the vessels finally followed their owner (or one of his descendants) into the tomb, depriving his descendants of using them for sacrifices. Why were they put there? There is no clear answer to the question. One interpretation is that of Hayashi Minao, who suggests this deposit means the deceased would continue in the next world the ancestor worship he practiced while alive.[31] The continuity of worship would thus be assured beyond death. Indeed, the vessels deposited in the tombs are often the same ones (and in many cases part of) the deceased used in his own lifetime to sacrifice to his dead father and to his ancestors, and thus to communicate with them. But it is also possible to imagine that the family members did a first sacrifice to the deceased in his tomb with all the vessels necessary for worship before proceeding with the sacrifices in the temple due him as a new ancestor. In fact, the bronze sets buried in the tombs until the 6th century BC are generally composed from several different sources: to bronzes cast by the deceased during his lifetime to worship his or her own ancestors were added much earlier vessels that had in many cases been used for decades (and sometimes over a century or even more) in the ancestral temple, and also vessels cast for the deceased just after his or her death. For example, in most of the tombs of the Jin rulers at Tianma-Qucun, the bronzes of several generations were mixed together.[32] In 6th and 5th century tombs, the vessels at times still contain the remains of meat offerings, indicating that a sacrifice was made by the family members before the

[31] Hayashi Minao, "Concerning the inscription 'May sons and grandsons eternally use this [vessel],'" *Artibus Asiae*, 53.1/2 (1993), 51–58. In fact, most of Hayashi's argumentation rests on late Eastern Zhou evidence and late textual sources. Over time, and in different places, the same burial practices may have had different meanings.

[32] This makes the dating and identification of the tombs' occupants especially difficult. Western Zhou and early to middle Eastern Zhou large tombs rarely contain coherent sets of vessels specially made by the deceased during his lifetime and buried in his tomb. In this respect, the bronze sets of Suixian Leigudun Tomb 1 and Taiyuan Jinshengcun Tomb 251, both of the 5th century BC, are in sharp contrast with earlier tombs. See Hubei sheng bowuguan, *Zeng Hou Yi mu*, 2 vols (Beijing, 1989); Shanxi sheng kaogu yanjiusuo, Taiyuan shi wenwu guanli weiyuanhui, *Taiyuan Jin guo Zhao qing mu* (Beijing, 1996). Hayashi's hypothesis is probably correct for the late Eastern Zhou period.

tomb was closed.[33] The more ancient sites, badly preserved, do not allow us to determine when this custom began. This sacrifice offered to the deceased in his tomb preceded the sacrifices he would shortly thereafter receive as an ancestor in the temple. In the correspondence between the two ritual bronze sets placed respectively in the temple and in the tomb, a close link is evident between these two places, foci of ancestor worship. These correspondences materialize the communication which the living maintained with the dead, their ancestors.

Geographical diversity of the funeral traditions: a reflection of the diversity of beliefs?

Examination of the tombs of the Spring and Autumn period (770–481 BC) reveal several innovations: the sumptuary rules which had shaped quite effectively the disposition and furnishings of the tombs until the 8th–7th century BC were very often broken later. In central China, however, these rules closely associated with the formation of the elites into clans and family groups[34] seem to have been followed longer than elsewhere. In their application, one observes a great number of differences between the tombs—differences whose origin it is difficult to know: in the case of a strict observation of the rules do they mark distinctions in status, or do they indicate the relative flexibility of the system?

In 771, following a revolt which ended with the assassination of the king, the court had to leave hurriedly the capital near modern-day Xi'an (Shaanxi) to take refuge in the secondary capital located near Luoyang (Henan). Royal power, greatly weakened by these events, was never again able to control the princes who had previously been (almost) completely subordinate to the king. Archaeological evidence reveals the growing independence of the lords in two converging ways. In the evolution of burial customs, changes, slow at first, became manifest during the course of the 6th century BC. Burials in the principalities then offered the elites an occasion to display their power, at times in an extravagant way. In addition, the contacts which were made in the regions situated on the

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[33] We must also remind the reader that, in addition to their religious aspects, funerals were occasions for the deceased's family to act at different symbolic levels related to the personality of the deceased and his or her rank, position in the family and wealth.

[34] Falkenhausen, *Chinese society in the age of Confucius*, pp. 169–203.

periphery of the Zhou cultural sphere with non-Chinese populations who had different customs and religious beliefs generated the formation of regional funerary traditions that are so many variations on shared practices. In this respect, one may distinguish a tradition belonging to the principality of Qin 秦,[35] another specific to Shandong (principalities of Qi 齊 and Lu 魯), others again in the south-central region corresponding to the upper course of the Huai river where several small principalities were established (Huang 黃, Jiang 江, etc.), and further south, the region straddling the southern part of Henan, Hubei and Hunan (kingdom of Chu 楚).[36] The region of the lower Yangzi river, corresponding to the kingdoms of Wu 吳 and Yue 越, is remarkable for its greater originality, with tombs built in the interior of artificial mounds (these tombs always belong to members of the elite). We will examine here only the traditions of Qin and Chu, because they seem opposed, although both are rooted in the inheritance of the practices of the Shang and Zhou.

Burial practices in the principality of Qin: the tomb as a microcosm

The case of the principality of Qin is interesting in more than one way. Here we take up again a certain number of points which Lothar von Falkenhausen has shed light on in his study of the funerary practices of Qin.[37] First, the difference in the treatment of the dead is very marked between the tombs of the princes and those of members of the aristocracy. The early princely tombs looted at Dabaozishan (Lixian county, Gansu) follow the model of the large tombs of the Western Zhou elite:[38] a pit to which led two dissymmetrical ramps placed on the east-west (and not the north-south) axis. Each is accompanied by a pit for horses and chariots. But one can perceive in their respective dimensions (115 meters and 88 meters long), in the abundance of the bronze burial objects, and in the presence of plaques of gold on the coffin a tendency to discard the standards to which the other princes seemed still to submit in the 8th century BC. This tendency is confirmed in the tomb

[35] Lothar von Falkenhausen, "Mortuary behavior in pre-imperial Qin: a religious interpretation," in John Lagerwey, ed., *Religion and Chinese society*, 2 vols (Hong Hong, 2004), 1.109–72.

[36] Alain Thote, "Burial practices," 1.65–107.

[37] Falkenhausen "Mortuary behavior," pp. 116 ff.

[38] Zhu Zhongxi, ed., *Qin Xi Chuiling qu* (Beijing, 2004).

of Prince Jing of Qin 秦景公 (r. 576–537), the largest in pre-imperial China, at Nanzhihui, Fengxiang county (Shaanxi), where the necropolis of the principality was situated between the 7th and 4th centuries BC (Fig. 6).[39] This tomb has two ramps, of a total length of around 280 meters. It contained 166 human victims, both accompaniers and sacrificial victims. The first were put in coffins of different types of wood, placed more or less near the prince, probably according to the place they occupied in his suite during their lifetime, while the others were buried without a coffin. The tomb was 24 meters in depth. Composed of compartments with communicating doors in the fashion of a dwelling for the living, the *guo* is complex. This is the first evidence of such an internal organization, but as the tomb has been robbed several times, we cannot know if the distribution of the furnishings between the compartments followed an arrangement which already suggested a dwelling.[40] Such a phenomenon appears in another site of the late 5th century BC and related to the Chu culture, at Leigudun, Suizhou county (Hubei),[41] and then in the 4th century in the tombs of the kings of Zhongshan 中山, for example,[42] and at Chu.[43] This remained, however, a discreet phenomenon until the late Warring States (3rd century BC).

The tombs of the Qin aristocrats, grouped in single lineage cemeteries, followed the current model of the Zhou cultural sphere, that is, a pit with vertical walls at the bottom of which was built the *guo* that contained the coffin of the deceased and the burial objects. The tombs for people of more modest standing had no *guo*. Some of them, on the model known as "catacomb-tomb," were composed of shafts whose bottom was dug out laterally so as to form a chamber closed by a low wall of unfired adobe bricks, wood or branches (Fig. 7). The body of the deceased rested inside with burial objects, deposited at his head in most cases. Tombs in jars also exist, but the phenomenon, which goes

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39 Han Wei, "Lüelun Shaanxi Chunqiu Zhanguo Qin-mu," *Kaogu yu wenwu* 1981.1, 83–93; "Fengxiang Qin gong lingyuan zantan yu shijue jianbao," *Wenwu* 1983.7, 30–37; "Qin ling gailun," *Kaogu xue yanjiu* (Xi'an, 1993). Reprint: Han Wei, *Moyan shugao. Han Wei kaogu wenji* (Beijing, 2001), pp. 52–68.

40 Falkenhausen "Mortuary behavior," pp. 118–19.

41 Hubei sheng bowuguan, *Zeng Hou Yi mu*; Thote, "Burial practices," pp. 90–96.

42 Hebei sheng wenwu yanjiusuo, *Cuo mu — Zhanguo Zhongshan guo guowang zhi mu* (Beijing, 1996).

43 Alain Thote, "Burial practices in the Chu kingdom in the light of recent discoveries: continuities and discontinuities," in Roderick Whitfield and Wang Tao, eds, *Exploring China's past: new discoveries and studies in archaeology and art* (London, 1999), pp. 89–204.

Fig. 6. Tomb of Prince Jing of Qin (Qin Jing Gong), died in 537 BC. After *La Chine* 1985.

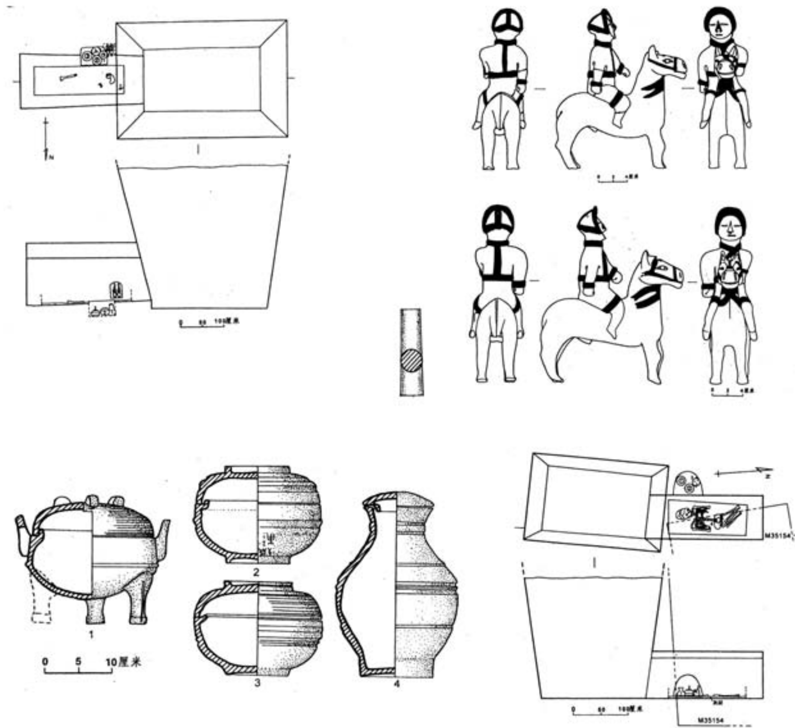

Fig. 7. Tomb-catacomb, characteristic of the principality of Qin: section and furnishings. Map, profile (above, left side), and furnishing of Tomb 28057 at Xianyang Ta'erpo (Shaanxi); map and profile of Tomb 35154 at Ta'erpo (right, below), 4th century BC. After Xianyang Shi Wenwu Kaogu Yanjiusuo, ed., *Ta'erpo Qin mu* (Xi'an, 1998), fig. 41 p. 50, figs. 96, 97 pp. 127–8, fig. 146 p. 209, fig. 131.9 p. 173, fig. 42 p. 51.

back to the Neolithic, has not been much studied for the Zhou period. The custom of burying a dog in a waist pit under the coffin of the deceased has been attested in Qin, as in several other sites of the same period in north China. The prevailing orientation for the deceased's head is the west.[44]

Many of the dead are lying on their backs, legs folded to the left or right side.[45] This is a specific characteristic of a large number of Qin burials, a fact that is explained in various ways. Whatever the reason, this is a cultural marker related to very ancient practices widespread in Qinghai and Gansu and, farther afield, in central Asia. This custom continued until the late 3rd century, as exemplified in tomb 11 at Shuihudi, Yunmeng county, Hubei, dated to 217 BC.[46] It may be linked to religious beliefs. A folded leg posture could frighten away evil spirits according to an almanac discovered at Shuihudi. By analogy, it is possible that placing the corpse in this position had the same power, at least at the end of the Warring States period.[47] With regard to human sacrifices, the accompanying dead show again a considerable difference of treatment between the sovereign and his subjects, in Qin as well as in central China. Chariots were also buried near certain Qin graves in sacrificial pits.

The furnishings of the Qin tombs are remarkable for the presence of *mingqi* 明器, which are objects made specifically for burial that belong to two main categories: earthenware or lead imitations of ritual vessels (or bronze ritual vessels whose quality is so poor they could not be used) and earthenware or wooden models of objects, animals or human beings.[48] In Qin from 700 BC some *mingqi* represent human figures, and from the 6th century BC onwards granaries, chariots drawn by

[44] In other parts of China, different orientations may prevail. In the Chu kingdom, except for elite members, who are most often buried with the head toward the east, the preferred orientation is south.

[45] The fact that they are bent to the right or to the left may be the result of the body's decay. In fact, what is important is that the legs are folded.

[46] See "Yunmeng Shuihudi Qin mu" Bianxiezu, *Yunmeng Shuihudi Qin mu* (Beijing, 1981).

[47] Falkenhausen, "Mortuary behavior," p. 136.

[48] For a thorough treatment of the *mingqi*, see Wu Hung, "'*Mingqi*' de lilun he shijian—Zhanguo shiqi liyi meishu zhong de guannianhua qingxiang," *Wenwu* 2006.6, 72–81. Imitations of ritual vessels of archaic types were added to the ritual sets in several tombs of the late 9th and 8th centuries BC, a phenomenon probably linked to the ritual reform.

oxen, and so on. Except for the human figures, the use of which would be widespread during the 4th and above all the 3rd centuries in Chu, such models remained a characteristic of the Qin principality until the late Warring States.

For Lothar von Falkenhausen, several elements seem to indicate that the tomb in Qin began to be conceived as a microcosm. The presence of models, the "catacomb" shape evoking a home, and the deposit of wooden or earthenware human figures are all elements which had an influence on the customs of the later Qin and Han dynasties. If, concerning the models, Qin played a leading role in the evolution of the funeral customs of the early empire, Chu also contributed to developing the conception of the tomb in the image of a home, but in another mode, and slightly later, from the 5th century BC.[49] As for the earthenware vessels imitating ritual bronze vessels, they developed in the Chu area in larger proportions than in any other place, and earlier, from the 8th century BC on.[50] Also, the imitations of bronze vessels in Chu are often of high quality. By contrast, the relatively low quality of the burial objects is a characteristic trait of the Qin. The ritual bronze vessels, like the ritual jades found in Qin tombs are among the less well worked of the Zhou period, made in an awkward style. Several of the elements just mentioned seem to indicate that Qin people tended to reserve for the dead objects necessarily different from those of the living, either cheap substitutes or models of real objects.[51] On the one hand, the tomb referred to the world of the living, either by its construction or by its furnishings; on the other, it did this symbolically, so as to mark clearly

[49] Yu Weichao, "Han dai zhuhouwang yu liehou muzang de xingzhi fenxi—jianlun 'Zhou zhi', 'Han zhi' yu 'Jin zhi'" de san jieduanxing," in *Zhongguo kaogu xuehui di-yici nianhui lunwenji* (Beijing, 1980), pp. 332–37; Thote, "Burial practices in the Chu kingdom."

[50] The production of pots specifically for burial and fired at a lower temperature so that they were unusable in daily life appeared much earlier in China, but they did not occur in such numbers as in the Chu kingdom and the Qin principality during the Eastern Zhou period. It is already in evidence in the tombs of the elites of the Liangzhu culture at Fanshan, near Hangzhou (Zhejiang). See Zhejiang sheng wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo, ed., *Fanshan*. In Chu, the phenomenon can be seen in the cemeteries of Zhaojiahu, Dangyang county, Yutaishan and Jiudian, Jiangling county: see Hubei sheng Yichang diqu bowuguan, Beijing daxue kaoguxi, eds, *Dangyang Zhaojiahu Chu mu* (Beijing, 1992); Hubei sheng Jingzhou diqu bowuguan, *Jiangling Yutaishan Chu mu* (Beijing, 1984); Hubei sheng wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo, *Jiangling Jiudian Dong Zhou mu* (Beijing, 1995).

[51] Falkenhausen, "Mortuary behavior," p. 152.

the separation between the dead and the living. The absence of weapons accompanying the deceased, so numerous in the tombs of other principalities, reinforces this impression. In the principality of Qin, funeral practices have thus also an economic logic—avoid expense—at the same time they have numerous symbolic aspects and represent a microcosm. In Chu, on the contrary, the burial objects reveal a lesser propensity to conceive death in these terms. Its inhabitants, at least those of the wealthy class, did not hesitate to spend fortunes on their dead and to supply them with the finest artistic productions of their time. The use of actual everyday objects in the graves of the Chu kingdom instead of models as in the Qin principality developed from the 5th century BC, later than the use of models in Qin.

Modes of burial in the kingdom of Chu: introduction of everyday objects

In the Spring and Autumn period, the funerary traditions of the princes of the Chu kingdom are represented by a unique but very rich cemetery on the site of Xiasi, Xichuan county, in Henan (6th century BC), that of a Chu prime minister surrounded by his relatives.[52] The other cemeteries, particularly in Hubei those of Zhaojiahu (Dangyang county), of Yutaishan and Jiudian (Jiangling county), allow us to measure the evolution of medium and small tombs since the end of the 8th century BC.[53] Of larger size, several tombs belonging to aristocrats who were sometimes related to the royal family and held important positions in the kingdom afford remarkable evidence of the modes of burial, but most of these tombs date from the 4th to the 3rd centuries BC.[54] The existence of a large number of tombs covering all the categories of the society has enabled archaeologists to undertake studies of Chu society.

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[52] Henan sheng wenwu yanjiusuo, Henan sheng Danjiang kuqu kaogu fajuedui, Xichuan xian bowuguan, *Xichuan Xiasi Chunqiu Chu mu* (Beijing, 1991), Alain Thote, "L'archéologie de Qin et de Chu à l'époque des Printemps et Automnes (770–481 avant notre ère)," in *Chine, la gloire des empereurs* (Paris, 2000), pp. 124–58.

[53] See Falkenhausen, "Mortuary behavior," and Thote, "Burial practices in the Chu kingdom."

[54] For example, tomb 1 at Jiangling Tianxingguan (ca. 350 BC), tomb 2 at Jingmen Baoshan (ca. 316 BC), tomb 1 and tomb 2 at Jiangling Wangshan (ca. 330–320 BC), tomb 1 and tomb 2 at Xinyang Changtaiguan (ca. 300 BC). Hubei sheng Jingzhou diqu bowuguan, "Jiangling Tianxingguan yi hao Chu mu," *Kaogu xuebao* 1982.1, 71–116; Hubei sheng wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo, *Jiangling Wangshan Shazhong Chu mu*; Hubei sheng Jing Sha tielu kaogudui, *Baoshan Chu mu* (Beijing, 1991); Henan sheng wenwu yanjiusuo, *Xinyang Chu mu* (Beijing, 1986).

The data gathered reveal the existence of a system of burials more homogenous than in the Qin area, and possibly of sumptuary laws or specific customs governing tombs according to the deceased's status—except the royal tombs, of which only one has been found, but it was severely plundered in the 1930s and dates to the late 3rd century BC—but combined with other factors such as gender, age at death and the wealth of the family.[55] The system seems to have been in place from the 5th century BC. In fact, the largest tombs of the 6th century, those of Xiasi (Tombs 1, 2 and 3), are built according to an arrangement which still belongs to the tombs of central China: a pit with vertical walls, a *guo* of vast dimensions forming only one chamber, a double coffin, small tombs for the accompanying dead, burial objects composed of ritual vessels, and musical instruments and weapons, as well as objects in jade. In this mode of burial, the deceased's status is emphasized first. In the heavy style of the bronzes and the content of their inscriptions, the political power of the leader is affirmed. The Qin princes had the same preoccupations. The construction of the tombs in the first place offered the princely families an occasion to show their power in this world, a tendency which intensified until the founding of the empire, with the culmination being the tomb of Qin Shihuangdi (210 BC). However, from the 5th century BC, the organization of the tombs would undergo a major change.

The tomb of the marquis Yi of Zeng

Tomb 1 at Suizhou Leigudun (Hubei), dated to 433 or slightly later, marks, in its arrangement as in its burial objects, a turning point in the evolution of burial practices, and for this reason may be taken as an example (Fig. 8).[56] In particular, its construction suggests that one of the souls of the deceased (the one which remains with the corpse) could circulate within the tomb, since the tomb was made up of four chambers, each having a function related to the owner's activities during his lifetime. The existence of a belief in a next world modelled on this

[55] The differences between the tombs are interpreted as markers of the status of their occupants, which is not without raising methodological problems, since names and status of fewer than ten tomb occupants are known to us. All these persons belonged to the aristocratic circles close to the Chu rulers. For the rest of the Chu graves (99.99%), the relationship between a tomb and the status of its occupant, even though the tomb categories were defined very precisely, is pure speculation.

[56] Hubei sheng bowuguan, *Zeng Hou Yi mu*.

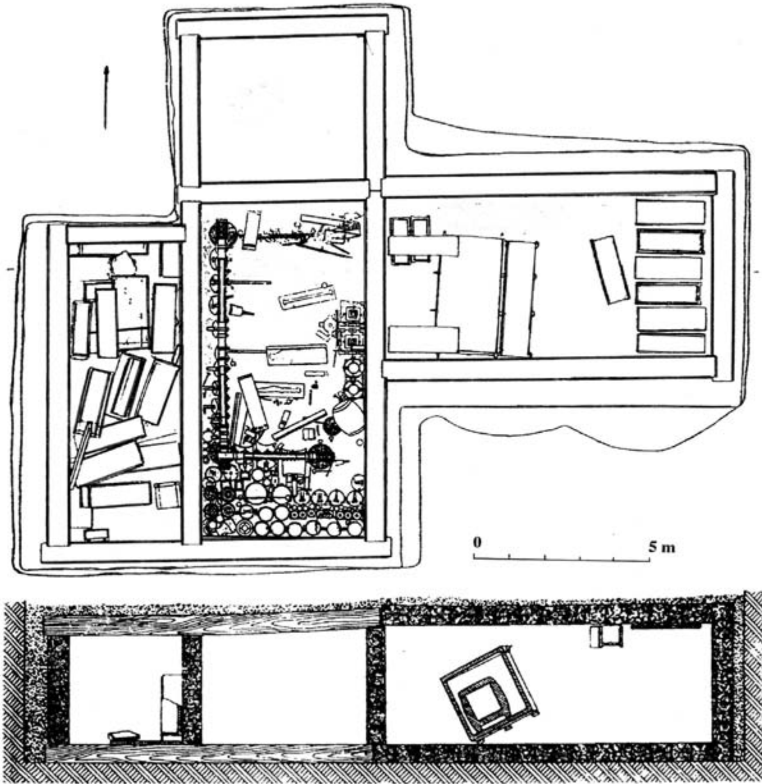

Fig. 8. Plan and section of tomb 1 at Leigudun, Suixian county (Hubei). Its owner, the marquis Yi of Zeng died in 433 or a little later. After Hubei sheng bowuguan, *Zeng Hou Yi mu*, 2 vols (Beijing, 1989), fig. 5 p. 9.

world seems to have guided this new idea: not only the status and the prestige of the deceased are displayed in the tomb, but also the burial furnishings include all kinds of pieces which were believed to be useful for the deceased in his life after death.

The tomb shows several innovations which would lead to ample developments in the 4th and 3rd centuries BC. Situated in an enclave of the Chu kingdom, the principality of Zeng, the tomb was occupied by the marquis Yi of Zeng 曾侯乙, who had close links to King Hui of Chu 楚惠王 (*r*. 488–432 BC). Although it does not possess the characteristics of a Chu tomb, the furnishings present numerous affinities with the classic burial objects of Chu tombs. Of vast dimensions (around 140 square meters), the *guo* was composed of four compartments (large enough to be considered as chambers, which is not generally the case elsewhere in the Chu kingdom) arranged in an irregular layout: to the east, the chamber where the deceased reposed, in two nested coffins; in the center, a chamber containing the ritual vessels and a set of musical instruments used during the ceremonies; to the west, a chamber holding the coffins of 13 women; to the north, a small chamber containing weapons, two enormous bronze jars, and the inventories of the chariots which composed the cortege and carried the gifts of the relatives of the deceased and princes and officers close to him at the time of the funeral. The distribution of the burial goods indicates that the marquis' chamber contained the objects useful to him in his daily life: utensils for eating and drinking (in gold and in lacquered wood), instruments for a small orchestra, clothes inside chests, eight coffins containing the remains of young women, no doubt servants or musicians, and, finally, a dog's coffin placed close to that of the deceased. On a symbolic level, this chamber seems to have represented his private apartments, whereas the central chamber was used for rituals and symbolized his official life. The northern chamber formed a kind of armory, with everything necessary for a warlord of this period. The western chamber probably contained the household staff of the deceased (perhaps in charge of the ritual ensemble or the musical instruments of the central chamber). The four rooms communicated with each other, at least symbolically, because the openings were very small (about 40 cm wide and high). The idea of communication within the tomb is also suggested by the paintings on the double coffin, since on the sides of the inner coffin a window and two doors were represented, and the larger coffin had on one side a small opening of the same size as the openings between

the chambers. It is possible that, in this arrangement, we have the first evidence of the belief in the existence of the *po* 魄 soul, thought to remain with the body in the tomb.[57] The idea that a man had two souls *hun* 魂 and *po* seems to have appeared in the 4th century BC or even before. At least there is a reference in the year 534 in the *Zuozhuan* 左傳, compiled around 350 BC.[58]

A new conception of death

In Suizhou Leigudun tomb 1, several aspects show the changes in the conception of death, and therefore the manner in which the dead should be treated. First, methods were developed, particularly in all the regions affected by the culture of the Chu kingdom, to effectively protect the wooden construction of the tombs by the selection of the earth filling the pit above the outer coffin and laid in compact rammed layers, and by the presence of extremely impermeable clay and charcoal against the walls and roof of the outer coffin. At the same time, the use of cinnabar was abandoned. The human sacrifices in the earth filling the pit or in sacrificial pits also disappeared. The human victims accompanying the deceased were laid in coffins nearby or at a short distance from the deceased. In the marquis' tomb he took his retinue with him, just as he took his dog (in earlier tombs, dogs were found buried in sacrificial pits). Among the furnishings, objects for daily use were added to the ritual pieces and the emblems of prestige (weapons). A chariot without wheels was found in the north chamber of Suixian Leigudun tomb 1. Usually chariots were buried with horses in separate pits dug near the main tomb and without their bronze fittings, which were placed inside the tomb (this was still the case in the marquis' tomb: probably the chariots listed in the inventories on bamboo slips were also, partly or completely, buried nearby).

These changes reveal a new sensitivity, a different expression of man's relationship with death and probably with the next world. This new conception of death influenced the course of the evolution of funeral practices over the next two centuries, particularly in the kingdom of Chu.

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[57] Lothar von Falkenhausen, *Chinese society in the age of Confucius*, p. 310.

[58] Michael Loewe, *Ways to paradise: the Chinese quest for immortality* (London, 1979), p. 9 ff.; Anna Seidel, "*Post-mortem* immortality or the Taoist resurrection of the body," in *Gilgul, essays on transformation, revolution and permanence in the history of religions dedicated to R.J. Zwi Werblowsky* (Leiden, 1987), pp. 226–27.

The tombs of Chu

For the location of cemeteries or isolated tombs, the Chu people chose a hill or a terrace, an elevated area, as opposed to the plain, often swampy and reserved for crops. Besides these practical reasons, there were perhaps other reasons, religious or symbolic, for the phenomenon is characteristic of the entire Chu cultural area. The tombs are characterized by the presence of an outer coffin of limited dimensions (around 9 m × 7 m for the largest), carefully constructed with thick and solid beams.[59] In the small (less than about 2 m × 1 m) and middle-sized tombs (between 6 m × 4 m and about 2–3 m × 1–2 m), the deceased's coffin occupies the major part of the *guo*, with the burial goods piled up near the head.[60] From the 6th century BC, in certain tombs, the *guo* is divided into compartments, following a custom which appeared in the southern region of Henan from the 8th century BC, and was subsequently adopted and systematically used in Chu. The number of compartments, between one and six, is proportional to the size of the tomb, and seems to be related to the status of the deceased, as is his coffin, which may be contained in one or two other nested coffins placed in the central compartment of the *guo*.[61] When there are several compartments, judging by their contents and as indicated sometimes in inventories on the bamboo slips placed in them, they frequently have each a special function.[62]

From the very start (8th–6th centuries BC), the structure of the *guo* is compact and very well built, even when the tomb does not contain an abundance of burial goods. The comparison with the cemetery of Shangma at Houma (Shanxi) from the same period and belonging to the principality of Jin is eloquent:[63] the outer coffins there are constructed in logs roughly fitted together, and they are larger than Chu wooden

[59] Henan sheng wenwu yanjiusuo, *Xinyang Chu mu* (Xinyang Changtaiguan tomb 1 and tomb 2); Hubei sheng Jingzhou diqu bowuguan, "Jiangling Tianxingguan yi hao Chu mu; Hubei sheng Jingzhou bowuguan, *Jingzhou Tianxingguan er hao Chu mu* (Beijing, 2003) (Jiangling Tianxingguan nos 1 and 2); Hubei sheng Jing Sha tielu kaogudui, *Baoshan Chu mu* (Jingmen Baoshan no. 2).

[60] Thote, "Burial practices in the Chu kingdom."

[61] Hubei sheng wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo, *Jiangling Wangshan Shazhong Chu mu* (Jiangling Wangshan tomb 1 and tomb 2, Shazhong tomb 1) and references in note 59.

[62] Hubei sheng Jing Sha tielu kaogudui, *Baoshan Chu mu*; Wu Hung, "Art and architecture of the Warring States period," in Michael Loewe and Edward L. Shaughnessy, eds, *The Cambridge history of ancient China: from the origins of civilization to 221 BC* (Cambridge, 1999), p. 726.

[63] Shanxi sheng kaogu yanjiusuo, *Shangma mudi* (Beijing, 1994).

coffins, even though they contain only rudimentary furnishings. In the Chu tombs, the deceased was provided with rich burial objects or at least pieces of good quality, even when the tomb was of quite modest size.[64] The coffins were closed with hemp ropes which were tightened by being twisted around pegs**.** The wooden construction was protected by extremely plastic clay which contains no impurities, packed between the pit and the sides of the *guo* and on its ceiling.

At Dangyang, Yutaishan and Jiudian, the tombs are not all oriented (position of the deceased's head) in the same direction. However, a southern orientation (180° ±10°) prevails over the others, while at Shangma, the northeast is preferred, more particularly the 80–88° angle. But in Chu and Jin, certain orientations seem to have been avoided: the northwest in Chu, and the southwest/south (± 10°) in Jin (that is, the opposite of Chu). The orientation corresponds to a choice whose significance escapes us, a choice linked perhaps to a social class[65] or to taboos shared within the same class. The tombs of persons of elevated rank in Chu society are in any case oriented differently from other tombs, preferably toward the east.

Innovations

It is during the course of the two last centuries of the period studied, the 4th and 3rd centuries, that the evolution of funeral practices is the most marked. Many rich tombs were covered by a burial mound (up to 50 m in diameter and 6 m high), according to a custom originating in the Lower Yangzi region (Fig. 9). As for the mode of construction, it is more and more perfect, the purpose being to protect the deceased in the most effective way, with the aim of stopping or delaying the decomposition of the corpse (these measures were crowned with success at Mawangdui, near Changsha in Hunan[66] and in some other sites of the late 3rd and the early 2nd centuries BC, in the area that once belonged to Chu). The *guo* rarely leaves any open spaces. The burial

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[64] Thote, "Burial practices in the Chu kingdom," pp. 190–91.

[65] In the largest Chu tombs, the orientation to the east prevails, whereas most of the deceased of medium-sized and small tombs were oriented to the south.

[66] Hunan sheng bowuguan, Zhongguo kexueyuan kaogu yanjiusuo, *Changsha Mawangdui yi hao Han mu* (Beijing, 1973). On the ways used to stop or delay the decay of the corpse, see Jacques Gernet, "Etre enterré nu," *Le Journal des Savants* (Jan.–Sept. 1985), 3–16.

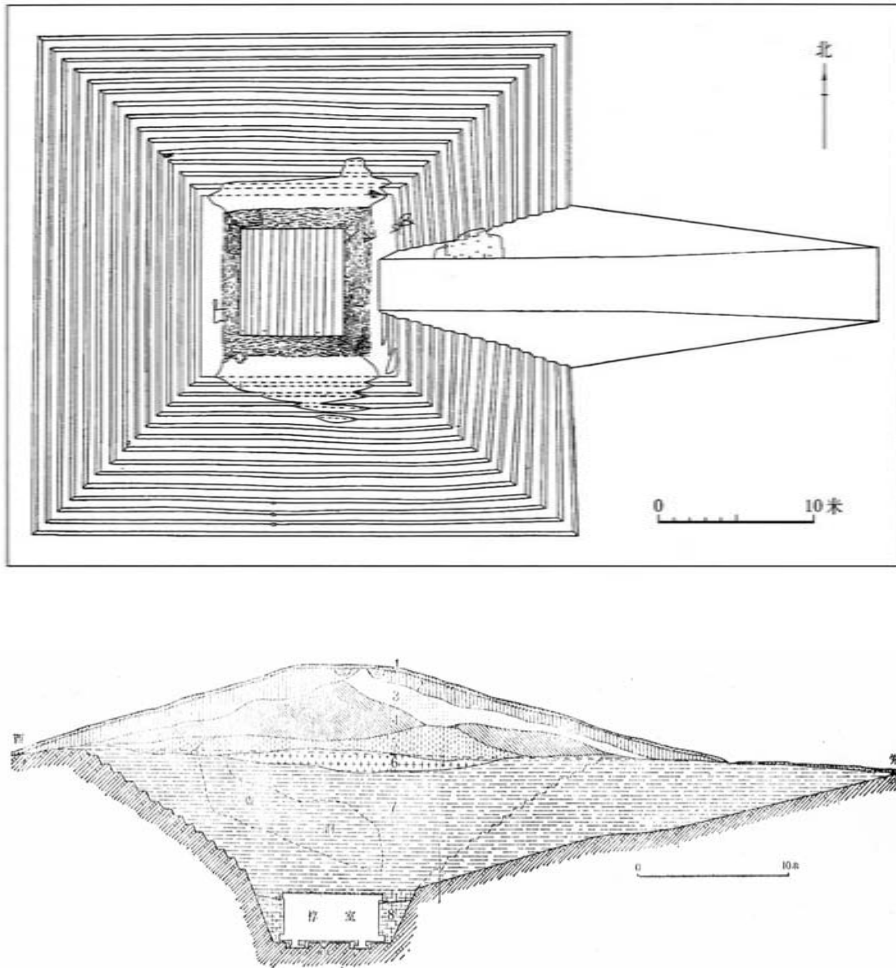

Fig. 9. Plan and section of tomb 2 at Baoshan, Jiangling county (Hubei). Its owner, Shao Tuo, who died in 316 BC, was related to the royal family of Chu and seems to have been minister of justice of the kingdom. After Hubei sheng Jingsha tielu kaogudui *Baoshan Chu mu* (Beijing, 1991).

objects are piled in the compartments, which are preferred narrow and filled up. The coffin or nested coffins, at times sealed with lacquer and wrapped in silk bands to close them hermetically, adjoin the walls of the compartment reserved for them without leaving any empty space. This compartment is generally closed by a double ceiling. The assemblages of tenons and mortises, sometimes with a dovetailed joint, ensured the perfect solidity of the coffins and wooden constructions.

At the same time, the burial objects changed in nature, or at least the hierarchy between two types of pieces, the ritual ensembles and the objects of daily life, was completely reversed. In effect, we see the decline of the ritual bronzes in two different ways. On the one hand, in the 4th century BC in Chu, not only do they no longer carry inscriptions, they are often badly cast, not smoothed after the cast, even unusable. On the other hand, the use of earthenware replicas of ritual vessels increased greatly in the Chu kingdom (this phenomenon existed also in the other kingdoms and principalities, but in lesser proportions). While the ritual ensembles no longer played their previous leading role among the burial objects, new and different categories of objects, related to earthly life, were present in the tomb: furniture (beds, low tables, arm and back rests, lamps, gaming tables), luxurious tableware (separate from the ritual utensils), personal effects (combs, hairpieces, hairpins, mirrors, fans, shoes, clothes), sets of writing utensils, bamboo slips, and always, following a centuries-old custom, weapons. In the choice of objects various functions appear: the conduct of war, grooming, entertainment, the pleasures of the table, rites which the deceased should follow during his lifetime. While the ritual sets composed of substitutes of low quality are only symbolically present, the other objects are of ostentatious luxury.

In the meantime, the nature of food deposits in the tomb had changed. These were provisions and no longer the traditional meat offerings. These foodstuffs were contained in baskets and sealed pots, because it was thought they then would serve the deceased during his voyage or his stay in the other world. The outer coffin *guo*, while remaining a structure of solid wood, was at times constructed with the idea that it was the dead person's "home," suggested by the presence of doors, real or painted, between the compartment for the burial objects and that for the coffin. At the end of the period (3rd to 2nd centuries BC), the access ramp descended deeper than before into the interior of the pit so as to ensure access to the level of the floor of the *guo*, suggesting a

new organization of the tomb entirely on the same level. In the Han period it would be possible to enter the tomb directly by a door.[67] It seems therefore that progressively during the Warring States period there developed the idea that the deceased "lived" in the tomb and that the tomb should be arranged in consequence.Nothing in the organization of the tombs or in their furnishings suggests it was like this before.

In the arrangement of the tomb, as in its contents, the material comfort of the deceased was thereafter assured. Beyond the conformism inherent in the social classes to which the deceased belonged, the choices made for the composition of the burial furnishings seem to be in accordance with the personal destiny of the deceased, and not only with the social position he occupied in his lifetime.[68] These changes led to modifications in the marks of status: the depth of the pit, shaped like an upside-down pyramid, the presence of multiple steps (up to 14), the number of compartments, the nested coffins, and the sumptuousness of the objects provided to the deceased became testimonies to social prestige. At the same time, the protection of the tomb aimed for efficacy, and the measures of a magical character were no longer expressed by animal or human sacrifice but by the presence of sculptures of monster guardians of the tombs, the *zhenmushou* 鎮墓獸, whose function was to ward off the serpents which would come and feed off the corpse (Fig. 10).[69] The dead were thus placed in favorable conditions—in the eyes of the living who buried them—for their lives in the next world. Perhaps the living sought also in this way to protect themselves from the dead, to dissuade them from coming back to torment the living.

[67] See Michèle Pirazzoli-t'Serstevens' chapter in Volume Two.

[68] Alain Thote, "Pratiques funéraires dans le royaume de Chu (Chine du Centre-Sud, VIe–IIIe s. av. J.-C.): De la représentation du statut social à l'expression d'un destin individuel," in Luc Baray, Patrice Brun, Alain Testart, eds, *Pratiques funéraires et sociétés. Nouvelles approches en archéologie et en anthropologie sociale* (Dijon, 2007), pp. 359–67.

[69] Alain Thote, "Au-delà du monde connu: représenter les dieux," *Arts Asiatiques* 61 (2006), 57–74.

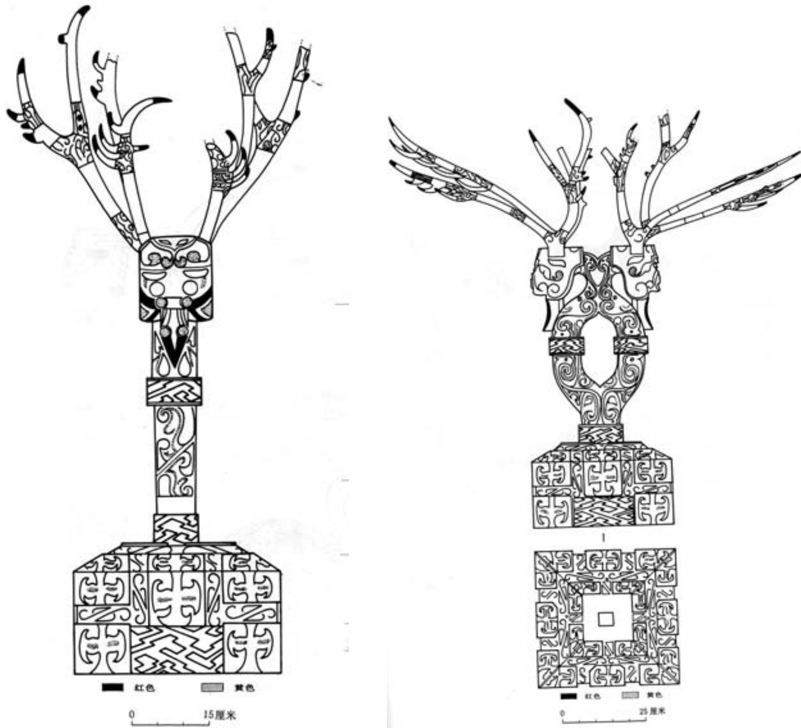

Fig. 10. Sculpture of a tomb guardian, *zhenmushou*, discovered in Tomb 2 at Tianxingguan, Jiangling county (Hubei). Lacquered wood. After Hubei sheng Jingzhou bowuguan, *Jingzhou Tianxingguan er hao Chu mu* (Beijing, 2003).

BRONZE INSCRIPTIONS, THE *SHIJING* AND THE *SHANGSHU*: THE EVOLUTION OF THE ANCESTRAL SACRIFICE DURING THE WESTERN ZHOU

Martin Kern*

Sources and issues

As far back as historical memory reaches, one of the central tenets of ancient Chinese religious practice and political culture was its veneration of the past. By the time of the late Shang (ca. 1250–ca. 1045 BC)—the era of the earliest epigraphic evidence—the ancestral sacrifice was, together with divination, the pre-eminent religious institution of the elite. Already in late Shang times, an abundance of royal oracle bone records along with a relatively small number of inscribed bronze vessels express an ideology of preserving, revering and imitating a former genealogical model that underlay the very notions of kingship, lineage and royal succession. Moreover, the ideas and practices of ancestor worship likely evolved through even earlier periods; their roots may ultimately be traced, as David N. Keightley has argued, to the burial practices from the 5th millennium BC onward.[1] By the end of the late Shang, the genealogical records extended back for twenty-one generations of ancestors who could receive regular sacrifices.[2]

This deeply felt presence of the past and orientation toward the former kings further intensified under the subsequent Western Zhou dynasty (ca. 1045–771 BC), a period for which our sources are far more diverse

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* I owe a great debt to Li Feng, who tirelessly helped me think through some of the more difficult historical questions every time I asked for his judicious advice. In addition, I have benefited from the valuable suggestions that both Olivier Venture and Lothar von Falkenhausen offered me at different stages in the writing of the current chapter. Finally, Michael J. Hunter, PhD student in East Asian Studies at Princeton, offered a series of astute observations that helped me sharpen my argument.

[1] Keightley, "The making of the ancestors: late Shang religion and its legacy," in *Religion and Chinese society* (Hong Kong, 2004), vol. 1, p. 5; see also his *The ancestral landscape: time, space, and community in late Shang China, ca. 1200–1045 B.C.* (Berkeley, 2000).

[2] Keightley, "The making of the ancestors," p. 40.

and richer in content. They consist of two principal sets of texts, one transmitted and the other archaeologically recovered: the transmitted texts are a series of ritual hymns preserved in the *Book of songs* (*Shijing* 詩經) as well as about a dozen royal speeches preserved in the *Book of documents* (*Shujing* 書經, or *Shangshu* 尚書), and, to a lesser extent, in the *Remnant Zhou documents* (*Yi Zhoushu* 逸周書). In addition to these, the archaeological work of the past century has recovered thousands of bronze artifacts, many of them inscribed, whose primary use, generally speaking, was in the ancestral sacrifice. Most inscriptions are short, though a number of Western Zhou inscriptions provide long accounts of the past that describe the merits of both the ancestors and their descendants, the patrons of the inscribed bronzes.

From the earliest commentaries onward, the hymns of the *Book of songs* have been identified as texts related to the (purportedly Western) royal Zhou ancestral sacrifice. At the core of this body of texts are the 31 "Eulogies of Zhou" (Zhou song 周頌) that are traditionally believed to have been performed during the early Western Zhou sacrifices. In addition, a number of other songs from the "Major" and "Minor court hymns" (Daya 大雅 and Xiaoya 小雅) as well as from the "Eulogies of Shang" (Shang song 商頌) and "Eulogies of Lu" (Lu song 魯頌) come not directly out of the ancestral ritual but nevertheless contain more or less detailed accounts of it. These poetic texts are at the center of all later knowledge about the Western Zhou ancestral ritual, be it in the format of direct commentary on the songs or in the accounts of the "three ritual classics" (*san li* 三禮)—the *Rites and ceremonies* (*Yili* 儀禮), the *Rites of Zhou* (*Zhouli* 周禮) and the *Book of rites* (*Liji* 禮記)—that were composed hundreds of years after the fall of the Western Zhou.[3] As these classical texts partly rely on the earlier songs and partly introduce knowledge that seems to reflect only post-Western Zhou developments

[3] The primacy of the poetic texts vis-à-vis the ritual classics has been noted in particular with respect to the song "Thorny caltrop" (Chuci 楚茨, Mao 209) that provides the most complete description of an ancestral sacrifice (see below). Qing scholars such as Yao Jiheng 姚際恆 (b. 1647) and Fang Yurun 方玉潤 (1811–1883) have argued that specifically the *Yili* draws most closely on the information given in the song; see Yao Jiheng, *Shijing tonglun* (Beijing, 1958), 11.231; Fang Yurun, *Shijing yuanshi* (Beijing, 1986), 11.431. More recently, Lothar von Falkenhausen has elaborated further on the issue: see his "Reflections on the political role of spirit mediums in early China: the *wu* officials in the *Zhou Li*," *Early China* 20 (1995), p. 297; "Issues in Western Zhou studies: a review article," *Early China* 18 (1993)," 148–50; and *Suspended music: chime-bells in the culture of Bronze Age China* (Berkeley, 1993), pp. 25–32. On the "Three rites," see the chapter in Volume Two by Michael Puett.

of the ancestral sacrifice, they are neither independent nor reliable sources to explain and elaborate upon the brief accounts contained in the hymns proper.[4] With regard to the Western Zhou ancestral sacrifice, the three ritual classics are therefore best understood as our earliest commentary on the primary accounts found in the early layers of the *Songs* and *Documents*—a commentary that reflects not only ancient knowledge but, and perhaps primarily, an idealizing and systematizing Eastern Zhou imagination of the early Western Zhou as the fountainhead of classical Chinese religion, social order and cultural accomplishment. This imagination is decidedly diachronic, fusing genuine historical knowledge of the Western Zhou with subsequent developments of religious practice and cultural projection.

At the same time, as will be argued in more detail below, even the presumably earliest hymns and speeches from the *Songs* and the *Documents* may, to a considerable extent, be idealizing artifacts in their own way. On the one hand, their radically abbreviated descriptions of religious practice are completely integrated into an early ideal of commemoration that is as much political as it is religious. On the other hand, even the earliest texts reflect linguistic and intellectual developments that, when compared to the data available from bronze inscriptions, postdate the early Western Zhou reigns. Thus, these texts were either partially updated or wholly created not by the sage rulers of the early Western Zhou but by their distant, late-Western or early Eastern Zhou descendants who commemorated them. In the case of the *Documents*, this is true not only for those speeches that have long been recognized as postdating the Western Zhou—for example, King Wu's 武 (1049/45–1043 BC)[5] "Exhortation at Mu" (Mu shi 牧誓), purportedly delivered at dawn before the decisive battle against the Shang, but clearly a post-Western Zhou text—but also for the 12 speeches that have been generally accepted as the core *Documents* chapters from the reign of King Cheng (1042/35–1006 BC), including the regency

[4] Unfortunately, all standard accounts of the Western Zhou ancestral sacrifice can be faulted for ignoring this problem in dealing with the sources. For example, Henri Maspero, *China in antiquity*, trans. Frank A. Kierman, Jr. (Amherst, 1978), notes that his reconstruction of Zhou ancestral sacrifices (pp. 150–54) is based on "Thorny caltrop" and "fleshed out with the aid of various chapters" (428–29, n. 46) from the three ritual canons.

[5] All dates of Western Zhou kings are taken from Edward L. Shaughnessy, *Sources of Western Zhou history: inscribed bronze vessels* (Berkeley, 1991), p. xix.

of the Duke of Zhou 周公 (1042–1036 BC).[6] In other words, all our transmitted sources that speak about the early Western Zhou are likely later idealizations that arose in times of dynastic decline and from a pronounced sense of loss and deficiency: first in the middle and later stages of the Western Zhou, that is, after King Zhao's 昭 (r. 977/75–957 BC) disastrous campaign south;[7] and second in the time of Confucius (551–479 BC) and the following half millennium of the Warring States and the early imperial period.

Furthermore, the royal hymns and speeches have come to us through multiple layers of textual redaction that extended over many centuries into Han times (206 BC–220 AD) and beyond.[8] In general, the case of the speeches is more problematic than that of the hymns. While the *Songs* were largely stable in their archaic wording since at least the late 4th century BC, regardless of their high degree of graphic variants in early manuscripts and profound differences in interpretation,[9] the text

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[6] See below for the 12 speeches. The argument for the authenticity of these speeches is outlined in Herlee G. Creel, *The origins of statecraft in China*, vol. 1, *The Western Chou empire* (Chicago, 1970), pp. 447–63, and re-iterated in Shaughnessy, "*Shang shu* 尚書 (*Shu ching* 書經)," in *Early Chinese texts*, ed. Michael Loewe (Berkeley, 1993), p. 379. However, Kai Vogelsang, "Inscriptions and proclamations: on the authenticity of the 'gao' chapters in the *Book of documents*," *Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities* 74 (2002), pp. 138–209, has raised serious doubts about Creel's conclusions; instead, his sophisticated and detailed study (and recent works by others cited there, including by He Dingsheng 何定生 and Vassilij M. Kryukov) suggests a late Western Zhou or early Chunqiu date for the early layers of both the *Songs* and the *Documents*. A similar argument is advanced in Kern, "The performance of writing in Western Zhou China," in *The poetics of grammar and the metaphysics of sound and sign*, eds Sergio La Porta and David Shulman (Leiden, 2007), pp. 109–76.

[7] Shaughnessy, "Western Zhou history," in *The Cambridge history of ancient China: from the origins of civilization to 221 B.C.*, eds Michael Loewe and Edward L. Shaughnessy (Cambridge, 1999), pp. 322–23; Li Feng, *Landscape and power in early China: the crisis and fall of the Western Zhou, 1045–771 BC* (Cambridge, 2006), pp. 93–95.

[8] William H. Baxter has called the *Songs* "a Zhou text in Han clothing: both its script and, to some extent, its text have been influenced by post-*Shijing* phonology"; see Baxter, "Zhou and Han phonology in the *Shijing*," in *Studies in the historical phonology of Asian languages*, eds William G. Boltz and Michael C. Shapiro (Amsterdam, 1991), p. 30. See also Baxter, *A handbook of Old Chinese phonology* (Berlin, 1992), pp. 343–66. In fact, there is some indication that the orthographic standardization of the *Songs* continued much beyond the Han.

[9] A series of recently excavated manuscripts with *Songs* quotations suggests an overall phonological stability between the text from at least the late 4th century BC onward and the received *Mao Songs* 毛詩 that we have in Zheng Xuan's (127–200) *Mao Shi Zheng jian* 毛詩鄭箋. Because of the basic monosyllabic nature of the classical Chinese language and its large numbers of homophones, this is not to say that those who in the early period occasionally wrote down parts of the *Songs* necessarily agreed in every case on the word behind the many different graphs that could be used to write it; see Baxter,

of the *Documents* was still much in flux far into Han times.[10] However, despite these editorial interventions, the early layers of the received *Songs* and *Documents* display an archaic diction in lexical choices and ideology that in general fits well with the epigraphic evidence from late (but not early) Western Zhou and early Springs and Autumns (*Chunqiu* 春秋) period (722–486 BC) bronze inscriptions.[11]

Distinct and independent from the transmitted texts of the *Songs* and the *Documents*, the by now very large number of excavated Western Zhou bronze inscriptions are available to us in their original shape. The reference work *Jinwen yinde* 金文引得[12] lists 5,758 distinct inscriptions, cast in altogether 9,916 bronze artifacts, for the late Shang and Western Zhou periods, with the vast majority apparently cast at the Zhou royal court. Since the publication of *Jinwen yinde* in 2001, numerous new finds, some of them spectacular, have been added to

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A handbook of Old Chinese phonology, pp. 358–60; Kern, "Methodological reflections on the analysis of textual variants and the modes of manuscript production in early China," *Journal of East Asian Archaeology* 4.1–4 (2002), 143–81; and Kern, "The *Odes* in excavated manuscripts," in *Text and ritual in early China*, ed. Martin Kern (Seattle, 2005), pp. 149–93. Thus, the Mao commentary, through its particular graphic choices and the glosses it attached to them, may indeed have changed the earlier meaning of the text; see Kern, "Excavated manuscripts and their Socratic pleasures: newly discovered challenges in reading the 'Airs of the States,'" *Études Asiatiques/Asiatische Studien* 61.3 (2007), 775–93. However, textual ambiguity was a far more serious problem with the "Airs of the States" (Guofeng 國風) section of the *Songs* than with the ritual hymns related to the ancestral sacrifice.

[10] On the case of *Documents* quotations across a range of received early texts, see Chen Mengjia, *Shangshu tonglun* (Beijing, 1985), pp. 11–35; Liu Qiyu, *Shangshu yuanliu ji chuanben kao* (Shenyang, 1997), pp. 4–24; Qu Wanli, *Shangshu yiwen huilu* (Taibei, 1983); Chen Hung Kan and Ho Che Wah, *Xian Qin Liang Han dianji yin 'Shangshu' ziliao huibian* (Hong Kong, 2003); also Mark Edward Lewis, *Writing and authority in early China* (Albany, 1999), pp. 106–07 (with further references), and David Schaberg, *A patterned past: form and thought in early Chinese historiography* (Cambridge, 2001), pp. 72–80. Likewise, the comparison of *Songs* and *Documents* quotations in the "Ziyi" 緇衣 manuscripts in the Guodian and Shanghai Museum (ca. 300 BC) with their counterparts in the received *Liji* 禮記 as well as in the received *Songs* and *Documents* shows the remarkable difference in stability between the two types of ancient texts; see Kern, "Quotation and the Confucian canon in early Chinese manuscripts: the case of 'Zi Yi' (Black robes)," *Asiatische Studien/Études Asiatiques* 59.1 (2005), 293–332. The general textual instability of the *Documents* is all the more remarkable as they are traditionally believed to have been "writings" (*shu* 書).

[11] See Vogelsang, "Inscriptions and proclamations," and Kern, "The performance of writing in Western Zhou China."

[12] Huadong shifan daxue Zhongguo wenzi yanjiu yu yingyong zhongxin, *Jinwen yinde (Yin-Shang Xi-Zhou juan)* (Nanning, 2001). The second volume of *Yinwen yinde*, published in 2002, lists 1692 distinct inscriptions on 2253 bronze artifacts from the Eastern Zhou period. In the present chapter, all references to *Jinwen yinde* (hereafter: JWYD) are confined to the first volume.

the record. Untouched by later editorial change, the bronze texts provide not only the best linguistic, historical and ideological standards against which the *Songs* and the *Documents* have to be measured and dated; they also provide pristine contemporaneous evidence for the Western Zhou ancestral sacrifice itself. While their information about specific ritual procedures is not nearly as detailed as in the hymns and speeches (to say nothing of the much later elaborations in the ritual classics and other texts), they nevertheless open a window into some very specific evidence of court ceremony, present us with the very artifacts that were used for sacrificial offerings, and allow us to chronologically stratify important historical developments in Western Zhou ritual practice and ideology between the early (ca. 1045–957 BC), middle (956–858 BC) and late (857–771 BC) periods of the dynasty. Especially the last point is critically important, as it helps us to rethink some of the central tenets of Western Zhou religion. To raise some specific examples, none of them trivial: in the early hymns and speeches from the *Songs* and the *Documents*—and far more so in later sources—the interrelated notions of "Son of Heaven" (*tianzi* 天子) and "Mandate of Heaven" (*tianming* 天命) appear as singularly central and critical to the political legitimacy and religious underpinnings of early Western Zhou rule. Neither term, however, appears with any frequency in early Western Zhou bronze inscriptions, that is, during the reigns of kings Wu, Cheng, Kang (1005/3–978 BC), and Zhao. In the corpus of the *Jinwen yinde*, the royal appellation "Son of Heaven" appears 13 times (in a total of just eight inscriptions) in the early period, 61 times in the middle period, and 84 times in the late period—differences that are perhaps not entirely explained by the overall disparity in the number and length of inscriptions from the early to the late Western Zhou. The royal "Mandate of Heaven" appears twice in the early period—each time as the "great mandate" (*daling* 大令)[13]—twice in the middle period,[14] but five times in the late period.[15] Moreover, it is not the case that *di* 帝 ("god"), the high deity of the late Shang, was particularly present in early Western Zhou inscriptions: it appears there four times, but also five

[13] In the Da Yu-*ding* 大盂鼎 (JWYD 4024: *daling* 大令) and the He-*zun* 何尊 (JWYD 2117: *daling* 大令).

[14] Yuan bo Dong-*gui* 彔伯㦰簋 lid (JWYD 5039: *tianming* 天命), Ban-*gui* 班簋 (YWYD 5061: *tianling* 天令).

[15] Mao gong-*ding* 毛公鼎 (JWYD 4027: *tianming* 天命), Guai bo Gui Feng-*gui* 乖伯歸夆簋 (JWYD 5056: *tianming* 天命), Shi Ke-*xu* 師克盨 (JWYD 5263: *daling* 大令), Shi Xun-*gui* 師詢簋 (JWYD 5062: *tianling* 天令), Hong-*gui* 訇簋 (JWYD 5049: *ling* 令).

times (in four inscriptions) in the middle period, and seven times (in six inscriptions) in the late period. Kings Wen (1099/56–1050 BC) and Wu—in transmitted sources the founding heroes of the Zhou dynasty and complementary paradigm of the civil (*wen* 文) and martial (*wu* 武) forces—are rarely evident in Western Zhou inscriptions at all: King Wu (without King Wen) appears in a mere six inscriptions from the early period and three more from the middle period; King Wen is mentioned in four early texts and three from the middle period. Remarkably, however, as the formulaic pair "King Wen and King Wu" (*Wen Wu* 文武), they never appear early on: once during the middle period,[16] but in six late Western Zhou bronze inscriptions. While two early inscriptions mention the two kings separately,[17] it appears that their ideal image as the primordial double ancestors who through their succession and complementary virtues had established the dynasty became formulaic only centuries after their demise, that is, at the time when the dynasty itself was heading toward collapse.[18] Furthermore, the formulaic commemoration of the two early rulers is directly tied to the mention of the heavenly "mandate": of the nine inscriptions that speak of the "mandate," five also include "King Wen and King Wu,"[19] two mention the two kings separately,[20] one refers to King Wen alone,[21] and only one inscription mentions neither king.[22] In other words, the memory of the founding rulers, the claim that they had received their right to rule directly from Heaven, and the very notion of the ruler being the "Son of Heaven" take on particular urgency only toward the end of the Western Zhou, some 200 years after the death of King Wu. While the archaeological record has significantly grown since the *Jinwen yinde* listing of 5,758 distinct inscriptions, and while this record will never fully reflect the actual number of inscribed bronze vessels cast during Western Zhou times, the sample is substantial enough to provide a reliable view of general trends. This view challenges the accounts from transmitted texts and provides

[16] Shi Qiang-*pan* 史墻盤 (JWYD 5411).
[17] He-*zun* and Da Yu-*ding*.
[18] I owe initial suggestions to the general frequency of terms and names to Olivier Venture (personal communication and unpublished work in progress). The numbers I am noting come from my own perusal of *Jinwen yinde*; depending on their choice of sources, other scholars may arrive at slightly different numbers.
[19] Mao gong-*ding*, Guai bo Gui Jiang-*gui*, Shi Ke-*xu*, Shi Xun-*gui*, Hong-*gui*.
[20] He-*zun* and Da Yu-*ding*.
[21] Ban-*gui*.
[22] Yuan bo Dong-*gui*.

us with a new, chronologically stratified, and therefore historically far more sophisticated perspective on the political and religious ideology and practice of the some 275 years of the Western Zhou.

The gradually emerging memory of "King Wen and King Wu" in conjunction with the notions of the heavenly mandate and of the ruler as the "Son of Heaven" reflects an increasingly coherent and solidified imagination of the beginnings of the dynasty and its original legitimacy. It appears that such an imagination became ever more important in response to the gradual political and military decline of the dynasty over its last century.[23] The commemoration of origin, and with it of the religious legitimacy of the entire dynasty, created an ideal past as a parallel reality to an actual experience of loss and decay. When Confucius and his followers began to enshrine the ideal past in an ideal body of texts—later called the *Five Classics* (*Wu jing* 五經), with the *Songs* and the *Documents* at its historical core—they unknowingly preserved not the cultural, political and religious expression of the early Western Zhou but only its subsequent, and already highly idealized, commemoration.

From this perspective, to rely on even the earliest transmitted sources has become problematic for various aspects of Western Zhou cultural history, but especially so with regard to the ancestral sacrifice, the central arena of dynastic commemoration and hence the very place in which the idealization of the early Western Zhou rulers and their reigns was performed and perpetuated. Specifically, the hymns and speeches in the *Songs* and *Documents* traditionally attributed to the early reigns appear now as artifacts in the context of late Western Zhou commemorative culture, if not later, that extended across both the ancestral sacrifice and the royal banquets, as we shall see. For some of the hymns—especially the 40 "Eulogies of Zhou"—this means merely a somewhat later date, as they had always been seen as songs for the ancestral sacrifice and hence utterances of commemoration. The implications for the purportedly early Western Zhou royal speeches are more profound: instead of being the authentic utterances of the early kings, they are better viewed as expressions through which these kings were imagined and commemorated by later generations. This scenario still leaves room for an historical core of the speeches underlying their later creation or re-creation; at the same time, it situates the received form and particular ideology of

[23] Li Feng, *Landscape and power in early China*, is now the authoritative treatment of this period.

the early *Documents* speeches within the specific needs and purposes of late Western Zhou religious and political practice. With regard to the *Documents*, this would be the only reconstructed context of such practice. For the speeches as original utterances by the early Western Zhou kings, no institutional framework exists to explain its early history of recording, transmission and circulation except for some vague assumptions about merely archival preservation. However, considering the speeches' exalted status as the words of the early kings and, as such, expressions of ideal rulership from the past, the scenario of having them shelved away in some archive seems less than compelling.

I will therefore suggest that we consider the early speeches as genuinely performative at their core—that is, texts for formal recitation—that had their place, and were preserved and perpetuated, within the institutions of religious and political commemoration from mid-Western Zhou times onward. In this hypothesis, the speeches may appear somewhat less reliable as verbatim records of the early Western Zhou, but they gain dramatically in terms of their public presence during the following reigns.[24] Their rhythmic diction, solemn formulaic gesture, and selective lexicon place them side by side with the *Songs* and early bronze inscriptions and present the foundational narrative of the Zhou as a dialogue between past and present: in the speeches—however retrospectively edited or reconstructed—the kings had once addressed their people and successors; in the hymns of the ancestral sacrifice and royal banquet, they were, in turn, praised by their descendants. In this dialogical relationship, the speeches would have maintained their charismatic presence, proclaiming the very foundational deeds that these sacrifices and banquets were intended to commemorate.[25] The hymns, speeches

[24] I am not sure, however, whether or not we should go so far as Henri Maspero who proposed to take them as "libretti" that accompanied and guided the dances during the ancestral sacrifices; see Maspero, *China in Antiquity*, pp. 274–76. One instance of the relation between the speeches and actual performances may be the case of the *Documents* chapter "Testamentary charge" (Gu ming 顧命) and several of the early *Songs*; see *Fu Sinian quanji* (*Taibei*, 1980), vol. 1, pp. 204–33, and Edward L. Shaughnessy, *Before Confucius: studies in the creation of the Chinese classics* (Albany, 1997), pp. 169–74; see also C.H. Wang, *From ritual to allegory: seven essays in early Chinese poetry* (Hong Kong, 1988), pp. 18–20. In any case, I disagree with Maspero (and Shaughnessy) on the—to my mind anachronistic—idea of individual literary authors or even a "solitary poet" (Shaughnessy) at the Western Zhou royal court; instead, I see the hymns, speeches and inscriptions as the work of ritual specialists who composed these texts in an institutional framework.

[25] The ancestors, through the medium of the impersonator (*shi* 尸), were speaking during the ancestral sacrifice; see Wang, *From ritual to allegory*, pp. 37–51.

and inscriptions share an abundance of common ideas and expressions, including a strong emphasis on central concepts expressive of lineage continuity, such as the "virtuous power" (*de* 德) of the dynasty that accumulated over generations.

The ideological consolidation of the Western Zhou that is directly reflected in the language employed in the ancestral temple occurred parallels, and most likely in conjunction with a sweeping range of mid- to late Western Zhou ritual and administrative reforms. In this process, the ceremonies at the ancestral temple evolved from close and intimate kinship sacrificial rites to rituals of broader socio-political representation. The religious title "Son of Heaven" was asserted ever more forcefully at a time when the Zhou ruler's religious aura began its irrevocable decline toward a largely ceremonial function in the multistate world of the Eastern Zhou.

While a more historically nuanced picture of Western Zhou religious practice emerges only from the bronze inscriptions, it remains vitally important not to regard them as primary historical records or archival accounts. Like the hymns and speeches, they do not simply document historical facts, including ritual practices, in a disinterested fashion; they were created to function in specific ceremonial contexts—first among them the ancestral sacrifice—that were simultaneously religious and political in nature. The inscriptions were cast into elaborate ritual vessels that were "quite probably, the most accomplished, expensive, labor-intensive, and beautiful human-made things their owners and handlers had ever seen."[26] They were aesthetically shaped, endowed with rhetorical purposes, strictly selective in the information they were meant to provide, and they served the political and religious interests of those who produced and possessed them. One characteristic that separates them from historical records prepared for an unspecific group of later readers is their unabashedly tendentious, even propagandistic nature. Their original audience was not some anonymous present or future public but a limited group of insiders who directly or indirectly participated in the lineage ideology of the Zhou royal house. They were either members of this house or of subordinate lineages that derived their own political legitimacy from the dynasty. Couched in relentlessly eulogistic diction and, if necessary, undisturbed by histori-

[26] Lothar von Falkenhausen, "Late Western Zhou taste," in *Études Chinoises (Mélanges de Sinologie offerts à Monsieur Jean-Pierre Diény [1])* 18.1–2 (1999), p. 146.

cal facts that contradicted their own account, these are the texts with which an ancient community created its common narrative of memory and agreed upon a common origin and identity. Thus, Western Zhou bronze inscriptions mentioning military affairs record only victories;[27] and while the famous Shi Qiang-*pan* 史墙盤 inscription of ca. 900 BC praises King Zhao for having subdued the southern people of Chu 楚 and Jing 荆, other historical sources inform us that the royal expedition south suffered a crushing defeat that destroyed the Zhou army and even left the king dead.[28] The fact that a royal scribe of highest rank was granted a wide and shallow water basin inscribed with a text that was as prominently displayed as it was historically inaccurate merely two generations after King Zhao's death shows that the true question answered by the inscribed narrative was not, "What has happened?" but, "What do we wish to remember?" The distinction is one between history and memory, defined by differences in agency, perspective and participation. The narrative of memory does not present different sides, nor does it speak to different groups—it is a first-person narrative: in *our* memory, *we* are recalling what is important to *us: we* speak, and we speak to ourselves. In both hymns and speeches, this perspective is consistently emphasized through the intense use of first and second person pronouns.

The Western Zhou ancestral sacrifice thus served a range of religious and social functions: it created the space where the ancestral spirits could mingle with the living, receiving sacrifices from their descendants and conferring their blessings on them in return. The living were not separated from their forebears, and the dead were not gone. The spirits, thought to be dwelling "on high" (*shang* 上) or in Heaven (*tian* 天), would in regular intervals descend to the sacrificial offerings, each time renewing their presence as the source of dynastic life and power. Second, the ancestral sacrifice constituted and perpetuated the identity and purpose of the living; for the Zhou king, it provided the historical basis and political legitimacy for the right to rule. Third, by its nature of "multi-media happenings"[29] that involved converging patterns of song, music, dance, fragrance, speech, material artifacts and sacrificial offerings, the sacrifice embodied the cultural practices of elite life; connected to the ideology of

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[27] Edward L. Shaughnessy, *Sources of Western Zhou history*, pp. 176–77.

[28] Shaughnessy, "Western Zhou history," pp. 322–23.

[29] Falkenhausen, "Ritual music in Bronze Age China: an archaeological perspective," (PhD diss., Harvard University, 1988), p. 693.

ancestor worship, it presented—at least according to its rhetoric—these practices as the perpetual repetition and continuity of the patterns established and handed down by the ancestors. Fourth, by expressing control over both cultural and material resources, and by gradually establishing sets of sumptuary rules, the ancestral sacrifice was the primary institution to express, legitimize and enforce social hierarchy and solidarity. Fifth, it marked both sacred space and time: while the space of the ancestral temple was considered the very essence of the lineage (and in the case of the king, of the dynastic polity altogether), the regular observation of daily as well as seasonal sacrifices helped to forge a religious rhythm for the calendar year. Sixth, the ancestral sacrifice was not only oriented toward the past, opening a line of communication even to the ancestral spirits from the remote past; it also emphatically expressed the promise that the past would continue into an everlasting future. This idea was made visible in the role of the impersonator (*shi* 尸), in which an adolescent member of the family served as the medium for the ancestral spirits, and it is expressed in the closing formula of the vast majority of Western Zhou bronze inscriptions, "may sons of sons, grandsons of grandsons, forever treasure and use [this sacrificial vessel]" 子子孫孫永寶用.[30] And finally, the ancestral sacrifice was directly connected to other ritual, social and political activities, among them banquets and ceremonies of administrative appointment. In these combined functions, the ancestral sacrifice was at the very center of Western Zhou social, religious and political activities.

Remarkably, our entire knowledge of Western Zhou religion, as far as it can be traced to contemporaneous sources (as opposed to the accounts in the ritual classics and other texts that date centuries later), comes from sources that themselves are directly tied to the sacrifice, that is, from bronze inscriptions and the royal hymns and speeches from the *Songs* and the *Documents*. In fact, of all its manifestations of writing during the Western Zhou period, the Chinese tradition has chosen to preserve only a very limited body of strictly ritualistic texts, that is, the hymns and speeches. Furthermore, for writing, the Western Zhou elites restricted the use of the precious, non-perishable material of bronze to texts that in their overwhelming majority were presented in the ances-

[30] Xu Zhongshu, "Jinwen guci shili," *Bulletin of the Institute of History and Philology* 6.1 (1936), 1–44, has estimated that 70–80 percent of all bronze inscriptions end with this formula.

tral ritual—a fact that speaks eloquently to the significance of writing for ritual display and religious purpose. While circumstantial evidence strongly suggests the presence of writing in administrative, economic, legal and other pragmatic contexts, this writing was not preserved in the ways the inscriptions (through durable material) and the hymns and speeches (through tradition) were. Phrased the other way around, without the institution of the ancestral sacrifice, none of the earliest sources would have come into existence or have been transmitted the way they were. It also appears that the practice of writing as textual display evolved primarily within the setting of the ancestral sacrifice over the course of the Western Zhou dynasty.

In making the best use of our earliest sources for the ancestral sacrifice—while maintaining a strict distinction with later, much more systematizing and elaborate accounts—they need to be recognized as artifacts of the very ritual procedures they are speaking about. This perspective exposes the biases noted above, yet it also instructs us to consider the inscriptions, hymns and speeches as aesthetic objects, elaborate and complex in terms both linguistic and material, where aesthetic form and propositional meaning cannot be imagined separate from each other; to grasp the function of text and the construction of meaning in the ancestral sacrifice, both demand the same degree of close attention. Thus, it is largely from the patterns of a sacrificial hymn such as "Thorny caltrop" (Chuci 楚茨; Mao 209), or of a series of six hymns that constitute the "Great martiality" (Dawu 大武) dance suite—representing the military conquest of the Shang—that we can tentatively reconstruct some of the actual steps in a real sacrificial performance.[31] What is more, some of the aesthetic features have come to inform us about historical developments on which the texts, both contemporaneous and later, remain silent: it is on the basis of changing patterns in the shapes and ensembles of different types of bronze artifacts that Jessica Rawson has been able to identify a mid- to late Western Zhou "ritual reform" that seems to have involved a fundamental shift in the practice and ideology of the ancestral sacrifice. Among other changes, the transition in emphasis from alcohol to food offerings, and from a small and intimate setting of the sacrifice to one of a larger audience

[31] On "Great martiality," see Sun Zuoyun, "Shijing yu Zhou dai shehui yanjiu," (Beijing, 1966), pp. 239–72; C.H. Wang, *From ritual to allegory*, pp. 12–18; Edward L. Shaughnessy, *Before Confucius*, pp. 166–69. For a more skeptical assessment, see Shirakawa Shizuka, *Shikyô kenkyû* (Kyoto, 1981), pp. 339–48.

beyond the immediate lineage members—a transition that also included significant changes in the nature of textual display—would not have been recoverable from transmitted texts.

The space of the ancestral sacrifice

The location of the Western Zhou ancestral sacrifice was a dedicated space, the ancestral temple. According to transmitted sources, it was there that the head of a lineage addressed his ancestral spirits through regular offerings and prayers and that he received their blessings and the "virtuous power" (*de* 德) they had accumulated over generations. Warring States and early imperial texts contain elaborate descriptions of the temple and refer to it primarily as *miao* 廟 ("temple") or *zongmiao* 宗廟 ("lineage temple"); the three ritual classics in particular provide extensive information about its multi-layered architecture in conjunction with the rituals performed within it. According to these traditional sources, the temple embodied the very essence of the lineage and, in the case of the Zhou king, of the dynasty altogether. Archaeologists and art historians have attempted to interpret excavated building foundations as those of large-scale temple complexes. In another step, these interpretations have led to complex drawings of the presumed—and long lost—temple architecture above ground, complete with courtyards and roofed buildings of multiple chambers.[32] In similar fashion, scholars of Chinese religion have suggested reconstructions of the actual ceremonies in the temple, relying primarily on the three ritual classics and other late sources, including Han and Tang commentaries on the *Songs* and the *Documents* that again are based on the same ritual classics.[33]

Impressive and inspiring as these reconstructions are, they tend to draw on an extremely diverse body of far later sources and are difficult to substantiate from the available early evidence. To reconstruct above-ground architecture from building foundations is bold, and nothing in these foundations of pounded earth proves that the building they

[32] For a recent summa of this scholarship, see Wu Hung, *Monumentality in early Chinese art and architecture* (Stanford, 1995), pp. 77–88; see also Qin Zhaofen, *Shang Zhou shiqi de zuxian chongbai* (Taibei, 2003), pp. 20–45.

[33] See, e.g., Maspero, *China in Antiquity*, pp. 147–58, or Zhang Hequan, *Zhoudai jisi yanjiu* (Taibei, 1993).

supported was indeed an ancestral temple.[34] Furthermore, the ritual classics—none of which predate the late Warring States period—are not reliable descriptions of buildings and accounts of religious practices from more than half a millennium earlier; instead, they must be understood as composite, diachronic and normative idealizations from those who imagined an age long gone by. None of the early layers of the *Songs* and *Documents* provides any description of an ancestral temple, nor does a single Western Zhou bronze inscription, and even the term *miao* appears just once in the entire 12 early chapters of the *Documents*,[35] in only three of the "Major court hymns,"[36] and in only one of the "Eulogies of Zhou"—"Clear temple" (Qing miao 清廟, Mao 266), the paradigmatic sacrificial hymn purportedly in praise of King Wen. Of the mere 23 inscriptions in the *Jinwen yinde* that mention *miao*, 20 are from the middle and late Western Zhou periods, and 19 of them follow the same formula as in, for example, the late Western Zhou Da Ke-*ding* 大克鼎 tripod: "The king was in (the capital) Ancestral Zhou. At dawn, the king entered the *miao* of [his ancestor, King] Mu." [37] This brief remark is followed not by an account of his sacrifice in the temple but by an extensive description of an appointment ceremony in which the king commanded a subject to take up a certain position and bestowed on him the insignia for the task. In the entire *Jinwen yinde* corpus, only one late Western Zhou inscription—the brief Nangong yousi-*ding* 南公有司鼎 text—mentions the *miao* in conjunction with sacrificial offerings: "The officer Nangong made [this] precious tripod. May he [enjoy] ten thousand years. [May] sons of sons, grandsons of grandsons forever treasure and use [it] to make offerings in the lineage temple."[38]

The Nangong inscription leaves no doubt that *miao*—here even as *zongmiao*[39]—refers to the ancestral temple where sacrifices were presented. This is further corroborated by the reference to the temple of King Mu in the Da Ke-*ding* inscription: as King Mu was already dead—Mu

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[34] As pointed out by Li Feng, "'Offices' in bronze inscriptions and Western Zhou government administration," *Early China* 26–27 (2001–02), p. 13.

[35] At the end of "The testamentary charge" where the "many lords" (*zhuhou* 諸侯) "went out the temple gate" 出廟門. It should be noted that this passage concludes the narrative, but is not part of an actual speech.

[36] "Mian" 緜 (Extended, Mao 237), "Si zhai" 思齊 (Reverential, Mao 240), "Song gao" 崧高 (High and lofty, Mao 259).

[37] JWYD 4023: 王在宗周。旦, 王格穆廟。

[38] JWYD 3904: 南公有司作尊鼎。其萬年。子子孫孫永寶用享于宗廟。

[39] The only time the term *zongmiao* appears in JWYD.

is his posthumous temple name—his *miao* was the place where he received sacrifices. Two other Western Zhou inscriptions mention the temple of King Kang,[40] five the "temple of Zhou" (Zhou *miao* 周廟),[41] and one the "offering temple" (*xiangmiao* 享廟);[42] while others speak of the "great temple" (*taimiao* 太廟 or *damiao* 大廟).[43] On the other hand, the function of the ancestral temple was not confined to offering sacrifices: especially from mid-Western Zhou times onward, when the appointment ceremony became a court ritual of central importance, the temple was also the site of administrative and diplomatic activities; or more precisely, the same location functioned as both temple and administrative office.[44]

The double function of the *miao* as a site for presenting offerings to the ancestors and for announcing administrative or political appointments becomes further apparent in two other terms that also denoted the site of ancestral offerings and appear with far greater frequency in Western Zhou bronze inscriptions: *gong* 宮 ("palace") and *shi* 室 ("chamber"; also as *taishi* 太室 ["grand chamber"]).[45] In many inscriptions, *gong* or *shi* designates the same site that elsewhere is called *miao*, while in others, *gong* is clearly a larger structure that included either a *shi* or a *miao* (or even another *gong*).[46] These smaller units were without doubt places of ancestral worship, but so were most, if not all, of the larger *gong*, especially those in the Zhou capital. (A small number of inscrip-

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[40] JWYD 4000, 5021.

[41] JWYD 2158, 3962, 4007, 4026, 5409.

[42] JWYD 3966.

[43] JWYD 4996, 5018, 5033, 5051.

[44] See Li Feng, "'Offices' in bronze inscriptions and Western Zhou government administration," pp. 3–14, for the argument that gong 宮—a term meaning both "palace" and "temple"—denoted a government office.

[45] In my counting of the inscriptions in JWYD, *shi* refers in sixteen inscriptions explicitly to the site of sacrificial offerings, while *gong* does so in ten.

[46] The best discussion of the ancestral temple is still Tang Lan, "Xi Zhou tongqi duandai zhong de 'Kang gong' wenti," *Kaogu xuebao* 1962.1, 15–48. Rarely, and only in mid- and late Western Zhou times, even the larger and the included smaller structure are both called *gong*. The first—the mid-Western Zhou Wang-*gui* 望簋 (5019)—mentions the "new palace of the Kang palace of Zhou" (*Zhou Kang gong xin gong* 周康宮新宮), which Tang Lan, p. 23, identifies as the temple of King Mu. The remaining three inscriptions (4013, 5037, 5040), all from late Western Zhou times, speak of a "palace of [King] Yi of the Kang palace of Zhou" (*Zhou Kang gong Yi gong* 周康宮徲[夷]宮); for the identification of 徲 as 夷, see Tang Lan, p. 22. Two more inscriptions (4011, 5025), also from the late period, speak of the "Grand room of [King] Yi of the Kang palace of Zhou" (*Zhou Kang gong Yi taishi* 周康宮徲 [夷]太室), making it clear that the smaller units *gong* and *taishi* were interchangeable terms for the ancestral temple of King Yi.

tions seem to refer to *gong* elsewhere in the Zhou realm.)[47] Thus, as Tang Lan has argued, the "Palace of Kang in Zhou" (*Zhou Kang gong* 周康宮)—the single most often mentioned *gong* in bronze inscriptions—was the ancestral temple of King Kang;[48] two (related) early Western Zhou inscriptions, the Ze ling-*fangzun* 矢令方尊 and the Ze ling-*fangyi* 矢令方彝,[49] both state that a sacrificial bull was "used" (that is, offered) in the *Zhou Kang gong*.

Jinwen yinde lists *Zhou Kang gong* in 21 inscriptions; another eleven texts mention either *Zhou Kang Mu gong* 周康穆宮, *Zhou Kang Zhao gong* 周康昭宮 or *Zhou Kang La gong* 周康剌宮. Following Tang Lan's analysis, these phrases point to the larger temple of King Kang that housed, as smaller units, the temples of subsequent rulers, including those named here, that is, kings Mu, Zhao and Li (857/53–842/28 BC).[50] The "palace of Kang" was thus on a par with the "capital palace" (*jinggong* 京宮) and likely synonymous with the "palace of Zhou" (*Zhou gong* 周宮). On the other hand, the term *zongshi* 宗室 ("ancestral chamber") was used by the nobility—but not by the kings—throughout Western Zhou as the site of their ancestral sacrifices, such as in the Zhong yinfu-*gui* 仲殷父簋 inscription of the late Western Zhou: "Zhong yinfu has cast [this] tureen to use it morning and evening to make sacrificial offerings in the ancestral chamber. May sons of sons, grandsons of grandsons, forever treasure and use [it]!"[51]

The number of early Western Zhou bronze inscriptions that mention the royal ancestral temple or any royal *gong* is very limited, making it impossible to grasp in any detail either the design of an actual temple or the overall system of the sacrifice ritual involving the ancestors from high antiquity and the first three kings—Wen, Wu, and Cheng—of the dynasty.[52] Furthermore, as noted above, kings Wen and Wu are barely mentioned in early inscriptions, and neither is King Cheng. (Remarkably different from kings Wen and Wu, who were commemorated throughout the Western Zhou and perhaps increasingly after the early period, King

[47] Tang Lan, "Xi Zhou tongqi duandai zhong de 'Kang gong' wenti," pp. 30–31.
[48] Tang Lan, "Xi Zhou tongqi duandai zhong de 'Kang gong' wenti."
[49] JWYD 2119, 2159.
[50] Tang Lan, "Xi Zhou tongqi duandai zhong de 'Kang gong' wenti," takes *la* 剌 as referring to King Li.
[51] JWYD 4848.
[52] JWYD includes two references to the royal *miao* (3962, 4026), four to the royal *shi* (2109, 2117, 4003, 5012), and seven to the royal *gong* (2119, 2159, 2828, 3968, 3994, 3998, 4901).

Cheng is mentioned in only three mid-Western Zhou inscriptions and in none thereafter.)[53] Our sources change dramatically with the beginning of the middle period of the dynasty, that is, after the reign of King Zhao when altogether more than 200 inscriptions mention the royal "palaces" (*gong*), "chambers" (*shi*) and "temples" (*miao*). From this rich evidence, two phenomena stand out: first, the overall organization of the temple system; and second, the fusion of religious and administrative functions in these "palaces," "chambers" and "temples." As noted above, the single most often mentioned site is that of the *Kang gong*, or "(posthumous) palace of King Kang," that together with the "capital palace" (*jinggong*) served as one of the two central temples of dynastic worship. According to Tang Lan—a view to some extent supported by inscriptional evidence—the *jinggong* housed temples for five ancestors preceding King Kang: Taiwang 太王 (grandfather of King Wen), Wang Ji 王季 (father of King Wen) and kings Wen, Wu and Cheng.[54] The *Kang gong* hosted five other ancestors as well: kings Kang, Zhao, Mu, Yi 夷 (865–858) and Li.[55] It should be noted, however, that the *jinggong* (once also as *jingshi* 京室 ["capital chamber"]) appears in only three *Jinwen yinde* inscriptions, all from the early Western Zhou: the Ze ling-*fangzun* and the Ze ling-*fangyi*[56] of King Zhao's reign and the He-*zun* 何尊[57] possibly from King Cheng's reign. Considering that the *Kang gong* was established under King Zhao and greatly expanded under the following rulers, it is not clear that the *jinggong* retained its early eminent position. Instead, its central function may have been gradually absorbed by the *Kang gong*.

The changes of the ancestral temple system fall precisely in the period of the mid- to late Western Zhou ritual and administrative reforms. The pre-eminent function of the *Kang gong*, which signals a new beginning

[53] King Cheng is mentioned in five inscriptions (JWYD 3232, 3906, 3975, 4026, 5047) from the early period and three more from the middle period (1806, 2157, 5411).

[54] For the discussion of *jinggong*, see Tang Lan, "Xi Zhou tongqi duandai zhong de 'Kang gong' wenti," pp. 17–18. This sequence of early ancestors differs only partly from the one given in the "Great capture" (Shifu 世俘) chapter of the *Remnant Zhou Documents*; see Huang Huaixin et al., *Yi Zhoushu huijiao jizhu* (Shanghai, 2007), p. 424; the chapter is possibly of late Western Zhou origin.

[55] These are the central conclusions in Tang Lan, "Xi Zhou tongqi duandai zhong de 'Kang gong' wenti." In Tang Lan's scheme, however, it remains unclear where kings Gong 恭 (917/15–900), Yi 懿 (899/97–873) and Xiao 孝 (872?–866) were hosted.

[56] JWYD 2119, 2159.

[57] JWYD 2117, which has *jingshi*.

in the Western Zhou ancestral sacrifice, developed only over time. The temple was established in the reign of King Zhao—when it certainly did not surpass the significance of the *jinggong*—and then greatly expanded over subsequent generations (during which the *jinggong* is no longer mentioned). The two ancestors most frequently mentioned as having their sacrificial sites in the *Kang gong* are kings Zhao and Mu; in addition, kings Li and Yi are noted. Such a temple, with a primary ancestor at the center and chambers (*gong, shi, miao*) for subsequent ancestors integrated in his temple, is described in great detail in Warring States and early imperial sources. According to these later texts, eminent among them the *Book of rites*, the chambers of these subsequent ancestors were arrayed in generational order, alternating to the right and left of the central axis of the temple and leading to the innermost center where the shrine of the primary ancestor was positioned; each ancestor was represented by a wooden tablet with his name inscribed. Thus, upon entering the temple, one would proceed forward toward the center but thereby also backward in time. When a king died, the tablet of the first of these secondary ancestors, residing on the left side position closest to the primary ancestor, was removed, and the tablets of his successors would all move up by one position (thereby each switching from right to left or left to right) to make space for the new ancestor who assumed the most junior position at the very end of the line, that is, on the right side close to the temple entrance.[58] This system, known as the *zhaomu* 昭穆 order, included a total of either six or eight generations in addition to the primary ancestor (who was not removed). While there is no evidence in Western Zhou bronze inscriptions to support these numbers or the specific spatial layout of the temple,[59] the name of the system—*zhaomu*—is striking in light of the fact that kings Zhao and Mu (written with the same characters: 昭穆) are indeed the first pair of ancestors that according to Western Zhou bronze inscriptions have their chambers in the temple of King Kang. Traditional scholars

[58] For schematic representations of this order, see Wu Hung, *Monumentality in early Chinese art and architecture*, pp. 81–82.

[59] Tang Lan, "Xi Zhou tongqi duandai zhong de 'Kang gong' wenti," pp. 22–27, points out that the inscriptions suggest a total of five ancestors each in the *jinggong* and *Kang gong*, not seven or nine. Furthermore, the arrangement of ancestors in the *jinggong* and *Kang gong* also seems at variance with the accounts in later literature that would include, for example, the remote ancestor of high antiquity, Lord Millet (Houji), in the temple.

have paid no attention to this fact, as their accounts saw the *zhaomu* system in place long before King Kang, namely, already beginning with the dynastic founders. The primary evidence from bronze inscriptions, however, suggests that a new temple organization, now with King Kang's temple at the center, was established as part of the overall mid- to late Western Zhou ritual reforms. This new organization must have begun after the death of King Zhao (that is, during the reign of King Mu), as he was the first to receive a chamber in the *Kang gong*; next came King Mu. As a continuous system, the *zhaomu* order was then fully realized when the following pair of rulers, kings Gong 恭 (917/15–900) and Yi 懿 (899/97–873), had their chambers aligned with those of kings Zhao and Mu. In other words, the evidence from bronze inscriptions allows us to hypothesize that the term *zhaomu* should be explained as based on the (posthumous temple) names King Zhao and King Mu and that the *zhaomu* system of the Zhou ancestral temple emerged only with the mid- to late Western Zhou ritual reforms.

The same context of ritual and administrative reform explains also the other remarkable phenomenon of the ancestral temple that has become fully apparent only from the bronze inscriptions: the fusion of religious and administrative practices. As noted above, nearly all references to the *miao* in mid- and late Western Zhou bronze inscriptions (the period when these references become frequent enough to allow for meaningful interpretation) point not to the offering of ancestral sacrifices but to the performance of appointment ceremonies during which the king bestowed a new position, complete with a wealth of ritual insignia, on an appointee. To date, more than 100 bronze inscriptions are known that explicitly mention the appointment ceremony, and several of them provide a fairly full account of this ritual, such as the Feng(?)-*ding* 趞鼎 inscription of 97 characters, composed in 809 BC:

> It was the 19th year, the fourth month, after the full moon, the day *xinmao*. The king was in the Zhao [Temple] of the Kang Palace. He arrived at the Grand Chamber and assumed his position. Assisted to his right by Intendant Xun, [I,] Feng(?), entered the gate. [I] assumed [my] position in the center of the court, facing north [toward the king]. Secretary Liu presented the king with the written order. The king called out to the Secretary of the Interior, [?], to announce the written bestowal to [me,] Feng (?): "[I bestow on you] a black jacket with embroidered hem, red kneepads, a scarlet demi-circlet, a chime pendant, and a bridle with bit and cheekpieces; use [these] to perform your service!" [I] bowed with my head touching the ground. [May I] dare in response to extol the Son of Heaven's greatly illustrious and abundant blessings and on account of

> this make for my August Deceased Father, the Elder Zheng(?), and his wife Zheng [this] precious tripod! May [I enjoy] extended longevity for ten thousand years! May sons of sons, grandsons of grandsons, forever treasure [this tripod]![60]

Without going into the intriguing details of the appointment ceremony, it should be noted that this appointment, and certainly hundreds like it, was made in a highly standardized ritual routine that remained stable throughout mid- and late Western Zhou times; as such, it also has found its reflection in one of the "Major court hymns," "The Jiang and the Han" (Jiang Han 江漢, Mao 262). Most significantly, it took place in the royal ancestral temple, that is, within the purview of the king's ancestral spirits. The standardized terms used in this ceremony include the royal "written order" (*lingshu* 令書) as well as the "announcement of the written bestowal" (*ceci* 冊賜) or "announcement of the written mandate" (*ceming* 冊命/*celing* 冊令). The mandate or bestowal was pronounced orally and at the same time given to the appointee in writing on bamboo slips. On this basis, the appointee was then entitled to have an inscribed bronze vessel cast that gave an account of the appointment and was henceforth used by the appointee to sacrifice to his ancestors (and by his descendants to sacrifice to him in the future).[61] The terminology of "mandate" (*ming* 命) and "order" (*ling* 令) used in this context, and in the space of the ancestral temple, was not accidental: precisely at the time when in bronze inscriptions, but probably also in the royal speeches preserved in the *Documents*, terms like "Son of Heaven" and "Mandate of Heaven" became a staple of political ideology and religious representation, the appointment ceremony, performed at the site of the king's ancestral worship, saw him extending his own

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[60] JWYD 4008. For a full discussion of the appointment ceremony, this particular text, and a series of related inscriptions, see Kern, "The performance of writing in Western Zhou China," in *The poetics of grammar and the metaphysics of sound and sign*, eds Sergio La Porta and David Shulman (Leiden, 2007), pp. 140–51 (with further references to recent scholarship); see also Chen Peifen, "Fan you, Feng(?) ding ji Liang Qi zhong mingwen quanshi," *Shanghai bowuguan jikan* 2 (1982), 17–20; for further study of the appointment ceremony, see Chen Hanping, *Xi Zhou ceming zhidu yanjiu* (Shanghai, 1986), p. 26.

[61] See Virginia Kane, "Aspects of Western Chou appointment inscriptions: the charge, the gifts, and the response," *Early China* 8 (1982–83), 14–28; Constance A. Cook, "Scribes, cooks, and artisans: breaking Zhou tradition," *Early China* 20 (1995), 241–77; Chen Hanping, *Xi Zhou ceming zhidu yanjiu*; Wong Yin-wai, *Yin Zhou qingtongqi shangci jinwen yanjiu* (Hong Kong, 1987); Falkenhausen, "Issues in Western Zhou studies," pp. 156–67.

mandate—received from Heaven as well as from his ancestors—to those in charge of administering his realm.[62] There was, in other words, no strict division between the religious and the political: the latter was represented as an extension of the former, and both were performed in a space that, as I will argue in further detail below, was initially conceived of as primarily religious but that over the course of the Western Zhou gradually accommodated also administrative and political purposes. Its basic ideological construction, however, remained continuous: as the king received his mandate from the spirits and extended it downward to his officials, he received their reports and presented his political and military feats both "vertically" to his ancestors and "horizontally" to his political community.[63] A trace of this extended connection between the spirits on the one hand and the king and his officers on the other can be grasped in the first and paradigmatic "Eulogy of Zhou," the hymn "Clear temple" addressed to King Wen:

> Ah! Solemn is the clear temple,
> Reverent and concordant the illustrious assistants.
> Dignified, dignified are the many officers,
> Holding fast to the virtue of King Wen.
> Responding in praise to the one in Heaven,
> They hurry swiftly within the temple.
> Greatly illustrious, greatly honored,
> May [King Wen] never be weary of [us] men!

The sacrificial hymns

More than any other textual corpus, the "Eulogies" and "Court hymns" that in Eastern Zhou times were canonized in the *Book of songs* and have been transmitted through the ages give account of the various aspects of the Zhou ancestral sacrifice. The 31 "Eulogies of Zhou" are very short pieces—20 of them less than 50 characters long—and are believed to be the sacrificial hymns through which the Western Zhou rulers addressed

[62] For a thoughtful analysis of the "mandate" in early China, see David Schaberg, "Command and the content of tradition," in *The magnitude of Ming*, ed. Christopher Lupke (Honolulu, 2005), pp. 23–48.

[63] See the "Great capture" chapter of the *Remnant Zhou documents*; see Huang Huaixin et al., *Yi Zhoushu huijiao jizhu*, p. 423, where King Wu enters the temple and presents his accomplishments in ordering the realm to his ancestors; see also the same chapter, p. 442.

their ancestors, the early kings from King Wen to King Kang. In addition, the 31 "Major court hymns" provide the master narrative of early Zhou history and culture; presumably performed at royal banquets, they also contain a certain number of references to the sacrifices, and so do a small group of songs from the 74 "Minor court hymns." While all the "Court hymns" are distinguished by their regular tetrasyllabic meter, orderly rhymes, stanzaic divisions, overall length and extensive narrative structure, many of the "Eulogies of Zhou" are notably lacking in these features and for this reason have been understood—rightly or wrongly—as genuinely archaic.

The "Eulogies of Zhou" inform us in different ways about the Western Zhou ancestral sacrifice. A number of them appear directly addressed to the ancestors but provide little description of the sacrificial ritual; others seem to exhort the princes present during the sacrifice; and yet others give brief accounts of the sacrificial performance. The hymns speaking directly to the ancestors include the above-quoted "Clear temple" as well as the one directly following it, "It is the Mandate of Heaven" (Wei tian zhi ming 維天之命, Mao 267):

> It is the Mandate of Heaven,
> How majestic and not ending!
> Ah, greatly illustrious—
> How pure the virtuous power of King Wen!
> [His] fine blessings flow to us in abundance,
> May we receive them!
> [He who] grandly gives us favors is King Wen—
> [His] distant descendants will strengthen them.

By contrast, the hymn "Brilliant and cultured" (Lie wen 烈文, Mao 269) eulogizes the king's rule and addresses the assembled lords he has enfeoffed. Presumably presented in the temple, it informs the ancestral spirits about the king's continuation of their model of rulership and exhorts his subordinates and future generations to follow their—and his own—example, remembering the past and extending its model into an indefinite future:

> The brilliant and cultured [ancestral] lords and rulers
> Have bestowed [on us] these blessings and favors.
> [Their] kindness to us has been without limits—
> Sons and grandsons will preserve it.
> There are no fiefs that are not in your land,
> It is the king who shall be honoring them.
> Remember these great accomplishments [of the past],

Continuing and extending, may [you] revere them as august.
Truly valorous [the king] is indeed as a man,
In all four quarters, may [you] follow him.
Greatly illustrious is indeed [his] virtuous power.
The hundred lords, may they regard it as [their] model—
Oh, the former kings are not forgotten.[64]

While different in perspective, both songs—and also "Clear temple"—display the principal concern of the ancestral sacrifice: the hymns commemorate the former rulers as models, and they conclude with the promise that future generations will continue to emulate them. A third type of hymn celebrates the very ritual act in which it is performed, thus representing and doubling the ancestral sacrifice in language. A song like "There are blind musicians" (You gu 有瞽, Mao 280) re-affirms the actions of the assembled community, asserts the presence of the spirits and creates a durable and repeatable linguistic memory of the ceremony itself:

There are blind musicians, there are blind musicians,
They are in the courtyard of the Zhou [temple].
[We] have set up the boards, we have set up the vertical posts [for bells and drums],
With raised flanges, planted feathers,
The [small] responding and introducing drums, the [large] suspended drums,
The [little] hand drums, chime stones, rattles, and clappers—
All prepared and now played.
The panpipes and flutes are all raised—
Huang-huang is their sound.
Solemn and concordant [their] harmonious tune—
The former ancestors, these are listening!
Our guests [the ancestors] have arrived,
For long [they] observe this performance.

Finally, a series of six of the "Eulogies of Zhou" has been reconstructed as a suite that, accompanied by dance, mimetically represented King

[64] Like James Legge, *The Chinese Classics*, vol. IV, *The She King* (Taibei, 1985), pp. 572–73, I follow the earliest commentators who understand the song as an exhortation to the princes (though my translation differs decidedly from Legge's). I disagree with Bernhard Karlgren, *The Book of odes* (Stockholm, 1950), pp. 240–41, and Shaughnessy, *Before Confucius*, p. 176, who take the song as addressed to the ancestors.

Wu's conquest of the Shang.[65] "Martial" celebrates King Wu as successor to King Wen and conqueror of the Yin (Shang):

> How august was King Wu—
> Truly valorous was his brilliance!
> Verily cultured was King Wen—
> [He] could open [the path] for those who came after!
> [King] Wu, the successor, received it,
> [he] vanquished Yin and ended their murderous cruelty.
> Accomplished and secured is your feat!

On the whole, the "Eulogies of Zhou" offer limited description of the ancestral sacrifice in which they were purportedly performed. Like "There are blind musicians," the hymn "Strong and valorous" (Zhi jing 執競, Mao 274) briefly mentions the musical instruments, but this time with a series of onomatopoeic reduplicatives that then blend in with the description of the blessings received in response from the ancestors:

> The bells and drums go *huang-huang*,
> The chime stones and flutes go *jiang-jiang*;
> The blessings sent down are *xiang-xiang*.
>
> The blessings sent down are *jian-jian*,
> The awe-inspiring demeanor is *fan-fan*.
> [The spirits,] they are drunk, they are satiated—
> Blessings and fortune come in return!

Here, an important performative element of the sacrificial hymns becomes visible, namely, their euphonic qualities that contribute to the overall aesthetic experience of the ritual performance. Not only does "Strong and valorous" array five reduplicatives in a row, in each line occupying two out of four characters, the lines also constitute two rhyme sequences that in the translation are separated by the line space (*huang-jiang-xiang* versus *jian-fan* ["return"] *-fan*). In other words, "Strong and valorous" employs language in a distinctly euphonic way—not merely in the onomatopoeic representation of musical sound but also in "describing" the blessings received from the ancestors. In bronze inscriptions, these binomes begin to emerge only in mid-Western Zhou times, and here in particular in inscriptions of bronze bells where they are used to

[65] See note 31 above. The six hymns are "Great Heaven has a defined mandate" (Hao tian you cheng ming 昊天有成命, Mao 271), "Martial" (Wu 武, Mao 285) "Joyous" (Ban 般, Mao 296), "Zhuo" 酌 (Mao 293), "Fierce" (Huan 桓, Mao 294), "Bestowing" (Lai 賚, Mao 295).

describe the bells' sounds. Moreover, judging from the archaeological record, bells themselves became prominent ritual paraphernalia only during the middle period of the dynasty and hence provide a likely *terminus post quem* for a song like "Strong and valorous."[66]

The same use of language, including stanzaic division, also appears in "Harmonious" (Yong 雝, Mao 282), a song that provides further detail on the sacrifice.

> Those who are coming are *yong-yong* (harmonious),
> As they arrive, they are *su-su* (solemn)
> Assisting are the lords and princes,
> The Son of Heaven is *mu-mu* (majestic).
>
> Ah, [as we] offer the large bull
> Assist me in setting forth the sacrifice!
> Come, o!, my august father,
> Comfort me, the sacrificing son![67]
>
> Of embracing wisdom he was as a man,
> Of cultural and martial virtue he was as a ruler.
> He even appeased Great Heaven,
> And could create prosperity for those who came after.
>
> Comfort us with extended longevity,
> Increase us through profuse favors!
> Having regaled the brilliant father,
> [I] also regale the cultured mother.

Like other hymns among the "Eulogies," "Harmonious" mentions a ritual community that at the Zhou royal court also included the lords and princes. Likewise, in "Now appearing" (Zai xian 載見, Mao 283), the king leads his illustrious guests when sacrificing to his ancestors. These lords have received their positions from the Zhou king and thus "assist" him in his sacrifice to his ancestors, who, ultimately, have secured the dynastic mandate from Heaven. The hymn, and with it the order of the ancestral sacrifice, thus reflects a hierarchical system that was at

[66] For the bells of the Zhou ancestral sacrifice, see the magisterial treatment by Lothar von Falkenhausen, *Suspended music: chime bells in the culture of Bronze Age China* (Berkeley, 1993), and the essays collected in Jenny F. So, ed., *Music in the age of Confucius* (Washington, D.C., 2000).

[67] Here and below, I translate *xiao* 孝 as "to sacrifice"; in Western Zhou times, the term denotes one's sacrificial service to the dead, not—as in later usage—filial behavior to one's living parents; for extensive references, see Kern, "*Shi jing* songs as performance texts: a case study of 'Chu ci' ('Thorny caltrop')," *Early China* 25 (2000), p. 87, note 131.

once religious and political with Heaven as its apex and the subordinate lords and princes at the end.

In the scenario of "Harmonious," both male and female ancestors are honored, a point also expressed in "Abundant harvest" (Feng nian 豐年, Mao 279) and "Now clearing away" (Zai shan 載芟, Mao 290) and frequently mentioned in the later ritual classics. The most substantial offering they receive is a bull;[68] other hymns mention a ram and a bull,[69] fish,[70] as well as grain and ale.[71] The ancestors are presented with music[72] and feasted until they are "drunk" and "satiated"[73]—in exact parallelism to the subordinate rulers and princes who are regaled at the royal banquets. Whereas the guests at the banquet confirm their allegiance to the king, the ancestors at the sacrifices send down their blessings, as in "Now appearing":

> [The king] leads [his guests] to appear before the glorious father,[74]
> To sacrifice, to make offerings,
> To increase extended longevity,
> That [he] forever may preserve!
> Splendid indeed are [the ancestors'] many favors,
> Brilliant and cultured [his ancestral] lords and rulers;
> Comforting [him] with manifold blessings,
> Making [him] perpetuate [his] brightness in pure benison.

The connection between banquet and ancestral sacrifice as the two primary sites of religious and political practice and communication becomes particularly visible in the "Court hymns" as well as in the "Eulogies" of Lu and Shang, all of which can only be dated toward the end of the Western Zhou or later.[75] While traditionally understood to

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[68] Also in "Good ploughs" (Liang si 良耜, Mao 291).

[69] "We bring forward" (Wo jiang 我將, Mao 272); "Silk robes" (Si yi 絲衣, Mao 292).

[70] "Submerged" (Qian 潛, Mao 281).

[71] "Now clearing away"; only grain in "Good ploughs"; only ale in "Silk robes."

[72] "Strong and valorous," "There are blind musicians."

[73] "Strong and valorous."

[74] Following traditional commentaries, *zhao kao* 昭考 is here usually understood as the first ancestor in the *zhaomu* system, that is, King Wu; see the extensive note in Bernhard Karlgren, *Glosses on the Book of odes* (Stockholm, 1964), pp. 157–58 (# 1102). However, considering the likely mid-Western Zhou date for the emergence of that system as well as the uncertainty in dating the present song, I refrain from this interpretation and instead translate *zhao* literally.

[75] Although the early commentarial tradition has attributed the first 18 of the 31 "Major court hymns" to the Duke of Zhou, the highly standardized and elaborate

be banquet songs, these sections of the *Songs* contain substantial references to the ancestral sacrifice and provide significantly richer descriptions of its process than the "Eulogies of Zhou." Unlike the latter, the "Major court hymns" are very extensive pieces—some of them several hundred characters long—that present the broad foundational narrative of the origin and early development of Zhou civilization. While it is unclear whether or not any of these hymns were performed in the ancestral sacrifice, their grand narrative of the Zhou must have pervaded the sacrifice as well as other ritual performances at the Zhou court. According to much later sources, beginning with the idealized account of the Zhou ritual order as expressed in the *Rites of Zhou*, the various forms of court ritual—ancestral sacrifices, diplomatic banquets, capping ceremonies, and so on—were interconnected by the continuous use of identical or closely related musical performances, dances and texts.[76] Most importantly, the "Eulogies" and "Court hymns" shared the same principal ideology of the latter, that is, the commemoration of the past as a model for the present and the future.

In both "Eulogies" and "Court hymns," this common orientation was primarily directed at the ancestors, and here most importantly at King Wen. He is explicitly mentioned in seven of the "Eulogies of Zhou"[77] and implied in others; in the "Major court hymns," a group of five songs[78] have been identified as the master narrative of the life of King Wen. In addition, the first of the "Major court hymns" is titled "King Wen" (Wen wang 文王, Mao 235) and another one "King Wen has fame" (Wen wang you sheng 文王有聲, Mao 244); both are entirely devoted to his praise. Finally, King Wen is further mentioned in two more "Major court hymns,"[79] and the "Mandate of Heaven" is closely associated with him throughout.[80]

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linguistic form of these hymns seems to rule out such an early date of composition. The "Eulogies of Lu" and "Eulogies of Shang" have long been recognized as postdating the Western Zhou.

[76] For references, see Kern, "*Shi Jing* songs as performance texts," pp. 98–99.

[77] "Clear temple," "It is the mandate of Heaven," "They are clear" (Wei qing 維清, Mao 268), "Heaven created" (Tian zuo 天作, Mao 270), "We bring forward," "Martial" and "Bestowing."

[78] "Great brightness" (Da ming 大明, Mao 236), "Extended," "August indeed," "She bore the folk" and "Duke Liu" (Gong Liu 公劉, Mao 250).

[79] "Reverential" and "Vast" (Tang 蕩, Mao 255).

[80] In "King Wen," "Great brightness," "August indeed," "Admirable and delightful" (Jia le 嘉樂, Mao 249) and "Vast." Wang, *From ritual to allegory*, pp. 73–114, compares the narrative of King Wen as told in the "Major court hymns" to the epics of early Greece.

Yet not only is King Wen, along with other specific ancestors ending with King Kang,[81] commemorated as a model in both "Eulogies" and "Hymns"; many of these songs speak also in general terms of continuing the accomplishments of former rulers, of the "former statutes" (*jiudian* 舊典), of the "former times" (*jiu* 舊) or of the "ancient men" (*gu zhi ren* 古之人).[82] Perhaps most remarkable, though, is the fact that the sacrificial rites themselves are explicitly presented as remembered rites where the act of commemorating is itself modeled after an earlier commemoration. In this way, the ancestral sacrifice itself was a manifestation of continuity and repetition: each new performance addressed to one's ancestors was a reenactment of what these ancestors had represented to their own progenitors. Every new performance was then also a model for the new generation of descendants, as expressed in the exhortation already cited, "may sons of sons, grandsons of grandsons forever treasure and use [this vessel]" that closes about 80 percent of all longer inscriptions. This closing "memory formula" asks the descendants not only to keep the vessel but also to use it, that is, to continue the commemorative sacrifices as they have always been continued. The vessel itself embodied the continuity of the sacrifice.

Significantly, this explicit invocation of past ritual practice appears in both "Eulogies" and "Hymns": "Since times of old, what have we done 自昔何爲?" is the phrase in line three of the "Minor court hymn" "Thorny caltrop"; "Truly—our sacrifices are like what 誕我祀如何?" is its equivalent in the "Major court hymn" "She bore the folk." In both cases, the question introduces a formulaic recital of the orderly agricultural preparations for the sacrifice as it has continued from antiquity to the present. Likewise, the "Eulogy of Zhong" "Now clearing away" 載芟 closes by saying, "It is not [merely] here what we have here; / it is not [merely] now what is now; / since ancient times, it is like this" 匪且有且, 匪今斯今, 振古如茲. In a sacrificial eulogy, the memory formula self-referentially speaks of the very ritual act in which the song is performed; in a banquet hymn, it relates the feasting of the royal

[81] King Cheng is eulogized in "Successors" (Xia wu 下武, Mao 243), "Great Heaven has a defined mandate," "Strong and valorous" (here together with King Kang), and "Ah!" (Yixi 噫嘻, Mao 277).

[82] For the "Major court hymns," see "King Wen," "Successors," "King Wen has fame," "She bore the folk," "Admirable and delightful," "Meandering slope" (Quan a 卷阿, Mao 252) and "Shao the Great" (Shao min 召旻, Mao 265); for the "Eulogies of Zhou," see "It is the mandate of Heaven," "Brilliant and cultured," "We bring forward," "Pitiable I am, the small child" (Min yu xiao zi 閔予小子, Mao 286), "Now clearing away," "Good ploughs," "Zhuo," "Fierce" and "Bestowing."

guests to the ancestral offerings. Not by accident, the spirits were also referred to as "guests," as in "There are blind musicians" cited above. The close connection between sacrifices and banquets is most explicit in a number of banquet hymns that seem to oscillate between the two ritual occasions. This is particularly true of several of the extensive "Eulogies" of Lu and Shang[83] but also of several court hymns,[84] as in stanza four from "Heaven protects" (Tian bao 天保, Mao 166) where the guests at the banquet address their royal host:

> Auspicious and pure are the oblations,
> These you use for sacrifices and offerings.
> [You perform] the summer, spring, winter and autumn sacrifices
> To the [ancestral] rulers and former kings.
> The [ancestral] lords say: "For you [we] predict
> Longevity of myriad years without limits!"

Complementing the "Eulogies of Zhou," the "Major" and "Minor court hymns" together with the "Eulogies" of Lu and Shang offer many of the bits and pieces of information on the ancestral and other sacrifices that subsequently were systematized and elaborated upon in the ritual classics as well as in the great works of Eastern Zhou narrative historiography, the *Zuo commentary* (*Zuozhuan* 左傳) and the *Discourses of the states* (Guoyu 國語). To begin with, both Heaven and the royal ancestors (residing in Heaven) received regular seasonal offerings. It is not clear how these sacrifices differed in nature, but they are referred to by distinct names (as in "Heaven protects" just cited).[85] In addition, sacrifices were performed at the altar of the soil (*she* 社) and to the cosmic spirits of the four directions (*sifang* 四方),[86] to Lord Millet (Houji 后稷),[87] at the border altar (*jiao* 郊), to the "Powers above and below" (*shangxia* 上下)

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[83] Most clearly in "Closed temple" (Bi gong 閟宮, Mao 300), "Ample" (Na 那, Mao 301), and "Brilliant ancestor" (Lie zu 烈祖, Mao 302).

[84] Especially "When the guests first sit down on their mats" (Bin zhi chu yan 賓之初筵, Mao 220), "The foot of the Han hill" (Han lu 旱麓, Mao 239), "She bore the folk" (Sheng min 生民, Mao 250), "Rushes in rows" (Hang wei 行葦, Mao 246), "We are drunk" (Ji zui 既醉, Mao 247) and "Wild ducks" (Fu yi 鳧鷖, Mao 248).

[85] The seasonal sacrifices are also noted in "Thorny caltrop," "Closed temple," "Ample," and "Brilliant ancestor," while "When the guests first sit down on their mats" mentions seasonal banquets.

[86] "Extensive fields" (Fu tian 甫田, Mao 211), "Large fields" (Da tian 大田, Mao 212), "Cloud river" (Yun han 雲漢, Mao 258), "August indeed" (Huang yi 皇矣, Mao 241), "Closed temple."

[87] "Closed temple."

and to the Lord on High (*shangdi* 上帝, or *di* 帝, residing in Heaven);[88] traveling or marching on military campaign, one made offerings to the spirits of the road[89] and to those of a newly conquered territory.[90] In short, the *Songs* inform us about a host of deities and the sacrifices they received, yet their overall emphasis remains on the ancestral sacrifice. Like the "Eulogies of Zhou," they mention grain (especially millet), ale, rams, pigs and bulls for the offerings,[91] including the fat and hair of the sacrificial victims.[92]

The richest account of the Zhou ancestral sacrifice comes from the "Minor court hymn" "Thorny caltrop" that deserves to be quoted in full. The hymn comprises 72 tetrasyllabic lines divided into six stanzas of equal length. Every stanza except the fifth begins with a new rhyme, and additional rhyme changes occur in stanzas four, five and six. In the following, I indicate the rhymes in square brackets; moreover, as I believe the song preserves the polyvocal perspectives of a sacrificial performance, I indicate the individual voices throughout the translation. This arrangement will show that changes of rhyme indicate actual shifts of voices in the ritual communication among the participants, or shifts in the direction or perspective of speech.[93] In my analysis, the text contains genuine utterances from an early ancestral sacrifice interspersed with brief narrative elements. This construction suggests not a genuine performance text sung in the ancestral sacrifice but a more complex textual artifact: a versified commemorative narrative that aims to preserve the authentic expressions of an earlier sacrifice while also providing guidance for an audience, certainly postdating the Western Zhou, that was no longer familiar with the original sacrificial practice. Initially, the ancestral sacrifice had been the occasion for which the ritual language of the "Eulogies" and "Court hymns" had been created; now, the sacrificial order itself was preserved only in these texts.[94]

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[88] "Cloud river," "August indeed," etc.

[89] "The multitudinous folk" (Zheng min 烝民, Mao 260), "The Marquis of Han is grand" (Han yi 韓奕, Mao 261).

[90] "August indeed." Cf. the chapter by Kominami Ichiro in this volume.

[91] "Thorny caltrop," "This Southern Mountain" (Xin nan shan 信南山, Mao 210), "Extensive fields," "Large fields," "She bore the folk," "When the guests first sit down on their mats," "Closed temple."

[92] "This Southern Mountain," "She bore the folk."

[93] For the full analysis and detailed annotation of the song see Kern, "*Shi jing* songs as performance texts," from which much of the following discussion is drawn.

[94] With this, I have decided to depart from my earlier analysis published eight years

Stanza 1:
[Invoker addressing the impersonator(s) of the ancestor(s) on behalf of the descendant:]

> "Thorny, thorny is the caltrop—
> So [we] remove its prickles. [A]
> Since times of old, what have [we] done?
> We plant the panicled millet, the glutinous millet: [A]
> Our panicled millet is abundant, abundant,
> Our glutinous millet is orderly, orderly. [A]
> Our granaries being full,
> Our sheaves are in hundreds of thousands. [A]
> With them, [we] make ale and food: [A]
> To offer, to sacrifice, [A]
> To assuage, to provision, [A]
> To pray for radiant blessings!" [A]

Stanza 2:
[Invoker addressing the descendant:]

> "Dignified, dignified, processional, processional—[B]
> [You] have purified your oxen and sheep, [B]
> Proceeding to the winter sacrifice, the autumn sacrifice. [B]
> Some flay, some boil, [B]
> Some arrange, some present. [B]
> The invoker sacrifices inside the temple gate, [B]
> The sacrificial service is greatly shining. [B]
> The ancestor(s), these [you] make to return, [B]
> The divine protector(s), these [you] feast. [B]
> The offering descendant shall have benison! [B]
> [He will be] requited with great blessings—
> Ten thousand years longevity without limit!" [B]

Stanza 3:
[Invoker addressing the descendant:]

> "The furnace managers are attentive, attentive, [C]
> Making the sacrificial stands grand and magnificent: [C]
> Some [meat] is roasted, some is broiled. [C]
> The noble wives are solemn, solemn, [C]
> Making the plates grand and numerous. [C]
> With those who are guests, with those who are visitors, [C]
> Presentations and toasts are exchanged. [C]

---

ago where I took the song as a genuine performance text. I now see it as part of Eastern Zhou commemorative culture.

Rites and ceremony are perfectly to the rule, [C]
Laughter and talk are perfectly measured. [C]
The divine protector, he is led to arrive, [C]
He will requite [you] with great blessings—
Ten thousand years longevity will be [your] reward!" [C]

Stanza 4:
[Principal descendant:]

"We are greatly reverential, [D]
Form and rites are without transgression." [D]

[Narrative comment]

The officiating invoker invokes the [spirits'] announcement,
He goes and presents it to the offering descendant:

[Invoker addressing the descendant on behalf of the ancestors:]

"[You] have made fragrant and aromatic the offering sacrifice, [A]
The spirits enjoy the drink and food; [A]
[They] predict for you a hundred blessings. [A]
According to the [proper] quantities, according to the [proper] rules, [A]
[You] have brought sacrificial grain, [you] have brought glutinous millet, [A]
[You] have put them in baskets, [you] have arranged them. [A]
Forever [the spirits] bestow on you the utmost, [A]
This ten-thousandfold, this hundred-thousandfold!" [A]

Stanza 5:
[Principal descendant (?):]

"Rites and ceremony are completed, [A]
Bells and drums have given their warning." [A]

[Narrative comment]:

The offering descendant goes to his place,
The officiating invoker delivers the announcement:

[Invoker addressing the impersonator(s) of the ancestor(s) on behalf of the descendant:]

"The spirits are all drunk— [E]
The august impersonator(s) may now rise!" [E]

[Narrative comment]:

Drums and bells escort the impersonator(s) away;
And so the divine protector returns. [F]
The many attendants and the noble wives
Clear and remove [the dishes] without delay. [F]
The many fathers and the brothers
All together banquet among themselves. [F]

Stanza 6:
[Narrative comment]:

The musicians all come in to perform, [G]
To secure the subsequent fortune. [G]

[Invoker addressing the descendant:]

"Your viands have been set forth, [B]
Without resentment, all are happy!" [B]

[Male clan members addressing the descendant:]

"[We] are drunk, [we] are satiated; [H]
young and old, [we] bow [our] heads. [H]
The spirits have enjoyed the drink and food,
They cause you, the lord, to live long!" [H]

[Invoker addressing the descendant:]

"Greatly compliant, greatly timely
is how you have completed [the rites]. [I]
Sons of sons, grandsons of grandsons,
Let them not fail to continue these [rites]!" [I]

The song confirms much of the information already gleaned from the "Eulogies" and other "Court hymns," such as the nature of the sacrificial offerings, the notion of seasonal sacrifices, the feasting of the offerings and the reception of their blessings in return; it also mentions the presence of music and briefly describes a concluding banquet that was still conducted under the purview of the ancestral spirits. It shows the ancestral sacrifice as a communal affair where members of the family, guests, and ritual officials fulfilled their prescribed roles, including the impersonator(s)—one or more young members of the family—that, once inebriated, spoke in the tongues representing the ancestral spirits.

The polyvocal structure of the text cannot be accidental but bespeaks the effort to recapture the religious drama performed in the Zhou ancestral temple. What counted in the recollection of this drama was not individuals but roles. None of the participants are named, but all have functions, thus demonstrating the decidedly non-historical but generic

nature of the hymn. "Thorny caltrop" encapsulates not any particular performance but the blueprint and essence of all such performances. By contrast, bronze inscriptions frequently do name their patrons and also the ritual officials in the appointment ceremonies. The act of having a bronze vessel cast reflected the merits of a particular individual for whom it apparently was important to historicize the ceremony by referring to the appointment ceremony not merely as a royal institution but to one particular instantiation of that institution, complete with the names of those present—a phenomenon that reflects a strong concern with the continuity of memory over future generations but perhaps also the contractual dimensions of a royal appointment.[95]

Most important for a generic account of an ideal ancestral sacrifice, "Thorny caltrop" mimetically represents the perfect ritual order as the order of its language. The song is composed of a tight aesthetic fabric featuring an exceptionally intense use of rhyme, the first-person plural pronoun, onomatopoeic reduplicative binomes and a staccato-like syntactic line pattern AXAY where "A" is a particle repeated in the first and third position and followed by two different verbs in the second and fourth position. Such patterning is not evenly distributed across early poetry; the "AXAY" structure is almost exclusively confined to the ritual hymns in the *Book of songs* (compared to the "Airs of the states" in the same anthology)—especially the "Major court hymns"—and so is the intensity with which the reduplicatives follow upon one another.[96] Especially among the 31 "Major court hymns" there is rarely a song that does not display several of the features noted above; compare the following stanzas of "August indeed!" that celebrates the foundation of the Zhou dynasty together with its founding heroes. For illustration, I emphasize in bold the words that are repeated in the original:

> He cut **them** down, he removed **them**,
> **Those** standing dead trees, **those** fallen dead trees;
> He dressed **them**, he levelled **them**,
> **Those** clumps, **those** lines;
> He opened **them** up, he cleared **them**,
> **Those** tamarisk trees, **those** *qu* trees;
> He bared **them**, he scraped **them**,
> **those** wild mulberry trees, **those** mountain mulberry trees.
>
> (Stanza two, ll. 1–8 of 12)

[95] Kern, "The performance of writing in Western Zhou China," p. 151.
[96] Kern, "*Shi jing* songs as performance texts," pp. 106–09.

It is indeed this Wang Ji;
The Lord measured his heart:
Serene he was in the fame of his **virtuous power**.
In his **virtuous power**, he **was able to make shining bright**;
He **was able to make shining bright**, he **was able** to distinguish;
He **was able** to lead, he **was able** to rule.
He governed as king over this great state,
He **was able** to enforce submission, he **was able** to enforce concordance.

(Stanza four, ll. 1–8 of 12)

The engines of assault were **strong, strong**,
the walls of Chong were **high, high**.
Captives to be questioned came in **procession, procession**,
Cut-off ears were presented **calmly, calmly**.
These he offered at the war sacrifice, **these** he offered at the conquest sacrifice.
These he brought forward, **these** he appended.
Within the four quarters, there was none who affronted him.
The engines of assault were **powerful, powerful**,
The walls of Chong were **towering, towering**.
These he attacked, **these** he assailed,
These he put to an end, **these** he exterminated.
Within the four quarters, there was none who opposed him.

(Stanza eight, ll. 1–12 of 12)[97]

The overall rhythmic repetition is an aesthetic principle integral to these generic songs. Within the confines of the tetrasyllabic line (itself a basic measure of standardization and regularity), this repetition shows continuous variation that is tightly controlled, never transgressing into unpredictable or aberrant patterns: end-rhymes abound but in different phonetic categories; the "AXAY" rhythm is pervasive but can be produced through many different choices for the repeated "A" syllable; various words may be repeated at the beginning of each line, in the second or third position, or at the beginning of each stanza; the repertoire of reduplicatives is unlimited; whole line patterns can be repeated within a stanza or in the same position of different stanzas, but such repetitions are different in every song. In short, no two of the ritual hymns are nearly identical, but all are similar. Due to their strictly formulaic and modular composition, intertextuality is pervasive among the ritual hymns preserved in the *Songs* and even more so among mid- and late

[97] Compare Karlgren, *The Book of odes*, pp. 193–96; Legge, *The She king*, pp. 368–73.

Western Zhou bronze inscriptions, where identical phrases and entire lines are ubiquitous.[98]

As rhythmic repetition is a feature of the single ritual performance as well as of the sequence of performances, its linguistic form manifests itself within a single hymn while simultaneously relating this hymn to the entire repertoire. This overall formal coherence is further enhanced by the fact that in virtually every text several of the patterns noted above occur in conjunction and rapid alternation. They are intertwined and overlap; they appear in recursive loops or parallel linear structures; they create a dense and multi-layered texture that resonates between lines, stanzas and whole songs. Their rich, tangible language embodies the Zhou institutions of cultural memory— sacrifice and banquet—and expresses cultural coherence, genealogical reproduction and political authority.

The features of the "Eulogies" and "Court hymns," and the ways in which they blend language and performance, are not unique to Zhou China but have been identified and analyzed by anthropologists and linguists in other cultures as well. According to these studies, there is a striking overlap between the language of poetry, the aesthetics of ritual, and the ideology of memory. Stanley J. Tambiah has offered a useful description of ritual as

> a culturally constructed system of symbolic communication. It is constituted of patterned and ordered sequences of words and acts, often expressed in multiple media, whose content and arrangement are characterized in varying degree by formality (conventionality), stereotypy (rigidity), condensation (fusion), and redundancy (repetition).[99]

While in this definition, condensation refers to "the sense of total fused experience"[100] created through multiple media, and thus operates on the level of the individual performance, the other three aspects of ritual—formality, stereotypy and redundancy—apply both to the aesthetic structure inherent in the single performance and to the sequence of

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[98] For the *Songs*, see W.A.H.C. Dobson, *The language of the Book of songs* (Toronto, 1968), pp. 247–64, and Kern, "*Shi jing* songs as performance texts," pp. 103–06. For the inscriptions, see Falkenhausen, "Issues in Western Zhou studies," pp. 155, 163–64, 168–71, and Jessica Rawson, *Western Zhou ritual bronzes in the Arthur M. Sackler collections* (Cambridge, 1990), vol. IIA, p. 93.

[99] Tambiah, *Culture, thought, and social action: an anthropological perspective* (Cambridge, 1985), p. 128.

[100] Tambiah, *Culture, thought, and social action*, p. 165.

performances of the same ritual at defined intervals. Indeed, the fact that a ritual performance is seen not as a single occurrence but as a member in a continuous chain of such occurrences is basic to its meaning and aesthetics. For a strong feature "contributing to the sense of total fused experience," Tambiah points to "the hyper-regular surface structure of ritual language: the poetic devices such as rhyme, meter, assonance, and alliteration generate an overall quality of union and a blurring of grammatical boundaries."[101] Likewise, Jan Assmann, writing about the creation and perpetuation of cultural memory, has noted:

> It can be taken as general knowledge that poetic formation serves primarily the mnemotechnical purpose of putting identity-securing knowledge into a durable form. We are by now equally familiar with the fact that this knowledge is usually performed in the form of a multi-media staging which embeds the linguistic text undetachably in voice, body, miming, gesture, dance, rhythm, and ritual act... By the regularity of their recurrence, feasts and rites grant the imparting and transmission of identity-securing knowledge and hence the reproduction of cultural identity. Ritual repetition secures the coherence of the group in space and time.[102]

Along the same line, Paul Connerton emphasizes that "all rites are repetitive, and repetition automatically implies continuity with the past."[103] In other words, ritual itself, on account of its repetitive and formalized nature, is a function of commemoration: a performance is the repetition of an earlier performance. Thus, the repetitive and formalized nature of ritual is rendered explicit through the regularity of rhythmic structure within and beyond the single performance. Each performance exposes its own aesthetic structure as the embodiment of the continued presence of the past. While expressing a specific master narrative of the past—in the "Major court hymns" most prominently the story of King Wen—the ritual performance, in conjunction with its propositional contents, constitutes a formal claim of continuity with the past.

The Zhou sacrifices and banquets were thus the ritual performance par excellence: their religious proposition—the commemoration and emulation of an ancestral model—converged with the formal structure

[101] Tambiah, *Culture, thought, and social action*, p. 165.
[102] Assmann, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis: Schrift, Erinnerung und politische Identität in frühen Hochkulturen* (Munich, 1992), pp. 56–57 (my translation); see also pp. 143–44.
[103] Paul Connerton, *How societies remember* (Cambridge, 1989), p. 45.

of its repetitive form. Furthermore, it not only exalted the ancestors as models to follow but through its correct and successful performance also transformed the pious descendant—the host of the sacrifice and banquet—into a rightful successor and hence ideal future ancestor to be venerated by subsequent generations.[104] By this logic, the correct performance of the ancestral sacrifice served as a touchstone of political legitimacy; in post-Western Zhou times, the idealized history of past rulership was envisioned as an idealized history of ritual.

In their analysis of ritual language, anthropologists and linguists alike have emphasized its formalized, restrained and repetitive patterns that show the verbal expression to tally with the aesthetic structure of ritual performance as a whole. The language of the Zhou ancestral sacrifice is prescribed and predictable; it does not furnish new information but, on the contrary, circulates within the performance what is already known. Maurice Bloch has characterized ritual speech as "formalised" and "impoverished language," as the "language of traditional authority" where "many of the options at all levels of language are abandoned so that choice of form, of style, of words and of syntax is less than in ordinary language."[105] Bloch holds that "religion uses forms of communication which do not have propositional force" and that in a song, "no argument or reasoning can be communicated…*You cannot argue with a song*."[106] Likewise, Emily Ahern speaks of a "restricted code," guarded by strict intertextuality;[107] Anthony F.C. Wallace has coined the classical formula of "communication without information";[108] and Wade T. Wheelock has noted that ritual speech

> is most often a fixed and known text repeated verbatim for each performance, and the constituents of the immediate ritual setting, to which the language of the liturgy will make frequent reference, are generally standardized and thus familiar to the participants, not needing any verbal

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[104] I have dealt with these features on several occasions; see Kern, "*Shi jing* songs as performance texts," pp. 55–76; *The stele inscriptions of Ch'in Shih-huang: text and ritual in early Chinese imperial representation* (New Haven, 2000), pp. 119–54; Ke Mading 柯馬丁 (Martin Kern), "Zuowei zhuixiang de shi: *Shi* ji qi zaoqi quanshi," *Guoxue yanjiu* 16 (2005), 329–41.

[105] Bloch, "Symbols, song, dance and features of articulation: is religion an extreme form of traditional authority?," *European Journal of Sociology* 15.1 (1974), pp. 60–61.

[106] Bloch, "Symbols, song, dance and features of articulation," p. 71.

[107] Emily Ahern, *Chinese ritual and politics* (Cambridge, 1981), pp. 54–55.

[108] Anthony Wallace, *Religion: an anthropological view* (New York, 1966), p. 233.

> explication. Therefore, practically every utterance of a ritual is superfluous from the perspective of ordinary conversational principles.[109]

The question of meaning extends beyond the verbal utterances to the entire ritual performance; meaning is constituted "not in terms of 'information' but in terms of *pattern recognition* and *configurational awareness*" achieved through restraint and the orchestrated use of "redundancy and recursive loops" (Tambiah).[110]

It is from these perspectives that songs like "Thorny caltrop" as well as the "Major court hymns" in general embody the purposes and aesthetics of the mid- and late Western Zhou royal sacrifices and banquets—even while possibly postdating the fall of the Western Zhou. Unlike the prose accounts of the ritual classics, they preserve the deep structure of the earlier ritual performances as the structure of text. The same, I will argue, is true for the speeches that the *Book of documents* attributes to the early Zhou rulers.

The royal speeches

If recent studies are any guide,[111] the scholarly consensus on the Zhou royal speeches included in the *Book of documents* may be about to change. Much of traditional scholarship has been concerned with the early history of the *Documents* as a book, exploring the situation of the text in Han times and the problem of the inauthentic pseudo-Kong Anguo 孔安國 "ancient-character" (*guwen* 古文) version.[112] In addition, a number of chapters have been dated to Warring States, Qin, and even Han times, and there is universal agreement that the speeches attributed to pre-Zhou rulers are post-Western Zhou fabrications. The one part of the text whose purported early date seems to have survived more or less unassailed are the 12 speeches attributed to the early Western Zhou rulers: "The great announcement" (Da gao 大誥), "The announcement to Kang" (Kang gao 康誥), "The announcement about alcohol" (Jiu gao

[109] Wade Wheelock, "The problem of ritual language: from information to situation," *The Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 50.1 (1982), p. 56.

[110] Tambiah, *Culture, thought, and social action*, p. 139.

[111] See note 6 above.

[112] See Michael Nylan, *The five "Confucian" classics* (New Haven, 2001), ch. 3; Nylan, "The *ku wen* documents in Han times," *T'oung Pao* 81 (1995), 25–50; Shaughnessy, "*Shang shu* 尙書 (*Shu ching* 書經)."

酒誥), "The timber of the Zi tree" (Zi cai 梓材), "The announcement of Shao" (Shao gao 召誥), "The announcement about Luo" (Luo gao 洛誥), "The numerous officers" (Duo shi 多士), "Against luxurious ease" (Wu yi 無逸), "Prince Shi" (Jun Shi 君奭), "The numerous regions" (Duo fang 多方), "The establishment of government" (Li zheng 立政) and "The testamentary charge" (Gu ming 顧命).

The claim that the speeches come from the time of their purported speakers is supported by nothing but the pious claim of tradition. In addition to and independent from linguistic challenges that have been mounted recently,[113] I will argue below that the speeches fit with the "Major court hymns" and the mid- to late Western Zhou historical context of commemorative culture as it can be reconstructed from bronze ritual paraphernalia and their inscriptions.[114] Moreover, this conclusion is in line with other parts of the *Documents* as well as with early Chinese historiography in general. As Creel has pointed out, the "Exhortation at Mu," purportedly spoken by King Wu to his troops before their conclusive victory over the Shang, has long been recognized as a post-Western Zhou fabrication.[115] Likewise, *all* the *Documents* speeches attributed to pre-Zhou rulers are without doubt products of Eastern Zhou times, that is, constructed or reconstructed speeches that may contain some historical knowledge but are fundamentally texts through which the Chinese rulers of high antiquity were imagined and became memorable. Thereafter, as David Schaberg has shown especially for the *Zuo commentary*, imagined speech was a primary rhetorical device in Eastern Zhou historiography,[116] and so was imagined song in historical writings from Eastern Zhou through Han times.[117]

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[113] Vogelsang, "Inscriptions and proclamations: on the authenticity of the 'gao' chapters in the *Book of documents*," with further references to other studies. As Vogelsang acknowledges, there is no question that his detailed account of words and phrases in the speeches is bound to contain individual mistakes; moreover, his study proceeds from the questionable premise that the present versions of the speeches—which he then compares to Western Zhou bronze inscriptions—represent more or less accurately their original form, an assumption that few scholars would share. Yet even if only a sizable minority of his specific observations were acceptable (which, to my mind, they are), the evidence against an early Western Zhou date for the speeches would still be impressive.

[114] It is not clear whether or not Vogelsang wants to date the speeches firmly into the Spring and Autumn period; in my own opinion, a late Western Zhou date remains possible.

[115] Creel, *The origins of statecraft in China*, pp. 455–56.

[116] Schaberg, *A patterned past*.

[117] David Schaberg, "Song and the historical imagination in early China," *Harvard*

At stake with all these utterances was not Ranke's "wie es eigentlich gewesen ist" ("how it really was") but—far more important—how the course of history was driven by moral force, who the moral agents of history were, and what kinds of utterances might have plausibly expressed the intentions of these cultural and political heroes at critical moments of political history and personal experience. In this, it was not a general past that was preserved but its selective reconstruction and reorganization as memory; in Jan Assmann's words:

> The past coagulates around symbolic figures to which remembrance attaches itself... For the cultural memory, not the factual but only the remembered history counts. One also could say that in the cultural memory, factual history becomes transformed into remembered history and hence into myth. Myth is a founding story, a story that is told to illuminate a present from its origins... Through remembrance, history turns into myth. By this, it does not become unreal but, on the contrary and only then, reality in the sense of a continual normative and formative force.[118]

In particular, religious celebrations of founding myths, such as the commemoration of the Israelite exodus in the Passover, are often performed in communal feasts. Here, the identity of the commemorating group is affirmed through reference to its shared past, and its collective identity is communicated in a ceremonial setting where remembrance "coagulates into texts, dances, images, and rites."[119]

Placing the origins and performance of the 12 Western Zhou speeches in mid- to late Western Zhou commemorative culture—or possibly even thereafter—befits them both conceptually and historically. Like the "Major court hymns," they commemorate, in however ritualized and seemingly impersonal an idiom, the early Zhou kings and their feats. Far beyond whatever historical information they provide, their first and foremost concern is the representation of their charismatic speakers at historically significant moments. In the speeches, the early rulers are at once generic paradigms of virtue and, as the actual moral agents of history, speak in an intensely personal idiom, rich with exclamations and first-person pronouns; they also are at once individualized as specific kings and generalized as models to emulate. Second, the speeches fit precisely into the historical context of mid- and late Western Zhou

Journal of Asiatic Studies 59 (1999), 305–61; Kern, "The poetry of Han historiography," *Early Medieval China* 10–11.1 (2004), 23–65.

[118] Assmann, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis*, p. 52 (my translation); see also pp. 75–78.

[119] Assmann, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis*, p. 53 (my translation).

times when the practice of the ancestral sacrifice was expanded into a much broader culture of commemoration that increasingly fused religious service with political purpose. This is the time of the grand commemorative banquet hymns as well as of court rituals that were no longer addressed to a small group of clan members but to a much broader political elite; when the appointment ceremony was one of the central activities in the ancestral temple, extending the king's "Mandate of Heaven" to those whom he commanded to take up administrative positions; when new and significantly larger types of bronze vessels and bells served not merely commemorative rituals—sacrifices and banquets—but at the same time also the conspicuous display of inscribed text; and when the early kings, now transformed into cultural and political icons, appear with increased frequency in such inscriptions. Furthermore, as noted above, to understand the early speeches as the products of commemorative culture places them not outside but in the mainstream of early Chinese historiographic practice—a practice fully visible even within the *Book of documents* itself, that is, both for King Wu and the extended line of pre-Zhou rulers altogether. In short, linguistic evidence, historical context and conceptual considerations on the nature and practice of cultural memory all converge in the argument for, at the earliest, a mid- or late Western Zhou date for the 12 speeches, and for their genuine place in the sacrifices and banquets of royal commemoration and political identity.[120] While it is impossible to state exactly how the speeches were performed in these contexts, their solemn rhythm and highly stylized diction easily lent themselves to formal declamation.

While the literary structure of the early royal speeches is not nearly as unified as that of the sacrificial hymns, it is far from ordinary language. The 12 speeches do not use rhyme but show a preference for rhythmic patterns, repetitions of various kinds, frequent exclamations like "Alas!" 嗚呼 at the beginning of a paragraph, catalogues (as in lists of dignitaries and functionaries) and the regular use of fixed formulae such as "I, the small child" 予小子 that are also familiar from bronze inscriptions. In Confucius' times, the *Documents* were considered to be linguistically—and in prestige—on a par with the *Songs*, as both related

[120] While one might, of course, allow that the speeches were composed only in Eastern Zhou times—after all, the commemoration of the Zhou origins did not end with the Western Zhou—it is not necessary to insist on such a later date. Thus, I consider the mid- to late Western Zhou date for the speeches a terminus post quem.

to the high idiom of ritual expression: in Analects (7/18), Confucius is quoted as saying that for (the recitation of) the *Songs*, the *Documents*, and matters of ritual, he used *yayan* 雅言 ("elegant standard speech"—as opposed to colloquial speech). The overall diction of the early speeches is one of ceremonial gravity and solemnity, as may be illustrated with the latter half of the "Many officers" (Duo shi 多士). Here, the Duke of Zhou is said to address the officers remaining from the overthrown Shang (Yin) dynasty. Following the Duke's outline of the failures of the previous dynasty, he urges the officers to now serve the Zhou. Three words are densely repeated throughout the passage: the emphatic particle *wei* 惟 ("only"; "it is this"), here translated as "indeed";[121] the first-person pronouns *yu* 予, *wo* 我 and *zhen* 朕, and the second-person pronoun *er* 爾. As no pronoun (or explicit subject) is required in classical Chinese, their heavy use—a feature typical of liturgical speech[122]—is a conscious stylistic choice that adds rhythm, intensity and a rhetorical emphasis on personality to the speech. In the following arrangement, I am parsing the text according to its rhythmic divisions and marking in bold the explicit pronouns as well as the particle *wei* 惟 here translated as "indeed."

> The king said: Ah!
> I declare to **you**, the many officers:
> **I, indeed** for these [afore-mentioned] reasons, have transferred and settled you in the west;
> It is not that **I, the One Man**, in holding up my virtuous power, make you restless.
> This **indeed** is the mandate from Heaven—do not go against it!
> **I** do not dare to be tardy—do not resent me!
> **Indeed** it is **you** who know
> That **indeed** it was the forefathers of Yin
> Who had documents, who had statutes
> To show how Yin superseded the mandate of Xia.
> Today, **you** further say:
> "The [officers of] Xia were promoted and chosen at the [Shang] royal court,
> Had duties among the hundred officials."

[121] I am aware that this is not the standard translation, but I consider it important also to maintain the basic identity of the word in English. While the two syntactic functions are used in free alternation, the particle often seems used primarily for emphasis and rhythmic purposes.

[122] See Wheelock, "The problem of ritual language," p. 50: "One of the first things that strikes one about liturgical utterances is the heavy usage of pronouns, adverbs, ellipses and the like that make reference to the immediate environment of the speaker and depend upon that context for their meaning."

I, the One Man,
Indeed only heed and employ those of virtuous power.
Therefore,
I dare to seek **you** out
In the Heavenly city of Shang.
I, indeed, will [now] generally pardon and pity you.
It is not that **I** am at fault;
this is **indeed** the Mandate of Heaven!
The king said: Many officers!
Formerly, when **I** came from Yan
I greatly sent down commands to the folk of **your** four states;
Yet also, **I** brightly applied the punishments of Heaven.
I moved **you** [here,] far and distant [from the city of Shang].
Comply with your affairs and serve **our** honored [capital]—
Be greatly obedient!
The king said:
I declare to **you**, the many officers of Yin:
Now, that **I, indeed**, have not killed **you**;
I, indeed, will give this command once again.
Now **I** make a great city in this place of Luo.
I, indeed, across the four quarters have none whom I reject.
And **indeed it is you**, the many officers,
Who should rush to submit and hasten to serve **us**—
Be greatly obedient!
You, then, may have **your** land!
You, then, may be tranquil in your duties and dwellings.
If **you** can be reverential,
Heaven, indeed, will favor and pity **you**.
If **you** cannot be reverential,
You not only will not have **your** land—
I also will apply the punishments of Heaven
To **you** as persons.
Now **you indeed** shall dwell in **your** city,
perpetuate **your** residence.
You, then, will have duties, will have years in this place of Luo.
Your small children will then prosper,
Following **your** being moved [here].[123]

There is no question about an overall rhythmic structure built around the use of personal pronouns, repetition and short cadences of three, four or five words that resonate with the generally tetrasyllabic meter of the *Songs*.[124] The rhythmic, repetitious diction, however, is not

[123] Compare James Legge, *The Chinese Classics,* Vol III*: The Shoo King* (Taibei, 1985), pp. 458–63; Bernhard Karlgren, *The Book of documents* (Stockholm, 1950), pp. 55–56.
[124] In the received text of the *Songs*, more than 90 percent of all lines are tetrasyllabic;

restricted to meter. In several lines, we find the "AXAY" structure discussed above; the relentless use of pronouns is more intense than in any of the hymns (or, for that matter, in bronze inscriptions); and even within this short passage, a number of expressions and entire lines are repeated. While not showing a coherent use of rhyme,[125] a text like the one above, revealing the principal features of ritual speech, comes to life only as a performance text. In its extremely formalized diction, and in particular through its emphasis on the first-person pronoun, it exudes the royal charisma of the king as persona, political institution and ancestral model. Such charisma fits with the ideological needs of the mid- and late Western Zhou period, yet it would also have its place at any time over the following centuries.

Bronze vessels and their inscriptions

The thousands of inscribed and uninscribed bronze ritual vessels that have been retrieved from tombs and storage pits were the most valuable and conspicuous artifacts of the Western Zhou ancestral sacrifice. Bronze vessels had been produced for several centuries before the Western Zhou, and the practice of casting them with inscriptions emerged in the late Shang dynasty around 1250 BC. These vessels of various shapes and sizes contained the offerings to royal and aristocratic ancestors and appear to have been produced for this purpose. In their elaborate design, sophisticated technological demands and unrivalled material expenditure, they appear fundamentally distinct from everyday objects for mundane use. As is evident even from the very short inscriptions, they were produced for the purpose of the ancestral sacrifice.

The vast majority of inscriptions from the late Shang and early

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see Gao Huaping, "Guyue de chenfu yu shiti de bianqian," *Zhongguo shehui kexue* 1991.5, 201–12, who relates this meter to the musical performances of the songs; George A. Kennedy, "Metrical 'irregularity' in the *Shih Ching*," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 4 (1939), 284–96. As Kennedy points out, not all lines of five or more syllables necessarily deviate from the basic four-beat pattern, as they often contain unstressed syllables that may not be musically relevant. On the other hand, several lines that are tetrasyllabic in the received *Songs* are only trisyllabic in recently excavated manuscripts; see Kern, "The Odes in excavated manuscripts."

[125] So far, the scholarly tradition has almost entirely focused on the reconstruction of end-rhymes in Zhou texts. As a result, we may well be overestimating the importance of end-rhyme among many other euphonic devices such as meter, prosody and various sound patterns within a single line or across a sequence of lines.

Western Zhou periods contained only between one and ten characters.[126] As a rule, these texts mentioned the patron of the artifact (often merely a clan sign) and possibly its sacrifical purpose. Longer inscriptions only gradually emerged in early Western Zhou times and became increasingly frequent over the middle and later periods of the dynasty.[127] At the same time, their placement in the bronze vessels changed over time: initially hidden deep inside the vessel and hence not visible for the human eye or at least very hard to discern, the inscriptions became not only longer over time but also more prominently placed.[128] Only in the latter part of the mid-Western Zhou period did broad-surfaced vessel shapes such as *gui* 簋 and *xu* 盨 tureens or shallow tripods emerge that lent themselves to the conspicuous display of long texts.[129] Likewise, sets of large *yongzhong* 甬鐘 bells that prominently display their inscriptions on their outside became common only from the 9th century BC onward.[130] Unlike the earlier characters hidden in the depth of narrow flasks and vases for alcoholic offerings, these texts were meant to be seen; they explicitly show the vessels and bells not merely as ritual objects to feast and delight the ancestors but also as representations of memory, cast in the most durable material available.

First discovered by Jessica Rawson and later significantly elaborated upon by Lothar von Falkenhausen, the 9th century BC saw the implementation of far-reaching ritual and administrative reforms.[131]

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[126] Feng Yicheng 風儀誠 (Olivier Venture), "Shang Zhou qingtongqi mingwen weizhi yanbian chutan," forthcoming.

[127] Ibid.

[128] Ibid.; Venture, "Visibilité et lisibilité dans les inscriptions sur bronze de la Chine archaïque (1250–771 av. notre ère)," in *Du visible au lisible: texte et image en Chine et au Japon*, eds Anne Kerlan-Stephens and Cécile Sakai (Arles, 2006), pp. 67–81.

[129] Li Feng, personal communication.

[130] While bells are known already from late third millennium BC and musical chime-bells were already used during the late Shang period, the *yongzhong* musical bells—originally not part of the northern (including royal) ritual culture—were adopted from the south; see Lothar von Falkenhausen, *Suspended music*, pp. 158–62; for the placement of text on *yongzhong* bells, see also Feng Yicheng, "Shang Zhou qingtongqi mingwen weizhi yanbian chutan."

[131] Rawson, "Statesmen or barbarians: the Western Zhou as seen through their bronzes," *Proceedings of the British Academy* 75 (1989), 87–93; *Western Zhou ritual bronzes from the Arthur M. Sackler collections*, vol. 2, pp. 93–111, *passim*; "Western Zhou archaeology," in *The Cambridge history of ancient China*, pp. 433–48; Falkenhausen, "Late Western Zhou taste"; Luo Tai 羅泰 (Lothar von Falkenhausen), "Youguan Xi Zhou wanqi lizhi gaige ji Zhuangbai Wei shi qingtongqi niandai de xin jiashe: cong shixi mingwen shuoqi," in *Zhongguo kaoguxue yu lishixue zhi zhenghe yanjiu*, ed. Tsang Cheng-hwa (Taibei, 1997), pp. 651–76; *Chinese society in the age of Confucius (1000–250 BC): the archaeological evidence* (Los Angeles, 2006), chap. 2.

With respect to the ancestral sacrifices and their bronze paraphernalia, a number of important changes can be observed: most vessels for alcoholic beverages were abandoned, with only large flasks remaining; instead, food vessels grew larger in both form and numbers, becoming arranged in extended sets that signified the increased importance of sumptuary rules; when sets of vessels and bells were inscribed, they all carried identical inscriptions; bronze bells were now introduced to the ensemble of ritual artifacts, adding the element of music to the ceremonies; minute detail in ornament was replaced by larger patterns that often included bold, even coarse, wave bands; and the calligraphy of bronze inscriptions became increasingly regular and symmetrically arranged. Altogether, an overall uniformity of design was imposed across the entire range of bronze ritual paraphernalia, and their increased size, larger ornament and arrangement in sets suggest a shift from a more private ritual of the ancestral sacrifice to one with larger numbers of participants perhaps standing at some distance.

In bronze vessel ornament, the zoomorphic *taotie* 饕餮 designs of late Shang and early Western Zhou bronze vessels gave way to abstract geometrical and highly standardized patterns that suggest significant and lasting changes not only in the production of bronze artifacts but quite likely also in religious attitudes,[132] including a departure from what might have been shamanistic practices among the late Shang and early Western Zhou elites.[133] As argued by Falkenhausen, this development

> intimates a fundamental religious shift in the sphere of the ancestral cult: away from 'dionysian' rituals centered upon dynamic, even frenzied movement, to a new kind of far more formalized ceremonies of 'apollonian' character, in which it was the paraphernalia themselves, and their orderly display, that commanded the principal attention of the participants.[134]

The change in bronze vessel ornament did not end with the abandoning of zoomorphic design. Appearing now in large numbers, the mid- and

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[132] For a debate on how bronze ornament may signify specific meanings, see the discussions in *The problem of meaning in early Chinese ritual bronzes*, ed. Roderick Whitfield (London, 1993), especially those by Jessica Rawson, "Late Shang bronze design: meaning and purpose," pp. 67–95, Robert W. Bagley, "Meaning and explanation," pp. 34–55, and Sarah Allan, "Epiloque," pp. 161–76.

[133] The classical statement on this possible meaning of the *taotie* is given in K.C. Chang, "The animal in Shang and Chou bronze art," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 41 (1981), 527–54, and Chang, *Art, myth, and ritual: the path to political authority in ancient China* (Cambridge, 1983), pp. 44–81.

[134] See also Falkenhausen, *Chinese society in the age of Confucius*, p. 48.

late Western Zhou vessels and bells displayed in their design a sense of standardization, repetition and restriction that matched far more closely the fundamental ideology of the ancestral sacrifice than the earlier artifacts. As Rawson notes,

> while early Western Zhou bronzes seem to have varied from decade to decade and those of middle Western Zhou at least by quality of surface design, the late Western Zhou period bronzes are rigidly uniform. There seems to have been little variety either from owner to owner or from place to place over the hundred years of their use. A strong centralized control of ritual seems to have been in place... In the same way, inscriptions seem unvarying, as though a single model for the range of expression, for the contents, and for the shapes of the characters was in force... these characters seem closely dependent on early written forms and thus suggest an element of deliberate archaism. Other suggestions of archaism are seen in some vessel shapes... It would appear that this interest in the past was twofold, first in the reproduction of ancient shapes of vessel and character type, and second in the collection of older bronzes... Where the vessels [found in hoards] are late and fall into the sets just mentioned, the inscriptions are beautifully written but stereotyped in content."[135]

Already in the 10th century BC, abstract, continuous patterns in multiplied relief bands gradually replaced defined individual motifs, and wave patterns "overrode the divisions between the mould sections and achieved a continuous rhythmical design."[136] After the ritual reform, when these patterns had developed into complex interlace,[137] change in bronze design was virtually halted for a full century. A "static repertoire" came into being, "limited and reiterated" and of "persistent sameness."[138] The rhythmic repetition that governed the continuous design of each individual vessel was again repeated across all such vessels.

From the perspective of the present discussion, three aspects of bronze design stand out in this description: first, compared to the often "eccentric" or "flamboyant"[139] bronzes of the early Western Zhou, a rigid restraint of expression was in place; second, these controlled patterns were in themselves emblems of the very rhythmic continuity that characterized the sum total of the ancestral sacrifice both within

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[135] Rawson, "Western Zhou archaeology," pp. 438–39.
[136] Rawson, *Western Zhou ritual bronzes from the Arthur M. Sackler collections*, pp. 86, 90.
[137] Ibid., pp. 113–23.
[138] Ibid., p. 125.
[139] Rawson's terminology; see her "Statesmen or barbarians," p. 70, *passim*, and *Western Zhou ritual bronzes*, p. 35, *passim*.

a single performance and as a tradition; and third, the new restricted and thus also continuously reiterated style was explicitly evocative of the more remote past.[140] The archaism of late Western Zhou times is striking not only because of its own nature but also because it indicates that "Late Western Zhou aristocrats had access to earlier bronzes handed down from Early and Middle Western Zhou and kept in their ancestral temples," and perhaps also that workshops preserved earlier models.[141] The evidence from both tombs and hoards shows that late Western Zhou owners of bronze vessels indeed kept their older, inherited vessels alongside their own new ones. The archaizing nature of the more recent vessels must have struck the onlookers as a reference to the past, reminding them of their ancestors' accomplishments and "the heroic times of the dynasty's founding";[142] furthermore, "archaistic referentiality in the typology and ornamentation of ritual bronzes would have been but a minor manifestation of a consummately history-conscious ritual ideology."[143] Thus, late Western Zhou ritual ideology of memory implied both the commemoration of the dynastic founding together with the self-representation of commemoration, expressed in strictly controlled fashion.

To this end, the form and design of the bronze vessels signified, first and foremost, their very nature as precious ritual objects together with the status of the person in whose name they were cast. As the appointment ceremony inscriptions show, the inscription was the final result of an elaborate, multi-step ceremony in which a high dignitary reported to the Zhou king, then received the royal command in a ceremony held in the courtyard of the royal ancestral temple, and finally was granted the right to have a vessel—inscribed or not—cast, most likely in the royal workshop. Having received the vessel, he was entitled to use it in his own ancestral sacrifices. If inscribed, the vessel text could be as short as noting its patron and his dedication ("I have made this vessel"); next, it could include a prayer for blessings to express the ritual use of the artifact. Further extended, it could provide an account of the patron's merits that was probably based either on his report to the king or on

[140] On late Western Zhou archaism, see also Falkenhausen, "Late Western Zhou taste," pp. 168–74.
[141] Ibid., p. 169.
[142] Ibid.
[143] Ibid., p. 173.

the king's appointment in response.[144] As such, a bronze inscription would even provide an account of the appointment ceremony itself, as in the Feng(?)-*ding* inscription quoted above. The most complete versions of the ceremony (or perhaps a series of ceremonies) can be found in the magnificent inscriptions of 373 characters on the Qiu-*pan* 逑盤 water basin that is further related to other lengthy inscriptions, including those on two separate series of Qiu-*ding* 逑鼎 tripods from 786 and 785 BC, that were all found in 2003 in Yangjiacun 楊家村 (Mei xian 眉縣, Shaanxi).[145]

The religious nature of the vast majority of bronze inscriptions—some late Western Zhou examples suggest that vessels were cast for use not at the sacrifice but at the banquet—rested not in the solemn ceremonies at the royal court but in the ancestral rituals in which the inscribed vessels were then used by their patrons. Here, the text of inscription spoke both to the ancestral spirits and to the assembled family and dignitaries, reporting not only on the patron's merits but also on their recognition by the Zhou king. To serve this purpose vis-à-vis the spirits, the vessel text included the self-referential statements of dedication and prayer, through which the patron identified himself and at the same time acknowledged his ancestors whose own virtuous deeds were now successfully continued, and who in return were asked to send down their blessings. Therefore, the inscriptions routinely referred to their bronze carriers as "precious" (*bao* 寶) or "revered" 尊 and exhorted future generations to "forever treasure and use" 永寶用 the vessel in their sacrifices to the current patron and future ancestor.[146] Thus, the

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[144] This tripartite structure has been reconstructed by Falkenhausen, "Issues in Western Zhou studies," pp. 152–56. More recently, Falkenhausen has expanded and modified his scheme to argue that the statement of dedication reflects a separate ceremony; see his "The oral subtexts of the Zhou bronze inscriptions," paper presented at the conference "Religion, poetry, and memory in ancient and early medieval China," Princeton University, May 2004.

[145] Falkenhausen, "The oral subtexts of the Zhou Bronze inscriptions"; "The inscribed bronzes from Yangjiacun: new evidence on social structure and historical consciousness in late Western Zhou China (c. 800 BC)," *Proceedings of the British Academy* 139 (1006), 239–95; and Luo Tai 羅泰 [Lothar von Falkenhausen], "Xi Zhou tongqi mingwen de xingzhi," in *Kaoguxue yanjiu* 6 (Beijing, 2006), 343–74.

[146] For an extensive discussion of the prayer section, see Xu Zhongshu, "Jinwen guci shili." Hayashi Minao, "Concerning the inscription 'May sons and grandsons eternally use this [vessel],'" *Artibus Asiae* 53.1–2 (1993), 51–58, has suggested that the final formula referred to the use of the sacrificial vessels even in the afterlife, that is, in the tombs where they were buried.

inscriptions created idealized (and highly selective) accounts of the past while also, perhaps even more importantly, projecting a prospective future memory of the present. Especially in the late Western Zhou period—that is, when the dynasty was gradually declining in stability—the aristocratic inscriptions seem to reflect an intense desire for continuity and tradition.

The bronze inscriptions of mid- and late Western Zhou times show conscious efforts toward poetic form. Especially in the wake of the ritual reforms, a greater number of inscriptions were guided by the same principles of rhyme and meter familiar from the *Songs*. The great majority of Western Zhou inscriptions include just a few graphs, but the two longest known bronze texts so far come close to 500 characters, and others contain from several dozen to 200–300 characters. All these more extensive texts fall into the range of length of the transmitted hymns. While rhyme and tetrasyllabic meter occur already among the earliest Western Zhou inscriptions,[147] these features become increasingly regular from the periods of kings Gong and Yi onward,[148] as do the calligraphy and overall visual layout (linear arrangement, spacing between graphs, etc.) of the inscriptions.[149] The linguistic regularity never reaches that of the "Major court hymns," but the overall tendency toward an increased aesthetic control and more rigidly standardized, and hence narrowed, expression is unquestionable. Furthermore, the inscriptions seem to prefer largely the same rhyme categories that also dominate the ritual pieces of the *Songs*.[150] In my opinion, it is not inconceivable that the euphonic features of these inscriptions were brought to life through recitation.[151]

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[147] E.g., in the Tianwang-*gui* 天亡簋 [JWYD 5012]. See Wolfgang Behr, "Reimende Bronzeinschriften und die Entstehung der chinesischen Endreimdichtung" (PhD diss., J.W. Goethe Universität, Frankfurt, 1996), pp. 140–44, 532–55; also pp. 86–87 and 678–79 for Behr's general conclusions.

[148] Behr, "Reimende Bronzeinschriften," pp. 422–23.

[149] Shaughnessy, *Sources of Western Zhou history*, pp. 121–26. As Rawson, *Western Zhou ritual bronzes from the Arthur M. Sackler collections*, p. 93, has noted for the late Western Zhou, "so regular is some of the calligraphy of this time that it suggests a reform of the script used for bronze inscriptions. Although such inscriptions appear precise and circumstantial, they in fact repeat common formulae, altered slightly to fit each occasion."

[150] Behr, "Reimende Bronzeinschriften," pp. 467–70.

[151] In a more detailed analysis, I have suggested this primarily oral nature was true even for significantly later bronze inscriptions from the early 7th and late 7th/early 6th centuries BC; see Kern, *The stele inscriptions of Ch'in Shih-huang*, pp. 59–105. Moreover,

On the whole, rhyme and meter developed over time in the earliest poetry of hymns and inscriptions. This development toward increased regularity appeared along with the consolidation of the royal institution of the ancestral sacrifice during the mid- and late Western Zhou. Earlier, less constrained aesthetic forms were replaced by a more formulaic mode of expression that reflected the gradually solidifying aesthetics of royal and aristocratic performances. Like the hymns during the last century of the Western Zhou, inscriptions were more regularly rhymed, more strict in their tetrasyllabic meter, more uniform in their calligraphy and visual arrangement, and more formulaic and intertextual in their wording; they also became increasingly generic.[152]

To illustrate the regular style of mid- to late Western Zhou bronze inscriptions, two examples may suffice here. The first, shorter one, is that on the Feng bo Ju fu-*gui* 豐伯車父簋 tureen of an unspecified date. It does not include an extended narrative but is concentrated on the self-referential statement of dedication (comprising just the first line) and its extended prayer (all remaining lines). The text is completely tetrasyllabic; I indicate the rhymes in square brackets:

> [I,] the Oldest of Feng, Father Ju, have made a revered *gui* tureen. [A]
> Use it to pray for extended longevity, [A]
> Myriad years without limit! [B]
> May sons and grandsons give it continuity, [B]
> May sons and grandsons treasure it, [A]
> Using it to sacrifice, using it to make offerings! [B][153]

The second, longer, example is that of a bell, the Xing ren Ning-*zhong* 邢人佞鐘, dating from the mid-9th century BC. The speaker, Ning, refers to himself not by a pronoun but by his name. Again, the text is largely tetrasyllabic and rhymes with some regularity:

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even the early imperial stele inscriptions of the First Emperor, dating between 219 and 210 BC, were first composed and recited and only then carved in stone. The oral performance of inscribed texts is not unusual elsewhere; for the ancient Greek example, see Rosalind Thomas, *Literacy and orality in ancient Greece* (Cambridge, 1995), p. 62.

[152] As Falkenhausen, "Late Western Zhou taste," pp. 174–75, notes for the late Western Zhou period: "As bronze decoration became more abstract, the contents of these inscriptions became more formulaic, and their literary structure became more regular…The ritual language of the inscriptions assumed an increasingly poetic character, with increasing prominence accorded to the rhymed prayers (*guci*) at the end of the documents…The specific, literal significance of the words mattered less and less."

[153] JWYD 4913. My translation differs slightly from Behr's, *Reimende Bronzeinschriften*, pp. 253–54.

Ning from Xing says:
[My] illustrious and gentle cultured ancestors and august late father [A]
Were able to give substance to their virtuous power. [A]
They obtained purity and used generosity,
Forever ending in auspiciousness. [B]
Ning does not dare to disobey them. [B]
Using his cultured ancestors and august late father [as his model], [A]
He respectfully, respectfully holds on to their virtuous power. [A]
Ning is elated, elated about their sagely brightness, [C]
Approaches their place in the ancestral hall. [B]
Thus, Ning has made for father He a grand *linzhong*[-bell]; [C]
Use it to sacrifice in commemoration, [A]
To delight the former cultured men. [D]
The former cultured men [D]
May solemnly reside above! [C]
Pang-bo, pang-bo—[154]
They bestow on me rich rewards, [A]
Manifold blessings without limit! [C]
May Ning have a myriad years! [D]
May sons of sons, grandsons of grandsons [D]
Forever treasure and use [this bell] to make offerings! [C][155]

The two inscriptions betray the regularity of a mature, codified expression. In their contents, they explicitly relate to past, present and future in a gesture that is as commemorative as it is prospective, fulfilling the obligation of worship to the ancestors while imposing it in turn on the descendants. Their choice of expression indicates the same strong sense of continuity and normativity. In both texts, the basic metrical unit is the tetrasyllabic line; rhyme is used throughout (though in less regular fashion than in the received *Songs*); the bell inscription contains a series of reduplicatives; and there is barely a line that does not have verbatim or near-verbatim counterparts in a host of other inscriptions. When this formulaic expression developed on a broader scale beginning in mid-Western Zhou times, it was matched by a parallel development toward standardization in the visual aesthetics of the ancestral sacrifice.

[154] A tetrasyllabic onomatopoeic expression representing the sound of the bell.
[155] JWYD 0083, 0078. Compare also Behr, *Reimende Bronzeinschriften*, pp. 259–63.

Conclusion: message and aesthetics in the Western Zhou ancestral sacrifice

The elaborate aesthetics of the Western Zhou ancestral sacrifice served at once the communication with the spirits of former generations and the representation of the past as foundational for the present. While inscriptions, where they drew on historical knowledge, were supported by archival records on perishable materials, they were not identical with these in either contents or purpose. The material expense and intricate design of their bronze carriers were functions of conspicuous display that marked a fundamental difference from mere administrative or historical documents. As the sacrificial food and wine vessels were distinguished from their everyday counterparts by means of elaborate form and ornament,[156] the sacrificial hymns differed from ordinary speech by their specific aesthetic structure.

Altogether, the hymns, speeches and inscriptions, together with the décor of the bronze vessels and all the other (now lost) visual, auditory and olfactory impressions, constituted the aesthetics of memory that governed the ritual performance and religious expression of the Western Zhou ancestral sacrifice. The different linguistic and material media were distinguished by their inherent possibilities and boundaries of expression. Yet at the same time, they operated in mutual conjunction, contributing to the same performance setting of the ancestral sacrifice. Visual and linguistic expressions were crafted from different materials by different specialists, but within the ancestral sacrifice, they were neither separate nor arbitrary as they served the common idea of worshipping and commemorating the ancestors. Therefore, one may look for traces of this ideology in the aesthetics of each set of artifacts, material or linguistic. One may also expect patterns of aesthetic convergence across the different kinds of artifacts, producing the message of the ancestral sacrifice as a multi-media performance where the various elements enhanced and intensified one another.

In the ancestral sacrifice, the past was commemorated and mimetically represented, and sacrificial hymns were performed that duplicated the ritual procedure by synchronically describing it. The sacrifices contained the hymns which in turn embodied the sacrifices, each being a replica

[156] Rawson, "Late Shang Bronze design," p. 92; Bagley, "Meaning and explanation," pp. 44–45.

of the other; their fusion created the arena to perpetuate, actualize and reinforce pre-existing normative patterns of speech and action. The ephemeral nature of performance became eternalized in the continuous existence of a repertoire of texts that finally transcended any particular occasion. Both hymns and inscriptions commemorated the ancestors as much as their own sacrificial ritual to serve them. Raising and answering a question like "Truly—our sacrifices are like what?" ("Thorny caltrop"), the hymnic text was the voice through which the ritual performance interpreted itself. Hymns and inscriptions contained, however abbreviated, what must not fall into oblivion: the order of culture, as embodied in the order of the sacrifice.

The Western Zhou ancestral sacrifice, therefore, was both a ritual and the model of this ritual; its increasingly uniform texts were simultaneously descriptive and prescriptive. The very phenomenon of standardization was a figure of memory: the standard to follow was always the standard from the past, preserved in continuous performances as well as in the collecting and preserving of earlier texts and artifacts. Just as bronze vessels and bells—especially those bearing inscriptions—were maintained in the ancestral temple, the hymns and royal speeches developed from individual pieces into a continuously available repertoire.

In the formal structure of the ancestral sacrifice, the textual order of songs, prayers, speeches and inscriptions was accompanied by the order of other phenomena now lost: dance, music and the sacrificial offerings that, according to all early accounts, including those of the ritual hymns themselves, were thoroughly choreographed. It is in this context that we need to imagine the appearance and function of bronze ornament. While we cannot date the "Major court hymns" with any certainty, their aesthetic features seem parallel to late Western Zhou ritual bronzes: in the hymns, the standardization of meter and stanzaic structures define the form and boundaries of all hymns in a unified fashion; within these boundaries, one notices the repetition of formulaic expression, continuous syntactic structures (binomes, the "AXAY" pattern, the repetition of specific formulae) and the dense fabric of onomatopoeic binomes and other euphonic features. In late Western Zhou bronze ornament, a strict aesthetic regime governed a limited number of sharply defined vessel shapes, continuous abstract designs of band and wave patterns, and the use of complex interlace.

The "Major court hymns" and also the royal speeches provided an idealized and highly abbreviated account of the origin of the Zhou and

the forceful personal agency of its founders. They were explicit in their ideology of commemoration, and they expressed this message not only in their contents but, on a perhaps even more fundamental level, through their aesthetic structures. As texts to be performed in the commemorative culture of sacrifices and banquets, they recalled and eulogized the feats of the ancestors and created the tightly restricted aesthetic patterns through which such praise and commemoration was to be perpetuated. The continuous repetition of the same, skillfully varied within narrowly defined boundaries of expression, is what characterizes the various textual voices in the wake of the ritual reform. In addition, like the literary patterning of the "Court hymns," the strictly conventionalized shapes and ornamentation of the bronze artifacts were both a reflection and an authoritative force of centralized, dogmatic control. Like the texts, the artifacts and their ornament were vehicles not of new information but of old, and shared, knowledge, "collective messages to ourselves."[157] But which messages were these? While their propositional value might be more easily extracted from the hymns and inscriptions, the ornamental patterns on the vessels and bells remind us more clearly of a crucial distinction. No uninscribed bronze artifact carried any specific historical information, but all of them conveyed the same sense of cultural and religious memory. Inscribed or not, a bronze vessel always pointed to itself as a ritual artifact, and it pointed beyond itself toward the lineage of bronze vessels—and with them to the ancestral lineage of their owners—to which it belonged. For the full last century of the Western Zhou, bronze ornament may be described as a single, continuous pattern flowing from vessel to vessel both diachronically and synchronically. The result was, more than anything else, a monument of memory that in rhythmic repetition called attention to the stability of its own tradition, rhetorically symbolized in the durability of bronze.

On their surface, the inscriptions, hymns and speeches that belonged to the same context of the ancestral sacrifice appear as historical accounts. However, while the ancestral sacrifice was defined by its reflection upon the past, it was utterly unconcerned with the vast array of historical detail undoubtedly available on perishable material. But this is not what the highly selective, highly idealizing memory presented

[157] According to Edmund R. Leach, *Culture and communication* (Cambridge, 1976), p. 45, "we engage in rituals in order to transmit collective messages to ourselves."

and perpetuated in the religious institution of the ancestral sacrifice was about. The issue at stake was not the past itself but the aesthetically patterned representation of its continuity in the present and future, and the communication addressed to both the ancestral spirits and one's future descendants. This memory remained alive as long as it was perpetuated in the ever renewed performance of the ancestral sacrifice and court banquets—in the words of "She bore the folk":

> Truly—our sacrifices, what are they like?
> Some hull (the grain), some scoop it;
> Some sift it, some tread it.
> Washing it, we hear it swish, swish;
> Distilling it, we see it steam, steam.
> Now we consult, now we consider;
> We take southernwood to sacrifice the fat,
> We take a ram to flay it.
> Now we roast, now we broil;
> To give rise to the following year.
>
> We load the wooden trenchers,
> The wooden trenchers, the earthenware platters.
> As the fragrance begins to rise,
> The Lord on High is tranquil and delighted.
> How good the fragrance is indeed!
> Lord Millet founded the sacrifice—
> Luckily, without fault or offense,
> It has reached the present day.

RITUALS FOR THE EARTH*

Kominami Ichirô

Rituals of the she

The she *of the clod of earth. The vitality inside the earth*

In ancient China, the rituals concerning Earth may be represented by the *she* 社. *She* designated at once the ritual space, the rank of the divinity worshiped in the ritual and the ritual itself. The character 社 is a combination of the characters for divinity 示 and for earth 土.

The character 社 is found on oracle bones and bronzes, but it is written 土. The left part of the character 示, the so-called "divinity" radical, was added later, around the Warring States period. The character 土 used on the oracle bones and bronze wares is written △ or ⊥, and in the *Dictionary of oracles bone characters*[1] Xu Zhongshu explains its shape: "It is a pictograph representing a clod of earth placed on the ground and refers to land. As *she* it refers to the god of the land." The equivalence between 社 and 土 is probably not because the character represents the earth but because a clod of earth is the direct focus of the ritual done for Earth.

But why revere not Earth itself but a clod of earth placed on it? According to the *Baihu tong* 白虎通 (*Comprehensive discussions of the White Tiger Hall*) of Ban Gu 班固, in the section on the ritual dedicated to the gods of the earth and cereals, *sheji* 社稷, the reason given is as follows:

> The land is vast, and it would be impossible to express reverence to all the land. There are many kinds of cereal, and it would be impossible to sacrifice to them all. That is why earth is formed into a mound to erect a *she* 封土立社, so that Earth can be worshiped (to sacrifice to it is to show veneration). Millet being the foremost of cereals, millet is set up and sacrifices made 立稷而祭之.[2]

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* Translated by Didier Davin.

[1] Xu Zhongshu, *Jiaguwen zidian* (Sichuan, 1988).

[2] *Baihu tong*, "sheji" 社稷; see Chen Li, *Baihu tong shuzheng* (Beijing, 1994).

In the article *sheji* of the *Fengsu tongyi* 風俗通儀 (*Comprehensive meaning of customs*) by Ying Shao 應劭 at the end of the Eastern Han, there is a quotation from the *Xiaojing shuo* 孝經說 (*Explanations of the filial piety classic*) which does not differ from the *Baihu tong*. For the ritual to Earth, a part of this earth is raised and an altar erected on it, and the celebrations were then made facing this mound. This explanation makes the altar of earth central to the establishment of the *she*. But the meaning carried by the clod of earth is not only that, and I will discuss below how a clod of earth was transported and, wrapped in reeds, became the core of a new *she*.

For moderns, the earth may be a cold and lifeless place composed of mineral elements, but the peoples of ancient times did not think that way at all. In the "Zhouyu" 周語 chapter of the *Guoyu* 國語 (*Discourses of the states*), the following words can be read as a declaration of the duke Guo Wen 虢文.

> In ancient times the grand astrologer (*taishi* 太史) observed the earth as it changed with the seasons. When the *yang* energy fills the world, the energy inside the earth thunders forth. When the constellation Auspices of agriculture 農祥 appears in the south in the morning and the sun and the moon enter the constellation of the Celestial temple 天廟, the veins of the earth open up. Nine days before [the first day of spring when the ritual to Great Earth is celebrated], the grand astrologer reports to [the officer of] Millet 稷: "From now to the first day of the second month, the *yang* energy will rise up and the moisture in the earth start to be active. If there is neither activity nor transformation, the veins will be obstructed and the cereals will not grow."
>
> [The officer of] Millet then announced to the king: "The officer of the *yang* 陽官, commanded by the grand astrologer, exhorts me to execute the celebration, saying that nine days hence the earth will be in full activity. Let the king purify himself 祇祓 and preside over the plowing without alteration."
>
> The king then ordered the minister of education (*situ* 司徒) to warn 戒 the nobles, the hundred officers, and the common people, and the minister of works (*sikong* 司空) to prepare the altars of the ceremonial rice field 除壇于籍, and to order the grand officer of agriculture to verify that all tools were ready.
>
> Five days before the ritual, the Blind One 瞽 (the music master) reported that a mild wind (an east wind) was blowing. The king then entered the fasting palace 齋宮, and all the officers in charge of the ritual began three days of fasting. The king purified his body with water and drank rice wine. At the time appointed, the officer of the turmeric 鬱人 presented fragrant wine and the officer of the sacrifice 犧人 sweet wine. The king executed the sprinkling rite with the fragrant wine and, after he had drunk the sweet

> wine, went toward the ritual place, the hundred officers and the common people following him. When they arrived in the ceremonial rice field, [the officer of] Houji 后稷 inspected the ritual place, the cook and the chief of agriculture explained the ritual of the field, the grand astrologer acted on the king's behalf, and the king followed him respectfully. The king, with a plow, dug the soil one time, [each successive] group three times [more than the previous group], and finally the common people plowed the entire field.[3]

This quotation is well known as a description of the rite which was celebrated in the ceremonial fields on the first day of spring. At the beginning of the spring the king of Zhou himself executed a simulation of plowing in order to open up work in the fields for his subjects. The condition for the execution of this agricultural ritual was that the soil be filled with energy. Moreover, if this energy was not exhaled by a proper passage opened by the agricultural ritual, it turned into a calamitous energy, and the cereals would not grow.

This explanation, based on the philosophy of *qi* 氣, may include some conceptual elements not present in the original ritual, but one can see that at the base of it there is the idea that the soil itself is living, and that cereals (and more generally plants) grew by absorbing the vitality of the earth.

To determine how widespread the idea of Earth as a mother goddess was in ancient China, in relation to the vitality of the earth and according to the idea the Great Earth is itself the body of a goddess, is certainly a subject for research to resolve.[4] However, that the idea of the earth as the body of a goddess—or a primitive giant—may have existed can be also deduced from the legend of Pangu 盤古 separating earth and sky, in which everything in the universe comes from the body of Pangu. The 45th chapter of the *Taiping jing* 太平經 (*Scripture of Great Peace*) and the first chapter of the *Bowu zhi* 博物志[5] (*Extensive investigation of things*) both view the surface of the earth as its skin and warn against digging deep into its flesh.

It can also be said that the following episode in the *Zuozhuan* 左傳 (*Zuo commentary*), in the context of the troubles in Jin at the origin of

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[3] *Guoyu*, "Zhouyu shang" (Shanghai, 1939), pp. 5b–7a.

[4] See Ikeda Suetoshi, "Kodai chûgoku no chiboshin ni kansuru ichi kôsatsu," *Chûgoku kodai shûkyôshi kenkyû*, (Tôkyô, 1981).

[5] *Bowu zhi jiaojian, Tôhôgakuhô* 59 (1987), 1–5: "The eminent mountains are the assistants of the earth, of which stones are the bones, rivers the veins, grass and trees the hair, and the earth is the flesh."

the roaming of the duke Wen of Jin Chong'er 晋文公重耳, shows the existence of a consciousness of the earth as a body. In the fourth year of Duke Xi 僖 we read the following account:

> The prince made an offering at Quwo and gave the rest of the ritual meat to the duke. Because at this time the duke was out hunting, his wife left the ritual meat in the palace for six days. When the duke came back, she poisoned the meat and served it. The duke first offered it to the ground, and the earth swelled. He gave it to a dog, and the dog died. He gave it to a servant, and the servant died.[6]

This episode tells how the princess Li, wife of Duke Xian, intrigues to undermine the relations between the duke and his stepson, the future Duke Wen. But in this passage, when the piece of poisoned meat is placed on the earth, the earth's swelling reflects the idea that the earth has a body with the same properties as those of a human being. Like the skin of a person, the earth became swollen. The conception that the earth has its own vitality became the foundation for various rituals linked with the Great Earth.

The she *of the woods: the vitality of vegetation and trees as a receptacle of divinity*

The vitality of Earth fructifies as an abundant harvest of cereals. The fact that the *she* and millet (*ji*) were joined in the same term, and that in some cases the state itself was referred to by the single word *sheji*, reflects the idea that Earth and cereals are closely related. Thus a rich harvest has its source in the vitality of Earth, but the earth did not grow only cereals. All plants grew by virtue of the vitality of the earth. It is certainly because they were indwelt by the vitality of Earth that, in many cases, trees were a part of the ritual installation of the *she*.

In the *Rites of Zhou* 周禮, in the notice on the grand ministry of education (*da situ* 大司徒) in the chapter "officers of earth" (*diguan* 地官), there is the following passage:

> The duty of the grand minister of education is to be in charge of the maps of the land and the census of the population so as to help the king bring peace to the state…He installs the altar of the earth and millet and

[6] Translation based on James Legge, tr., *The Ch'un Ts'ew with the Tso Chuen* (repr. Taiwan, 1971), p. 142.

> plants there the tree as emblem of the field 田主,[7] in accordance with what is appropriate to the region. He then gives the earth god and the region the name of the tree.

The emblem of the field was the receptacle of the field's god and the object of the ceremony dedicated to Great Earth. This tree which becomes the receptacle of the divinity was chosen as the most appropriate variety in relation to the climate of each region. The fact that it was the most luxuriant tree of the region that was made lord of the field means it was the tree which could best express the vitality of the earth and suggests that the belief in a particular tree as holy and the ritual of the *she* is slightly different.

In the chapter on the *sheji* in the *Baihu tong* the explanation of the planting of the tree for the *sheji* ritual is as follows:

> Why is there a tree on the *sheji*? This was to recognize the veneration owed it, so the people view it from afar and the master pay it respect…It is also to illustrate the merit [of the divinity]. That is why it is says in the *Zhouguan* 周官 (*Offices of Zhou*): "In administering the *she* and planting its tree, use the different trees growing in each region." And in the *Shangshu* 尚書 (*Book of documents*) it says: "Plant for the Great *she* 太社 a pine tree, for the *she* of the east 東社 a cypress, for the *she* of the south a birch, for the *she* of the west a chestnut, and for the *she* of the north a locust."

Or, as an older description in the *Analects* puts it:

> Duke Ai asked Tsai Yü 宰我 about the Holy Ground 社. Tsai Yü replied, The Hsia sovereigns marked theirs with a pine, the men of Yin used a cypress, the men of Chou used a chestnut-tree, saying, "This will cause the common people to be in fear and trembling."[8]

Although Confucius is here explaining the historical changes in the ritual systems of the Xia, Yin and Zhou, here, too, the tree planted by the *she* is not fixed.

The tree planted by the *she* is not always singular but is often several trees tied together. There are many examples where the term "copse" 叢林 is used with reference to the tree of the *she*. Moriya Mitsuo attaches importance to the idea the "clump" 叢 form is the very origin of the *she*.[9]

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[7] The word here translated "emblem" (*zhu* 主) is the same word as is used to designate the wooden votive tablet in the context of the ancestral cult (translator's note).

[8] *Lunyu* 3.21, tr. Arthur Waley (1938; repr. New York), p. 99.

[9] Moriya Mitsuo, "Sha no kenkyû," *Shigaku zasshi* 59.7 (1950), pp. 19–52. Regarding the theory linking the ritual of the *she* and the cult of the copses, see Édouard

For example, in the inner chapter "Wenshang" 問上 of the *Yanzi chunqiu* 晏子春秋 (*Annals of Master Yan*) the following dialogue is recorded:

> Duke Jing asked Yanzi: "What should I be cautious about in governing the country?" Yanzi answered: "You have to be cautious about the rats of the *she* 社鼠." Duke Jing asked: "What does that mean?" He answered: "What is called a *she* is trees tied together with earth spread around them 束木而塗之. The rats then take up lodging there. If you try to smoke them out, you risk destroying the trees; if you pour water on it, you risk the mound collapsing. The rats cannot be killed because of the *she*."

This paragraph is the source of the expression, "A rat in the sanctuary, a fox in the castle" 社鼠城狐. The sanctuary refers to the lord, the rat to a fawner, and this means that even if he brings disorder to the country, it is very difficult to dislodge a fawner deeply appreciated by the lord.

I will not treat the allegorical meaning here. What I would like to remark is the shape of the *she*, described as several trees tied together with earth spread around it. The next passage, from the *Mozi* 墨子 in the chapter "Minggui" 明鬼 ("Elucidating spirits"), is noteworthy for its mention of the same shape of the *she*:

> In ancient times, on the day when the rulers of Yu, Xia, Shang, and Zhou, the sage kings 聖王 of the Three Dynasties, first established their states and set up their capitals, they always selected a site for the main altar 正壇 of the state, and constructed an ancestral temple 宗廟 there; and they selected a site where the trees were particularly fine and luxuriant to set up the *zouwei* 菆位.[10]

Here the term *zouwei* clearly means the earth god altar but there are several theories to explain why the *she* was called *zouwei*. Bi Wan 畢玩 explains it as follows:

> *Zou* is a phonetic borrowing for *jue* 蕝. In the *Shuowen* it says: "*Jue* refers to tied reeds 束茅 installed for the morning audience so as to indicate emplacements 位." In the *Discourses of the states* ("Jinyu" 晋語) it is said that the seats are indicated by reed *jue*. Wei Zhao 韋昭 explains that a *jue* refers to reeds tied together and set upright 束茅而立之. This is used to sieve the wine poured as a libation 縮酒.

Chavannes, "Le dieu du sol dans la Chine antique," *Le T'ai-chan: essai de monographie d'un culte chinois* (Paris, 1910), pp. 437–525; Izushi Yoshihiko, "Sha o chûshin to shite mitaru shasho kukô," *Shina shinwa densetsu kenkyû* (Tôkyô, 1943); Sekino Takeshi, "Chûgoku kodai no jumoku shisô – Sai no hangatô no jumoku monyô ni yosete," *Chûgoku kôko gaku kenkyû* (Tokyo, 1956), pp. 527–52.

[10] Tr. based on Burton Watson, *Mo Tzu: basic writings* (New York, 1963), p. 100.

Thus we may infer that the *she* is called *zouwei* because the *zouwei* made from several reeds tied together resembled the *she* composed of a copse of trees spread round with earth, and the functions are also common.

Xu Shen 許慎 in *Wujing yiyi* 五經異義 (*Various meanings of the Five Classics*) argues as follows:

> Someone asked: "Do high and low officials 卿大夫士 all have a tablet 有主?" He answered: "According to the explanation of Gongyang 公羊, all such officials are gentlemen without land and cannot make the ancestral sacrifice to the alternate generations in a pavilion. Hence they have no tablet. The grandees 大夫 have a bundle of silk as a receptacle for the divinity 束帛依神, and the lower rank of officials 士 tie reeds together into a bunch 結茅爲菆."[11]

This text is precious because it tells us that officials who cannot use a wooden votive tablet used as substitute a bundle of silk or a bunch of reeds, which served as a receptacle for the divinity. The *she* made from the clump of trees is the *zou* 菆 of tied reeds on a bigger scale, and the clump is likewise a receptacle for the divinity, its brushy sharp point probably serving to invite them. The divinities of ancient China were perhaps particularly attracted to the shape like the extremity of a broom.

The she *of stone*

We saw above the *she* made with a clod of earth in its center and the *she* whose shape combined a clod of earth and a tree or clump of trees. But there were also *she* made principally from stone. In the chapter "Guizhi" 貴直 of the *Lüshi chunqiu* 呂氏春秋 (*Annals of Sire Lü*), we read the following statement:

> After Duke Wen (of Jin) ascended the throne…at the battle of Chengpu 城濮 he defeated Chu five times, and when he surrounded Wei and took Cao, he uprooted the stone *she* 石社.

The fact he had to "uproot the stone *she*" suggests a large rock served as the main altar, the foundation of which was buried in the ground. In the state of Cao the rock was in the center of the *she*, and that is why the Jin army, to show symbolically they had taken possession of the lands of Cao, uprooted the stone, the religious core of the land.

[11] Zheng Xuan, *Bo wujing yiyi shuzheng* (Hou Zhi buzu zhai collection).

In the paragraph on the assistant minister of rites (*xiao zongbo* 小宗伯) in the "spring officials" ("Chunguan" 春官) section of the *Rites of Zhou* it is said:

> The assistant minister of rites is in charge of setting up the emplacements for the gods 神位 of the state: the *sheji* to the right and the ancestral temple to the left [of the palace]...When there is a major military campaign, he directs those in charge in setting up the military *she* 軍社 and in placing the ancestral tablets reverently in the chariot.[12]

The note of Zheng Xuan 鄭玄on this text says: "The *she* tablet was probably made of stone" 社主、蓋用石爲之.[13] He is not categorical but thinks that, for a military campaign, the tablet (the receptacle of the divinity) carried on a carriage was made of stone.

In a commentary on the same passage, Jia Gongyan 賈公彥 quotes the *Various meanings of the Five Classics*:

> According to Xu Shen, at the present time in the ordinary shrines 俗祠 of the people of the region of Shanyang 山陽, there is a tablet of stone. Although this is a disposition for the shrine of the gods 神祠, it requires a stone tablet, like that of the *she* 主類其社. For the *she*, the altar is made of earth, and stone is of the same class as earth 其社既以土爲壇、石是土之類.

Thus, during the Eastern Han dynasty, around Shanyang (modern Henan, prefecture of Xiuwu 修武), in the sanctuaries of the gods of the people stone tablets were erected, and Jia Gongyan infers that there were also *she* tablets of stone.

Concerning the use of altars of stone, even if it is a much later document, one can verify this use by the following debate in the 22nd chapter of the *Tang huiyao* 唐會要:

> In the fifth month of the year 705, a decree ordered the establishment of a Great *she* 太社 in the eastern capital.[14] The imperial secretary of the office of rites, Zhu Qinming 祝欽明, asked the scholars and officers of rites: "In the *Rites of Zhou* the emblem/tablet of the field 田主 is the most appropriate tree of the region. Why now use a stone as the emblem/altar of the Great *she*?" The vice minister of the chamberlain of ceremonials Wei Shuxia 韋叔夏, the director of studies Guo Shanyun 郭山惲, and the erudites of the chamberlain for ceremonials Zhang Zhaixian 張齋賢 and

[12] Cf. Édouard Biot, tr., *Rites des Tcheou* (Paris, 1851; repr. Taibei, 1969), 1.441, 449.

[13] *Zhouli, Shisanjing zhushu* (Taibei, 1965), p. 293.

[14] That is, in Luoyang. The Great *she* is that located in the capital, the chief *she* of the entire country.

> Yin Zhizhang 尹知章 submitted a discussion: "In the *Sanli yizong* 三禮義宗 (*Fundamental ideas of the three books of rites*) of Cui Ling'en 崔靈恩 it is said that the use of a stone for the god of the *she* is because, among all things belonging to earth, stone is the most solid. Also, in the *Lüshi chunqiu* it is said that, in the rites of the Yin 殷 people, a stone was used for the *she*, and in the *Hou Weishu* 後魏書 (*History of the Latter Wei*) it is said that in the fourth month of the year 443 the stone emblem/altar of the Great *she* was moved to the palace of the earth god (*shegong* 社宮). Thus there are clear and ancient statements to the effect that the *she* tablet/emblem was made of stone. In the *Rites of Zhou* the trees of the various regions are also used as emblem of the fields because it is referring not to the Great *she* but to that of the common people 人間之社. Moreover, examination of the emblem/altar of the ancient *she* 社主 reveals it was one foot six inches in height and one foot seven inches wide on the four sides."
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> The matter was confided to the scholars and the officers of rites, that they discuss the system. Wei Shuxia and the other officers of the rites again submitted a discussion which said: "There is no regulation in the ritual texts about the size of the *she* emblem/altar. But when the Son of Heaven goes to war, the *she* tablet 社主 is transported in a carriage, and this is called the 'rites of the earth god' 社事. If the votive tablet 神主 of the earth god can be thus transported, it is clear that it must not be too heavy."

This document records the discussion involving the officers of the rites at court because, while the altar of the Great *she* god in Luoyang was made of stone, there was no description of such an altar of stone in the old ritual regulations. When the royal court of the Tang invaded Luoyang, the main altar of the Great *she* apparently had the shape of a cube over one foot in height, width and depth. In the debate between the officers of rites quoted above, by inferring from the fact that the quotation about the main altar of stone is taken from the *Hou Weishu*, we may suppose that the main altar made in stone was inherited from the institutions of the Northern Dynasties.

In the above debate the officers of rites explain the difference and the hierarchy of the *she* by saying that the *she* with a tree in the center is the *she* of the commoners, while a main altar of stone is used for the Great *she* of the state. But it is more probable to contrast the traditional altar of the Central Plains made from clods of earth and trees with an altar of stone from a different cultural tradition.

Two vestiges of early sites were reported recently. They are probably related to beliefs concerning the *she* that used this type of altar of stone. The first one was found in the province of Jiangsu, in the city of Lianyungang 連雲港, and is considered a vestige of the sacrificial altar

of the Eastern tribes 東夷.[15] In this site, three megaliths stand on a level space in the mountains. Around this space there are three drawings on rock walls. In those drawings there is something that is thought to represent a man's head and a straw linked together. The worship of the earth to make the crops grow is supposed to have occurred on this place with an altar of stone in the middle. On the basis of the technique of carving used for the drawings in the stone, it is thought to be Neolithic, and from the simplicity of the pattern of the face of the animal in the picture it can be inferred that it is probably from the early Longshan culture, but we are waiting for a more detailed inquiry.

The other vestige is the sacrificial altar of the Shang in Jiangsu province, north of the city of Xuzhou 徐州.[16] In the center of this vestige there is a one meter high natural stone whose lower extremity was wedge-shaped and buried in the ground, with three stones erected close around it. Many bones of humans and dogs were found around the stone, all buried with the head facing the stones. The humans bones were buried in a crouched position, the head down, and most of them had the hands tied behind the back. This was not the site of a simple graveyard but of a ritual in which, it is supposed, humans and dogs were sacrificed. Furthermore, the bones of the sacrificed victims were excavated in two separate layers of the early Yinxu 殷墟 period and the last Yinxu period, so we know this ritual site was used for a long period.

There is still some doubt as to whether these two vestiges of altars centered on a stone are directly linked to the *she* with an altar of stone. But we can certainly not ignore the fact they are both located in northern Jiangsu, and that they may be related to the *she* altar of the Eastern tribal area, culturally different from the Central Plains. I will come back to the *she* of the Eastern tribal culture by examining in the next section the *she* of Cisui 次睢.

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[15] Li Hongfu, "Jiangjun yayanhua yizhi de chubu tansuo," *Wenwu* 1981.7, pp. 25–27; Museum of the city of Lianyungang, *Lianyungang Jiangjun yayanhua yizhi diaocha*, *Wenwu* 1981.7; Yu Weichao, "Lianyungang Jiangjun ya dongyi shesi yizhi de tuiding," *Xian Qin liang Han kaoguxue lunji* (Beijing, 1985), pp. 59–61.

[16] Wang Yuxin and Chen Shaodi, "Guanyu Jiangsu Tongshan Qiuwan Shangdai jisi yizhi," *Wenwu* 1973.12, pp. 55–58; Yu Weichao, "Tongshan Qiuwan Shangdai shesi yizhi de tuiding," *Xian Qin liang Han kaoguxue lunji*, pp. 54–58.

The popular character of the ritual of the she

There are many descriptions of the *she* ritual which show they were organized on the national level by social class. In the chapter "Jifa" 祭法 ("Methods of sacrifice") of the *Book of rites* there is the following passage, in which the correspondence between social position and the *she* can be seen:

> The king, for all the people, erected an altar (*she*) to (the spirit of) the ground called the Great *she* 大社, and one for himself called the Lord's *she* 主社. A feudal prince, for all his people, erected one called the State *she* 国社, and one for himself called the *she* of the Prince 侯社. Great officers and all below them in association erected such a *she*, called the Appointed *she* 大夫以下成群立社、曰置社.[17]

It is possible to find other names of *she* of the various social classes different from those in the "Jifa" chapter. But, very probably, the names of the *she* linked to social classes were systematized later on in a different era, and it was probably an ideal system. The basic part of the ritual is supposed to have been determined even before the structure of the state was constituted, that is to say back in the Neolithic period when agricultural society emerged. If there is no major error in this supposition, the essence of the ritual of the *she* was less what the state had decreed than what was inherited from popular rituals of the *she*.

We can also see that the earth god ritual concerned all people, regardless of class, in the following description found in the chapter "Jingshen xun" 精神訓 of the *Huainanzi* 淮南子: "At the *she* of remote country places, people beat vases and drum on pitchers to accompany their harmonious singing, and they consider that music."[18] The chapter "Jiao tesheng" 郊特牲 of the *Liji* reads:

> When there was a sacrifice at the Shê altar of a village 社事, some one went out to it from every house. When there was such a sacrifice in preparation for a hunt 社田, the men of the state all engaged in it. When there was such a sacrifice, from the towns, small and large, they contributed their vessels of rice, thereby expressing their gratitude to the source (of

[17] Translation based on *Li chi, Book of rites. An encyclopedia of ancient ceremonial usages, religious creeds, and social institutions*, tr. James Legge, *Edited with introduction and study guide*, Ch'u Chai and Winberg Chai (New Hyde Park, 1967), vol. 2, p. 206.

[18] Translation based on *Philosophes taoïstes II. Huainanzi*, eds Charles Le Blanc and Rémi Mathieu (Paris, 2003), p. 314.

> their prosperity) and going back in their thoughts to the beginning (of all being) 報本反始.[19]

Thus, the ritual of the *she* was probably something basically focused on the unit of a regional community, and all the members of the community were involved in it. Moreover, social ranks were ignored, the relations between the people being basically equal, and the fundamental principles of the community were at work. The famous episode in the biography of Chen Ping 陳平 in the *Shiji* 史記 (*Records of the historian*), where Chen Ping, who was prefect, divided the ritual meat equally at the *she* ritual in his prefecture and was praised by the ancients for that, reveals the fact that equality was indeed the fundamental rule.

This popular ritual of the *she* occurred twice a year, no doubt ever since antiquity, in spring and autumn. In spring the prayer for a good crop was made to the *she*, and in autumn gratitude for the harvest was expressed to the *she*. As the chapter "Yueling" 月令 ("Monthly ordinances") of the *Liji* says: "That month (the second month of the lunar calendar) the fortunate day is chosen, and orders are given to the people to sacrifice at their altars to the spirit of the ground 命民社."[20] In the chapter on the Feng and Shan sacrifices in the *Shiji*, we read:

> In the spring of the year 197 BC, the authorities asked to be allowed to order the provincial offices every year in the third month of spring and during the *la* time to offer a sheep and a pig to worship the gods of earth and grains 祠社稷 and the people at the village *she* 民里社 to use their own resources to worship. The ruling was positive.

The two documents above are evidence that the state organized worship of the earth god, but that village worship of the *she* was left to the people. Moreover, it seems that there were different rules concerning the date, but the time of the ritual was finally fixed at twice a year, in the second and eighth month of the lunar calendar. The classical poems singing the popular celebration on the day of the *she*, after the Tang and the Song dynasties, are too numerous to be mentioned.

Regarding the commoners' worship of the *she*, the section on the second month in the *Jingchu suishi ji* 荊楚歲時記 (*Record of the year and seasons of Jing-Chu*) states:

[19] *Li chi*, tr. Legge, vol. 1, pp. 425–26.
[20] Ibid., p. 258.

> On the day of the *she* 社日, the neighborhood joins together to prepare the animals and the unrefined wine for the sacrifice, make a house under the tree 爲屋於樹下, and, after the sacrifice to the god, all together eat the ritual meat 饗其胙.

An article on village worship of the gods of earth and grain 諸里祭社稷 in the *Tongdian* 通典 relates more precisely the worship of the *she*:

> The day before the ritual, the chief of the *she* 社正 and the people of the *she* who are concerned by the ritual observe a pure fast in the main room of their house. Those in charge of the preparation of the offering first tidy up at the foot of the god's tree 神樹 and then dig a hole to the north of the tree deep enough to contain the offering.[21] The people in charge of the ritual set up the position of the chief of the *she* ten steps northwest of the millet emplacement and facing east. The people of the *she* are behind him, facing east on the south side. The invocator sets the emplacement where the tray of fresh meat will be offered to the north of the hole, facing south. As for the number of ritual vessels, each seat has two barrels of wine and one ladle covered with a cloth, one stand, two flat baskets, two trays, two tripod carafes, two ritual displays and two round vases.
>
> Before dawn on the day of the ritual, the sacrificial meat is boiled in the kitchen. The people wake up early and those in charge of preparing the offerings put them in the ritual vessels. Those in charge of the ritual enter carrying straw mats and install the mat of the *she* god at the foot of the tree and that of the millet god to its west. Both mats face north…
>
> When the invocator comes forward holding a tray (on which are placed the written prayers), he goes to the east of the *she* god and faces west; he kneels down and reads the prayers 祝文: "In such-and-such a year and month, on the day of the new moon, the head of the *she* So-and-so 某坊社正姓名, together with all the people of the *she*, announces (*gao* 告) clearly to the god of the *she*: It is you who supports and nourishes the people and makes all things grow. It is now the second (eighth) month, an auspicious day, and, in accord with the standard rite, we reverently offer the special sacrificial victim, clear wine and cereals, which with great deference we present to the god of the *she*. May you enjoy these offerings."

Thus, centered on the chief of the *she*, the people of the *she* gathered by the *she* tree, prepared the seats of the gods of earth and millet, and then celebrated the ritual. It is difficult to verify in how far this manner of celebrating the ritual was universal, but we may suppose that pretty much the same ritual occurred in the Central Plains of China from the period of the Southern and Northern dynasties to the Sui and Tang.

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[21] The offerings are buried after the ritual.

Building on the activities of this people's *she*, some *she* organizations centered on the Buddhist faith came into existence, as we can see in texts from Dunhuang, but I will not treat of this new type of *she* here.

The establishment of the cities of Bo

In the previous section I described very briefly the different basic forms of the *she* and its ritual. In this section I shall attempt an analysis of the concepts—especially the mythological ones—this ritual was based on. Ideas certainly changed over time, but, behind these changing ideas, I would like to identify the basic concept and its religious and sociological function.

Various debates have occurred about the place where the first emperor of the Shang dynasty, King Tang 湯王, built the capital Bo 亳.[22] At the center of these debates is the polemic regarding the identification of the Bo which appears in received texts, particularly the question of what urban remains from the Shang period correspond to the Bo of King Tang. Is it the site of the remains thought to be the capital of the first period of the Shang dynasty, Shixianggou 尸鄉溝 in Yanshi 偃師, or is it the capital of what will later be the state of Zheng 鄭? There are also the Shang ruins in the area around Shangqiu 商丘. The question is, which places correspond to the North Bo, South Bo, and West Bo that appear in the texts? The debate goes in different directions, but I will not take part directly here in these debates on the comparison and the identification of the names of the different locations. I would like instead to focus on the tradition that led the Shang people—those who created the Shang dynasty—to call their most important base "Bo," and ask why a "Bo" can be found in every place.

There are some examples of the use of the characters 薄, 博, or 蒲 to refer to the place "Bo," and it is said that all those places refer in fact to Bo 亳. If we locate the places called "Bo," they range widely throughout the Central Plains, from Shaanxi 陝西 and Henan 河南 to Shandong 山東. I would therefore like to shift the debate from the identification

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[22] The location of Bo is a much-debated issue: Wang Guowei, "Shuobo," *Guantang jilin* 12 (Shanghai, 1992), pp. 2b–4b; Zheng Jiexiang, "Buci suojian bodi kao," *Zhongyuan wenwu* 1983.4, 49–55; Kominami Ichirô, "Boshe kao," *Yinxu bowuyuan yuankan* 1989.1, 73–75.

of the site of King Tang's capital Bo to the question why virtually every place related to the Shang people was called Bo. The fact the toponym Bo is so widespread is related to the expansion to the Central Plains by the Shang and is also certainly closely linked to the formation of the Shang dynasty.

The group forming the core of the Shang moved to different places before the advent of the Shang dynasty, and even after the founding of the dynasty they moved the capital several times. According to received texts, from the ancient ancestor of the Shang Qi 契 to King Tang, the Shang clan changed their base eight times, and after King Tang had founded the dynasty, they changed five more times the site of the capital, which was finally fixed by Pangeng 盤庚 near Yinxu 殷墟.[23] Why did the people of the Shang clan change so frequently the site of their capital? The notes in the Pangeng 盤庚 chapter of the *Shangshu* 尚書 explain that the lower and middle region of the Yellow River has an alkaline soil in which, after a certain period of use, the salt rose from the underground water, and it ceased to be suitable for agriculture. This is why the Shang had to change places continually. The problem of underground water was certainly one of the reasons, but, more fundamentally, we may speculate that the repetition of the change of base was a necessary element of the basic features of the tribal group that the Shang was at this time. Moreover, one can see that the characteristics of this tribe were taken over by the Zhou 周. At least until the middle of the Western Zhou, the Zhou were mainly acting as a tribal group which needed repeatedly to move from place to place.[24]

To go into more details about the activity of the tribes of that period, the people of the Shang (and of the Zhou as well) would establish their seat, not in the center of already secured territory, from which they then expanded their domination to the peripheral regions, but on the front lines, where they fought with other tribes to expand their sphere of power. Probably, the functions of the central base and the conditions of its location were quite different from those of the capitals of the later period, and the most advantageous place in the struggle for power was chosen as the central base. The main part of the tribe was made up of

[23] See Wang Guowei, "Shuo zi Qi zhiyu Chengtang baqian," *Guantang jilin* 12, pp. 1a–1b.

[24] Concerning the activities of the tribe centered on a group of warriors, see Kominami Ichirô, "Shû no kenkoku to hôken," *Kodai ôken no tanjô* 1 (Tôkyô, 2003), pp. 226–40.

warriors who were constantly engaged in warfare and moved from one battle to another. They kept moving the place of their fight in an ongoing struggle for power with other tribes. That is why we may speculate that the tribal core of the Shang was regularly moving its central base from one place to another.

Thus, through their military power the Shang eliminated other tribes, and by the building of military bases one after the other they expanded their territorial domination. These military bases were probably often called *shi* 師. In the oracular inscriptions of Yinxu, as in texts inscribed on bronzes from the first years of the Western Zhou, we can see many places called Such-and-such a *shi*. Among them, the most important place is called *jingshi* 京師, a word which will later mean the central city of a state.[25]

After the military influence of the other tribes had been eliminated, the military base was shifted to a newly occupied place, and at the time of the construction of those places, in addition to the main buildings and the stronghold structures, religious procedures were certainly required. The central rituals took the form of the establishment of the shrine of the ancestors and of the *she*.

In the oracular inscriptions from Yinxu, in addition to the toponym Bo, an augur concerning Botu 亳土 is frequently mentioned. The character *tu* 土 might refer to the *she* itself or a zone centered on the *she*, as the following examples show:

> Divination on the day *wuzi*: we will make the sacrifice *sui* to *botu*, with three small [animal victims].
>
> 戊子:卜其又歲于亳土、三小[牢] (京3950、合集28109)
>
> To *botu*, offer a sacrifice *yu*.
>
> 于亳土御 (粹篇20、合集32675)
>
> If we make the sacrifice *liao* to *botu*, il will rain.[26]
>
> 其又尞亳土又雨 (佚928、合集28108)

The *botu* 亳土 that received the annual offering (*sui*) was none other than the *boshe* 亳社. It was the object of this royal ritual, and the prediction of rain implied an abundant crop. This *boshe* represented the

[25] Kominami Ichirô, "Keishi kô," *Chûgoku kodai toshi no keisei* (Kyôto, 2000), pp. 108–12.
[26] Translation by Olivier Venture.

earth of an area, especially an agricultural area, and when the *boshe* received rain, it meant the whole area would have rain. Revering the *boshe* corresponded to revering the earth of the area.

As for the characteristics of the ritual of the *she* and its origin, as was said in the first section, several explanations exist, but no objection can be made to the fact that it was a ritual to the earth of a given area. To establish a *she* on a specific site and celebrate a ritual to this *she* was a way of confirming the possession of this land in a religious way.

As to the establishment of the ancestor shrine and the *she* in a new region, the description in the hymn "Mian" 緜 of the Daya 大雅 section of the *Shijing* 詩経 (*Book of songs*), which is not about the Shang but the establishment of the base of Zhouyuan 周原 of the Zhou, can provide useful information. This poem reads as follows:

> The plain of Zhou was very fertile,
> Its celery and sowthistle sweet as rice-cakes.
> "Here we will make a start; here take counsel,
> Here notch our tortoise."
> It says, "Stop," it says, "Halt.
> Build houses here."
> …
> Then he summoned his Master of Works,
> Then he summoned his Master of Lands
> And made them build houses.
> Dead straight was the plumb-line,
> The planks were lashed to hold the earth;
> They made the Hall of Ancestors, very venerable.
> …
> They raised the outer gate;
> The outer gate soared high.
> They raised the inner gate;
> The inner gate was very strong.
> They raised the great earth-mound 冢土,
> Whence excursions of war might start.[27]

Thus, when a new dwelling place was established, the shrine for the ancestors was erected first and then, after the palace had been built, the altar mound of the earth god. This mound was related to the shrine dedicated to the ancestor of the dominant class, but the ordinary people also gathered there, meaning the *she* was at the heart of the religion of the ordinary people and was the core of their unity.

[27] Tr. Arthur Waley, *The Book of songs* (New York, 1960), pp. 248–49.

The hymn just cited from the *Book of songs* is part of an epic describing the establishment of the base of the Zhou, but that of the Shang was no doubt fundamentally the same as far as the procedures were concerned. In the case of the Shang, too, the shrine made for the ancestors was built first in a newly occupied site, and then next to it the palace of the dominant people and around it the houses of the common people.

In a new dwelling place, the shrine to the ancestor and the *she* mound were erected first but, to build those religious sites, the revered gods had to be transported from the previous location. In the case of the shrine of the ancestors, it was necessary to carry the spirit tablets and place them in the new shrine

The biography of Boyi and Shuqi 伯夷叔齊列傳 in the *Shiji*, reports that, when King Wu of the Zhou raised an army to defeat the Yin (Shang), his army carried with it the spirit tablets of King Wen. Boyi and Shuqi criticized the fact that, even before the funeral of the king's father was over, the spirit tablets were on a carriage to go to war, and then admonished against the dispatch of troops.

The poem "Tianwen" 天問 ("Heavenly questions") in the *Chuci* 楚辭 (*Songs of the South*), too, in the passage describing the subjugation of the Yin by King Wu, reads:

> When Wu set out to slay the Yin, what was he so anxious about?
> When he carried the corpse 尸 into battle, what was he pressed by?[28]

This passage says that carrying the spirit tablet of the preceding king into battle was unusual. But in the political context of the period, where the tribes were centered on warrior groups, carrying spirit tablets on a carriage into battle must have been a normal occurrence. For example, in the chapter "Ganshi" 甘誓 of the *Book of documents*, the following words are recorded as the declaration of the lord to the soldiers before battle: "If you obey orders well during battle, you will be rewarded by the ancestors. If you disobey orders, you will be executed before the *she*" 用命、賞于祖;不用命、戮于社. Here, the term "ancestor" (*zu* 祖)

[28] Translation based on David Hawkes, *Ch'u Tz'u, The Songs of the South* (London, 1959; repr. Boston, 1962), p. 55. Hawkes notes, p. 55, that "according to some accounts it was the 'spirit tablet' of his dead father which King Wu carried in his chariot to battle," but prefers the literal interpretation of the phrase; Kominami understands the word "corpse" here as referring to the tablet. (Translator's note.)

refers to the tablet of the previous king, and the text seems to be telling us that both the *zu* and the *she* were carried with the army and that rewards and punishments were meted out in front of their respective symbols. It seems unlikely that they waited until after a triumphant return to grant rewards in the shrine of the ancestor or to execute the guilty by the *she*.

Thus we may infer that transporting the *zu* and the *she* was common to the tribal groups of this time when troops went into battle. They carried the tablets (the *zu*) into the fight against other tribes and, if they won the battle and gained new territory, they built a new shrine to the ancestors and placed the tablets they had transported in it. These religious procedures laid the foundation of a new base.

The architecture of the *she* was also similar to that of the ancestral shrine except that, in the case of the *she*, a clod of earth corresponded to the ancestor tablets. The group of warriors who fought against other tribes carried a clod of earth from the homeland and revered it in the military camp. The assumption the shape of the character for "earth" 土 was related to the shape [illegible] is probably due to the fact it took the shape of the clod of earth that was revered as the god of the *she*. This earth from the homeland was certainly taken from the earthen platform of the *she* of the homeland. According to later accounts, this earth was transported wrapped in white reeds.

When the Shang militarily eliminated another tribe and obtained a new territory, the clod of earth that was carried with the army was mixed with local earth and a new *she* was built. By mixing the earth of the homeland with the earth of the new land, through some sort of contagious magic, the earth of the new land acquired the same stability and vitality as that from the homeland. If this measure of contagious magic was not used, a new land, even a militarily occupied one, remained a chaotic and sterile wasteland for the members of the Shang clan.

In later feudal etiquette we can see the reminiscence of this method of territorial expansion consisting in dividing the earth of the *she* of the homeland and using it for the edification of a new *she*. The man ordered by the king to rule a new state received a white reed-wrapped clod of earth dug from the platform of the Great *she* in the capital, took that clod to the assigned state, there mixed it with local earth, and built a new *she*. It is a later document, but in the "Zuoluojie" 作洛解 of the *Yi Zhoushu* 逸周書 (*Remnant Zhou documents*) one can read the following description:

> The Great *she* was established in the center of the country (the capital). The earth platform 壝 of the Great *she* was made of blue earth on the east, red on the south, white on the west, black on the north, and of yellow earth in the center. When a lord received an assignment, he dug some earth from the side corresponding to the direction of the assigned country, covered it with the yellow earth, and wrapped it in white reeds. This constituted the "enfeoffment of the *she*" 社之封. That is why it was said he had received the "lineage earth" of the royal court of the Zhou 受列土于周室.

The "*she* enfeoffment" made of earth removed from the Great *she* of the capital was transported to the assigned country, and a new *she* was built with this earth.

This description, tinged as it is with five elements thinking, reflects the conceptions of the period. However, in more ancient times, in the case of military expansion of territory, even if five colors of earth were not used, the religious method of the transportation of a clod of earth from the homeland and the establishment of a *she* with it was used. We may speculate that, by virtue of the combined military and religious ordering of the land, the possession of the new territory was thought to be confirmed.

It is worth noting that in the Forbidden City of present-day Beijing, one can still see the platform of a *sheji* 社稷 made in the Ming–Qing era. According to the rules of the *Rites of Zhou*, the shrine to the ancestors should have been built to the east side (left) and the *sheji* to the west (right) of the palace. The actual site of the *sheji* is in the Zhongshan park 中山公園, but its platform is still one with five colors. It is hard to see when the weather is dry, but after the rain the colors of the earth of the five elements on the four sides and top of the platform is very clear.

It must be because the Shang warriors transported the clod of earth called *botu* 亳土 with the army and, using it in the newly occupied territories, built one *she* after another, that many military bases were called Bo. The *she* built with the *botu* were all called *boshe* 亳社, and the site centered on the *boshe* was called *Bo*. The clod of earth called *botu* came from the earth platform of the old base, also called *boshe*.

The boshe *of the following generations*

As we saw in the previous section, the toponym Bo surviving in various places in the Central Plains probably derives, in most cases, from the military bases settled by the Shang clan, and the *boshe* has its source

in the ritual institutions created in those bases. The *boshe* had this old origin and was intimately related to the activities of the Shang clan, but after the extinction of the dynasty the ritual was not interrupted. From the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods many historical records mentioning the *boshe* remain, and this shows us that the *boshe* played an important role in the religious system of its time.

For example, in the *Zuozhuan* there are four mentions of the *boshe* (five if we count the text of the *Chunqiu* as well), each of them extremely interesting.[29] In the sixth year of Duke Ding 定公, the rebel Yang Hu 陽虎 of Lu 魯 celebrates an alliance with the people at the *she*, and tries to reinforce his influence:

> Yang Hu imposed another covenant (*meng* 盟) on the duke and the three Hwan clans at the altar of Chow 周社, and one upon the people at the altar of Poh (Bo) 亳社, the imprecations (*zu* 詛) being spoken in the street of Woo-foo [against the people helping the opposing faction].[30]

Here, Yang Hu makes an alliance with the people related to the royal family in Lu at the *she* of Zhou, and one with the people of the country (the free people of the city) at the *boshe*. The validity of the alliance was guaranteed by the earth god. What is particularly interesting here is that Yang Hu makes his alliance with two different groups of differing social condition at separate earth god altars.

As the Shang people had transported the *botu* when expanding their territory, we may suppose that the Zhou people likewise carried a clod of earth called *zhoutu* 周土 when enlarging their zone of control. For this reason Zhou cities were named "zhou," as Zongzhou 宗周 or Chengzhou 成周. Moreover, the descendants of the Duke of Zhou (Zhougong 周公), member of the royal house who founded the state of Lu, built a *zhoushe* 周社 in the Lu capital with the earth of Zhou (*zhoutu*) that he received in the Zhou capital. It is natural that the alliance with the duke of Lu, a descendant of Zhougong, and the people related to him, was celebrated at the *zhoushe*.

By contrast, the important families of Lu swore the alliance not at the *zhoushe* but at the *boshe*. The *boshe* of Lu was presumably built before Zhougong came to Lu and built the *zhoushe*. The first year of the Zhou period, when the fief of Lu was constituted, the occupying force of the Zhou clan moved in and took control of the population that had long

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[29] Niimishi Hiroshi, "Ro no jisha ni tsuite," *Shina gaku* 8.4 (1936), 49–55.
[30] Tr. James Legge, *The Ch'un Ts'ew*, p. 763.

been united around its own *boshe*. Because the main portion of the population of Lu was linked to the *boshe*, Yang Hu made his alliance with them at the *boshe*. We may suppose that, while the *zhoushe* was a new *she* linked to the occupation of the Zhou court, the *boshe* had a somewhat different character, as the institution of the ancient religion.

The fact that the *boshe* was a particular type of *she* containing ancient elements is typically expressed by the fact that human sacrifices were executed there. In the tenth year of Duke Zhao 昭公 and the seventh year of Duke Ai 哀公 in the *Zuozhuan*, there are the following entries:

> In autumn, the seventh month, Pingzi 平子 subjugated Ju 莒 and took the territory of Geng 郠. In presenting his captives, (the duke) for the first time sacrificed a human victim at the *boshe* 始用人於亳社.[31]
>
> In autumn, we invaded Zhu 邾... Our army then entered Zhu and occupied the viscount's palace. The troops all plundered during the day, and then the people took refuge on [mount] Yi. The troops [also] plundered during the night, and then returned, bringing Viscount Yi of Zhu with them. He was presented on the *boshe* 獻于亳社.[32]

In the item of the tenth year of Duke Zhao, the verb *yong* 用, literally "to use" is employed. Already in writings on the turtle shell, this verb has the meaning of sacrificing an animal to the divinity. In the *Zuozhuan*, it is the prisoners of war who are sacrificed to the *boshe* as an offering to the god. According to the passage, this was "the first time" a human being was sacrificed, and we may suppose it was not the last. The second item is similar, except that it involves the offering not of ordinary prisoners of war but the ruler of the defeated state himself to the *boshe*.

In the region southeast of the Central Plains, several customs, and not only the *boshe*, involved human sacrifice. For example, in the 19th year of Duke Xi 僖, the *Chunqiu* contains the following entries:

> In summer, in the sixth month, the duke of Song, the lord of Cao, and the lord of Zhu, made a covenant in the south of Cao. The viscount of Zeng met and covenanted [with them] in Zhu. On the *jiyou* day, the lord of Zhu seized the viscount of Zeng and used him 用之 [as a victim].[33]

[31] Tr. Legge, *Tso Chuen*, p. 629, with modifications.
[32] Tr. Legge, *Tso Chuen*, p. 814, with modifications.
[33] Tr. Legge, *Tso Chuen*, p. 176, with modifications.

The *Zuozhuan* relates this event as follows:

> The duke of Song made Duke Wen of Zhu sacrifice the viscount of Tseng to the *she* at Cisui 用鄫子于次睢之社, wishing thereby to force the eastern tribes into submission.

Of the same event, the *Gongyang zhuan* 公羊傳 gives the following explanation:

> Summer, sixth month. The duke of Song, the lord of Cao, and the lord of Zhulou made a covenant in the south of Cao, and the viscount of Zeng met at Zhulou. What is the difference between "meeting" (*hui* 會) and "making a covenant" (*meng* 盟)? The viscount arrived late at the meeting (that is, too late to join the covenant). On the day *jiyou*, the lord of Zhulou captured the viscount of Zeng and used him for a sacrifice. Where did he use him? He used him at the *she* 用之社. How did he use him at the *she*? He hit him on the nose to make him bleed, and so bloodied the *she* 血社.

Thus the *Gongyang zhuan* explains that the sacrificial blood was just a nosebleed, but as the professor Naba Toshisada has pointed out, the sacrifice to the *she* using the blood of the nose is the later, simplified ritual, and there is no doubt that, originally, the victim was killed and his blood left to empty out on the *she*.[34] The note of Liu Zhao 劉昭 on the copse pavilion (*congting* 叢亭) of Linyi 臨沂 in the Langya region 琅玡国, in the *Hou Hanshu* 後漢書 (*History of the Latter Han*), quotes the *Bowu ji* 博物記 (*Record of extensive investigations*) as follows:

> In Cisui, on the eastern border of the district of Linyi, there is a big copse *she*. The people call it the man-eating *she* 食卜社. This is the *she* of Cisui.[35]

From the appellation copse pavilion or copse *she* during the Han period, we may conclude that, on the altar of the *she* of Cisui or around it, there were probably luxuriant trees. If the local population called it a "man-eating *she*," it is surely because the memory of the human sacrifices that had occurred there lived on.

The quotation from the *Zuozhuan* above explained that the sacrifice of the lord of Zeng was designed to cow the eastern tribes into submission. This suggests the people of the Central Plains were conscious of the fact that the custom of human sacrifice was somewhat different

[34] Naba Toshisada, "Jisui shakôn" *Geibun* 13.6 (1992), 13–39.
[35] *Hou Hanshu* (Beijing, 1965), *zhi* 21, p. 3460.

from their ritual traditions. The ritual of the god of the earth using a main altar of stone in the eastern coastal region, as we saw in the first section, was no doubt related to the traditions of the eastern tribes. By the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods, the custom of human sacrifice had come to be considered a usage of other races, but we think that, originally, around the *boshe*, it was one of the religious rituals of the Shang. Concerning the relations between the Shang and the transmission of the culture of the eastern tribes, many works have been written, but it remains a major question without a conclusion.

There are other examples of the "use" of prisoners of war after a victorious battle. In the 11th year of Duke Zhao, the *Chunqiu* records the following item: "Winter, eleventh month. The Chu army destroyed the state of Cai 蔡. They seized the heir apparent You 世子有, took him back with them, and used him." This entry suggests that in the country of Chu, too, human sacrifices were made. The *Zuozhuan* says the sacrifice occurred at Mount Gangshan 岡山. Was it also a ritual of offering to the god of the mountain?

The victims of these sacrifices were the lord of Zeng and the heir of the state of Cai, that is, the former owners of the lands. This suggests that, after winning a battle, the sacrifice at the *she* of the captured former owner of the land, was a kind of traditional victory ritual. This ritual, even after the beginning of the Spring and Autumn period, continued to be carried out at the *boshe*, even though the people may have come to see the rite as extraneous and unfamiliar.

If we synthesize the above considerations, we may venture the following hypothesis. The Shang people carried a clod of earth called *botu* from one battlefield to the next and, when they won new territories, settled their military base there and used the *botu* to build a *boshe* at its center. The first religious activity at this new *boshe* was the sacrifice of the former owner of the land defeated during the acquisition of the invaded territory. Considering the fact that this rite was later simplified, with a nosebleed replacing the blood of the victim, it seems likely that the action of pouring the blood of the former lord on the *she* itself was the main part of the victory ritual. By this ritual procedure, the change of ownership of a defined region was religiously confirmed.

In the Spring and Autumn period too, the sacrifice of state lords or relatives to the *she* was not the standard rite for the *she* but rather one for the special occasion of confirmation of the possession of a territory. From the existence of this particular rite, we may conclude that the activities centered on the *she* were directly linked to territorial expansion.

Furthermore, the earth 土 used for the *she* in the turtle shell characters is sometimes written [illegible], and we may infer that the liquid drawn falling on the clod of earth represents the blood of the victim being poured out on the clod of earth that is the central part of the *she*.[36] Besides the already quoted texts, the fact that the ritual of the *she* required blood can be learned, for example, from the following passage in the chapter "Minggui" of the *Mozi*: Duke Zhuang of Qi, in order to judge the guilt or innocence of two subjects being prosecuted,

> ordered the two men to bring a lamb and take an oath (*meng* 盟) on the Ch'i altar of the soil 神社. The two men agreed to take the oath of blood. The throat of the lamb was cut, its blood sprinkled on the altar.[37]

To add a few words more, we inferred above, on the basis of the biography of Boyi and Shuqi, that the peoples centered on warriors groups who aimed to expand the territories under their control, carried the clod of earth of the *she* and the spirit tablets of the ancestors in preparation for creating in the new territory the *she* and the altar of the ancestor. But the consciousness of the difference between the *she* and the altar of the ancestors came later in time. Originally, the clod of earth for the edification of the *she* may well have had both functions. The Shang originally carried only the *botu* from battle to battle, and we suppose that, by building the *boshe*, they also created the place for the ritual to their ancestors. This hypothesis derives from the fact the religious installation of the *she*, in subsequent generations, was not only a place for the ritual to the god of the earth, but was also intimately linked with the faith in the ancestral gods. For example in the seventh year of Duke Ai 哀 in the *Zuozhuan*, we read the following:

> Before this, a man of Cao dreamt that a number of gentlemen were standing in the temple [adjoining the] the altar of the land (*shegong* 社宮), and consulting about the ruin of the state, and that [among them was] Shu of Cao, Zhenduo 振鐸 (the first earl of Cao; a brother of King Wu), who begged them to wait till Gongsun Jiang 公孫彊 appeared, and to this they agreed.[38]

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[36] Peng Yushang, likewise, concerning the fact that the turtle shell character for "earth" includes little points, thinks that this is the expression of the sprinkling of the blood over the *she* and that the little points are drops of blood: "Buci zhong tu, he, yue" 卜辞中土、河、岳, *Guwenzi yanjiu lunwenji, Sichuan University Journal series* 10 (1981), 194–226.

[37] Tr. Burton Watson, *Mo Tzu: The basic writings* (New York, 1963), p. 99.

[38] Tr. Legge, *Tso Chuen*, p. 814, with modifications.

The gentlemen gathered here in the temple of the *she* to discuss the destiny of Cao, as we can see from the fact the founder of the state of Cao, Zhenduo, is among them, were the ancestor divinities. The fact they assembled at the *she* shows the *she* was not just a place for rituals addressed to the god of the earth but was also intimately linked to rituals for the ancestors. The fact that, in later times, the *shegong* 社公 and, nowadays, the *tudigong* 土地公 in many local traditions has the role of escorting the souls of the dead to the other world is also the result of an old characteristic of the *she*, which cannot be separated from belief in the ancestors.

Might we not hypothesize that the level of religious conceptualization at which there was no distinction between the ancestor gods and the god of the earth may be linked to the concept of *qie* 且 (ancestor) as exposed by Guo Moruo 郭沫若 in the "Shi zubi" 釋祖妣 ("Explanations concerning the ancestors")?[39] The fact *she* and *zu* (ancestor) are phonetically related has already been noted in earlier studies. In consequence, we may suppose that if, in the first period the Shang carried only the clod of earth called *botu* from battle to battle and used it to make their *boshe*, they must have carried separately the tablets of their ancestors. Thus the *she* was not just a place for rituals to the earth god but, the further we go back in time, the more it was a general ritual installation with different functions.

The ritual of the *she* was probably also intimately related to the ritual to the sky, as the next item shows. For the fourth year of Duke Ai, the *Chunqiu* mentions a fire that occurred at the *boshe* of the Lu capital. In the *Zuozhuan*, there is no direct mention of this event, but on the passage, "sixth month, *xinchou* 辛丑 day, there was a fire at the *boshe,*" the note of Tu Yu 杜預 reads as follows:

> Not mentioned in the Commentary. [The fire] is fire from the sky (fire which was caused by a lightning strike). The *boshe* is the *she* of Yin 殷社. All states of the feudal lords had one so as to warn that the [Shang] state has been extinguished 所以戒亡国.

In the text of the *Chunqiu* used by the *Gongyang zhuan*, the *boshe* is called a *pushe* 蒲社. Regarding the fire on this *pushe*, the *Gongyang zhuan* says this:

[39] Guo Moruo, "Shi zubi," *Jiagu wenzi yanjiu* (Shanghai, 1931), 1/1a–23b.

> Sixth month, day *xinchou*, a fire occurred at the *pushe*. What is the *pushe*? It is the *she* of a fallen state 亡国之社. The *she* is a mound of earth (*feng* 封). What does it mean there was a catastrophe on it? The *she* of the extinguished state has a roof on it 蓋揜之. A roof is built on top of it, and firewood placed under it 柴其下.

The question raised by the *Gongyang zhuan* is: If the *she* was just a mound of earth, how could a fire occur there? The answer is that, being the *boshe* of an extinguished state, a roof covered it, and under it there was firewood. It is this wooden part which had burnt. The *Guliang zhuan* 穀梁傳, likewise, explains that the *she* of a fallen state was built as part of the outer wall of the ancestor temple of the state of Lu, and that a roof was added. If this explanation of the *she* of a fallen state is correct, then the normal *she*, that of a living state, was just a mound of earth in the open air.

The chapter "Jiao tesheng" of the *Book of rites* gives the following explanation:

> The Great *she* of the Son of Heaven must receive the frost, dew, wind, and rain, so as to be in communication with the energies of the earth and sky 以達天地之氣. That is why on the *she* of a state that has perished a roof is built so that it cannot receive the *yang* energies of the heavens 不受天陽. A window on the north side of the *pushe* allows light to enter from the *yin* direction 使陰明.

Here the legitimate *she* is open to the earth and the sky, and through its intermediary the energies of earth and sky are in communication. By contrast, a roof is built over the *she* of an extinct state to prevent the energy of the sun reaching it. The *Duduan* 獨斷 of Cai Yong 蔡邕 says the same thing, adding that the combination of a roof above and the brushwood below "expresses clearly that it is cut off from both heaven and earth" 示與天地絶也. In other words, what is worth our attention is the fact that the ritual installation of a *she* is not just intimately related to the earth: through it, sky and earth are linked and communicate. This conception is expressed not only in the special case of the *she* of a fallen state, but also, for example, in an entry in the *Gongyang zhuan* concerning the rite for the eclipse of the sun that occurred in the 25th year of Duke Zhuang 莊公; the *Gongyang commentary* asks:

> In the sixth month, on a *xinwei* day, the first of the moon, when an eclipse of the sun occurred, the drums were beaten and a sacrifice made at the *she* 鼓用牲于社. Why? As a way of imploring the *yin*, a red thread was tied around the *she* 求乎陰之道、以朱絲營社. One explanation says this

> was to threaten the *she*, another that there was a risk that someone, in the darkness [of the eclipse], infringe the limits of the *she*.

According to this entry, by the intermediary of the *she*, human actions can have an effect on natural phenomena like eclipses. There is no doubt that beating drums and offering sacrifices were actions made to give energy to the declining sun. Tying a red thread around the perimeter of the *she* can be understood as an attempt to make the red energy reach the sun through the *she*. When people wanted to exert a magic influence on the celestial world, they did so via the *she*. The *she* is not just the site of rituals addressed to the god of the earth, but the place where sky and earth communicate and through which people could have an impact on the sky.

The spreading earth: Yu's flood control and the "expansive earth"

In Chinese mythology, in a distant past, Yu 禹 made the land safe for people to live on by conquering the big flood that had covered the entire world.[40] There are many texts mentioning this flood control by Yu; for example, the chapter "Yugong" 禹貢 of the *Book of documents*, which relates the creation of the nine provinces and the determination of the tribute owed by each province.[41] It begins with the following expression: "Yu spread the earth (*futu* 敷土). Following the mountains, he cut down trees and fixed the lofty mountains and major rivers." The *Weikong zhuan* 僞孔傳 interprets this paragraph as follows:

> When the flood was overflowing, Yu went to each of the nine provinces and secured their earth. When he went through a mountain forest, he cut down the trees and opened a road. The lofty mountains are the five great mountains, and the major rivers are the four great rivers. In each of them he set the procedure that must be followed for the rituals.

The *Shu jizhuan* 書集傳 (*Collected traditions of the* Documents) explains:

> 'Spread' (*fu* 敷) means to divide; he separated the lands and fixed the nine provinces. 'Fixed' (*dian* 奠) means to determine; he determined the lofty mountains and major rivers and, by so doing, made clear the border between the provinces.

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[40] See Kominami Ichirô, "Daichi no shinwa–Kon U shinwa genshi," *Koshi shunju* 1985.2, 2–22; also, in this volume, the chapter by Mark Edward Lewis.

[41] See the chapter by Vera Dorofeeva-Lichtmann in this volume.

Thus, even in this short sentence placed at the opening of the "Yugong" chapter, old commentaries and new are quite different. Looking just at the first three characters, "Yu spread the earth" 禹敷土, the commentators give very different readings. Which is correct? Or are completely different readings possible?

The formation of the "Yugong" is supposed to go back to the Warring States period. Because it is a text of such an early period, it is not easy to recover the original meaning of each expression. But we may notice the following fact: in the texts on flood control by Yu, we frequently encounter the expression *futu* 敷土, "spread the earth," or a similar expression, suggesting such words were probably conventional descriptions of the mythological acts of Yu. For example, in the hymn "Changfa" 長發 in the *Book of songs*, in the part where the origins of the Shang people are recounted, we read the following:

> Deep and wise was Shang,
> Always furthering its good omens.
> The waters of the Flood spread wide.
> Yu ranged lands and realms on earth below 敷下土方;
> Beyond, great kingdoms were his frontier,
> And when this far-flung power had been made lasting
> The clan of Song was favoured;
> God (Di 帝) appointed its child to bear Shang.[42]

We would like to know here the precise meaning of the line translated "Yu ranged lands and realms on earth below," but there is no doubt that it is related to the expression in the "Yugong" translated above, "Yu spread the earth."

In the *Shanhai jing* 山海經 (*Classic of mountains and seas*) the term *butu* 布土 used in the telling of the story of Yu is without question related to *futu* 敷土. In the chapter "Hainei jing" 海内經, the flood control of Yu is related as follows:

> Yu and Gun 鯀 first spread the earth (*butu* 布土) and secured all nine provinces…When the flooding waters engulfed the heavens, Gun stole the living earth (*xirang* 息壤) from Di 帝 and sought with it to dike the flood. Because he acted without waiting for a mandate from Di, Di ordered (*ling* 令) Zhurong 祝融 to kill Gun in the vicinity of Feather [Mountain] 羽郊. Gun came back to life in Yu, and Di then mandated Yu to complete the task of spreading the earth (*butu*) so as to secure the nine provinces.

[42] Tr. Waley, *Songs*, p. 277.

The term *butu* used here probably meant "to spread the earth." Gun stole the special earth called "living earth," the possession of Di, and spread it in every region in order to stop the flood. We may infer that the *butu* refers to this act of spreading earth from heaven.

In the lines telling the story of Yu in the chapter "Chengxiang" 成相 of the *Xunzi* 荀子 there is the word *futu* 傅土, "scatter the earth," which must again be related to the expressions *futu* and *butu*:

> Yu had great merit: he suppressed the flood, eliminated the scourge of the people, and banished Gonggong 共工. To the north he channeled nine streams through twelve marshes, linking them to three rivers…Yu scattered the earth, pacified the world, labored mightily on behalf of the people, and found Yi 益, Gaotao 皋陶, Hengge 横革, and Zhicheng 直成 to serve as his assistants.

The expression *futu* here must be related to *futu* and no doubt also refers to the spreading of the "living earth."

One of the oldest textual documents recording the control of the flood by Yu is the recently revealed bronze inscription called Xigongxu (燹公盨).[43] From the design of a bird on one side of this bronze, we may infer that it is from the middle of the Western Zhou period. The inscription on this bronze starts with the following words: "Heaven commanded Yu to spread the earth, to dig the mountain, and to dredge the rivers" 天令禹尃土、墮山濬川. This means the expression "Yu spread the earth" is a truly archaic one.

Thus the use of *futu* or its equivalent is found in a wide range of accounts of the flood control by Yu. In all likelihood, this expression has its origin in a fixed verse form of the epic narration of Yu's labors, and even when the original meaning of this fixed verse form had became obscure, it was still used as an ancient expression inherited from the past. On the basis of the *Classic of mountains and seas*, where Gun starts to spread the earth and Yu completes the task, we may hypothesize that the term originally meant the use of "living earth" (*xirang*) from the sky. Another term for "living earth" is *xitu* 息土. Both terms refer to an earth that possesses vitality and can expand spontaneously. The character *xi* 息 may be understood in the sense of *zixi* 滋息, "spontaneously grow in vitality." The Guo Pu 郭璞 commentary on the *Classic of mountains and seas* explains *xirang* as follows:

[43] See *Huaxue* 6 (Hong Kong, 2003), 1–49.

> *Xirang* refers to an earth that expands unlimitedly. That is why it could be used to stop up the flooding waters. The *Manual of achilleomancy* 開筮 says: "Vast the flooding waters, they have no boundary where they stop." Lord Gun, with living stones and earth 息石息壤, stopped the flood.

The use of the term *xitu* instead of *xirang* may be seen in the "Dixing xun" 墬形訓 chapter of the *Huainanzi* 淮南子:

> In all, the abysmal swamps composed of vast stretches of water measuring several hundred meters in depth covered 200,033,550 leagues and included nine abysses. Then Yu stopped up the flooding waters with living earth 息土 that he formed into the eminent mountains.[44]

The swamps of 200,033,550 leagues in extent correspond to the passage just before our quotation, when Yu has Taizhang 太章 and Shuhai 竪亥 measure the earth from east to west and south to north respectively, and both come up with a distance of 200,033,500 leagues and 75 steps. This vast space was entirely submerged under flood waters several hundred meters deep. The nine abysses made by the flood were filled by Yu with the living earth which created the nine provinces by building a big mountain in each province. Regarding this living earth, the commentary of Gao You 高誘 explains as follows: "The *xitu* is never exhausted: the more it is dug the more abundant it becomes. That is why the flooding waters could be stopped up by it."

The legend of the flood control by Yu is also mentioned in the "Tianwen" poem in the *Songs of the South*, where the transfer from Gun to Yu is described as follows:

> When the owl and the turtle [taught him the flood control method by]
> pulling and holding in the mouth,
> Why did Gun not follow what they said?
> And if he almost accomplished the work according to his will,
> Why did the High Lord (Di 帝) punish him?
> Long he lay cast off on Feather Mountain 羽山.
> Why did he not rot for three years?
> Lord Yu came forth from the belly of Gun.
> How was he transformed?
> Yu inherited the same tradition
> And carried on the work of his father.
> Why was it that though he continued the work already begun,
> His plan was a different one?

[44] Translation based on Charles Le Blanc and Rémi Mathieu, eds, *Huainanzi*, p. 164.

How did he fill the flood waters up
Where they were most deep?
How did he set bounds
To the Nine Lands of the earth?
What did the winged dragon trace on the ground?
Where did the seas and rivers flow?
What did Gun labour on,
And what did Yu accomplish?[45]

Here the fact that the task of containing the flood was started by the father Gun and completed by the son Yu is pointed out. While Gun, sacrificing himself, stole the living earth treasured by Di, the High Lord, Yu then spread it everywhere and, by the power of proliferation of the living earth, succeeded in restraining the flood. If we schematize this legend from the point of view of vitality, the vitality of the sky, by the intermediary of the living earth, was transmitted to earth, and this vitality overwhelmed the forces antagonistic to life in the form of a flood and vanquished the chaos on the surface of the earth. The legendary motif of the sacrifice of Gun, which made possible the transmission of the vitality of the sky to earth, is inseparable from the sacrificial ritual that is the background of this legend.

The flood that Yu conquered is historicized in some texts like the *Book of documents*, where it is said to be a disaster that occurred in the time of Lord Yao 堯. But the flood that Yu had to deal with was not just a big scale river inundation. A "flood"—*hongshui* 洪水, 鴻水, as the characters say—is originally "vast waters," and it is thought to be what is referred to as original waters or a primordial sea in mythical expressions: "How admirable was the merit of Yu! His intelligent virtue reached far. But for Yu, we should have been fishes."[46] It is only if one reads this line with the tradition of the primitive sea in mind that one can fully grasp its meaning.

In Polynesian mythology, it was the work of a bird to bring the earth over the primitive sea on which people can live. In what is generally called underwater mythology, a bird dove into the primitive sea and came up holding in his mouth a clod of earth from the bottom of the sea. Many legends explain that this earth expanded and became the actual earth. In the case of the legend of Yu, this clod of earth is the

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[45] Translation based on Hawkes, *Songs of the South*, p. 48.
[46] Kominami Ichirô, "Chûgoku no kôzui densetsu," *Sekai no kôzui shinwa* (Tôkyô, 2004), ed. Sinda Chiwaki, pp. 92–107. Tr. Legge, *Tso chuen*, p. 578.

xirang, and it was brought by Gun from the sky. Was there a tradition that the *xirang* came from a clod of earth at the bottom of the great sea, or did it come, from the beginning, from the sky? It is very difficult to find materials which could help us decide. But in the tradition of flood control by Yu, the structure of the myth places it between the two extremities of earth and sky, and the *xirang*, which contains the vitality of the sky, is transmitted to earth, filling the function of an intermediary between sky and earth.

Immediately after the *Huainanzi* passage quoted above, after the mention of Yu using the living earth to make the "eminent mountains," reference is made to his "leveling Mount Kunlun so that it come down to earth." Mount Kunlun is said to be the "head of the earth" in the *Hetu guadi xiang* 河圖括地象.[47] At the summit of the world there is the Kunlun mountain, and Xu Zheng 徐整, in the *Changli* 長暦,[48] says that the summit of the Kunlun mountain corresponds to the Great Bear constellation. Mount Kunlun, on the vast earth, is the nearest point to the sky, and its summit reaches the sky. There earth and sky meet. If someone climbed to the top of Mount Kunlun, he would have entered the world of the sky.[49]

As we saw before, the ritual executed on the *she* altar can influence Heaven. The *she* is not just a place to revere the earth but is also a place where Heaven and Earth communicate. Both the *she* and Mount Kunlun have the religious function of being, each in its own space, a meeting point of sky and earth. We may say that Kunlun mountain is a *she* representing the entire earth, and the *she* of the different regions are miniature Kunluns for each area.

Kunlun is a mountain coming from the sky, and the clod of earth which is the core of the *she* also comes, if we consider its origin, from the sky. The earth of the *she* was the earth of the different homelands of each tribe, the place which was considered, if we go back in time, as the land from which the ancestor of the tribe first descended. If this earth of the oldest homeland was made from the clod of earth carried by the ancestor from the sky, then it was the oldest *she*. This religious transmission was mythologized, and in the case of the Shang, the holy

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[47] Quoted in the early Song imperial encyclopedia, the *Taiping yulan*, j. 38.

[48] Also quoted in *Taiping yulan*, j. 38.

[49] Concerning the mythological functions of Mount Kunlun, see Kominami Ichirô, *Seiôbô to Tanabata denshô* (Tôkyô, 1991), pp. 143–86.

earth which is the core of the *boshe*, is thought to takes its origin from the *xirang* used by Yu to control the flood.

We already mentioned in the beginning of this chapter that the character *bo* 亳 in *boshe* was written with the different characters 薄, 博 and 蒲. Concerning the spreading of the earth, *futu* 敷土, by Yu, we saw several ways of writing it: 傅土, 布土, or 尃土. If we infer from the phonetic part 甫 which is present in most of the characters of these two groups, may we not suppose that these expressions are phonetically linked?[50] If this supposition is not wrong, we may suppose, in a roundabout way, that there was a tradition identifying the *xirang* as the earth placed by the Shang at the core of the *boshe* in each place—the earth spread by Yu to control the flood—and that this earth took its origin from the sky. There is certainly a deep connection between the fact that the clod of earth which is the main part of the *she* was brought from the sky and the fact that the religious installation which is the *she* has the function of intermediary between earth and sky.

Yu spread the *xirang* everywhere he went and so governed the whole earth. When the various peoples, from the Shang to the Zhou, carried a clod of earth from their homeland and spread it via the *she* in the new territories they acquired through conquest, thereby making it possible to reside in those territories, they were engaging in a practice whose background was the mythical conception of flood control by Yu. The earth not only contains vitality, but the vitality of one clod of earth can be transmitted to another region and represent rule over the entire land.

[50] The details of the phonetic system of the Shang are not known, but by inference from the phonetic and figurative characters seen in the turtle shell characters, it should not be so different from the Zhou. About the pronunciation in old Chinese of the characters "敷," "布," "傅," etc., if we use the table of Robert Eno, we obtain: 亳敷傅布尃 (甫) 蒲博 Karlgren*b'ăk*p'iwo*piwo*pwo*p'iow*piwo*b'wo*b'wo; Guo Xi Liang 郭錫良*băk*p'ĭwa*pĭwa*pua*p'ĭwa*p'ĭwa*pĭwa*păk. See Ikeda Suetoshi, "Kodaichûgoku no chiboshin ni kansuru ichikôsatsu," *Chûgoku kodai shûkyôshi kenkyû* (Tôkai daigaku, 1981).

EASTERN ZHOU (770–256 BC)

ANCESTOR WORSHIP DURING THE EASTERN ZHOU

Constance A. Cook*

Sacrifice and divination records, both material and textual, show that the practice of ancestor worship—a ritual practice involving the deification of select human spirits[1]—was linked to maintaining a stable political and social hierarchy in an agrarian Zhou society. In the system reflected in contemporary texts, people of social rank (i.e., members of the "100 named" lineage groups, *bai xing* 百姓) all worshipped a progenitor or shared Zhou founder ancestor, the grain god and earth deity (Houji 后稷), and their lineage founder whose original rank could be traced back to the creation of a Heavenly Mandated Zhou nation, its founder kings, and the Zhou mission of control over non-Zhou peoples in the surrounding Four Regions (*sifang* 四方). During the five centuries of political strife and economic changes known as the Eastern Zhou period (770–256 BC), this system came to an end, and with it disappeared the role of ancestors as the vital link between Heaven (Tian 天) and political power.

Numerous factors led to the downfall of this Zhou-style system and ultimately the demise of the celestial ancestral bureaucracy: destruction of aristocratic lineages through warfare, population mobility and the loss of traditional communities, more sophisticated agricultural and trade networks, and the rise of political economic powers representing

* I am grateful to Sarah Allan, John Lagerwey, and an anonymous reader for critical readings at various stages in the writing of this chapter.

[1] Steven Bokenkamp notes that "ancestor worship" is a misnomer for the practice of "maintenance of family ties through ritual means in the hope that one's forebears might continue to aid their descendants"; see "Record of the Feng and Shan," *Religions of Asia in practice: an anthology*, Donald S. Lopez, ed. (Princeton, 2002), p. 388. Lee Kwang Kyu notes that the performance of funerary rites and shamanistic rituals is characteristic of Korean style ancestor worship.These rituals create a system of mutual dependence between the living and the dead that is common in other East Asian systems. He notes that spirits that become protective ancestors are those who have lived long lives and died normal deaths. Basically, the performance of ritual has the power to determine the nature of the spirit; see "The concept of ancestors and ancestor worship in Korea," *Asian Folklore Studies* 43.2 (1984), 199–214. Lee's definition of the prescribed rituals was drawn from Korean versions of the traditional Chinese ritual texts, particularly the *Liji* and *Yili*.

non-Zhou cultures. The old system, which relied on intact, stable, and ancient Zhou-style lineage records of ancestral merit (such as those preserved by Zhou elites to determine the authority and rank of a given noble's heirs) collapsed as rulers without clear pedigrees swept down the Yellow and Yangzi river valleys eastward wiping out the old-Zhou states. Ceremonies linked to the worship of by-gone lineage founders were adapted by local courts for the worship of different sets of progenitors and non-Zhou "sage kings" (*shengwang* 聖王),[2] whose cultural affiliations and political achievements, according to Eastern Zhou texts, predated the Zhou.

In the first stage of the collapse of the Zhou system, during the Spring and Autumn period (770–476 BC) and into the Warring States period (475–222 BC), mortuary rituals—that is, those rituals used to create and sustain an identity for the deceased—linked the deceased to founder ancestors and lineages connected to the defunct Zhou tribute system, a system focused on settling new territory for farming.[3] As more polities outside the central Yellow river region of earlier Zhou hegemony rose to power and as more of the old lineages became corrupted, were overthrown, or simply died out, ceremonies celebrating founder deities other than the first Zhou kings became increasingly evident in textual records. At the same time, rituals formerly used in ancestor worship shifted away from lineage rituals and the worship of human spirits. By the early Han period (BC 206–9 AD), the most popular sage kings of the Three Dynasties (*sandai* 三代), which included the defunct Zhou founder kings, were consolidated into a single evolutionary system as a model of behavior for present and future rulers. At the same time, these founder kings and associated lineage founders were displaced as the ultimate source of moral and political authority in Tian by cosmologies of revolving natural influences, such as in the "five phases" or "five processes" (*wuxing* 五行).

By the end of the Warring States period, ancestor worship had lost its political saliency (or connection to the Heavenly Mandate, *tianming* 天命), and ancestral spirits were subsumed back into the larger pantheon of natural forces that could interfere with an individual's life mandate (*ming* 命). This change was most obvious with regard to Tian, which

[2] The epithet *sheng* was applied to lineage ancestors during the Western Zhou period.

[3] Cho-yun Hsu and Katheryn M. Linduff, *Western Chou civilization* (New Haven, 1988), pp. 345–60.

for the Zhou had been not only the ultimate site of the most powerful ancestors but also the original source of their own "mandate" to rule. By the end of the Warring States period, Tian's anthropomorphic presence had been replaced by the abstract astral power, the "Great One," Taiyi 太一. By the Han period, founder ancestor spirits as inhabitants of the sky, possibly near the North Pole, might serve as liaisons in communication with a celestial bureaucracy during the performance of rites by their descendants but not as the ultimate determiners of the emperor's right to rule, as was the case in earlier times.[4]

The shift from human historic lineage founders to astral deities as sources of authority was complete by the Han period. With the advent of the Han imperial age, founder deities linked to the three interconnected cultural regions of the Three Dynasties, known as Xia, Shang, and Zhou, were relegated to an ancestral trinity, called the Sanhuang 三皇 (Three Brilliancies).[5] Varied pantheons of sage king founders were reduced into the Wudi 五帝 (Five Lords/Emperors) to match the five processes.[6] The location of the Sanhuang and Wudi in Tian (replacing the ancestors) is evident by Han times but may have begun much earlier. For example, in the case of the Sanhuang,[7] we are reminded of a Zhou sky trinity, the Three Long Lived Ones 三壽 (Sanshou), already known from late Western Zhou bronze inscriptions. These deities were envisioned as residing in the sky along with other ancestors arrayed (by rank) at the sides of the Lord on High (Shangdi 上帝).[8] In the Han period, stone

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[4] Bokenkamp, "Record of the Feng and Shan," p. 388.

[5] For a clear articulation of the numerology of three and its links to time and astrology, see John Major, *Heaven and earth in early Han thought: chapters three, four, and five of the* Huainanzi (Albany, NY, 1993), pp. 108–12.

[6] See K.C. Chang's study of the "heroes" and the "legendary kings" in the text "Roots of the generations" (*Shiben* 世本), "China on the eve of the historical period," in *The Cambridge history of ancient China: from the origins of civilization to 221 BC*, Michael Loewe and Edward Shaughnessy, eds (Cambridge, 1999), pp. 68–71.

[7] For a study of how *huang* represented a bright light and for a discussion of its use as an epithet for ancestors beginning in the Western Zhou, see Constance Cook, "Auspicious metals and southern spirits: an analysis of the Chu bronze inscriptions," PhD dissertation (Berkeley, 1990), p. 107. The term *huangdi* was used for a spirit in the late Western Zhou (see in Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan kaogu yanjiusuo, comp., *Yin Zhou jinwen jicheng*, 18 vols (Beijing, 1984–94), no. 4342. Hereafter cited as *Jicheng*). For a discussion of ancestors as stars, see Sarah Allan, "On the identity of Shang Di 上帝 and the origin of the concept of a Celestial Mandate (*tian ming* 天命)," *Early China*, forthcoming.

[8] For the argument that *shangdi* is a cosmological phenomenon, see David Pankenier, "A brief history of Beiji 北極 (Northern Culmen), with an excursus on the origin of the character *di* 帝," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 124.2 (April-June 2004),

reliefs from the Shandong area dating to the 2nd century AD depict Taiyi (also known as the Lord of Heaven, Tiandi 天帝) as seated in a low throne inside the ladle of the Big Dipper. Arrayed behind him were three men and before him four more, possibly representing the seven stars of the Dipper constellation.[9] In this stone shrine, the title Sanhuang no longer represented the founder kings of the Sandai (as earlier in the Han) but instead represented other mythological creation gods, who along with the Wudi occupied in ranked array the top floor of a building or mountain structure consisting of registers or "floors" with figures from famous historical narratives.[10] That this architectural form was crowned with the mythological scene representing the archetypal ancestress and directional goddess, Queen Mother of the West (Xiwangmu 西王母), suggests that this was a realm of the immortals, an intermediary realm envisioned in the west where famous "historical" souls could reach Tian through the offices of a cosmic ancestor with no connection to a human lineage.[11] While this representation might be understood as an abstract remnant of access to Tian via an ancestral-type spirit, it is evident that the earlier prestigious Zhou system had disappeared.

This transition resulted from a breakdown in lineage worship that occurred during the Eastern Zhou period. Although all deities, no matter how historic, could wield potential harm, local courts by the end of the Eastern Zhou period had become much more concerned

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211–36, and Sarah Allan, "On the identity." For a review of the question of whether *shangdi* was a single or collective ancestor god, see the chapter by Robert Eno in this book and Michael Puett, *To become a god: cosmology, sacrifice, and self-divinization in early China* (Cambridge, Mass., 2002), pp. 48–50; Allan, "On the identity." Allan shows how Shangdi can be identified as Tian.

[9] Cary Liu, Michael Nylan, and Anthony Barberi-Low, eds, *Recarving China's past: art, archaeology, and architecture of the Wu family shrines* (New Haven, 2005), pp. 145–47.

[10] Cary et al., *Recarving*, pp. 170–71. The creation gods were Fuxi and Nüwa (with dragon tails entwined and dangling an infant between them), Zhurong (a Chu founder deity), and Shennong, an agricultural god, possibly related to the earlier Houji and the earth god, Houtu, see Ding Shan, "Houtu Houji Shennong Jushou kao" (*shang*) *Wenshi* 55 (2001.2), 1–13; (*xia*) *Wenshi* 56 (2001.3), 1–16. Cary Liu and Eileen Hsiang-ling Hsu in their discussion of this carved panel wonder if the cartouche subdividers within the upper three of the four registers represented divisions of time or space. The lowest register continues a procession of chariots from other panels and may represent the funeral procession; see Cook's analysis of the procession in a 4th-century BC painting, in Constance Cook, *Death in ancient China: the tale of one man's journey* (Leiden, 2006), pp. 119–28.

[11] The title *wangmu* referred to a deceased grandmother during the Warring States period.

with interpreting natural omens produced by Sky and Earth by way of mathematical equations of natural forces, such as time, *yin*, *yang*, directions, elements, mountains, rivers, clouds, stars, comets, sounds, and so forth.[12] While worship of ancestor spirits had always coexisted within a larger pantheon of natural spirits, this last stage marked a clear reversal in the influence of human spirits. The sphere of influence shrunk from the older elite communities of the social structure of economically corporate kin groups or clans (*zu* 族) spread over a homeland region to simply that of an extended-family unit in a single location.[13] These earlier corporate groups, tied to relatively non-mobile farming communities, did not survive the social disruption of the Eastern Zhou period.[14] The following sections will document the fall of the Zhou-style system and the ceremonies used to uphold the system, with an emphasis on regional variations and the manipulation of iconic Zhou ceremonies for the worship to non-Zhou deities.

Land, founder ancestors and the loss of the Zhou tradition

During the Eastern Zhou period, the relationship between agriculture, community, and corporate kin groups that had originally led to the rise of ancestor worship in ancient China broke down. The historical founders of lineages authorized by the Zhou kings (in a process later known during the Eastern Zhou period as *feng* 封)[15] were gradually

[12] This system is described in detail by Li Ling, *Zhongguo fangshu kao* (Beijing, 2000).

[13] For reading this term as "clan," see Lothar von Falkenhausen, *Chinese society in the age of Confucius (1000–250 BC): the archaeological evidence* (Los Angeles, 2006), pp. 23–4, 28. In a study of societies that exhibit various levels of ancestor worship, Dean Sheils notes that ancestor worship is most intense among "economically corporate kin" groups with unilineal descent, polygynous marriage types, and relatively non-mobile simple horticultural life economies: "Toward a unified theory of ancestor worship: a cross-cultural study," *Social Forces* 54.2 (Dec., 1975), 429–31.

[14] For a more detailed review of the social and political changes, see Falkenhausen, *Chinese society*; Michael Loewe and Edward Shaughnessy, eds, *The Cambridge history of ancient China*, particularly chapters by Falkenhausen, "The waning of the Bronze Age: material culture and social developments, 770–481," pp. 450–544, and Cho-yun Hsu, "The Spring and Autumn period," pp. 545–86.

[15] Eastern Zhou texts describe this as a process of creating "a protective fence" around Zhou of land grants to members of the king's main lineage group (*zongzu* 宗族) or of brothers from the mother's family: see *Zuozhuan* Xi 24 and Zhao 9, *Shisanjing zhushu*, Ye Shaojun, comp., 8 vols (Beijing, 1987), vol. 6, pp. 255–57, 778; hereafter cited as *Shisanjing zhushu*. Many scholars accept the Eastern Zhou descriptions of the Western

displaced by the founder deities of un-related lineages.[16] Sites of worship, their tombs and shrines, were neglected or destroyed as the communities themselves were dislocated by war or cultural changes. What then remained of the once powerful founder ancestors, those ancestors connected to the original communities, existed primarily in memory.[17] In Eastern Zhou texts, the re-creation of new communities out of the old often required mythologizing the Zhou system of establishing polities and their protective ancestral spirits. Texts documenting the Spring and Autumn period, for example, reveal a preoccupation with the creation and destruction of altars (*sheji* 社稷) representing a combination of earth worship inherited from the Shang and worship of the Zhou progenitor and grain god (Houji). According to the ritual texts, "mound men" (*fengren* 封人) were in charge of setting up and maintaining these altars. They were also in charge of the borderlands of states, which like the state altar (and perhaps the ancient Zhou fields), required sacrifices and protection.[18] While both a well-maintained *sheji* and a central ancestral

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Zhou system as historical reality and, hence, the Eastern Zhou system as a corruption of the earlier system as described, see Mark Lewis, "Warring States political history," in *The Cambridge history of ancient China*, pp. 607–09. However, Western Zhou bronze inscriptions that mention *feng* do so only in terms of out-lining fields for purposes of agriculture (*Jicheng* 2831, 10176). A couple inscriptions mention Zhou subjects acting as a protective fence (*ping* 甹> 屏, *Jicheng* 2841, 4326, 4341, 10175) around the king's throne (*wei* 位) which might be understood as a symbol of state. Nevertheless, even though archaeologists continue to try to provide material proof of "Zhou" states as recorded in later texts (Falkenhausen discusses instead the expansion of a Zhou ritual system, *Chinese society*), traditional terms like "fiefs," enfeofment," or "feudal system" will be avoided by this author.

[16] The "Zhou" process was described in the "Yueji" chapter of the *Liji* in terms of granting of lands to the descendants of founder sage-kings (compare the "Zhou benji" description in the *Shiji*, see n. 109 below). First, the Zhou founder, King Wu, granted lands for the worship of Huangdi, Di Yao, and Di Shun, and then, of Xia Houshi. In a third stage, Zhou King Wu "cast" 投 the Yin (or Shang) descendants into Song while also creating a burial space (*feng*) for the legendary murdered official Wangzi Bi Gan (*Shisanjing zhushu* vol. 5, pp. 695–96).

[17] For a discussion of how the Western Zhou re-invented their past to adapt to social change and the importance of the narrative of ancestral contribution to that past, see Ming-ke Wang, "Western Zhou remembering and forgetting," *Journal of East Asian Archaeology* 1 (1999), 231–50.

[18] The *fengren*, mentioned in the *Zuozhuan* and later texts, was somewhat similar to the Western Zhou *situ* 司徒. For a description of the *fengren*'s duties, see the *Zhouli* "Diguan situ 2," *Shisanjing zhushu* vol. 3, pp. 187–88. Curiously, while there is ample evidence in the Shang oracle bones for the existence of *she*, the only Western Zhou bronze inscription that mentions *she* is one found in old Shang territory (the Yi Hou Ze *gui*, see *Jicheng* 4320). Among Eastern Zhou inscriptions, there is only the late Warring States period Zhongshan inscriptions that mention *feng* in terms of the

shrine (*zongmiao* 宗廟) represented political health and lineage rank within the mythologized Zhou system, during the Warring States period it was only the *sheji* that remained the primary icon of statehood.

The Eastern Zhou preoccupation with the institution of *feng* was tied up with the creation of founder ancestors and sites to worship them. The word itself had a number of different meanings, but the most common Eastern Zhou meanings ("to grant land," "to bury," and "to raise a mound over a burial") were related not only in terms of the notion of creating a sanctified area within distinct borders but in terms of creating a space for ancestor and founder worship. The Eastern Zhou sense of "a land grant" was linked to the establishment of the *sheji* altar for sacrifices to the earth and grain deities and a shrine for sacrifices to the lineage founder (called variously the *xianzu* 先祖, *xiangu* 先古, *xiansheng* 先聖, *xianwang* 先王, *xianjun* 先君, or *shanggong* 上公).[19] Following what was understood as Zhou custom, the lords of local polities presented bronze sacrificial vessels from their own treasuries for sacrifices to founder ancestors whenever a new *feng* was acknowledged.[20] This act can be understood as a symbolic transfer or extension of spiritual authority (initially from Tian to the Zhou founders and then to local founders) and protection from a patron (whose social rank was determined by the perceived rank of his founder ancestor) to a subservient lord in a newly re-sanctified area (i.e., lands won as the result of war or other alliances). During the Eastern Zhou period, it was the status of the founder ancestor, tied to the original *feng* of a contemporary state, which determined

nation's borders (*fengjiang*) and the site of *sheji* in terms of the Four Regions, *sifang* (see *Jicheng* 2840).

[19] This is made clear in the ritual texts; see, for a few of many examples, the *Zhouli*, "Diguan situ 2," *Shisanjing zhushu* vol. 3, pp. 149, 173, 187; "Chunguan Zongbo 3," *Shisanjing zhushu* vol. 3, pp. 290; *Liji*, "Jiyi" and "Ai Gong wen," *Shisanjing zhushu* vol. 5, pp. 826, 849. The establishment of a state (*guo*) required a "spirit throne" (*shenwei* 神位), which consisted of a *sheji* and a central ancestral shrine (*zongmiao*) set up next to each other. All *feng* had to be announced to the earth god. In the *Zuozhuan*, the *xianjun* were the "hosts" or "principle agents" (*zhu* 主) of the *sheji*. *Sheji* were treated like living beings: they were consoled, insulted, fed blood and grain sacrifices, protected, and when destroyed, referred to as "corpses" (*shi* 尸) (*Zuozhuan* passim; for the reference to a conquered one as a corpse, see *Zhouli*, "Qiuguan sigou 5," *Shisanjing zhushu* vol. 3, p. 527).

[20] This was presumably to assuage the spirits of the earth and grain altar and to set up a system whereby the lords would be compelled to return vessels to the king during a mortuary feast (*Zuozhuan* Zhao 11, *Shisanjing zhushu*, vol. 6, p. 823.).

the rank of the state's living ruler.[21] The rank of one's founder ancestor and the perceived legitimacy of the patron-client relationship involved in the Zhou creation of the *feng* determined, for example, where a guest would be seated during funerary performances as well as the type of gift exchange considered proper.[22] Such displays of social rank connected to a Zhou-style mortuary system, along with the need on the part of an individual descendant to adequately express reverence for the rank of the deceased, were factors in early arguments for the continued observance of lengthy mourning and mortuary sacrifices. These arguments for tradition faced intensifying attacks by elite groups who questioned the efficacy of Zhou-style rituals at the same time that the system of ancestor worship was crumbling. The sphere of ancestral influence was narrowing to the lives of their immediate descendants.[23] It was precisely at this same time that the Bronze Age—marked by the production of bronze sacrificial and burial vessels for ancestor creation and worship, a system that had peaked under the Zhou—was also coming to an end.

The loss of the Zhou system of ancestor worship began with the traumatic loss of the Zhou homeland and ancestral burial grounds in 771 BC. The earlier surrounding buffer or tribute states of the Zhou then competed to "protect" the Zhou legacy symbolized by the bronze vessels used by the Zhou heirs for ancestor worship. In fact, this "protection" was often an excuse for plundering the sacrificial vessels and other treasures that the heirs had transported eastward for ancestor worship (hoards of bronzes had been left buried in caches back in the homeland—possibly because they were too heavy to carry or because the vessels were associated in the minds of their users with the land where the ancestors were buried). The state of Zheng 鄭 moved the Zhou treasures around when they relocated the heirs in new or rebuilt sections of Chengzhou 成周. Qin 秦, which at that time occupied the ancestral Zhou region, absconded with the treasures altogether. During the Spring and Autumn period, control over the Zhou vessels for ancestor worship represented a ruler's hegemonic control over the central state

[21] This is discussed with an overview of all occurrences of *feng* in pre-Han texts in Constance Cook, "Ritual, politics, and the issue of *feng* (封)," in Wuhan daxue lishi dili yanjiusuo, ed., *Shi Quan xiansheng jiushi danchen jinian wenji* (Wuhan, 2007), pp. 215–67.

[22] See, for example, the case of the attendance of a Jin envoy at a Zhou queen's funeral and why he was not expected to present vessels, unlike the envoy from Lu (*Zuozhuan* Zhao 25, *Shisanjing zhushu* vol. 6, p. 823).

[23] See "Teng Wen gong" in *Mengzi*, for example.

(Zhou) and all its tribute states.[24] It is significant that legend ascribes the disappearance of the Zhou vessels for ancestor worship to the Qin, which not only occupied the Zhou homeland but would eventually end the Zhou era after they swept east and occupied the entire civilized area of the middle and lower Yellow and Yangzi river valleys.

With the symbolic loss of the Zhou vessels, all pretense by former tribute states of protection for the Zhou ended. The break is marked by the advent of the Warring States period, a crisis period during which Confucius (ca. 551–479 BC) proclaimed the need to safeguard the old customs. He claimed to be an inheritor of the tradition of Lu 魯 *feng* or polity[25] founder, the legendary Zhougong 周公, an uncrowned king and brother of the Zhou founder king Wu 武王.[26] Nevertheless, the Ruist battle against the elevation of non-Zhou founders was already lost. Powerful states had already elevated other founder ancestors. Qi 齊 in the northeast and Qin in the west referred in Spring and Autumn period inscriptions to sage kings Tang 湯 and Yu 禹 (legendary founder ancestors of the Shang and Xia dynasties) but not to the Zhou founders, kings Wen 文 and Wu.[27] The Ru themselves admired sage kings Yao and Shun. From tales preserved in the *Zuozhuan* 左傳,[28] we know that the rise of many new and competing states resulted in an intense search for divine authority and ancestral approval, either by elevating non-Zhou founder deities into a Zhou-style system or by bending a perceived Zhou legacy to local circumstances.

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[24] According to legend, these treasures consisted of nine cauldrons with "images" (*xiang* 象) on them; see K.C. Chang, *Art, myth, and ritual: the path to political authority in ancient China* (Cambridge, 1983), pp. 95–106. For Zheng's maneuvers, see "Chimi" in *Guanzi*, in Liu Baonan, ed., *Zhuzi jicheng*, 8 vols (Shanghai, 1991), vol. 5, pp. 205–06 (hereafter *Zhuzi jicheng*). For how Qin "took the essence out" of Zhou, see *Shiji* 4 in Takikawa Kametaro, *Shiki kaichū kōshō* (Taipei, 1977), p. 85.

[25] Many scholars have noted the graphic and phonetic similarities between the words "land grant" (*feng*) and "nation" (*bang* 邦). The word *bang*, however, was used in Western Zhou times to refer to both Zhou and non-Zhou controlled polities.

[26] For a recent study of the possibly multi-cultural origins of Confucius, see Robert Eno, "The background of the Kong family of Lu and the origins of Ruism," *Early China* 28 (2003), 1–41.

[27] A recently discovered inscription which archaeologists date to the second half of the Western Zhou period eulogizes sage-king Yu instead of the Zhou founder kings and may represent a minority tradition active during that period; see Xing Wen, ed., "The X Gong Xu: a report and papers from the Dartmouth workshop," special issue of *International research on bamboo and silk documents: newsletter* (Hanover, 2003).

[28] For details on the compilation of this text during the Warring States period, see Michael Loewe ed., *Early Chinese texts: a bibliographical guide* (Berkeley, 1993), pp. 67–76.

The notorious state of Chu 楚, for example, represented the perfect Eastern Zhou conundrum. As a state just south of Jin 晉 (a Zhou state in the legendary Xia homeland), Chu symbolized an outlying region whose ruler was among the first to publicly announce to the elite world of *hou* 侯 ("warriors" or "warlords," local leaders who presumably sent tribute to the Zhou)[29] that he was now a king (*wang* 王). The Chu was a state that rose in a location that in Zhou social memory was linked to the drowning of an early Zhou king while on a military campaign to the resource-rich south. The Han river, a tributary of the middle Yangzi river, hosts the earliest archaeological finds that document a sophisticated and literate Chu culture familiar with the Zhou ritual system.[30] They had adopted the use of bronze emblems in their sacrificial system and were conversant with Zhou language, but their calendars and ritual customs were different. There were no lineage connections with the Zhou. In addition, we know from 4th century BC documents that Chu ancestral kings (the kings of Jing 荊) were openly located within a pantheon of mythical founders, such as Laotong 老童 (aka Juan Zhang 卷章), Zhurong 祝融, and Yu Yin 粥飲 (aka Yu Xiong 鬻熊), and other natural powers, including the astral deity, Great Unity 太一.[31] The Chu challenge dismissed the Zhou idea that the *wang* had to be empowered by the highest Sky power named Tian (or Shangdi).

[29] Bronze inscriptions show *hou* as powerful leaders or chiefs of lineage networks whose "merit" (*gong* 功) to rule was gained through ritual and martial acts. Bronzes dated as early as the late Shang period and as late as the Warring States period record inscriptions commissioned by variously named *hou* lords. They were allied to the local kings who controlled bronze production and the religio-political economy. Interestingly, while the name of most *hou* during the Western Zhou period consists of a place name, often identifiable from later transmitted texts, occasionally a *hou* belonged to a word linked to the ritual calendar of ancestor worship developed by the Shang people. See, for example, Kang Hou 康侯 or Ji Hou 己侯 (*Jicheng* 06173, 11778–9, 03772). This religious connection seems lost by the Warring States period.

[30] See Constance Cook and John Major, eds, *Defining Chu: image and reality in ancient China* (Honolulu, 1999); Cook, "The ideology of the Chu ruling class: ritual rhetoric and bronze inscriptions," in *Defining Chu*, pp. 67–76; Cook, "Scribes, cooks, and artisans: breaking Zhou tradition," *Early China* 20 (1995), 241–77.

[31] Zhang Zhengming 張正明 discusses how Han sources such as the *Shiji* synthesized numerous mythological founder gods not originally worshipped in Chu (and all linked to sky or earth powers) to create a unified genealogy. These included Gao Yang mentioned in the "Lisao," a case which he claimed was simply an effort on Qu Yuan's part to link Chu to mainstream middle Yellow river valley culture. See *Chu shi* 楚史 (Hankou, 1996), pp. 5–24. For other discussions, see also Cook, "Three high gods of Chu," *Journal of Chinese Religions* 22 (1994), 1–22; Major, "Characteristics of late Chu religion," in *Defining Chu*, pp. 121–43; Cook, *Death in ancient China*, pp. 79–118.

By the 3rd century BC, the debate over the proper qualifications of a *wang* had moved away from Zhou founder ancestors and Tian as the legitimating forces. Early titles, such as *wang* and *di*, which were once limited to living hegemonic rulers or to their deified ancestors, were used by the lower elite as well. The title *wang*, besides being the title for a king, was used as an epithet for a deceased grandfather (*wangfu*) or deceased grandmother (*wangmu*). The title *di* was applied to a royal spirit but also to living "emperors." The *Liji* notes:

> When a Sky King (celestially ordained king, *tianwang* 天王) dies and is being called back (*fu* 復), one says: "Son of the Sky (*tianzi*) return!" When announcing his funeral, one says: "The Sky King is climbing up to the distant realm (*deng jia/xia* 登假>遐)." When arranging the shrine and setting up his tablet, one says: "*di*," but if he had not yet finished his own mourning, he is called "Little One" (*xiaozi* 小子).[32]

The Qin kings, who saw themselves as unifiers, titled themselves "brilliant *di*" (*huangdi* 皇帝). This mix-up in the use of epitaphs for the living and the dead reflects the elite search for divinity and power as it ultimately moved away from a focus on the ascendance of an ancestral god toward the transcendence of oneself within a natural order.[33] This move mirrored the failure of the ancestors to hand down a sustainable, "unchanging" (*bu yi* 不易) heavenly mandate for political control over land.

One reason for the failure of the traditional system was clearly due to the politics of warfare in which the ancestral shrines and earth altars (the *sheji*) of smaller local leaders and lineages were being routinely "wiped out" (*mie* 滅) by bigger states. With their symbols of political independence and connections to the natural founder deities of earth and grain destroyed, the heirs of these small states were forced to align with the *wang* of larger states or the *hou* of former Zhou tribute states. While ancestral treasures and lineage records were melted down, burned or redistributed, occasionally the larger state would re-*feng* the destroyed

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[32] *Shisanjing zhushu* vol. 5, pp. 79–80. The last part of the quote is paraphrased slightly for clarity. The text actually notes that the king referred to himself as "I, the Little One," while he was still mourning (his father), but if he died before he is finished mourning, then he continued to go by that title instead of *di*. The practice of "recalling" the soul took place shortly after death, see Cook, *Death in ancient China*, pp. 32–5. Falkenhausen notes for the Western Zhou that a *xiaozi* is the youngest reigning descendant's self-reference when discussing himself within the context of his ancestors (*Chinese society*, p. 170).

[33] Puett, *To become a god*, documents this process.

state so that the people could carry on sacrifices to certain powerful founder or nature deities—many unheard of during the period of Zhou hegemony.[34] For example, a scion of the Feng corporate group 風姓 at Xugou 須勾 (near Taishan) was reinstated (after the Zhu 邾 people had wiped them out) in order to continue sacrifices to founder deity Dahao 大皞 at the Ji 濟 river.[35] Founder spirits along the Fen 汾 river (Shanxi) were feared troublemakers and thus appeased through multiple acts of *feng* in order to preserve their annual sacrifices.[36] According to Eastern Zhou period legend, the founder god Shun 舜 *feng*ed a chief who raised dragons. Similarly, each of the five phases (*wuxing*) were *feng*ed as high patriarchs 上公 so that they like other noble spirits could receive annual sacrifices.[37] Many, if not all, of these founder deities represented earth, sky, or other natural forces.

Powerful states, such as Lu, Jin, Qi, and Chu, would *feng* or re-*feng* to build hierarchical chains of indebted relationships either over former Zhou (or Ji 姬-named *zu*-corporate group) polities ostensibly to preserve the ancient *feng* connection or over other polities because they were non-Zhou peoples.[38] The manipulation of this idealized Zhou

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[34] Cook, "Ritual, politics, and the issue of *feng*," pp. 252–54.

[35] *Zuozhuan* Xi 21, *Shisanjing zhushu* vol. 6, p. 242.

[36] *Zuozhuan* Zhao 1, *Shisanjing zhushu* vol. 6, p. 667.

[37] *Zuozhuan* Zhao 29, *Shisanjing zhushu* vol. 6, p. 922. For a review of legends regarding Shun in the *Zuozhuan* and the deity's relationship to southern mountain worship, see You Shen, "Chunqiu ji qi yiqian Shu Di chuanshuo xinkao," *Xian Qin, Qin Han shi* 2006.3, 39–44. For the translation of the title *gong* as "patriarch," it is important to understand the history of the term. As Falkenhausen has pointed out the title *gong* was an "appellation of [a] venerated ancestor" and "later also [a] title for the ruler of a polity, sometimes translated as 'Duke'" (*Chinese society*, p. 528). By the Eastern Zhou period, the title was hundreds of years old. In bronze inscriptions, we find the title generally applied to the deceased leader of an elite lineage group who was also a past ruler or even a founder ancestor. There is no clear relationship of the many *gong* found in Eastern Zhou texts to the Zhou king. This is no doubt due to the fact that *gong* was first a kinship rank (higher than "elder" *bo*) and second a political title. For a discussion of when *gong* might be applied instead of *wang* for a local ruler, as in the case of Chu, see Cook, "Myth and authenticity: deciphering the Chu Gong Ni bell inscription," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 113.4 (1993), 539–50, p. 546. By the end of the Eastern Zhou period, the term was also applied to venerated individuals or officials, such as the trinity of *gong* 三公, defined variously as high officers in the early Zhou, of prehistoric dynasties, or even of Taiyi in the sky (in which case, the trinity were stars) depending on which text one followed. In this chapter, keeping with the author's effort to avoid the use of titles linked to Western styles of government, the English title "duke" is avoided. The title "patriarch," which in English can equally be applied to a family head, a founder, and a leader is used instead.

[38] *Zuozhuan* Huan 2, Xiang 10, 27, Zhao 30, *Shisanjing zhushu* vol. 6, pp. 97, 538–39, 643, 927.

framework for exploitation of one's neighbors conferred many benefits besides the obvious economic and political advantages. A *feng* acted as a protective region—replete with its well-fed deities—and also as a source of agricultural and other goods necessary to the performance of lineage rituals such as marriage and mortuary rituals.[39] During the Warring States period, these pseudo-Zhou relationships disintegrated, and the creation and preservation of *feng* became simply associated with either burial or worship of earth and sky (with mountains and mounded burials serving as altars). Textual descriptions of the dikes and earthen mounds with tree plantings that once symbolized the establishment of the borders of a polity were also applied to the creation of a *sheji* or an ideal burial for highly ranked elites.[40] Grand funerals involved sacrifices to Shangdi, *feng* rituals to the great spirits 大神, and sacrifices to the mountains, hence locating the deceased within a supernatural realm of earth and sky spirits rather than within an ancestral lineage.[41] The Zhou tradition of burying bronze texts with the dead "announcing" (*gao* 告) the name and merit of the deceased into the world of the ancestors died out. Seasonal harmony was more important. A *feng* could be set up only in summer, and not in winter months, so as not to harm the earth.[42] By the end of the Warring States period and into the Han period, a grand *feng* 大封 ritual evolved for "unifying the masses," which began with an "announcement" (*gao*) to the earth lord 后土.[43] We see the Warring States version of the ritual continued with the symbolic restoration of a Zhou client state in 130 BC by Han emperor Wudi 武帝 (141–87 BC) when he performed a *feng* ritual on a sacred mountain to the spirits of the four regions (*sifang*) and Shangdi instead of to any particular Zhou founder deity.[44]

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[39] *Zuozhuan* Ai 11, *Shisanjing zhushu* vol. 6, p. 1017.

[40] "Diguan situ 2" and "Chunguan Zongbo 3" in *Zhouli, Shisanjing zhushu* vol. 3, 149–90, p. 334.

[41] "Chunguan Zongbo 3" in *Zhouli, Shisanjing zhushu* vol. 3, p. 298. In fact, I suspect that burial rites from the very beginning involved sacrifices to natural spirits. Unfortunately, there is no reliable textual proof for pre-Eastern Zhou funerals. To further compound the problem, texts with Eastern Zhou content, such as the *Zhouli*, suffered the same Han attempts at synthesis as did the elite genealogies.

[42] "Yueling" in *Liji, Shisanjing zhushu* vol. 5, pp. 305, 323; "Chunguan Zongbo 3" in *Zhouli, Shishanjing zhushu* vol. 3, pp. 315, 406.

[43] "Chunguan Zongbo 3" in *Zhouli, Shisanjing zhushu* vol. 3, pp. 277, 285.

[44] "Qian Han" 6.19, in Wang Xianqian, ed., *Hanshu buzhu* 2 vols (Beijing, 1983), vol. 1, p. 19. The link of *feng* to mountain worship, apparent in the Han, is also seen in the "Yueji" of the *Liji*, *Shisanjing zhushu* vol. 5, p. 696. For the description of a 56

The *feng* system, considered a Zhou relic during the Eastern Zhou period, shifted away from the tight kinship-related organization focused around founder ancestor worship. By the end of the Warring States period, it was all but forgotten, only to be re-invented during the Han as a memorial gesture to an idealized geopolitical past. At the same time that the *feng* ritual lost its link to founder ancestors, another artifact of the Zhou system of ancestor creation and worship was lost: the use of bronze vessels in mortuary ritual. We see also that one of the primary sacrifices performed for individual and founder ancestors using these vessels, the *di* 禘, a sacrifice older than the Zhou,[45] also changed into a seasonal sacrifice to a founder ancestor. At the same time, the essential nature of what composed the human spirit changed. In the Zhou lineage-based order an essence called *de* 德 represented a person's "merit" as it was accumulated through generations of related individuals. By the end of the Warring States period, the term *de* represented a manifestation of one's inner harmony due to a balance of natural forces empowered by cosmic "vapors" or "breath" (*qi* 氣). This shift affected the performance of Zhou-style mortuary ritual, the primary mechanism for establishing the social role of an ancestor. This performance required a lengthy mourning period with repeated and expensive sacrifices as well as ascetic practices on the part of the heirs (including an inconvenient withdrawal from active politics). In a world composed of *qi*, the hierarchy supporting enactment of ancestor worship was meaningless. During the Warring States period, ancestors devolved into manifestations of *qi*, rather than acting as agents of Tian, and retained power only over their descendants and their homes.

Shrines and ceremonies

Sacrifices, rituals, and some acts of government and education took place in ancestral shrines or halls.[46] The combined sacred and secular

AD performance by the Han court at Taishan, see Bokenkamp, "Record of the Feng and Shan."

[45] Eno's chapter in this book and Allan, "The identity," *Early China*, forthcoming. For Zhou practice of the *di*, see Peng Lin, "Zhoudai diji pingyi," in *Xi Zhou shi lunwenji*, vol. 2, Shaanxi lishi bowuguan, ed. (Xi'an, 1993), pp. 1036–49.

[46] Zhang Huaitong points out that the Zhou traditionally conducted government business under the eyes of the ancestors in shrines: "Xi Zhou zuxian chongbai yu jun chen zhenzhi lunli de qiyuan," *Hebei shifan daxue xuebao* 20.4 (1997), 84. According to the "Wangzhi" chapter of the *Liji* (*Shisanjing zhushu* vol. 5, p. 236), the teaching of

functions of the main ancestral shrine (*zongmiao*) are clear by its paired importance with the *sheji* in Eastern Zhou texts.[47] Survival of the idealized state in the re-constructed Zhou model required an active reciprocal relationship of protection (*bao* 保) between the spiritual inhabitants (*zhu* 主 or *ling* 靈) of both sites and their human lineage representatives. Mencius 孟子 (ca. 382–300 BC) explained that the *zongmiao* of each state was where the records (*dianji* 典籍) of their first patriarch's *feng* by the Zhou king or Son of Heaven (*tianzi*) were safeguarded. It was the site where the family ceremonial "vessels" (*qi* 器) were stored.[48] War, neglect, and the intrusion of other ritual systems destroyed the link between ancestor worship, the shrine for this worship, and the stability of the political realm. The archaic use of bronze sacrificial vessels in the shrines to "announce" lineage changes was expensive, unwieldy, and no longer relevant. Their use for establishing a contract for benefits from the ancestors also ended.[49] The change is most noticeable in the inscriptions of the Yangzi river valley, which focused on testimonials of personal worth and on the performance of music and merrymaking rather than ancestors or lineage history.[50]

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royal children took place in the left side of the southern section of the patriarch's hall 公宮南之左 whereas older students were taught outside the city wall (*jiao* 郊).

[47] The two types of shrines appear as a pair in the "duan" commentary of the *Yijing*, a "Shang book" of the *Shujing*, the *Zhouli* (see n. 19 above), the *Liji*, and other transmitted texts including the *Zuozhuan*.

[48] *Zhuzi jicheng* vol. 1, pp. 92, 290, 502. I suspect that, as in traditional Korean religion, one of many spirits or souls may have been conceived of as residing inside a "spirit box" in the form of a bronze vessel (see Lee, "The concept of ancestors," p. 201). Depictions of spirits inside vessels are found in late Warring States and Han period paintings from Changsha, Hunan. The vessels in the paintings share decorative features with contemporary bronze vessels, particularly the feature of dragons running up the walls. In one case, the occupant is driving a dragon and the lidded vessel shape doubles as a covered chariot. Early examples of spirit boxes might include the Shang period cauldron with four faces found in Changsha or even the toy-like Western Zhou vessels on top of wheeled chambers replete with doors and door-guardians (for illustrations, see Cook and Major, *Defining Chu*, figs. 8.1, 8.2, pl. 8; Wu Hung, "Art and architecture of the Warring States period," p. 743, fig. 10.41 (b), Falkenhausen, "The waning of the Bronze Age," p. 483, fig. 7.13).

[49] For a discussion of this process from the standpoint of material culture, see Falkenhausen, "The waning." Falkenhausen dates the cultural shift as beginning around mid-5th century BC (pp. 450–51). See also Jenny So who remarks on the rising importance of lacquerware ("Chu art: link between the old and new," *Defining Chu*, pp. 33–47), and Cook who discusses the changes in rhetoric on the bronze inscriptions ("The ideology of the Chu ruling class: ritual rhetoric and bronze inscriptions," pp. 67–76).

[50] This change has most recently been described by Falkenhausen, *Chinese society*, pp. 293–306. For a more detailed exposition of changes in the rhetoric of southern bronze inscriptions, see Cook, "Auspicious metal and southern spirits."

Eastern Zhou texts reflect an attempt to describe an ideal shrine system in terms of fading corporate groups (*zu*) and their various lineage names (*xing* 姓):

> In cases of the mourning for the various rulers (*zhuhou* 諸侯), those of a different *xing* pay their respects (*lin* 臨) on the outside (of the city) and those of the same *xing* do so (inside) at the main ancestral shrine (*zongmiao*). Those who share the same founder (*zong*) do so at their local branch of the founder ancestral shrine (*zumiao* 祖廟) and those who share the same corporate group (*zu*) do so at their local shrine for the *zu* founder (*nimiao* 禰廟).[51]

By the end of the Warring States period, these fine distinctions were lost in the social upheaval, and the term for lineage name (*xing*) referred simply to a family surname.[52] The term *zu* evolved a rather loose and multi-layered application to people who occupied a common region or village, a *zudang* 族黨, or perhaps shared a common legendary patriarch, a *gongzu* 公族, but no longer shared a common space.[53] The precise nature of the shrines and how (or if) they related to each other is unknown. No doubt there was a great deal of regional variation that is not captured in the textual records. Archaeologists can only attest to the building of shrines and mausoleums in royal burial grounds outside of the cities. Pictorial representations of sacrifices on the surfaces of bronze vessels show simple tiered buildings within an area with trees and featuring scenes of toasting, tasting, or serving from ritual vessels, and of music and dance performances, archery, and other rituals.[54]

Inside tombs, which many scholars interpret as underground shrines, bronze vessels—the emblems of political-economic power and ancestral

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[51] Xiang 12, *Shisanjing zhushu* vol. 6, p. 548. The terms *zumiao* and *nimiao* are rare in Eastern Zhou texts. I suspect their appearance in the *Zuozhuan* may represent a later editorial hand.

[52] For a study of the role of kinship and family in early imperial China, see Mark Lewis, *The construction of space in early China* (Albany, 2006), pp. 77–133.

[53] Both terms appear in the *Zuozhuan*, although most often in the context of Jin politics, suggesting perhaps a regional usage. For the ideal division of Zhou society into *zong* and *zu* and how they "no longer indicated groups living together on common property and coordinating actions for political ends" (but referred instead to individual households separated by geographical difference and no social contract), see Lewis, *The contruction of space*, pp. 94–5.

[54] Wu Hung, "Art and architecture," pp. 671, 702–03, 708–27, figs. 10.8 and 10.26. A small ca. 500 BC model of a one-room building with musical performers was found in a tomb in Zhejiang (see Falkenhausen, "The waning," fig. 7.2). Lewis argues that shrines at tombs were only of secondary importance to the central shrine (*The construction of space*, p. 128).

spiritual approval according to the earlier Zhou system—were slowly displaced in many regions by displays of fine lacquer-ware and silk clothing.[55] At the same time there was a rise in the popularity of the creation of a special category of grave-goods, called "luminous artifacts" (*mingqi* 明器)—artifacts which Xunzi (ca. 310–215 BC) explained "made clear" (a pun on the double meaning of *ming*) the separation between the dead and the living. These objects were different from the regular artifacts made for sacrifices to the ancestors in the ancestral shrines, some of which were also buried in tombs, by the fact that they were purposefully made either useless (i.e., without bottoms), crudely, of materials other than bronze, or, sometimes, as unique objects combining old, new, or foreign elements.[56] The manufacturing of sacrificial artifacts, considered one of the first responsibilities of people with land,[57] was tied to a network of elite alliances as well as access to mining and production centers, such as Houma 侯馬, in the northern section of the middle Yellow river valley (location of the Jin 晉 state) or to Tonglüshan 銅綠山 in the middle Yangzi river valley (location of Jin's rival, the powerful Chu state). The political disruption of old alliances and local control over manufacturing centers altered the traditional economy for sacrificial bronze production.[58]

The ceremonial use of the bronze vessel also changed after the end of the Western Zhou period. During the Spring and Autumn period, we see a clear move away from ceremonial lineage rites under the watchful eyes of Zhou founder kings and Shangdi to an emphasis on entertainment. It was important to lineage representatives that the groups of spirits and guests which mingled during these performances were filled not only with good food and drink but also with joy from fine music and dance. The solemn exchange of prayer and ancestral approval evident in statements of awards or musical performances recorded by the Western Zhou elite was muted. The inscriptions no longer functioned as the

[55] This is especially evident in well-preserved Chu tombs. See the discussions by So, "Chu art," pp. 34–7. For a discussion of all regions, see Falkenhausen, "The waning."

[56] This is explained by Wu Hung, " 'Mingqi' de lilun he shijian," *Wenwu* 2006.6, 72–81. Another discussion is found in Falkenhausen, *Chinese society*, pp. 301–06.

[57] "Quli, shang," *Liji*, in *Shisanjing zhushu* vol. 5, p. 75.

[58] Falkenhausen sees the "attenuation of the ancestral cult" and the aristocratic order as a bottom-up phenomenon of the influence of lower-class beliefs over a declining upper class (*Chinese society*, esp. pp. 290–91, 366, 397–98).

primary record of ancestral approval or gift-giving,[59] although changes in an heir's status from youth to an inherited position in government or the marriage of an elite daughter—both events that affected individual lineage merit and the relative rank of the descendants vis-à-vis the ancestors—were sometimes still cause for the casting of an inscription during the Spring and Autumn period.

Eastern Zhou vessels were rarely dedicated to a single ancestor as in the case of older traditional Zhou inscriptions, suggesting that ancestors were increasingly worshipped in groups. By the end of the Warring States period, inscriptions on bronzes no longer specifically commemorated ancestral rites and might be used in seasonal sacrifices instead. This transition is particularly obvious in southern inscriptions. For example, in the 6th century BC, we find the prescribed function of the vessel to be for "presenting mortuary feasts in order to express filial piety to our brilliant ancestor[60] and accomplished deceased-father" 用享以孝於皇祖文考, but also for "praying for extended longevity" 用祈眉壽. There follows a performance on the part of the royal son that displays Zhou-style virtues essential for receiving *de* from the ancestors, such as a skilled performance of "awesome decorum" (*weiyi* 威儀) accompanied to music. By the 5th century BC, a Chu king presents an inscribed bell as a gift specifically designated for the eternal presenting of mortuary feasts at the ancestral shrine (*zong* 宗) at a place called Xiyang for the deceased lord of Zeng. By the 3rd century BC, ancestral spirits were rarely mentioned. Instead, royal vessels were made for the use of ritual officers for "use in presenting the annual autumnal offerings" 以供歲嘗 or even secularized for use in a particular kitchen. If ancestral spirits were mentioned, it was only the founder ancestor (*huangzu* 皇祖), perhaps already an astral spirit, who was worshipped at the same time as the annual autumnal offerings were presented. The purpose of this festival, one inscription by a royal son specified, was to bring together fathers and brothers. This sentiment is notable because it echoes Spring and Autumn-period bell inscriptions, though with a distinct difference.

[59] See Constance Cook, "Wealth and the Western Zhou," *The Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 60.2 (1997), 253–94.

[60] For a study of the term *huangzu* as founder ancestor based on middle and late Western Zhou inscriptions and later ritual texts, see Cao Wei, *Zhouyuan yizhi Xi Zhou tongqi yanjiu* (Beijing, 2004), pp. 190–94.

The earlier bell inscriptions included entertainment of the king, lords and other members of the extended kinship group.[61]

In the Spring and Autumn period, founder ancestors, albeit not the Zhou founders, still played a critical role in some of the award ceremonies. Most obvious are the award ceremonies where an elite descendant emerged from the role of "youth" (*xiaozi*) and took over the rank or office of his deceased father. These ceremonies were likely performed during prescribed days of founder ancestor worship, such as the *di* ceremony, in the main ancestral shrine. Inscriptions describe how the descendant displayed his cultivated dignified demeanor, or "awesome decorum" (*weiyi*), a performance that seemed to involve a martial dance, the singing of eulogies and, perhaps, other musical displays in a pattern symbolic (or "matching" *pei* 配 and "modeling" *xing* 型) of the founder ancestor's original merit (that warranted the establishment of the state) and lineage mythology.[62] Learning this performance remained an essential aspect of the education of elite youth and functioned as a type of service to ancestors, both historical and legendary. It was taught by elders and "masters" (*shi* 師) inside the ancestral shrines and was historically complemented by outside martial instruction in hunting and battle fields—movements symbolic of extending a Zhou style mandate over untamed regions. The ritual texts tell us that some of these patterns were dances linked by the end of the Eastern Zhou period with the founder sage kings of the Xia, Shang, and Zhou. The Ruist incorporation of varied styles attributed to founder sage kings may have been a tactic for assimilating competing ritual systems.[63]

During the Warring States period, the musical performances patterned after the sage kings were transformed by the Ruists into personal practices of self-cultivation. The use of music, body movement, and

[61] See the studies by Cook, "Auspicious metals"; "Myth and authenticity," "Ideology"; and "Scribes," where these inscriptions are discussed in detail including, in the case of "Auspicious metals" comparisons with earlier and contemporary inscriptions from other regions. See also Falkenhausen, *Chinese society*, pp. 296–97.

[62] There might be a link between these performance patterns and divination. The "Image" (Xiang) to the Yu 豫 hexagram in the Yijing notes, "The Former Kings expressed their reverence for *de* through the making of music; the Yin offered it up to Shangdi, and thereby matched (*pei*) their ancestors and deceased fathers" (*Zhouyi zhengyi*, in *Shisanjing zhushu* vol. 1, p. 49).

[63] See Cook, *Death in ancient China*; "Xianwang zhi dao"; "Education and the way of the Former Kings," spring 2007 ms. Wu Hung makes a similar observation with regard to color symbolism in grave goods ("'Mingqi' de lilun," 78–9).

imitation allowed the acolyte to achieve a similar level of sainthood.[64] This practice, called "the way of the former kings" (*xianwang zhi dao* 先王之道), became extremely controversial because scholars of many persuasions, not just Ruists, took up the call to imitate the patterns of different sets of sage kings. Groups such as Mozi and his followers, for example, rejected the Ruist Zhou styles and promoted underdog sages such as Yu. By the end of the period, Xunzi 荀子, in the Ruist tradition, tried to clarify what had by then become a cacophony of different claims as to the true Way of the Former kings. Of these hundreds of founder kings, only some, he asserted, were legitimate sources for imitation, such as the Zhou kings, which he defined as the "latter kings" (*houwang* 後王). Splinter Ruist groups, the Mohists, and other groups who continued to follow the less refined "former kings" could not expect to achieve the same level of cultivation.

Eastern Zhou period bronze inscriptions, mostly dating from the Spring and Autumn period, reflect the more conservative performance of founder imitation or *weiyi* at a *di* or similar sacrifice to ancestors, including the founder ancestor. In most cases, Zhou ritual rhetoric was re-applied to local situations and local founders. This is particularly true in cases of ritual affirmation of a son's right to rule, a ritual most likely performed after the prescribed mourning period. For example, in a set of Qin inscriptions, an heir (*xiaozi*) upon his accession to office first announced what we might understand as a *feng* by the Zhou king, although the text does not use that term: "My Former Ancestor (*xianzu*) received Heaven's Mandate and was rewarded with a dwelling and received territory" 我先祖受天命, 賞宅受域. Next he eulogized the first three patriarchs of Qin who had "united" (*he* 合) with the will of brilliant Heaven (*huangtian*) to suppress non-Zhou peoples. He then faced his mother (his father, the former ruler, being deceased), and described how the "illumination" (*ming* 明) of his inner being (his "heart," *xin* 心) resulted from his proper performance of the annual sacrifices and thus enabled him to bring the other (non-heir) elites in his kin group to his side and, just like his forbearers, suppress non-Zhou peoples. At the end of the inscription, he again referred to the three patriarchs but as a group who were clearly overseeing the performance documented

[64] For a brief discussion of references to this practice in Xunzi and the Guodian text "Xunzi mingchu," see Paul Goldin, "Xunzi in the light of the Guodian manuscripts," *Early China* 25 (2000), 130–33. More details and a review of other scholarship on the importance of music in Ruist practice are found in Cook, "Xianwang zhi dao."

on the inscription. These "brilliant patriarchs" (*huanggong*), after being entertained by bell music, sent down their approval of the proceedings and brought good fortune.[65] In another inscription, a slightly different set of ancestral spirits was called down by the Qin patriarch, a group that included a non-Zhou sage king. The Qin ruler declared: "Greatly manifest is our brilliant ancestor who received the Heavenly Mandate to settle and reside in the tracks of Yu. The twelve patriarchs who reside at the Lord's flanks sternly paid their respects and revered Heaven's Mandate" 丕顯朕皇祖, 定宅禹蹟, 十又二公在帝之坏 嚴恭夤天命.[66] The Qin ruler then eulogized the former patriarch's suppression of other peoples and their protection of the Qin legacy (presumably initiated by a Zhou king, although this is not specified in the inscriptions). For the ruler's own performance, he used traditional Zhou rhetoric to declare (in musical rhythmic terms) how he followed the patriarchs' model and grasped the luminous inner power (*ming de*) so that he, full of radiance, could step in a martial manner—no doubt a reference to his performance of *weiyi*. The results of this performance are similar to those described in the previous inscription. He was able to bring together the other young men, who are described as a crowd among which the ruler moved in a manner like Wen and Wu—a style of performance rather than founder kings specifically. The performance occurred during his annual sacrifices to the brilliant ancestor in the shrine (*zong*). The Qin occupation of the "tracks of Yu" had a double meaning: first, that they ruled the ancient lands once occupied by the Zhou (as described in the song "Wen Wang you sheng" 文王有聲, this was the region of the eastward-flowing Feng river 灃水);[67] and, second, that they saw themselves as following in the footsteps of Yu. The mention of action in a *wen* and *wu* manner recalled the Zhou founder kings and their earlier occupation of the Feng river area, but significantly, the title "king" was never used. This way the Qin managed to reach farther back into legendary history for legitimation and essentially justify their occupation of ancestral Zhou territory and the extension of their rule to the four regions (mentioned at the end of

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[65] *Jicheng* 262–64 (with a similar text found on 267–70). My translation is indebted to but varies from that of Gilbert Mattos, "Eastern Zhou bronze inscriptions," in *New sources of early Chinese history: an introduction to the reading of inscriptions and manuscripts*, ed., Edward Shaughnessy (Berkeley, 1997), pp. 111–20.

[66] *Jicheng* 4315, Mattos, "Eastern Zhou," pp. 114–7. The last graph could refer to a hill or to a niche in a wall or be a loan for *pei* 陪 "to accompany."

[67] *Shisanjing zhushu* vol. 2, p. 584. See also the discussion by Li Ling, "Kaogu faxian yu shenhua chuanshuo," *Xueren* vol. 5, p. 132.

the inscription), an adaptation of the original Zhou plan of expansion into the Four Regions to Qin aspirations.

A similar inscription on a water basin by a Jin patriarch begins with a eulogy of the Jin legendary founder ancestor, "brilliant ancestor patriarch Tang" 皇祖唐公. The Jin, unlike the Qin, mention their original connection to the Zhou; the Jin founder aided Zhou king Wen in suppressing non-Zhou peoples and was hence awarded a residence and settlement (his *feng*, although again this term is not used) out of which arose the Jin nation (*bang*).[68] As in the Qin case, the Jin ruler then referred to his own performance (in reduplicative terms that suggest this was done to bell music, even though the inscription is cast on a vessel for liquids) as a "youth" and his "grasping of *de*" resulting from "daring to follow and model himself on the Former Kings," a general reference to the Zhou founder kings. The Jin ruler then proclaimed his own martial merit. But here the inscription, which up to this point is very similar in format to the Qin inscriptions, diverges in purpose. Rather than documenting his own right to rule the state, he uses the format to document the marriage of his eldest daughter into the Chu ruling lineage, where the daughter will take on the potentially powerful position of Shrine Woman (*zongfu* 宗婦). Although this position is mentioned in earlier Zhou inscriptions, very little is known about it. By the end of the Eastern Zhou period, it seemed to involve naming rituals for lineage heirs and the display of sacrificial foods and wines in the main shrine.[69] The Jin inscription specifically states that her dowry vessels should be used by her to perform the annual sacrifices to the brilliant chief minister 皇卿 and to bring the hundred ascendant ones *baizhi* 百至 "close" 親. Since she was moving to the state of Chu, a competitor of Jin's, these spirits must be the lineage founder and subsequent ancestor spirits (using a term similar to *baishen* 百神 mentioned in late Western Zhou inscriptions) of her husband's family. An admonition at the end of the inscription suggests the risk Jin takes in linking the families of the two states. The ruler requested that she be eternally "without blame" 無咎, i.e., not cursed by poor performance and unhappy spirits, so that the reputation of the Jin nation could "soar" 翰.

[68] *Jicheng* 10342.

[69] See Huan 6 in *Zuozhuan*, *Shisanjing zhushu* vol. 6, p. 112. This role is also mentioned in earlier inscriptions and later ritual texts.

While the Jin ritual rhetoric had much in common with its western neighbor, Qin, it also shared some elements with its southern neighbor, Chu. In a bell inscription by a royal son of Chu, the son eulogized "our" brilliant ancestor and accomplished deceased-father so that their reputations could "soar" just like the sounds of the bells.[70] In Zhou-style terms, he described his "governing power" (*zhengde*) and his skill at *weiyi*, but in the end it was the bell sounds themselves that heralded the descent of the blessings. No specific ancestral source was named or link to Zhou implied.

Farther east along the Yellow river, we find a different version of the same ritual in Qi. In one lengthy inscription (which is dated by a "king's" reign year, presumably an oblique nod to the Zhou king in Chengzhou), that might be described as a *feng* of a lineage relative (possibly through the female line) by a Qi patriarch, ancestors are mentioned at key points in the beginning, middle and final sections of the inscription.[71] In the beginning, as with the Qin and Jin inscriptions, the patriarch justified his right to command by claiming that he took the founder (*xianzu*) as his "constant" pattern (*jing* 經). But, curiously, this founder was not his own but that of the man he was awarding (and who cast the inscription), his relative of the rank "uncle" (*shu* 叔). Likewise, the "heart" opened through performance was not the ruler's own but also that of his uncle. It was also the uncle, not the ruler, who was then empowered to bring to completion the ruler's "governing power" through military successes. These successes, however, did not involve the suppression of outside peoples but the punishment of the patriarch's own people (who likely belonged to the Eastern Yi peoples, with no relation to Zhou). After announcing the awards of control over metropolitan areas and a large army, the patriarch extolled the mandate of the brilliant lord (*huangjun*), probably the former ruler. He then extolled his uncle for not begging off of military duties by claiming to be a "youth" (*xiaozi*) (i.e., still in mourning for his own father) and proceeded to heap further awards upon him. In the final section of the inscription, consisting of the awardee's response of gratitude to the lord patriarch (*jungong*), the

[70] *Jincheng* 261; Cook, "Auspicious metals," pp. 411–9; Mattos, "Eastern Zhou," pp. 88–91.

[71] *Jicheng* 272–79, 285. Darrel Doty, "The bronze inscriptions of Ch'i," 2 vols, PhD dissertation (Seattle, 1982), vol. 1, pp. 245–384. My interpretation varies somewhat from Doty's. For a review of the debate over dating and the precise identity of the patriarch and Shu Yi, see Doty.

uncle gave a speech filled with ecstatic language directed not only to his ruler but also to two founder ancestors. First, he noted the presence of the "former old one" (*xianjiu*), likely the lineage founder which he seemed to share with the ruler, but one rank closer. Second, and more powerfully, he noted the "fiery" presence (coming from on high where he resided with Di) of the legendary Shang founder, the high ancestor (*gaozu*), Cheng Tang 成湯, from whom he claimed descent. He eulogized Cheng Tang's defeat of Xia and his occupation of Yu's Nine Continents and capital. He then recounted his own connection to this historical founding through three patriarchs and their daughters. Finally, directing himself to the majestic and martial patriarch Ling 桓武靈公 (either the present or recently deceased ruler of Qi), he promised to use the awarded "auspicious metals" 吉金 (a term that can refer to captured bronzes from other shrines) to cast bells to be used during mortuary feasts for both founder and recent ancestors of both genders: brilliant ancestor, brilliant ancestress (*huangbi* 皇妣), brilliant mother and brilliant deceased-father. He prayed to them for blessings and good health. In this Qi inscription, we see not only the worship of a sage king as founder but also the worship of female ancestor spirits as well as male, suggesting a lineage system that may not have followed the same conventions as those to the west. We also see that, once again, the history of an Eastern Zhou state was linked not to the Zhou founders, but to pre-Zhou founders, in the Qi case to the legendary Shang founder. The awardee, while a subject of the Qi ruler, was clearly older and related to the ruler's lineage perhaps through his mother or grandmother (originally from the neighboring Song 宋 state considered descendent from the Shang?). His ability to claim a relation to an esteemed regional pre-Zhou founder provided further prestige.

The importance of both genders of ancestors appears in another inscription (but from south of the Yellow river) for a daughter being married to a ruler of the eastern coastal state of Wu 吳. A set of inscribed bronze vessels made by a Cai 蔡 ruler for his daughter in honor of her marriage to the king of Wu provides a rare glimpse into the ritual of a marriage announcement at the *di* ceremony. This 524 BC record specifies the use of these vessels for performing the purification ritual and for the presentation of purified alcoholic offerings during a *changdi* 嘗禘 ceremony. Unlike a male heir, this princess was exhorted to pattern herself after King Wen's mother (a Zhou saint and possible fertility goddess of Ji 姬 lineage women such as the princess) to receive divine aid; her dance involved a sashaying (*youyou* 游游) style of *weiyi* performance

while her face bore a numinous glow 靈容 to the beat indicative of ancestral presence (*mumu* 穆穆), the same rhythmic tones used at the beginning of Zhou-style inscriptions when invoking the presence of the former kings or ancestors.[72] From this set of inscriptions, we discover that elite women, like elite men, were also trained to perform during founder ancestor ceremonies.[73]

We find a rare late Warring States inscription that is reminiscent of the earlier *di* worship to founder ancestors on the occasion of lineage changes, except for a profound difference. In an inscription cast in the northern state of Zhongshan by its king, we find the *sheji* invoked with more force than the ancestors.[74] The king eulogized his "former ancestor," King Huan, and his "deceased-father," King Cheng, for their care of the *sheji* and for traveling the Four Regions 行四方, more likely ritual peregrinations around the *sheji* than actual travel abroad (although the king did later refer to his own youthful wandering, *you* 遊, and the importance of good neighborly relations). In the inscription, the king spoke of himself as a *xiaozi* and addressed his descendants, but, much as with Warring States Chu inscriptions, focused on the merit of an official going so far as to laud the minister's own ability to take Tian (not a specific founder) as a model in order to "illuminate" his *de* resulting in a successful battle (even though he was executed in the end for initiating the attack without the king's permission). The inscription does not end with prayers for blessings from the ancestors, only a warning to future generations not to lose the nation (*bang*).

In the inscriptions described above, we see that ancestor worship involved the relationship of the human subjects (rulers, awardees, daughters) set within an ancestral hierarchy consisting of an un-named or legendary founder ancestor, former rulers, or deceased parents. The musical entertainment and ritual dramas performed by the descendants during the *di* ceremony to the ancestors reinforced the traditional corporate identity, a group of allied lineage branches or lineages with shared political and cultural goals often linked to a locale (*zu* 族). This identity,

[72] *Jicheng* 6010 & 10171. See discussions by Cook in "Moonshine and millet," p. 15, and *Death in ancient China*, p. 74. If we understand the expression *youyou* to be a loan for the expression 悠悠 found in the *Shijing*, then it might refer to a distracted state of mind, one that is far away, thinking about the ancestor or heaven.

[73] An early Jin queen invokes a deceased female termed a *xiangu* 先姑, which might be either an aunt on her father's side or her mother-in-law. Since she wants protection for the Jin state, it is most likely the Jin ruler's mother (*Jicheng* 2826).

[74] *Jicheng* 2840; Mattos, "Eastern Zhou," pp. 104–11.

tied to the "merit" (*gong* 功) and hierarchical standing of the founder in lineage myth, was retold and re-created in subsequent *di* through the dances and songs in honor of the founder ancestor. It was during the *di* that people whose status had changed—due to such events as coming of age, marriage and death—were announced or "brought forward" 致, and a bronze inscription cast to memorialize the event.

Seasons and sage kings: regional practices

Modern scholar Peng Lin reviewed the contradictory Eastern Zhou records regarding the *di* ceremony and came to the following conclusions: (1) every locality performed its own style of *di* and at different times, (2) there were two types of *di*, one just to a "progenitor" or founder ancestor, and one to all branch lineage ancestors. This latter form was also called a "unity" (*xia* 祫) sacrifice. This type involved a ritual re-arrangement of the ancestral tablets in the main ancestral shrine to reflect changes since the last performance, Lu style being three years afterwards.[75] The tablets, according to the *Liji*, were also collected from the shrines of the most recent four generations (in the case of a king or high official rank) by a domestic ritual officer (*zai* 宰) and handed over to the shrine officer of spirit invocation (*zhu* 祝) for arrangement by rank in the main ancestral shrine.[76] By Han times, *di* were no longer the only type of sacrifice during which tablets could be re-arranged. Zheng Xuan 鄭玄 (127–200 AD) noted that at the close of the mourning period for rulers, a spirit tablet or "host" (*zhu* 主) was placed in the ancestral shrine during a seasonal sacrifice, one of which might be the summer *di* sacrifice.[77] Other seasonal sacrifices auspicious for tablet re-arrangement were the fall *chang* 嘗 sacrifice, and the winter *zheng*

[75] Peng Lin, "Zhoudai diji pingyi."

[76] "Zengzi wen," *Liji zhengyi* in *Shisanjing zhushu* vol. 5, p. 367. The unity ceremony was also a time in which the tablets of ancestors whose shrines had been destroyed would be displayed to the founder ancestor.

[77] In the Shang oracle bones, this sacrifice is made to the deities of the four directions; see David Keightley, *The ancestral landscape: time, space, and community in late Shang China (ca. 1200–1045 BC)* (Berkeley, 2000), pp. 70, 73. Allan ("The identity") suggests that performance of the *di*-rite was the prerogative of the Shang king. Allan also notes that the rite was made to Bird and Tiger, possibly constellations. She states that the rite was redirected toward human ancestors only beginning in the Zhou. If this is the case, then it seems that by the end of the Warring States pre-Zhou practices were resurging.

烝 sacrifice,[78] but not the spring *yue* 禴 sacrifice. These comments show the intimate connection between mourning practices and the practice of ancestor worship. They also show that the *di* ritual was once again subsumed into a natural cycle of seasonal sacrifices, no doubt linked to agriculture. The seasonal sacrifices were performed to aid a recently deceased royal ancestor for five years after the end of the mourning period (during which sacrifices dictated by the mourning schedule were held in the person's shrine).[79]

Before the *di* was designated a summer sacrifice, sometime during the Warring States period, it was primarily a sacrifice marking the end of the mourning period. Eastern Zhou texts record a "grand sacrifice" (*daji* 大祭) performed Shang-style, particularly in the eastern region of the Yellow river valley in the states of Lu and Song 宋. The ceremony was the time when the identity of the deceased and the shrine emblem of an ancestor, the "host" or marker (*zhu*), was placed in the shrine (an act termed *fu* 祔). The shrine officer (*zhu*) placed the tablet according to the person's lineage rank and then, three years later, advanced (*ji*) it to the position of his immediate ancestor.[80] After some number of generations, varying according to the rank of the descendant, the

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[78] Warring States period Qi 齊 state inscriptions on sacrificial vessels mention that the vessels were for use in the *zheng* and *chang* sacrifices (Zheng Xuan being from Shandong may have been most familiar with this northeastern type of *di*). Chu vessels of this time mention the *chang* sacrifice. In either case, these sacrifices seem to include the founder ancestors and the display of *weiyi* in dance. The earliest example is from Cai 蔡, where *chang* and *di* were performed at the same time (*Jicheng* 10171). The Warring States examples from Chu and Qi were likely all made in the eastern Huai river area (*Jicheng* 2479, 2623, 2794–95, 4694–95 from late Chu kings and 4646–48 from a local Qi ruler).

[79] "Wangzhi," *Liji zhengyi* in *Shisanjing zhushu* vol. 5, p. 243.

[80] The "making of the host" (*zuo zhu*) was done after the wailing period. "Whenever a lord dies, the sacrifice for presenting the spirit tablet to the ancestral spirits in the main shrine (*fu* 祔) is performed with the 'making of the host' (*zuozhu*); special ritual sacrifices to the host/tablet, such as the *zheng, chang,* and *di* are performed in the shrine" (*Shisanjing zhushu* vol. 6, p. 292). In the specific case of Patriarch Xi, who was buried four months after his son Wengong 文公 took the throne, there seems to have been some confusion at the time as to the use of an intercalary month to calculate the proper number of months for burial after death (Xi had died as much as six or seven months earlier, in the eleventh month of his 33rd reign year). The advancement (*ji*) of Xi Gong's tablet in the grand shrine (*damiao* 大廟) is recorded in the *Chunqiu* as taking place during the 8th month of the second year of his son's reign. Both actions were criticized as being out of sync with either the proper ritual calendar regarding the burial or with the proper burial order of male generations (presumably alternating between "shining" *zhao* 昭 and "grave" *mu* 穆 sides of the burial ground, although there is little material evidence that this idealized "Zhou" system was actually followed; see Falkenhausen, *Chinese society*, p. 85, n. 22). Presents of grave robes 襚 could be made

ancestor joined the others in the main lineage shrine, and his separate, personal shrine was then destroyed. This basic pattern represented the idealized Zhou-style process of elevating the elite into a powerful spirit bureaucracy. Other tales suggest that regional practices, even those in Lu, might have involved worship of earth and other natural powers.

A tale dated to the tenth year of Patriarch Xiang 襄公 of Lu (563 BC) and preserved in the *Zuozhuan*[81] provides a description of a *di* ceremony which reveals regional differences, misunderstandings of ancient rites, the use of dance and music to convey ancestral power, and the danger of non-Zhou ritual performances to aristocrats linked to the old Zhou system. The tale shows the experience of an eastern *di* performance of Shang style by a western ruler, a *hou* of Jin:

> The patriarch of Song entertained[82] the lord of Jin at Bramble Hill 楚丘 and requested the performance of [the dance] "Mulberry Woods" 桑林. Xun Ying 荀罃 declined [to participate] but Xun Yan 荀偃 and Shi Gai 士丐 said: "With respect to the various lords of Song and Lu, this is [how they] observe ritual behavior 觀禮. When Lu performs the music for the *di* ceremony, they use it to entertain guests[83] and present sacrifices. The Song (people) use 'Mulberry Woods' to entertain lords. So why not?!" When the master of the dance used flags to conduct the Xia 夏 (musical performance and dance),[84] the lord of Jin became frightened and retreated into another room, returning only after the flag [part] was over to enjoy the rest of the feast. On his way (back home) to Yong 雍, he fell ill. The turtle oracle produced the image of the Mulberry Woods. Xun Yan and Shi Gai wanted to run back to request the performance of sacrificial prayers (*dao* 禱) for him. Xun Ying wouldn't allow it, saying: "I was the one who declined to participate in the ritual and they (i.e., the Song people) are the ones who used it. So if there is a ghost or spirit (*guishen* 鬼神)[85] involved, then the onus is on them!" The lord of Jin recovered and, taking a boy of Biyang

years after the burial, as we see in the case where Xi Gong's son, Wen Gong, accepted such a gift from a Qin envoy in the 9th year of his reign.

[81] *Zuozhuan*, Xiang 10, *Shisanjing zhushu* vol. 6, pp. 539–40.

[82] Following late Western Zhou convention, the word *xiang* 享, previously referring to a lineage mortuary feast for particular ancestral spirits, is used by Eastern Zhou period for a grand feast *xiang* 饗, which could include envoys from other states and guests who belonged to other lineages. For feasting, see Cook, "Wealth and the Western Zhou" and "Moonshine and millet," pp. 9–33.

[83] The guests of a *bin* 賓 ritual included both the living and the dead.

[84] The word *xia* could refer to the name of an ancient era, a style of music linked to pre-Zhou sage kings, a "grand" performance generally, or to the specific use of multi-colored feathers in costumes.

[85] Puett shows that ancestors vacillated between the state of ghost or spirit depending on whether they were fed ("The offering"). For a definition of ghost or *gui* as spirits of animate and inanimate objects, see Mu-choo Poo, "The concept of ghost in ancient

> 偪陽, he returned home and presented him as an offering at the Hall of Wu 武宮, calling him an Yi 夷 captive. The lineage name of the people of Biyang is Yun 妘 and their corporate body (*zu*) was selected by an inner archivist (*neishi* 内史) of Zhou as the successors to the tribute income of the many peoples of Huo 霍; so this was proper ritual.

From this passage, we learn a number of things about the *di* ceremony and about the symbolic powers of the founder spirits. First, it was clearly hazardous for an outsider to participate in a non-Zhou or Shang-style *di* ceremony, in this case that of the Lu[86] and Song people (particularly in this case because, as the full passage tells us, the Jin army harbored nefarious intentions against Song). We also learn about the power of legendary founder gods evoked through performance at a site linked to nature, e.g., "Mulberry Woods," a place where the founder ancestor of Shang, Cheng Tang, continued to receive annual sacrifices.[87] Finally, we learn about how the Zhou legacy informed the power of the ceremony and of the subsequent Jin sacrifice to thank the Jin founder spirit for returning the ruler to health.

In Eastern Zhou texts, "Mulberry Woods" is both the name of a holy site and a dance. As a site for worship in Song, the Mozi text claims that it was equivalent to other sites (famous for hunting and fertility rituals), such as the *sheji* in Qi,[88] the "Cloud Dream" (Yunmeng 雲夢) wetlands in Chu, and the "Possessing Ancestors" (Youzu 有祖/菹) brush of Yan 燕.[89] In local myth, Tang, the Shang founder king, had to expose

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Chinese religion," in *Religion and Chinese society*, ed., John Lagerwey, vol. 1 (Hong Kong, 2004), pp. 173–91.

[86] We know the Lu *di* sacrifice required more than sixteen dancers for the Wan 萬 dance; see *Zuozhuan* Zhao 25, *Shisanjing zhushu* vol. 6, pp. 892–93.

[87] See *Zhuzi jicheng* vol. 6, the *Lüshi chunqiu*, pp. 86, 160. For the safeguarding of the performance of the dance by a man of Wei 微 near the foot of a mountain, see p. 119; cf. John Knoblock and Jeffrey Riegel, trs, *The annals of Lü Buwei: a complete translation and study* (Stanford, 2000), pp. 210, 340, 267.

[88] The reference to a *sheji* in Qi may be a mistake as the Qi *she*, minus the altar to the Zhou grain god, seems to have been the Qi site of power. The *she* in Qi was a site where the Qi ruler received visitors from other states, a custom considered unorthodox by the writer of the *Zuozhuan* (e.g., Zhuang 23). Xiang 24 of *Zuozhuan* mentions a *she* in Qi where armaments were gathered together in preparation for battle (*Shisanjing zhushu* vol. 6, p. 610). In his study of violence in ancient China, Mark Lewis emphasizes the juxtaposition between hunting, sacrifice, and war as symbols of the state that converged in cult worship at altars such as the *she*: *Sanctioned violence in early China* (Albany, 1990), pp. 17–24.

[89] "Ming gui, xia," *Mozi jiangu*, in *Zhuzi jicheng* vol. 4, p. 142. The connection between founder rituals and wild places is made in Mencius where he explains that the legendary Shang minister Yi Yin was "enjoying (*le* 樂, through musical performance) the Dao

himself to the sun and Shangdi at Mulberry Woods to end a drought caused by his defeat of the Xia ruler.[90] Zhuangzi (ca. 365–285 BC) ironically compared the skilled movements of the Mulberry Woods dance to the movements of the hands, shoulders, knees, and feet of a master butcher while slaughtering an ox as an illustration of the self perfection achieved by following the *dao*.[91] While later Ruists had turned earlier dances into essential methods for channeling emotion and cultivating inner *de*, perceiving sound as directly affecting the inner being or heart,[92] we know from the *Zuozhuan* passage that the dance was also part of the local *di* ceremony, one with props and, no doubt, costumes. Some characters may have been dressed as founder ancestors with natural forms such as horned animals or bird figures, and other characters may have represented suns, rivers, trees or other spirits worshipped along with the founder ancestors since Shang times.[93] Choreography may have been in the form of a cosmic diagram.[94] The Xia was a grand musical performance accompanied by flutes, zithers, bells and drums. Flags decorated with feathers and animal tails were carried as emblems or as markers to signal stages in the performance. In the *Zuozhuan* tale, it was the use of a particular prop, a flag used to conduct a Xia-style dance, that frightened the Jin ruler and caused his illness. Since the Jin occupied the ancient lands of Xia, linked in popular mythology to the sage king Yu, the flag may have evoked a powerful spirit known for clearing lands of ill-intentioned spirits. For the Song people (whom the Jin ruler hoped to conquer), the "presence" of pre-Zhou founder spirits in addition to nature spirits of the Mulberry

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of Yao and Shun" while performing the plowing ritual at the wild place Youxin 有莘 ("Wanzhang, shang" in *Zhuzi jicheng* vol. 1, pp. 385–86).

[90] Allan, *Shape of the turtle*, pp. 41–6.

[91] "Yangsheng zhu," *Zhuangzi jishi* in *Zhushu jicheng* vol. 3, p. 55. See the translation and commentary of Scott Cook, "Zhuang Zi and his carving of the Confucian ox," *Philosophy East and West* 74.4 (Oct., 1997), pp. 536 ff.

[92] *Liji zhengyi* in *Shisanjing zhushu* vol. 5, pp. 662–63. This sentiment is found also in the bamboo texts of self-cultivation in Guodian and in Xunzi, see n. 15 above and Cook, *Death in ancient China*, pp. 21–24.

[93] Allan, *Shape of the turtle*, pp. 46–56. For a study of early dances, see Dallas McCurley, "Performing patterns: numinous relations in Shang and Zhou China," *The Drama Review* 49.3 (2005), 135–56.

[94] See my studies of the layout of musical performances for sage king Yu in the *Shangshu*, Guodian and other texts in Cook, "The way(s) of the Former Kings," and "Xianwang zhi dao."

Woods itself embodied by performers provided a protective function.[95] The descent of the spirits during the ceremony—perhaps into the body of a designated descendant, the personator of the dead (the "corpse" 尸), or other dancers—is attested to in the *Book of songs* and in other Eastern Zhou texts.[96]

Even though the Jin officers lumped the Song and Lu performances of *di* together, the Lu *di* involved different songs and Zhou deities. As described in the *Liji*, it took place around the time of the summer solstice and also involved musical performance. Accompanied by red-stringed zithers, a lead singer with three members of a chorus opened with the song "Pure shrine" (Qing miao 清廟), a song which seems to describe the summoning of bird-like ancestral spirits by the elite descendants who danced in order to show their decorum and to "grasp the (ancestral) power" 秉德.[97] Then there followed flutes playing the "Imitation" (Xiang 象) tune so that the participants, holding red shields and jade axes, could dance the "Great martiality" (Da wu 大武) dance (hence "matching" or recreating the conquest of Shang by the Zhou founder King Wu) and then in eight lines dance the "Great Xia" (Da Xia 大夏) dance. In the Song example examined above, this final movement, by its association with Yu and exorcism, may have served a cleansing function for the participants. In the record of the Lu *di* performance, a sacrificial feast was then served; a white male animal was sacrificed, and a variety of ritual jades were offered to the spirits. Sometimes the music of non-Zhou cultural peoples (the Yi and the Mian) in the east and south was added to show Lu cultural superiority. This was all done to teach the descendants the value of their corporate identity through continued worship of their founder Zhou Gong and his handed-down power (*de*).[98]

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[95] See Lewis, *The construction of space*, p. 42, for the embodiment of cosmos and state. For a brief summary of Jin history and internecine struggles, see pp. 140–41.

[96] See the study of the ode "Chuci" by Martin Kern, see "*Shi jing* songs as performance texts: a case study of 'Chu Ci' (Thorny Caltrop)," *Early China* 25 (2000), 49–111.

[97] *Maoshi zhengyi* in *Shisanjing zhushu* vol. 2, pp. 706–08. I have described the Western Zhou concept of *de* as a type of "life force" passed down from the ancestors to their descendants. It is connected to the notion of *ming* 命 as both a mandate for rule and for one's lifespan; see Cook, *Death in ancient China*, pp. 21–24. The performance of the Qing miao ode is described by Xunzi: "in the performances of the Pure Temple Ode, one singer intones and the other three in harmony"; John Knoblock, tr., *Xunzi, A translation and study of the complete works*, 3 vols (Stanford, 1988), vol. 3, p. 60.

[98] *Liji zhengyi* in *Shisanjing zhushu* vol. 5, pp. 577–78, 840–41.

The Jin performed their counter-sacrifice in a place called the Hall of Wu, the hall to Wu Hou 武侯, the Jin founder of the ancestral corporate group (*zongzu* 宗族).[99] A captive from the city of Biyang, recently "wiped out" by Jin, was presented as a sacrifice to the spirit of the hall. Although the captive was not a Ji 姬 lineage member (i.e., a member of the Zhou descent group), because the Biyang people had collected the tribute of the Huo people who were Ji members,[100] the captive was considered an acceptable offering. The Huo people shared the same corporate group (*zu*) as Lu and hence the same patron founder deity (and no doubt also worshipped the Zhou grain god). The Jin and Lu rulers both belonged to the Ji lineage group, so, according to a record dated to 559 BC, they could both worship at a main shrine for royal Zhou ancestral spirits (*zongmiao*). The Jin and Lu rulers could not worship at the same shrine (*zumiao*) for their founder ancestors originally provided Zhou *feng* (Tang Shu 唐叔 for the Jin and Zhou Gong for the Lu) or at the shrine for their personal lineage patriarchs (*nimiao*).[101] The Lu people considered their corporate group ancestor to be the Western Zhou king Wen,[102] but the Jin lived among the Rong and Di peoples, and their founder Tang Shu was only a younger brother of Zhou king Cheng's mother.[103] Although the Jin founder had been awarded a *feng* by a Zhou king so that their lineage name could be Ji like the Zhou, their original corporate kinship group, *zu* (that of Wu Hou), was different,

[99] However, there may have been many halls to various specific and non-specific *wu* ("martial") war deities. There was the Western Zhou founder, King Wu, eulogized by numerous Western Zhou bronze inscriptions and *Shijing* songs. There was a hall for a patriarch of Wu (Wu Gong) in Lu near Quwo 曲沃 where a *di* ceremony was recorded for the second month of 585 BC (possibly in honor of a military victory). The Lu "Spring and Autumn" annals (*Chunqiu* 春秋) record services (*shi* 事) there on the second month of *di*-style musical performances. The Lu ruler sometimes held his morning court (*chao* 朝) for lower ranked visitors there (see *Zuozhuan* Xi 24, Cheng 6, 18, Zhao 15, *Shisanjing zhushu* vol. 6, pp. 254, 440, 485, 821). The performances involved flutes which had to be quieted once when a guest died. Some commentators suggest that Wu Gong was a Lu ancestor of Cheng Gong, but others that he was a god of war since *wu* 武 translates as "martial." There may have been many such halls in different states.

[100] The Yun lineage group, according to a first century AD dictionary, traced their founder to the fire god, Zhurong, a founder spirit worshipped in the middle Yangzi and Han river valleys' people of Chu.

[101] See *Zuozhuan* Xiang 12, *Shisanjing zhushu* vol. 6, p. 548. Eastern Zhou texts emphasize that related lineage groups were all "small *zong*" 小宗 or off-shoots from the larger or main *zong* 大宗 represented by the patriarch and his sons.

[102] See *Zuozhuan* Xi 24, *Shisanjing zhushu* vol. 6, pp. 255–56.

[103] *Zuozhuan* Zhao 15, *Shisanjing zhushu* vol. 6, pp. 823–24.

Ning 寧.[104] The fact that the human offering had to be connected to the Zhou lineage for acceptance by the deity (even though this connection was by way of a tribute *feng* relationship) suggests a bureaucracy of ancestral spirits who, like their earthly descendants, had to constantly jockey for power and status based on the types of sacrifice or symbolic tributes paid them. On a more mundane level, it seems that the Biyang people, by accepting the Huo tribute, also took charge of the ancestral spirits of the Huo people and that the two sets of ancestral spirits were joined to make a more powerful pantheon which was then taken over and controlled by Jin. The counter-sacrifice of human tribute (labeled an Yi, or non-Zhou eastern people, i.e., those native to the eastern region occupied by Song, Qi and Lu)[105] to the Jin founder ancestor was considered a proper gift of appreciation for the ancestor's cure of the Jin ruler's illness caused by the spirits of the "Mulberry Woods."

By the end of the Warring States period as the Zhou system failed, the *di* ceremony of ancestor worship merged with seasonal sacrifices and, in some texts, was specified as for the worship of former kings (*xianwang*), the sage kings.[106] This change coincided with the increased emphasis on sage-kings as founder ancestors and on natural omens to guide the political process. A Zhou-style system had also been applied to the interpretation of Tian, as evidenced by the popular "field-allocation" system of astrology in which the movements of astral bodies within fields in the sky were perceived as linked to the welfare of the states below.[107] The worship of Tian and its earthly seasons became regular features of the state sacrificial calendar. The *di* sacrifice performed inside

[104] This is based on the *Shiji* 39 in Takikawa, *Shiki kaichū*, p. 621. They married women of the Jiang 姜 lineage (*Jicheng* 2826). A Jin inscription dated to around 511 BC has the Jin patriarch (Ding Gong) invoking his founder "Our brilliant ancestor Tang Gong, received the great command, and aided King Wu" (*Jicheng* 10342).

[105] The graph representing the Yi people in bronze inscriptions was written the same as "corpse" (*shi*) no doubt symbolic of their use in Zhou human sacrifice.

[106] Although one record in the *Liji* explains that *di* was performed with music in the spring (and not summer as elsewhere) to welcome the rains and *chang* without music in the fall to say farewell to them (*Liji zhengyi*, in *Shisanjing zhushu* vol. 5, p. 807), this is contradicted by the passage in *Liji zhengyi* in *Shisanjing zhushu* vol. 5, p. 840, which explains that both ceremonies involved music. This supports Peng Lin's theory that there were two types of *di* sacrifices, one for a progenitor or nature spirit and one for ancestral spirits. He notes that *di* for Former Kings represented a misunderstanding of the earlier ritual ("Zhoudai diji pingyi").

[107] David Pankenier, "Applied field-allocation astrology in Zhou China: Duke Wen of Jin and the battle of Chengpu (632 BC)," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 119.2 (April-June 1999), 261–79.

the ancestral shrine inside the city walls was contrasted in ritual texts to the *jiao* sacrifice (to Tian) performed outside the city walls. By Xunzi's time, the *jiao* was understood as a sacrifice to "the hundred kings high in the sky." The Ruists attempted to recreate a lineage system of sacrifices using pre-dynastic and Sandai sages, thus combining seasonal sacrifices and astral deities:

> The Yu-people 虞氏 performed the *di* sacrifice to the Yellow Emperor (Huangdi 黃帝) and the suburban sacrifice (*jiao* 郊) to Ku 嚳; they took Zhuanxu 顓頊 as local branch lineage founder (*zu* 祖) and Yao 堯 as ancestral founder (*zong* 宗). The Xia-people 夏后氏 likewise presented the *di* to the Yellow Emperor but the suburban sacrifice to Gun 鯀; they [also] took Zhuanxu as local lineage founder but Yu 禹 as ancestral founder. The Yin people 殷人 presented *di* to Ku and the suburban sacrifice to Ming 冥; they took Qi 契 as their local lineage founder and Tang 湯 as ancestral founder. The Zhou people presented *di* to Ku and the suburban sacrifice to Ji 稷; they took King Wen as local lineage founder and King Wu as the ancestral founder.[108]

By Han times, we find the Zhou state founding myth successfully putting the mythical founders of other regions into their places through the act of *feng*. The *Shiji* records that when King Wu was redistributing the treasured sacrificial vessels of the conquered Shang, he meditated upon the sage kings 追思先聖王 and then created *feng* for the descendants of each sage king. Only after this step, did he create *feng* for the lineage leaders who led troops in his then disbanded army.[109] The phrase translated as "meditate", *zhuisi* 追思, was derived from the older Zhou-style phrases of *zhuixiang* 追享 and *zhuixiao* 追孝 which are found on

[108] *Liji zhengyi*, in *Shisanjing zhushu* vol. 5, p. 796. Huangdi may have been a progenitor spirit local to the northeast. He was first mentioned in a bronze inscription as a founder ancestor by a member of the Tian 田 lineage after they took over Qi in the 4th century BC (see Doty, "The bronze inscriptions of Ch'i," vol. 2, p. 632. See also the discussions by Li Ling, "Kaogu faxian yu shenhua chuanshuo," pp. 126–31 and You Shen, "Chunqiu yiji qi yiqian," pp. 41–2). Reference to the suburban sacrifice for progenitor Ji begs the question of what happened to this agricultural god (besides being turned into the generic Shennong). The only hint might reside in the mention in the "Chunguan zongbo 3" section of the *Zhouli* regarding the *di*-like musical performance (flutes, drums, songs) for the "field ancestor" (*tianzu* 田祖) and possibly related to spring plowing (*Shisanjing zhushu* vol. 3, p. 368).

[109] The sage kings in this list represent a slightly different pantheon from that in the *Liji* passage above. In the "Zhou benji," the pantheon is listed in the following order: Shennong, Huangdi, Di Yao, Di Shun, Da Yu (see Takikawa, *Shiki kaichū*, pp. 71–2). For pantheons which include Shundi, see You Shen, "Chunqiu yi ji qi qian," pp. 39–41. For an outline and discussion of the varied "legend sets" of different founder sage kings, see Sarah Allan, *The heir and the sage* (San Francisco, 1981).

Spring and Autumn period (and earlier) bronze inscriptions prescribing the use of the vessels "to pursue the memory of" the ancestors in mortuary sacrifices.

Ancestors as public spectacle: the challenge to Zhou-style mourning rituals, social rank, and ancestral identity

The repeated acts of sacrifice performed after death were key to successful placement of the ancestor in the supernatural hierarchy.[110] To elevate a deceased person into the status of an ancestor was a public process affirming the descendant's social status and political power. This process began at the moment of death where even the terms for dying reflected rank. The general term "death" (*si* 死) was applied to commoners and animals. A king or Zhou-style "Son of Heaven" (*tianzi* 天子) "collapsed (like a mountain)" (*peng* 崩), whereas a regional ruler (*hou*) and his wife both fell with a "thudding sound" (as with the noise of a group of insects suddenly taking off or of dirt being thrown into a hole) (*hong* 薨).[111] The next two stages for affirming rank involved first the funeral and then the mourning—the performance style of either stage represented an adherence either to a Zhou-style belief structure, as advocated by the Ruists, or to local customs, including a style that did not involve social rank or display, as advocated by Moists. In either case, there seems to have been a pervasive belief that it took about 25 months or "three years" for the aspect of the deceased that could become

[110] Recent ethnographic data from pre-industrial societies suggests that the sacrifices during the mourning period were instrumental in marking the ascent of the deceased into the rank of an ancestor and to helping the deceased make it to the celestial or spirit realm. See Meredith S. Chesson, ed., *Social memory, identity, and death: anthropological perspectives on mortuary rituals* (Arlington, 2001).

[111] Curiously, someone complained that if music is not performed during the period of mourning, the entire process was also at risk of "collapse" (see "Yanghuo" 陽貨, *Lunyu zhengyi*, in *Zhuzi jicheng* vol. 1, p. 380). The reduplicated descriptive *honghong* occurs in these two contexts in the *Shijing* (*Maoshi zhengyi*, in *Shisanjing zhushu* vol. 2, pp. 36, 188, 548). General terms for life, on the other hand, did not seem to reflect different ranks. We find that "life" (*sheng* 生) was also an "embodiment" (*wu* 物), and "death" (*si* 死) simply the lack thereof, "nothing" (*wang* 亡). The word connoting physical body (*shen* 身) was also used to imply self-consciousness or "oneself." For a study of the consciousness of self in late Warring States and early Han sources, see Lewis, *The construction of space*, pp. 13–76. For the relationship between the words "body" *ti* 體 and "ritual" *li* 禮, see Cook, "Auspicious metals," pp. 110–22; Lewis, ibid., pp. 14–16.

an ancestor with adequate mortuary ritual to settle into the next world or to begin influencing the human world.[112]

The periodic sacrifices required for the deceased to become an ancestral identity not only marked off the stages of mourning but also affirmed the status of both the deceased and his or her descendants. They also provided a continuing process of nurturing the spirits with food, whose needs lessened over the generations.[113] The word "ancestor" (*zu* 祖) was both the title of a deceased lineage forbearer above the rank of one's deceased parents[114] and a sacrifice to spirits of the road when departing on a journey. As part of a funeral ceremony, this sacrifice was performed in the ancestral shrine to mark the transition of the deceased from the home to the grave, a symbolic "breaking off" 折 of the living from the dead.[115] According to some late ritual texts, the send-off ceremony for

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[112] The pervasive nature of this belief in ancient China is expressed in Mengzi as is also the tendency to take shortcuts in the lengthy and arduous process involving the wearing of rough clothing and eating of grain soups (see "Teng Wen gong, shang" 滕文公上 *Mengzi zhengyi*, in *Zhushu jicheng* vol. 1, pp. 190–93). For a detailed discussion of the mourning system both idealized and in practice in early China, see Guolong Lai, "The diagram of the mourning system from Mawangdui," *Early China* 28 (2003), 43–99. In a tale preserved in the "Minggui" of Mozi, it took three years for a minister to come back after death to haunt his ruler after an unfair death. Interestingly, the subsistence common to both the minister and the ruler in their ghost or living states was "awareness" (*zhi* 知), suggesting that the ability to return and to apprehend the return of the dead required a kind of consciousness or knowledge (*Mozi jiangu*, in *Zhuzi jicheng* vol. 4, pp. 140, 142). Also in Mozi is the notation that only family with three years worth of subsistence could afford to recognize a child (as their own and worth raising); see the discussion by Anne Kinney, "Infant abandonment in early China" *Early China* 18 (1993), p. 117. Xunzi explained that all beings (*wu*) born between Heaven and Earth with blood and breath (*qi*) had awareness and the ability to feel loss at the death of a loved one, but that humans had more and therefore the need for more elaborate rituals of grieving (Knoblock, *Xunzi*, vol. 3, p. 69; *Xunzi jijie*, in *Zhuzi jicheng* vol. 2, p. 247). Xunzi, in his chapter "Lilun" 禮論 defending Ruist rites, particularly mortuary ritual as an expression of humanity, insisted that it was a person's "name" (*ming* 名) that was transmitted to posterity by way of sacrifices (to his "spirit" *shen* 神), inscriptions, eulogies, and genealogical records (Knoblock, *Xunzi*, vol. 3, p. 68; *Xunzi jijie*, in *Zhuzi jicheng* vol. 2, p. 246). This is also discussed in Kenneth Brashier, "Han thanatology and the division of 'souls,'" *Early China* 21 (1996), 125–58.

[113] For a detailed discussion of "form" and "liberation from form" particularly regarding late Warring States and Han period practices for self-divinization, see Puett, *To become a god*, esp. pp. 201–24, "The ascension of the spirit." In "The offering of food and the creation of order: the practice of sacrifice in early China," *Of tripod and palate: food, politics, and religion in traditional China*, ed., Roel Sterckx, (New York, 2005), Sterckx notes that the deceased is a "ghost" and not a "spirit" unless fed.

[114] The word *zu* was also a general term for ancestors, a term for the ancestral shrine, among other uses.

[115] For a discussion of departure and road rituals, see Lai, "Death and otherworldly journey," pp. 38–42; also, in vol. 2 of this set, the chapter by Liu Tseng-kuei. Xunzi

the deceased was a kind of wake which occurred at midnight before the burial and involved drinking, feasting, singing and other entertainment, during which the heirs, by contrast, were to make a show of grief and restraint. They were silent, wore rough un-hemmed and undyed sackcloth gowns, and ate unrefined rice and gruel.[116] According to the idealized Zhou system represented in the ritual texts, mourning status shaped the ceremonies of all major life events, such as birth, coming-of-age and marriage. Participation in elite ceremonies depended upon one's rank in either the "hemmed gown" or "un-hemmed gown" mourning groups, in other words, the higher three-year mourning rank or one below. Men of the hemmed-gown groups included the highest ranks of society, *tianzi*, *wang*, *zhufu*, who all required three-year mourning periods. While in mourning, they could not attend any ceremonies of other members in their group, suggesting that the association of the mourner with the death of a powerful member of society could jeopardize the auspicious nature of those ceremonies. This was also the case for the next rank of elites, but to a lesser degree, suggesting that the power of the spirit was directly correlated to his social rank in life. The next rank consisted of the many youths of the same generation as the heir in the main and collateral elite lineage lines, the *shi* 士 and their *pengyou* 朋友. They mourned only nine months. The mortuary cults around a powerful wife or mother were simply "lighter" (*qing* 輕) versions of their husbands'.

Zhou-style mourning practices were expressions of elite tradition and, as such, were under attack by advocates of other social classes. Their performance was also corrupted by local practices. For Ruists, the mourning practices that went into three years 三年之喪 were essential expressions of respect for those of higher rank, such as royalty or one's parents. Xunzi disapproved of the increasing tendency toward shortened mourning periods and also the excessive displays of grief (especially for financial gain). Early tales warn of the dire consequences to the state if

explains in detail how ornamentation of the body helps the survivors cope with the hideousness of death (Knoblock, *Xunzi*, vol. 3, pp. 64–5; *Xunzi jijie*, in *Zhuzi jicheng* vol. 2, pp. 240–1).

[116] For a discussion of foods consumed during the mourning period, see Roel Sterckx, "Food and philosophy in early China," *Of tripod and palate*," ed., Roel Sterckx (New York, 2005), pp. 40–1. For a discussion of the use of silence as an artifice for political gain, see Yang Hua, "'Liang an bu yan' yu jun quan jiaoti—guanyu 'sannian zhi sang' de yige xin shijiao," *Zhongguo shehui lishi pinglun* (Chinese Social History Review) 6 (2005), 1–20.

a leader were seen by his people as either displaying inadequate grief or overdoing it[117] Ruists linked the Zhou-style three-year tradition to the former kings (*xianwang*) of the Sandai as models of behavior for the ruling elite. They claimed that these kings had performed it as expressions of "filial piety" (*xiao* 孝), traditional obedience to the father (and all his ancestors). They further claimed such expressions were commonly practiced by people of all ranks, from the Son of Heaven (*tianzi* 天子) down to and including people of branch lineages (*shuren* 庶人), and that, indeed, anyone who might be considered human under the Zhou Heaven (*tianxia* 天下).[118]

Criticism or support of the system became a rhetorical device defining the debate between the camps of Ruist and Mozi followers. Mozi argued against the elaborate funeral and mortuary rituals central to the Ruist practice. For him, it was a waste of resources spent on the preservation of the corpses of the elite and key to what he saw as their corrupt hierarchical identities. Their tombs and burial grounds—replete with shrines, sacred gardens and mausoleum parks—were physical testimonies of power.[119] He advocated quick disposal of the corpse with a minimum of fuss; one that did not involve physical preservation.

Zhou-style funerals involved a fair amount of public spectacle—a custom also under attack. Ritual specialists from the main lineage shrine set out displays of gifts, banners and sacrificial goods—many gifts representative of the network of powerful relations of the deceased—in a variety of decorated carts including the cart that carried the body of the deceased. The carts and a parade of mourners and figures dressed as spirits moved from the house to the shrine and ultimately to the burial site, stopping at each stage for feasts and ceremonies. The

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[117] *Zuozhuan* Zhao 11, *Shisanjing zhushu* vol. 6, p. 287. One complaint regarding excess displays also included the criticism that sacrificial vessels were supposed to be given as awards for merit and not simply as gifts to mourners (*Zuozhuan* Zhao 15, *Shisanjing zhushu* vol. 6, p. 824).

[118] "Lilun," Knoblock, *Xunzi*, vol. 3, p. 68. *Xunzi jijie*, in *Zhuzi jicheng* vol. 2, p. 246; "Teng Wen gong, shang," *Mengzi zhengyi*, in *Zhuzi jicheng* vol. 1, p. 190; "Yanghuo," *Lunyu zhengyi*, in *Zhuzi jicheng* vol. 1, p. 382.

[119] On shrines, see the earlier discussion above and Wu Hung, "From temple to tomb: ancient Chinese art and religion in transition," *Early China* 13 (1988), 78–115. For a recent discussion of Eastern Zhou royal tombs and tomb complexes, see Falkenhausen, *Chinese society,* pp. 310–12, 328–38. For gardens or sacred spaces, there is the tale of a disciple of Confucius who mourned him in a room he built on a *chang* 場 over his tomb (*Mengzi zhengyi*, in *Zhushu jicheng* vol. 1, p. 231). In some texts, the area for worship was called a *changpu* 場圃, a courtyard and garden (*Shijing zhengyi* 8, in *Shisanjing zhushu* vol. 2, p. 285; *Zhouli* 16, in *Shisanjing zhushu* vol. 3, p. 251).

mourners would include public figures representing the social status of the deceased and their links to the local ruler and their common pseudo-ancestor and, by coincidence, their proximity to the economic pulse of the state.[120]

Mozi complained about the false nature of these rich funeral displays of "righteous decorum" (*yi* 義). He noted that such displays were claimed by Ruists to be "humane" (*ren* 仁) acts because they could be observed (*guan* 觀) by the "ten thousand peoples" (*wanmin* 萬民). The observation of ceremonies served as a social model or moral lesson for the audience. Mozi noted that these fake performers of "filial piety" claimed to draw their inspiration from their high ancestors who in turn had followed their own "way of the former kings," thus falsely elevating themselves by links to sage-king founders.[121]

Ancestors in private worship

Although there is evidence that founder ancestors gradually lost their hold over the politics of the Eastern Zhou elite as the Zhou system crumbled, human spirits, either in the form of one's own or other people's ancestors, continued to influence the welfare of their descendants. One's location in space determined the danger. Most easily offended were spirits native to regions outside the influence of a traveler's corporate lineage group that might include unfed spirits in areas whose altars had been destroyed. Late Eastern Zhou texts categorized spirits in lineage and spatial terms, as either inner or outer.[122] The spatial division of society

[120] *Mozi jiangu*, in *Zhuzi jicheng* vol. 4, pp. 104–17, 276. Jeffrey Riegel, "Do not serve the dead as you serve the living: the *Lüshi chunqiu* treatises on moderation in burial," *Early China* 20 (1995), 301–30, esp. pp. 316–28. For an exploration of the funeral in the Warring States context, see Cook, *Death in ancient China*, pp. 38–40.

[121] *Mozi jiangu*, in *Zhuzi jicheng* vol. 4, p. 105. For a discussion of the evolution of the meaning of *xiao* from the sacrificial feedings of ancestral spirits to the complete obedience of elders, see Keith Knapp, "The *Ru* reinterpretation of *Xiao*," *Early China* 20 (1995), 195–222. He claims the three-year mourning period was a Ruist fiction. I doubt that, but I do agree that there were, as indicated by Lai's work ("The diagram"), many variants.

[122] Sacrifices to nature gods, such as the suburban sacrifice (*jiao*) to the sky god and the *she* to the earth god, were considered "outer" (*wai* 外) rituals, whereas sacrifices to ancestral spirits, such as the *chang* and *di* (an artificial distinction by the end of the Warring States period) were "inner" (*nei* 内) rituals (*Liji zhengyi*, in *Shisanjing zhushu* vol. 5, p. 840). For a discussion of how different food types and preparation levels were used in the sacrifices to distinguish recent versus distant ancestors, see Gilles Boileau,

into inner and outer groups was symbolized by political and personal boundaries such as the city wall and by gender-identified boundaries of lineage worship. The local and immigrant non-elite people lived outside the city walls in the "suburbs." The elite inside the city referred to the main shrines for a wife's natal lineage and home as "outer main ancestral shrines" (*waizong* 外宗). The dead were buried outside the city walls, often at some distance from the living.[123] Regions outside the state's borders were infested with the ghosts of vanquished peoples, such as those of the Four Regions exterminated by the Zhou.

Negotiation with regions outside required not only ancestral protection but increasingly sacrifices to nature deities, such as the earth deity of the wilds (*ye* 野) (versus the *she* inside the city) as well as to the deities of mountains, rivers and other areas in order to bury their dead or to travel into outside areas.[124] Texts documenting rituals from the late Warring States period make it clear that the *sheji* and other landscape spirits had greater influence over travel than did the ancestors.[125] On the other hand, we find that by the Qin period, the personal performance of a dance associated with a sage king, albeit one historically linked to exorcism, Yu, was necessary upon setting out.[126]

Other records suggest that some key ancestors were carried outside the cities and accompanied the armies in the form of portable tablets, along with portable altars and sacrificial vessels. The "Zhou benji" in the *Shiji* notes that King Wu carried the tablet of his father King Wen on a cart into battle. According to the *Zhouli*, the Grand Master 大師 was in charge of the prohibitions, sacrifices and divinations involved in moving the shrine tablets that would go with the army. The tablet and other equipment (e.g., bells and drums) were smeared with the

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"Some ritual elaborations on cooking and sacrifice in Late Zhou and Western Han texts," *Early China* 23–24 (1998–99), 89–123.

[123] They might also have been conceived of as protectors of a city. In the case of the Chu metropolis of Ying 郢, the elite were buried around the sides of the city except the south where the Yangzi river was located. The hills to the north and west were most populated with the dead; Cook, *Death in ancient China*, pp. 1–4, 150–51.

[124] See the discussion by Lai, "Death and otherworldly journey."

[125] Lewis claims it was the "ritual innovation" of a shift to the nature worship at the altars of soil and grain that signaled the decline in influence of ancestral cults (*The construction of space*, pp. 147–48). I suspect that ancestor and nature worship had always been integrated but that it was the decline of the lineage system that caused the ascendance of the *sheji* cult.

[126] Hu Wenhui, "Qin jian 'Rishu, Chu bang men pian' xinzheng," *Wenbo* 1998.1, 91–4.

blood of the sacrificial animal. The author of the chapter "Zhengzi wen" in the *Liji* (through the voice of Confucius) contrasted the antiquity of the practice with the contemporary habit of rulers of bringing all major shrine tablets with them to battle. He warned that it was unwise to leave all the shrines empty. Some rulers got around this problem by leaving the original tablet in the shrine and bringing a copy into battle, although this could be a cause for confusion for worshippers if the copy was then stored in the shrine with the original (since a shrine should not have two "hosts").[127]

While traveling was particularly dangerous and required all sorts of protective rituals, Warring States period divination texts and almanacs illustrate the dangers of ordinary life, where the slightest cough or fever might be the result of a mischievous demon or ghost. When diviners inquired about the source of an illness, they used a combination of oracle bone and stalk divination as diagnostic tools. To effect a cure, ritualists offered a range of meat sacrifices, jades and finished cloth garments or cap ornaments to a pantheon of human and natural spirits. In the records of divination and sacrifice, ancestral spirits might be named or simply referred to in general categories, such as "human harm" (*renhai* 人害) or "luminous ancestors" (*mingzu* 明祖). The named ancestral spirits included mythical founder spirits, ancient kings, the former king at the head of a branch lineage and recently deceased ancestors. Of these groups, the recently deceased, which went back as far as four generations, were considered, along with the earth and sky deities, as the most likely sources of curses (*sui* 祟).[128] Particularly dangerous were those, such as parents, for whom mourning rituals had not yet been completed. Also dangerous were ghosts of those who had died young or violently, belonged to an in-law's family, "wandered" (*you* 遊) due to lack of a proper burial, or were hungry. Improper displays of respect and sacrifices to ancestor spirits caused "blame" (*jiu* 咎), from which descendants had to be released (*jie* 解) with gifts of food, drink, precious objects and performances to make them happy (*xi* 喜).

[127] See Takikawa, *Shiki kaichū*, p. 68; "Xia guan, Sima" in *Zhouli*, *Shisanjing zhushu* vol. 3, p. 448; "Zhengzi wen" in *Liji*, *Shisanjing zhushu* vol. 5, p. 367; see also, Lewis, *Sanctioned violence*, pp. 23, 43–5.

[128] See Cook, *Death in ancient China*, pp. 95–6, 99–100, 111–14.

Conclusion

During the Eastern Zhou period, old Zhou patterns were challenged by competing traditions and social upstarts. While we find that ancestor worship and mortuary ritual continued to form the basis of all social and political relationships in ancient China, the lack of a clear relationship via a single Son of Heaven combined with general socio-political disruption led to increased disaffection from Zhou-style or elite traditions. Most significantly, the public worship of royal ancestors, such as the Zhou founder kings, disappeared from the bronze inscription corpus. Local courts continued the mimetic ceremony of ancestor worship at *di* ceremonies—the occasions for the display of skills by the elite young who were undergoing a change of status through political advancement or marriage—but the founder ancestors worshipped were more often legendary figures, some reaching back to a pre-Zhou history.

Another influence that led to change in the performance of traditional rites to ancestors was the increasing literacy of an expanding and more socially complex population. The expression of ideas flourished, and texts expounding different philosophical positions and religious beliefs were written onto "rolls" 卷 of bamboo strips, a form once limited to court or lineage records. The Ruists proved the best at preserving and editing these ancient texts so that when the era of contending kings and states drew to a close, many of their traditions were codified into social law as reference texts for rulers. As the primary historians and authorities for Zhou-style ritual, they handily reapplied the vocabulary of old Zhou *di* rites, once inscribed in bronze (the changing Heavenly Mandate, accumulating *de*, and mythmaking choreographies), to new political arenas, smoothing the way for the rise of the imperial age and a redefined cosmos of natural forces.

While founder ancestors and lineage ancestors did not entirely lose their political currency, the privatization of the family ancestor worship was an inevitable result of the expansion of an elite society with few traceable connections to the past. The use of ancient ledgers of lineage merit and ancestral approval kept by court archivists and recorded on bronze inscriptions was a lost practice. Ritual officers instead buried bamboo records of divination, sacrifices and gifts representing the efforts of the living to negotiate with the supernatural. The deities mentioned in these records show that the deceased would take his place within a hierarchy ruled by natural forces. In the meanwhile, self-cultivation practices to channel *qi* and follow the Dao would further privatize the

ancient performances once used to invoke the ancestral spirits and recall lineage history. The staged Ru performance of music and ritual functioned to transform the practitioner personally into a sage (a state once reserved for an ancestor), while Daoists went one step further by internalizing the performance space itself within the body.

RITUAL AND RITUAL TEXTS IN EARLY CHINA

Mu-chou Poo

This chapter studies ritual and ritual texts in the context of early Chinese religious life from the Shang to the end of the Warring States. Without going into an extensive discussion of the complex theoretical issues involved in defining ritual,[1] not to say religion, I adopt a more or less functional definition, which, though not necessarily covering all the possible variations of ritual, may serve the Chinese case appropriately. A ritual, in the context of our study, is a set of repeatable actions aimed at producing a predictable effect involving communication with whatever forces the ritual performer was trying to be in touch with. Religious ritual is a ritual act that aims at producing effects of a religious nature, that is, effects that could somehow influence or attract the attention of certain supernatural or extra-human powers to act in favor of the ritual performer or benefactor. The ritual performer, in different situations, could be either a person with special ability and status, or anyone with the necessary knowledge, often with the help of ritual paraphernalia. In a literary culture, when a ritual achieves a certain complexity, it becomes necessary for certain important ritual procedures to be written down so as to ensure the correct enactment of the ritual in future. It is simply natural that written texts can only partially transmit or express the ritual process. Actions, emotions, sounds, color, even odor, though important during ritual performance, are often difficult to recapture with written words. Ritual texts, or texts describing ritual in various ways, are thus the most important testimony available to study rituals. Myth, whatever its relationship with ritual, may appear in a fragmentary state in ritual texts and may occasionally provide some insight into the formation of certain religious ideas or customs. Archaeological reports, on the other hand, may provide partial evidence of funerary or temple rituals often left unmentioned in written texts. With the help of these sources, we wish to know, in the context of ancient Chinese society, not only the purposes of the rituals, the guarantors (deities, ancestors, ghosts, and

[1] Catherine Bell, *Ritual* (Oxford, 1996).

spirits) of ritual actions, and the ritual processes but, most importantly, the cosmological assumptions behind all these. What can these assumptions tell us about the characteristics of the society that produced these rituals? And what can they tell us about the sentiments of the people who performed or needed these rituals? Hopefully the beginning of an answer to these questions could emerge from this investigation.

In order to concentrate on the few themes outlined here, the present chapter chooses to discuss selected rituals and ritual texts in the following order: we shall first discuss a number of rituals that were performed at the court and involved mainly state affairs in the Shang and early Zhou, as these are practically all we know about rituals in this early period. In the transition from the late Zhou to the Warring States period and beyond, we choose to discuss certain rituals that have more to do with daily life at the local level, so that the reader can gain an idea of how religious beliefs were integrated into the lives of the people. It is worthwhile to note that a number of rituals such as *nuo* 儺 and *meng* 盟 could be performed at various levels in society, thus it is inappropriate to classify them as either court rituals or private rituals. In the conclusion, we reflect upon the underlying cosmological assumptions of the rituals and if or how these assumptions were integrated into the intellectual traditions developed since the Warring States period.

Shang and Zhou state rituals

An oft-quoted passage in the *Zuozhuan* 左傳 (*Zuo commentary*) states that the important business of the state lies in ritual and war 國之大事在祀與戎.[2] Although no iron-cast rule, this notion of ritual and war brings out two important issues of survival for early states, that is, survival against foreign enemies and survival against unknown, supernatural, forces. The object of ritual sacrifice, in this context, logically implies the existence of deities and spirits or even human beings that had the power to influence the fortune of the state. One passage in the *Liji* 禮記 (*Book of rites*) offers a rather utilitarian and rational explanation of the origin of ritual offerings:

> According to the institutes of the sage kings about sacrifices, sacrifice should be offered to him who had given laws to the people; to him who

[2] *Zuozhuan zhushu*, in *Shisanjing zhushu* (Taibei, 1985), 27.10.

> had laboured to the death in the discharge of his duties; to him who had strengthened the state by his laborious toil; to him who had boldly and successfully met great calamities; and to him who had warded off great evils…
>
> As to the sun and moon, the stars and constellations, the people look up to them, while mountains, forests, streams, valleys, and hills supply them with the materials for use which they require. Only men and things of this character were admitted into the sacrificial canon.[3]

Such an explanation undoubtedly expresses the Confucian understanding of the meaning of ritual which, to a certain extent, could reflect the official attitude toward ritual sacrifice: ritual is for the celebration of "public value." It therefore precludes any possibility of understanding religious piety on a personal or emotional basis. One needs to qualify the term ritual here as "state ritual."

Shang rituals of a religious nature as recorded in the oracle bone inscriptions testify that there are rituals pertaining to matters of the state such as war and harvest.[4] Names of a certain number of rituals are known; the deities and royal ancestors involved in the rituals are identified. In general the recipient of ritual sacrifice during the Shang can be categorized into three kinds: heavenly deities such as Di, Sun, Cloud, Wind, Snow, Eastern Mother, Western Mother; earth gods such as Earth, the Four Directions, Mountain, and River; and the royal ancestors, even past subjects.[5] Most of the rituals are known only by their names. A number of them, such as *liao* 燎 ("burnt offering"), *chen* 沉 (sink into water) and *mai* 埋 (bury underground), are a little better known only because their names reveal their treatment of the offerings. Such treatment of the offerings, that is, sending the offerings literally to heaven, to water, and to the netherworld, presumes that the recipients dwell in these regions. An exception may be the *wu* 舞 (dance), which is a ritual dance that was used particularly when praying for rain.[6] As

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[3] *Liji zhushu*, in *Shisanjing zhushu* (Taibei, 1985 reprint) 46.14–15; J. Legge, *The Li Ki*, in F. Max Müller ed., *The sacred books of the East* vol. 28 (Oxford, 1885), pp. 207–09.

[4] A basic reference is Chen Mengjia, *Yinxu buci zongshu* (Beijing, 1956), pp. 561–604; Ts'ung-tung Chang, *Der Kult der Shang Dynastie im Spiegel der Orakelinschriften: Eine palaeographische Studie zur Religion im archarischen China* (Wiesbaden, 1970).

[5] See the chapter by Robert Eno on the Shang state pantheon in this volume, and translated excerpts of related oracle bone inscriptions: Robert Eno, "Deities and ancestors in early oracle inscriptions," in *Religions of China in practice*, ed. Donald S. Lopez, Jr. (Princeton, 1996), pp. 41–51.

[6] Chen Mengjia, *Yinxu buci zongshu*, pp. 599–603. See Eno's discussion in this volume.

to why such a dance could induce the Rain God to deliver rain, no sure answer can yet be given.

Documents from later eras confirm the lasting existence of these rituals. So far as the record shows, however, we know almost nothing about their procedures. Often a type of ritual sacrifice can be performed on different occasions for different deities. For example, the *liao*-burnt offering can be performed to implore the deities of Earth, Mountain, River, Wind and Snow. On the other hand, more than one kind of ritual offering could be performed for a given deity or royal ancestor. This situation points to a basic understanding of the nature of these rituals. Unlike some of the ancient Egyptian ritual offerings such as the ritual of mirror offering or the wine offering,[7] where the symbolic meaning of the offering was closely related to the specific nature of the deities, these Shang rituals are basically different sets of performed acts that express different degrees of reverence but have no intrinsic meaning with regard to the recipients, except the most general ones like direction of offering or residence of the deities. A similar idea is expressed in the *Book of rites*:

> With a blazing pile of wood on the grand altar they sacrificed to Heaven, by burying (the victim) in the grand mound, they sacrificed to Earth. (In both cases) they used a red victim.[8]

Regarding rituals performed specifically for the Shang royal ancestors, a rotating system of five kinds of rituals is identified for the late-Shang period.[9] Again, only the names of the rituals are known. The purposes of the rituals are presumably pleading for protection and good fortune, but we do not yet understand the purposes of all the rituals. According to a recent study, toward the end of the Shang period, more and more ancestral rituals began to become systematic rituals of general purpose, without specific protective or exorcistic content, indicating a decline in the divine and powerful nature of the ancestors. This decline of the power of the ancestors led to the development of the Zhou dynasty ritual system, in which there is an emphasis on the political and social

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[7] Constance Husson, *L'Offrande du miroir dans les temples égyptiens de l'époque gréco-romaine* (Lyon, 1977); Mu-chou Poo, *Wine and wine offering in the religion of ancient Egypt* (London, 1995).

[8] *Liji zhushu* 46.3–4; James Legge, *The Li Ki*, pp. 202–203.

[9] For reference, see K.C. Chang, *Shang civilization* (New Haven, 1980), pp. 202–203; David Keightley, *The ancestral landscape: time, space, and community in late Shang China (ca. 1200–1045)* (Berkeley, 2000), pp. 47–49.

importance of the ritual activities, while the specific and personal prayer of the kings for protection and fortune weigh less and less.[10]

Textual evidence concerning rituals performed at the court during the Zhou dynasty is mainly found in the *Zhouli* 周禮 (*Rites of Zhou*).[11] However one evaluates the historical authenticity of the *Zhouli*, there can be no doubt that the institutions described in it must have been based on certain historical precedents. The *Zhouli* provides a rather long account of the duty of the grand minister of rites (*dazongbo* 大宗伯), who is in charge of the state rituals:

> The grand minister of rites supervises the rituals of the vassal states, overseeing the rites offered to heavenly spirits, human ghosts, and terrestrial divinities. He helps the king establish and protect the various states. He serves ghosts and spirits of the state with auspicious rituals, and with pure Yin sacrifices he conducts rites to Bright Heaven, the Lord on High. He presents burnt offerings to the sun, moon, stars, and planets; he makes similar burnt offerings to the directors of the center and destiny and to the masters of wind and rain. He offers blood sacrifices to the altars of the land and grain, to the five tutelary deities of the house, and to the five sacred mountains. By burying and sinking sacrificial animals he sacrifices to the mountains, forests, rivers, and lakes, and offers the split carcasses of sacrificial animals to the four directions and the myriad things.[12]

The text follows by stating that the grand minister of rites performs six different offering rituals in different seasons for the former kings. Various occasions that are the concern of the state, such as natural disasters, death, military defeat, or rebellions are also taken care of by appropriate rituals. This obviously systematized account of the various important religious rituals of the state provides a view of an ideal system that resonates with what can be found in the Shang dynasty documents. However, this account only provides the names of the rituals assigned for the corresponding deities or ancestors, without detailing the actual content of the rituals. Occasionally, we can glean some details of ritual action from documents such as the *Liji*:

> On the day of sacrifice, the ruler led the victim forward, along with and assisted by his son on the opposite side, while the great officers followed

[10] Liu Yuan, "Shangdai houqi jizu yishi leixing," *Lishi yanjiu* 2002.6, 80–94. See the chapter by Robert Eno in this volume.

[11] A systematic account of the state rituals as reflected in the classics can be found in Lester J. Bilsky, *The state religion of ancient China*, 2 vols (Taibei, 1975).

[12] *Zhouli zhushu*, in *Shisanjing zhushu* (Taibei reprint, 1985), 18.1–5; cf. Deborah Sommer, *Chinese religion: an anthology of sources* (Oxford, 1995), p. 29.

> in order. When they had entered the gate of the temple, they fastened the victim to the stone pillar. The ministers and great officers then bared their arms and proceeded to inspect the hair, paying particular attention to that of the ears. They then with the knife with the bells attached to it, cut it open, took out the fat about the innards, and withdrew. Afterwards they offered some of the flesh boiled, and some raw, then withdrawing. There was the highest reverence about everything.[13]

The text of the *Liji* being mainly a discussion of the meaning of offerings, this single passage only explains one aspect of the procedure in the offering of the sacrificial animal, which could be applied to any ritual that involves the offering of victims. In any case, the list of the grand minister's duties in the *Zhouli* does not exhaust all the known rituals that might have taken place under various special circumstances. One good example is the *nuo* 儺 exorcism.

The nuo-*exorcism*

The term *nuo* (儺 or 難) refers to an ancient exorcistic ritual that was performed at various levels in society and has survived in various forms until the present.[14] It has been suggested that a kind of exorcism against evil spirits was performed as early as the Shang period. One term in the oracle bone inscriptions has been identified as the term for *fangxiang* 方相, the main exorcist in the *nuo*-exorcism known to the later era.[15] During the Eastern Zhou period it was known to have been done at the village level, as Confucius was said to have once attended the performance of a *nuo*-ritual in a village.[16] Passages found in the *Book of rites*, the *Rites of Zhou*, the *Lüshi chunqiu* 呂氏春秋 (*Annals of Sire Lü*), and the *Hou Hanshu* 後漢書 (*History of the Latter Han*) show the *nuo*-exorcism was an official ritual aimed at driving away evil spirits from the human sphere. It was usually performed as a seasonal ritual, initiated by the government and participated in by the ruler and officials. According to the "Yueling" 月令 ("Monthly ordinances") preserved in the *Lüshi chunqiu*:

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[13] *Liji zhushu* 47.11–12; Legge, *Li Ki*, pp. 217–18.

[14] Qu Liuyi and Qian Fu, *Zhongguo nuo wenhua tonglun* (Taibei, 2003).

[15] Qian Fu, "Shang jiu tanwei," *Minzu yishu* 1994.2, 51–68; Guo Moruo, *Buci tongcuan*, in *Guo Moruo quanji* (Beijing, 1983), No. 498; Qu Liuyi and Qian Fu, *Zhongguo nuo wenhua tonglun*, pp. 389–93.

[16] *Lunyu zhushu*, in *Shisanjing zhushu* (Taibei reprint, 1985), 10.9.

> During the third month of the spring...order the state to perform the *nuo*-ceremony, exorcising the evil spirits at the nine gates, in order to complete the spring *qi*-ether.
>
> During the second month of the fall...order the steward and diviner to perform sacrificial rituals...and the son of heaven performs the *nuo*-ceremony, in order to ward off diseases and to smooth the *qi*-ether of the fall.
>
> During the third month of the winter, order the officials to perform the great *nuo*-ceremony and the exorcistic sacrifice and display the earth cattle, in order to send away the cold *qi*-ether.[17]

It seems that in the context of the "Monthly ordinances" the term *nuo* was more or less the designation of a special seasonal exorcistic ritual for expelling evil spirits of all sorts. The passages in the "Monthly ordinances" did not specify the names of the evil spirits to be exorcised during the *nuo*-ritual. Nor can we tell from the text the actual procedures of the ritual performance. The *Zhouli* provides some description of the main exorcist, the *fangxiang*:

> The *fangxiang* is covered with a bear skin with four golden eyes. Clad in a black upper and a red lower garment, he grasps a lance and brandishes a shield. He leads the hundred participants and performs the seasonal *nuo*-ritual to search the house and expel diseases. During a state funeral, he shall walk in front of the coffin. Upon reaching the tomb, he shall enter the tomb pit and use the lance to beat the four corners and drive away the *fangliang*.[18]

Thus the *fangxiang* as an exorcist performed on various occasions other than the *nuo*-exorcism.

It is only in the *Hou Hanshu* that more information concerning the ritual process of the *nuo*-exorcism is available. The oft-cited passage in the "Treatise on rituals and ceremonies" gives a quite detailed description of the preparation and process of the *nuo*-ritual, as well as a text pronounced during the ceremony:

> One day before the La 腊 there is the Great Exorcism (*danuo* 大儺), which is called the "expulsion of pestilences". In this ceremony, one hundred and twenty lads from among the Palace Attendants of the Yellow Gates [a designation for the palace eunuchs], aged ten to twelve, are selected to form a youthful troupe. They all wear red headcloths, black tunics, and hold large twirl-drums. The Exorcist (*fangxiangshi* 方相氏), [his head]

[17] *Lüshi chunqiu* (Taibei, 1974), 2.3, 8.2, 11.2.
[18] *Zhouli zhushu* 31.12.

> covered with a bear skin having four eyes of gold, and clad in black upper garment and red lower garment, grasps a lance and brandishes a shield. Palace Attendants of the Yellow Gates act as twelve "animals", wearing fur, feathers and horns, and the Supervisor of the Retinue leads them to expel evil demons from the palace.
>
> When the water is yet high in the night water-clock, the court officials assemble, with Palace Attendants, Masters of Writing, Imperial Clerks, Internuncios, and Generals of the As-Rapid-as-Tigers and Feathered Forest Gentlemen all wearing red headcloths. The Emperor with his escort drives to the Front Hall [of the palace], where the Prefect of the Yellow Gates [a eunuch] memorializes, saying: "The youthful troupe is in readiness. We beg permission to expel the pestilences."
>
> Then the Palace Attendants of the Yellow Gates start a chant in which the troupe joins: "Jiazuo, devour the baneful! Feiwei, devour tigers! Xiongbo, devour the Mei! Tengqian, devour the inauspicious! Lanzhu, devour calamities! Boqi, devour dreams! Qiangliang and Zuming, together devour those who, having suffered execution with public exposure, now cling to the living! Weisui, devour visions! Cuoduan, devour giants, Qungqi and Tenggen, together devour the *gu* 蠱 poisons! There are altogether twelve spirits to drive away the evil and baneful. Let them roast your bodies, break your spines and joints, tear off your flesh, pull out your lungs and entrails. If you do not leave at once, those who stay behind will become their food."
>
> As this takes place, the Exorcist and the twelve "animals" dance and shout, going everywhere through the front and rear palace apartments. They make three rounds, holding torches, with which they send the pestilences forth out of the Meridional Gate. Outside this gate, mounted horsemen take over the torches and go out of the palace through the Guard Tower Gate, outside of which horsemen of the Five Barracks Guards in turn take over the torches and hurl them into the Luo river.
>
> [Meanwhile], in the various official bureaus, each official wears a wooden animal mask with which he can act as the leader of those participating in the Exorcism.
>
> When this is all over, peachwood figurines of [Shenshu] and Yulü with rush cords are set up. When this has been done, the officers in attendance upon the throne stop their efforts. Rush spears and peachwood staffs are bestowed upon the [Three] Lords, the [Nine] Ministers, the Generals, the Marquises of Special Merit, the other Marquises, and so on.[19]

The ritual process thus consisted of the following steps:

1. After all personnel were ready, the Palace Attendants of the Yellow Gates pronounced the spell, which was a threat to the evil spirits.

[19] *Hou Hanshu* (Beijing, 1970), pp. 3127–28. Tr. Derk Bodde, *Festivals in classical China* (Princeton, 1975), pp. 81–82, with minor changes.

2. After the pronouncement, the various personnel engaged in a ritual dance, mimicking the battle between the twelve deities and the evil spirits. Torches were used to drive out evil spirits.
3. The evil spirits seem to have been attached to the torches, so that after the performance, the torches were discarded into the river so as to get rid of the evil spirits.

The religious assumption behind this ritual can be construed as follows: there were evil spirits hiding in every corner of the human residence. The way to expel them was to invoke the help of certain deities to engage in combat with them. The victory of the deities was ensured, however, since there was not any doubt as to their ability to expel the evil spirits. The use of fire torches indicates that fire was considered auspicious and righteous. What is to be noticed is that the evil spirits were basically not destroyed but expelled. The spell specifically states that "if you do not leave at once, those who stay behind will become their (the deities') food." When the evil spirits were driven out, the expression used is "they (the Exorcist and the twelve animal-deities) send the pestilences forth out of the Meridional Gate." Thus although destructive threats were uttered in the spell, the aim of this exorcistic ritual was not to destroy the evil spirits but only to send them out of the human sphere. Implicitly, this means that the evil spirits would be able to come back the following year, so that another exorcism had to be performed. The cosmological assumption behind this exorcistic act, therefore, is quite interesting: the evil spirits, though malevolent and dangerous toward human beings, were part of the cosmic order. They could be expelled from the human sphere, yet there seems to be no way to destroy them once and for all. Thus yearly, or periodically, there arises the need to expel them.

Although the *nuo*-exorcism recorded in the *Hou Hanshu* qualifies as a state ritual, since the purpose was to expel evil spirits from the palace and many officials participated in the ritual, similar exorcistic rituals were also performed at the county and village level.[20] What is common to all these exorcistic rituals is the pronouncement of spells and certain ritual actions. In other words, the basic elements in exorcistic rituals are common to all.

[20] Qu Liuyi and Qian Fu, *Zhongguo nuo wenhua tonglun*, pp. 159–99.

The meng-*covenant*

A special ritual for the state was the *meng* 盟-covenant performed between sovereigns or between rulers and their subjects, or between equals.[21] The *Zuozhuan* preserves many instances where oaths of mutual recognition and alliance were made on the basis of divine retribution if the covenant were to be broken. During the *meng*-ritual, the parties engaged in the covenant first dug a pit in the ground, then sacrificed a bull, a horse, or a sheep in the pit, cut off its left ear and placed it on a plate, and poured the blood into a vessel. The covenant or contract was then pronounced, and the participants each drunk from the vessel as a token of a binding alliance. The covenant text was then buried together with the sacrifice, and the participants each kept a copy for their own record.[22]

In the *meng*-covenant deities and ancestral spirits were called upon as witnesses and guarantors of the covenant. To secure a covenant, self-curses (*shi* 誓) were often pronounced by the participants to ensure their faithfulness regarding the covenant. Therefore the term *mengshi* (covenant and curse) was often employed in situations involving the establishment of covenants and their securing with curses. In other words, a *meng* by its nature contains a *shi*, though not vice versa. An example of *mengshi* during a covenant ritual from the *Zuozhuan* reads as follows:

> All we who covenant together agree not to hoard up the produce of good years, not to shut one another out from advantages [that we possess], not to protect traitors, not to shelter criminals. We agree to aid one another in disasters and calamities, to have compassion on one another in seasons of misfortune and disorder, to cherish the same likings and dislikings, to support and encourage the royal House. Should any prince break these engagements, may He who watches over men's sincerity and He who

[21] See the pioneer study by Jiang Shaoyuan, "Meng yu zu," in *Jiang Shaoyuan minsuxue lunji* (Shanghai, 1998), pp. 114–44. For a study of *meng* in the context of the interstate politics of the Eastern Zhou period, see Liu Boji, *Chunqiu huimeng zhengzhi* (Taibei, 1962).

[22] Descriptions of the process of the *meng*-ritual can be found in *Liji*, *Zhouli*, and *Zuozhuan*; for a synopsis, see Jiang Shaoyuan, "Meng yu zu," pp. 122–23. Recent studies include Zhang Guoshuo, "Shilun Shangdai de huimeng shizu zhidu," *Yindu xuekan* 1998,4, 7–11; Li Mo, "Xian Qin mengshi de zhonglei ji yicheng," *Xuexi yu tanso* 2000.4, 134–138; Hao Benxing, "Cong Wenxian mengshu tan Zhongguo gudai mengshi zhidu," *Huaxia kaogu* 2002.2, 107–12; Lü Jing, "Zhongguo gudai mengshi gongnengxing yuanli de kaocha," *Shilin* 2006.1, 83–91.

> watches over covenants, [the Spirits of] the famous hills and [of] the famous streams, the kings and dukes our predecessors, the whole host of Spirits, and all who are sacrificed to, the ancestors of our twelve states with their seven surnames: may all these intelligent Spirits destroy him, so that he shall lose his people, his appointment pass from him, his family perish, and his State be utterly overthrown![23]

Thus the body of the covenant text usually consists of two sections: the first states the pact, or what behavior is expected of the participants henceforth, and the second is a *shi*, which is an invocation of the deities and ancestors asking them to witness the act and to keep an eye on those who would violate the covenant.[24] Archaeological excavations have found a large number of covenant texts pronounced during covenant rituals dated to the Eastern Zhou period. A horde discovered at Houma is from the state of Jin and dates to the early 5th century BC. The covenant was made between the members of the ruling Zhao clan against their common opponents. An example is the following:

> In the eleventh month the new moon was seen on the day *jiayin* 甲寅, and on the day *yichou* 乙丑 a sacrifice of cattle was offered [to] the ancestor spirit of the duke of Jin. I hereby reverently observe the command of the palace of Ding and Pingshi, and wish that you would approve…[if someone] should not follow the words of the covenant, may the ancestor lord recognize it and destroy him accordingly.[25]

A different text omits the date but adds the names of the enemies that were to be excluded from the covenant:

> Should Zhao dare not express his sincerity and serve his clan lord, dare not follow the honorable lord's covenant and the command of the palace of Ding and Pingshi, dare to alter sincerity and neglect the command of the two ancestral temples, and dare to follow Zhao Ni (the enemy) and his descendants, Xian Ke's descendants, Xian Zhi and his descendants, the descendants of Yun Yin, and Shi Qiu and his descendants in the land of the state of Jin, and those who privately gather and make covenant, may my lord take notice and destroy them.[26]

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[23] *Zuozhuan zhushu* 31.18–19; tr. James Legge, *The Ch'un Ts'ew with the Tso Chuen*, *The Chinese classics,* vol. 5 (Taibei reprint, 1985), p. 453.

[24] Lü Jing, "Zhongguo gudai mengshi gongnengxing yuanli de kaocha," adds a "preface" section, which is an introduction to the time, participants, and reason for making the *meng*-covenant.

[25] *Houma mengshu* (Taibei, 1980), p. 25.

[26] *Houma mengshu*, p. 28.

It is notable that only the ancestral spirit but no names of deities are mentioned in the text. According to the account in the *Zuozhuan* quoted above, various deities and royal ancestors could have been called upon to witness the *meng*-covenant. The *Guoyu* 國語 (*Discourses of the states*) also mentions that "the many deities of heaven and earth" are invoked during a state *meng*-ritual 以約誓于上下庶神.[27] A survey of the two major discoveries of *meng*-texts from Houma and Wenxian,[28] however, reveals that none of the excavated *meng*-texts contains a single divine name. We can therefore only assume that the convention of the day did not require the text to spell out the divine names as guarantors.

Similar to the *nuo*-exorcism, the *meng*-covenant can also be performed in a private situation as a form of oath-taking. One example is the *meng* between Duke Zhuang of Lu and Lady Mengren. The mutual oath was taken with the exchange of blood by cutting the arms of the two participants. When blood flowed from the wound, the two arms were entwined so as to form a binding pact.[29]

One common feature of the state and private *meng*-rituals is the exchange of blood. To drink from a common vessel the blood of the sacrificial animal implies a belief in the sacredness of the blood, and by sharing the sacred blood, it is hoped that the participants would be firmly bound by the alliance. The blood is therefore seen as the material guarantee of the alliance, since if a participant broke the alliance there would be retribution on account of the blood inside his body. Its divine status presumably comes from the fact that spells approved by the deities and endowed with a transforming power to sanctify the blood are first addressed to the deities. To exchange each other's blood by touching the wounds is another way to ensure that both parties have the same sacred blood inside themselves. Here it might be useful to trace the meaning of blood in the context of ancient Chinese religious ideas.

The *Liji* provides perhaps the only explication of the meaning of blood or blood sacrifice. A passage in the chapter "Jiao tesheng" 郊特牲 states:

> The suburban sacrifice has blood, the grand sacrifice has raw flesh, the "three offerings" has boiled flesh, and the "one offering" has [something]

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[27] *Guoyu* (Taibei, 1970), 6.9.

[28] Hao Benxing, "Honan Wenxian Dong Zhou mengshi yizhi fajue yu zhengli qingkuang," in *Xinchu jianbo yenjiu*, eds Ai Lan and Xing Wen (Beijing, 2004), pp. 74–79; Hao Benxing, "Cong Wenxian mengshu."

[29] *Zuozhuan zhushu* 10.22.

> well-done. The most reverent offering is not to offer taste 不饗味 but to honor the scent 貴氣臭.[30]

In another instance, it is stated:

> At the sacrifices in the time of the lord of Yu the smell (*qi* 氣) was thought most important. There were the offerings of blood, of raw flesh, and of boiled flesh. All these were employed for the sake of smell 用氣.[31]

Thus the reason for the use of blood offering is mainly based on the smell of blood. However, another passage states that, "To use blood as sacrifice is because of the *qi* that is contained in it 盛氣也."[32] There is a certain ambiguity about the term *qi* here. When it is used together with *xiu* 臭 as in *qixiu* 氣臭, there can be no doubt that it means "smell" or "scent." Yet when it is said that "to use blood as sacrifice is because of the *qi* that is contained in it," it could mean "breath" with the extended meaning "life force." The common term *xueqi* 血氣 (blood-*qi*) also indicates that conceptually blood is related to the idea of "life force." In either case the binding force of blood in the *meng*-covenant does not seem to have been adequately expressed by the term *qi*. There is also the idea that blood smeared on various objects could serve as a kind of exorcistic protection.[33] In such cases, blood is seen as possessing a certain sacred power that could ward off evil spirits. In fact, an unresolved issue is whether the participants of the *meng*-covenant drank the blood, or merely smeared the blood on the mouth, as an act of sanctification.[34]

If the blood was drunk, the concept of blood-brotherhood often found in some early or "primitive" societies may provide some clue to the necessity or significance of drinking and exchanging blood in the *meng*-rituals.[35] The sharing of blood, in such cases, assumes that the same

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[30] *Liji zhushu* 25.1. For the translation, cf. James Legge, *The Li Ki*, p. 417; see also Gilles Boileau, "Some ritual elaborations on cooking and sacrifice in Late Zhou and Western Han Texts," *Early China* 23–24 (1998/99), 89–123, esp. 93–94.

[31] *Liji zhushu* 26.21. Tr. Legge, *The Li Ki*, p. 443.

[32] *Liji zhushu* 26.22. James Legge, *The Li Ki*, p. 445.

[33] See Jiang Shaoyuan, "Gudai de xueban (tuxue) li," in *Jiang Shaoyuan minsuxue lunji*, pp. 145–60.

[34] For discussion, see Lü Jing, "Zhongguo gudai mengshi," pp. 84–86.

[35] For the religious significance of blood, mainly as representing life force or soul substance, and the blood-brotherhood or inter-commingling of blood-life, see H.W. Robinson, "Blood," in *Encyclopaedia of religion and ethics*, ed. James Hastings (New York, 1926), vol. 2, pp. 714–19; Jean-Paul Roux, "Blood," in *The encyclopaedia of religion*, ed. Lindsay Jones (New York, 2005), vol. 2, pp. 254–56.

life force is to be distributed equally among the covenant members, so that they became virtually consanguineous, which theoretically should make them of one mind and heart. The possible retribution of the deities, however, seems to be a distrusting and realistic precaution against those who might break the covenant, which also implies a consensus that even consanguineous brotherhood is not absolutely reliable.

There are also instances where no blood sacrifice is needed for a *meng*-covenant to be effective.[36] The *Zuozhuan* records an event that took place in year 9 of Duke Xi of Lu when the duke of Qi called for a *meng*-covenant among the various Zhou vassals. According to the *Mengzi* 孟子 (*Mencius*), this *meng*-covenant took place without the use of blood sacrifice.[37] One famous incidence involves the duke Wen of Jin (Chong Er), who made a covenant with his uncle Jiu Fan when he was about to return to Jin from Qin as a released hostage: "If I do not share one mind with uncle, the Lord of the River shall see to it!"[38] He then threw a piece of jade into the river as token of the covenant. No blood covenant is mentioned here.

Sometimes our sources do not allow us to make assumptions as to whether any blood sacrifice was used during a covenant. In year 9 of Duke Xiang of Lu, a passage in the *Zuozhuan* mentions that "when a *meng*-covenant was requested yet with no hostage (guarantee), the god would not descend." The name of the god is never spelled out.[39] When a *meng*-covenant was done between nobles or officials, the "great god" (*dashen* 大神) is sometimes invoked as witness. For example, a certain Ning Wuzi made a covenant with the people of Wei with the following words:

> Heaven sent down calamity on the State of Wei, so that the ruler and his subjects were not harmonious, and we were brought to our present state of sorrow. But now Heaven is guiding all minds, bringing them in humility to a mutual accord. If there had not been those who abode in the State, who would have kept the altars for the ruler? If there had not been those who went abroad with him, who would have guarded his cattle and horses? Because of the former want of harmony, we now clearly beg to covenant

[36] See Li Mo, "Xian Qin mengshi de zhonglei," p. 136.

[37] *Zuozhuan zhushu* 13.11; *Mengzi zhushu*, in *Shisanjing zhushu* (Taibei reprint, 1985), 12b.1; Yang Bojun, *Chunqiu zuozhuan zhu* (Beijing, 1981), p. 327.

[38] *Zuozhuan zhushu* 15.14. The text in *Zuozhuan* has 所不與舅氏同心者, 有如白水, while Sima Qian gives a somewhat different but clearer rendering: 若反國, 所不與子犯共者, 河伯視之 (*Shiji* 39.1660).

[39] *Zuozhuan zhushu* 30.32.

> before you, great god, asking you to direct our consciences. From this time forward after this covenant, those who went abroad with the marquis shall not presume upon their services, and those who remained in the State need not fear that any crime will be imputed to them. If any break this covenant, exciting dissatisfactions and quarrels, may the intelligent Spirits and our former rulers mark and destroy them![40]

We are not informed of the identity of this "great god," nor do we know if the covenant ritual involved any blood sacrifice. Yet the significance of *meng*-covenant is clear: when certain forms of human relations, in particular relations of a political nature, were to be established, they required higher guarantors that could see to the execution of the mutually agreed to responsibilities. It was therefore a form of divine justice that reflected the religious mentality of the time. When the *meng*-covenant lost its appeal as an effective assurance of alliance, especially in the political arena, a form of secular justice based on military force had to be enforced to ensure the smooth enforcement of a political alliance. The secularization of political affairs, of course, was a gradual process and did not replace the entire belief system, which we continue to encounter in other areas of human activities, as well as, in changed form, in the political sphere.

Seasonal rituals

Seasonal and agricultural rituals for the local community must have been needed and performed from very early on. In an agricultural society, however, seasonal rituals were not only community affairs but also family affairs. The *Shijing* 詩經 (*Book of songs*) preserves fragments of evidence concerning seasonal rituals in a community setting. One poem, the famous "Seventh Month" has the following paragraph:

> [The ice-house was opened] in the days of the fourth month, early in the morning,
> Having offered in sacrifice a lamb with scallions;
> In the ninth month, it is cold, with frost;
> In the tenth month, they sweep clean their stack-sites.
> The two bottles of spirits are enjoyed,
> And they say, "Let us kill our lambs and sheep,
> And go to the hall of our prince,

[40] *Zuozhuan zhushu*, 16.27; Legge, *The Chinese classics*, vol. 5, p. 211.

> There raise the cup of rhinoceros horn,
> And wish him long life, that he may live for ever."[41]

Here there are two seasonal and agricultural festivals that are celebrated with the offering of lambs. We are not informed who the recipient deities of the offerings were. Compared with evidence in the "Monthly ordinances," however, it has been suggested that the recipient deity of the fourth month was probably the "matchmaker" (Gaomei 高禖), a deity whose function was to enhance human fertility.[42] To suggest that a deity for human fertility was honored in a ritual that sought agricultural success is logically not impossible, since the ancient Mesopotamians also had similar religious festivals linking human fecundity with agricultural fertility.[43] However, a number of other poems in the *Shijing* indicate that agricultural festivals or rituals were mainly celebrated to honor the ancestors and the Lord of Earth (*tianzu* 田祖).[44] Thus agricultural festivals often took place while the ancestors were also honored. It has been argued that many of the earliest poems in the *Shijing* are in fact liturgies pronounced during seasonal agricultural festivals that include paying homage to the ancestors.[45] A detailed study of the seasonal rituals has been provided by Derk Bodde, and thus shall not be attempted in this chapter.[46]

Funerary rituals

A funeral is basically a religious and social event that mediates between the individual, the family, and the community. In early China it was an

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[41] *Shijing zhushu,* in *Shisanjing zhushu* (Taibei reprint, 1985), 8a.22; cf. Legge, *The Chinese classics*, vol. 4, pp. 232–33.

[42] See Mu-chou Poo, *In search of personal welfare* (New York, 1998), pp. 31–32. For further discussion of the agriculture festival and the related problem of the ancient calendar system, see Guan Donggui, "Zhongguo gudai de fengshou ji jiqi yu linian de guanxi," *Lishi yuyan yanjiuso jikan* 31 (1960), 191–270.

[43] See, for example, the dying god of fertility: Thorkild Jacobsen, *The treasure of darkness: a history of Mesopotamian religion* (New Haven, 1976), pp. 23–74.

[44] *Shijing zhushu* 19/3:3 周頌 豐年: 豐年多黍多稌, 亦有高廩, 萬億及秭, 爲酒爲醴, 烝畀祖妣, 以洽百禮, 降福孔皆; *Shijing zhushu* 14/1:6 小雅 甫田: 我田既臧, 農夫之慶, 琴瑟擊鼓, 以御田祖, 以祈甘雨.

[45] Edward L. Shaughnessy, "From liturgy to literature: the ritual context of the earliest poems in the Book of Poetry," in *Hanxue yanjiu* 13.1 (1995), 133–64.

[46] Derk Bodde, *Festivals in classical China*. See also Robert Eno and Kominami Ichiro in this volume.

event in which various socio-political elements in society were played out: the relationship between the living and the dead, the standing of the deceased and his/her family in the social hierarchy, the future of the deceased in the netherworld, and the fortune of the family members still on earth. Besides preparing a tomb and all sorts of funerary objects, it was necessary that certain rituals be performed and protective spells pronounced, written down, and buried in the tomb.

Excavations of Shang dynasty burials show such signs of funerary rituals as human and animal sacrifice, and the sequence of the rituals can be established through archaeological excavations. Beginning from the bottom of the tomb pit, animals such as dogs were buried in the so-called *yaokeng* 腰坑 or "waist pit." After the coffins and caskets were installed, if it was a royal tomb, human sacrifice was performed, and the heads and beheaded bodies of the victims were buried on the steps of the ramps. The exact process of the individual rituals, however, is unclear.

The *Book of songs* contains some fragmentary information concerning funerary ritual during the Western Zhou period. It is mentioned that when a man died the family would select a young child, usually his grandson, to be dressed up in the guise of the deceased, in order to accept food and homage on behalf of the deceased. This custom of making a *shi* 尸, literally "corpse," as a living effigy of the deceased has been discussed time and again. The existence of this custom during the Shang period has also been suggested.[47] During the Eastern Zhou period, there is evidence showing that during a funeral procession a *wu*-shaman was assigned to purify the way in front of the procession using a peach wood twig. A collection of rituals performed during the funeral of a man of the *shi* 士-gentleman class can be found in the *Yili* 儀禮 (*Rites and ceremonies*). Most of these rituals are devised for the purpose of differentiating various social relations and providing a guideline for proper conduct in the entire period from the moment of death till interment and the subsequent ritual sacrifices.

For example, in the "Shi sangli" 士喪禮 ("Funeral rites for gentlemen"), there is the following passage:

[47] Hu Xinsheng, "Zhoudai jisi zhong de lishi li ji qi zongjiao yiyi," *Shijie zongjiao yanjiu* 1990.4, 14–25; Ge Yinghui, "Shuo jisi lishi buci," *Yindu xuekan* 2000.1, 4–8; Fang Shuxin, "Yinxu buci zhong suojian de shi," *Kaogu yu wenwu* 2000.5, 21–24 and 27.

> When he has died in the principal room of the private apartments, he is covered with the coverlet used at the smaller dressing. A man is sent to call the soul back. He uses the clothes of the russet cap suit for the purpose, sewing the skirt to the coat. Then throwing them over his left shoulder, he takes the collar and the girdle together in his left hand. He then ascends by a ladder set against the front end of the east wall, and, going up to the center of the house, faces north, and uses the clothes to invite the spirit to return to them, saying, "Ah! So-and-so, return!" This he does three times, and then throws the clothes down in front of the hall. The clothes are received in a basket, and taken up by the east steps for the clothing of the corpse. The man who went up to call back the soul descends by the back end of the west wall.[48]

More detailed instructions follow this and read like a play script:

> If visitors arrive on hearing of the death, the Master of Ceremonies simply bows as they enter. The Master of Ceremonies then enters, and sits down to the east of the couch, with those who help him to manage the obsequies behind him, and all facing west. The females of the family sit close up to the couch on the other side, with their faces eastward. The near relations are in the room. The rest of the womenfolk are outside the door of the room, with their faces to the north, and the rest of the menfolk in the court below the hall, with their faces also north.[49]

Without exhausting all the examples, it should be clear that there is an obsession with the minute details of ritual action based on social hierarchy. The preparation for the afterlife, therefore, was also a procedure for constructing or consolidating proper social relations among the living. The death of a member of a social group provided an opportunity for the surviving members to rehearse the social network. As the Confucian scholar Xunzi put it, "Music is performed to unite and create unity, ritual is performed to divide and make distinctions."[50] The performance of rituals, therefore, had the function of distinguishing and, thereby, of determining different social statuses. When applied to funerals, this meant that various degrees of complexity in ceremonies and richness in accompanying funerary goods were designed to show the status of the deceased person and, by extension, the status of the family that organized the funeral.

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[48] *Yili zhushu*, in *Shisanjing zhushu* (Taibei reprint, 1985), 35.1–4; trans. John Steele, *The I-Li or book of etiquette and ceremonial*, 2 vols (London, 1917), 2.45.

[49] *Yili zhushu* 35.5–6; John Steele, *The I-Li*, 2.46–47.

[50] Wang Xianqian, *Xunzi jijie* (Taibei reprint, 1970), 14.255.

Whether or not the rituals described or prescribed in the *Rites and ceremonies* were actually performed verbatim at any point in time, it can be assumed that they represent to a certain degree the commonly agreed social customs of the ruling elites.[51] However, it is also clear that the *Rites and ceremonies* is not a field report and that its content is the result of much editing and numerous transmissions and, above all, ideological embellishments. When we look at actual practice, deviations from the "norm" as described in the *Rites and ceremonies* seem to be the rule. This refers not only to the coffins and funerary objects, but also to the rituals associated with the funeral. Different from the transmitted canonical texts, therefore, ritual texts found in archaeological excavations provide us with a direct witness to rituals performed at local funerals.[52]

For example, a group of wooden slips found in Hunan province and dated to 79 AD provides rich information on the rituals performed in connection with death and burial.[53] Although a little late in time, the content of the texts is still revealing concerning daily ritual practice. The texts are written in the form of a contract in which it is recorded that when a person was about to die, the family members would employ a *wu* 巫-shaman to pray and make ale and meat offerings for the deceased. When the person died, the family members would pray again to a variety of deities, including the lord of the stove (*zaojun* 灶君), the director of destiny (*siming* 司命), and a number of local deities. Sacrifice to the deities was also ministered to by local *wu*-shamans. When the prayer was finished, the content of the prayer and the offering was written on wooden or bamboo slips, to be taken by the deceased as a kind of contract to the Heavenly Sire (*tiangong* 天公), to testify that prayers and offerings had indeed been performed, as promised, on behalf of the deceased. It is unclear who this Heavenly Sire was, though he must

[51] See a detailed study by Xu Fuquan, "Yili shi sangli ji xili yijie yanjiu," *Guowen yanjiusuo jikan* (Taiwan shifan daxue) 24 (1980), 225–518.

[52] A study of modern Chinese funerary customs claims that despite local variations, there was an overall unified funerary ritual, which was the result of age-old cultural homogenization. See James L. Watson, "The structure of Chinese funerary rites: elementary forms, ritual sequence, and the primacy of performance," in *Death ritual in late imperial and modern China*, eds James L. Watson and Evelyn Rawski (Berkeley, 1988), pp. 3–19.

[53] Chen Songchang, *Xianggang Zhongwen daxue wenwuguan cang jiandu* (Hong Kong, 2001). Donald Harper, "Contracts with the spirit world in Han common religion: the Xuning prayer and sacrifice documents of A.D. 79," in *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie* 14 (2004), 227–67.

have been one of the important deities in charge of the deceased. This, of course, is another form of the bureaucratization of the afterworld, as official documents on earth were imitated in the world of the dead. It is particularly interesting that here the deceased was referred to as ascending to heaven and descending to the Yellow Spring at the same time when death occurred. None of these rituals are recorded in the *Rites and ceremonies*.

Funerary rituals are performed not only for those who died of natural causes, but also for those who died an untimely death, such as on the battlefield, which would require different rituals.

A text found in a tomb from Jiudian 九店, Hubei 湖北 province, dating to the late 4th century BC, seems to be a model text for praying to the deity Wuyi 武夷, who is referred to as being assigned by the Lord on High (Shangdi 上帝) to take charge of the war dead, to enable such a person to return home to receive food offerings from his family. The somewhat obscure text reads as follows:

> [Hao! I] dare to implore Wuyi, the Son of [unidentified name]. You reside at the foot of Fu Mountain 復山 and in the wilderness of Buzhou 不周. The Lord 帝, having determined that you have no occupation, commanded you to take charge of those who died by weapons. Today, so-and-so (the deceased) wishes to eat. So-and-so (the invocator) dares to ask his (the deceased's) wife to offer strips of silk 攝幣 (i.e. money), and fragrant provisions 芳糧 are offered for the sake of so-and-so (the deceased) at the place of Wuyi. Your Lordship in the past has received so-and-so's (the invocator's) cut strips of silk and fragrant provisions. Please deign to allow so-and-so (the deceased) to come back to eat as usual.[54]

The text is wrought with difficult passages; the general meaning, however, is more or less certain. As a supplication to the deity Wuyi, the function of the text was to ensure the safe return of the ghost of the soldier who had died on the battlefield. The *Zuozhuan* passage "when the ghost has a place to return, it will not cause any malice" could be seen as an ideal state for the deceased when similar supplications were pronounced in the funeral. The fact that such a model text even existed indicates a wide acceptance of similar beliefs in society.

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[54] Hubei sheng wenwu kaogu yanjiu suo, *Jiangling Jiudian Dong Zhou mu*, plate 113; see also Hubei sheng wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo and Beijing daxue zhongwenxi, *Jiudian Chujian* (Beijing, 2000), pp. 13, 50; Chen Songchang, "Zhanguo shidai bingsizhe de daoci," *Jianbo yanjiu yicong* 2 (1998), 30–42. Zhou Fengwu, "Jiudian Chu jian gao Wu Yi chongtan," *Zhongyang yanjiuyuan lishi yuyan yanjiusuo jikan* 72.4 (2001), 941–59; pp. 943–45.

Both of the excavated texts treated above demonstrate that during a funeral local or higher deities were invoked for various reasons. No deities, on the other hand, are found to have played any role in the funerary rituals described in the *Rites and ceremonies*.

Rituals in daily life

As the world is full of innumerable potential disasters, the individual needs to obtain the help of deities and spirits in various daily operations through prayers and offerings, or to prevent possible injuries caused by evil spirits and demons with various exorcistic methods. Often actions cannot be taken without first consulting the oracles or making certain necessary ritual offerings and prayers. The following is an account of some of the most often encountered daily rituals for an individual in the late Warring States period. These rituals demonstrate how people's mundane life was intimately related to the supernatural world.

Rituals for travel

According to the daybooks (*rishu* 日書) of Shuihudi 睡虎地 and Fangmatan 放馬灘, not only should one choose a day suitable for travel, a ritual is to be performed before one sets out. According to the Shuihudi text,

> When one reaches the gate of the state (*bang* 邦, perhaps meaning community or village), make three Yu-steps (*Yubu* 禹步), add one more step and call: "Ah! I hereby dare to plead and say: [In order that] my travel shall have no danger, [I shall] first prepare the way for Yu." Then one should draw five lines on the ground, and pick up the dirt in the middle of the drawing and carry it with him.[55]

Another version in the Shuihudi text gives a somewhat different ritual procedure:

> When one is about to leave the gate of the state, he should walk…and carry the talisman of Yu, walk from the left and return from the right, and say: "…" …return from the right, and say: "[I shall] travel [outside] the [gate] of the state and be allowed to travel (?)." He shall throw the

[55] Shuihudi Qinmu zhujian zhengli xiaozu, *Shuihudi Qinmu zhujian* (Beijing, 1990), p. 223.

> talisman on the ground, make three Yu-steps, and say: "Ah! I hereby plead and say…the talisman." Then get on the wagon, do not look back.[56]

A similar version is found in the Fangmatan text:

> When one is about to go out of the gate of the village, [he should] make three Yu-steps and face toward the Northern Dipper, use the shield to draw on the ground, watch, and say: "Emperor Yu has five horizontal lines. Now in order to facilitate travel and travel with no danger, [I shall] prepare [the way] for Yu." This should be appropriate.[57]

Several points in the rituals for traveling presented above call for attention. First are the ritual acts, which include the performing of the Yu-steps, the carrying of the Yu-talisman, the drawing on the ground, the pronouncing of the supplication, and the carrying of the dirt taken from the middle of the drawing. The rituals are to be performed at the gate of the village or community, which indicates a conceptual division of space between that which is familiar and safe and that which is unfamiliar and dangerous.[58]

The second point worth noticing is the prominent role of the legendary emperor Yu in this ritual. Not only the Yu-steps are performed, a talisman in the name of Yu was used, and the drawings on the ground were also related to the Yu legend.[59] The pronouncement states that the drawings are for clearing the way for Yu. As legend has it, Yu, the successor of the wise emperor Shun and founder of the Xia dynasty, the first dynasty in Chinese traditional history (though yet to be substantiated by modern historians), was skilled in hydraulic engineering and so spent most of his life in the countryside trying to divert water into channels to prevent floods. Three times he passed his home but did not enter the house to see his newly wedded wife. This famous story has been told time and again in Chinese history as evidence of the Great Yu's devotion to his work—people first, so to speak. He is endlessly praised by the Chinese as a national hero. Thus it seems that the legend of Yu

[56] Ibid., p. 240.

[57] See He Runqun, "Yunmeng Qinjian rishu xing ji youguan Qinren shehui huodong kao," *Jianghan kaogu* 1996.1, 90–92.

[58] For further discussion of the traveling ritual, see Liu Tseng-kuei, "Qinjian rishu zhong chuxing lisu yu xinyang," *Lishi yuyan yanjiusuo jikan* 72. 3 (2001), 503–39; Lai Guolong, "Death and otherworldly journey in early China as seen through tomb texts, travel paraphernalia, and road rituals," *Asia Major* 3rd series, 18.1 (2005), 1–44.

[59] Liu Zhaorei, "Lun Yubu de qiyuan ji Yu yu wu dao de guanxi," in *Liang Zhaotao yu renleixue*, ed. Zhongshan daxue renlei xuexi (Guangzhou, 1991), pp. 264–279.

made him a deity who could protect travelers. The act of clearing the way for Yu thus functions as a magical action to protect the traveler. That Yu was important in the popular mind in regards to travel can also be demonstrated by another passage preserved in the same Shuihudi daybook. In a day-selection chapter, it is written that

> This day is *gengshen* 庚申, the day when Emperor Yu left (home)…One should not give one's daughter in marriage or take a wife, nor take in servants and beasts; it is only good for separation. One should not travel on a day for leaving; he who does will never return.[60]

Another paragraph related to the legend of Yu states that,

> *Guichou* 癸丑, *wuwu* 戊午, and *jiwe i* 己未 are the days when Emperor Yu took the daughter from Tu Shan 塗山 as wife. If the wife is not deserted, she will surely die in childbirth.[61]

Here, interestingly, we see a completely different assessment of the Yu legend and what Yu had done—not for his country, but to his wife. His poor wife must have suffered a lot from his absence, should the legend be true, since Great Yu apparently did not care much about her personal needs, as he was serving a "greater cause." Greater or not, the result is what we see in the minds of the common people whose wisdom has created the passages in the daybook. Do not marry your daughter on the day that Yu got married, as this will bring bad luck to your daughter: she will be separated from her husband, for example, and suffer exactly what Yu's wife had suffered. One should not travel, as the passage states, on the same (sexagesimally defined) day as Yu left home, for he never returned home. Positively or negatively, the legend of Yu was closely associated with rituals and beliefs related to travel.[62]

In either case, the examples demonstrate that ancient legends could become the reference for people to establish their understanding of the auspiciousness of a certain date or to explain certain oracular signs. This can be corroborated by examples found in other divination texts, notably the *Guicang* 歸藏 text found in Wangjiatai 王家台. One passage states that, "In the ancient past, King Qi of Xia 夏啓 divined that he should ride the flying dragon to reach the heavens." This is another reference

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[60] *Shuihudi Qinmu zhujian*, p. 240.
[61] Ibid., p. 208.
[62] See further discussion in Liu Lexian, *Shuihudi Qinjian rishu yanjiu* (Taibei, 1994), pp. 458–61.

to ancient Xia dynasty lore which was passed down in reference to an auspicious date.[63] From here one can surmise that there was a common underlying mentality between the daybook, the *Guicang*, and the *Changes of Zhou* (*Zhouyi* 周易).[64] The *Lüshi chunqiu* preserves another example that could support the excavated texts:

> The king of Xia, Kong Jia 孔甲, once hunted at Mount Fu of Dongyang. Suddenly there was strong wind and darkness in the sky and Kong Jia, having lost his way, entered into the house of a commoner. The owner of the house had just had a child. Someone therefore said, "It is an auspicious date since the Lord came. This child will have good fortune." Yet others say, "One cannot receive [such a divine power], this child will surely have a bad fate."[65]

Auspicious or not, the story testifies how ancient legends or myths are related to hemerology.

Curses

While during a *meng*-covenant ritual, a curse could be cast to invoke deities and ancestral spirits to punish the unfaithful; curses could also be cast upon one's enemies without a covenant. In fact, curses were widely used in ancient society as a means to transfer one's malicious intentions against others by means of divine or magical power. An oft-cited passage in the *Book of songs* reads as follows:

> Now I use these three creatures for sacrifice,
> In order to secure a curse on you,
> If you were a ghost (*gui* 鬼) or a short fox (*yu* 蜮),
> Then I could not get you.[66]

The text reveals that a curse could be secured by performing a sacrifice, presumably to the relevant power. The point in the poem, however, is that a curse could only be cast upon living human beings. A ghost or a demonic figure (the short fox), on the other hand, could not be harmed by a curse. Another example of a curse is found in the *Zuozhuan*, in which a pig, a dog, and a chicken were sacrificed in order to secure a

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[63] Wang Mingqin, "Wangjiatai Qinmu zhujian gaishu," in *Xinchu jianbo yanjiu*, eds Ai Lan and Xing Wen (Beijing, 2003), pp. 26–49. The quote can be found on p. 32.

[64] See Wang Baoxuan, "Cong Qinjian guicang kan yixiang shuo yu guade shuo de qiyuan," in *Xinchu jianbo yanjiu*, eds Ai Lan and Xing Wen, pp. 146–153.

[65] *Lüshi chunqiu* 6.5.

[66] *Shijing zhushu*, 12/3.18.

curse: "The duke of Zheng ordered that 100 soldiers offer a pig and 25 soldiers a dog and chicken, in order to cast a curse against the one who shot Ying Kaoshu."[67] The use of animal sacrifice in the act of curse-casting was apparently a widespread custom. As late as the Eastern Han period, it is reported that even the Xiongnu used to bury sheep and cattle as part of the curse-casting act against the Han army.[68]

As an effective method to reach desired results, either for binding a covenant or to harm an enemy, the act of curse-casting had official status. The *Rites of Zhou* lists an office of curse-casting (*zuzhu* 詛祝), which is in charge of various occasions that require a curse be cast.[69] The Qin dynasty is known to have had an office in charge of cursing; it was abolished only in the early Han during the reign of Emperor Wen.[70] Toward the end of the reign of Emperor Wu of the Han, a case of witchcraft broke out, involving numerous officials and royal relatives and ending in the tragic death of the heir apparent. The ignition point of the incident was allegedly the act of cursing against the emperor by discontented royal relatives, and many court women were involved. The method used was the burial of small wooden figurines accompanied by spells cast by shamans. The exact content of the spell, however, remains unknown.[71] Apparently here again the act required no assistance from any deities or demons, though the actions of the *wu*-shamans always involved dubious relations with evil ghosts and spirits.[72]

Exorcisms

Since one cannot use curses to ward off evil spirits and ghosts, the last resort is to rely on the use of various exorcistic methods. As we have seen in the *nuo*-exorcism discussed above, a spell is pronounced to threaten the evil spirits and get them to leave, but this is not a curse, since a curse by definition is designed to harm the cursed party. The Shuihudi daybook contains a collection of exorcistic instructions that can

[67] *Zuozhuan zhushu* 39.3–4.
[68] *Hou Hanshu*, p. 3913: 聞漢軍當來, 匈奴使巫埋羊牛所出諸道及水上以詛軍.
[69] *Zhouli zhushu* 26.6.
[70] *Shiji* 28.1337; 10.427.
[71] Mu-chou Poo, "Wugu zhi huo de zhengzhi yiyi," *Lishi yuyan yanjiusuo jikan* 57.3 (1987), 511–38. Michael Loewe, *Crisis and conflict in Han China* (London, 1974), pp. 37–90. See also the chapter by Lin Fu-shih in Volume One.
[72] See Lin Fu-shih, *Handai de wuzhe* (Taibei, 1999), pp. 71–80.

give us some idea of the exorcistic rituals performed in daily life.[73] The collection is entitled "Spellbinding" (*jie* 詰), with a general introduction concerning the purpose of the ritual spells and actions:

> Spellbinding: Ghosts harm the people and, acting wantonly, treat the people unpropitiously. Pronounce a spell to bind it and enable the people to avoid the baleful and disastrous. What ghosts detest are namely: reclining in a crouch, sitting like a winnowing basket, linked steps, and standing on one foot.[74]

After this introduction, the text continues with dozens of instructions for exorcistic rituals against various ghosts and demons. A few examples should suffice to illustrate the general nature of the rituals:

> When without cause a ghost attacks a person and does not desist—this is the Stabbing Demon. Make a bow from peach wood; make arrows from non-fruiting jujube wood, and feather them with chicken feathers. When it appears, shoot it. Then it will desist.[75]
>
> When without cause a ghost lodges in a person's home—this is the mound ghost. Take earth from an old abandoned mound and make imitation people and dogs with it. Set them on the outside wall, one person and one dog every five paces, and encircle the home. When the ghost comes, scatter ashes, strike a winnowing basket, and screech at it. Then it stops.[76]
>
> When a ghost continually causes a person to have foul dreams, and after waking they cannot be divined—this is the Master of Diagrams. Make a mulberry-wood staff and prop it inside the doorway, and turn a cookpot upside down outside the doorway. Then it will not come.[77]

Thus in general the text begins by describing the haunting situation, identifies the source of the trouble, and then provides a description of the ritual actions needed in order to expel the haunting ghost or demon. The actions usually consist in the use of certain objects or performing certain bodily acts, including the positions described in the introduc-

[73] Donald Harper, "A Chinese demonography of the third century B.C." *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 45 (1985), 459–498; Mark Kalinowski, "Les traités de Shuihudi et l'hémérologie chinoise à la fin des Royaumes combattants," *T'oung Pao* 72 (1986), 174–228; Mu-chou Poo, "Popular religion in pre-imperial China: observations on the almanacs of Shui-hu-ti," *T'oung Pao* 79 (1993), 225–48. Liu Lexian, *Shuihudi Qinjian rishu yanjiu*.

[74] Donald Harper, "Spellbinding," in *Religion of China in practice*, ed. Donald S. Lopez, Jr. (Princeton, 1996), p. 244. My translation differs from Harper's at several points.

[75] Ibid.

[76] Ibid.

[77] Ibid., p. 247.

tion such as reclining, sitting in a posture like a winnowing basket, or standing on one foot, and these are occasionally assisted by spells.

Unlike curses, and unlike the *nuo*-exorcism, no deities or divine spirits are invoked to help expel the demons and evil spirits listed in the daybook. A survey of the various methods used in the exorcistic rituals shows that people relied on the exorcistic power of certain objects, which can be grouped into several categories. There are plants such as jujube wood, peach wood, mulberry wood, woolly grass, reeds, and bamboo; animal parts that include foxtails or cattails; objects with an offensive smell, such as feces of dogs and pigs; inanimate substances such as sand, ashes, yellow soil, white stone, water, and fire; and finally there are man-made objects such as arrows, drums, bells, swords, and shoes. Usually the actions taken are quite simple, yet sometimes the text only says something like "search for it and get rid of it," without specifying the exact method to be used to get rid of the demons. There are also examples where the exorcistic ritual consists of only actions, such as "unbind the hair and rush past it," without the use of any instruments or objects. The use of fire and the sounding of the drum, in particular, reminds us of what happened during the *nuo*-exorcism.

The reasons people considered these objects or actions efficacious in expelling the ghosts and evil spirits are not entirely understood. Certain objects, such as peach wood or mulberry, have long been discussed. The Qing dynasty scholar Yu Zhengxie (1775–1840), for example, already collected considerable data concerning the popular belief in the magical power of peach wood and peach talismans.[78] Recent scholarship emphasizes the good taste of the peach as a precious and nutritious fruit, its medicinal effect, and its role in the ancient myth of Kuafu 夸父.[79] The mulberry, on the other hand, is a symbol of fertility in ancient China, and thus possesses a certain potency.

The use of animal excrement as a deterrent against ghosts and demons can be corroborated by the famous story about the adulterous wife of Li Ji preserved in the *Han Feizi*, as well as in the much later Dunhuang text *Baize jingguai tu* 白澤精怪圖 (*Diagram of the spirits and demons of the White Marsh*).[80] This custom seems to have originated from people's distaste for pollution and polluted objects. This dislike was then transferred

[78] Yu Zhengxie, *Guisi leigao* (Shanghai, 1994).
[79] Luo Man, "Tao, taohua yu Zhongguo wenhua," in *Zhongguo shehui kexue* 1989.4, 145–56.
[80] Huang Yongwu, ed., *Dunhuang baozang*, 140 vols (Taibei, 1981–86), vol. 123.

to ghosts, with the idea that they, too, were afraid of such pollution. Corroboration for this view can be found in a text from a late Warring States period Qin dynasty tomb at Fangmatan in Tianshui. The text tells a story about a person's return from death experience. According to this person, in the world of the dead—in this case the tomb where the dead person dwells—ghosts did not like their graveyards being polluted by people vomiting or by other unclean objects.[81]

The sitting posture that resembles a winnowing basket is seen as an offensive position, the classic reference being Confucius' reprimanding of Yuan Rang's sitting thus.[82] To use such a position to ward off evil spirits may therefore be a reasonable development. As for other positions, their common characteristics, as with sitting in a winnowing basket style, is their irregularity as opposed to a normal daily bodily posture. The performance of Yu-steps, in this connection, may be seen as another such irregular bodily movement that was seen as possessing great exorcistic power. The objects of exorcism are various ghosts and demons. The terms used in the daybook include *gui* 鬼-ghost, *yao* 妖-demon, and *shen* 神-divine spirit. However, even *shen* could be exorcised, which says something of the nature of these "*shen*-spirits": they are closer to ghosts and demons than to exalted divine beings. Moreover, various animals and insects, even natural phenomena such as thunder, cloud, fire, and wind could also be considered as malicious and need to be exorcised. The mundane nature of the diseases and disasters thought to have originated in the malicious acts of ghosts and demons, moreover, speaks forcefully of the intimate relation between the daily life of the users of the daybook and the various exorcistic rituals. When unknown illnesses or natural disasters occurred, as the text suggests, people sought the reasons outside themselves. In other words, personal morality was not considered as having anything to do with these difficulties in life.

Another feature of exorcism as described in the daybooks is that no ritual specialist such as the *wu*-shaman is needed in the performance of the ritual acts. Theoretically anyone who has access to a daybook

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[81] Li Xueqin, "Fangmatan jian zhong de zhiguai gushi," *Wenwu* 1990.4, 43–47; Donald Harper, "Resurrection in Warring States popular religion," *Taoist Resources* 5.2 (1994), 13–28. For a theoretical discussion of the idea of pollution, see Mary Douglas, *Purity and danger: an analysis of the concepts of pollution and taboo* (London, 1966).

[82] *Lunyu chushu* 14.18. See discussion in Li Ji, "Guizuo dunju yu jiju," in *Lishi yuyan yanjiusuo jikan* 24 (1953), 283–301.

and is able to read the instructions could perform the exorcistic rituals as instructed. The mentality behind this is quite revealing. If the ritual acts themselves—including the use of certain objects and the performance of certain bodily actions—were powerful and efficacious and the human performer only a neutral agent that brought the sacred or powerful objects and actions together, there should be no direct relationship between the ritual act and the performer. In other words, the exorcistic rituals are understood as purely technical actions much like using medicine to cure a disease. In fact, in the "medical" texts found in the early Han period, i.e., the Mawangdui silk manuscript *Wushi'er bingfang* 五十二病方 (*Recipes for fifty-two ailments*), exorcistic acts and spells are placed together with herbal recipes. A ritual to cure warts, for example, is as follows:

> On the last day of the month at the end of the late afternoon, take clods the size of a chicken egg—men seven and women twice seven. First set the clods down behind the house, arranging them in a line from south to north. When dark, go to the place where the clods are. Perform the Pace of Yu thrice. Starting from the southern quarter, pick up a clod and say: "Today is the last day of the month. I rub the warts to the north." Rub the [warts] once with the clod. After rubbing, set the clod back in its place and leave without looking back.[83]

The instruction is similar to that found in the daybook chapter "Spellbinding." The person who performs the act could be anyone capable of following the instructions in the text.

Healing rituals and divination

Healing rituals, however, took another form in combination with divination. We hear of Shang divination texts inquiring about the health of the kings or royal relatives.[84] Yet it is only in the Warring States period that texts concerning healing rituals are found. Manuscripts excavated in Baoshan and elsewhere in recent years indicate a widespread use of healing rituals. When a person was sick, usually in a serious state, the family members would engage in a series of divinations and ritual offerings.

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[83] Donald Harper, *Early Chinese medical literature: the Mawangdui medical manuscripts* (London, 1998), pp. 244–45.

[84] See Robert Eno in this volume.

The first action would be to perform a divination to ask if the person's health would be recovered. A point worth mentioning is the bureaucratic nature of these ritual texts. When making a divination, the date, the person who performs the divination, the tools used, and the person for whom the divination was performed are stated. Then the content of the inquiry is formulated. Finally the result of the divination is given a reading. Since most of the time divinations were performed when a person was very sick, the result of the divination usually gave an ambiguous reading: the patient would recover in the long run, but for the present the illness might become serious. If the illness was identified as the result of malicious spirits or ghosts, then a second divination was performed, preceded by offerings to the deities and ancestral spirits.

This second divination used the oracle bones and yarrow stalks as media to pray to the relevant spirits and ghosts and, promising to make various offerings to them, expressed the hope they would in turn protect the sick person. The objects used in the offering ritual consisted of domestic animals such as dogs, pigs, and chickens and precious objects such as jade.[85] The spirits include cosmic deities such as Taiyi 太一 (Great One) and the earth; functional deities such as Siming 司命 (the director of destiny), Sihuo 司禍 (the director of calamity), and Dashui 大水 (Great Water); or local deities such as the two "sons of Heaven" of the river Xiang (*er tianzi* 二天子). Family ancestors are also among those prayed to. After the offering, a second divination was performed, and the results were usually "auspicious," even when we know the person died soon afterwards.[86]

Since the texts were found in tombs, it can be assumed that after the person died, such records of divination and ritual offering were buried together with the deceased, perhaps to serve as evidence of the family effort in soliciting the help of the spirits and ancestors. In this regard, they are related to the above discussed Han dynasty text of ritual offerings to the deities after a person had died. It can be surmised that rituals for healing are often part of the series of ritual acts that could be

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[85] For details, see Hubeisheng jingsha tielu kaogudui, *Baoshan Chumu* (Beijing, 1991); Henansheng wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo, *Xincai geling Chumu* (Zhengzhou, 2003); Yan Changgui, "Qinjiazui bushi jidao jian shiwen jijiao," *Hubei daxue xuibao* (*zhexue shehui kexue ban*) 2005.1, 10–13; Hu Yali, "Churen bushi gaishu," *Jianghan kaogu*, 2002.4, 70–74.

[86] Hu Yali, "Churen bushi gaishu."

performed during a person's final days and continued into the immediate period after death.

In a text excavated in a Qin tomb from Hubei province, we witness another kind of healing ritual that is aimed at lesser illnesses:

> The recipe for healing a tooth: Present oneself before the eastern wall, make three Yu-steps, and say: "Hao! I dare to implore the lord of the eastern wall. So-and-so is ill because of a decayed tooth. If you can heal so-and-so, I promise to offer a cow and a calf: a fine pair." If you see a tile on the ground in front of you, take it; if you see a tile on the wall, perform the Yu-steps and stop. Take the tile on the wall and bury it under the eastern wall, place a "cow" on top of it, and use the tile you took (from the ground) to cover it, and bury it securely. The so called "cow" is a large head bug (?).[87]

Here, unlike the Shang king who divined to know the cause of his toothache, a local deity (the lord of the eastern wall) is implored to cure the illness, with the performance of ritual and prayer and the offering of "substitute cattle." What is worth noticing is that the instructions for ritual offerings are similar to medical prescriptions and exorcistic rituals: a pig for this deity, a jade for that. This mentality found its echo in transmitted texts such as the *Shanhai jing* 山海經 (*Classic of mountains and seas*). One example from the *Shanhai jing* describes ritual offerings to the deities as the following:

> From Chao Yao 招搖 Mountain, in the Que 鵲 Range, to Ji Wei 箕尾 Mountain, there are ten mountains and 2,950 li. The spirits here all have bird bodies and dragon heads. The ceremony of sacrifice to them is *mao* 毛 (animal sacrifice), and a *zhang* 璋-jade is buried. The sacrificial grain is *tu* 稌-rice, a *bi* 璧-jade, and rice. White rushes serve as a mat.[88]

The deities are thus treated in a manner similar to those used to exorcise ghosts: it is a matter of assigning the correct measure and proper objects just as, when exorcising ghosts, one needs to use the correct instruments and bodily actions. It also explains why, in the *Recipes for fifty-two ailments*, medical prescriptions are placed side by side with exorcistic instructions: they all originate in a similar mentality that sees illnesses and spirits as something coming from outside the person and susceptible to expunging with precise techniques.

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[87] Hubeisheng Jingzhoushi Zhouliang yuqiao yizhi bowuguan bian, *Guanju Qin Han mu jiandu* (Beijing, 2001), p. 129.

[88] Yuan Ke, *Shanhai jing jiaozhu* (Shanghai, 1980), p. 8. For translation, cf. *Shan Hai Ching*, trans. Hsiao-chieh Cheng (Taibei, 1985), p. 3.

Conclusion

As an important expression of religious beliefs, ritual mediates between the human and the spiritual world. Ritual actions are imbued with or could summon divine or sacred power that could help achieve the goal of the performer. Although deities or spirits are often involved, ritual action could be powerful on its own account. What this entails is the assumption that certain material objects and bodily postures and actions possess an innate power, as though they are a part of the world order that need only be appropriated and utilized by human beings. In other words, power, at least partially, is considered as having always existed in the mundane world. The ritual specialist or anyone with the necessary knowledge need only find the right material and take the correct posture in order to trigger the power. Spells, or specific strings of words that contain power, are also part of the correct "material," only they are in the form of sound, just as the sounding of drums can be powerful during certain rituals. On this account, we perceive an amoral cosmology that lies behind the ritual actions discussed above. In this cosmology things work according to pre-set rules: every divine being has its proper domain of power, and every evil spirit has its weakness and thus can be exorcised. Human beings suffer attack from the evil spirits and obtain protection from the divine beings; they can also solve their own problems by performing proper rituals. The key is to have the necessary knowledge about what objects to choose and what actions to take. Morality, in this context, does not come into play, since one's rescue comes from ritual knowledge, not moral behavior. The performance of rituals and sacrifices, moreover, also implies a desire to negotiate with the divine spirits.[89]

This underlying cosmological assumption needs to be articulated if we are to understand the nature of ancient Chinese religious beliefs. We observe it in the art of divination, in the art of day selection, and in many forms of the *shushu* 數術 tradition. As these texts reveal, there is a lack of a sense of awe and mystery in them. One level of popular mentality in ancient China seems to have regarded the world and every being in it as somehow accessible to the human mind and therefore manageable. At least, people were hopeful that the texts, whether the

[89] Mu-chou Poo, "How to steer through life: negotiating fate in the *Daybook*," in *The magnitude of Ming*, ed. Christopher Lupke (Honolulu, 2005), pp. 107–25.

daybooks or other divination texts, could reveal to them what to do when they encountered a problem. There was a separation of one's moral self from the outside world, since the technical know-how one needs to perform the rituals and consult the texts was not conditioned by one's moral behavior. This is of course not to suggest that morality was not important or non-existent in ancient China. It obviously did exist in various social relations and was important in maintaining the proper operation of the real world. The concept of the Mandate of Heaven, for example, depended on an idea of morality, as the Mandate was bestowed on morally just rulers. There was, therefore, an implicit reference to a negotiation between the ruler and Heaven, since whether a ruler received the Mandate depended on his moral behavior. Confucians, Taoists, Moists, and Legalists were all masters of their own moral philosophy. Yet their philosophy is often penetrated by the amoral cosmology described here. The "Monthly ordinances" is an excellent example: what can be more representative of the Confucian view of the operation of the world order than this? Yet the natural order envisaged in the "Monthly ordinances" clearly represents an amoral understanding of the order of the cosmos: every month requires its own special set of rituals and actions that must be performed in order that the world works properly. The correct behavior of the ruler was to follow this natural order. When he did so, this correct act, by virtue of its following the order of nature that ensures agricultural production and therefore the welfare of the state, could be considered as "moral" in the (Confucian) value system. Thus the "Monthly ordinances" is an essentially moral system based on an underlying structure of amoral cosmology. More extensive investigation into how the different intellectual traditions integrated their moral philosophy into this ancient and underlying amoral cosmology, however, needs to be dealt with elsewhere.[90] How or whether this amoral cosmology is transformed in the Daoist, Buddhist, and so-called popular religions, how personal piety and devotion to the gods are intertwined with or influenced by this underlying mentality, moreover, can be very significant, for here may lie the heart of Chinese religious sentiment that instructs or informs all forms of religious belief in the subsequent eras.

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[90] See the chapter by Jean Levi in this volume.

CHINESE HISTORY WRITING BETWEEN THE SACRED AND THE SECULAR

Yuri Pines

The nexus of religion and the writing of history in ancient China is a broad topic that may pertain to a large variety of texts and non-textual phenomena, depending on the definition of "religion" applied in the Chinese context. To focus the discussion more topically, in what follows I shall adopt a heuristically-convenient definition of "religious" and "secular" with regard to historical texts. I define a text, or an aspect thereof as "religious" insofar as it is related to communication with deities (particularly ancestral spirits), or insofar as it is supposed to have a certain sacral power of influencing the world through a proper choice of wording or proper arrangement of the material. Alternatively, I treat the text as "secular" if it lacks the above traits and is intended either for political education of the elite or for their entertainment.

My discussion will focus on those texts that had lasting impact on Chinese historiography, namely the canonical *Chunqiu* 春秋 (*Annals*) and its commentaries, and the first of the so-called "official histories," the *Shiji* 史記 (*Records of the historian*). In what follows, I shall outline, first, the cultic origins of the Chinese historiographical tradition and suggest that the *Chunqiu* should be understood primarily as a ritual rather than a historical text. Then, by analyzing two of the most important *Chunqiu* commentaries, the *Zuozhuan* 左傳 (*Zuo commentary*) and the *Gongyang zhuan* 公羊傳 (*Gongyang commentary*), I shall trace the bifurcation of history writing between the "secular" and the "religious" traditions. Finally, by briefly addressing the *Shiji*, I shall try to show that while this text belongs largely to what I define as a secular historiographical tradition, the invention of the genre of biographies by its author, Sima Qian 司馬遷 (ca. 145–90 BC),[1] added a new quasi-religious dimension to the *Shiji* and to the historical genre as a whole.

[1] All dates are BC, unless otherwise indicated.

Cultic origins: from bronze inscriptions to the Chunqiu

The intrinsic connection between writing, historiography and cult is apparent in the two earliest examples of Chinese writings—oracle bones and bronze inscriptions associated respectively with the Shang 商 (ca. 1600–1046) and Western Zhou 西周 (1046–771) periods. The second of these genres is particularly germane to the present study because, as I hope to demonstrate, there are significant continuities between the bronze inscriptions and the annalistic genre exemplified by the *Chunqiu* of the state of Lu 魯. As is well known, bronze inscriptions, especially those of the Western Zhou period, contain significant amounts of historical information, such as accounts of appointments, mentions of military campaigns and even—occasionally—references to land conflicts among the Zhou nobles. However, as insightfully pointed out by Lothar von Falkenhausen, it would be wrong to consider this information outside its cultic context. The very location of the inscriptions on the inside of the bronze vessels or on the verso side of the bells makes them inconvenient for reading. The purported audience of the inscriptions was thus in all likelihood not the living members of the kin who utilized the vessel in ancestral sacrifices, but primarily the ancestral spirits, who were supposed to "consume" the inscription during sacrificial rites.[2]

The bulk of historical information in the inscriptions is concentrated in what Falkenhausen aptly calls the "announcement of merit," in which the vessel's donor informs the ancestors of his recent achievements. These announcements of merit, particularly those performed in the so-called "documentary mode" are in turn based on earlier documentation created by court or lineage scribes (*shi* 史), the functionaries whose tasks comprised, among other things, the dual roles of keeping records of important events and communicating with the deities.[3] The original

[2] For inscriptions as historical sources, see Edward L. Shaughnessy, *Sources of Western Zhou history* (Berkeley, 1991); idem, "Western Zhou bronze inscriptions," *New sources of early Chinese history: an introduction to the reading of inscriptions and manuscripts*, ed., Shaughnessy (Berkeley, 1997), pp. 57–84; and Lothar von Falkenhausen, "Issues in Western Zhou studies: a review article," *Early China* 18 (1993), 139–95, on which much of the above discussion is based.

[3] For the cultic origins of the scribes' function, see, e.g., Shirakawa Shizuka, "Shaku shi," *Kōkotsu bungaku ronshū* (Kyōto, 1955), vol. 1, pp. 3–68; Hu Dianxian, "Shi shi," *Zhongguo gudai shi luncong* (Fuzhou, 1981), vol. 1, pp. 210–24; Leon Vandermeersch, "L'imaginaire divinatoire dans l'histoire en Chine," *Bulletin de l'École francaise d'Extrême Orient* 79.1 (1992), 1–8.

records, from which the inscriptions were extracted, were often lengthy and detailed. The mid-9th century inscription on the Jin Hou Su-*bianzhong* 晉侯穌編鐘, for instance, tells of a military campaign that lasted for six months, supplying precise dating of major related events. Apparently, the scribes kept day-to-day records during the campaign, and at its successful conclusion they decided (perhaps in consultation with the lord of Jin, the vessel's donor) what portion of their records was to be inscribed on the bells.[4] It is important to note, then, that the inscription was not a primary historical document but a secondary record, selected and polished in accordance with the norms of this genre.

With this in mind, we may better understand the peculiar position of such inscriptions in Chinese historiography. While containing meticulous dating and an abundance of other details, such as place names, official titles and precise wording of investiture orders, the inscriptions were not meant to reproduce historical events as such, but rather those that would please the ancestors. Falkenhausen observes: "These documents do not convey the full range of human experience; the spirits were not supposed to know everything—there were to be no surprises, no irregularities in ritual exchange."[5] Indeed, the inscriptions never record military defeats or other unpleasant events in the donor's life. This selectivity results at times in euphemistic forms that completely distort the actual event. For instance, the famous narrative of early Zhou history on the Shi Qiang-*pan* 史牆盤, states: "Great and excellent was King Zhao [r. ca. 977/5–957 BC]. He broadly overpowered Chu-Jing, opening the southern route."[6]

The author of the inscription, a scribe in the service of the Zhou royal house, was certainly well aware of the disastrous defeat of King Zhao's southern expedition, which marked the end of Zhou territorial expansion. Nonetheless, the inscription contains no reference to this; it was diplomatically refurbished to please Scribe Qiang's ancestors, who served at King Zhao's court. A similar formula appears in a recently

[4] For the announcement of merits, see Falkenhausen, "Issues," 156–67; for the Jin Hou Su-*bianzhong*, see detailed discussion by Jaehoon Shim, "The 'Jinhou Su *Bianzhong*' inscription and its significance," *Early China* 22 (1997), 43–76.

[5] See Falkenhausen, "Issues," 152.

[6] 弘魯昭王, 廣能楚荊, 惟貫南行. This example is discussed by Paul R. Goldin, in "Appeals to history in early Chinese philosophy and rhetoric," *Journal of Chinese Philosophy*, forthcoming. For the complete text of the Shi Qiang-*pan*, see Shaughnessy, *Sources*, 183–92.

discovered Qiu-*pan* 逑盤 inscription from Yangjiacun 楊家村, Shaanxi.[7] Perhaps by presenting a revamped version of personal and general history, the donors sought to find favor with the spirits and increase their chances to receive the spirits' blessing.

All the features found in inscriptions, namely the meticulous dating, the abundance of technical details, formulaic language, selective recording and what seem like attempts to influence the future through properly recording the past, are evident in the genre of the state annals, of which the *Chunqiu* of the state of Lu is the only surviving representative. While many scholars routinely consider the *Chunqiu* as a purely "historical" text, I believe the evidence calls this assumption into question. Rather than being directed at posterity, the *Chunqiu* (and apparently other annals as well) were directed primarily at the ancestral spirits of the ruling house of each state, as I hope to demonstrate below.[8]

That the *Chunqiu* originated from the records of the ancestral temple is suggested by the *Zuozhuan* (hereafter the *Zuo*), the earliest and most detailed of its commentaries. Under the year 710, the *Chunqiu* record has: "Winter. The lord [i.e., Lord Huan of Lu, 魯桓公 (r. 711–694)] returned from Tang." The *Zuo* comments:

> "Winter. The lord returned from Tang 唐." It was reported (*gao* 告) at the temple. Whenever the lord departs, it is reported at the ancestral temple (*zongmiao* 宗廟); whenever he returns, he drinks upon arrival, puts the cup down, and his achievements are written on the *ce* 策 tablets: this is ritual 禮也.[9]

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[7] The donor states that his ancestor "joined kings Zhao and Mu in appeasing and rectifying the Four Directions and clipping and attacking Chu Jing." See Li Xueqin, "Meixian Yangjiacun xinchu qingtongqi yanjiu," *Wenwu* 6 (2003), 66–73. For a detailed discussion of the Yangjiacun discovery, see Lothar von Falkenhausen, "The inscribed bronzes from Yangjiacun: new evidence on social structure and historical consciousness in Late Western Zhou China (ca. 800 BC)," *Proceedings of the British Academy* 139 (2006), 239–95.

[8] For views of the *Chunqiu* as a purely historical text, see e.g., Timoteus Pokora, "Pre-Han literature," *Essays on the sources for Chinese history*, ed. Donald D. Leslie (Canberra, 1973), p. 20; Zhao Guangxian, "*Chun qiu* yu *Zuozhuan*," *Zhongguo shixue mingzhu pingjia*, ed., Cang Xiuliang (Jinan, 1990), pp. 26–29. See my earlier study of the *Chunqiu*, Yuri Pines, "Intellectual change in the Chunqiu period—the reliability of the speeches in the *Zuozhuan* as sources of Chunqiu intellectual history," *Early China* 22 (1997), 82–86.

[9] *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu*, annotated by Yang Bojun (Beijing, 1981, hereinafter the *Zuo*), Huan 2, p. 91. Cf. Xiang 13, p. 998.

The *Zuo* identification of the *Chunqiu* with the records made on the *ce* tablets from the Lu ancestral temple[10] helps us to understand several peculiarities of the *Chunqiu* text as ritual writing.[11] For instance, the most important part of the *Chunqiu* are not records of political events but of seasons: on no less than 63 occasions the text records the season and its first month even when no event is reported for this period of time. In all likelihood, seasonal tablets were pre-arranged in the Lu ancestral temple, while records of events were added later to the pre-existent structure. Needless to say, for a lay reader these "blank" seasonal records are meaningless. Many other records convey information which might have been of significance—if any—only for the ruling family of the state of Lu, but not for an external audience. A reader of the *Chunqiu* accounts of the eventful year 632 may be puzzled by the entry, "Autumn. Bo Ji 杞伯 from Qi arrived,"[12] which breaks the sequence of the records pertaining to the inter-state activities in which the lord of Lu took active part. The arrival of Bo Ji, a sister of the reigning Lord Xi of Lu 魯僖公 (r. 659–627), was a minor event in political terms; but for the ancestral spirits it was perhaps no less important than Lu's newly-fostered alliance with the rising power of Jin. This peculiar selection of events diminishes the text's value as a historical chronicle, but serves its ritual purposes.

Ritual considerations obviously dominate the *Chunqiu* records. For instance, records of foreign events are made exclusively when the event was properly reported to the court of Lu and not in accordance with its overall political significance. Thus, while the *Chunqiu* routinely informs of deaths and funerals of allied rulers, including heads of tiny neighboring polities such as Zhu 邾 or Cao 曹, it fails to mention the deaths even of the Zhou kings if royal envoys did not report the matter.[13] Similarly, while the *Chunqiu* usually tells of wars between other states, it fails to mention some fateful military encounters. In the winter

[10] The identification of the *ce* records with the *Chunqiu* was analyzed by the most famous commentator of the *Chunqiu* and the *Zuozhuan*, Du Yu (杜預, 222–84 AD). See his comments and additional elaborations by Kong Yingda (574–648 AD) in *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhengyi*, annotated by Du Yu and Kong Yingda (rpt. *Shisanjing zhushu*, compiled by Ruan Yuan [Beijing, 1991], "Xu" 序, p. 1701).

[11] Many insightful observations with regard to the ritualistic nature of the *Chunqiu* were made by Artemij M. Karapet'iants, "Chun' tsiu i drevnekitajskij istoriograficheskij ritual," *Etika i ritual v traditsionnom Kitae*, eds L.S. Vasil'ev et al. (Moscow, 1988), pp. 85–154.

[12] *Zuo*, Xi 28, p. 450.

[13] For these omissions, see e.g., *Zuo*, Xi 7, p. 319; Wen 14, p. 602.

of 712 the state of Zheng 鄭 defeated Song 宋, thereby solidifying its hegemonic status in the Central Plain area. The *Chunqiu* is silent about this event. The *Zuo* explains:

> Winter, the tenth month. The earl of Zheng 鄭伯 leading the Guo 虢 army invaded Song 宋. On the day *renxu* (14th), he greatly defeated the Song army, revenging its invasion of Zheng. Song did not report its [military] decree, hence [the *Chunqiu*] did not record it. Whenever the overlords issue a decree, if they report it, then it is recorded; otherwise it is not. The same is true about success and failure of military expeditions. Even if the state were annihilated, unless the defeat is reported, or the winners reported their victory, it would not be recorded on bamboo tablets.[14]

This passage clearly demonstrates that for the compilers of the *Chunqiu*—the Lu scribes—what truly mattered was not the political importance of the event but the ritually correct manner in which it was reported. Similar omissions occur with regard to domestic events that were not recorded in the *Chunqiu* if the lord of Lu was not in attendance; alternatively, the record could be modified and certain information omitted.[15] Such omissions and modifications are notorious in relation to problematic events in the state of Lu. Like the bronze inscriptions, the annals concealed unpleasant news: thus the assassination of a Lu ruler or heir is invariably reported as the slain lord merely "passing away" (*hong* 薨), while the heir is said to have "died" (*zu* 卒).[16] Similarly, it was taboo (*hui* 諱) for the annals to publish occasions when the lord of Lu was detained or otherwise humiliated by foreign powers.[17] Also, when in 517 rebellious ministers expelled Lord Zhao 魯昭公 (r. 541–510), the *Chunqiu* laconically recorded: "Ninth month; on [the day] *jihai*, the lord left for Qi."[18] There are many similar instances.[19]

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[14] *Zuo*, Yin 11, p. 78. Indeed, even such an outstanding event as the defeat in 494 of the state of Yue 越 by its rivals from Wu 吳 is not mentioned by the *Chunqiu*, since "Wu did not report victory, Yue did not report defeat" (*Zuo*, Ai 1, p. 1607).

[15] See, e.g., *Zuo* Yin 1, p. 18; Huan 14, p. 138; Xi 2, p. 281; Wen 7, p. 562.

[16] For the reports on the slain lords, see *Zuo*, Yin 11, p. 71; Huan 18, p. 151; Min 2, p. 261; for heirs, see *Zuo*, Zhuang 32, p. 251; and Wen 18, p. 629; in the latter case, the *Zuo* explains: "The book [*Chunqiu*] says 'the son died' because of the taboo" (Wen 18, p. 633).

[17] See *Zuo*, Xi 17, p. 373; Wen 2, p. 522; Cheng 10, p. 851; Zhao 16, p. 375.

[18] *Zuo*, Zhao 25, p. 1454; when other dignitaries or foreign rulers went into exile, the *Chunqiu* reports them as "fleeing" (*ben* 奔).

[19] The taboos were extended to the Zhou kings: in 632 when King Xiang 周襄王 (r. 651–619) was humiliatingly summoned to the inter-state meeting at Wen by powerful Lord Wen of Jin 晉文公 (r. 636–628), the *Chunqiu* laconically states: "Heavenly King

The above examples suffice to indicate that the *Chunqiu* was definitely not composed as a factual record of historical events for the members of the educated elite, who would in any case find its terse language and skewed contents difficult to comprehend without proper commentaries.[20] Rather, it was a means of communicating with the ancestors, predicated upon what Joachim Gentz aptly designates "ritual" rather than historical "reality."[21] The omissions and skewed reports are only one aspect of a much more general tendency, that is, the general emphasis of the text on ritual precision. The *Chunqiu* is extraordinarily careful in its choice of words. Thus, it uniformly refers to foreign dignitaries according to their ranks within the Zhou original hierarchy, stubbornly refusing to recognize the ritual "upgrading" of powerful rulers of such states as Chu 楚, Wu 吳, Yue 越 and Qin 秦 from their original *bo* 伯 ("earl") or *zi* 子 ("viscount") to the *gong* 公 ("duke") and *wang* 王 ("king") rank. Careful use of other terms, names and appellations convey the *Chunqiu*'s judgment of political personalities of the age. Eventually, this formulaic language became the foundation of the subsequent exegetical tradition and the search for the "subtle meaning" of the text.

The adherence of the annalists to ritual reality explains the importance of the annals as a quasi-legal means of judging political personalities. The most celebrated case of such judgment was the condemnation of a Jin leader, Zhao Dun 趙盾, who orchestrated the assassination of his ruler, Lord Ling 晉靈公 (r. 620–607), while pretending to flee the state. The court scribe, Dong Hu 董狐, nevertheless recorded for the annals: "Zhao Dun murdered his ruler." Zhao protested, but Dong Hu explained that as Zhao neither left the state at the time of the murder

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hunted at Heyang" 天王狩于河陽 (Xi 28, p. 473). For further examples, see Chao Yuefeng, "*Chunqiu* shuo li," *Guji zhengli yanjiu xuekan* 1 (2000), 8–13, especially 10–11.

[20] It is worth noting that from the very beginning of its circulation (presumably in the 5th century), the *Chunqiu* was accompanied by the commentaries (three to five, according to Ban Gu et al., *Hanshu*, annotated by Yan Shigu [Beijing, 1997], 30.1715). Interestingly, earlier Classics, written in archaic and less comprehensible language, like the *Shijing* 詩經 (*Book of songs*) and the *Shujing* 書經 (*Book of documents*), did not acquire systematic commentaries until the early Han. This shows both the demand to properly understand the *Chunqiu* and the difficulty of doing so. The Han scholar, Huan Tan 桓譚 (ca. 20 BC–56 AD) exclaimed: "If the [*Chunqiu*] classic lacked the [*Zuo*] commentary, the sage would close the door and ponder over it for ten years, and even then he would not understand it!" Cited by Zhu Yizun, *Jing yi kao* (rpt. Beijing, 1988), 169.875.

[21] See Gentz, "The past as a messianic vision: historical thought and strategies of sacralization in the early Gongyang tradition," *Historical truth, historical criticism and ideology: Chinese historiography and historical culture from a new comparative perspective*, eds Helwig Schmidt-Glintzer, Achim Mittag and Jörn Rüsen (Leiden, 2005), p. 235.

nor punished the criminals thereafter, the legal responsibility was his.[22] Courageous Dong Hu was praised as a model scribe by Confucius 孔子 (551–479) himself—precisely because he understood that the function of the annals is not to record events as such, but to present a ritually correct judgment of the rulers and their ministers. This judgment could have severe consequences for the culprit. Several *Zuo* anecdotes attest to the annals' legal importance.[23] In 559, a Wei 衛 potentate, Ning Zhi 甯殖 (d. 553), together with his accomplice Sun Linfu 孫林父 expelled Lord Xian 獻公 (r. 576–559 and 546–544) from the state. On his deathbed, Ning Zhi reportedly repented:

> Ning Huizi 甯惠子 of Wei (i.e., Ning Zhi) became sick. He summoned his son, Daozi [Ning Xi 甯喜, d. 546], saying: "I committed a crime toward the ruler, and although I repented, I was unable to mend it. My name is preserved on the *ce* 冊 tablets of the overlords, which say: 'Sun Linfu and Ning Zhi expelled their ruler.' When the ruler returns [to the state], you should conceal this [record]. If you are able to conceal it, you are my true son. If you fail, then, insofar as spirits and deities exist, I shall remain hungry and will not receive [your] offerings." Daozi made the promise, and then Huizi died.[24]

It is unclear whether Ning Zhi was afraid of condemnation on the *ce* tablets of the overlords because they would tarnish his memory or because of fear of divine retribution: his skepticism with regard to the deities' existence suggests that the former answer is more plausible.[25] In any case, afraid of condemnation, Ning Zhi wanted his son to allow the ousted ruler to come back in exchange for a retroactive change of

[22] *Zuo*, Xuan 2, p. 663. There are other cases in which the *Chunqiu* condemnation of a ruler's murderer hints at a legally responsible person, even if technically he was not the killer. See Zhao Shengqun, *Chunqiu jing zhuan yanjiu* (Shanghai, 2000), pp. 251–57.

[23] In 612, the Song envoy, Hua Ou, had to decline a polite invitation from Lord Wen of Lu 魯文公 (r. 626–609), because a century earlier Hua's ancestor, Du, had participated in the assassination of his ruler and "was named in the bamboo tablets of the overlords" (*Zuo*, Wen 15, p. 609). Others were less compliant with the scribes' verdict: the Qi potentate, Cui Zhu 崔杼, had no less than two scribes killed in order to prevent them recording that he had assassinated Lord Zhuang 齊莊公 (r. 553–548), but the scribes' persistence left him no option but to accept this damage to his name (*Zuo*, Xiang 25, p. 1099).

[24] *Zuo*, Xiang 20, p. 1055.

[25] The phrase "*if* spirits and deities exist," became widespread in the second half of the Chunqiu period, as suggested by the *Zuozhuan* (*Zuo*, Xuan 4, p. 680; Xiang 10, p. 977; Xiang 14, p. 1013; Xiang 20, p. 1055; Zhao 27, p. 1487). This conditional clause reflects growing doubts as to the deities' existence, reflected also in the later part of the *Zuo* (see Pines, *Foundations of Confucian thought: intellectual life in the Chunqiu period, 722–453 B.C.E.* [Honolulu, 2002], pp. 79–84).

the record. Ning Zhi's son managed to get this done, and the current text of the *Chunqiu* does not mention Ning Zhi's role in ousting Lord Xian, stating instead: "The Marquis of Wei fled to Qi."[26] I shall return to the story of the retroactive manipulation of the records later; here it is important to assess the power of the annals to influence political reality. While not all Chunqiu statesmen were as concerned with their image "on the *ce* tablets of the overlords" as Ning Zhi, it is highly likely that Ning Zhi's reaction was precisely the one sought by the annals' compilers. Through their staunch preference for ritual reality over historical facts, and through their judgment of political actors, the court scribes and their employers hoped to preserve the deteriorating ritual order intact. Thus, the *Chunqiu* was not merely a means of communicating with the ancestors, but a creation—or re-creation—of reality as it should be, an alternative to the chaotic events of the real world. Perhaps this is why Confucius chose to publish the *Chunqiu*, turning thereby the Lu annals into one of the most revered canonical texts in Chinese history.

Profane or sacred? The Chunqiu *and its commentaries*

Throughout the Chunqiu period, the court annals were not designed to circulate widely; when a foreign dignitary was given the right to review them it was considered a gesture of extraordinary personal favor.[27] Thus, when Confucius (or members of his entourage) published the *Chunqiu*, in effect re-addressing it from the spirits to living contemporaries, they radically altered the function of the text. This may have caused Confucius to doubt whether this action itself was in accord with ritual norms, as is reflected in his putative saying: "I will be understood only because of the *Chunqiu*; I will be condemned only because of the *Chunqiu*."[28]

Through its association with Confucius, the *Chunqiu* rapidly acquired the position of canonical text, and was identified as such since the

[26] *Zuo*, Xiang 14, p. 1004.

[27] See, e.g., *Zuo*, Zhao 2, pp. 1226–27.

[28] *Mengzi yizhu*, annotated by Yang Bojun (Beijing, 1992), "Teng Wen Gong, xia" 6.9, p. 155. For the controversy over Confucius' authorship of the *Chunqiu*, see, e.g., Yang Bojun, "Qianyan," *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu*, pp. 7–18; Zhang Yiren, "Kongzi yu *Chunqiu* de guanxi," *Chunqiu shi lunji* (Taibei, 1990), pp. 1–59. The extant evidence does not allow a decisive answer as to whether or not Confucius (or his followers) modified the original text of the Lu annals, but it is highly likely that he was the text's publisher.

4th century BC.[29] Almost immediately, the terse text of the Lu annals acquired commentaries, which have become indispensable to its readers ever since. Two of these commentaries, namely, the *Zuo* and the *Gongyang zhuan*, may be representative of the bifurcation of Chinese historiography between the bureaucratic account of events aimed at political education of the elite and the perpetuation of ritual reality at the expense of the facts.

The *Zuozhuan* was composed between the 5th and 4th centuries BC. It incorporates various historical sources from major Chunqiu states, including materials that appear as auxiliary notes used by the scribes for the compilation of the annals, as well as more detailed narrative histories prepared by the scribes separately from the annals. Elsewhere I have suggested that these "scribal records" (*shiji* 史記), being addressed to members of the educated elite rather than to the deities, reflect an alternative historiographic tradition to that of the court annals; and this alternative tradition is duly observable in the *Zuozhuan*.[30]

Even a cursory view of the *Zuo* shows its tremendous difference from the *Chunqiu*, in terms of structure, content and approach to history. First, far from being a dry ritualistic account, the *Zuo* presents history complexly, with explicit emphasis on cause-and-effect relations; not incidentally one of the most wide-spread terms in the text is *gu* 故 ("therefore"), which appears over 600 times. Second, the *Zuo* is markedly devoid of the formulaic language so characteristic of the *Chunqiu*. Thus, for example, there is no traceable correlation between the appellations it employs and its author's evaluation of the protagonists; nor does the text employ other hidden formulae to deliver "praise and blame"; this is done in a more straightforward way. Third, in terms of language, the *Zuo* does not steadfastly observe ritual conventions; hence, it frequently refers to the rulers of Chu, Wu and Yue as "kings"—much to the dismay of later Confucian purists. Fourth, there are no traces of taboos in the *Zuo*, and as far as I can tell, the text shows no clear political biases. It conceals neither defeats nor misdeeds of domestic and foreign rulers and dignitaries, as it mercilessly reveals their treachery, folly and cruelty.

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[29] The two earliest references to the *Chunqiu* are in the *Mengzi* ("Teng Wen Gong xia" 6.9 p. 155; "Li Lou xia" 8.21, p. 192), and in the "Yu cong 語叢 1" slips (ca. 300), from Guodian 郭店, where the *Chunqiu* is ranked together with other canonical texts, such as the *Shijing* and *Shujing*. See *Guodian Chumu zhujian* (Beijing, 1998), "Yu cong 1," p. 195, slips 40–41.

[30] For a detailed discussion of the *Zuozhuan* sources, see Pines, "Intellectual change" and *Foundations*, pp. 14–26.

The *Zuo* simply ignores "the rules of recording" that played such a great role in the compilation of the *Chunqiu*.

Having said this, I do not intend to claim that the *Zuo* is devoid of hidden or overt messages, or that it is a sort of Rankean history. Ideologically, the author obviously believes in the moral and ritually correct universe of the *Chunqiu*; but he delivers his ideological message neither through the *Chunqiu*-like subtleties nor through a tendentious arrangement of materials as in the later dynastic histories. Rather, ideological goals are served through a variety of interpretative techniques, such as moralizing speeches, long- and short-term predictions, commentaries by the narrator and by Confucius, and the like.[31] Yet important as they are, these techniques do not turn the *Zuo* into a polemical treatise aimed "to validate *Ru* teachings... through writing them into a narrative of the past."[32] Rather, its aim (like the aim of the "scribal records" incorporated into the *Zuo*) is to supply members of the educated elite with a working knowledge of past events—an indispensable asset in everyday political practice. This goal is yet another difference between the *Zuo* and the *Chunqiu*.

The *Zuo* is self-referential in its insistence on the importance of mastering the past to cope with current challenges. Its protagonists routinely invoke the past in a variety of court or inter-state debates, and their superior knowledge of former events becomes a useful polemical weapon. References to successes and failures of previous rulers and ministers, analyses of historical developments in a rival state or invocations of earlier precedents to justify a policy choice—are recurrent rhetorical strategies in the *Zuo*. The past is a tool in the statesmen's hands; and to make it more accessible, the author aims at providing the reader with as much useful information about important events in the life of major states and lineages as possible. This emphasis on detailed information is probably the single most important feature of the *Zuo*. Not a single pre-imperial text can even remotely match it in terms of precision of the historical data involved. Dates and names, office titles and locations, personal and lineage background of the protagonists—all these shape

[31] The best discussion of these interpretative techniques is by David C. Schaberg, *A patterned past: form and thought in early Chinese historiography* (Cambridge and London, 2001). For the comments of the narrator and of Confucius, scattered throughout the *Zuo*, see Eric Henry, "'Junzi yue' and 'Zhongni yue' in *Zuozhuan*," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 59.1 (1999), 125–161.

[32] Mark E. Lewis, *Writing and authority in early China* (Albany, 1999), p. 132.

the *Zuo* narrative. This abundant information is often presented in an almost raw form, with minimal interpretation, which at times results in narratives that go against the moral messages enunciated in other parts, indicating that ruthless and immoral statesmen can attain political success. Some of the later readers of the *Zuo* were visibly annoyed by this occasional moral void in a canonical text. Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130–1200 AD) bitterly complained: "The malady of Mr. Zuo is that he discusses right and wrong in terms of success and failure and does not root [himself] in the correctness of righteousness and principles."[33]

Zhu Xi and other Confucian purists were unhappy not only with regard to the insufficiently emphasized moral message of the *Zuo* but also with regard to its treatment of the *Chunqiu* text. Despite occasional praise of the *Chunqiu*'s ability to use subtle words in order to "encourage the good and frighten the licentious,"[34] the *Zuo* does not consider this text to be flawless or infallible, and its commentary, with its focus on the historical background of the *Chunqiu* entries, frequently leads the reader to question the correctness of some of the *Chunqiu* records. While the *Zuo* never criticizes the *Chunqiu*'s adherence to formulaic language and its taboo-related omissions, it shows that some modifications or omissions were made not due to ritual considerations but out of political expediency. Thus, in the above mentioned case, Ning Zhi, who was originally condemned in the "annals of the overlords" as the ouster of his lord managed to get the record altered due to successful political maneuvering. The extant *Chunqiu* entry as it appears is therefore wrong not only factually but also morally, for it conceals the heinous crime of expelling the legitimate ruler. Elsewhere, the *Zuo* informs us that a certain record was falsified to appease the state of Chu, the erstwhile ally of the state of Lu, whom Lu betrayed.[35] The *Zuo* also hints that the *Chunqiu* conceals cases of regicide in other states—apparently either to appease foreign powers or due to its uncritical acceptance of falsified

[33] *Zhuzi yulei*, compiled by Li Jingde; collated by Wang Xingxian (Beijing, 1986) 93.2151. Six centuries later, Liu Fenglu 劉逢錄 (1776–1829 AD) condemned the *Zuo*: "The *Chunqiu* is not a historical text. Supporters of the *Zuo* treat the *Chunqiu* as a historical text, and inevitably lose its meaning" (Liu Fenglu, "*Zuoshi chunqiu* kaozheng," *Guji kaobian congkan*, ed., Gu Jiegang [Beijing, 1955], p. 599). For similar views, see Pi Xirui, *Jingxue tonglun* (Beijing, 1989), pp. 39–45.

[34] *Zuo*, Zhao 31, pp. 1512–13; cf. Cheng 14, p. 870.

[35] See *Zuo*, Xi 28, p. 452 (and the *Chunqiu* record on p. 448).

reports from foreign courts.[36] These instances, one of which is the case of regicide in the state of Zheng discussed below, strip the *Chunqiu* text of its supposed ritual and moral infallibility and effectively de-sacralize it. The resultant lack of an identifiable source of ultimate authority is yet another feature of "secular" historiography as exemplified by the *Zuozhuan*.

If the *Zuozhuan* approach represents a "secular" trend in traditional historiography, the *Gongyang zhuan* may be the clearest representative of a new quasi-religious approach, the adherents of which identified the *Chunqiu* itself as a sacred text that can magically influence the world. The *Gongyang zhuan*, which has been extensively studied by Joachim Gentz, to whom I am indebted for much of the following analysis, was composed in the second half of the Warring States period (Zhanguo, 453–221), approximately a century or more after the *Zuo*.[37] Several important intellectual developments took place during these generations, and they are helpful in understanding the peculiarities of the *Gongyang* approach. First, the association between Confucius and the *Chunqiu* had been firmly established by then. Second, Confucius himself had been recast by some of his followers from an ordinary Master into a supreme sage that "nobody like him ever existed since the people were born."[38] Third, the massive use and abuse of history by rival thinkers of the Warring States era began backfiring, generating negative reaction against invocations of the past as compelling arguments in political debates.[39] These three developments resulted in the creation of the *Gongyang zhuan*—a text that insists on the sacral power of the writing of history when performed by the Sage, but simultaneously tries to disengage this sagely product from its historical setting.

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[36] See a list of these cases in Zhao Shengqun, *Chunqiu jing zhuan*, pp. 238–242; Zhao does not analyze these items in terms of concealment of regicides in foreign courts.

[37] For Gentz's major study, see his *Das* Gongyang zhuan*: Auslegung und Kanonisierung der Frühlings- und Herbstannalen (Chunqiu)* (Wiesbaden, 2001); see also Gentz's articles cited in this chapter and his chapter in Volume Two.

[38] Zi Gong's 子貢 saying as cited in the *Mengzi*, "Gongsun Chou, shang" 3.2, p. 63. For the inflated image of sages, who were conceived of as divine figures by some of the late Zhanguo thinkers, see Michael J. Puett, *To become a god: cosmology, sacrifice, and self-divinization in early China* (Cambridge, Mass., 2002).

[39] For the massive abuse of historical narratives and the diminishing appeal of historical argumentation in political debates, see Pines, "Speeches and the question of authenticity in ancient Chinese historical records," *Historical truth*, pp. 195–224.

For the authors of the *Gongyang zhuan*, the *Chunqiu* is not just a historical text to be commented upon, but a manifestation of the ultimate wisdom of the Sage. They clarify this point in the final lines of the text:

> Why did the superior man [Confucius] make the *Chunqiu*? To eradicate generations of disorder and return to the right there is nothing like the *Chunqiu*. Yet we cannot know anymore whether it was made for this purpose or because superior men liked to speak of the Way of Yao and Shun. And was it not in the end perhaps the delight that he would be recognized [in the same way] as Yao [recognized] Shun? To obtain the [hidden] meaning of the *Chunqiu* in order to await for later sages—it was also this in which the superior man was delighted when making [the *Chunqiu*].[40]

The authors are cautious with regard to their ability to comprehend Confucius's true intent, but they are unequivocal with regard to the potential of the *Chunqiu* "to eradicate generations of disorder and return to the right." While in the *Zuozhuan* the *Chunqiu* is presented as a means "to encourage the good and frighten the bad," a relatively modest goal, in the *Gongyang zhuan* this text becomes the single way out of the state of disorder, the repository of the ultimate blueprint of a correct world. This assertion sets the tone for the re-sacralization of the *Chunqiu*, as is reflected throughout the *Gongyang zhuan* narrative.

The *Gongyang* authors assume that the *Chunqiu* comprises two layers: the initial Lu court annals, and the modifications by Confucius. The first layer is a factual skeleton of the text to which Confucius added the "flesh," namely, specific wording through which the events should be properly understood and analyzed. The *Gongyang* authors attempt to discern the Master's hidden message from behind his "subtle words" 微言. This is done through a particular exegetical method, according to which, first, the pattern of proper recording of the events in the *Chunqiu* is determined; second, all deviations from this putative pattern are identified; and third, each deviation is explained either as reflecting an abnormal historical situation, or representing Confucius' "praise and blame." At the next step one can establish the pattern of deviations from the regular pattern of recording, and then another set of yet more subtle deviations from that pattern, and the pattern of a new set of deviations, and so on. As Joachim Gentz summarizes, "the

[40] I follow Gentz's translation ("The past," pp. 236–37), with slight modifications.

Gongyang zhuan does not always succeed in offering a coherent exegesis and is time and again forced to invent new rules…and even rules that deviate from deviation rules."[41]

The *Gongyang zhuan*'s method of exegesis is revealing. It is based on a somewhat cabbalistic assumption that the *Chunqiu* text is sacrosanct and infallible, not a single word of which is misplaced or miswritten due to authorial oversight, but rather hides the Sage's message. To preserve this assumption in light of obvious flaws in the *Chunqiu* records, the *Gongyang* masters perform remarkable intellectual acrobatics. This can be illustrated by a single comparison between their account and that of the *Zuozhuan* of the following *Chunqiu* entry from the year 566:

> Winter, the twelfth month. [Our] lord assembled with the marquis of Jin, the duke of Song, the marquis of Chen, the marquis of Wei, the earl of Cao, the viscount of Ju, and the viscount of Zhu at Wei 鄬. Earl Kunwan 髡頑 of Zheng was going to the assembly. He did not meet the overlords; on the day *bingxu* he died at [the town of] Cao 鄵.[42]

This record conceals an instance of regicide: Lord Xi of Zheng 鄭僖公 (r. 570–566) did not merely "die" but was assassinated. Why did the *Chunqiu* conceal this fact? The two commentaries offer entirely different explanations. The *Zuo* explains:

> When Earl Xi 僖公 of Zheng was still heir-apparent, in the 16th year of Lord Cheng [of Lu, i.e., 575], he traveled together with Zi Han 子罕 [a leading Zheng noble] to Jin, and mistreated him. Later he traveled with Zi Feng 子豐 [another leading noble] to Chu and again mistreated him. In the first year of his rule, he attended the court of Jin; Zi Feng wanted to complain to Jin and to depose the lord, but Zi Han stopped him. On the eve of the meeting at Wei, Zi Si 子駟 [another leading Zheng noble] acted as chancellor, and [the lord] again mistreated him. [The lord's] servant remonstrated but was not heeded; when he remonstrated again, the lord killed him. When the lord arrived at Cao, Zi Si dispatched bandits who killed Lord Xi at night; while [Zi Si] informed the overlords that the lord died of high fever.[43]

The *Gongyang zhuan* presents an entirely different version:

> Why was it written "died at Cao 操"? [Cao] is a Zheng town. When an overlord dies within his domain, the location is not recorded: why was the

[41] See Gentz, "The ritual meaning," p. 133 (and pp. 128–34 for the detailed discussion of the *Gongyang* exegesis), and his article in Volume Two.
[42] *Zuo*, Xiang 7, p. 949.
[43] *Zuo*, Xiang 7, p. 953.

> location recorded here?—To conceal the matter?—What to conceal?—[The lord] was murdered.—Who murdered him?—His nobles murdered him. Why is it not said that his nobles murdered him?—It is a taboo for the Central States.—Why is it a taboo for the Central States?—The earl of Zheng was en route to meet the overlords at Wei; his nobles remonstrated, saying: "It is not good to return to the Central States; it is better to follow Chu." The earl of Zheng said: "Unacceptable." His nobles said: "If you consider the Central States righteous, then what about them invading us during the mourning period? If you consider them powerful, then they are no match for Chu." Then they murdered [the lord].—Why then was the name of the earl of Zheng, Kunwan, recorded? He was wounded and was on the way back; he did not arrive at his lodging and died.—But he did not meet the overlords; why is it written that he went to the assembly?—To fulfill his will.[44]

Both texts agree about the basic fact: the lord of Zheng was murdered by his underlings en route to the inter-state assembly at Wei; thus the *Chunqiu* record is obviously misleading. The *Zuozhuan* explains that this record reflects a deliberately wrong report by the Zheng chancellor, a major culprit. The Lu scribes (and probably scribes of other northern states) went along with this lie in order not to alienate an important ally (and the Zheng leaders duly respected this by reconfirming their alliance with the northerners a few months later). That the lord of Zheng was an intolerable ruler whose cruelty and folly brought about this miserable end should not absolve the murderers of their responsibility: after all the aforementioned Zhao Dun was also justified in his plot against Lord Ling of Jin, but nonetheless the paragon of upright historians, Dong Hu, considered Zhao Dun guilty of regicide. The concealment of a similar event in the state of Zheng is therefore morally and ritually wrong and can be explained only by analyzing political circumstances.

This explanation is unacceptable to the *Gongyang* (as well as the parallel *Guliang zhuan* 穀梁傳) authors. To justify the false record they invent a fascinating explanation: the *Chunqiu* concealed the crime as a matter of taboo. While taboo regulations should not apply to the non-Lu rulers, in this case the record was modified out of respect to Lord Xi's putative commitment to the cause of the "Central States" against the state of Chu. It is almost needless to state that this explanation is groundless. While Zheng frequently shifted its alliances, there are no indications that Lord Xi was a supporter of the northern states, or that

[44] *Chunqiu Gongyang zhuan zhushu*, annot. by He Xiu and Xu Yan, rpt. *Shisanjing zhushu*, Xiang 7, 19, p. 2302 (hereafter *Gongyang zhuan*).

his ministers leaned toward Chu; the fact that Zheng continued its alliance with Jin after the assassination of Lord Xi suggests that this explanation is wrong. More substantially, treating the state of Chu as the Other of the "Central States" is anachronistic: this conceptualization of Chu is a product of the middle Warring States period and does not reflect the conditions when the *Chunqiu* was compiled.[45] The *Gongyang* authors go to great lengths to preserve the integrity and infallibility of the text upon which they comment.

This example will suffice to show how reverence for the *Chunqiu* required the authors of the *Gongyang zhuan* to invent or twist the facts to fit in with preconceived ideas. This reflects a general attitude of the authors toward history. The latter is important insofar as it serves as a foundation for Confucius' putative judgments in the *Chunqiu*, but in the final account it is subordinate to ritual considerations. What really happened matters very little; the true message of the *Chunqiu* is what *ought* to have happened. The *Gongyang zhuan* creates an imagined state of affairs in which there is a unified world ruled by a powerful Son of Heaven, who is served by the overlords and their nobles, with the latter being the ruler's minor executives and not powerful political actors. This picture, which the authors read into the *Chunqiu*, is completely at odds with the realities of the eponymous period (722–453), and depicts not the actual but the ideal state of affairs. The real world of *Chunqiu* events frequently threatens to break out from its interpretative bounds, reflecting the impossibility for the *Gongyang* authors to accommodate real history within their ritual framework.[46] Thus, at times they display great reverence toward the Zhou kings, who are treated as if they were truly powerful sovereigns; at times, however, the text laments that during the Chunqiu period "there was no Son of Heaven above" 上無天子, suggesting that the king was a nullity. The authors do not bother to

[45] For the distinct identity of Chu being primarily a Zhanguo period phenomenon, see Yuri Pines, "Beasts or humans: pre-imperial origins of sino-barbarian dichotomy," *Mongols, Turks and others*, eds. Reuven Amitai and Michal Biran (Leiden, 2004), pp. 87–88.

[46] It is significant I believe, that on a few occasions when the *Chunqiu* conceals the instance of a regicide in a foreign country, neither the *Gongyang* nor the *Guliang zhuan* comment upon this matter at all. See, e.g., *Gongyang zhuan*, Zhao 1, 22, p. 2317, Ai 10, 27, p. 2349; *Chunqiu Guliang zhuan zhushu*, annotated by Fan Ning and Yang Shixun, rpt. *Shisanjing zhushu*, Zhao 1, 17, p. 2433 and Ai 10, 20, p. 2450. Also noteworthy is that none of the major commentators of these texts addressed this concealment, although in the first case the culprit was the notorious usurper and tyrant, Prince Wei 王子圍 of Chu, who ascended the throne as King Ling 楚靈王 (r. 540–529).

resolve this apparent contradiction: they want to teach the reader the correct political principles bequeathed by Confucius, not to teach about the past.[47]

Disengaged from its historical setting, the *Chunqiu* in its *Gongyang* interpretation became adaptable to any imaginable political demand, as the history of the text under the Han dynasty (206 BC–220 AD) exemplifies. The so-called *Chunqiu* principles could be applied to domestic and foreign policy, and even to legal cases; the text became a kind of holy scripture. Its sacred status was further emphasized by those Han scholars who asserted that in the *Chunqiu* Confucius had predicted the Han ascendancy and preordained the political institutions to be used by the Han. Although this radical religious interpretation of the *Chunqiu* is not part of the original *Gongyang zhuan* design, it appears as a logical outcome both of its method of exegesis, which allowed reading into the *Chunqiu* almost any possible meaning, and of the elevation of the Lu text to supernatural realms.[48]

The *Gongyang zhuan* is certainly the most religious of the post-*Chunqiu* historical texts, as well as the least "historical." Its a-historical view of Confucius and of his putative legacy places the *Gongyang zhuan* on a par with ritual texts such as the "Quli" 曲禮 or the "Wangzhi" 王制 chapters of the *Liji* 禮記 (*Book of rites*), or even with the *Zhou li* 周禮 (*Rites of Zhou*), rather than with historical texts such as the *Zuozhuan* or the *Guoyu* 國語 (*Discourses of the states*). The *Gongyang zhuan* marks therefore both the apex and the dead end of religious historiography. Its advent in the early Han might therefore have contributed decisively toward what Li Wai-yee identifies as the "anti-historical tendency in Han thought."[49] This a-historicism is what eventually diminished the importance of the *Gongyang zhuan* in the later historiographical tradition, as it was overshadowed by the rival commentary, the *Zuozhuan*. This does not mean however that history writing lost its spiritual elements. These were reintroduced at the beginning of the Han by the greatest early Chinese historian, Sima Qian.

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[47] For a brief but insightful analysis of the *Gongyang zhuan*'s a-historical approach, see Lewis, *Writing and authority*, pp. 139–44.

[48] For multiple applications of the *Chunqiu* under the Han, see Zhao Boxiong, *Chunqiu xue shi* (Ji'nan, 2004), pp. 102–27 and pp. 202–11. See also Joachim Gentz's chapter in Volume Two.

[49] Li Wai-yee, "The idea of authority in the *Shi ji* (*Records of the historian*)," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 54.2 (1994), 353–58.

Memory and immortality: the Shiji *contribution*

Insofar as I have identified correctly the "religious-secular" divide of ancient Chinese historiography, it is interesting to try to locate the *Shiji*, the fountainhead of Chinese official histories, within the sides of this divide. Recently, Michael Nylan has made several interesting observations with regard to possible religious motives in the *Shiji*. According to her interpretation, by compiling his universal history, Sima Qian tried to act out his filial obligation to his father, Tan 談, and to attain a kind of personal immortality in addition to addressing such a religiously significant topic as relations between Heaven and Man.[50] My focus will be different from Nylan's, though. In what follows, I shall address the relation of the *Shiji* to the *Chunqiu* traditions outlined above, and then explore possible religious aspects of the genre of biographies invented by Sima Qian.

The relation of the *Shiji* to the *Chunqiu* has been studied in several excellent works, and I shall therefore limit myself to a brief summary. In the autobiographic last chapter of the treatise, Sima Qian draws an explicit parallel between himself and Confucius, and, despite his polite demurral, it is clear that he considered his *magnum opus* as compatible with the *Chunqiu*.[51] This desire to emulate the Sage did not mean, however, that Sima Qian had to adhere to the terse style of the Lu chronicle. First, by the early Han period, the term *Chunqiu* pertained not only to the original text attributed to Confucius but also to its commentaries and sub-commentaries, and, more broadly, to an entire list of historical works, numbering "myriad words."[52] Second, living in the age of the unified empire, Sima Qian realized the need to modify the format of his work in order "to apply the model of the *Chunqiu*, the chronicle of a single state, to the entire known world."[53] What mattered to Sima Qian was, then, not the style of the *Chunqiu* but the idea of a text that

[50] See Nylan, "Sima Qian: a true historian?" *Early China* 23–24 (1998–99), 203–46.

[51] See detailed analysis in Li Wai-yee, "The idea of authority," 358–61; Stephen W. Durrant, *The cloudy mirror: tension and conflict in the writings of Sima Qian* (Albany, 1995), pp. 9–12.

[52] Sima Qian mentions that the text of the *Chunqiu* comprises "dozens of thousands" of words (*Shiji* 130, p. 3297)—a number that clearly refers to the Classic and the commentaries if not to the entire collection of historical texts. In the *Shiji*, the *Chunqiu* genre appears as particularly inclusive, as Sima Qian occasionally includes even those texts that we would define today as "philosophical," such as writings by Xunzi 荀子 and Han Feizi 韓非子 (*Shiji* 14, p. 510).

[53] See Lewis, *Writing and authority*, p. 310.

is both comprehensive in its scope and authoritative in its judgments. As he explicitly stated, he hoped that his work would "exhaust the interchanges between Heaven and man, penetrate comprehensively the changes from ancient times to the present, and thus complete the words of a single school/family."[54]

In light of this conscious attempt to emulate the *Chunqiu* as a world-ordering text, it is remarkable that Sima Qian decisively opted to create a historical text in the *Zuozhuan* style and not a repository of "subtle words" in the manner of the *Chunqiu* in its *Gongyang* interpretation. The *Shiji* is indebted to the *Zuo* both as one of its most important sources, and as a model of informative historiography. Largely rejecting the a-temporal approach of the *Gongyang* tradition, Sima Qian depicts history in its complexity, avoiding a simplistic "praise and blame" mode and allowing his sources and protagonists to speak for themselves. His interpretative techniques, such as the protagonists' speeches and the narrator's remarks, clearly resemble those of the *Zuo*. And yet, the *Shiji* crucially departs from the *Zuozhuan* in two important aspects. First, unlike the *Zuo*, which remained limited temporally and geographically to the *Chunqiu* framework, the *Shiji* attempts to attain true comprehensiveness in time and space. Second, Sima Qian abandoned the rigid chronological form of the *Zuozhuan*, creating a hierarchically structured text, the form of which conveys a sense of order even more than the content does. The second feature in particular places Sima Qian's work on a par with the world-ordering function of the *Chunqiu*.

Sima Qian's arrangement of the *Shiji* materials discloses his attempt not just to depict the world but also to regulate it. Of the five sections into which he divided the *Shiji*, three, namely, "Chronicles" (*ji* 紀), "Hereditary houses" (*shijia* 世家) and "Arrayed biographies" (*liezhuan* 列傳) are arranged in a clearly hierarchic pattern. The twelve "Chronicles" (the number of which might have been patterned after the twelve lords of Lu surveyed in the *Chunqiu*) deal with the rulers who supposedly governed All under Heaven; the "Hereditary houses" deal with the high nobility; while the "Arrayed biographies" focus on particularly noteworthy individuals of lesser rank.[55] This structure, emulated henceforth in

[54] From Sima Qian's letter to Ren An 任安, *Han shu* 62, p. 2735.

[55] For detailed analyses of the structure of the *Shiji*, see Grant Hardy, *Worlds of bronze and bamboo: Sima Qian's conquest of history* (New York, 1999), pp. 27–60; Lewis, *Writing and authority*, pp. 309–13.

the dynastic histories, allowed the historian to buttress the hierarchic order of the universe, placing every protagonist in a bracket that befitted his or her social position. What is remarkable, however, is the degree of looseness in Sima Qian's arrangement of narratives. Much to the dismay of later ideologues of dynastic legitimacy, he placed accounts of the pre-dynastic state of Qin and of the Han competitor, Xiang Yu 項羽 (d. 202) in the "imperial" section, while the story of the peasant rebel, Chen She 陳涉 (d. 208), appears among the "Hereditary houses."[56] This obvious violation of the ritually sanctioned hierarchical norms discloses the major difference between the *Shiji* and the *Chunqiu*. While in the latter, ritual order mattered much more than historical setting, for Sima Qian the actual power of certain individuals or groups was compelling enough to make him deviate from the norms of social hierarchy. In the final account, the "secular" historian in Sima Qian overwhelms the "religious" one.

If in terms of its relation to the *Chunqiu* lore, the *Shiji* belongs squarely to the "secular" tradition of Chinese historiography, the text nonetheless does not lack religious dimensions. Aside from those outlined by Michael Nylan, I would like to focus on the genre of biographies, which is one of Sima Qian's important innovations. Prior to the *Shiji* there is no evidence for the existence of a biographic genre at all. Although its seeds can be traced to the inscription of the donor's achievements or pedigree on bronze vessels, or to the collection of anecdotes about and sayings of important historical personalities that circulated in the Warring States period, prior to Sima Qian no attempt was made to systematically present biographies. Sima Qian's invention of this genre—if he really did it—became one of his lasting contributions to Chinese historiography.[57]

Sima Qian's decision to commemorate outstanding individuals may reflect his personal experience, which made him particularly sensitive to the fate of a personality in history; it may also reflect his general

[56] For further examples of Sima Qian's violations of the ritually correct hierarchy, see Zheng Zhihong, *Shiji zhi wenxian yanjiu* (Chengdu, 1997), pp. 202–08.

[57] Li Wai-yee raises the possibility that the biographic genre first appeared in the now lost late Warring States compilation, *Shi ben* 世本; see "The idea of authority," pp. 378–79, n. 55. Cf. Denis Twitchett, "Chinese biographical writings," *Historians of China and Japan*, eds. William G. Beasley and Edwin G. Pulleyblank (London, 1962), p. 96. For the novelty of the biographic genre, see also Nylan, "Sima Qian," 214–15, especially n. 40.

emphasis on the individual as a prime mover in historical events.[58] It would be incongruous, then, to argue that he created biographies for explicitly religious purposes; but from the inception, the genre had a religious dimension. This dimension is explicit in the first of the "Arrayed biographies" in the *Shiji*, where Sima Qian briefly narrates the story of the two legendary righteous hermits, Boyi 伯夷 and Shuqi 叔齊, and then begins an unusually long dialogue with the readers, in which he reflects upon the historian's tasks and upon the importance of commemoration of outstanding personalities.[59]

Boyi and Shuqi, two morally impeccable persons who died of starvation, enable Sima Qian to question more generally Heaven's justice. By providing examples of righteous men, like Confucius's disciple Yan Yuan 顏淵, who died prematurely, and of arch-villains, like Robber Zhi 盜蹠, who enjoyed a good life, Sima Qian asks in despair: "So, what is called 'the Way of Heaven' 天道: is it right or is it wrong?"[60] Questioning Heaven's justice and lamenting one's fate was a common *topos* in Warring States discourse, the prevalent answer being that the superior man will cultivate his virtue whatever the external circumstances.[61] Sima Qian mentions this solution, proposed by Confucius, but then provides an additional way of coping with injustice:

> [Confucius said:] "The superior man detests that after he passes away his name will not be mentioned." Master Jia [Jia Yi 賈誼, ca. 200–168] said: "The covetous man seeks wealth; the zealous *shi* 士 seeks name; one who boasts dies out of expediency; the masses cling to life." [The *Yijing* 易經 says:] "Those of identical light illuminate each other; those of identical

[58] For Sima Qian's emphasis on personality in history, see, e.g., Li Wai-yee, "The idea of authority"; for his focus on the individual as a prime mover in history, see Vitalij Rubin, "Kak Syma TSian' izobrazhal period Chun'tsiu," *Narody Azii i Afriki* 2 (1966), 66–76.

[59] For a brilliant discussion of this chapter, see Durrant, *The cloudy mirror*, pp. 20–27; see also Shan Shaojie, "'Boyi liezhuan' zhong de gongzheng linian he yongheng linian," *Zhongguo renmin daxue xuebao* 4 (2005), 129–37.

[60] *Shiji* 61, p. 2125.

[61] This issue is discussed in numerous texts, the paradigmatic one being the recently unearthed *Qiong da yi shi* 窮達以時 ("Failure and success depend on the times") from the Guodian site. For details, see Li Rui, "Guodian Chu jian *Qiong da yi shi* zai kao," *Xin chutu wenxian yu gudai wenming yanjiu*, eds Xie Weiyang and Zhu Yuanqing (Shanghai, 2004), pp. 268–78. A recently published short text *Guishen zhi ming* 鬼神之明 from the Shanghai Museum collection, which may have been written by Mozi's 墨子 (ca. 460–390) followers, explores the issue of the good fate of villains and the bad fate of sages to question the numinosity of the deities. See "Guishen zhi ming," annotated by Cao Jinyan, *Shanghai bowuguan cang Zhanguo Chu zhushu*, ed., Ma Chengyuan (Shanghai, 2006), vol. 5, pp. 307–20.

> kind seek each other." [It also says:] "Clouds follow the dragon; wind follows the tiger; the sage rises and myriad creatures eye him." Although Boyi and Shuqi were worthy, it was because they attained the Master [Confucius] that they became more illustrious. Although Yan Yuan 顏淵 studied industriously, it was because he attached himself to the tail of thoroughbred [Confucius] that his conduct became more renowned. There are *shi* of rocky caves who approach and reject [a position] in a timely [manner]; how sad it is that their name will perish like smoke and not be mentioned! The men from village gates and lanes who want to behave steadfastly to establish their names—how will they carry it to the later generations unless attached to the lofty *shi*?[62]

The detailed analysis of this extraordinarily rich passage would lead me too far afield; what is important for our discussion is Sima Qian's assertion that establishing one's name may serve as a sort of compensation for Heaven's injustice. In Durrant's words, "the historian thereby becomes the savior, those attached to him are saved, living on through the power of his writing brush."[63] Indeed, by preserving one's name for posterity, the historian corrects Heaven's wrongdoing, providing a sort of immortality for those who failed to fulfill their aspirations in life. An after-life in a historical text becomes a compensation for under-appreciation or failure in life.

Stressing the importance of leaving one's name to posterity as a means to post-mortem justice if not "commemorative immortality" is not Sima Qian's invention. Its roots are traceable to the following *Zuozhuan* dialogue:

> Twenty-fourth year [of Lord Xiang, 549], spring; Mu Shu 穆叔 [Shusun Bao 叔孫豹] arrived at Jin. Fan Xuanzi 范宣子 [Shi Gai 士丐] greeted him [at the capital's outskirts]. [Fan Xuanzi] asked him: "The men of old had a saying: 'dead and not rotten': what did they mean?" Mu Shu did not answer. Xuanzi said: "My, Gai's, ancestors at the time of Yu [Shun] and earlier were the Taotang lineage; during the Xia they became the Yulong lineage, during the Shang the Shiwei lineage, during the Zhou the Tangdu lineage, and, when Jin began presiding over the Xia ["Chinese" states] alliance, we became the Fan lineage. It is said about this!"
>
> Mu Shu said: "According to what I, Bao, heard, these are the so-called hereditary emoluments and not 'being not rotten.' Lu had a former noble Zang Wenzhong 臧文仲; he is dead already, but his words are still established: it is told about that! I, Bao, heard: 'The best is to establish virtue; second to it is to establish merits; next is to establish words.' If even after

[62] *Shiji* 61, p. 2127.
[63] Durrant, *The cloudy mirror*, p. 25.

> a lengthy period they do not fade—this means being not rotten. Preserving one's clan and establishing a lineage to guard the ancestral temple so that sacrifices do not fade for generations—this exists in every state. It is named 'great emolument,' but it cannot be named 'not being rotten.' "[64]

This fascinating exchange, recorded also in the *Guoyu*, epitomizes a change of mentality from the lineage-oriented to an individual-oriented notion of continuity and immortality. Shi Gai's views reflected lineage consciousness, according to which the survival of the lineage and perpetuity of ancestral sacrifices were the true measure of one's success.[65] Shusun Bao, a leading noble himself, did not reject this idea, but outlined a higher degree of personal success: to attain personal fame either through political achievements or at least through establishing one's "words" to be transmitted to posterity.[66] One's posthumous fame was one's true immortality.

The idea of preserving one's name for posterity as a true measure of personal success gained further popularity in the Warring States period and thereafter, as suggested among others by the sayings of Confucius and Jia Yi, cited in the *Shiji* passage above. It resonated well both with the increasingly popular quest for name/fame (*ming* 名) that became one of the prime movers of elite behavior and with the religious idea that through remembering the deceased one could "enliven" them. This latter topic is presented in the "Ji yi" 祭義 ("Meaning of the sacrifice") chapter of the *Liji*, which was perhaps compiled in the early Han period, but which may well reflect earlier religious views:

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[64] *Zuo*, Xiang 24, pp. 1087–88.

[65] This "lineage immortality" is traceable in turn already to the "auspicious words" (*gu ci* 嘏辭) of the bronze inscriptions in which the donors asked the ancestors to allow future generations to "forever treasure [this vessel]" 子孫永寶. Significantly, the requests of the "auspicious words" are directed either to lineage or to personal well-being, but never to remembrance by posterity. See more in Xu Zhongshu, "Jinwen guci shili," *Xu Zhongshu lishi lunwen xuanji* (Beijing, 1998), pp. 502–64.

[66] The difference between establishing "virtue" (*de* 德) and "merit" (*gong* 功), may be in the degree of political achievement; establishing *de* could pertain in certain early Zhou contexts to establishing a new dynasty or at least a new regional polity (for these early usages of *de*, see Kominami Ichirō, "Tenmei to toku," *Tōhō gakuhō* 64 [1992], 1–59). Merit could pertain to a more modest achievement, such as those for which meritorious ancestors of the noble lineages received their ranks. As for "establishing words," this may well refer to the tradition of preserving ideologically important speeches of leading statesmen. For the preservation of such speeches of Zang Wenzhong, see *Guoyu jijie*, comp. by Xu Yuangao (Beijing, 2002), "Lu yu 1" 4.9, p. 170.

> Thus, the filiality [taught by] the former kings [requires] that the [son's] eyes should not forget [the parents'] looks, his ears should not forget their voices, his heart should not forget their hearts, will, inclinations, and desires. When he delivers them his love, they seem to live again; when he delivers his sincerity, they reappear. When those who reappear and live again are not forgotten, how can [the son] be irreverent?[67]

I whole-heartedly concur with Michael Nylan that this idea of the transformative power of mortuary rituals could have been a source of inspiration for Sima Qian.[68] Indeed, the notion of "commemorative immortality" appears in several texts. The *Laozi*'s view, that "to die and not be forgotten means longevity" 死而不忘者壽,[69] reflects well this quest for commemoration in the world of the Warring States. Some thinkers hoped to do so through the written media. Several Zhanguo texts speak of the importance of one's merits being recorded—preferably inscribed or incised on bronze or on stone to become truly indestructible—to perpetuate one's glory.[70] All these ideas might have contributed toward Sima Qian's idea to immortalize the heroes of the past through preserving their individual deeds and statements in his *magnum opus*.

The idea of "commemorative immortality" might have had even deeper religious importance in Sima Qian's times. It could have been particularly appealing to educated persons, in light of the notorious lack of clarity with regard to the afterlife. In the course of the Warring States and early Han period, the previously dominant idea of the ancestors dwelling above and communicating with their descendants during sacrificial rites gave place to a variety of competing approaches. The coexisting ideas of a bureaucratically organized netherworld, of the tomb as a dwelling for the soul and of the "paradise" of the Spirit

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[67] *Liji jijie*, compiled by Sun Xidan (Beijing, 1995), "Ji yi" 24, p. 1209.

[68] Nylan, "Sima Qian," 220–222.

[69] *Boshu Laozi jiaozhu*, compiled and annotated by Gao Ming (Beijing, 1996), 33, pp. 403–05. I follow both Mawangdui versions; Gao Ming suggests following Wang Bi's 王弼 recension, to emend "forget" (*wang* 忘) to "die" (*wang* 亡), because in his eyes the idea of commemoration does not resonate well with the *Laozi*'s thought.

[70] For the idea that one's deeds should be inscribed or incised to preserve the name for posterity, see e.g., *Xunzi jijie*, compiled by Wang Xianqian (Beijing, 1992), "Li lun" 19, p. 367; *Lüshi chunqiu jiaoshi*, compiled and annotated by Chen Qiyou (Shanghai, 1990), "Shen shi" 17.6, p. 1108; *Liji*, "Ji tong" 47, p. 1250. The earliest extant example of such commemoration is a late 4th-century BC stele of a Zhongshan 中山 official, who recorded his appointment "to announce it respectfully to the later exalted worthies" (cited from Martin Kern, *The stele inscriptions of Ch'in Shih-huang: text and ritual in early Chinese imperial representation* [New Haven, 2000], p. 56).

Mother of the West (Xiwangmu 西王母) might have been insufficiently compelling to satisfy the elites' need of positive retribution in the afterlife.[71] It is thus that the historian moved in to propose a way toward lasting endurance.

It is impossible to ascertain the full range of Sima Qian's motives when he undertook the compilation of the "Arrayed biographies"; nor will we ever be able to clarify entirely the role of religious considerations in his project, although religious implications of the biographic genre are undeniable. To paraphrase Grant Hardy, Sima Qian's *magnum opus* became eventually as imperishable as bronze and stone, which were singled out as proper media for commemoration by the Warring States thinkers. By the 1st century AD, with the increasing circulation of the *Shiji*, a new commemorative genre ensued, that of stone steles erected on the tombs of the elite. The similarity in the structure of the epitaphs and the *Shiji* biographies may not be incidental.[72] It is not impossible, therefore, that while the *Chunqiu* reflected the ancestral cult of its age, the *Shiji* eventually contributed toward the development of a new strand in the ancestral cult of future generations. If this observation is correct, it adds yet another dimension to the discussion of the complex relations between religion and historiography during the formative age of China's intellectual tradition.

[71] For changing views on the afterlife in the Warring States period, see Lothar von Falkenhausen, *Chinese society in the age of Confucius (1050–250 BC): the archeological evidence* (Los Angeles, 2006), pp. 293–325. For co-existence of divergent approaches to the afterlife in the early Han period, see Wu Hung, "Art in ritual context: rethinking Mawangdui," *Early China* 17 (1992), 111–44.

[72] This similarity is noticed by Twitchett, "Chinese biographical writing," pp. 96–7; see also K.E. Brashier's chapter in Volume Two.

DIVINERS AND ASTROLOGERS UNDER THE EASTERN ZHOU. TRANSMITTED TEXTS AND RECENT ARCHAEOLOGICAL DISCOVERIES*

Marc Kalinowski

The idea that oracular practices occupied a preponderant place in China is not, in itself, a novelty. For two millennia, literati have sought for, commented on, and transmitted the evidence concerning the diviners that is recorded in the Classics and in the writings of the pre-imperial annalists and philosophers. Faced with this information that is all in all very fragmented and difficult to date with certainty, modern criticism has done little more than to credit the traditional views, stressing at the same time the historical vagueness which surrounds any attempt at reconstruction for periods before the 4th century BC.

In this respect, the archaeological discoveries of the last century have contributed substantially to increasing our knowledge of divination in ancient China: of the divinatory techniques themselves, but above all of the manner in which these techniques were used in a social and cultural context relatively well circumscribed in space and time. For the period of the ancient kingdoms, the discovery of thousands of oracular inscriptions on bones and turtle shells dating from the late Shang (ca. 1250–1050 BC) has allowed reconstruction of the learned and complex operations by which the royal diviners prepared and burned these media with incandescent brands so as to produce the cracks which enabled them to formulate their prognostications. The requests for oracles concerned all decisions concerning the affairs of the state, its harvests and rains as well as the king himself and his court. They were generally accompanied by proposals for sacrifices offered to ancestors and gods from whom it was hoped to obtain favors and support. It now appears that, under the Shang, osteo-pyromancy was the first of the mantic arts,

* Translated by Margaret McIntosh. The original French paper, "La divination sous les Zhou Orientaux (770–256 avant notre ère). Textes transmis et découvertes archéologiques récentes," was published by Editions Le Cerf in a book entitled *Religion et société en Chine ancienne et médiévale* (Paris, 2008).

indissolubly linked to the religious beliefs and practices of the upper levels of society.[1]

Another equally important discovery was that of the numerical signs inscribed on the pyromantic media of the Shang and, in greater quantity still, on those of the Western Zhou (ca. 1050–771). These "numerograms" composed of six figures one above the other and usually grouped two by two, have been identified as the ancestors of the hexagrams of the *Book of changes* (*Yijing* 易經).[2] Also referred to as the *Changes of Zhou* (*Zhouyi* 周易), this eminent classic compiled between the 9th and the 7th centuries BC, originally without glosses or commentaries, was a collection of oracles connected to a set of 64 mantic diagrams (the hexagrams), made up of six units (the monograms) represented in the received versions of the text by straight or broken lines symbolizing the *yang*-odd and the *yin*-even.[3] A cleromantic process of casting wooden sticks or, as tradition would have it, yarrow stalks, allowed the diviner to draw by lot a numerical device in order to obtain the oracle corresponding to the request submitted by the consultant. Despite all the uncertainties linked to the absence of documents on the uses of this primitive cleromancy, it remains clear nonetheless that the practice of yarrow stalk divination goes back to the Shang period and precedes by several centuries the first elaborations of the *Changes*. Moreover, the presence of the numerical hexagrams on the media used by the pyromancers shows that the traditional methods of turtle and yarrow divination (*bushi* 卜筮) were combined with each other and functioned within the ritualized framework of a similar oracular liturgy.[4]

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[1] On the oracular inscriptions and osteo-pyromantic techniques of the Shang, see Léon Vandermeersch, "De la tortue à l'achillée," in *Divination et rationalité*, eds Jean-Pierre Vernant et al. (Paris, 1974), pp. 29–51; David N. Keightley, *Sources of Shang history: the oracle-bone inscriptions* (Berkeley, 1978), and "Shang divination and metaphysics," *Philosophy East and West* 38 (1988), 367–97. On the cult of the ancestors under the Shang, see Keightley, "The making of the ancestors: late Shang religion and its legacy," in *Religion and Chinese society*, ed. John Lagerwey (Hong Kong, 2004), pp. 3–63. See also, in this volume, the chapter by Robert Eno.

[2] See Zhang Zhenglang, "An interpretation of the divinatory inscriptions on early Zhou bronzes," *Early China* 6 (1980–81), pp. 80–96; Wang Dongliang, *Les signes et les mutations. Une approche nouvelle du Yi King: histoire, pratique et texte* (Paris, 1995), pp. 51–66; Li Ling, *Zhongguo fangshu kao* (Beijing, 2006), pp. 199–215.

[3] For studies on the formation of the *Zhouyi*, see Edward L. Shaughnessy, "The composition of the Zhouyi," PhD dissertation (Stanford, 1983); Richard A. Kunst, "The original 'Yijing': a text, phonetic transcription, translation, and indexes, with sample glosses," PhD dissertation (Univ. of California, Berkeley, 1985).

[4] On the religious context of Shang pyromancy, see David N. Keightley, "Late Shang divination: the magico-religious legacy," in *Explorations in early Chinese cosmology*, ed. Henry Rosemont Jr (Chicago, 1984), pp. 11–34.

The moving of the Zhou capital to the east in 770 BC marks the beginning of a long process of decomposition of the system of privileges and interclan alliances which characterized the regime of political and territorial domination established by the first kings of the dynasty. Chinese historiographers divide the six centuries which separate the Western Zhou from the early empires into two periods. The first is that of Spring and Autumn (770–482 BC), when the increasingly vast domains and principalities that resulted from the incorporation of territories formerly under the sphere of influence of the Zhou kings began to rival each other for the exercise of hegemonic power. During the second period, that of the Warring States (481–222 BC), territorial units became large and independent states with, at their head, powerful lords seconded by numerous high dignitaries, magistrates, and local functionaries. It is to one of them, King Zheng of Qin, that the privilege of unifying the realm fell when, at the end of a war of conquest without precedent, he took the title of First Emperor (Shihuang 始皇) 26 years after his accession to power in 246 BC.

The changes that occurred during these six centuries included wide territorial expansion, the multiplication of large urban centers, and an increasing secularization of government practices. From the end of the Spring and Autumn period the first speculations on the nature of man and his place in society appear. Following Kong Qiu 孔丘 (Confucius, 551–479) and his disciples, defenders of traditional values and of a humanism founded on education as well as ritual and moral improvement, different currents of wisdom and thought gradually took shape, leading to ardent debates in the princely courts of the 5th to 3rd centuries BC.[5]

The literature of the Warring States, all genres combined, left little place for stories and conceptions relative to the practice of diviners and astrologers. The only texts which escaped this rule espouse theories or report events thought to go back to more ancient periods. This is the case, for example, of the *Rites of Zhou* (*Zhouli* 周禮), whose composition is dated to around the 4th century BC but which consists of a description as precise as it is idealized of the royal administration

[5] On the social and intellectual history of this period, see Jacques Gernet, *Le monde chinois* (Paris, 1972), pp. 53–96, and the contributions in *The Cambridge history of ancient China. From the origins of civilization to 221 B.C.*, eds Michael Loewe and Edward Shaughnessy (Cambridge, Eng., 1999).

at the beginning of the Western Zhou.[6] According to this work, the diviners and astrologers depended on a ministry of cults composed of 70 major and minor officers and a total of 3,673 functionaries or petty officials. Among the major officers, alongside those in charge of rites and sacrifices—the grand master of music (*dayue* 大樂) and the grand invocator (*dazhu* 大祝)—are listed the grand diviner (*dabu* 大卜) and the grand scribe (*dashi* 大史). The grand diviner was responsible for divination by turtle and by the *Changes* (the yarrow stalk method), as well as for the interpretation of dreams. His functions consisted in writing the proposals to be divined and presiding over oracular consultations. He also played a role in the rites and royal sacrifices, in ceremonies of enthronement and investiture, the moving of the capital, military campaigns, and funeral rites. Seven minor officers assisted him in these duties: four for pyromancy alone, including the one who made the prognostications, wrote them down, archived them and, at the end of the year, kept an account of the oracles, verified or not; the three others took care respectively of the drawing of the yarrow stalks before the burning of the turtle plastrons, of the interpretation and exorcism of dreams, and of the examination and conjuration of the prodigies which had appeared in the land.[7] The grand scribe, for his part, was responsible for the conservation of official documents and charts and the composition of administrative acts and their archiving. It was also his duty to establish the calendar for the seasonal activities of government and assist the diviners in the choice of days propitious for the holding of regular worship. In this framework he carried out his predictive functions with the help of two minor officers, one in charge of observations and calculation of the movements of the stars, the other of recording celestial irregularities, meteorological phenomena, and omens of good or bad fortune.[8] Whatever the degree of reality we may concede to the distinctions established by the *Rites of Zhou*, the division of the mantic arts into two major offices, that of grand diviner for consultations of the turtle and yarrow, and that of grand scribe for the stars and meteorology, remains a distinctive feature of the distribution

[6] For an update on questions of the composition and dating of the work, see the article "Chouli" by William Boltz in *Early Chinese texts. A bibliographical guide*, ed. Michael Loewe (Berkeley, 1993), pp. 24–32. For a translation of the *Rites of Zhou*, see Edouard Biot, tr. *Le Tcheou-li ou rites des Zhou*, 3 vols (1851; repr. Taibei, 1975).

[7] Translation based on Biot, pp. 2.69–85.

[8] Translation based on Biot, pp. 2.104–16.

of divinatory techniques within the administrations of the Qin (221–207 BC) and Han (206 BC–220 AD) empires.[9]

Our principal source of information on the activities of the pre-imperial diviners and astrologers remains without contest the *Zuo commentary* (*Zuozhuan* 左傳, hereafter *Commentary*). The work is closely related to the *Annals* (*Chunqiu* 春秋), the celebrated collection of annals of the state of Lu traditionally attributed to Confucius, which reports in brief and ritualized form the events which took place in Lu and elsewhere between 722 and 479, the year of the Master's death.[10] If the *Commentary* follows the chronological framework imposed by the *Chunqiu*, it differs by virtue of its incomparably rich historical material, composed of accounts and legends linked to each other and forming a narrative structure that is complex but relatively unified. Originally compiled during the late 5th or the 4th century BC from annalistic traditions existing at the time, the *Commentary* also contains a rich doctrinal content which expresses itself through edifying accounts, speeches pronounced by wise counsellors, and "judgments of the gentleman" (*junzi yue* 君子曰) interpolated in the body of the text. In this way, the narrator invested the course of events with a moral dimension based on a rhetoric of praise and blame and the ideas of the just retribution of acts and of human responsibility in the shaping of his destiny.[11]

By their number and diversity, the accounts of divination in the *Commentary* describe a quite significant range of divinatory practices in the

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[9] See Hans Bielenstein, *The bureaucracy of Han times* (Cambridge, Eng., 1980), pp. 19 and 22–3.

[10] The two other canonical commentaries of the *Chunqiu*, the *Gongyang* and the *Guliang*, are conceived of as "catechisms" in which the notes of the classic are glossed to the letter, in the form of questions and answers. By their form and content, they differ clearly from the *Zuozhuan* and will not be taken into account here. For a presentation of the *Chunqiu* and its three commentaries, see Anne Cheng, *Etude sur le confucianisme Han. L'élaboration d'une tradition exégétique sur les classiques* (Paris, 1985), pp. 50–87 and 287–92. On the *Gongyang* commentary, see the chapter by Joachim Gentz in Volume Two.

[11] The *Zuozhuan* has been the subject of two important PhD dissertations which discuss these questions in detail from different points of view: see David Schaberg, "Foundations of Chinese historiography: literary representation in *Zuo Zhuan* and *Guoyu*" (Harvard University, 1996); and Yuri Pines, "Aspects of intellectual developments in the Chunqiu period (722–453)" (Hebrew University, Jerusalem, 1997). On the composition and ideological content of the edifying accounts, see Yuri Pines, "Intellectual change in the Chunqiu period: the reliability of the speeches in the *Zuo Zhuan* as sources of Chunqiu intellectual history," *Early China* 22 (1997), 77–132; David Schaberg, "Remonstrance in Eastern Zhou historiography," *Early China* 22 (1997), 133–79.

royal and princely courts of the pre-imperial period. Han historiographers, scholars, and literati continued to see the proof of the antiquity of these practices and to quote them in support of their arguments for or against the legitimacy of the mantic arts. For example, almost all cases of pyromantic consultation mentioned for the Spring and Autumn period in the *Records of the historian* (*Shiji* 史記) of Sima Qian (ca. 145–86 BC) are identical to those found in the *Commentary*.[12] I will begin by examining these documents quite extensively so as to have a complete view of the way in which their authors portrayed the divinatory conceptions and practices of ancient China. Then I will turn to the archaeological materials, which also show considerable activity on the part of the diviners at the time the *Commentary* was being written. While being quite clear about the distance which separates these two types of sources, I will try to show how they help identify the place occupied by divination in the society and culture of the Warring States.

Diviners and astrologers in the Commentary

The *Zuozhuan* contains 132 accounts, anecdotes, or simple allusions in which various personages accomplish divinatory acts. In their vast majority, they do not refer to the entries in the *Chunqiu*, which sporadically notes the anomalies that occurred during oracular consultations, eclipses, unusual conjunctions of the stars, fires, floods, insect invasions, and other natural prodigies.[13] Classification by type of divination shows a clear predominance of the three traditional techniques affiliated in the *Rites of Zhou* with the office of the grand diviner since the turtle (46 cases), the yarrow (18 cases), and dreams (26 cases) alone represent three-fourths of the whole, with natural prodigies (15 cases) and astrology (19 cases) sharing the remainder (see Table 1).[14] Distribution

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[12] There are 20 or so accounts of this kind spread over the chapters on the hereditary families (*shijia* 世家).

[13] Of the hundreds of notations of this type in the *Chunqiu*, only 15 give rise in the *Zuozhuan* to predictive accounts. Twenty or so others are the subject of simple explicative glosses in the style of the *Gongyang* and *Guliang* commentaries.

[14] In Table 1 as in the body of the article, the references to the accounts in the *Zuozhuan* follow the subdivision established in the *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu*, ed. Yang Bojun (Beijing, 1990). For example, Zhuang 22.1 refers to the first account of the 22nd year of Prince Zhuang. The references underlined in the columns of the turtle and yarrow indicate that predictions by one or the other method were carried out during the same consultation. In the columns of natural prodigies and astrology, the references in italics

Table 1. Chronological distribution of mantic techniques in the *Zuozhuan* accounts.

reigns	turtle	yarrow	dreams	omens	astrology	various
			Period 1			
Yin 隱 722 11 years						1.0
Huan 桓 711 18 years	11.2					
Zhuang 莊 693 32 years	22.1a, 22.1b	22.1		14.2, 32.3		
Min 閔 661 2 years	2.4	1.6, 2.4				1.6, 2.4
Xi 僖 659 33 years	4.6, 15.4b, 15.4c, 17.2, 19.4, 25.2, 31.5	4.6, 15.4a, 15.4d, 25.2	28.3, 28.4, 31.5	*14.3*, *15.5*, *16.1*, 29.4, 32.3	5.8	29.4
Wen 文 626 18 years	11.5, 13.3, 18.1			16.3	*14.7*	1.1
Xuan 宣 608 18 years	3.3, 12.1	6.6 (r), 12.2 (r)	3.6, 15.5			
			Period 2			
Cheng 成 590 18 years	17.6	16.5	2.3, 5.1, 10.4a, 10.4b, 10.4c, 16.5, 17.8			
Xiang 襄 572 31 years	10.2, 10.5, 24.8, 28.9a, 28.9b	9.3, 25.2, 28.8 (r)	18.3	*28.1*, *30.7*	18.4, *28.1*, 28.8, 30.10	18.4
Zhao 昭 541 32 years	1.12, 3.3, 5.8 10.2, 13.2, 17.6, 19.8, 25.10	5.1, 7.15, 12.10,	1.12, 4.8, 7.3, 7.7, 7.9, 7.15, 11.4, 17.4, 25.8, 31.6	8.1, *9.4*, *23.6*, *25.4*	6.3, *7.4*, 8.6, *9.4*, 10.1, 11.2, *17.5*, 18.3, 20.1, *24.4*, *31.6*, 32.2	1.12, 28.2
Ding 定 509 15 years	4.3, 8.7, 9.4					
Ai 哀 494 27 years [end 468]	2.3, 4.2, 6.4a, 6.4b, 9.6, 10.4, 17.3, 17.4a, 17.4b, 17.5, 18.2, 23.2, 27.3	9.6, 17.5	7.5, 17.5, 26.2	14.1	6.4	
Total	46 cases	18 cases	26 cases	15 cases	19 cases	8 cases

of the accounts over the reigns of the twelve princes of Lu covering the years 722 (Yin 1) to 468 BC (Ai 27) also reveals a marked disparity between the first seven reigns (from Yin to Xuan, 722–591, hereafter "period 1")—which have two times fewer entries—and the last five (from Cheng to Ai, 590–468, hereafter "period 2"). This in itself is not significant, since the *Commentary* shows identical disparities between the total number of accounts reported for the two periods.[15] Still, divination accounts of period 2 are not only more numerous, but are also more detailed than those of period 1, regularly including animated debates between the diviners and individuals such as Zi Chan 子產 of Zheng (d. 522), Shu Xiang 叔向 of Jin (d. 520), and Yan Ying 晏嬰 of Qi (d. 500). Without equalling the wisdom of Confucius, these persons are depicted by the narrator as paradigmatic figures of the wise minister and sage counselor.[16]

As can be seen from the examples presented below, the conjectures and predictions included in the divination accounts belong to a specific literary genre probably much in vogue at the time and whose stylistic resources the compilers exploited to the hilt on both the narrative and doctrinal levels.[17] Firstly, their predictions almost always prove extraordinarily correct and precise, even for facts separated by several centuries from the time of divination. Second, these facts are generally recorded in the *Commentary* either after the predictions which anticipated them or further along during an account which refers back to them. Finally, the dramatic effects produced by such announcements anticipating the

indicate that the relevant accounts correspond to the notations of the *Chunqiu* (15 accounts out of 34, that is, less than half). In the column of "reigns," the name of the prince is followed by the year he came to power and the number of years of his reign (e.g. Prince Yin gained power in 722 and his reign lasted 11 years).

[15] The total volume of the accounts of the *Zuozhuan* for period 2 (6th and early 5th) is actually twice that of period 1 (late 8th and 7th). Note also that the accounts included in the four reigns under which Confucius lived (551–479 BC: princes Xiang, Zhao, Ding and Ai) alone represent half of the whole.

[16] On these individuals and, in a general way, on the nature of the speeches attributed to the counselors in the *Zuozhuan*, see Schaberg, "Remonstrance in Eastern Zhou," and Pines "Intellectual change." For a comparative study of the representations of Zi Chan in the ancient sources, see François Martin, "Le cas Zichan: entre légiste et confucianiste," in *En suivant la voie royale. Mélanges en hommage à Léon Vandermeersch*, eds Jacques Gernet and Marc Kalinowski (Paris, 1997), pp. 69–83.

[17] As Schaberg has shown, this is true also for the accounts including speeches and remonstrances addressed by the counselors to their prince. They teach us more about the intellectual milieu in which the *Zuozhuan* was composed than about the period in which the authors of these speeches lived ("Remonstrance in Eastern Zhou," 137).

course of events provide the *Commentary* with an artifice of narrative continuity.[18]

On the doctrinal level, the accounts of divination are linked to the actual project of the *Zuozhuan*. On the one hand, they are used to portray the tension existing between the predictable character of events to come and the impact of the decisions and moral qualities of men on the course of their actions. On the other, they give birth to conflicting interpretations and debates which lead the protagonists to reflect on the relationship between religion and wisdom, or between political realism and an immoderate belief in the efficacy of divinatory practices. Nevertheless, the sources to which the compilers had recourse in constructing their narratives very clearly bear the mark of their time. They are precious documents for the study of the activities of the pre-imperial diviners and scribes and, even more, of the manner in which these activities were perceived by those who estimated them worthy of being written down.

Turtle divination

Accounts of divination by the turtle (*bu* 卜) occur throughout the two periods, with the exception of the first reign which contains no prediction of a technical character whatsoever. They may be very short (including the consultant's name, theme of the divination, lucky or unlucky outcome) or be the subject of further narrative developments.[19] The consultants are almost always named: more than half of them are kings and princes, the rest are ministers or counselors. The predictive process starts when someone asks for a consultation on a particular theme, either in the form "so-and-so requests an oracle on such-and-such subject", or through a charge (*ming* 命) expressing a wish or a future possibility. For example, in the charge "May he not live until the planned date!" the

[18] The narrative effects produced by the accounts of technical divination constitute, with the predictive speeches of the counselors, a form of "oracular rhetoric" found throughout the composition of the *Zuozhuan*; see Marc Kalinowski, "La rhétorique oraculaire dans les chroniques anciennes de la Chine. Une étude des discours prédictifs dans le *Zuozhuan*," *Extrême-Orient Extrême-Occident* 21 (1999), 48–51. See also Ronald C. Egan, "Narratives in the *Tso chuan*," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 37.2 (1977), 323–52; and Schaberg, "Remonstrance in Eastern Zhou," 487–95.

[19] In addition to the 46 cases recorded in Table 1, the *Zuozhuan* contains about ten others which are simple allusions to the technical aspects of pyromancy. For a study of all the occurrences of divination by turtle in the *Zuozhuan*, see Liu Yujian, *Zhongguo gudai guibu wenhua* (Guilin, 1992), pp. 267–358.

wish is expressed by the modal particle *shang* 尚 (may it be that) placed at the beginning of a sentence.[20] The themes submitted for divination principally concerned war (25 cases) and, in decreasing order, succession struggles and the choice of high officials (6 cases), illness (4), marriage (3) and changes of capital or residence (3).

Contrary to the consultants, the pyromancers are rarely named.[21] The procedure in itself hardly arouses the narrator's interest, if only to note an incident which took place during the burning operation.[22] Consultation of the turtle was thus a routine and ritualized practice carried out by diviners attached to the princely houses. As part of the divinatory institution, the turtle plastrons were the subject of great care. Some accounts note that they were kept in ancestral temples and were utilized only after authorization had been obtained by the head of government. Certain highly ranked families possessed them as well, and even traded them. An anecdote reports a case of the theft of a turtle between members of the same lineage.[23] After the burning, the shells were sometimes presented to the consultants, who examined them and made predictions.[24] Carrier of augural signs, the turtle shell was invested with divine power and to dispose of it carelessly passed for an act of madness and impiety:

> [E-1] King Ling at a former time had asked the turtle whether he might possibly (*shang*) get the whole kingdom; and when the answer was unfavorable, he cast the shell from him, railed at Heaven, and said, "This small thing you will not give me, but I will take it for myself." The people were distressed by his insatiable ambition, and joined in the insurrection against him as eagerly as if they had been going home.[25]

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[20] See below the examples E-1, E-3, and E-4. Further on we will see that the use of the particle *shang* in the charges proposed by the diviners is also found in the divinatory and sacrificial manuscripts of Chu.

[21] For divination by turtle, three diviners (*bu*) are named for period 1 and only one for period 2; see Table 2.

[22] See Ding 9.4 and Ai 2.3. In the two cases, the incident is due to the fact that the turtle shell was scorched (*guijiao* 龜焦).

[23] See Ding 9.4 for the ancestral temples, Zhao 18.3 and 19.8 for the control of turtles by the administration, and Zhao 25.10 for the theft of a turtle.

[24] The terms used are *xiangui* 獻龜 (to present the turtle) or *shigui* 示龜 (to show the turtle); see Xiang 10.5, 28.9a, and 28.9b.

[25] Zhao 13.2; translation based on James Legge, tr., *The Ch'un Tsew with the Tso chuen* (repr. Taibei, 1971), p. 649.

Generally speaking, it is the part of the accounts that concerns the interpretation of the oracles and the effect of the prediction on the course of events which retains the narrator's attention. Intervening here are the diviners and scribes, but also the consultants themselves, the counselors and, on two occasions, women.[26] The example below illustrates perfectly this type of account, where the predictive verve of the interpreters takes the form of sibylline rationalizations. It shows a minister of the powerful state of Jin who is uncertain of the strategy to follow in the conflict which opposes the states of Zheng and Song. A first consultation by turtle is made and interpretation of the oracle confided to three scribes, whose predictions agree in suggesting to the hesitant minister not to undertake anything against Song. As if the avalanche of arguments presented by the scribes was insufficient, a second consultation takes place, this time by casting yarrow stalks and with the intervention of a counselor who is not a diviner, and his prognosis confirms the preceding results. The effect of the episode on the narrative process is weak because the minister simply follows the unanimous opinion expressed by the four interpreters. It might be said that, in such cases, the divinatory consultation has no other function than to accentuate the importance of the decision to be taken by submitting it to the turtle and yarrow:

> [E-2] Zhao Yang [minister of Jin] consulted the turtle to know if he should help the state of Zheng [threatened by that of Song]. He obtained the sign "Water encroaches on fire".[27] A prediction was requested from the scribes Zhao, Mo and Gui. Scribe Gui said: "This must mean that the *yang* is submerged [by the *yin*] and that it is advantageous to raise an army to attack a state of the Jiang lineage but not a state of the Zi lineage from the Shang. In these conditions, you may affront the state of Qi [Jiang lineage], but it would be unfortunate to oppose the Song [Zi lineage]." Scribe Mo said: "The Ying lineage [to which belongs the minister of Jin] is classified under the water category, just as the Zi lineage [the state of Song] represents a water position. The category of the former not being in conflict with the position of the latter, how can they oppose each other! On the contrary, a state of Jiang lineage [like Qi] which descends from the Fiery Emperor [Yandi], master of fire, may be fought because the augural sign

[26] For the women, see Zhuang 22.1b and Xiang 10.5.

[27] The link between the augural sign (that is, the crack, *zhao* 兆, appearing on the shell following the burning) and the oracle is not explicit. The image of water dominating fire serves as a basis for the interpretations of the three scribes.

> indicates just that, the overcoming of fire by water."[28] Scribe Zhao said: "The sign is like a river whose impetuous course does not allow navigation. Zheng has committed a fault [in offending Song] and should not be defended. To help Zheng would be ill-fated, this is all that I know."[29] Yang Hu, then in the service of Jin, cast the yarrow using the *Changes of Zhou* and obtained hexagram Xu's line in hexagram Tai: ["King Yi marries his daughter, felicity, original fortune."] His prognostication was: "Song is in a favorable period, one cannot oppose them. Qi, prince of Wei [and great ancestor of the Song], is none other than the oldest son of King Yi of the Shang. Now, the countries of Song and of Zheng are related on the women's side, and the oracle predicts that the marriage of the sister of the sovereign Yi will bring prosperity and happiness. How can it be favorable [to attack Song!][30] Zhao Yang renounced his plan.[31]

In the following example, the impact of the prediction on the narration is, on the contrary, very clear. What matters here is not to raise the consultant's doubts on a decision to be made but to predict in an almost prophetic tone a series of frightening events which will occur in a dramatic manner during the course of the year. The prince of Lu, who had the cowardice to wish that the prince of Qi die of sickness rather than to face him in battle, died himself in the month following the prediction. As for the prince of Qi, he was assassinated before the autumn by his malevolent detractors and Hui Bo, the unfortunate counselor, underwent the same fate very soon afterwards:[32]

> [E-3] The prince of Qi had just announced the moment when he would take up arms [against Lu] when he fell ill. The doctors said that he would die before autumn. The prince of Lu heard of it and consulted the turtle with the following charge: "May he (*shang*) not live until the day planned for the battle!" Hui Bo [his faithful counselor] was responsible for proclaiming the charge. The diviner Chu Qiu put the prediction in these terms: "The prince of Qi will not reach the planned day, but not because of illness. You yourself, prince, will not have the time to learn

[28] The forecast of the second scribe only comments on that of the first by explaining the associations between water (Jin and Song) and fire (Qi).

[29] The third scribe interprets the oracle as a sign of the misconduct of Zheng which, by the offence it had previously given Song, caused its own loss. We can see that the scribe was not lacking in political intelligence.

[30] On the manner in which the *Commentary* identifies the oracles obtained by casting the yarrow stalks, see Shaughnessy, "The composition," pp. 84–95. Here, the oracle concerned is that of the fifth line of hexagram Tai 泰 (#11). The text of the oracle is not mentioned in the *Zuozhuan*, but the interpretation of the counselor leaves no doubt on the subject.

[31] Ai 9.6; tr. based on Legge, *Tso chuen*, p. 819.

[32] Concerning these events, see Wen 18 (609).

> this. Furthermore, a great misfortune will fall on the person who has proclaimed the charge."[33]

The consultations could also give rise to debates during which the prediction of the diviner was contested. This is the case in the following account opposing the prime minister of Chu to the head of his armies concerning a military campaign directed against the kingdom of Wu. The account is interesting for several reasons. First, the general not only contests the prediction by a strategic argument ("we will occupy the river upstream"), he even rejects the legitimacy of the consultation on the pretext that, for military matters, it was the head of the armies and not the prime minister that had the traditional privilege of consulting the turtle. We may also see here the importance accorded to the manner in which the consultants formulated the charges, since that of the general, more precise than that of the minister, resulted in a prediction which was the opposite of the first. Finally, the narrative function of the account is to glorify the general by presenting his sacrifice and that of his guard as a voluntary act decided upon even before the beginning of the hostilities:

> [E-4] While the king of Wu prepared to attack Chu, Yang Gai, who was prime minister of Chu, consulted the turtle to know the outcome of the battle. The prognostication was unfavorable. The head of the armies, Zi Yu, said: "We occupy the river upstream, which is rather a good omen. Moreover, the customs of Chu demand that on such occasions it be the head of the armies who questions the turtle. I request therefore a new consultation with the following charge: "If Zi Yu and his guard lose their lives in the combats and the Chu armies continue the battle, may (*shang*) we obtain the victory!" The prognostication this time was favorable. The battle was engaged at Chang'an, Zi Yu fell at once, and the Chu army continued the combat and inflicted a severe defeat on the armies of Wu.[34]

Consultations on the theme of sickness present particularities directly related to the archaeological materials examined further on: the predictions always consist in determining the name of the spirit or demon causing the consultant's illness.[35] Once the source of the curse (*sui* 祟)

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[33] Wen 18.1; tr. based on Legge, *Tso chuen*, p. 281.

[34] Zhao 17.6; tr. based on Legge, *Tso chuen*, p. 668.

[35] For the other predictions by the turtle concerning sickness, see Xiang 10.2, Zhao 1.12, and Xiang 28.9b; the last is particular because it is actually a stratagem. For a similar case of an indirect consultation of the turtle concerning the illness of the last king of the Eastern Zhou, She (r. 314–256), see *Zhanguo ce*, "Dong Zhou yu," *Zhanguo ce zhushi*, ed. He Jianzhang (Beijing, 1990), p. 36.

had been identified, it had to be exorcized by the appropriate rites and sacrifices in the hope of a possible cure. Still, in the *Commentary*, there is always someone who questions in one way or another the ability to harm the spirit identified by the diviner, and this has the effect of preventing the holding of the prescribed sacrifices. In the example below, the disagreement comes from the patient himself, who bases his argument on questions of protocol and ritual classification. He dies shortly afterwards but his kingdom survives him. The account finishes with praise of the unfortunate king from none other than Confucius:

> [E-5] King Zhao [of Chu] fell ill. The oracle of the turtle having determined that the curse (*sui*) was caused by the god of the [Yellow] River, the king refused to proceed with the appropriate sacrifices. When his counselors insisted that they sacrifice to the god on the altars of the state following the *jiao* 焦 ritual, he said: "The kings of the ancient dynasties, in their sacrificial codes, have decreed that the princes should sacrifice to the nature deities according to the *wang* 望 ritual. Furthermore, the only river gods related to Chu are those of the Jiang, the Han, the Qu, and the Zhang. It is on them, and on them alone, that our good and bad fortune depends. I, a man of no value, though I lack virtue, cannot have offended the god of the River." The sacrifices were not done. Confucius [having heard of the affair] said: "King Zhao knew the great principles, it is right that his kingdom be preserved from misfortune."[36]

Yarrow stalk divination

Divinations using yarrow stalks account for fewer than half of the pyromantic consultations. Only 15 cases are attested, four of which are done in combination with the turtle. To these purely cleromantic usages must be added three other accounts where the consultant interprets an oracle in the *Changes of Zhou* without casting the stalks.[37] The actors in these accounts are hardly different from those we have already encountered for the turtle, except that they vary significantly in the two periods. For example, the consultants are always princes in period 1 while they tend to be nobles and counselors in period 2. The same is true for those who carry out the casting of the yarrow. In period 1

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[36] Ai 6.4b; tr. based on Legge, *Tso chuen*, p. 810.

[37] See Table 1. The references to combined predictions by turtle and yarrow are underlined; those which correspond to non-cleromantic predictions are followed by an "r" in parentheses. For a complete study of prediction by yarrow in the *Zuozhuan*, see Kidder Smith Jr, "*Zhouyi* interpretation from accounts in the *Zuozhuan*," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 49.2 (1989), pp. 421–63.

these are exclusively the *bu*-diviners—a term which in the *Zuozhuan* applies mainly to pyromancers—and the *shi*-scribes. In period 2, the reading is done by the consultants themselves, with the phrase "a certain prince/counselor cast the yarrow" replacing "a certain diviner/scribe cast the yarrow." As for the predictions and their interpretation, they involve, in addition to those of period 1, other individuals such as the counselors and an increasing number of scribes, while the diviners themselves tend to disappear.[38]

The structure of the accounts is relatively uniform. The narrator begins by naming the person (diviner, scribe, or consultant), who then casts the yarrow (*shizhi* 筮之). This may be followed by the theme of the divination, which rarely takes the grammatical form of a charge as in the case of the pyromantic consultations.[39] Here, too, the themes concern above all battles (6 cases) and marriages (3 cases); but there is a total absence of divination on the theme of sickness. Then the results of the casting are given. More than two-thirds of the oracles come from the *Changes of Zhou*, the remainder consisting in sibylline verses (*zhou* 繇) composed in a style similar to those found in divinations by turtle.[40] The last part of the narrative, usually the longest, is given over to interpretation of the oracles, announcing the predictions and, in certain cases, debates in which the prediction is questioned and reinterpreted.

The interest aroused by the accounts of yarrow stalk divination in the *Commentary* has been greater than for the other forms of mantic arts it describes. This is due in part to the fascination exerted by the *Book of changes* over Chinese culture in general and to its canonical status comparable to that of the books of *Songs* and *Documents*.[41] It is also due to the evolving features mentioned above, which, because of the questions they pose, have given rise to important studies. It is indeed in the *Commentary* that the first evidence of an evolution in the use of the *Book of changes* in pre-imperial times appears. The nature and composition of the accounts makes it difficult to distinguish between reality and

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[38] Only one diviner is cited in period 2 (Zhao 5.1).

[39] Only one charge contains the modal particule *shang* (Zhao 7.15).

[40] For the sibylline verses, see Min 2.4, Xi 4.6, Xi 15.4a, Cheng 16.5, and Ai 17.5. However, at times the oracles in the *Changes of Zhou* are referred to as being sibylline verses (Xi 15.4a). On the sibylline verses and their role in the composition of the oracles of the *Changes*, see Edward L. Shaughnessy, "The origin of an *Yijing* line statement," *Early China* 20 (1995), 223–40.

[41] For a synthesis of previous work, see Shaughnessy "The composition," pp. 16–49, and Smith, "*Zhouyi* interpretation," 422–23.

the reinterpretation of facts for didactic and doctrinal reasons. In what follows, we shall examine the basic ideas the narratives convey.

In the first instance, the independence of the yarrow method compared with that of the turtle is attested from the very beginning of the *Commentary* and consequently covers the entire Spring and Autumn period. Nevertheless, the two methods remain complementary, as can be seen in the cases of consultations in common in periods 1 (3 cases) and 2 (2 cases). Second, the casting of the stalks is also associated with the *Changes* from the beginning, since the first account, dated 672 BC (Zhuang 22.1), begins with the phrase, "A scribe of Zhou cast the yarrow using the *Changes of Zhou*." This formulation and its variations appear no less than eight times in the text.[42] Even if some of the oracles are not found in the present classic, it is nevertheless true that the *Changes* reveals itself in the *Commentary* to be the book of reference for the diviners of the period. Third, the practice of yarrow stalk divination spread beyond the specialized circles of court diviners and was little by little secularized by becoming accessible to the consultants themselves. We have seen that all the castings mentioned in period 2 were no longer attributed to the diviners and scribes but to the princes and counselors. We may add here that the last account, dated 478 BC (Ai 17.5), begins, significantly, in the following manner: "The prince cast the yarrow in person" (*qin shizhi* 親筮之)—as if the narrator wanted to highlight by this last detail the outcome of a process already widely hinted at in the preceding accounts.

These observations, once put in a chronological perspective, has led scholars such as K. Smith to trace the outline of a historical evolution in the course of which the *Changes* free themselves not only from the technique of the casting of yarrow stalks, but also from divination itself, and come to be used only for their illustrative value, to strengthen an argument or explain a point of doctrine.[43]

The first case examined below is typical of the accounts of divination by yarrow. It concerns the famous battle of Han between the states of Qin and Jin (645 BC). Defeated, Prince Hui of Jin (650–637 BC) is

[42] The most usual form is *yi Zhouyi shizhi* 以周易筮之 ([so-and-so] "cast the yarrow using the *Changes of Zhou*"); see Zhao 5.1, Zhao 7.15, and Ai 9.6.

[43] On this evolution and the problems it poses, see Smith, "*Zhouyi* interpretation," pp. 447–50; and Mark Lewis, *Writing and authority in early China* (Albany, 1999), pp. 243–51.

held in Qin. His sister, Bo Ji, wife of Prince Mu (r. 659–621 BC), is also there. The account, placed by the narrator in the year of the battle of Han, reports that a divination had taken place ten or so years before, at the time when the father of Prince Hui planned to give his daughter (Bo Ji) in marriage to Prince Mu of Qin.[44] The scribe was not in favor of the marriage and made a series of clairvoyant predictions which anticipated everything that would happen to the princely family of Jin following the defeat of Han. Returning to the present time of the narrative, a conversation takes place between Prince Hui and his minister concerning the scribe's predictions. The wise minister blames his master for the carelessness with which he made his dead father bear the responsibility for the defeat instead of acknowledging his own mistakes. Criticism of the prince's irresponsibility in the face of the events which were to come is accompanied by criticism of the prediction itself which, we are told, was useless because it anticipated the course of events but could not change any of the predictions:

> [E-6] Previously, Prince Xian of Jin [father of Prince Hui] consulted the yarrow concerning the marriage of his daughter Bo Ji to Prince Mu of Qin, and obtained hexagram Kui's line in hexagram Guimei.[45] Scribe Su made the following prediction: "Unlucky! For the verse says: 'The young wife cuts the lamb's throat and no blood runs, the young girl offers her basket which remains empty, the neighbor to the west [Qin] reproaches us but there is no one to respond'…It will not be propitious [in the future] to undertake a military campaign. Defeat will take place on the hill [of Han] where the ancestors of Jin repose. The marriage of the young girl will bring discord and solitude, the enemy will draw his bow and a nephew [son of Prince Hui] will be exiled near his aunt [Bo Ji]…"[46]
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> While Prince Hui of Jin was held at Qin [following the defeat of Han], he deplored his situation, saying that if his father had followed the scribe Su's predictions, he would not be there. Han Jian, [his wise minister] at his side, said to him: "The turtle creates images, the yarrow generates numbers. Things must take form before images can reveal themselves. In the process of their revelation, the images cause a proliferation from

[44] These accounts in "flashback" style are generally identifiable by the presence of the word *chu* 初 ("previously") placed at the beginning. On this figure of style typical of the *Zuozhuan*, see Schaberg, "Foundations," pp. 500–02.

[45] The formulation of the *Zuozhuan* designates the sixth line (upper line) of hexagram Guimei 歸妹 (#54). The verse quoted by the scribe is a free adaptation of this oracle.

[46] The interpretation of the scribe is based here on the oracle of the sixth line of hexagram Kui 睽 (#38) and not anymore on that of hexagram Guimei. The predictions of the scribe continued up to the death of the nephew (Zi Yu) nine years later; on all these events, see Xi 15 (battle of Han) to Xi 24 (assassination of Zi Yu).

> which the numbers are born. The mistakes of your late father were not produced by the numbers of the yarrow! Followed or not, the prediction of Scribe Su would have changed nothing."[47]

The following account is one of the three cases of predictions by the *Changes of Zhou* without the casting of yarrow. They are grouped over a period of fifty years (603–545), between the end of period 1 and the beginning of period 2.[48] Their composition is quite similar. The story starts with the announcement of a prediction based on the observation of the behavior of the person involved. The author of the prediction then quotes an oracle from the classic, so as to corroborate his premonition and provide additional details of the events to come as they are actually described later in the narrative. It is almost as though it would suffice to replace the beginning of the account translated below with the phrase, "Upon his return from Chu, You Ji cast the yarrow using the *Changes of Zhou* concerning the person of the king and obtained…" to find again the typical form of the yarrow stalk divinations (see E-6 above). This would, however, have the effect of eliminating the specificity of these non-divinatory consultations, in which the predictive power traditionally associated with the yarrow casting technique is transposed onto the person of the counselor and his personal qualities of wisdom and prescience:

> [E-7] Upon his return [from Chu], You Ji of Zheng made his report to Zi Zhan. He informed him of the situation and confided to him: "The king of Chu will die soon! He governs without virtue and debauches and bribes the princes to satisfy his own ambitions. Assuredly, his days are numbered. One finds in the *Changes of Zhou*, at hexagram Yi's line in the Fu hexagram, the following oracle 'Blind return, bad fortune.'[49] Doesn't this apply to the king of Chu! He relates everything to himself and abandons the principles of good government. To return without knowing where to go, this is called a blind return. How can he escape from misfortune! If our prince decides to go to Chu, he will return only after attending the funeral of the king, thus satisfying the wish of Chu for the better good of his subjects."[50]

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[47] Xi 15.4a (645); tr. based on Legge, *Tso chuen*, p. 169.

[48] Xuan 6.6, Xuan 12.2, and Xiang 28.8; see Table 1.

[49] The formulation refers here to the beginning of the oracle in the sixth line of hexagram Fu 復 (#24).

[50] Xiang 28.8 (545); tr. based on Legge, *Tso chuen*, p. 541. For the translations and analyses of the other two accounts of prediction without reading the yarrow, see Smith, "*Zhouyi* interpretation."

The three cases of recourse to the *Changes of Zhou* in a non-predictive context are grouped in period 2 under the reign of prince Zhao (541–510 BC)—a fact which confirms the impression that usage of the classic is gradually slipping out of the domain of the divinatory arts.[51] The example below shows a doctor questioned about the sense of the word "bewitchment" *gu* 蠱. He begins by an etiological definition ("a sickness caused by vice and debauchery"), moves on to an explanation of the term by analysis of its graphic components, and finishes with a gloss of the hexagram Gu in the classic:

> [E-8] The prince of Qin sent doctor He to auscultate [the prince of Jin]. Arriving at the patient's bedside, the doctor said: "Your sickness is without cure. I would say that it is the result of an excessive frequentation of women. The illnesses caused by women are like bewitchments. Neither evil spirits nor diet is involved here. Your spirit is altered only by the effect of your deliriums"...The doctor retired and reported his interview to Zhao Yang [minister of Jin]...Zhao Yang questioned the doctor on the meaning of the word "bewitchment" and obtained the following answer: "'Bewitchment' is a sickness provoked by vice and debauchery. The written form of the word *gu* 蠱 'bewitchment' represents a swarm of insects (虫) above a bowl of food (皿), just as the vermin who escape from a dish of spoiled cereals are also called *gu*. In the *Changes of Zhou*, the hexagram entitled Bewitchment (Gu) has images of the wind which topples the mountain and of a man lost because of a woman."[52]

Oneiromancy

Accounts of dreams appear only in the middle of period 1, with a strong concentration under the reign of princes Cheng (7 cases) and Zhao (10 cases). The dreamers hardly differ from the consultants of turtle and yarrow, except that there are more women among them.[53] The

[51] Zhao 1.12, 29.4, and 32.4. Does the fact that the first prediction without the use of yarrow is placed in 603 (Xiang 6) and the first use of the oracles in a non-predictive context in 541 (Zhao 1) correspond to a kind of reality as Smith maintains in his 1989 article? Taking into account the uncertainties which weigh on the authenticity of the accounts of predictions in the *Zuozhuan*, all that can be said is that the three uses of the *Changes of Zhou* already coexisted in the period when the accounts which record them were integrated into the narrative, that is, in the 4th century BC.

[52] Zhao 1.12 (541); tr. based on Legge, *Tso chuen*, pp. 580–81. The doctor's note is inspired by the fact that hexagram Gu 蠱 (#18) includes, in its lower part, the trigram Xun associated with the wind and the oldest daughter and, in its upper part the trigram Gen, symbol of the mountain and the youngest son.

[53] Xuan 3.6, Zhao 1.12, and Zhao 11.4. For an exhaustive study of dreams in the *Zuozhuan*, see Xiong Daolin, *Xian Qin meng wenhua tanwei* (Taibei, 2004), pp. 207–321; see

interpretations never show the involvement of any official or professional oneiromancers. The diviners and scribes themselves are almost absent, unless there are dreams to be interpreted by turtle or yarrow. New arrivals in the person of shamans (*wu* 巫) invest the narrative with a magical, supernatural atmosphere.[54] The images which appear to the dreamer are suggestive in this respect: his brain is sucked; a yellow bear comes into his room, its mouth full of precious stones; he shoots an arrow at the moon, transforms himself into a bird, or watches macabre dances of nude, hairy men. More evocative still are the dreams in which a divinity, an ancestor or a ghost speaks directly to the dreamer, threatening him with all manner of harm and demanding he make offerings to them in exchange for some kind of favor. The action often takes place near an altar or in the ancestral temples.[55] Even if all the dreams are not of this kind (some of them refer to a simple scene from daily life), their imaginative universe is one strongly anchored in the religious practices and beliefs of the period.

The dream generally occurs when the dreamer is in a critical situation: a battle is about to begin or a marriage has been contracted; a conflict of succession comes up or illness has struck. Some belong to the category of premonitory dreams, and in almost every case, predictions of death are made. Others are rather prescriptive in the sense that they incite the dreamer to make a decision or to accomplish a given action. Others still have the primary purpose of praising or criticizing a person, while bringing a touch of irony to the narrative. The dream images, whether clear or obscure, seem most of the time to have a self-evident meaning. The interpretations are quite rare, short, and rarely raise a contradictory debate. Dreamers hesitated, moreover, to communicate their dreams, for fear of seeing them come true.[56]

The examples which follow are part of the dream cycle of Prince Jing of Jin (r. 599–581), who died in a derisory manner in the latrines of his palace. As it concerned so eminent a personage—the head of a powerful

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also Li Wai-yee, "Dreams of interpretation in early Chinese historical and philosophical writings," in *Dream cultures: explorations in the comparative history of dreaming*, eds David Schulman and Guy G. Stromsa (Oxford, 1999), pp. 17–42.

[54] On dreams interpreted by shamans, see Cheng 10.4a, Xiang 18.3, and E-9 below.

[55] The dreams in which divinities or ancestors appear account for about half the total (15 out of 26). On the ancestral temples, see Zhao 11.4 and 25.8. On other religious sites, see Ai 7.5 and 17.5.

[56] See Cheng 17.8.

state—the tragic side of the incident surely did not go unnoticed at the time. Whatever the case, the three colorful dreams which accompany the narrative contribute not only to accentuating the exceptional nature of the event, but also furnish elements explaining how such a terrible thing could happen. The first dream, reinforced by the shaman's interpretation, teaches us that the prince had been subject to a curse on the part of the ancestor of two counselors he had had executed two years previously.[57] It also shows that the prince had, on this score, a rather heavy hand, since the shaman, whose prediction would nevertheless come true, underwent the same fate in the following months. The second dream happens in an atmosphere of magical medicine, an example of which we have seen above (see E-5). It shows the irreversible character of the prince's illness; at this point, he accepts with resignation and civility the doctor's diagnosis. Finally the last dream adds again to the fatality of the event, since it reveals by means of a third person what is actually happening:

> [E-9] The prince of Jin saw in a dream a ghost whose hair was undone and hanging to the ground. The ghost struck his breast, gesturing and saying: "You have unjustly killed my descendants; the Lord on High has heard my plea!" Saying this, he broke the doors of the palace, then those of the prince's apartments, and entered. Panic stricken, the prince sought refuge in his chamber. While the ghost was trying to get in, the prince awoke. He called for the shaman of Mulberry Field, who confirmed that everything would take place as the dream foretold.[58] "And what will happen?" questioned the prince. The shaman answered: "You will not taste the new wheat."
>
> The prince fell gravely ill. He called for the prince of Qin who sent the doctor Huan to care for him. Before he arrived, the prince saw in a dream the two [spirits with the appearance of] young boys who provoked his illness. One said: "This Huan is a clever doctor, I fear he will harm us. Let us flee!" The other replied: "If we stay camped under his heart just above the diaphragm, what can happen to us?" The doctor arrived, examined the prince, and said: "The illness is incurable! It is there between the heart and the diaphragm. It will be impossible to exorcize (*gong* 攻): the needles cannot touch it nor the remedies reach it; nothing more can be done." "What an excellent doctor!" exclaimed the prince, who let him leave after heaping honors on him.

[57] The account of the death of the two counselors (Zhao Tong and Zhao Kuo) is found in Cheng 8.6.

[58] Mulberry Field (*sangtian* 桑田) is a sacred site in the state of Jin.

> In the sixth month, the prince of Jin wanted to taste the new cereals and asked his steward to get some for him. While the cook was preparing them according to custom, the prince ordered the shaman of Mulberry Field to come, showed him the new cereals, and had him put to death. Then as he prepared to taste the dish, suddenly his stomach swelled. He hurried to the latrines, fell into the pit and died in his turn. The same morning, a palace servant had dreamt that he carried the prince on his back and bore him away to heaven. In the afternoon, he was chosen to carry his master out of the latrines on his back, with the result that he was sacrificed and buried with the prince.[59]

Prodigies and omens

Of the fifteen prodigies which result in predictions in the *Zuozhuan*, half are part of the notations on events reported by the *Chunqiu*, and half come from closely related sources taken up and adapted by the narrator.[60] Just as the premonitory dreams present themselves spontaneously to the sleeper's spirit, the prodigies appear in the natural world in an accidental way and, because of their odd or terrifying character, take on the form of omens invested with predictive power. They may be divided into several categories according to whether they are a climatic disorder (drought, flood, fire, lightning, invasion of insects), a natural catastrophe (earthquake, collapse of a mountain), strange behavior of animals (serpents coming out of a temple, a bird nesting in a unusual place), or anomalies and physical aberrations (a talking stone, a spirit descending from the heavens, sounds of mooing coming from inside a coffin).

Most interpreters of omens are technicians: a diviner, two music masters and, above all, scribes and astrologers. Unlike the specialists of turtle and yarrow, they are designated by name, and some of them are among the most often quoted figures of the *Zuozhuan* in the field of astrology and divination.[61] Their predictions always announce unhappy events such as imminent trouble, the end of a kingdom, the death or exile of a prince. They are formulated in clear language, without much

[59] Cheng 10.4; tr. based on Legge, *Tso chuen*, p. 374.

[60] Of the 50 or so entries of the *Annals* which mention prodigies and natural calamities, 30 are commented on in the *Commentary*, and only eight are the subject of predictions (see Table 1, references underlined).

[61] See Table 2 and below, n. 65.

explanation of the way in which the omen is attached to the predicted event.

The treatment of prodigies in the *Commentary* is often accompanied by reflections on the principles which govern the science of omens. The authors of these discourses attempt to reconcile natural explanations with the tradition which holds prodigies to be in resonance with the course of events and to appear in response to human and social disorders:

> In the heavens, the perturbations of a seasonal cycle provoke natural disasters (*zai* 災). On earth, the confusion of men and things causes prodigies (*yao* 妖). Among men, perversion of the moral senses gives birth to disorder. When disorder sets in, natural disasters and prodigies appear.[62]

In the following story, the prince of Lu wonders about the existence of omens. The counselor's answer is ambiguous to say the least, since he defines them as the projections of unconscious desires onto the external world, while preserving for the prodigies which give rise to them their predictive value as symptoms revealing the misconduct of men:

> [E-10] Previously, two serpents were seen fighting at the southern gate of the Zheng capital, one coming from inside and the other from outside. The serpent from the inside was killed. Six years went by and Prince Li [of Zheng] returned home [from exile]. [Having learned this], the prince of Lu asked his counselor Shen Xu: "Do omens exist after all?" He heard the reply: "When someone fears something, his vital force heats up and affects his surroundings. It is men who cause omens to appear. If a person has committed no fault, they will not appear of their own. Inversely, they will come if a person's conduct departs from established rules of proper conduct. It is in this sense that the omens exist."[63]

The equivocal character of these speeches is even more evident in the account of the predictions made by Scribe Shu Xing concerning two connected prodigies noted in the *Chunqiu*. The text begins with a remark by the narrator, who gives a naturalistic interpretation of both phenomena. The prince of Song, however, considers them to be omens of events to come and wonders about their significance. In his reply, the scribe makes three predictions one after the other, which reveal themselves exactly as

[62] Xuan 15.3.

[63] Zhuang 14.2; tr. based on Legge, *Tso chuen*, p. 92. On Shen Xu, see also Zhao 17.5 (astrological prediction).

predicted, the last of which concerns the prince directly. The reader must wait till the end of the account to learn that the scribe had in fact the same opinion as the narrator, but rather than show a skepticism which could have been interpreted as a mark of impiety, he preferred not to go against the prince's convictions and instead used the talents suited to his status as royal scribe. The exactitude of his predictions is not at any time in doubt and the interest of the account resides precisely in the manner in which the figures of naturalist, skeptic and diviner are reunited in the same character:

> [E-11] In the springtime, five stones fell from heaven onto the state of Song and six herons flew backwards across the capital. In the first case, it was actually a rain of stars, and in the other, an illusion produced by the wind. Prince Xiang questioned Shu Xing, an inner scribe of the king of Zhou who was visiting Song, on the significance of these prodigies and on whether they were omens of good or bad fortune. The scribe answered: "This year there will be grand funerals in Lu and next year revolts will break out in Qi. You yourself, my lord, will soon try to exert your power over the princes of neighboring countries, but you will not be able to do so." He retired and declared to his entourage: "The prince's question was badly put. These prodigies are caused by natural changes of *yin* and *yang*. In no way are they omens of good or bad fortune. These depend upon men themselves. As the prince posed his question badly, I didn't dare to contradict him."[64]

Astrology and the calendar

Interestingly enough, astrological predictions are almost absent from period 1, with a remarkable concentration in the reign of Prince Zhao (12 out of 19). Their authors, resembling in this the interpreters of prodigies, are above all scribes and astrologists. The most famous, such as Pi Zao 裨竈 of Zheng (4 cases), Zi Shen 梓慎 of Lu (5 cases) and Cai Mo 蔡墨 of Jin (5 cases) alone account for three-fourths of the predictions.[65] The celestial phenomena involved in the accounts can be reduced to three types. The first is solar eclipses, which were considered particularly unfavorable and dangerous events. They take up a considerable place

[64] Xi 16.1; tr. based on Legge, *Tso chuen*, p. 171.

[65] See Table 2. These three astrologers, contemporaries of Confucius, are also credited with interpretations of prodigies. Only one astrological prediction is attributed to a diviner (*bu*), the celebrated Guo Yan (see below). For a study of all astrological material in the *Commentary*, see Shiode Tadashi, "Saden no sensei kiji ni tsuite," *Tôhô shûkyô* 66 (1985), 67–86.

in the *Chunqiu* with 37 entries. The *Zuozhuan* comments very little on these entries, and accounts of a predictive nature are rarer still (only 3 cases).[66] The example below portrays a dialogue between a prince and his counselor concerning an eclipse. At a certain point, the latter formulates predictions of death concerning two people who will effectively die during the year. Following these unfortunate events, the two men meet again and continue their conversation. The prince is astounded by the accuracy of the counselor's predictions, but the counselor questions the efficacy of astrology and credits his success to chance, invoking the irregularity of celestial movements, the uncertainty of the course of events, and the inconstancy of human decisions:

> [E-12] The prince of Jin asked [his wise counselor] Shi Wenbo: "Who will suffer because of this eclipse?" The counselor replied: "Its evil effects will be felt first by the state of Wei, then, in lesser measure, by that of Lu." "Why?" asked the prince. "The eclipse started over the territory of Wu and then, leaving it, entered that of Lu," continued Wenbo. "Misfortune will strike first at Wei, surely at the prince himself, and then it will spread naturally to Lu, where it may affect the minister"…
>
> [The predicted events having taken place], the prince confided to Wenbo: "Everything announced in your reply to my question has come true. Could it always be so?" The counselor replied: "No! Celestial phenomena vary unceasingly, the intentions of men are unequal, the chain of events is never regular, and the conduct of government does not follow unchanging rules. From the same beginning follow different ends. How can that which was true once be always true!"[67]

Then come the risings and settings of the star of Fire (*huo* 火, Antares), which in the ancient calendars marked the start and end of work in the fields from spring till the end of summer.[68] Five cases are mentioned, often along with other observations. In the following example, the narrator reports the predictions of an astrologer concerning the large fires which that year ravaged the country to the southwest of Lu where he worked. The impersonal tone of the account gives a good sense of the activities of observation of the stars and examination of the direction of the winds which accompanied the formulation of astrological predictions:

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[66] The authenticity of the entries concerning the eclipses in the *Chunqiu* is still largely debated today. See Zhang Peiyu, "'Chunqiu', 'Shijing' rishi he youguan wenti," *Zhongguo tianwenxue shi wenji* 3 (1984), 1–23.

[67] Zhao 7.4 and 7.14; tr. based on Legge, *Tso chuen*, pp. 617 and 619.

[68] On the rising and setting of Antares, see Léopold de Saussure, *Les origines de l'astronomie chinoise* (Paris, 1930), pp. 375–81.

[E-13] In the fifth month [spring equinox], the Fire star began to appear in the evening and, on the 13th day of the [sexagenary] cycle, the wind rose. Zi Shen, [astrologer of the state of Lu], said: "This wind is the warm wind of the northeast, which coincides with the beginning of the Fire. It may be that fires will start in seven days!" On the 15th day of the cycle, the wind became stronger and was transformed into a tempest on the 19th day. Fires broke out in the states of Song, Wei, Chen, and Zheng. The astrologer climbed to the top of the ancestral granary of the Dating lineage to watch from afar and said: "The fires should strike Song, Wei, Chen and Zheng." A few days later, emissaries from these four states arrived in Lu to announce the disasters.[69]

Finally there are the predictions founded on the twelve-year Jupiter cycle. The seven accounts which mention them are grouped remarkably in the short period from 545 (Xiang 28) to 531 (Zhao 11).[70] The narrator's attention is focused on the return of correlated events each time the planet comes back to occupy the same position within the twelve Jupiter mansions. In the following example, which takes place in 531, the prediction of the assassination of the prince of Cai is based explicitly on the fact that he himself killed his father twelve years before (in 543). Although the narrator does not mention it explicitly, this is also true of the second prediction since the king of Chu, who will die two years later (in 529), had had his predecessor assassinated while Jupiter was in the same mansion (in 541):[71]

[E-14] The king of Zhou asked [his astrologer] Chang Hong 萇弘: "Among today's princes, who will have good or ill fortune?" He obtained the following reply: "Ill fortune will strike the prince of Cai. Jupiter is stationed now in the Shiwei mansion which is that of the year [12 years ago] when the present prince, Ban, had the preceding prince killed. Before the cycle is finished, Chu will take possession of Cai and will reach the height of its iniquities. [In two years], when Jupiter crosses the Daliang mansion, Cai will get back his land and Chu, in its turn, will know misfortune."[72]

The weak technical nature of the astrological predictions in the *Zuozhuan* is due no doubt to the deliberate will of the narrator not to complicate

[69] Zhao 18.3; tr. based on Legge, *Tso chuen*, p. 671.
[70] It is generally admitted that the Jovian computation of the *Commentary* corresponds to observations made at the end of the 4th century BC; see de Saussure, *Les origines*, pp. 315–42, and Shiode, "Saden no sensei," pp. 76–80.
[71] See Xiang 30 (543) for the assassination of the prince of Cai, Zhao 1 (541) for the murder of the pretender to the throne of Chu, and Zhao 13 (529) for the death of King Ling of Chu.
[72] Zhao 11.2; tr. based on Legge, *Tso chuen*, p. 633.

the accounts uselessly, his main interest being, as for the other forms of divination, to emphasize the content of the predictions rather than the process used to obtain them. Nevertheless, other accounts report discussions in which the technical and religious aspects of astrology are covered in more detail. Calendrical art is also the subject of numerous remarks and digressions. Their aim is generally to indicate errors of calculation, as when Confucius, having observed that Antares was still visible in the first month of winter, criticized Lu calendarists for having allowed the astronomical year to become separate from the civil calendar.[73] Divinatory uses of the calendar are, however, very rarely present in the *Commentary*. There are a few mentions of lucky or unlucky days, as well as interdictions and seasonal prescriptions concerning all sorts of activities, but hemerological theories and practices very seldom give rise to narratives that include demonstrations or conflicting debates.[74]

Other forms of divination

Other forms of divination do appear in the accounts; most of the time as a complement to the methods already mentioned. They are rare, however, and half of them concern cases of glyphomancy in which a sign written on the hand of a newborn child is interpreted. There are also cases of divination by music and two others by the study of facial features.[75] The art of predicting the destiny of people by examining their physical traits gained in importance under the early empires, so the first instances mentioned in the *Commentary* are not uninteresting. In the example below, a royal scribe, known also for his talents as astrologer, is asked to examine the children of a high dignitary of Lu. His predictions come true in the years to follow when the first son (Gu) succeeds his father and the second (Nuo) takes charge of his funeral:

> [E-15] Shu Fu, royal scribe of Zhou, had come to Lu to attend the funeral of the prince. Gongsun Ao, [a high official of Lu], learned that he excelled in physiognomony (*neng xiangren* 能相人) and presented to him his two

[73] Ai 12.5. For other entries on calendrical calculations, see Xiang 27.10, Wen 1.1 and 6.9, Zhao 17.5 and 21.5.

[74] See Huan 17.7, Zhuang 16.3, 29.4, Xi 20.1, Cheng 16.5, Zhao 9.5, 17.5, 31.6, and Ai 9.6. On hemerology in the *Zuozhuan*, see Liu Ying, Zuozhuan, Guoyu *fangshu yanjiu* (Beijing, 2006), pp. 206–22.

[75] For glyphomancy, see Yin 1.0, Min 1.5, 2.4, and Zhao 1.12; for music, Xiang 18.4.

> sons Gu and Nuo. The scribe said: "Gu will nourish you, Nuo will bury you. Guo's face is round and plump, he will certainly ensure the posterity of your lineage in the state of Lu."[76]

Synthesis

The mantic arts, as they are *mis en scène* in the *Commentary*, may be divided into three categories. First there are the techniques of turtle and yarrow in which the augural signs (cracks and hexagrams) are produced by voluntary action. The divinations concern a large variety of subjects determined by the immediate preoccupations of the consultants and characterized by a routine form of practice firmly anchored in the customs of the period. This is above all true of the pyromantic consultations, with regard to their number as well as the relative anonymity of the diviners involved. As for the yarrow method, it tended to free itself from the context of official divination to be carried out in an independent manner by non-diviners. The diversification of the uses of the *Changes*, divinatory and non-divinatory, accentuates still further the specific character of the treatment reserved for the classic in the *Zuozhuan*. There is here a striking contrast with the turtle method, for which the title of no text is mentioned.[77]

Second are the techniques for interpreting signs which manifest themselves spontaneously in the physical or heavenly world in the form of disasters, prodigies, and unusual astronomical phenomena. Because of their aberrant and catastrophic nature, these signs were perceived as omens provoked by human disorders. "Determining the event" predicted by an omen was in some sense equivalent to "discovering the cause" of the omen's appearance. Omenological predictions— which were different from consultations by the turtle or yarrow—almost always concerned the death of a person or the decline of a state. The interpretation of omens in the *Commentary* appears as a domain reserved for a small number of scribe-astrologers clearly identified by name, whose activities were concentrated within a relatively short period.

The third category is that of dreams, whose interpretation also concerns signs which appear spontaneously, albeit in the mind of a sleep-

[76] Wen 1.1; tr. based on Legge, *Tso chuen*, p. 229. For the verifications, see Wen 14.

[77] A manual of divination by turtle is included in *Shiji* 128; see Shaughnessy, "The composition," pp. 64–5, and Léon Vandermeersch, "De la tortue à l'achillée," pp. 31–6.

ing person. Premonitions, incitations, and oneiric images are always linked to the dreamer and his destiny or that of his entourage, as well as to events which will, in one way or another, affect him. There are no prophetic dreams unrelated to the dreamer in the *Commentary*. The interpretation of dreams, quite rare on the whole, is never done by specialists, except when a *wu*-shaman is involved. It also happens that a diviner or a scribe is solicited to clarify the sense of a dream by consultation with turtle or yarrow.[78]

Several features common to the three categories may be observed. First, they are profoundly technical in character. There is no place for pompous imprecatory predictions from inspired prophets: the interpretations always rely on sign analysis and deductive reasoning. The most daring—those where the predictive inspiration of the interpreters is given full rein—at most take the form of what one could call a "reasonable trance". The shamans themselves, when explaining dreams, speak the same language as the scribes and diviners. The principal function of the divinatory arts is to predict the future, whether it be near, as in predictions concerning a decision to be taken regarding a litigious situation, or far, as in predictions concerning the destiny of a person or a state. This predictive dimension serves the narrator mainly for the narrative effects which can be introduced into the account of events, but also for the portrayal of conversations and debates in which the protagonists themselves question the utility of divination. Finally, the "public" of the mantic arts is restricted to the ruling elites. Here, too, the interest of the narrator lies in the social effects of divination, the reactions of the consultants who follow or contest the predictions, hesitate, or show wisdom or impiety. With rare exceptions, we know nothing of what went on in the offices of the diviners and astrologers or in the ancestral temples and observation towers.

Nonetheless, the *Commentary* affords us an appreciable amount of information about the status and activities of the specialists in the divinatory arts. Curiously, the official diviners in charge of turtle and yarrow are far from being the most numerous. The majority of diviners are anonymous and, of the half dozen mentioned by name, there is only one for period 2 (see Table 2). Some of them seem to have become known far beyond their attributions as official diviners. This is the case of Guo Yan 郭偃 (fl. 661–628 BC), a famous diviner of the state of Jin who

[78] See, for example, Ai 17.5.

appears in seven accounts but only once for a pyromantic consultation. He is seen elsewhere practicing astrology, interpreting omens and, above all, giving advice on the affairs of the state to the prince of Jin. One 3rd century BC thinker classes him among the wise counselors of the Spring and Autumn period without even mentioning his divinatory talents.[79] Other accounts show that some diviners enjoyed a status comparable to high officials. The function was hereditary, and it happened that a father and his son officiated together during the same consultation. In one account the prince of Teng, during a quarrel with another prince of the same rank over relative position, finally won the argument when he claimed to be descended from a line of diviners which went back to the Western Zhou.[80]

The place afforded to the scribes is clearly more pre-eminent. They are present in both period 1 for the casting of yarrow and interpretations of omens, and period 2, where their number has increased with the multiplication of astrological predictions (see Table 2). Five of them are scribes attached to the court of the Eastern Zhou; others figure among the most outstanding personages of the *Commentary.* For example, the scribe Cai Mo of the state of Jin (fl. 513–475 BC), to whom are attributed a consultation of the turtle and two astrological predictions, appears also as a scholar of renown. His speeches are often the occasion of a vast display of knowledge of both astronomy and annalistic as well as ritual traditions. He is also involved in political debates. In one account, his opinions are considered on a par with the judgments of Confucius, and his clairvoyance earns him the privilege of being called a gentleman (*junzi* 君子).[81] It is hard to say whether the scribal supremacy in the divinatory arts that began in period 2—when the diviners tend to disappear as influential personages from the accounts—corresponds to an actual situation of conflict between the specialists in astrology and omens and those of turtle and yarrow. The bias of the narrator in

[79] See Table 2. For the judgment of the philosopher (Han Fei 韓非, 280–233), see *Han Feizi*, chapter "Nanmian 南面"; see Jean Levi, *Han-Fei-tse ou le Tao du prince* (Paris, 1999), pp. 171–2.

[80] See Yin 11.1. On the transmission of the post of diviner, see the accounts concerning Guan Cong 觀從, who we know was head of the diviners (*buyin* 卜尹) of the kingdom of Chu in 529 BC (Zhao 13.2) and Guan Zhan 觀瞻, probably a member of his clan, who is the author of a prediction in 482 BC (Ai 18.2). Some diviners also possessed land (Min 2.3) and participated in court intrigues (Ai 16.6).

[81] Ai 20.3. For the other occurrences, see Table 2 and Zhao 29.4–5.

Table 2. Diviners, scribes and astrologers: authors of prognostications and predictions.

scribes and diviners quoted	turtle	yarrow	dreams	omens	astrology
		period 1			
scribe of Zhou 周史		zhuang22.1			
Guo 過 (scribe of Zhou)				zhuang32.3	
Chu Qiu 楚丘 father (Lu diviner)	min2.4				
Guo Yan 郭偃 (Jin diviner)	xi25.2	min2.4		xi14.3, 32.3	xi5.8
Tufu 徒父 (Qin diviner)		xi15.4a			
Su 蘇 (scribe of Jin)		xi15.4d			
Shu Xing 叔興 (scribe of Zhou)				xi16.1	
Zhaofu 趙父 (Liang diviner)	xi17.2				
Shu Fu 叔服 (scribe of Zhou)					wen14.7
		period 2			
Zi Shen 梓慎 (Lu astrologer)			zhao7.3	xiang28.1	xiang28.1, zhao17.5, 18.3, 20.1, 24.4
Pi Zao 裨灶 (Zheng astrologer)				zhao9.4	xiang28.8, 30.10 zhao9.4, 10.1
Kuang 曠 (Jin music master)				zhao8.1	
Zhao 趙 (scribe of Jin)	ai9.6				zhao8.6
Chu Qiu 楚丘 son (Lu diviner)		zhao5.1			
Chao 朝 (scribe of Wei)		zhao7.15			
Cai Mo 蔡墨 (scribe of Jin)	ai9.6		zhao31.6		zhao31.6, 32.2
Chang Hong 萇弘 (Zhou astrologer)				zhao23.6	zhao11.2
Ji 己 (Lu music master)				zhao25.4	
grand scribe of Zhou 周大史					ai6.4
Gui 龜 (scribe of Jin)	ai9.6				

favor of the former seems unquestionable insofar as the *Commentary* was compiled on the basis of annalistic sources written by the scribes themselves. Moreover, their role in the *Commentary* is not limited to divination: numerous accounts portray their functions as compilers of administrative and historiographic acts and as specialists of royal and princely genealogies. The writings and speeches of Yi 佚—a legendary scribe believed to have lived in the 11th century BC—are cited several times as models of wisdom and political discernment.[82]

The situation is made more complicated by the presence of the group of wise counselors and political advisers whose repeated interventions in the accounts of technical divinations give the narrative a strong critical perspective. On one hand, they rival in knowledge with the scribes and diviners, participating themselves in the divinatory consultations and formulating predictions and interpretations with a rhetoric similar to that of their rivals. When a conflict is apparent between a diviner and a counselor, preference always goes to the latter. Moreover, the diversity of the uses of yarrow and of the oracles in the *Changes of Zhou* reinforces the idea that the practice of the divinatory arts was not limited to specialists performing in an official setting. This appropriation of divination by worthy counselors is all the more evident as most of the speeches attributed to them in the *Zuozhuan* are composed in an oracular style which anticipates the events to come without any recourse to a particular technique. The authors of these "predictive discourses" appear as gifted with innate foreknowledge, and they provide the narrator with an indirect but effective weapon for criticizing traditional forms of technical divination.[83]

It is, indeed, the counselors who openly attack the divinatory arts. They defend the idea that the course of events, however contingent it may be, depends in an almost deterministic way on the good or bad

[82] See Wen 15.4, Xi 15.4, Xuan 12.3 and Cheng 4.4.

[83] Concerning the "predictive discourses" in the *Zuozhuan*, see Marc Kalinowski, "La rhétorique oraculaire," and Jean Levi, "Pratiques divinatoires, conjectures et critiques rationalistes à l'époque des Royaumes combattants," *Extrême-Orient Extrême-Occident* 21 (1999), 67–77. This faculty of foreknowledge is not presented in the texts as coming from some sort of intuition or divine inspiration, but from careful observation of human behavior and moral standards. In this sense, the criticism introduced by the speeches of the counselors shows a tendency towards a rationalized practice of divination. Claudia Moatti, *La raison de Rome. Naissance de l'esprit critique à la fin de la République* (Paris, 1997), p. 178, notes similar developments in Rome at the end of the Republic: "What is at work in the distinction between divination and religion, is in fact the work of Reason over tradition."

tendencies of men and that excessive use of oracles is rather an obstacle than an aid to decision taking: "One consults the turtle to do away with doubt, why then consult it when there is no room for doubt!"[84] Against the techniques of the scribes and diviners, the counselors prone a form of intelligence which consists in seeing the premises of future change in present situations. Their arguments are marked by Confucian humanism, and the political idea they defend is that of the enlightened ruler concerned with public welfare, who "does not indulge in excessive consultation of turtle and yarrow."[85]

The archaeological materials

The excavations carried out in China over the last fifty years have led to the discovery, in tombs dating from the 5th century BC to the 1st century AD, of texts written on silk, or more commonly, on thin strips of bamboo tied together to form scrolls. Among these findings made up of funerary documents, personal archives, and technical and literary writings, divinatory manuscripts occupy a privileged place. Their importance is all the more salient in that there is nothing comparable in the transmitted texts. For the period of the Warring States, apart from the collections concerning the reign of King Zheng of Qin (r. 246–210) before he became First Emperor in 221 BC, the others come principally from tombs closed in the 4th century, at about the same time as the *Zuozhuan* was being compiled.[86] These tombs have the peculiarity of being situated on the territory of the powerful southern kingdom of Chu, which then occupied the regions of the middle course of the Yangzi and, further north, the basin of the Huai River.[87] The manuscripts, fewer in number than those we have for the Qin and Han, may be divided into two groups comprising, on the one hand, texts on the turtle and yarrow methods and, on the other, texts concerning hemerological practices and the calendar.

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[84] Huan 11.2.

[85] Ai 18.2.

[86] For a presentation of the manuscript collections, see Marc Kalinowski, "Bibliothèques et archives funéraires de la Chine ancienne," *Comptes rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions et des Belles-Lettres (séances de avril–juin 2003)* (Paris, 2003), 889–927. For a description and classification of the divinatory and astrological manuscripts, see Liu Lexian, *Jianbo shushu wenxian tanlun* (Wuhan, 2003), pp. 3–52.

[87] On the funerary context of the Chu tombs with manuscripts, see Falkenhausen 2003.

The divinatory and sacrificial records of Chu

These documents consist of records of divination by turtle and yarrow stalks carried out by professional diviners and priests for members of the aristocracy of the kingdom of Chu. Insofar as most requests for an oracle concern the illnesses from which the tomb occupants suffered in the months preceding their death, we may say these texts are closely related to the funerary customs of the times. It is generally admitted that the records were buried for religious reasons having to do with the ancestral cult and beliefs in an afterlife. Written in the stereotyped style similar to that of the other administrative archives found in the same tombs, they also show that the recording of oracular consultations took place in the framework of the current practice of committing to writing every act of the high officials of the kingdom in the performance of their deeds.

At present we have half a dozen such records covering a period from 377 to 316 BC. The majority come from tombs located in the immediate vicinity of Ying 郢, which was then the capital of the kings of Chu (located near present-day Jiangling in Hubei).[88] The recent discovery of the Geling records 葛陵 (Henan) in a tomb situated 200 km northeast of Ying, about 100 km from Chu's northern border, proves that the practices they describe were not limited to the immediate vicinity of the capital but were also current in the provinces and territories annexed by the kings of Chu when they rose to power at the end of the Spring and Autumn period.[89]

The records present no significant change of style and content between the beginning and the end of the 4th century, which suggests that the

[88] Three collections are presently available: (1) manuscripts of Geling 葛陵 (tomb n° 1, ca. 377; orig. and transcr. in *Xincai Geling Chumu*, Zhengzhou, 2003); (2) manuscripts of Wangshan 望山 (tomb n° 1, 320–310; orig. and transcr. in *Wangshan Chujian*, Beijing,1995); (3) manuscripts of Baoshan 包山 (tomb n° 2, 316; orig. and transcr. in *Baoshan Chumu*, Beijing, 1991). A fourth collection is partially available in transcription, the manuscripts of Tianxingguan 天星觀 (tomb n° 1, 339); see "Jiangling Tianxingguan yihao mu," *Kaogu xuebao* 1982.1, 71–116; and Yan Changgui, "Tianxingguan 'bushi daoci' jian shiwen jijiao," *Chudi jianbo wenxian sixiang yanjiu* 2 (Wuhan, 2005), pp. 265–98. The reports mention three other tombs in the Qinjiazui cemetery 秦家嘴 (n° 1, 13 and 99), likewise dated to the year 300 or a little later and containing divinatory records of the same kind; see Huang Xiquan, *Hubei chutu Shang Zhou wenzi jizheng* (Wuchang, 1992), pp. 163–4.

[89] The site of Geling is found in the territory of the ancient principality of Cai 蔡, destroyed and annexed to the kingdom of Chu in 447 BC. The owner of tomb n° 1 (Cheng, prince of Pingye 平夜君), who died in 377, was a member of the Chu aristocracy. See Chen Wei, "Geling Chujian suojian de bushi yu daoci," *Chutu wenxian yanjiu* 6 (2004), pp. 34–42.

traditions they recorded were firmly established. The poor state of conservation of the manuscripts and the problems raised by the transcription and interpretation of the texts does not facilitate our understanding of the place occupied by the beliefs and ritual procedures involved in the consultation of the turtle and yarrow in the cultural context of the period. In this respect, the collection of 54 bamboo strips excavated from the Baoshan 包山 cemetery (about 15 km north of the Chu capital) is the most interesting, for it is the only one which has been restored with a good degree of certainty to its original state.[90]

Shao Tuo 邵陀, the tomb occupant, was a member of the royal lineage. He was "minister of the left" (*zuoyin* 左尹) and, according to the other documents buried with him, his role was that of a high magistrate in charge of penal affairs. He died in his forties, in the spring of 316 BC. The records may be subdivided into 26 reports: four of them note the execution of sacrifices to the ancestors of Shao Tuo according to the diviners' proposals; the rest are accounts of divination by turtle and yarrow. The dates mentioned in the preface of each report allow us to group them into six sets of "consultations" made the same day and covering a period of three consecutive years. During these consultations, the diviners, whose number varied from one to five, had to prognosticate on the same topic (charge), which concerned either the activities of the consultant for the year to come, or the evolution of his illness (see Table 3).[91]

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[90] The strips are numbered from 197 to 250 (*Baoshan Chumu*, pp. 364–9). In what follows, I rely on the revised transcription of Chen Wei, *Baoshan Chujian chutan* (Wuhan, 1996), pp. 231–8. For a translation and analysis of the Baoshan records, see Constance Cook, *Death in ancient China. The tale of one man's journey* (Leiden, 2006), pp. 79–118 and 153–210. On the cultural context of the Baoshan tomb, see Lai Guolong, "The Baoshan tomb: religious transitions in art, ritual, and text during the Warring States period (480–221 BCE)," PhD dissertation (Univ. of California, Los Angeles, 2002).

[91] The classification of the consultations in Table 2 does not necessarily correspond to the order in which the strips were grouped and perhaps tied to each other. Many points of uncertainty persist concerning the transcription of the text, the pronunciation of the written forms, and the interpretation of certain technical terms. The organization of the calendar of consultations and the translations of the charges is based on the work done by the Chinese paleographers since the publication of the first transcriptions of the manuscripts in 1991 by Peng Hao and his team; see Li Ling, *Zhongguo fangshuzheng kao* (Beijing, 2006), pp. 215–35; Zeng Xiantong, "Baoshan bushi jian kaoshi (qipian)," in *Di erjie guoji Zhongguo guwenzi yantaohui lunwenji* (Hong Kong, 1993), pp. 405–24; Chen Wei, *Baoshan Chujian chutan*; and Li Jiahao, "Baoshan jidao jian yanjiu," *Jianbo yanjiu* (2001), 25–36. To separate the predictions by turtle from those by yarrow, I have adopted the principle according to which any prediction which does not contain "numerograms" is a prediction by turtle.

Table 3. Calendar of the turtle and yarrow consultations and ritual activities as reconstructed from the Baoshan divinatory and sacrificial reports (316 BC).

—Year 318—

1st consultation, first month (*xingyi* 刑夷), day 32 of the sexagenary cycle (*yiwei* 乙未)

- Charge 1: *From this first month until the first month (of the next year), in his comings and goings in the service of the king, may it be that all through this period he not undergo any harm.*
- 3 divinations: Ku Ji[1] (turtle), Shi Beishang (turtle), Ying Hui (yarrow).

—Year 317—

2nd consultation, second month (*xiayi* 夏夷), day 2 of the cycle (*yichou* 乙丑)

- Charge 2: *In his comings and goings in the service of the king, from this second month until the second month of the next year, may it happen that all through this period he not undergo any harm.*
- 3 divinations: Wu Sheng[1] (yarrow), Ku Ji[2] (turtle), Ke Jia (turtle).

3rd consultation, eighth month (*cuanyue* 爨月), day 46 of the cycle (*jiyou* 己酉) [after 164 days]

- Charge 3: *He is affected by a sickness located under the heart, breathing has become difficult.*
- 2 divinations: Xu Ji[1] (turtle), Ke Guang[1] (turtle).
- Charge 4: *A sickness affects the heart, breathing has become difficult, he is unable to eat, may it be that during this eighth month the sickness not worsen.*
- 2 divinations: Nong Qiang (turtle), Qu Yi (turtle).

A—sacrificial reports, eighth month (*cuanyue* 爨月), day 53 of the cycle (*bingchen* 丙辰) [after 7 days]

- 2 sacrifices carried out (to the consultant's grandfather and a close relative).

B—sacrificial reports, tenth month (*dongxi* 冬夕), day 50 of the cycle (*guichou* 癸丑) [after 57 days]

- 2 sacrifices carried out (to his lineage ancestor and his four direct ascendants).

4th consultation, twelfth month (*yuanxi* 遠夕), day 40 of the cycle (*guimao* 癸卯) [after 50 days]

- Charge 5: *The sickness affects the abdomen, breathing has become difficult, may it be that he not be harmed.*
- 1 divination: Ke Guang[2] (turtle).

Table 3 (*cont.*)

—Year 316—

5th consultation, first month (*xingyi*), day 16 of the cycle (*jimao* 己卯) [after 36 days]

- Charge 6: *In his comings and goings in the service of the king, from this first month till the first month of the next year, may it be that all through this period he not undergo any harm.*
- 5 divinations: Ku Ji[3] (turtle), Chen Yi[1] (yarrow), Guan Beng[1] (turtle), Wu Sheng[2] (yarrow), Xu Ji[4] (turtle).
- Charge 7: *Heart and abdomen are affected, he is unable to breathe, food has become insipid, there has been no improvement for a long time, may it be that his health improve rapidly and the curse cease.*
- 5 divinations: Ku Ji[4] (turtle), Chen Yi[2] (yarrow), Guan Beng[2] (turtle), Wu Sheng[3] (yarrow), Xu Ji[4] (turtle).

6th consultation, second month (*xiayi*), day 36 of the cycle (*jihai* 己亥) [after 20 days]

- Charge 8: *The illness presents intumescences,* (*he*) *cannot breathe, may it still be possible that he not die.*
- 1 divination: Guan Yi (turtle).

* Third month (*xiangyue* 享月), day 24 of the cycle (*dinghai* 丁亥, 20 April 316 BC): funeral of the consultant. [after 48 days]

The form taken by the Chu calendar in the 4th century BC remains uncertain as regards the beginning of the year. The scenario of consultations, as described below, is based on the most widely accepted hypothesis concerning the structure of the Chu calendar. According to this hypothesis, the first month of the year corresponds to the lunar month called *xingyi* 刑夷 in the manuscripts; the second month is called *xiayi* 夏夷, the third *xiangyue* 享月, and so forth.[92] Thus, in the first month of 318, the first consultation took place, with a request of

[92] See, for example, Chen Wei, *Baoshan Chujian chutan*, pp. 1–20, and Li Jiahao, "Baoshan jidao jian," pp. 26–7. According to the other hypothesis, the beginning of the year starts three months earlier (month *dongxi* 冬夕), and the month *xingyi* then becomes the fourth month of the year. The principal—and almost only—defender of this hypothesis is Liu Binhui (see his recent "Chuguo lifa de jianzheng wenti bianzheng," paper presented at the International conference on Chinese paleography and ancient history, Academia Sinica, Taibei, Sept. 22–24, 2006); see also Cook, *Death in ancient China*, p. 92, n. 60. In the chronology proposed here, the three months' gap concerns only the three consultations made in 317 (see the following note).

an oracle for the coming year (charge 1). Three divinations were performed by different diviners, twice by turtle and once by yarrow. The following year, in the second month of 317, another consultation about the year to come took place, following the same procedure as in 318 (charge 2). To this point, there was nothing to suggest Shao Tuo's health was endangered. Events moved more quickly in the eighth month of 317, when a third consultation resulted in four divinations by turtle in response to two different charges, both of them concerning the minister's sickness (charges 3 and 4).[93] Seven days later, a first series of sacrifices was carried out in accord with the proposals formulated by the diviners (sacrificial reports A), followed in the tenth month by other sacrifices which were submitted to divination during the annual consultation of the preceding year (sacrificial reports B). A final consultation took place in the twelfth month, still concerning the patient's state, with only one divination by turtle (charge 5). The year 316 began intensely during the consultation of the first month, with ten divinations concerning two requests: one for the year to come (charge 6), in which five diviners participated (three for the turtle and two for the yarrow), the other regarding the sickness (charge 7), with the same diviners and media. Twenty days later, in the second month, a final consultation took place with only one divination using the turtle. The end of charge 8—"may it still be possible that he not die"—suggests the unfortunate minister's illness had taken an irreversible turn, and he in fact died some forty days later. His funeral took place in the third month, on the 24th day of the sexagenary cycle (20 April 316 by the Julian calendar).[94]

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[93] If we were to adopt the hypothesis of the month *dongxi* as first month of the year, the chronology of the three consultations of 317 would begin with consultation 4 (*yuanxi* 遠夕, third month of Liu Binhui) on the sickness of Shao Tuo, then we would have consultation 2 on the year to come (*xiayi* 夏夷, fifth month of Liu) followed by consultation 3 on Shao's illness (*cuanyue* 爨月, eleventh month of Liu). Now, the course of the annual consultations of 318 and 317 is not only identical, but above all it is different from the annual consultation of 316, which combines the divination requests for the year to come and for illness. This phenomenon seems to indicate that the state of Shao Tuo's health became preoccupying after the annual consultation of 317 and not before, as would be the case in Liu Binhui's hypothesis. The same remark can be made of the sacrificial reports B (month *dongxi,* first month of Liu), which would have been carried out even before the diviner Ku Ji proposed them during the annual consultation of the second month (*xiayi*, fifth month of Liu). See Chen Wei, *Baoshan Chujian chutan*, pp. 6–9.

[94] The strip indicating the day of the death of Shao Tuo (st. 267) was found among a group of strips which give the inventory of the objects placed in the tomb (st. 251–277).

The annual consultations (*suizhen* 歲貞), especially those preceding the appearance of Shao Tuo's illness in the second half of 317, are interesting because they show that divination by turtle and yarrow was a common practice in Chu and that the elite of the country did it at more or less fixed dates: once a year, but also every month (*yuezhen* 月貞), as in the case of the owner of the tomb at Tianxingguan 天星觀.[95] Judging by the reports which have come down to us, the divinatory ritual responded to strict rules. Here is the text reporting on the second divination of the annual consultation of 318, carried out by the diviner Shi Beishang:[96]

> [*Preface*] The year when Bi, lord of Sheng, was dispatched by the state of Song to visit Chu, in the first month, 32nd day of the cycle, Shi Beishang made a divination using the Docile turtle for the minister of the left (Shao) Tuo: [*charge*] "From this first month until the first month (of the next year), in his comings and goings in the service of the king, may it be (*shang* 尚) that all through this period he not undergo any harm." [*First prognostication*] The prognostication was: "Regular auguration, auspicious." [*Initial prediction*] "There are some small worries concerning the person (of the consultant). Moreover, an affair which preoccupies him will take place with a slight delay. Proceed with the rites of supplication adapted to these conjunctures." [*Sacrificial proposals*] Prayer rite *yi* to King Zhao: a sacrificial ox, to offer ritually. Prayer rite *yi* to the illustrious prince of Pingye, to Zi Chun, lord of Wu, to the head of the armies, Zi Yin, and to Zi Jia, lord of Cai: a sacrificial pig to each one, accompanied by wine and food. Prayer rite *yi* to the deceased mother (of the consultant): sacrificial dried meats.[97] If the affair which preoccupies him takes place rapidly, carry out as quickly as possible a rite of thanks. [*Second prognostication*] The prognostication was "Auspicious." [*Final prediction*] "There will be good luck in the third and fourth months."

Although related to the inscriptions on the divinatory media of the Shang, these reports have a much more elaborate narrative structure, with passages in direct style and others which are obviously reported

[95] See Yan Changgui, "Tianxingguan bushi daoci," pp. 270–2.

[96] St. 199–200; transcr. in Chen, *Baoshan Chujian chutan*, p. 231. According to the practice of the Chu scribes, the years are designated by outstanding events. The days are in sexagesimal notation, from day 1 (*jiazi*) to day 60 (*guihai*). There is neither punctuation nor quotation marks in the original text. I have also indicated between brackets and in italics the terms ([*preface*], etc.) which mark the narrative structure of the annual divinations as explained in the following paragraph.

[97] According to all evidence, King Zhao of Chu (r. 515–489) is the lineage ancestor of Shao Tuo, while the four others are his direct ascendants, from his great-great grandfather to his father.

speech (in quotation marks in the above translation).[98] The text begins with a preface in which are noted first the year (here, 318), the month and the day of the divination, and then the names of the officiants, of the instrument used for divining (turtle or yarrow) and, finally, the name of the consultant. Next comes the charge as it was probably pronounced during the augural ceremony. Its codified form is all the more evident as it is found again not only in the three annual consultations of Baoshan (see Table 3), but also in the other collections. One notes the presence of the modal particle *shang*, which we already encountered in the pyromantic charges in the *Commentary*. When the divination is made by yarrow, the author of the report places here the result of the casting in the form of two numerical hexagrams side by side.[99] If not, the report moves directly on to the first prognostication comprising two parts: the prognostication as such, which confirms, using a brief formula ("regular auguration, auspicious," *hengzhen ji* 亨貞吉), that the mantic operation was correctly performed, followed by an initial prediction, of which the content varies from one account to another and has the particularity of being very general and, above all, negative. We see next the sacrificial proposals which make up the longest and most complex part of the accounts. The recommended rites can be sacrifices of animals or food destined, as here, for the direct ancestors of the consultant, or for the mythical heroes of Chu, nature deities and local or domestic

[98] On the links between the records of Chu and the oracular inscriptions of the Shang, see Li Xueqin, "Zhujian buci yu Shang Zhou jiagu," *Zhengzhou daxue xuebao* 1989.2. The narrative structure of the accounts is not always uniform, the proposed analyses may differ from one author to another, but they always include the following basic subdivisions: "preface" (*qianci* 前辭), "charge" (*mingci* 命辭), "prognostication 1" (*di yici zhanci* 第一次占辭), "ritual proposals" (*qidao jierang jianyi* 祈禱解禳建議) and "prognostication 2" (*di erci zhanci* 第二次占辭); see Chen, *Baoshan Chujian chutan*, pp. 156–8; Li Ling, "Formulaic structure of Chu divinatory bamboo slips," *Early China* 15 (1990), 71–86.

[99] For example, the divination by yarrow of the first consultation (st. 201–204) includes here, in two small columns placed under the column of the main text, the result of the draw in the form ⋀⋀⋀ – ⋀⋀ (on the right side) and – – ⋀ – – ⋀ (on the left side). Specialists tend to think that these signs do not represent the numbers 1 (—) and 6 (⋀) as in the numerograms of the Shang and Zhou, but the symbols of the six *yang* (—) or *yin* (– –) lines of the hexagrams in the tradition of the *Book of Changes*; nevertheless, the existence of a link between the records of Chu and the hexagram oracles in the *Zhouyi* has not yet been proved; see Kondô Hiroyuki, "The silk-manuscript *Chou-i* from Ma-wang-dui and divination and prayer records in Ch'u bamboo slips from Pao-shan: a tentative study of the formation of the *Chou-i* as seen from the Pao-shan Ch'u bamboo slips," *Acta Asiatica* 80 (2001), 41–51; and Li Xueqin, "Lun Zhanguo jian de guahua," *Chutu wenxian yanjiu* 6 (2004), 1–5.

gods. The proposals also mention non-sacrificial rites of conjuration and exorcism of evil spirits as well as various observances such as fasting (*zhai* 齋).[100] The report ends with a second prognostication—limited to confirming by a word ("auspicious") the appropriateness of the sacrificial proposals—and a final prediction, the content of which is, contrary to the initial prediction, rather encouraging and always positive.

The narrative structure of these records is remarkable for the space allotted to the proposals for sacrifices and exorcisms by comparison with the predictions, which are not only very brief but also extremely stereotyped and common to all existing records. What is more, the manner in which the proposals are inserted between the initial and final predictions—the first negative, the second positive—accentuates even more the primacy which the authors gave to the religious context of the consultations when they were composing their reports. The main idea which emerges, reduced to its hard core, may be expressed as follows:[101]

initial negative prediction → sacrificial rites and exorcisms → final positive prediction

In other words, the regular yearly consultations of the oracles of the turtle and yarrow function within a complex religious system in which the cult of the ancestors and gods guarantees the consultant an auspicious future in accordance with his hopes. The aim of the divination is not so much to predict the future as to define and control the ritual protocols of prayer and exorcism which accompany the consultants' requests. It is interesting to note that the compilers of the records have taken care to introduce reports attesting that the sacrifices recommended during the consultations were carried out in due form. The example below records the accomplishment, during the tenth month of 317, of the rites of prayer to the ancestors of Shao Tuo which had been proposed

[100] For the prescriptions on fasting, see the Geling records, st. *jia*3–134 and 108; Wangshan records, st. 106, 132, 137, 155, and 156.

[101] The last divination of the annual consultation of 317 (Ke Jia) ends with prognostication 2 ("Auspicious") and does not include the final prediction. This is also the case of the consultation of the first month of 316, which takes place after Shao Tuo became ill and which combines prognostications on the year to come and on the consultant's illness.

twenty months (!) earlier by Shi Beishang (see above, the translation of the consultation of the first month of 318):[102]

> The year when Xu Cheng, emissary of the Eastern Zhou, came to Cai Ying to present his sacrificial offerings, in the tenth month, the 50th day of the cycle, the *yi*-rite of prayer to King Zhao was carried out with the sacrifice of an ox. The grand officer of deposits was in charge of preparing the offerings, and Zhao Ji was in charge of the altars. The rite having been accomplished, (a part of the offerings) was sent (to the consultant) as a token of felicity.

The four iatromantic consultations (*jizhen* 疾貞, nine divinations by turtle and two by yarrow) took place over a period of 170 days, between the eighth month of 317 and the second month of 316. Three of them were independent of the regular consultations, attesting to the possibility offered to the Chu elite to question the oracles on specific occasions, in times of crisis as in the present case, but certainly also to cope with other events generating doubt and anxiety such as a birth, marriage, a conflict, or an abrupt change of situation. The charges and predictions noted in the reports allow us to follow the progress of Shao Tuo's sickness up to the point of no return in the second month of 316 (see Table 3):[103]

> [*Preface*] The year when Dao Gu, chief of the Chu armies, went to the aid of the domain of Fu, in the second month, 36th day of the cycle, Guan Yi performed a divination using the (turtle) Guardian of the lineages for the minister of the left Shao Tuo: [*charge*] "The illness presents intumescences, (he) can no longer breathe, may it still be (*shang*) possible that he not die." [*First prognostication*] (Guan) Yi made the prognostication: "Regular auguration." [*Prediction*] "He will not die. The curse comes from the (ancestors) who died without descendants or from the Jianmu site (*jianmu li*[*wei*] 漸木立[位]). Proceed with the rites of supplication adapted to these conjunctures." [*Sacrificial proposals*] Prayer rite *yi* to the (ancestors) dead without descendants: a fat pig for each, to be offered ritually. Execute a rite of imprecation and exorcism at the Jianmu site. Moreover, if the residence is moved there, may it be favorable. [*Second prognostication*] The prognostication uttered by Guan Yi was: "Auspicious."

[102] St. 205. The text includes several obscure points. For example, the two graphs translated here by "grand officer of deposits" following Li Jiahao ("Baoshan jidao jian," p. 32), are interpreted by Chen (*Baoshan Chujian chutan*, pp. 174–75) as meaning "great broth" and attached to the end of the preceding phrase.

[103] St. 249–250. Prognostications on illness have been studied by Donald Harper, "Iatromancy, diagnosis, and prognosis in early Chinese medicine," in *Innovation in Chinese medicine*, ed. Elizabeth Hsu (Cambridge, Eng., 2001), pp. 99–120.

The composition of the divinations concerning the sickness differs little from those carried out within the schedule of regular consultations. The predictions are almost as vague and brief as those concerning the year: "The sickness will be difficult to heal," "The patient's state will improve gradually," and so on.[104] Two points, however, stand out. First, with only one exception, the sequence "negative prediction → sacrificial proposals → positive prediction" does not appear. The predictions are noted only once before the proposals, and their content may be at times positive, at times negative.[105] Second, nearly half of the predictions consist, as in the *Zuozhuan*, in determining the source of the curse (*sui* 祟) which has caused the consultant's sickness. The proposals inevitably then contain the list of sacrifices and exorcisms destined to appease the spirits named in the prediction.

Such were, roughly, the forms of the pyro-cleromantic consultations in the kingdom of Chu in the 4th century BC.[106] The main contribution of the reports is to show that these consultations were inseparable from the beliefs and cults which ruled the religious life of the members of the aristocracy. The relationship between the divinatory rituals of Chu and those which can be reconstructed from the inscriptions on bone and turtle shells of the Shang attest to the permanence and wide diffusion of these practices between the end of the 2nd millennium BC and the Warring States over a vast territory extending from the centers of civilization of the ancient dynasties to the southern regions of the middle Yangzi. Even if it is not known when nor by what channel the noble lineages of Chu came to trust the oracles of the turtle and yarrow, the extent of the phenomenon, illuminated by the unearthed documents, was considerable. To judge only by the collection of Baoshan, the six

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[104] However, at times more precise dates are indicated; see Harper, "Iatromancy," p. 106.

[105] Only one divination for the sickness presents a narrative structure similar to the annual consultations of 318 and 317 (st. 207–208), with a negative initial prediction ("the sickness is not completely reduced" 少爲已) and a final prediction ("the patient will visit the king [again] in the [following] first month" 刑夷且見王).

[106] The evidence furnished by the Geling records shows that the consultations could take more varied forms than those of the accounts of Baoshan, Wangshan, and Tianxingguan. For example, there we see the diviners casting the yarrow several times in a row during the same consultation, thus forming a kind of dialogue in which charges and predictions respond to each other: the first prediction is taken up in the following charge which, after a new casting, brings on a new prediction, which, in its turn, will be taken up in a third charge (*jia*3–198 and 199.2, *jia*3–112; see Chen Wei, "Geling Chujian," pp. 36–7).

regular and occasional consultations carried out for Shao Tuo between 318 and 316 mobilized 12 diviners. The ritual activities prescribed in the reports, whether or not they were actually accomplished, reveal the wealth expended by the consultants. The total number of animals proposed for sacrifice to the ancestors and to the gods is particularly revealing in this regard, as they total more than 70, among them 36 pigs, 23 sheep, 9 oxen, 6 dogs and a horse.[107] As there is no reason to think the owners of the tombs in which the records have been found were exceptions in the social and religious context of the period, it seems probable that a good majority of the nobles and high officials of Chu had recourse to the services of diviners and priests with the same frequency and under the same conditions.

Although the most current form of regular consultations authorized, it seems, three predictions (two by turtle and one by yarrow), at times the number was increased to ten, as in Shao Tuo's consultation in the first month of 316. Who, then, were the diviners solicited in this manner to respond to the requests of the Chu nobility? Their status is generally not mentioned in the records, but there is little doubt they worked in an official and centralized framework, according to well defined protocols and in close collaboration with other specialists who were likewise appointed, such as sacrificers, exorcists and doctors.[108] That Fan Huozhi 范獲志 (a turtle diviner) belonged to a public office open to any authorized consultant is not in doubt, since his name appears in two records from different tombs located near the capital.[109] The large number of diviners with the same family name in the same record confirms what is reported in the *Commentary* concerning the hereditary character of the diviners' office.[110] Let us also point out that members of the royal

[107] Of course, these are only proposals. It is possible that, for the same consultation, the proposals of only one diviner have been retained. On the sacrificial offerings in the records, see Chen Wei, *Baoshan Chujian chutan*, pp. 174–80.

[108] The Geling records (*yi*4–141) mention an "officer in charge of turtles", *guiyin* 龜尹. In the Baoshan record, there are, however, several titles for functions linked to the sacrifices, such as the "officer in charge of exorcisms", *gongyin* 攻尹 (st. 224). On the use of the term *gong* in the *Zuozhuan*, see the account E-9 translated above.

[109] Records from Tianxingguan (Yan Changgui, "Tianxingguan," pp. 269–70); and Wangshan records (st. 1). According to Yan (p. 270), the same diviner also appears in the Qinjiazui records (tomb n° 99).

[110] For example, the Tianxingguan records mention five diviners with the family name Chen 陳 (Yan, "Tianxingguan," pp. 272–3). At Baoshan, two diviners have the same family name (Guan 觀), like Guan Cong and Guan Zhan cited in the *Zuozhuan* as being employed as official diviners in Chu (see above, n. 80): Guan Beng 觀綳 (consultation 5) and Guan Yi 觀義 (consultation 6).

lineage living far from the capital, such as the prince of Pingye buried at Geling, had at their disposal diviners who worked on the spot and used turtles belonging to the local administration.[111]

Near as they may be to the places in which the divinations took place, the records provide very little information about how the turtle shells were burned or the yarrow stalks consulted, how the charges were transmitted to the augural powers, or the processes which allowed formulation of the prognostications and predictions. It would be a mistake to conclude straightaway that the rationalizing and almost legalistic style of the records provides a mirror-image of the step-by-step operations involved in the divinatory ritual. For example, the clear distinction made in the prognostications between the charge and the sacrificial proposals may be simply a rhetorical artifice used by the authors of the reports to express their own intentions. Since there was only one divination for both, it is possible that both the charge and the proposals were submitted to the oracle at the same time. In other words, the narrative continuity of the reports does not necessarily correspond to the course of the operations they claim to describe. The divination records have to be taken primarily as documentary sources that have value in themselves, as textual representations designed to fill a function prolonging that of the divinatory rite but not to be confused with it. Even if they were compiled in the first place to serve as a reference tool for diviners and priests, their very elaborate narrative structure and the numerous marginal notes, corrections, and later addenda scattered through them leads us to think that they were not reserved for strictly internal use, but were addressed also to the consultants, for example, inviting them to carry out the recommended rites of prayer and thanksgiving. The fact that the records were found in the tombs of these dead nobles also fits with this idea.

The hemerological collections of Jiudian

Among the divinatory manuscripts unearthed, those which appear with greater frequency are the miscellaneous collections of hemerological devices and magical recipes that are usually designated by the generic

[111] In the Geling records, at times the name of the object used in the divination is preceded by a note on their provenance: "Xu Ding divined for the prince with the turtle Great Treasure of *lingyin* Yi" 陵尹懌 (st. *yi*2–25, *ling*-205, *yi*3–48, *yi*2–27).

term “daybooks” (*rishu* 日書), taken from the title that appears on one of them discovered in 1976 at Shuihudi (217 BC).[112] In addition to their interest for the study of ancient ideas concerning prescriptions and calendar prohibitions, these documents contain a considerable amount of concrete information on the daily life, beliefs and religious practices of the time.[113] The owners of daybooks were for the most part members of the provincial and local administrations. They were for their own use, but probably also served in the framework of their official activities, just as they used the texts of laws and administrative regulations discovered in great number in the same tombs. Almost all the collections excavated as of today date from the Qin and Han periods, with the exception of the one coming from the cemetery of Jiudian 九店 located—like the divinatory records examined above—in the vicinity of the Chu state capital. The tomb which contained the manuscript had been closed around the year 300 BC. Its modest size and the much-reduced quantity of grave goods placed in two niches hollowed out in the ground around the coffin suggest the deceased’s status was that of an officer of inferior rank.[114]

The collection, written on a bundle of 146 bamboo strips, comprises 14 sections. With the exception of a section on the auspicious or inauspicious configurations of dwellings and another which describes an exorcism for illnesses, all the others are of a hemerological nature. They are lists of prescriptions and prohibitions on the most diverse subjects such as marriages, births, rites and sacrifices, commerce, war, voyages, the hunt and auspicious days for cultivating the fields or making clothes. Although the Chu calendar has its own peculiarities, the collection is not different from those which come from the Qin and Han tombs located in other regions. For example, two-thirds of the 14 sections of the Jiudian collection are also found in the Shuihudi daybooks.[115] This indicates that hemerological knowledge was transmitted in written form

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[112] On the Shuihudi daybooks, see Marc Kalinowski, “Les traités de Shuihudi et l’hémérologie chinoise à la fin des Royaumes combattants,” *T’oung Pao* 72 (1986), 175–227; and Poo Mu-chou, *In search of personal welfare. A view of ancient Chinese religion* (Albany, 1998), pp. 79–101. The best commented edition of the manuscripts is that of Liu Lexian, *Shuihudi Qinjian rishu yanjiu* (Taibei, 1994).

[113] See the chapter by Liu Tseng-kuei in Volume Two.

[114] See *Jiudian Chujian* (Beijing, 2000), pp. 149–70 for the archaeological context of tomb n° 56 where the manuscripts were found, and pp. 1–57 for reproductions and transcriptions of the strips. For a study of the whole collection, see Liu Lexian, “Jiudian Chujian rishu yanjiu,” *Huaxue* 2 (1996), 61–70.

[115] See *Jiudian Chujian*, pp. 153–5.

from at least the late 4th century and that it constituted a common set of beliefs and practices largely shared by all the states of the Chinese realm. The passage translated below is an extract from the section of forecasts concerning the 12-day cycle of the sexagenary calendar. The phrases which are missing or do not appear in the Jiudian text have been added [in square brackets] from the Shuihudi version:[116]

> On a *wei* day (eighth of the 12-day cycle), to turn to the east is auspicious, for one will obtain (what one is hoping for); the north is inauspicious and the [south]west [auspicious]. On this day there is opening in the morning and obstruction in the evening. In general, for the five *wei* days (in a 60-day cycle), the fugitives will be captured during the day or the evening, but not in the morning. It is auspicious to gather and to store. For the illnesses (contracted on a *wei* day), a slight improvement is expected on a *zi* day (first of the cycle) and clear improvement on a *mao* day (fourth of the cycle), the fatal day being *yin* (third of the cycle). [The illness comes from fresh meat brought from the south by a red-faced man. The curse (*sui*) is caused by a relative on the maternal side who died by accident far away.]

Particularly remarkable are the prognostications concerning illness because of their similarity with the iatromantic procedures involved in turtle and yarrow consultations. Were the two ways thus offered to the patient in his quest for a possible cure different and incompatible, or did the patient choose one or the other according to circumstances?[117] The manuscripts attest to the fact that a certain form of interaction existed between the activities of hemerologists and diviners. On the one hand, Chu divination reports regularly recommend "choosing an auspicious month and a propitious day" (*ze liangyue liangri* 擇良月良日) before proceeding with the rites and exorcisms prescribed in the sacrificial proposals.[118] On the other, in the daybooks, the prognostications contain

[116] Jiudian, st. 67; Shuihudi, collection B, st. 171–172 (see Liu Lexian, *Shuihudi Qinjian*, pp. 368–77).

[117] For a comparison of medical hemerology in the daybooks with the iatromantic consultations in the Baoshan records, see Harper, "Iatromancy, diagnosis." According to Harper, the rise of hemerology in the 4th and 3rd centuries, while introducing new elements in the conception of the treatment of diseases, did not take place at the expense of traditional techniques of prediction and exorcism by turtle and yarrow (pp. 106–7). Attempts have been made to show that the diviners of Baoshan made their prognostications on the basis of recipes of medical hemerology included in the daybooks but without convincing results; see Yang Hua, "Chutu rishu yu Chudi de jibing zhanbu," *Wuhan daxue xuebao* (*renwen kexueban*) 56.5 (2003), 564–70.

[118] See, for example, the Geling (st. *jia*3–4, *jia*3–201, *jia*3–302) and Baoshan records (st. 218). On questions of the choice of propitious days in the records, see Yang Hua,

lists of auspicious and inauspicious days for performing turtle and yarrow divination: "On *zi* days (first of the cycle), one should not divine by turtle or yarrow, for this will harm the august Lord on High."[119]

That said, other factors argue in favor of a difference between the two. In the light of the archaeological contexts in which the divination records were discovered, consultation of the oracles seems to have been widespread above all among the noble lineages and high officials of the kingdom. By contrast, the hemerological miscellanies from Jiudian and the majority of the daybooks from the Qin and Han tombs belonged to magistrates of more modest rank or to local administrators. It is therefore possible that, while the ostentatious and costly character of the pyro-cleromantic divinations were not without influence on the decisions of the would-be consultants, people at all levels of society could posses and use the daybooks in professional as well as private contexts.[120]

In a more significant way, hemerological practices were connected to religious conceptions different from those which underpinned the oracles of turtle and yarrow. The celebrated Chu Almanac on silk (*Chu boshu* 楚帛書) discovered in the mid-1940s at Changsha (Hunan) constitutes in this respect a document of primary importance. Dated also to the end of the 4th century BC, it is made up of three parts: first a cosmogony which explains the arrangement of space and time by a primordial couple whose offspring are promoted to the rank of divinities of the four seasons; then a description of natural disorders and the heavenly punishments incurred by those who infringe the seasonal regulations; and finally a list of prescriptions and predictions for the twelve months of the year.[121] From this ensemble emerges the guiding principles of a cosmic liturgy in which the regulatory power

"Xincai jian suojian Chudi jidao liyi erze," *Chudi jianbo wenxian sixiang yanjiu* 2 (Wuhan, 2005), pp. 253–64.

[119] Shuihudi daybooks, collection A, st. 101².

[120] Yet the construction of the three tombs of Qinjiazui which contained the records of the pyro-cleromantic consultations seems to indicate that their owners did not belong to the highest levels of society (see above, n. 88). In the same way, the records of hemerology were discovered in the tombs of high dignitaries, such as that of Wu Yang 吳陽, lord of Yuanling 沅陵, buried at Huxishan 虎溪山 (early Western Han, modern province of Hunan). These documents, not yet published, seem however to have been of a different nature than the collections usually classified in the category "daybooks"; see "Yuanling Huxishan yihao Hanmu fajue jianbao," *Wenwu* 2003.1, 36–55.

[121] See Li Ling, *Zhongguo fangshu*, pp. 142–56; and Marc Kalinowski, "Fonctionnalité calendaire dans les cosmogonies anciennes de la Chine," *Etudes chinoises* 23 (2004), 87–122.

of the calendar consecrates the alliance between men, nature, and the gods: "If the people don't know how the year goes, they will be unable to perform sacrifices".[122] The hemerological prescriptions of the third part, like those of the daybooks which derived from them, concerned all matters, public and private, and in this context fill a role comparable to that of the oracular consultations as they are reported in the divinatory records. The manuscripts unfortunately do not allow us to say whether these religious presuppositions were taken into account by the users themselves, nor whether hemerology and the science of the astrologers made up in their eyes a domain which was distinct from the religious traditions underlying the consultations of turtle and yarrow. It suffices, however, to demonstrate the complexity of the factors which determined the practice of the divinatory arts in the sphere of influence of the kingdom of Chu in the 4th century BC.

Conclusion

The manuscript sources available at present for the Warring States period are too fragmentary to suffice as a basis for finding definite solutions to the problems of the origins and dating of the accounts concerning divination in the *Commentary*.[123] At most they may contribute to untangling the strings which tie the ideals defended by their authors to the reality of the facts they report. The divergences between the divinatory records of Chu and the accounts of prediction by turtle and yarrow in the *Commentary* are in this respect exemplary. In the first instance, the records leave no doubt about the religious context in which the consultations were conducted. The divinatory rite plays a simple role of supervision within a much more encompassing sacrificial liturgy which constituted the very reason for its existence. Without being completely absent, this

[122] 民人弗知歲則無攸祭 (transcribed from Li Ling, *Zhongguo fangshu*, p. 152).

[123] These accounts are not specific to the *Zuozhuan*. They probably circulated in independent form in the learned circles of the Warring States, and we have seen that in that period they were a fashionable literary genre. For anecdotes concerning divination by turtle or yarrow in the *Discourses of the states* (*Guoyu*), see Liu Yujian, *Zhongguo gudai guibu*, pp. 358–73, and Helmut Wilhelm, "I-Ching oracles in the *Tso-chuan* and the *Kuo-Yü*," *Journal of Asian and Oriental Studies* 79.4 (1959), 275–80. A document (*Mu He* 繆和) appended to the *Changes of Zhou* of Mawangdui (168 BC) contains several accounts of rhetorical predictions placed in the Spring and Autumn period. One of them portrays the scribe Cai Mo; see Edward Shaughnessy, *I Ching, the Classic of Changes* (New York, 1997), pp. 269–71.

context appears strongly nuanced in the *Commentary*. It can nevertheless be deducted, from the very allusive manner in which the accounts report most of the consultations by turtle, that they formed a routine activity in which the princes and high officials engaged. It is interesting to note that in the divinations concerning illness—where the religious context is most apparent—the rites for elimination of curses proposed by the diviners are always contested, as if there was a determination openly displayed here by the narrator to encourage the abandonment of these practices.

Second, the composition of the excavated records gives priority to the question of sacrifice and exorcism. Ritual proposals not only take up the most space, they above all differ from one diviner to the next, and it could happen that contrary proposals were formulated during the same consultation.[124] In the *Commentary*, the accent is on signs and predictions; they and they alone retain the narrator's attention. What is at stake in the debates which accompany the accounts of divination is almost exclusively the predictive value of the oracles, their interpretation, or their outright rejection. More important still is the fact that the records contain reports of sacrifices which attest to the fact that the rites have been carried out in conformity with the diviners' proposals while, in the *Commentary*, a similar rhetoric is applied to the predictions, whose accuracy can always be verified in the course of the narrative.

Finally, notwithstanding the large number of accounts of divination by turtle and yarrow reported by the *Commentary* and their even distribution over the whole period covered by the work, the diviners themselves are rarely present as outstanding personalities. With the exception of the celebrated Guo Yan and some names cited in the accounts from period 1, almost all others are anonymous figures whose role is limited to simply carrying out orders. As was remarked concerning the narratives of period 2, the prerogatives of the diviners of turtle and yarrow tend to lose ground to the increasing influence of the scribes and counselors who competed with them on their own turf, but also to other divinatory disciplines such as astrology, or to the use of oracles from the *Changes* in a non-sacrificial context. The recent discovery of a *Zhouyi* manuscript in a large collection of philosophical and doctrinal

[124] Baoshan records, consultation 3, divination by Xu Ji (st. 228) and Ke Guang (st. 229). One recommends going to (or making an exorcism at) Piyang (*dou yu Piyang*), the other, the contrary (*bu dou yu Piyang*).

texts written in Chu script and dated from the late 4th century BC (the Shanghai manuscripts) has furnished the proof that the *Changes* were at that time a part of the teachings disseminated by the schools of wisdom and that its status was already that of a canonical text.[125] By contrast, the divinatory records show nary a trace of reliance on a collection of oracles.[126] Even though such collections most certainly existed, the authors of the records of divination accorded them neither the prestige nor the authority they gave the turtle and yarrow as divinatory media. As we have seen, these objects are always mentioned in the prefaces, following the name of the officiant, in reverential terms such as "Docile turtle", "Unchanging virtue", or "Little treasure".[127]

Minimization of the role of diviners and priests in the *Commentary* makes up only one aspect of the general tendency of the work to depreciate sacrificial and magico-religious practices. A manuscript from the Shanghai collection mentioned above reports a dialogue between Confucius and Prince Ai of Lu concerning a drought which devastated his country at that time. After having blamed the phenomenon on bad management of public affairs, the Master advises the prince to rectify his conduct and make the appropriate offerings to the divinities of the mountains and rivers, with the aim, he explains, of satisfying the expectations of the people who are "ignorant of the laws and of morality and believe only in the rites of supplication addressed to the spirits."[128] However pragmatic it may seem to us, Confucius' reply is then questioned by a nit-picking disciple, who tries to convince him of the absurdity of belief in the efficacy of the rites to bring rain.

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[125] Orig. and transcr. in *Shanghai bowuguan cang Zhanguo Chu zhushu*, vol. 3 (Shanghai, 2003).

[126] Still, the presence of a fragment of a strip carrying the mention *qi zhou yue* 其繇曰 (the verse says) in the Geling records seems to indicate that the Chu diviners did use collections of oracles to make their predictions; see Chen, "Geling Chujian," p. 39. Portions of a manual of divination by turtle of uncertain date have been incorporated in the *Records of the historian* (*Shiji* 128; pp. 3240–51).

[127] In this respect, the phrase "So-and-so will divine using such-and-such instrument…" (X 以 [name of the instrument] 貞)—which appears systematically in all the prefaces (see the translated examples above)—may be considered as the equivalent of the recurrent phrase in the *Zuozhuan*: "So-and-so will divine using the *Changes of Zhou*…" (X 以周易筮之); see above, n. 42.

[128] *Lubang dahan* 魯邦大旱; orig. and transcr. in *Shanghai bowuguan cang Zhanguo Chu zhushu*, vol. 2 (Shanghai, 2002), pp. 49–56 and 201–10. It is remarkable that the graph translated here by "rites of supplication" is identical to that which appears constantly in the prognostication part of the Chu reports: "Proceed with the rites of supplication (敓) adapted to these conjunctures"; see the passages translated above.

Another manuscript in the same collection treats similar questions, but in a much more detailed fashion and with a remarkable realism of tone. The action takes place under the reign of King Jian 簡 of Chu (r. 431–407), that is to say barely half a century before the divinatory and sacrificial practices described in the excavated records. Here too, the account concerns a drought and the measures taken to remedy it. While the king participates in the consultation of the turtle to enquire about the place in and the divinity to which it would be suitable to sacrifice, he becomes a victim of sunstroke and falls gravely ill. The usual procedure is thus disturbed and, after another divinatory consultation and in concert with the officer in charge of offerings, the planned sacrifices are put off:[129]

> The king undertook to conjure the drought which had taken over the country and ordered the officer in charge of turtles (*guiyin* 龜尹), Luo 羅, to consult the oracles at Daxia 大夏. He attended the ceremony in person and stood facing the sun, sweat running down over his body to his waist. Realizing that the king was about to have sunstroke, the officer in charge of turtles seized the handle of an umbrella and moved it according to the sun's course. The officer in charge of offerings (*liyin* 釐尹?), Gao 高, alerted by the illness which had struck the king, took the place of his colleague so as to speed up the consultation of the turtle with regard to the high mountains and deep rivers to which it would be appropriate to make offerings. The king stopped him, saying: "My anxiety is great and my sickness increases. Several times I have dreamed of the high mountains and deep rivers, but none of them is among the mountains and great rivers within our lands. Since it is preferable that such sacrifices be addressed to the divinities of our own land, wouldn't it be better to consult the turtle at Daxia [as had been initially planned]! If the outcome is favorable, we will then proceed to the sacrifices." The officer in charge of offerings agreed, and the oracles being auspicious, he informed the king accordingly, who replied: "If that be the case, see to it that the sacrifices be carried out as quickly as possible. My sickness is getting worse, I am worried and tormented." They replied: "The royal cults of Chu are governed by unchanging precepts. Who would dare disobey them by reducing the sacrificial protocols? We have never seen a change in the rituals made only for the benefit of the person of the king."

[129] *Jian dawang bohan* 簡大王泊旱; orig. and transcr. in *Shanghai bowuguan cang Zhanguo Chu zhushu*, vol. 4 (Shanghai, 2005), pp. 43–67 and 191–215. The translation given here corresponds to the text written on st. 1, 2, 8, 3, 4, and 5. Given the problems of reconstruction posed by the manuscript, this translation remains approximate. I follow the transcriptions established by Zhou Fengwu, "Shangbo si 'Jian dawang bohan' chongtan," *Jianbo* 1 (2006), 119–35; and Chen Wei, "'Jian dawang bohan' xinyan," *Jianbo* 2 (2007), 259–68.

The anecdote continues with a series of debates between the ministers and high officials of the state, interspersed with new dreams inciting the king to take salutary measures in favor of his people. The result is that the unfortunate monarch finally recovers his health, and the rain falls three days later, but this is not because the sacrifices and expiatory rites were carried out (the text does not mention whether they were or not), but because he and his officer in charge of offerings had shown exemplary conduct and wisdom in their decisions:

> Our prince, as supreme monarch, has not departed from the unchanging rules for his own sake. On his side, the officer in charge of offerings, responsible for the ancestors and gods of Chu, has taken care not to thwart these rules out of complaisance for the person of the king. The Lord on High and the assembly of the gods, in their supreme clairvoyance, would have learned of it in due time. The healing of our prince is surely imminent![130]

The anecdote could very well have had its place in the *Commentary*, which does not lack for similar accounts. At the same time, the realism of style, the profusion of concrete details concerning the practice of the diviners and priests, and the fact that the action was practically contemporaneous with the events portrayed in the Chu divination records, confers on this narrative a note of authenticity which is lacking in the *Zuozhuan* accounts.[131] The manuscript of Shanghai brings the proof that such accounts circulated independently in the 4th century BC and that they were probably based for a large part on events which had actually taken place.

The negative bias with regard to sacrificial practices which is evident in all these texts was largely shared by the educated elite of the 4th century and, as Henri Maspero has shown, is a reflection of the impact of the religious crisis caused by the slow disintegration of the political regime created by the Western Zhou and the resultant decline of the lineage and territorial cults which assured its cohesion.[132] The question remains as to whether a form of oracular liturgy similar to that which

[130] St. 20, 21, and 6.

[131] For example, the title given here to the diviner (*guiyin*, officer in charge of turtles) is also found in the Geling records (see above, n. 108).

[132] Henri Maspero, *Le Taoïsme et les religions chinoises* (Paris, 1971), pp. 25–33. On the religious changes of the Eastern Zhou as they can be deduced from the archaeological evidence, see Lothar von Falkenhausen, *Chinese society in the age of Confucius (1000–250 BC). The archaeological evidence* (Los Angeles, 2006), pp. 293–325.

prevailed in Chu was equally present in the northern regions, and whether the political and institutional reforms were more advanced there than among their southern neighbors. A clay tablet from 334 BC certifying the allocation of lands to a high officer of Qin shows that the ancient system of investiture (*fenfeng* 分封) was still functioning there in the 4th century and, above all, that the *bu*-diviners took part in the ritual burial of the tablet.[133] We must also consider the possibility that the practices reported in the divinatory records no longer had the importance we might be tempted to attribute to them. The fact they are not found anymore in the 3rd century tombs would be an argument in favor of such a view, although this sudden eclipse may also be attributed to the destruction of the Chu capital and the annexation of its territories by the kingdom of Qin in 278 BC.

Be that as it may, the role assigned in the *Commentary* to the counselors and scribes leaves no doubt of the existence in these milieus of a deep crisis of belief in the traditional techniques of divination by turtle and yarrow. Far from denying the legitimacy of the divinatory arts, they re-orient them in other directions, no doubt in conformity with the spirit of the times. For example, the emphasis on the predictive function of divination is a clear indicator of a change in the very understanding of mantic activity, the finality of which is no longer to gain the goodwill of the ancestors and the gods or implore their favors by rites of prayer and offerings, but to banish doubts, legitimize decisions and, in the final analysis, to use the future as they used the past. It is, incidentally, in the *Commentary* that the first stirrings of a philosophical approach to the idea of individual fate may be found. The accounts of predictions contained in the work will serve as a point of reference in later debates on historical determinism and the predictability of future events and human destiny.

The hesitation introduced in the accounts between the divinatory and non divinatory uses of the *Changes* offers another example of the attitude of the educated elite towards the venerable collection of oracles. Without dismissing entirely the recourse to yarrow stalks, they see in the sibylline verses attached to the hexagrams the expression of a wisdom inherited from the ancients, a basis for reflection in keeping with

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[133] The diviner Zhi 卜蟄 is mentioned, on the other side of the tablet, among the people having participated in the ritual; see Guo Zizhi, "Zhanguo Qin feng zongyi washu mingwen xinshi," *Guwenzi yanjiu* 14 (1986), 177–96.

their own moral and political ideals. A text attached to the manuscript of the *Changes of Zhou* discovered in a tomb from the beginning of the Han (168 BC) but probably composed in the preceding century illustrates very well the contrast already apparent in the *Commentary* between the responsible and enlightened attitude of the sage and the passive and superstitious attitudes of those who trust their fate to priests and diviners. The account portrays a disciple who reproaches Confucius for his pronounced taste for the classic in spite of the fact his teaching disapproves of divination and sacrifice. The master begins by admitting that he does sometimes cast the yarrow stalks and that its predictions are exact seven times out of ten. He then justifies himself in the following way:

> If the men of future generations come to doubt me, it will be because of the *Changes*! I, however, aspire only to virtue and nothing else. My way merges with that of the scribes and shamans but our destinations are different. The good man seeks fortune by following the rules of good conduct, and thus he accords little credit to sacrificial cults. He uses his sense of humanity and duty to understand whether a given situation will spell good or ill fortune, and that is why he rarely consults the turtle or yarrow.[134]

Although the *Commentary* does not refer to open conflicts between astrologers and diviners, the rapid increase of astrological prediction in the accounts of the second half of the 6th century may indicate a reinforcement of this type of activity in the princely courts at the end of the Spring and Autumn period. The discovery of a chest—in the tomb of the ruler of a 5th century state, part of the Chu cultural area—with the diagram of the 28 celestial mansions on its cover shows that astrological representations were by then part and parcel of the symbolical imagery shared at the upper levels of society.[135] The fact that astrology is described in the *Commentary* as a science placed under the authority of the learned scribes seems also completely justified and in accordance with the evidence provided by the categorization of the mantic specialists in the *Rites of Zhou* as well as in the historiographical traditions of the Han. Furthermore, it is in these milieus that astronomy and

[134] Mawangdui ms, *Yao* 要 (The principles); see Shaughnessy, *I Ching, the Classic of Changes*, pp. 240–41.

[135] For a reproduction and references to existing works, see Donald Harper, "Warring States natural philosophy and occult thought," in *The Cambridge history of ancient China*, eds Michael Loewe and Edward Shaughnessy (Cambridge, Eng., 1999), pp. 833–6.

the calendar, during the Warring States, made considerable progress and that the first identified specialists in these sciences appear in the received sources.[136]

The documents examined above allow us better to situate astro-calendrical divination in the context of contemporary beliefs in the divinity of the heavens and in the regulatory power of the natural cycles. They also show that the hemerological techniques written down by the local magistrates and their scribes were becoming accessible to a larger public and that their effect on the conduct of public and private affairs represents a cultural phenomenon of great importance at least from the 3rd century BC on. In a certain way, all these developments prefigure the situation which will prevail under the Han empire, both on the level of the principles of classification of the divinatory arts as they will be established by the imperial bibliographers at the end of the 1st century BC and on the level of official and scholarly practices, which will be dominated by astro-calendrical prognostication, the science of omens, and the cosmological interpretation of the *Book of changes*.

[136] See Sun Xiaochun and Jacob Kistemaker, *The Chinese sky under the Han. Constellating stars and society* (Leiden, 1997), pp. 15–27.

THE IMAGE AND STATUS OF SHAMANS IN ANCIENT CHINA*

Fu-shih Lin

At the end of the Eastern Han, the famous literatus Zheng Xuan 鄭玄 (127–200), in his annotation of the line in the *Zhouli* 周禮 (*Rites of Zhou*), "Whoever serves the gods is in charge of the laws that control the three heavenly bodies, in order to determine where the gods dwell and to distinguish the appropriate sacrifices," writes as follows:

> The *Guoyu* 國語 (*Discourses of the states*) says: "Of old, the gods descended into those whose spirit was focused, who were at once poised and centered, who knew how to ascend and descend and make comparisons, whose saintliness shed its light abroad, whose vision illumined matters, and whose hearing penetrated them. Men of this kind were called *xi* 覡, women *wu* 巫. They knew how to manage the hierarchical order and placements of the gods and to make for them sacrificial vessels and seasonal vestments." Such was the knowledge shamans (*wu*) and invocators (*zhu* 祝) had of the gods, and they were also at ease with the laws of heaven. That is why saintly kings worshiped them. But today's shamans are thoroughly benighted: where is their luminous intelligence? What laws do they follow? Orthodox gods do not descend. Befuddled by illicit ghosts, they covet material goods and so cheat gods and men and cause this Way to be extinguished. How distressing![1]

In his commentary on the line in the *Liji* 禮記 (*Book of rites*), "For the surnamed families the king established seven cults, namely, the director of destiny 司命, the impluvium 中霤, the gate of the capital 國門, state roads 國行, the dead without posterity 泰厲, the door 戶 and the stove 竈…For the lowest-ranking aristocrats and commoners he created one sacrifice, either the door or the stove," Zheng writes:

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* Translated by John Lagerwey in consultation with Mu-chou Poo.

[1] *Zhouli, Shisanjing zhushu* (Taibei, 1981), "Jiazong ren," 27.423–24; cf. Edouard Biot, tr., *Le Tcheou-li, ou rites des Tcheou*, 2 vols (Paris, 1851; reprint, Taibei, 1969), 2.139.

> These are not the major gods to whom prayers and thanksgiving are made for important matters. They are minor gods who dwell among the people, in charge of watching for small faults and making reports on them. The *Treatise on music* says: "In the illumined world there are rites and music; in the dark world there are gods and ghosts." Is this not what is meant by gods and ghosts? The director of destiny inspects the three forms of destiny; the impluvium is in charge of halls and living quarters; the gates oversee comings and goings; the roads take care of roads and traveling; the unfortunate dead handle executions and punishments; the stove sees to eating and drinking. The "Funeral rites of gentlemen" 士喪禮 states: "In time of illness, prayers are made to the five gods." The times for worshiping the director of destiny and the unfortunate dead are not stated. Nowadays, in spring and autumn, some people worship the director of destiny and associate with them the gods of travel, hills, gates, and the stove. They should worship the director of destiny in the spring and, in the fall, the unfortunate dead. Or else they should worship them together. The word "hills" refers to the unfortunate dead, but people don't like to use the word "unfortunate dead." When shamans and invocators identify this god as Lishan 厲山 (Shennong), are they not in error? The *Annals commentary* 春秋傳 says: "Ghosts have a place to return to. They are not unfortunate dead."[2]

Not only does Zheng Xuan explain the meaning of the Classics in these two lines, he also points out the changes that have occurred in the system of rites. Four of these changes are particularly important. First, in ancient times, when the "state" (or "society") sacrificed to gods and ghosts (gods of heaven and earth and human ghosts), shamans were in charge. At the end of the Eastern Han shamans were no longer capable of ordering "orthodox gods" (*zhengshen* 正神) to descend or possess them. That is, the orthodox gods did not descend for them, and they only sacrificed to the ghosts of the unfortunate dead, who had become the focus of "illicit cults" (*yinsi* 淫祀) outside the state "register of sacrifices" (*sidian* 祀典).[3] Second, the shamans of the past were very familiar with the appropriate rites for the worship of gods and ghosts, but those of the Eastern Han had lost the required knowledge and techniques.[4] Third, shamans in antiquity were people of superior quality, with high intelligence, vision and hearing, but those at the end of the Eastern Han

[2] *Liji*, *Shisanjing zhushu* (Taibei, 1981), "Jifa," 46.801–02.
[3] Whence his use of the term "befuddled."
[4] Whence his referring to them as "benighted."

were shysters after money.[5] Fourth, the shamans of old were respected. When sacrificing, rulers and people of worth would follow their rituals.[6] At the end of the Eastern Han, in the view of Zheng Xuan, their knowledge and practice had become disorderly and at odds with the Classics, causing people to despise them.

In short, according to Zheng Xuan, *wu*-shamans had once played an important role in the world of ancient Chinese "religion" (sacrifices), and they had enjoyed respect. But this "tradition"—this "way of the shamans"—had completely broken down by the end of the Han, and the guilty party was the shamans themselves. Not only had they lost their techniques, their behavior was incorrect, and they had caused the way of the shamans to sink into "illicit worship."

Zheng Xuan's observations of the changes that had occurred are most acute. In just a few words, he manages to sketch with perfect clarity the difference in the social images of shamans in antiquity and in the present. Nonetheless, his discussion leaves a number of questions that need to be clarified. Two are of particular importance: first, from what time did the shamans who had enjoyed such high respect lose their status? How can we determine this? Second, is the collapse of their status due to their loss of technical competence and their moral corruption? If so, what factors led to this situation?

Previous scholars have, in greater or lesser degree, touched on these two questions. Indeed, already at the end of the 19th/beginning of the 20th century, shamanism had attracted the attention of the academic world, although it was not until the last ten to 20 years that this interest came to be widely shared. If we look at recent studies, we will discover that scholars have been most interested in three issues. The first is the social and political status of shamans. Some scholars think that, in antiquity, the king was a shaman, or at least that the shaman was a central member of the ruling group whose status was very high and

[5] Whence the reference to them "coveting goods and cheating gods and men."
[6] Whence the idea that "the kings worshiped them." This may mean that the gods and ghosts worshipped by the shamans were also sacrificed to by the king, or that, after the shaman's death, he/she was worshipped by the king.

who had a great deal of authority and influence.[7] But others think that the shaman's status was not high, or even that it was relatively low.[8]

Second is the question of the role shamans played in the development of Chinese culture. Some scholars think that the techniques of literature, iconography, music, opera and medicine all derive from shamanism, or at least are intimately connected to it,[9] while others deny this. But whether one is for or against, this is a matter of speculation and conjecture. Only with regard to the close relationship between shamans and doctors is there quite a bit of written evidence to be discussed. Third is the question of the divine world and religious rituals of the shamans. Early studies relied almost entirely on the written records. But as archaeological materials have grown daily more abundant, studies based on iconography and sacrificial vessels have been made.[10] Still, such studies always require supporting evidence from written records

[7] The most representative sholars are Chen Mengjia and Chang Kwang-chih: see Chen Mengjia, "Shangdai de shenhua yu wushu," *Yanjing xuebao* 20 (1936), 485–576; Chang Kwang-chih, "Zhongguo yuangu shidai yishi shenghuo de ruogan ziliao," *Zhongyang yanjiuyuan minzuxue yanjiusuo jikan* 9 (1960), 253–68; Chang Kwang-chih, *Zhongguo qingtong shidai* (Taibei, 1983); Chang Kwang-chih, "Shangdai de wu yu wushu," *Zhongguo qingtong shidai di'er ji* (Taibei, 1990), pp. 41–65; Chang Kwang-chih, "Yangshao wenhua de wuxi ziliao," *Zhongyang yanjiuyuan lishi yuyan yanjiusuo jikan* 64.3 (1993), 611–25; Chang Kwang-chih, "Renlei lishi shang de wujiao de yigu chubu dingyi," *Guoli Taiwan daxue kaogu renlei xuekan* 49 (1993), 1–3; Chang Kwang-chih, *Art, myth, and ritual: the path to political authority in ancient China* (Cambridge, Mass., 1983); Chang Kwang-chih, "Shang shamans," in *The power of culture: studies in Chinese cultural history*, Willard J. Peterson et al., eds. (Hong Kong, 1994), pp. 10–36. See also Wang Zijin, "Jizheng heyi zhidu yu Zhongguo gudai zhengzhi mixin," *Shijie zongjiao yanjiu* 1990.1 (1990), 15–26; Tong Enzheng, "Zhongguo gudai de wu," *Zhongguo shehui kexue* 1995.5 (1995), 180–97.

[8] The most representative scholars are Jao Tsung-i and Li Ling: see Jao Tsung-i, "Lishi jia dui shaman zhuyi ying chongxin zuo fansi yu jiantao—wu de xin renshi," *Zhonghua wenhua de guoqu, xianzai he weilai* (Beijing, 1992), 396–412; Li Ling, "Xian Qin liang Han wenzi shiliao zhong de wu," *Zhongguo fangshu xukao* (Beijing, 2000), 41–79.

[9] See Bai Chuanjing (Shirakawa Shizuka), *Jiaguwen de shijie—gu Yin wangchao de tigou*, Wen Tianhe and Cai Zhemao, tr. (Taibei, 1977); Zhou Cezong, *Gu wuyi yu 'Liu shi' kao—Zhongguo langman wenxue tanyuan* (Taibei, 1986); Wu Quanlan, "Wu feng de yuyun: 'Guofeng' zhong de gewu," *Shijing yanjiu congkan* (Beijing, 2003), vol. 5, 196–206.

[10] Most frequently discussed are images or statues of *wu* (shamans), as well as sacrificial vessels, divine animals and representations of gods and ghosts. For such studies or introductions to them, see Hayashi Minao, "Chûgoku kodai no ichiko," *Tôhô gakuhô* 38 (1967), 211–18; Yang Shurong, "Zhongguo kaogu faxian zai yuanshi zongjiao yanjiu zhong de jiazhi yu yiyi," *Shijie zongjiao yanjiu* 1994.3 (1994), 85–95; Yu Mianxiu, "Cong Zhongguo kaogu faxian kan yuanshi zongjiao dui Zhongguo chuantong wenhua de yingxiang," *Shijie zongjiao yanjiu* 1994.1 (1994), 45–87; Wu Rongzeng, "Zhanguo, Handai de 'Zaoshe shenguai' ji youguan shenhua mixin de bianyi," *Xian Qin liang Han shi yanjiu* (Beijing, 1995), pp. 347–61; Li Ling, "Chu boshu de zai renshi," *Li Ling zixuan ji*

and frequently end in a conflict of opinions.[11] Some studies have looked at shamanism from a different perspective, such as that of gender and female shamanism, for example. Others have explained the character *wu* itself, or have analyzed myths and legendary persons connected with shamanism, or have analyzed the relationship between shamanism and Daoism.[12]

All of these studies have their value. However, because of limitations of method and material, scholars have not come to any consensus on the role played by shamans in the formation of ancient Chinese society and civilization, nor on their social and political status. By using both textual and archaeological materials and the results of previous studies, selecting those which are the most credible, this chapter will analyze the social image of shamans in early Chinese society and try to discover the reasons for the changes in their social and political status from the pre-Qin through the Han.

But before opening this discussion, let us look again at the primary basis for Zheng Xuan's assessment of ancient shamanism, namely, the definition of shamans given in the *Discourses of the states*. The sentence cited above comes from a conversation between King Zhao of Chu (515–489 BC) and the officer Guan Shefu 觀射夫. The original text follows:

> King Zhao of Chu asked Guan Shefu: "What does the *Book of Zhou* 周書 mean by saying Zhong 重 and Li 黎 caused communication between heaven and earth to be broken? Had that not happened, would people be able to ascend to heaven?" He responded: "That is not what was meant. In the past, humans and gods did not mix. Of old, the gods descended into those whose spirit was focused, who were at once poised and centered, who knew how to ascend and descend and make comparisons, whose saintliness shed its light abroad, whose vision illumined matters, and whose hearing penetrated them. Men of this kind were called *xi*, women *wu*. They knew how to manage the hierarchical order and placements of

(Guilin, 1998), pp. 227–62; Song Guangyu, "Cong wuxi ji xiangguan de zongjiao gainian tantao Zhongguo gudai chutu ziliao," *Kaogu renlei xue kan* 60 (2003), 36–63.

[11] Li Ling, "Kaogu faxian yu shenhua chuanshuo," *Li Ling zixuan ji*, pp. 59–84.

[12] See Zhou Cezong, "'Wu' zi chuyi tanyuan," *Dalu zazhi* 69.6 (1984), 21–23; Luo Man, "Nüxu wei wu sanlun," *Jiang Han luntan* 1986.6 (1984), 52–55; Liu Zhaorui, "Lun 'Yubu' de qiyuan ji Yu yu wu, dao de guanxi," *Liang Zhaohan yu renlei xue*, Zhongshan daxue renlei xuexi, ed., (Guangzhou, 1991), pp. 264–79; Wu Rongzeng, "Zhenmuwen zhong suo jian de Dong Han daowu guanxi," *Xian Qin liang Han shi yanjiu* (Beijing, 1995), pp. 362–78; Wang Zijin, "Zhanguo Qin Han shiqi de nüwu," *Gushi xingbie yanjiu conggao* (Beijing, 2004), pp. 3–37.

the gods and to select the sacrificial victims, vessels, and seasonal colors. They brought glory to the descendants of the former kings and knew the names of the mountains and rivers, the centrality of the founding ancestor, the rites of the ancestral temple, the order of alternate generations, profound reverence, appropriate rituals, model protocols, correct demeanor, the value of loyalty and trustworthiness, pure vestments for the sacrifices, reverence for the bright gods, and how to pray to them. They enabled the descendants of illustrious names to know the produce of the four seasons, the sacrificial objects, the jade and silk, the rites to be used, the capacity of the vessels, the distances between primary and secondary seats, the use of screens to set off primary seats, the altar sites, superior and inferior gods, and the origins of clans and surnames. The person who knew the ancient classics by heart was put in charge of sacrifices. Thus there came to be officials for the classification of things: heaven and earth, gods and humans. These were the so-called five officers (*wuguan* 五官), each in charge of his own affairs and not interfering with the others. Because of this the people were able to be loyal and trustworthy and the gods brightly virtuous. The gods and the people had each its own activities. People were reverent without being obsequious, and so the gods sent down good things. The people enjoyed life, disasters did not happen, and they lacked for nothing.

Then came the decadence of Shaohao, when the Nine Li disrupted government; people and gods commingled, and things no longer stayed true to category. Everyone made sacrifice, there were shamans (*wu*) and scribes (*shi* 史) in every family, and there was no sincerity. Although people exhausted themselves in sacrifice, they had no wellbeing. Sacrifices were not measured, and gods and people occupied the same positions. People recklessly made sworn alliances that were utterly without authority. The gods imitated the people and had no measure in their behavior. Good things did not descend, and there was nothing to offer in sacrifice. Catastrophes multiplied, and no one lived out his life. When Zhuanxu 顓頊 received the Mandate, he ordered the southern rector Zhong to take charge of heaven in order to organize the gods, and he ordered the northern rector Li to take charge of earth in order to organize the people. He made all return to the ancient norm, when there was no mutual intrusion. This is what is meant by breaking off communication between earth and heaven.

Thereafter, the Three Miao renewed the rebellion of the Nine Li, and Yao 堯 again favored the descendants of Zhong and Li. He did not forget the old system but put them in charge again. Right down to the Xia and the Shang, the clans of Zhong and Li ordered heaven and earth for generations, with each being in charge of his own domain. Under the Zhou, Xiufu, count of Cheng 程伯休父, was their descendant, but in the time of King Xuan, he lost his position and became minister of war. He exalted his ancestors as gods in order to gain authority over the people, saying: 'Zhong raised up the heavens, while Li held the earth down.' Because it

> was a time of disorder, no one could prevent (the propagation of these fables). Were it not so, were heaven and earth perfect and unchanging, what comparisons could be made?"[13]

This citation has been much discussed by scholars, who have at least three or four completely different angles of study and approaches, and whose conclusions are also at variance.[14] But most scholars do agree that Guan Shefu is describing three phases in the development of religion in ancient China.[15] Be that as it may, Guan Shefu's answer is an excellent expression of the increasingly mature and ever-more dominant humanistic mentality of the late Spring and Autumn period.[16] It also shows us that, in the times of Guan Shefu (or of the writing of the *Discourses of the states*), shamans still occupied an important place in Chinese society.

As to the social and political status of these shamans, we may measure it according to three standards: first, what was their power of decision in public affairs? Second, how many social resources could they control? Third, to what degree did other members of society respect them and look to them for help? If we wish to discuss the role and functions of shamans in early society, at the very least we must know what image their contemporaries had of them.

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[13] *Guoyu*, "Chuyu xia," commentary of Zhan Xinxin (Taibei, 1981), 18.559–64. Cf. Ban Gu, *Hanshu*, (Beijing, 1962), "Jiaosi zhi," 25.1189–90. The translation relies on Jean Levi, *Les fonctionnaires divins. Politique, despotisme et mystique en Chine ancienne* (Paris, 1989), pp. 220–21, 225.

[14] For an introduction and evaluation of these studies, see Zhang Jinghua, "Gushi yanjiu de santiao tujing: yi xiandai xuezhe dui 'Jue ditian tong' yi yu de chanshi wei zhongxin," *Hanxue yanjiu tongxun* 26.2 (2007), 1–10.

[15] See Xu Xusheng, *Zhongguo gushi de chuanshuo shidai*, augmented ed. (Beijing, 1960), pp. 74–85; He Hao, "Zhuanxu chuanshuo zhong de shenhua yu shishi," *Lishi yanjiu* 1992.3 (1992), 69–84; Zhang Shuguo, "Jue ditian tong: shanggu shehui wuxi zhengzhi de yinyu pouxi," *Zhongguo Chuci xu di'er ji* (Beijing, 2003), 219–37; Xu Zhaochang, "Zhong, Li jue ditian tong kaobian erze," *Jilin daxue shehui kexue xuebao* 2001.2 (2001), 104–11.

[16] On Guan Shefu's life and thought, see Xiao Hanming, "Guan Shefu—Chunqiu moqi Chuguo zongjiao sixiang jia," *Jiang Han luntan* 1986.5 (1986), 60–65.

Early shamans in myth and legend

Shamans and healing

The most important function of shamans in early society was healing.[17] Even though scholars continue to have differing views of the origins of Chinese medicine, in traditional Chinese society there are quite a number of myths and legends which attribute knowledge of drugs and healing and the creation of that profession to shamans. With regard to the origin of doctors, the *Zhuangzi* says:

> Wandering-in-the-islands asked Realgar: "Why do you beat the drum and holler to drive away pestilence and drought demons?" Realgar replied: "Because the people had many diseases, the Yellow Emperor appointed Shaman Xian 巫咸 to bathe and fast in order to open the nine orifices, to beat the drum and strike the bell so as to excite the heart and exercise the body, to make steps in order to stir up the energies of *yin* and *yang*, and to drink ale and eat scallions in order to remove blockages in the five viscera. Because he beat the drum and hollered in order to drive out pestilence and the drought demon, the people, in their ignorance, thought it was the drought demon who was causing trouble."[18]

The *Shiben* 世本 (*Genealogies*) says: "Shaman Xian was a minister of Yao. With his vast knowledge of techniques, he served as Lord Yao's physician (*yi* 醫)."[19] In received texts ever since the pre-Qin era, even though there are different views of his period, region, and appearance, all agree Shaman Xian was a famous doctor.[20]

Others, however, say the first doctor, or the person who invented healing techniques was Shaman Peng. The *Lüshi chunqiu* 吕氏春秋 *(Annals of Sire Lü*), for example, in a list of 20 officials in Yao's administration, says that "Shaman Peng 巫彭 invented medicine, Shaman Xian milfoil divination."[21] In his *Shuowen* 說文 (*Explanation of characters*), Xu Shen

[17] See Zhou Cezong, *Gu wuyi*; Li Jianguo, "Xian Qin yiwu de fenliu he douzheng," *Wenshi zhishi* 1994.1 (1994), 39–42.

[18] This is a lost passage from the *Zhuangzi*, quoted from *Lushi houji*: see Huang Hui, *Lunheng jiaoshi*, "Dinggui" (Beijing, 1990), p. 936.

[19] Li Fang et al., *Taiping yulan* (Taibei, 1975), 721.3325–31.

[20] Shaman Xian is in fact someone whose "divine understanding was vast": in addition to healing and drugs, he was also a master of astronomy, divination and shamans. See Gu Yanwu, *Rizhi lu*, "Wu Xian," punctuated manuscript (Taibei, 1971), pp. 719–21.

[21] Lü Buwei et al., *Lüshi chunqiu jishi*, "Shen fenlan," Xu Weiyu, ed., (Taibei, 1983), 17.1078.

許慎 (30–124) also says that "Shaman Peng invented medicine."[22] But regardless of which was the first doctor, in the *Shanhai jing* 山海經 (*Classic of mountains and seas*) the two men are among the shamans linked to drugs. For example, the "Dahuang xijing" 大荒西經 ("Classic of the great western wasteland") says:

> In the great wasteland...there is a numinous mountain, from which the shamans Xian, Ji 即, Pan 肦, Peng, Gu 姑, Zhen 真, Li 禮, Di 抵, Xie 謝, and Luo 羅 ascend and descend. All manner of drugs are found there.[23]

Guo Pu 郭璞 of the Jin dynasty interprets this line to mean that "the shamans go up and down the mountain to collect plants."[24] In the "Haiwai xijing" 海外西經 ("Classic of the western regions beyond the seas") there is mention of Shaman Xian ascending Bao Mountain:

> The land of Shaman Xian is north of Nüchou. In his right hand he held a blue and in his left a red snake and so ascended Bao Mountain. This is where all shamans ascend and descend.[25]

Guo Pu comments: "This is what is meant by 'ascending Bao Mountain,' where the shamans ascend and descend, coming and going as they collect plants."[26] The "Hainei xijing" 海內西經 ("Classic of the western regions within the seas") adds:

> East of Kaiming the shamans Peng, Di, Yang, Lü, Fan, and Xiang, carried the body of Qiyu and tried to revive him with drugs of immortality.[27]

Guo Pu comments that all six of these shamans were "divine physicians" (*shenyi* 神醫).[28] From these items from the *Classic of mountains and seas* we can see that, from the pre-Qin down to the Jin, people believed that shamans in the early period were masters of healing, doctors who had drugs of immortality.

To this we may add that Chinese medicine includes a specialty called "incantations for removal"[29] (*zhuyou* 祝由). While the exact meaning of the two characters *zhu* and *you* is still the subject of debate, there can be no doubt but that the tradition of Chinese medicine still preserves the

[22] Xu Shen, *Shuowen jiezi zhu*, Duan Yucai, com. (Taibei, 1985), 14B.40b.
[23] *Shanhai jing jiaozhu*, "Dahuang xijing," Yuan Ke, ed. (Taibei, 1982), p. 396.
[24] Ibid., p. 397.
[25] *Shanhai jing*, "Haiwai xijing," p. 219.
[26] Ibid.
[27] *Shanhai jing*, "Hainei xijing," p. 301.
[28] Ibid.
[29] See the article by Li Jianmin in this set.

technique of healing by incantation. Even such "orthodox," mainstream medical texts as Sun Simiao's *Qianjin yifang* 千金翼方 and the *Rumen shiqin* 儒門事親 all preserve this method of healing. And shamans are said to be the origin of this method, as in the *Huangdi neijing* 黃帝內經 (*Classic of the Yellow Emperor on internal medicine*):

> The Yellow Emperor said: "What the Master has told me is what every sick person knows. But if the patient has not encountered perverse energies and has not been frightened and yet falls suddenly ill, what is the reason? Is it because of gods and ghosts?" Qibo replied: "This is because there are old perverse energies which linger without breaking out. Then the mind has something it hates, and then again something it desires. Within, his blood and energy are in disorder, and *yin* and *yang* attack each other. It comes out of nowhere and is invisible and inaudible, so it seems it is ghosts or gods." The Yellow Emperor said: "Then why do you just use incantations?" Qibo replied: "The shamans of old, because they knew how each form of illness triumphed, knew ahead of time where the illness would come from, so an incantation sufficed."[30]

Similar statements can be found in other medical texts, such Huangfu Mi's *Zhenjiu jiayi jing* 針灸甲乙經[31] and Sun Yikui's *Yizhi xuyu* 醫旨緒餘,[32] all of which quote the *Classic of internal medicine*. In any case, the attribution by doctors of the incantation tradition to shamans is perhaps not deferential or obscurantist, because from the pre-Qin era on, one of the techniques regularly used by shamans to heal illness was incantations.[33]

Shamanism and divination

The citation above from the *Annals of Sire Lü* shows that Shaman Xian was also considered to be the inventor of divination, or that he had been in charge of divination in Yao's time. Indeed, his link to divination is not superficial. In the *Rites of Zhou*, for example, it says:

[30] *Huangdi neijing, Lingshu*, "Zeifeng" (Taibei, 1984), p. 411.

[31] Huangfu Mi, *Huangdi zhenjiu jiayi jing*, "Sishi zeifeng xieqi dalun" (Beijing, 1995), 6.760.

[32] Sun Yikui, *Yizhi xuyu*, "Zeifeng pian," in *Chishui xuanzhu quanji* (Beijing, 1993), 2.1246–47.

[33] Lin Fu-shih, "Shilun Handai de wushu yiliao fa jiqi guannian jichu," *Shiyuan* 16 (1987), 29–53; Lin Fu-shih, "Zhongguo Liuchao shiqi de wuxi yu yiliao," *Zhongyang yanjiuyuan lishi yuyan yanjiusuo jikan* 70.1 (1991), 1–48.

> Diviners master the three *Books of changes* and distinguish the names of nine kinds of milfoil divination. One is called *Lianshan*, the second *Guicang*, the third *Zhouyi*. The names of the nine kinds of milfoil are Wugeng 巫更, Wuxian, Wushi 巫式, Wumu 巫目, Wuyi 巫易, Wubi 巫比, Wuci 巫祠, Wucan 巫參, and Wuhuan 巫環. They distinguish the auspicious from the inauspicious. In all important matters of state, milfoil divination is done first and then turtle divination. At the beginning of the year, a new kind of milfoil is chosen. In all matters of state, recourse is had to milfoil divination.[34]

The so-called "three changes" and "nine milfoils" must refer to methods and schools of divination. Each of the latter is called *wu* so-and-so. Traditionally, commentators have glossed *wu* 巫 "shaman" as meaning *shi* 筮 "milfoil divination," so the closeness of the two is clear. But I think the term *wu* here should perhaps simply be seen to refer to shamans who are named as individuals or perhaps as lineages. Among them, Shaman Xian (Wuxian) is a representative figure of various schools of divination in later tales. For example, in the *Shiji* 史記 (*Records of the historian*) we read:

> Among those who transmitted the ciphers of heaven (*tianshu* 天數), there was Zhong and Li before Gaoxin; in the time of Yao and Yu (Shun), there was Xi 羲 and He 和; under the Xia, Kunwu 昆吾; in the Shang, Shaman Xian; and under the Zhou, Scribe Yi 史佚 and Chang Hong 萇弘.[35]

Sima Qian is here giving the names of all the great specialists of astrology in the pre-Qin period. Among them, we find Shaman Xian as the representative of the Shang dynasty.[36] Indeed, from the Han through the Tang, *Shaman Xian* was the name of a major book on astral divination cited and studied by astrologers.[37]

Shaman Xian is also linked to dream interpretation, as in Zhang Heng's "Thinking of mystery rhapsody" ("Sixuan fu" 思玄賦): "He had his dream explained by Shaman Xian, who said the great sign was most auspicious."[38] Right down to the end of the Northern Song, Shaman Xian's reputation in the domain of the technical arts never diminished.

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[34] *Zhouli*, "Chungong zongbo, Shiren," 24.376.

[35] Sima Qian, *Shiji* (Beijing, 1959), "Tianguan shu," 27.1343.

[36] Cf. Fan Ye, *Hou Hanshu*, "Tianwen zhi" (Beijing, 1965), 10.3214.

[37] Fang Xuanling et al., *Jinshu*, "Tianwen zhi" (Beijing, 1974), 11.277–78; Ge Hong, *Baopuzi neipian jiaozhu*, "Shizhi," Wang Ming, ed., augmented ed. (Beijing, 1985), 8.141; Sima Biao, *Xu Hanshu zhi*, printed with Fan Ye's *Hou Hanshu*, 10.3220, 3222, 3234–36, 3228, 3372.

[38] *Hou Hanshu*, "Zhang Heng liezhuan," 59.1932.

Thus when the emperor Huizong created a school of mathematics in the Daguan era (1107–10), the decree included Shaman Xian among the ancient worthies whose portraits should be hung for the school's sacrifices.[39]

A famous individual in all traditional literature from the pre-Qin on, Shaman Xian had still other faces and images. In the "Chu imprecation text" ("Zu Chuwen" 詛楚文), he is a major god who is worshiped at the time the alliance is sworn,[40] and in the *Zhuangzi* a superior person who fully understands the Way of Heaven.[41] In the "Li Sao" 離騷 poem in the *Chuci* 楚辭 (*Songs of the South*), we read:

> I heard that Wu Xian was descending in the evening,
> So I lay in wait with offerings of peppered rice-balls.
> The spirits came like a dense cloud descending,
> And the host of Jiuyi mountain came crowding to meet him.[42]

In his "Sweet springs rhapsody" ("Ganquan fu" 甘泉賦) Yang Xiong 揚雄 speaks of "selecting Shaman Xian to call at Di's Gate," which seems to suggest Xian is a god in the court of the Lord on High (Di) or a human who can reach heaven. But he is most frequently referred to as a Shang-era (official) shaman and also a "worthy minister" from the time of Taiwu of the Shang, while his son is a "worthy minister" from the time of King Zuyi.[43] The Tang commentator Kong Anguo thinks that, in the names of both father and son, the word *wu* is a surname, and it is a fact that it was frequent in antiquity to derive surnames from an office or a function. It may be that father and son were members of a clan that held the office of shaman over a long period in the Shang. The fact that Shaman Xian is also mentioned in the oracle bones means that he must have been an historical person who once occupied the post of shaman.[44]

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[39] See Hong Mai, *Rongzhai suibi, Rongzhai sanbi* (Shanghai, 1978), 13.570.

[40] See Jiang Liangfu, "Qin zu Chu wen kaoshi—jian shi Yatuo dashen Jiuqiu liang ci," *Lanzhou daxue xuebao* 3 (1980), 54–71; Chen Zhaorong, "Cong Qin xi wenzi yanbian de guandian lun zu Chu wen de zhenwei jiqi xiangguan wenti," *Zhongyang yanjiuyuan lishi yuyan yanjiusuo jikan* 62.4 (1993), 569–621.

[41] *Zhuangzi jishi*, Guo Qingfan, ed. (Taibei, 1981), "Waipian tianyun," 5.496.

[42] Translation based on David Hawkes, tr., *Ch'u Tz'u: the songs of the South* (repr. Boston, 1962), p. 31.

[43] *Shangshu*, *Shisanjing zhushuben* (Taibei, 1981), "Shangshu: Xianyou yide," 8.122; "Zhoushu: Jun Shuang," 16.245; *Shiji*, "Yin benji," 3.100–01; "Yanzhao gong shijia," 34.1549–50; "Tianguan shu," 27.1344; "Fengshan shu," 28.1356–57.

[44] Jao Tsung-i, "Wu de xin renshi," pp. 396–97.

The involvement of shamans in the technical arts, especially divination, may also be seen in the story of Jixian, as told in the *Zhuangzi*:

> In the state of Zheng, there was a divine shaman (*shenwu* 神巫) named Jixian 季咸. He knew all about people's life and death, preservation and loss, misfortune and good fortune, longevity and mortality—predicting the year, month, week, and day as though he himself were a spirit.[45]

The *Huainanzi* refers to "the divine shaman of Zheng, who examined Huzi Lin and found symptoms." Gao You 高誘 of the Eastern Han glosses this as follows: "By examining the bones, the *wu* can distinguish auspicious from inauspicious energies."[46] In his *Lunheng* 論衡 (*Balanced assessments*), Wang Chong also states that "shamans know the future and can divine people's fate without fail."[47]

From the above it becomes clear that, in the minds of the ancients, in early Chinese society *wu*-shamans were not only religious figures in charge of sacrifices and communication with the gods, they were also well versed in medicine and the various arts of divination. Moreover, it is said that in the time of Yao and of the Shang, there was an office of shamans.[48] In other words, in the views of people of the pre-Qin and Han, shamans were once a part of the ruling class, and their capacities were recognized by society.

Shaman officials, official shamans and their functions before the Qin

To rely on myths and legends to prove that shamans were a part of the ruling class in ancient China may not be sufficient to convince people. But for the Shang and Zhou, we have fairly complete evidence. In the Shang, the word *wu* appears frequently in the oracle bones. Written [illegible] in the bones, it has six different meanings: divination;[49] a kind of sacrifice, like the "oriented sacrifice" (*fangsi* 方祀) or the "sacrifice from

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[45] *Zhuangzi*, "Neipian Ying diwang," 3.297; translation based on Victor Mair, tr., *Wandering on the Way: early Taoist tales and parables of Chuang Tzu* (New York, 1994), p. 68. A similar statement is made in the *Liezi*.

[46] Liu An et al., *Huainanzi jishi*, He Ning, ed., (Beijing, 2006), "Jingshen xun," 7.534.

[47] Wang Chong, *Lunheng*, "Shiying pian."

[48] See Zhang Rongming, "Guanyu Yin Zhou zongjiao ruogan wenti de tantao," *Tianjin shida xuebao* 1988.5 (1988), 38–44; Zhang Rongming, "Yin Zhou shidai de zongjiao zuzhi," *Shijie zongjiao yanjiu* 1998.3 (1998), 127–34.

[49] Jao Tsung-i, *Yindai zhenbu renwu tongkao* (Hong Kong, 1959), vol. 1, pp. 41–42.

afar" (*wangsi* 望祀);[50] the name of a state;[51] a place name;[52] the name of a god;[53] a person with a special status or function (referred to below as a shaman).[54]

This shows clearly that the word *wu* in the Shang period already had a very rich range of meanings. As for the matters in which they were involved in the oracle bones, it was almost exclusively with sacrifices, conjuring catastrophe and communicating with the gods.[55] It is worth noting that the Shang could, on occasion, use the shaman as sacrificial victim.[56] Because of this, some scholars speculate that their status was low, but others think, on the contrary, that this is proof for the idea of a shaman-king.[57] In short, we have no real way of knowing whether the shaman in the oracle bones was, as many scholars think, the king or a central member of the ruling class, or whether he was someone of low estate and plebeian functions. Still, in a society and a ruling class where gods and ghosts were worshipped, where everything required asking the gods and divining, and where great significance was attached to sacrifice and exorcism,[58] it seems not very credible that the shaman was of little importance.

At the very least, it seems certain that, throughout the Zhou dynasty, there must have been shaman officials and official shamans in the feudal system.[59] This is clearly stated in the *Rites of Zhou*, where the director of

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[50] Chen Mengjia, *Yinxu buci zongshu* (Beijing, 1956), pp. 578–79.

[51] Ibid.

[52] Ibid.

[53] Ibid.; Hayashi Minao, *Chûgoku kodai no ichiko*, pp. 211–18.

[54] Li Xiaoding, *Jiaguwen zi jishi* (Nangang, 1965), vol. 5, p. 1599; Jao Tsung-i, *Yindai zhenbu*, vol. 2, p. 663; Hayashi Minao, *Chûgoku*, pp. 210–18.

[55] In addition to the references in the preceding note, see Jao Tsung-i, "Wu de xin renshi," pp. 396–97; Wang Hui, "Shangdai buci zhong qiyu wushu de wenhua yiyun," *Wenshi zhishi* 1999.8 (1999), 65–70; Gilles Boileau, "Wu and shaman," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 65.2 (2002), 350–78; Zhao Rongjun, *Yinshang jiagu buci suo jian zhi wushu* (Taibei, 2003), pp. 162–284; Zhang Shuhao, "Buci suo jian de wuzhe jiqi zhuyao zhishi," *Xin shiji zongjiao yanjiu* 3.4 (2005), 116–40.

[56] See Qiu Xigui, "Shuo buci de fen wuwang yu zuo tulong," in *Jiaguwen yu Yinshang shi*, Hu Houxuan, ed., (Shanghai, 1983), pp. 96–412; Jao Tsung-i, "Wu de xin renshi," pp. 396–412; Zhou Fengwu, "Shuo wu," *Taida zhongwen xuebao* 3 (1989), 1–23; Li Ling, "Xian Qin liang Han," pp. 41–79.

[57] See Fukino Yasushi, "Funfu no zoku to tôshukubun—*Gokansho* 'dokkôretsuden,'" Kokugakuin zasshi 46 (1997), 1–18.

[58] See Chen Mengjia, *Yinxu*, pp. 561–603; Bai Chuanjing, *Jiaguwen*; Xu Jinxiong, *Zhongguo gudai shehui: wenzi yu renlei xue de toushi* (Taibei, 1995).

[59] By "shaman officials" I mean officials who were in charge of shamanic affairs, and by "official shamans" I mean they were a part of the "official structure," or that in the ruling circles there were shamans who had particular functions and responsibilities.

shamans (*siwu* 司巫), male shamans (*nanwu* 男巫), and female shamans (*nüwu* 女巫) were all shaman officials:

> The director of the shamans has under him two middling gentlemen, one treasurer, one scribe, one technician, and ten assistants. The number of male shamans is not fixed, nor is that of female shamans. Four middling gentlemen serve as masters, with two treasurers, four scribes, four technicians, and 14 assistants… There is not a fixed number of gentlemen serving the gods. They are classed as noble or lowly, depending on which arts they perform.[60]

Zheng Xuan comments:

> Gentlemen ennobled because of the gods are the best of the male shamans, those with knowledge and talent. The arts are the rites, music, archery, charioteering, writing and calculating. The highest in rank are superior gentlemen, followed by middling gentlemen and then lesser gentlemen.[61]

As to their functions, the *Rites of Zhou* says:

> The directors of the shamans are in charge of the policies and orders issued to the many shamans. When the country suffers a great drought, they lead the shamans in dancing the rain-making ritual. When the country suffers a great calamity, they lead the shamans in enacting the long-standing practices of shamans… At official sacrifices, they [handle] the ancestral tablets in their receptacles, the cloth set out as seats for the gods, and the box containing the reeds [for presenting the sacrificial foodstuffs]. In all official sacrifices, they guard the place where the offerings are buried… In all funerary services, they are in charge of the rituals by which the shamans make [the spirits] descend.[62]
>
> Male shamans are in charge of sacrificing and inviting from a distance [the gods of the mountains and rivers]. They receive the [gods'] titles [from the invocators], and summon them on all sides with reeds. In the winter, in the great temple hall, they offer [*or*: shoot arrows] without a fixed direction and without regard to distance. In the spring, they summon

[60] *Zhouli*, "Chungong zongbo," 17.265, 267; cf. Biot, *Rites*, 1.412–13, and Lothar von Falkenhausen, "Reflections on the political role of spirit mediums in early China: the *wu* officials in the *Zhou li*," *Early China* 20 (1995), p. 285.

[61] *Zhouli*, "Chungong zongbo," 17.267; cf. Falkenhausen, "Spirit mediums," p. 286.

[62] *Zhouli*, "Chungong siwu," 26.399–400; translation based on Falkenhausen, "Spirit mediums," p. 285 (the ellipses refer to the fact Falkenhausen presents the texts in a slightly different order and inserts commentary [translator's note]); cf. Biot, *Rites*, 2.102.

> and pacify in order to expel disease. When the king goes to offer condolences, together with the invocator they precede the king.[63]
>
> The female shamans are in charge of anointing and ablutions at the exorcisms that are held at regular times throughout the year. When there is a drought or scorching heat, they dance in the rain-making ritual. When the queen offers condolences, they together with the invocators precede her. In all great calamities of the state, they pray, singing and wailing.[64]

From this it can be seen that shaman officials were primarily in charge of sacrificing to the gods, both praying and exorcising, in order to get rid of all manner of disaster. Their most important work was prayer for rain, funerals, driving away pestilence and sacrificing.

The *Rites of Zhou* is not the only text to treat of shaman officials. The *Xunzi* says:

> The power of the Son of Heaven is as great as his person is at ease; his heart is as joyous as his ambitions are uncowed. Although he does not exhaust himself, none is more revered than he… When he goes out the door, the male and female shamans have work and, when he goes out the gate, it is the turn of the temple invocators.[65]

The shamans and temple invocators in this text must all have been officials. The *Book of rites* says:

> For the same reason, there are the invocators in the ancestral temple; the three ducal ministers in the court; and the three classes of old men in the college. In front of the king there were the shamans, and behind him the scribes; the diviners by the turtle and by milfoil, the blind musicians and their helpers were all on his left and right. He himself was in the center. His mind had nothing to do but to maintain what was entirely correct.[66]

This explains how the various officials assist the enlightened king, and the shaman is one of them. As to the shaman official's functions, the *Xunzi* says he is in charge of divination:

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[63] *Zhouli*, "Chungong nanwu," 26.400; cf. Falkenhausen, "Spirit mediums," p. 290, and Biot, *Rites*, 2.103. The fact the shaman and the invocator work together during royal mourning is also touched on at *Zhouli*, "Sangzhu," 26.397.

[64] *Zhouli* "Chungong nüwu," 26.400; tr. based on Falkenhausen, "Spirit mediums," p. 290.

[65] *Xunzi*, Zhan Xin, ed., (Taibei, 1983), "Zhenglun," pp. 352–53.

[66] *Liji*, "Liyun," 22.438, translation based on James Legge, tr. *Li chi, Book of rites: an encyclopedia of ancient ceremonial usages, religious creeds, and social institutions, edited with introduction and study guide*, eds Ch'u Chai and Winberg Chai (New Hyde Park, New York, 1967), 2 vols, pp. 1.385–86.

> To observe the *yin* and *yang*, judge the meaning of portents, divine by the turtle and milfoil, conduct exorcisms, fortunetelling, divination by the five types of signs, and understand all that pertains to good and bad fortune—these are the duties of hunchback shamanesses and crippled shamans.[67]

The *Book of rites* says:

> When a ruler went to the mourning rites for a minister, he took with him a shaman with a peach-wand, an invocator with his reed-(brush), and a lance-bearer,—disliking (the presence of death), and to make his appearance different from (what it was at any affair of) life.[68]

Elsewhere, it adds:

> When the ruler went to a great officer's or a common officer's after the coffining had taken place, he sent word beforehand of his coming. The chief mourner provided all the offerings to be set down for the dead in the fullest measure, and waited outside the gate till he saw the heads of the horses. He then led the way in by the right side of the gate. The shaman stopped outside, and the invocator took his place, and preceded the ruler, who put down the offerings of vegetables (for the spirit of the gate) inside it.[69]

The *Yili* 儀禮 (*Rites and ceremonies*) describes it thus:

> When the lord arrives, the host goes to greet him outside the outer gate. When he sees the head of the horse, he does not weep but goes back inside the gate, to the right and facing north…The shaman stays outside the gate of the ancestral temple, and the invocator takes the place of the host. Two minor assistants stand in front with halberds, and two others stand behind.[70]

These quotations all demonstrate that, in ancient times, when a sovereign came to a funeral, the shaman played an important role. According to the *Rites of Zhou*, thus assisting the sovereign in mourning was the responsibility of the male shaman. The *Da Dai liji* 大戴禮記 (*Book of rites of the Elder Dai*) describes shaman officials who were in charge of sacrifices and prayers:

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[67] *Xunzi*, "Wangzhi," p. 156; translation based on Burton Watson, tr., *Hsün Tzu: basic writings* (New York, 1963), p. 49.

[68] *Liji*, "Tangong xia," 9.171; tr. Legge, *Li chi*, p. 1.172.

[69] *Liji*, "Sang daji," 45.784; tr. Legge, *Li chi*, p. 2.194.

[70] *Yili*, *Shisanjing zhushu* ed. (Taibei, 1981), "Shi sangli," 37.436.

> All matters involving the wealth of the people and what the gods of the mountains and rivers bestowed on the people, where the development of the state and planning for improvement are at issue, require reverent fasting and regular assemblies. The calendarologists, shamans, and invocators, who hold office because of their technical abilities, await their orders before acting. They pray for the harvest, the people's livelihood, the livestock, cereals, insects, and grasses.[71]

The *Zuozhuan* provides a series of concrete examples. The first is from the tenth year of Duke Xi (650 BC):

> The marquis of Jin reburied [his brother] Prince Gong [whom he had forced to commit suicide]. In the fall, when Hutu went to the lower capital, he met the prince['s ghost], who had him get up and take his reins [as he had been accustomed to] and told him: "Yiwu (the marquis of Jin) acts contrary to the rites. My prayer to the Lord on High (Di 帝) has been accepted. He will give Jin to Qin, and Qin will sacrifice to me." Hutu responded: "Your servant has heard this: 'The spirits do not enjoy what is not of their kind, and the people do not sacrifice to those not of their clan.' Will not the sacrifices to you be as though there were none?"...The prince replied: "Yes. I will pray anew. Seven days hence, to the west of the New City, there will be a shaman through whom you will see me." When Hutu had given his word, the prince disappeared. On the appointed day, he went and was told: "The Lord on High has granted that I punish only the criminal, who will be defeated at Han."[72]

The place referred to as lower capital is the same as New City. It was the place where Prince Gong had committed suicide in 656 BC, and it was also the former capital of Jin, where the ancestral temple was located.[73] Thus the reference to "seeing me" refers to seeing the prince's ghost, or the shaman on whom the ghost depended in order to come down. Read in the light of the *Rites of Zhou* on the director of shamans being in charge of rites of shamanic descent, this must refer to a shaman official in Jin.

Another example takes place in Duke Yin's 11th year (712 BC), when the duke had been imprisoned by Yin, a grand officer in Zheng. He

[71] *Dadai liji* (Taibei, 1981), "Qiansheng," p. 302.
[72] *Zuozhuan, Shisanjing zhushu* ed. (Taibei, 1981), Xigong 10, 13.221; translation based on James Legge, tr., *The Chinese Classics vol. 5: The Ch'un Ts'ew* with *the Tso Chuen*, reprint (Taibei, 1983), p. 157.
[73] Ibid.; see also Xigong 4, 12.204, and *Guoyu*, "Jinyu," 2, p. 292.

> bribed Yin and prayed to his god Zhongwu 鍾巫. Then he went back with Yin and set up his god (Zhongwu in Lu). In the 11th month, the duke sacrificed to Zhongwu and fasted in the enclosure of the earth god.[74]

In the summer of the 21st year of Duke Xi (639 BC), there was a great drought, and Duke Xi of Lu wished to "burn a shaman and a deformed person" (*fen wu wang* 焚巫尪) to pray for rain.[75] In the 10th year of Duke Wen (617 BC), the Chengpu battle between Qin and Jin took place. Prior to this, Shaman Yusi of the town of Fan in Chu had told King Cheng, Ziyu, and Zixi: "My three lordships will all die a violent death."[76] In the 10th year of Duke Cheng (581 BC), Duke Jing of Jin dreamt of a "giant demon" (*dali* 大厲) and invited a shaman from Sangtian 桑田 to interpret his dream.[77] In the 18th year of Duke Xiang (555 BC), Xun Yan, prince of Jin serving as hostage in Lu, having dreamt he lost a lawsuit to Duke Li of Jin, saw the shaman Gao of Gengyang 梗陽, who predicted the date of his death.[78] In the 29th year of Duke Xiang (544 BC), when the duke was in Chu for the funeral of King Kang and Chu obliged him "to bring grave-clothes with his own hand," he had a shaman first sprinkle the grave using a peach branch and reeds "in order to avert the pollution" (*fubin* 祓殯)."[79]

In the above cases, although the text does not say so explicitly, given their relationships with and activities on behalf of sovereigns and feudal lords—dream interpretation, prayer for rain, funeral exorcism—they must have been official shamans. The first case shows that, in ancient times, there were indeed sacrifices made to shamans of the past. We may also now affirm that the House of Zhou had shaman officials, whose head was called *siwu*, director of shamans, and who had under him male and female shamans. Given the fact there were also masters and apprentices, it would seem there were personnel in charge of training and others for a whole range of matters.[80] Moreover, in the feudal system, the states of Lu, Jin, Chu and Zheng all had shamans, whose status must also have been that of shaman officials or official shamans.

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[74] *Zuozhuan*, Yingong 11, 4.83; cf. Legge, p. 34.
[75] *Zuozhuan*, Xigong 21, 14.241–42; cf. Legge, p. 180.
[76] *Zuozhuan*, Wengong 10, 19.322; cf. Legge, p. 256.
[77] *Zuozhuan*, Chenggong 10, 26.450; cf. Legge, p. 374.
[78] *Zuozhuan*, Xianggong 18, 33.576–77; cf. Legge, p. 478.
[79] *Zuozhuan*, Xianggong 29, 39.664–65; cf. Legge, p. 547. See also *Liji*, "Tangong," 10.190–91.
[80] See Lothar von Falkenhausen, "Spirit mediums," pp. 279–300.

Popular and professional shamans before the Qin

If it was natural in early society for shamanism to become a profession and for shamans to become a part of the ruling class, contemporary ethnography tells us that ruling classes cannot completely monopolize the techniques of possession, and that possession can often become the arm of the weak, the way of the subjected and the oppressed to fight for power and express their anger.[81] It is therefore very difficult to say whether, outside official shamanism, there really was no space at all for commoner shamans in late Zhou China. What we can say, however, is that the appearance in the literature of professional shamans among the people represents a major change.

The question is, then, when did this happen? We may begin by looking at the origin of surnames. According to Wang Fu in his *Qianfu lun* 潛夫論 (*Discourses of the hermit*), surnames have many sources, one of which is the various trades, a category for which he gives three examples, namely, shamans 巫氏, carpenters 匠氏 and potters 陶氏.[82] In his *Fengsu tongyi* 風俗通義 (*Comprehensive meaning of customs*) Ying Shao concurs:

> Examples of surnames derived from trades are shaman, diviner 卜, carpenter and potter. In the Shang there were Wu Xian and Wu Xian 巫賢, and in the Han, the Jizhou prefect Wu Jie 巫捷, and also Wu Du 巫都, author of *The Scripture for nourishing life*.[83]

"Surnames derived from trades" seems to refer to families which hereditarily followed the same trade. This means that the term *wu* "shaman" refers to a profession and that, among those who engaged in it, there were not just the official shamans who "held office by virtue of their mastery of techniques," but also shamans among the people who made a living from their trade: "commoner shamans."

These passages unfortunately do not tell us when commoner shamans first appeared. Indeed, there is usually no way of knowing whether the shamans referred to in received texts were commoners or officials. Still,

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[81] See I.M. Lewis, *Ecstatic religion: a study of shamanism and spirit possession*, 2nd ed. (London, 1989).

[82] Wang Fu, *Qianfu lun jian jiaozheng*, Wang Jipei and Peng Duo, eds (Beijing, 1985), "Zhi shixing," 9.401.

[83] Ying Shao, *Fengsu tongyi jiaozhu*, Wang Liqi, ed. (Taibei, 1982), "Xingshi," p. 506.

there are a few examples that seem to refer to commoner shamans, as in the *Mencius*:

> Mencius (372–289 BC) said: "Is the maker of arrows really more unfeeling than the maker of armour? The maker of arrows is afraid lest he should fail to harm people, whereas the maker of armour is afraid lest they should be harmed. The case is similar with the shaman and the coffin-maker. For this reason one cannot be too careful in the choice of one's calling."[84]

The term "shaman and coffin-maker" in this phrase is glossed by the Han commentator Zhao Qi 趙岐 as follows:

> Shamans wish to save people with incantations, while coffin makers, when they make caskets, want to sell them as quickly as possible, so it is in their interest that people die.[85]

According to this explanation, the shaman in *Mencius* is someone who uses incantations to make his living, like the makers of arrows, armor and coffins. All are people who live from their specialized techniques.

Passages like the following from the *Annals of Sire Lü* do not say clearly the object of criticism is commoner shamans, but from the fact they say people, not sovereigns, looked down on shamans, we may surmise that, at the very least, they are referring at once to official and commoner shamans:

> The reason disease and illness become ever worse is that superiors of the present generation divine and pray…If you use hot water to keep a pot from boiling over, not only will the boiling not stop, the pot will boil more vigorously. But put the fire out and the boiling will stop. Shaman-physicians (*wuyi* 巫醫) and their purgative drugs treat sickness by expelling baleful influences. This is why the ancients held them in contempt.[86]

If we compare such a statement with what we know of commoner shamans in the Han, it may well be that it is in fact describing late Warring States commoner shamans who made a living by praying for blessings and curing illness. There is also the *Shiji* account of Ximen Bao 西門豹, governor of Ye (near modern Linzhang county, Hebei) in the time of Marquis Wen of Wei (r. 446–396 BC):

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[84] *Mengzi*, *Shisanjing zhushu* (Taibei, 1981), "Gongsun Chou A," 3.66; translation D.C. Lau, *Mencius, a bilingual edition*, rev. ed. (Hong Kong, 2003), p. 75.

[85] Ibid.

[86] *Lüshi chunqiu*, "Jichun ji, Jinshu," 3.152–53; translation based on John Knoblock and Jeffrey Riegel, trs, *The annals of Lü Buwei: a complete translation and study* (Stanford, 2000), p. 101.

In the time of Marquis Wen of Wei, Ximen Bao was prefect of Ye. When he went to Ye, he met with the elders and asked them what the people suffered from. The elders said: "They suffer from having to provide a wife for the Lord of the River 河伯. That is why they are poor." When Bao asked why, they said: "The district elder (*sanlao* 三老) and inspector (*tingyuan* 廷掾) tax the people yearly and collect from them millions. They use two to three hundred thousand to find a wife for the Lord of the River, and the rest of the money they divide between themselves and the shamans and invocators. The shamans look for and then betroth a pretty girl from a low-class family, saying she will become the wife of the Lord of the River. They wash her, make new clothes of silk for her, and then have her retire to fast. On the banks of the river they prepare a fasting palace, with a curtain of red silk within which the girl is placed. For ten-odd days they provide her beef and ale. They make her up with powder and prepare for her a wedding bed which, having had her to sit on it, they set afloat on the river. At first it floats, but after some distance, it sinks. Families with pretty daughters, fearing lest they be taken for the Lord of the River, flee afar with their daughters. As this has gone on for a long time, the city has grown ever emptier and poorer. The people have a saying: 'If we do not find a wife for the Lord of the River, his waters will inundate us, and we will drown.'" Ximen Bao said: "When the time comes to take a wife for the Lord of the River, and the district elder, shamans, invocators, and local elders see her off to the river bank, kindly come inform me, and I will go with you to see her off." All promised to do so.

When the time came, Ximen Bao met them on the river bank. The district elder and subordinate officials, the powerful, and the local elders all came, and some two to three thousand people came to watch. The shaman was an old woman 70 years of age. She had ten female disciples, all of whom stood behind her dressed in single-layered silk. Ximen Bao said: "Call the wife of the Lord of the River that we may see whether she is beautiful or ugly." They brought the girl out from behind the curtain and had her come forward. Bao looked at her and said to the district elder, the shamans, and the local elders: "This woman is not pretty. Let the chief shaman enter and report to the Lord of the River that we must search out a prettier girl, whom we will escort later." Then he had his clerks and soldiers pick up the chief shaman and throw her in the river. Some time thereafter, he said: "How is it the shaman is taking so long? Let one of her disciples go get her!" They threw a disciple in the river. After another while, he said: "Why is the disciple taking so long? Let another disciple go fetch her!" When they had thrown a second and then a third disciple into the river, Ximen Bao said: "The shaman's disciples are all women and are incapable of making the report. Let the district elder go make the report." They threw the district elder in the water. Ximen Bao stood by looking at the river for a long while, reverently waiting. The local elders and clerks looking on from the side were all terrified. Ximen Bao turned to them and said: "The shaman and the district elder have not come back. What shall we do?" He wanted the inspector and one of the local powerful men

> to go fetch them, but all kowtowed until their foreheads bled profusely and their faces were ashen. Ximen Bao said: "Fine. Then we'll wait a bit more." Some time later, Bao said: "Let the inspector stand up and inform the Lord of the River in writing that he has kept his guests too long. They have given up and are going home." The clerks and people of Ye were all terrified, but from that time on no one dared bring up the idea of finding a bride for the Lord of the River.[87]

If this story really happened in the time of Marquis Wen, then professional shamans who used religious activities to earn money from the people had already appeared in Chinese society, at least in the state of Wei, at the very latest by the 5th century BC.

Attitudes of pre-Qin thinkers toward shamans

It is difficult to assign a precise time and reason for the appearance in the literature of commoner shamans, but it must be intimately related to the collapse of the Zhou feudal system. By the middle of the Spring and Autumn period (about the 7th–6th centuries BC), this system had begun to tremble, and when Confucius sighed that "the rites were in disarray, and music had collapsed" 禮壞樂崩 and people of the Han said that "royal officials had lost control" 王官失守, they were quite accurately describing the characteristics of the new period, in which the ruling class could no longer monopolize the knowledge and techniques as royal officials had in the past. Neither thought nor the study of techniques could continue to be determined by one overlord, and the flourishing of the hundred schools and the debates among them in the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods reflects this historical sea change. In this context of massive change, shamans faced an unprecedented challenge. Certain persons of renown or wielding political power began to express doubts about the functions and methods of the shamans.

The first person in the record to have looked down on shamans or to have expressed his doubts about their techniques would seem to be the grand officer of Lu, Zang Wenzhong 臧文仲 (Duke Xi 21, 639 BC):

> Summer, great drought. The duke wished (in consequence of the drought) to burn a shaman (*wu*) and a deformed person (*wang* 尪). Zang Wenzhong said to him, "That is not the proper preparation in a time of drought.

[87] *Shiji*, "Huaji liezhuan," 126.3211–12.

> Put in good repair your walls, the inner and the outer; lessen your food; be sparing in all your expenditure. Be in earnest to be economical, and encourage people to help one another—this is the most important preparation. What have the shaman and the deformed person to do with the matter? If Heaven wish to put them to death, it had better not have given them life. If they can really produce drought, to burn them will increase the calamity." The duke followed his advice; and that year the scarcity was not very great.[88]

The *Book of rites* records a very similar event involving Duke Mu of Lu (r. 407–376 BC). The duke's advisor, Xianzi 縣子, replies that to expose a "deformed person" 疾子 would be cruel and to expose a "foolish woman" 愚婦—the shamaness—useless. Zheng Xuan explains the choice of such persons as follows: "When a deformed person looks up to Heaven and longs for pity, Heaven sends rain…Shamans are in charge of welcoming the gods 主接神 and also hope Heaven's pity will bring rain."[89]

Whatever the value of this explanation, we may note that Zheng Xuan does not discuss why Xianzi refers to the shamaness who prays for rain by dancing as a "foolish woman," nor why he uses this argument to persuade Duke Mu not to expose her in order to get it to rain. The famous Tang dynasty commentator, Kong Yingda, by contrast, did remark on this:

> Xianzi says: "The Way of Heaven is distant, that of humans nearby." If heaven sends no rain, to pin one's hopes on a foolish woman and to wish to expose her to the sun to get rain is far-fetched. Is it not even farther off the mark in terms of actually getting it to rain? These words are completely irrational! In the *Chunqiu zhuan* he cites, and also in the "Discourses of Chu," King Zhao asks Guan Shefu about breaking off communication between heaven and earth. Guan Shefu responds: "The gods descend into those whose spirit is focused. If it is a man, he is called *xi*, if a woman *wu*." Thus according to the "Discourses of Chu," one could be a shaman only if one's spirit was focused. The fact this scripture speaks of a foolish woman means this is a latter-day shaman. This is no longer the shaman whose spirit was focused.[90]

From Kong Yingda's point of view, Duke Mu already lived in the latter days, and the shamans of his time were no longer the persons of superior intelligence of antiquity. But when he has Xianzi speak of the ways of Heaven and humans, these are not the original words of the *Book of*

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[88] *Zuozhuan*, Xigong 21, 14.241–42; tr. Legge, *Tso chuen*, p. 180.
[89] *Liji*, "Tangong B," 10.201; cf. Legge, *Li chi*, pp. 1.201–02.
[90] Ibid.

rites but are what the Zheng grand officer Zichan 子產 (d. 522 BC) is reported as saying in the year 524 BC when he rejected the proposal of the great officer in charge of astrology, Pi Zao 裨竈, to exorcise fire by using jade beakers:

> The way of Heaven is distant, that of humans near. How can we know what we cannot reach? How does Zao know the way of Heaven? Given how much he talks, is it surprising he is credible on occasion?[91]

While this does not address the question of shamans praying for rain, and there is no reason to think Pi Zao was a shaman,[92] Zichan is clearly just as dubious about shamanistic techniques for driving off catastrophe as Zang Wenzhong of the 7th and Xianzi of the 5th century BC. Thus certain shamanistic practices were gradually being called into question. It may be that the end times for shamans had already begun in the 7th century BC, and the techniques on which their status, position and power rested were beginning to be challenged—an indication their position was not secure.

The doubts about shamans can also be seen in an anecdote from the time of Duke Jing of Qi (547–490 BC) recorded in the *Yanzi chunqiu* 晏子春秋 (*Annals of Master Yan*):

> Shaman Wei 巫微 of Chu led Yukuan in to see Duke Jing. They were in conversation for three days, and Duke Jing was pleased. The Chu shaman said: "The duke is the lord of the bright spirits, a sovereign among sovereigns. You have been on the throne for seven years, but you have not yet made any great breakthrough, and the bright gods have not come. Let us invite the Five Emperors (Wudi 五帝) in order to illustrate your virtue." The duke bowed low twice. The shaman from Chu said: "I suggest you go on a tour of inspection to the suburbs of the city in order to inspect the thrones of the emperors." When they reached Buffalo Hill, the duke dared not ascend. The shaman said: "The thrones of the Five Emperors lie south of the city. I suggest you fast and then ascend." The duke ordered all the officials to prepare the vessels for a fast at the place indicated by the shaman from Chu. Yukuan was in charge.
>
> When Yanzi heard it, he went to see the duke and said: "Has the duke let the shaman from Chu fast on Buffalo Hill?" The duke replied: "I have. He will invite the Five Emperors in order to illustrate my virtue, and the gods will bring down good fortune on me so that there may be a breakthrough." Yanzi said: "How wrong my lord is! Kings in antiquity

[91] *Zuozhuan*, Zhaogong 18, 48.841; cf. Legge, *Tso chuen*, p. 671.

[92] He is in any case classified together with Shaman Xian as an important person in the traditions concerning astrology in antiquity.

> relied on the solidity of their virtue to bring peace to the world and on the capaciousness of their actions to embrace the multitudes. The feudal lords honored them as their overlord, and the people adhered to them as to their own parents. That is why heaven and earth were in harmony and the four seasons came in order and why the stars, the sun, and the moon followed their circuits without disorder. Solid virtue and capacious actions make one the mate of heaven, in the image of the seasons, and then one becomes the sovereign of sovereigns and the lord of the bright spirits. In antiquity, lords did not act carelessly and multiply sacrifices, nor take their own person lightly and rely on shamans. With a government in disorder and behavior that is vulgar, do you think to seek out the luminous virtue of the Five Emperors? Do you think that by spurning the worthy and employing shamans you can seek sovereignty for your person? Merit with regard to the people is not easily won, nor does good fortune descend readily: do you not think it will be difficult to become the sovereign of sovereigns? Alas! Your position is lofty but your theories are lowly."
>
> The duke replied: "Regarding Yukuan, the shaman from Chu instructed me, saying, 'Try meeting with him, and you will see.' I met him and was pleased. I believed in his way and put his words into practice. Now that you criticize him, let me drive the shaman from Chu away and imprison Yukuan." Yanzi replied: "You must not send the Chu shaman away." The duke said: "Why?" He replied: "If you send him away, one of the feudal lords will take him in. That you believed him and are at fault domestically is a lack of knowledge; to send him away to another feudal lord abroad is a lack of humanity. Please have the shaman of Chu go east and Yukuan imprisoned." The duke consented.[93]

The *Annals of Master Yan* being of uncertain date and authorship, this tale is probably not historical. But it at the very least represents the author or the editor's attitudes toward shamans.[94] Through Yanzi, the text states with perfect clarity that to imitate the ancients is not to rely on sacrifices and shamans. A disorderly government that employs shamans cannot gain a reputation for virtue, nor can its sovereign obtain the blessing of the gods. What the author thinks of shamans may be seen from the fact he sets them over against the worthy.

Among the thinkers of the period there are virtually none who do not criticize shamans. Mozi (ca. 486–376 BC), for example, even though he "elucidates spirits" 明鬼 and considers religion important, also on occasion stigmatizes shamanic practices:

[93] *Yanzi chunqiu* (Beijing, 1961), "Neipian Jian A," 1.50–51.

[94] It is generally thought this book is not the work of a single author and that it probably took shape in the mid-to-late Warring States (4th–3rd century BC).

> Making music is wrong! How do we know that this is so? The proof is found among the books of the former kings, in Tang's "Code of Punishment", where it says: "Constant dancing in the palace—this is the way of shamans! As a punishment, gentlemen shall be fined two measures of silk."[95]

The historicity of this statement cannot be known.[96] But Mozi clearly opposes such shamanizing. He also insists that in time of war, when "defending the city," the speech and actions of shamans should be strictly controlled:

> The observers of ethers (*wangqi* 望氣) must lodge close to the guard house, while the shamans must lodge close to the public earth god and worship him reverently. Shamans, invocators, astrologers, and observers of ethers must make positive statements to the people and report their prayers to the defenders. The defenders know only that they have prayed. The shamans and observers of ethers must not foolishly make negative statements that frighten the people. Those who do must be judged without mercy.[97]

He also says:

> If the enemy comes from the east, meet him at the eastern altar. The altar is eight feet high, and the hall has eight sealed entries. Eight persons aged 80 preside over the sacrifice with green flags. There are eight green gods eight feet tall, eight crossbows that let the arrows fly eight times. Vestments must also be green, and the sacrificial victim a cock…Relocate (inside the city) the houses and various important sites of worship that are outside the city. When the numinous shamans 靈巫 pray there, supply the sacrificial victims.[98]

While defending the city against an enemy, then, shamans must be fully controlled and utilized, to pray to the gods, help calm the people and excite the army's ardor. They must not speak incautiously lest they cause panic, and should any infringe this order, they should be punished without mercy. In a time when wars were frequent, Mo's ideas were probably welcome to leaders and the military class.

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[95] *Mozi xiangu*, Sun Yirang, ed., (Taibei, 1987), "Fei yue," 8.234–35; translation based on Burton Watson, tr., *Mo Tzu: basic writings*, (New York, 1963), p. 115.

[96] The passage in the *Shangshu*, "Yi xun," 8.115, which says, "Daring to have constant dancing in the palace and taking pleasure in singing in the apartments, this is called shamanic customs" 敢有恒舞于宮, 酣歌于室, 時謂巫風, would seem to be an adumbration of the words of Mozi. Most scholars consider this section of the *Shangshu* to be a fake.

[97] *Mozi xiangu*, "Haoling," 15.561.

[98] *Mozi xiangu*, "Yingdi ci," 15.528–29.

The fact Mozi basically does not look down on shamans may have to do with his general stance on religion. Mozi repeatedly attacked the idea that there were no ghosts and told many "ghost stories" in order to prove their existence. One of them reads as follows:

> Long ago, in the time of Bao, Lord Wen of Song [610–589 BC], there was a minister named Guangu the Invocator, who was in charge of serving the unfortunate dead (*li* 厲). Once a man wearing a red garment (*zhuzi* 袾子) appeared from the temple bearing a club and said, "Guangu, what does this mean? The sacramental jades and circlets do not fulfill the proper standard, the offerings of wine and millet are impure, the sacrificial animals are not fat and flawless as they should be and the ceremonies appropriate to the four seasons are not performed at the right times! Is this your doing or Bao's?" Guangu replied, "Bao is an infant, still in swaddling clothes. What does he know of such matters? I am in charge, and it is all my doing!" Then the man dressed in red raised his club and struck Guangu, who fell dead on the altar. At that time there was not one of the Song attendants who did not see what happened and no one in distant regions who did not hear about it. It was recorded in the spring and autumn annals of Song, and the feudal lords handed down the story, saying, "All who fail to conduct sacrifices with the proper respect and circumspection will incur the punishment of the ghosts and spirits with just such rapidity!"[99]

According to Sun Yirang's interpretation, Guangu was the invocator in charge of preparing sacrifices, and the man dressed in red was a wu-shaman who "knew how to welcome the gods" (*jieshen* 接神). "Spirits of the unfortunate dead descended into his body" 厲神降於其身, and he uttered reproaches to the invocator and then beat him to death. From this story we can see not only that sacrifices to unrequited ghosts were done jointly by shaman and invocator officials but also that Mozi believed implicitly in the power of shamans to bring down the gods by virtue of their mastery of the methods of sacrifice and prayer for blessings.

Zhuangzi (ca. 369–286 BC), by contrast, uses tales and anecdotes to express in direct or indirect manner his contempt for shamans:

> In carrying out an exorcistic sacrifice, one cannot present oxen with white foreheads, suckling pigs with upturned snouts, or people with hemorrhoids to the god of the River. All of this is known by the shamans and invocators, who consider these creatures to be inauspicious. For the same reasons, the spiritual person considers them to be greatly auspicious.[100]

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[99] *Mozi xiangu*, "Minggui B," 8.208–09; tr. Watson, *Mo Tzu*, p. 98.
[100] *Zhuangzi jishi*, "Renjian shi," 2.177; tr. Mair, *Chuang Tzu*, p. 39.

The Tang commentator Cheng Xuanying explains this passage as follows:

> *Sang* 顙 is the forehead. *Kang* 亢 means high. *Zhi* 痔 refers to hemorrhoids. The shaman and the invocator set out straw dogs for sacrifices and select buffalo and pigs for exorcisms. These must be the very best, and of a single color. They select good animals in order to show their sincere reverence, so that the gods will be moved in secret. A pig with a high snout and a low forehead, a buffalo which is not red and has a white forehead, and a person with hemorrhoids who oozes filth are all impure, and it is therefore not meet to go with them to a sacred river to make sacrifice. Of old, people were drowned in the river as a sacrifice to the Lord of the River, until Ximen Bao as prefect of Ye forbade the practice. The text refers to this kind of matter. The female shaman is called *wu*, the male *xi*. The invocator holds the tablet and the sacrificial writ. Auspicious means good. When the shaman master and the scribe invocator perform an exorcism, they know these three items cannot be offered, so they reject them as things which are no good and do not use them. But the divinely intelligent person knows how to be on a par with the Creator, and he knows that, because an item is not useful, it stays whole. Thus the idea a white forehead, a high snout, and a man with hemorrhoids are inauspicious is appropriate as the vulgar attitudes of a lowly shaman. How could they characterize the wisdom of a great man? So to be of material which is not perfect is what the divinely intelligent man considers to be auspicious and a great good.[101]

Zhuangzi's famous tale of the "divine shaman" (*shenwu* 神巫) Jixian 季咸, in which a "spiritual person" defeats a shaman at his own game, reveals that the context of the increasingly virulent attack of intellectuals on shamanism was the development of spiritual exercises.[102] Jixian, begins the tale, could predict the future so unerringly that people fled when they saw him. Liezi 列子, disciple of Huzi 壺子, Master Hu, is so impressed he thinks the shaman superior to his own master. But Huzi replies:

> What I have conveyed to you so far only deals with the surface," said Master Hu. "We haven't yet begun to deal with the substance. And you think you're already in possession of the Way?…Try to bring him along with you next time and show me to him.

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[101] Ibid.

[102] Cf., in these volumes, the articles by Mark Csikszentmihàlyi and Romain Graziani.

For several days in a row Liezi brings the shaman in to see his master, and each time Master Hu shows the shaman a different aspect of himself: "the patterns of the earth"; "the appearance of heaven"; "the neutrality of Great Nonvictory." The fourth and last time, the shaman in his turn is so terrified he runs away:

> "Just now," said Master Hu, "I showed myself to him with my ancestry having not yet begun to appear. I was emptily intertwined with it so that one could not discern who was who. Thus did I bend with the wind and flow with the waves. Therefore he fled."
>
> After this, Master Lie came to believe that he had barely begun to learn. He returned home and did not go out for three years. He cooked for his wife and fed pigs as though he were feeding people. He took no sides in affairs and whittled himself back to the simplicity of the unhewn log. Clodlike, he stood alone in his physical form. Sealed off against perplexity, in this manner he remained whole to the end.[103]

Thus Huzi's practice of the Dao far surpasses the so-called "divine shaman." We saw above that Xunzi (ca. 313–238 BC), while confirming the bureaucracy required shaman officials to take care of divining and questions of good and bad fortune, did not use the word "shaman" directly but added the words "hunchbacked" and "cripple" so as to underline the fact that such people were lacking something. It almost implies someone had to be defective in body in order to take up this line of work, or that shamans were often handicapped, implying contempt. In another passage, when discussing his idea of the sage king (*shengwang* 聖王), he insists that those who disagree with his views are "like hunchbacked shamans and cripples who think they know everything."[104]

In his biography of Xunzi, Sima Qian says:

> Xun Qing hated the government of a corrupt world, where the disorderly sovereigns of condemned states submitted to each other and did not follow the great Way but busied themselves with shamans and invocators, trusted auspices and vulgar literati with little tricks, people like Zhuang Zhou, who disturbed customs with their sarcasm. So did he come to examine the flourishing and decline of Confucianism, Mohism, and Daoism, writing many tens of thousands of words before dying.[105]

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[103] Ibid., "Ying diwang," 3.297–306; tr. Mair, *Chuang Tzu*, pp. 68–70. The same tale is found in the *Huainanzi*, 7.233, and the *Liezi*, 2.70–76.

[104] *Xunzi*, "Zhenglun," p. 389.

[105] *Shiji*, "Mengzi Xun Qing liezhuan," 74.2348.

Confucians, Mohists, and Daoists were not the only ones critical of shamans; the representative Legalist Han Fei (280–233 BC) was as well:

> When the shaman-invocators pray for someone, they say, "May you live a thousand autumns and ten thousand years!" But the "thousand autumns and ten thousand years" are only a noise dinning on the ear—no one has ever proved that such prayers add so much as a day to anyone's life. For this reason people despise the shaman-invocators. Similarly, when the Confucians of the present time counsel rulers, they…spend all their time telling tales of the distant past and praising the achievements of the former kings. And then they try to make their words more attractive by saying, "If you listen to our advice, you may become a dictator or a king!" They are the shaman-invocators of the rhetoricians.[106]

Although the main aim of this passage is to criticize the "words of the scholars" 學者之言, the Confucians whose words are "hollow" and "useless," Han Feizi compares them with shamans and invocators, and when he speaks of the "reason people despise shamans," he is implying that many of his contemporaries looked down on such people. His criticism of shamans may also be seen in this tale:

> Lord Si of Wei 衛嗣君 (d. 293 BC) said to Boyi 薄疑: "I know you think my state too insignificant to take up office in it, but I am going to do everything in my power to get you to serve. Kindly accept a post as high official." And he gave him a fief of ten thousand acres. Boyi said: "My mother has great affection for me and thinks I could be prime minister of a state with ten thousand chariots. But among the shamans in my house is an old lady from Cai 蔡嫗 whom my mother loves and trusts and to whom she has confided the affairs of the household. My knowledge is sufficient for me to discuss such matters viably, and my mother listens to me. But once she has spoken with me, she always asks the shamaness from Cai to decide. Thus, though she says my capacities are sufficient to govern a state of ten thousand chariots, and though we are close as only a son and mother can be, this does not prevent her from consulting with the old lady from Cai. What then of my relationship to you? We are not as close as mother and son, but you have many such shamanesses. Your shamanesses are no doubt important persons who can advance their private interests. Advancing private interests falls outside the cord of the law, by contrast with my words, which are within the law. That which is outside the cord is in enmity with that which is within the law: they are not compatible.[107]

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[106] Han Fei, *Han Feizi jishi*, ed., Wang Xianqian (Taibei, 1980), "Xianxue," 19.1102; tr. Watson, *Han Fei Tzu: basic writings* (New York, 1964), pp. 127–28.

[107] *Han Feizi*, "Waizhu shuiyou A," 13.745; translation based on Jean Levi, *Han-Fei-tse ou le Tao du prince* (Paris, 1999), pp. 379–80.

This passage is not openly critical or contemptuous of shamans, but the domestic shamaness from Cai is in fact compared to "insignificant intimates" of the sovereign who "advance their private interests." From this we can see the image Boyi and Han Feizi had of shamans. Indirectly, this tale demonstrates that, at the very latest, by the 4th–3rd century BC, there were "commoner shamans" in the service of the wealthy: "domestic shamans."

On the basis of the passages quoted above, we may conclude that, in the late Eastern Zhou, it was not just a small minority of thinkers who were critical of shamans. Among the people cited are famous officers who held real power in the ruling class in the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods, while others were leading or representative figures of the most reputable schools of thought—Confucian, Mohist, Legalist and Daoist—in the states. They had attitudes toward shamans that covered the entire range from the merely skeptical to the utterly contemptuous. Some were simply negative; others advocated strict control and efficient use of shamans by the rulers. This means that, in Chinese society of that period, even though some shamans might still have belonged to the ruling class, they no longer had much power or authority in either political affairs or the realm of religion. It goes without saying that the critiques and doubts of the thinkers may have contributed to this loss of authority and position.

Interdiction and repression of shamans

While the criticism and doubts of the thinkers may have damaged the social image of the shamans, their loss of political and social status is much more directly the result of political interdictions and attacks. They do not seem to have met with complete repression or interdiction in the pre-Qin period. The tale of Ximen Bao quoted above may simply reflect the "shaman hunt" attitude characteristic of the Han. As for what Mozi calls the interdiction of and punishment of "shamanic excesses," this was not really an interdiction of shamanic activities but of members of the ruling class overindulging in music (constantly dancing in the palace).

Still, if we look at the passages cited from the *Mozi*, from the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods on, people gradually advocated controlling the activities of shamans. For example, the probably Warring States text (*Taigong*) *Liutao* (太公)六韜 says:

> Fake recipes and bizarre techniques, sinister ways (*zuodao* 左道) of black magic (*wugu* 巫蠱), and inauspicious words that deceive the good people should be forbidden by the king.[108]

The author of the *Book of rites*, no doubt a Confucian scholar of the Warring States, advocates "capital punishment for people who analyze words and break the law, change things by falsifying names, and follow sinister ways that disrupt the political order."[109] Zheng Xuan explains "sinister ways" as referring to black magic and charms.[110]

This shows that the techniques of black magic in which shamans excelled were much feared, and there was worry shamans could use these techniques to "deceive the good people" and "disrupt the political order." For these reasons, some advocated forbidding them. When the "black magic calamity" broke out during the reign of Han Wudi and led to official action, a basic change occurred in the political and social standing of shamans.

Shamans in the Qin and Han

Official shamans and commoner shamans

The social and political standing of shamans had undergone a slow decline throughout the Eastern Zhou. In the Qin and Han, after the transition from the feudal states to a unified empire with "registered households" (*bianhu qimin* 編戶齊民), not only did this tendency not change, it moved faster. A number of scholars have pointed out that the status of shamans was relatively low in the Han.[111] But in the early period, at least some of the shamans were still able to slip into the ruling class. Thus the *Shiji* states:

> After peace had been restored to the empire, Gaozu…appointed various officials for sacrifice and invocation in Chang'an, as well as women

[108] *Liu Tao* (Taibei, 1990), "Wentao," p. 70.

[109] *Liji*, "Wangzhi," 13.260; cf. Legge, *Li chi*, 1.237.

[110] Ibid.

[111] Mori Mikisaburô, "Shinkan ni okeru minkan saishi no tôitsu," *Tôhô gakuhô* 11.1 (1940), 84–87; Xu Dishan, *Daojiao shi* (Taibei, 1976), pp. 10–172; Qu Duizhi, "Shi wu," *Zhongguo shehui shiliao congchao* (Taibei, 1965), pp. 1008–09; T'ung-tsu Ch'u, *Han social structure* (Seattle, 1972), pp. 125–26; Lin Fu-shih, *Handai de wuzhe* (Taibei, 1999); Sun Jiazhou, "Fujutsu no seikô to kandai shakai," *Kodai bunka* 47.7 (1995), 38–47; Feng Xin, "Lun liang Han minjian de wu yu wushu, *Wenshi zhe* 2001.3 (2001), 119–26.

> shamans. The shamans from the region of Liang worshipped such deities as Heaven and Earth, the earth god of Heaven 天社, the waters of Heaven 天水, within the Chamber (*fangzhong* 房中), and in the Hall 堂上. Those from the region of Jin worshipped such gods as the Five Emperors, the lord of the east, the lord in the clouds, the director of destiny, the earth god of the shamans 巫社, the ancestors of the shamans 巫祠, the kinsmen 族人, and the first cook 先炊. Those from Qin worshipped such as the lord of the earth 社主, the protector of shamans 巫保, and imprisoned kinsmen 族纍. The shamans of Jing worshipped such deities as Below the hall 堂下, Wuxian, the director of destiny, and the giver of gruel 施糜. Other shamans appointed especially for that purpose worshipped the Nine Heavens. All of these performed their sacrifices at the appropriate seasons during the year in the palace. The shamans of the River, however, performed their sacrifices at Linjin 臨晉, while those of the Southern Mountains performed sacrifices to these mountains and to Qinzhong, that is, to the spirit of the Second Emperor of the Qin 二世皇帝. All these sacrifices were performed at specified months and seasons.[112]

In the year 201 BC, thus, seven kinds of shaman officials were appointed. Their main function was to sacrifice to the particular gods of their respective regions. Later, in 109 BC, when Southern Yue had been destroyed, Yue shamans were added to the list.[113] In the year 31 BC, the proposals of Kuang Heng 匡衡 and Zhang Tan 張譚 led to the elimination of these eight kinds of shaman,[114] but they may well have been restored before Chengdi's death[115] or, at the very latest, after Aidi came to the throne, because he "restored all the previously honored cults and their officers."[116] In the Eastern Han, the central government still had "eight domestic shamans" (*jiawu* 家巫).[117]

These official shamans must have been regular members of the bureaucracy, with set functions. In the Western Han, they were officers under the great invocator (*taizhu* 太祝), one of six under the chamberlain for ceremonials (*taichang* 太常), whose primary responsibility was the

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[112] *Shiji*, "Fengshan shu," 28.1378–79, translation based on Burton Watson, tr., *Records of the grand historian: Han dynasty II*, rev. ed. (New York, 1993), pp. 19–20.

[113] Ibid., 28.1399–1400.

[114] *Hanshu*, "Jiaosi zhi B," 25.1257–58.

[115] In his late years, because he had no heir, Chengdi had the empress dowager give orders to restore the various sacrifices that had been abolished, no doubt including the eight classes of shaman. See the chapter by Marianne Bujard in this set.

[116] *Hanshu*, "Jiaosi zhi B," 25.1264.

[117] *Xu Hanshu zhi*, "Baiguan zhi," 26.3595, citation of Wang Long's *Hanguan* in Liu Zhao's commentary.

sacrifices in the ancestral temple.[118] In the Eastern Han, they belonged to the bureau of sacrifices (*cisi ling* 祠祀令) under the domestic treasury (*shaofu* 少府), "in charge of the small sacrificial rites of the palace."[119] Although their rank and salary is not recorded, given the fact their office of sacrifices belonged in the Western Han to the chamberlain for ceremonials (outer court, officials of the court), their salary and rank must have been like that of 600 bushel officials.[120] In the Eastern Han, their salary was still 600 bushels, but they were transferred to the domestic treasury (inner court, palace officials).[121] This transfer suggests the role of the shamans in state sacrifices was even less important than in the Western Han.

In the central government, other than the shaman officials just described, there were "expectant officials" (*daizhao* 待詔). In his *Hanguan* 漢官 (*Han officials*), Wang Long of the Eastern Han writes:

> There were 37 expectant officials under the grand scribe-astrologer, six in charge of the calendar, three of turtle divination, three of houses, four of times of day, three of divination by milfoil, two of exorcism, three each of archives, vows, and encomia, nine in all, two each of auspicious rites, prayers for rain, and exorcism, and one physician.[122]

Auspicious rites, prayers for rain, and exorcism are all functions of shamans and were most probably done by them. "Expectant officials" were not full-fledged officials. Thus Ying Shao says: "All people with special techniques were expectant; they were not regular officials. That is why they were said to be 'expectant.'"[123] The Western Han also had such "expectant" shamans:

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[118] *Shiji*, "Fengshan shu," 28.1378, simply records the appointment of "various officials for sacrifice and invocation, as well as women shamans," but does not explain the relationship between the two. Ban Gu's *Hanshu*, "Gaodi ji," p. 81, says: "When Gaozu came to the throne, he created officials for the sacrifices, with shamans from Qin, Jin, Liang, and Jing." This means the "seven shamans" belonged to the category "sacrifices" (*cisi* 祠祀), which in the Western Han was one of six under the chamberlain for ceremonials; see *Hanshu*, "Baiguan gongqing biao," 19A.726.

[119] *Xu Hanshu zhi*, "Baiguan zhi," 26.3595, citation of Wang Long's *Hanguan* in Liu Zhao's commentary.

[120] The rank and salary of sacrificial officers is not recorded, but the "erudites" (*boshi* 博士), who also belonged to the chamberlain for ceremonials, received 600 bushels. The salary of these officers must have been roughly equivalent. See *Hanshu*, "Baiguan gongqing biao," 19A.726.

[121] *Xu Hanshu zhi*, "Baiguan zhi," 25.3574.

[122] Ibid., 25.3572; cited in the commentary by Liu Zhao.

[123] *Hanshu*, "Aidi ji," 11.340; cited by Yan Shigu.

> When Aidi came to the throne, he had a severe illness and summoned specialists from far and near. The capital and the provinces all had people in attendance in the places of sacrifice.[124]

Although the text simply refers to "specialists," from this proposal of Gong Sheng 龔勝 to Aidi we can see that there were shamans among them:

> Sheng said: "I see that the state, when it summons physicians and shamans, sends a carriage. When it summons the worthy, it should do likewise."[125]

As for local government, it does not seem to have had shaman officials in its regular organization. However, in the official sacrificial activities of these governments, shamans did participate, perhaps summoned from among the people.[126]

In summary, there were official shamans in the Han, but only in the lower echelons of the central government's bureau of sacrifices. Definitely part of the official bureaucracy were the "eight shamans" of the Western Han, while in the Eastern Han there were eight "domestic shamans." If a shaman thought to make an official career, he could only fill functions of that kind, and in very limited numbers. And while they could respond to summons, expectant officials were not a part of the regular bureaucracy, and summons were infrequent: nothing was fixed, not the time, the number of people or the nature of the task. For these reasons, it is doubtful there were many shamans who made a career through these channels.[127] In the provinces, while shamans could participate in official sacrifices, it is not clear what their status was, but it would seem, on the basis of the materials we have, that it was of the nature of a temporary summons, not a permanent position.[128] In other words, there were very few shaman officials, and they occupied an infinitesimally small niche in the bureaucracy.

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[124] *Hanshu*, "Jiaosi zhi," 25B.1264.

[125] *Hanshu*, "Wang Gongyu Gong Bao zhuan," 72.3080.

[126] See Lin Fu-shih, *Handai de wuzhe*, pp. 41–42.

[127] On the channels of selection of officials in the Han and the examination system, see the Song work by Xu Tianlin, *Xi Han huiyao* (Taibei, 1981), "Xuanju," 44–45.451–473; Xu Tianlin, *Dong Han huiyao* (Taibei, 1981), "Xuanju," 26–27.279–302; Zheng Qinren, "Xiangju li xuan—liang Han de xuanju zhidu," *Zhongguo wenhua xinlun* (Taibei, 1982), pp. 193–99; Han Fuzhi, "Dong Han de xuanju," *Hanshi lunji* (Taibei, 1980), pp. 113–14.

[128] See Lin Fu-shih, *Handai de wuzhe*, pp. 38–43.

The chances of a shaman becoming a regular official, that is, obtaining a position other than that of shaman, were virtually non-existent, as we can see from the case of Gao Feng 高鳳:

> Gao Feng's *zi* was Wentong. He hailed from Ye in Nanyang. In his youth he was a student. His family engaged in farming, but he single-mindedly recited books day and night without stop... Later he became a famous scholar and taught in Western Tangshan... Even in old age, his ambition never flagged, and he became widely known. The prefect summoned him repeatedly but, fearing he might not be able to refuse, he said he came from a shaman's household 巫家 and could not become an official. He also pretended to sue his widowed sister-in-law over land and, in the end, did not take office. In the Jianchu era (76–83 AD), the chief architect Ren Kui recommended Feng for his frankness, but when he arrived at the public carriage, he pretended to be ill and slipped off back home.[129]

According to this story, Gao Feng avoided office by claiming to be from a shaman household. What exactly is meant here? Is this a legal interdiction? Or is it a customary view? If it is a legal interdiction, then shamans were under the same restrictions as merchants and people registered in the marketplace:

> After peace had been restored to the empire, Gaozu issued an order forbidding merchants to wear silk or ride in carriages, and increased the taxes they were obliged to pay in order to hamper and humiliate them. During the reigns of Emperor Hui and Empress Lü, because the empire had only just begun to recover from the period of war and confusion, the laws concerning the merchants were relaxed, though the sons and grandsons of merchant families were prohibited from holding government office.[130]

The *Hanshu* contains a decree issued in the year 142 BC by Jingdi:

> [But] now [a person must have] capital [sufficient to be required to pay at least] ten or more [times] the poll-tax (*suan*) before he is permitted to become a palace official. The [number of] poll-taxes [which can be paid by] incorrupt gentlemen are not inevitably many. [Just as] those who are enregistered in the market-places [as merchants] are not allowed to become palace officials, [so] those who have not [sufficient] capital are also not allowed to become palace officials. We very much deplore this. If the capital [of incorrupt gentlemen is sufficient so that they pay] four [times] the poll-tax, they shall be allowed to become palace officials, so

[129] *Hou Hanshu*, "Yimin liezhuan," 83.2768–69.
[130] *Shiji*, "Pingzhun shu," 30.1418; tr. Watson, *Han II*, pp. 61–62.

> as not to let incorrupt persons be kept for a long time from office and covetous fellows to profit continuously.[131]

Thus prior to Jingdi, not only were there capital restrictions on officials, those with a market registration were also restricted. Under Wudi, because of the long military campaigns and the consequent fiscal difficulties, new policies were implemented: "men who presented goods would be appointed to official position," those who gave slaves or goats were made "gentlemen" 郎, "among the purchasers of 'ranks of military merit,' those of the *guanshou* 官首 or fifth grade or above were to be accorded the same privileges as regular government officials of the fifth lord class," and "wealthy men who had previously been engaged in the salt and iron industries were appointed as officials in the bureaus." The result was that "the system of selecting officials on the basis of merit fell into disuse," "the way to official position became even more confused," and many merchants became officials.[132] After Wudi, while the interdiction of merchants or people registered in the markets becoming officials still existed, it was probably not strictly enforced. Thus, in the time of Xuandi, He Wu and his four brothers were all provincial clerks even though his younger brother Xian's family was registered in the market.[133] But when Aidi came to the throne in 7 BC, he forthwith issued a decree renewing the interdiction: "No merchants are to be allowed to own private cultivated land or become officials. Those who violate [this order] shall be sentenced according to the Code."[134] Whether or not this decree was put into effect and, if so, for how long, we do not know. But after Aidi, there were again cases of purchase of office (*yuguan* 鬻官).[135] Thus even if the interdiction was not lifted, it is doubtful it had much effect.

But when the interdiction was in effect, although a shaman was not a merchant, perhaps because he was registered in the market, he could be strictly prevented from becoming an official. For example, in the time of Wang Mang, the following "tribute system" (*gongfa* 貢法) applied:

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[131] *Hanshu*, "Jingdi ji," 5.152; translation by Homer H. Dubs, tr. *The history of the Former Han dynasty: a critical translation with annotations* (Baltimore, 1938), 3 vols, 1.329–31.

[132] *Shiji*, "Pingzhun shu," 30.1420–29; tr. Watson, *Han II*, pp. 64–66, 71.

[133] *Hanshu*, "He Wu zhuan," 86.3482.

[134] *Hanshu*, "Aidi ji," 11.1181; tr. Dubs, *Former Han* (1955), 3.22.

[135] *Dong Han huiyao*, "Zhiguan," 25.275–76.

> Craftsmen, doctors, shamans, diviners, invocators, and other specialists, as well as merchants and shopkeepers, whether living in the merchants' quarter, in residential neighborhoods, or in hostels, had each to report his business to the office of the local magistrate. Their capital having been set aside, their profit was calculated and divided into eleven parts, with one part going for tribute. Those who dared not to report or did not report in accord with the facts had everything confiscated and had to do labor service for the magistrate for a year.[136]

These were the rules for the collection of professional taxes from the named trades.[137] Whether it be in the merchants' quarter, residential neighborhoods or hostels,[138] these were all professional addresses. Those who did business in the merchants' quarter, that is the market, theoretically were registered in the market.[139] From the point of view of "tribute," there must have been shamans who lived in town or engaged in their trade in town and were registered there. The chance of such shamans becoming officials must have been very small.

However, Gao Feng's being originally from a shaman family does not seem to refer to market registration. Gao Feng's family was engaged in farming, and he himself was not a shaman but a literatus and a teacher by profession. Even if it was his father or grandfather who was registered in the market, the Han restriction on such people applied to individuals, not their ascendants.[140] So Gao Feng could not use market registration as an excuse for not serving. Hence "being of a shaman family and not being able to become an official" must not refer to a regular rule. It seems

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[136] *Hanshu*, "Shihuo zhi," 24B.1181.

[137] In the Koryo period in Korea (918–1392), as well as in the Li dynasty (1393–1910), shamans paid a similar professional tax. See Li Nenghe, *Chaoxian wusu kao* (1927; tr. Taibei, 1971), pp. 19–23.

[138] See Li Jiannong, *Xian Qin liang Han jingji shi gao* (Taibei, 1981), pp. 221–29.

[139] Some authors think that "market registration" simply refers to place of residence not profession. But it would seem that people who did not reside in the market but had a fixed place in it for their business were also registered there. On the issue of market registration, see Du Zhengsheng, "Zhou Qin chengshi de fazhan yu tezhi," *Zhongyang yanjiuyuan lishi yuyan yanjiusuo jikan* 51.4 (1980), p. 691.

[140] In the Warring States, the state of Wei's household registration laws forbade those engaged in business or running inns, as well as stepfathers and men who lived in their wives' families, from becoming officials—an interdiction that extended to the third generation. But in the Han, among the seven categories of prohibitions, only those who had a market registration for generations, including ego, were excluded. Restrictions on holding office were confined to the individual who was registered in the market. For the Wei laws, see the Shuihudi Qin grave study group, ed., *Shuihudi Qinmu zhujian* (Beijing, 1978), pp. 292–93. On the seven categories of banishment, see the *Hanshu*, "Wudi ji," 6.205, commentary of Yan Shigu in which he cites Zhang Yan. See also Hori Toshikazu, "Kandai no shichikataku to sono kigen," *Sundai shigaku* 57 (1982), 1–27.

most unlikely that so strict a policy of interdiction would have been devised by the Han just for shamans. The fact that Ren Kui continued to recommend Gao Feng is proof of that.

But if it is not a regular law, it may be that it was an optional custom. This is a question very intimately linked to Han career channels, recommendation categories, and the bureaucratic hierarchy. The most important paths to officialdom in the Han were being the son of an official, purchase of office, being the disciple of an academician, special summons, selection after scrutiny and examinations. Recommendation categories included "worthy and excellent" 賢良, "straightforward and upright" 方正 and many more.[141] Of these various paths to officialdom, the most common in the early Western Han were being the son of an official and purchase of office. From the mid-Han on, it gradually became recommendations for "knowledge of the Classics" (*jingshu* 經術), "special summons" (*pizhao* 辟召) and being "filial and incorrupt" (*xiaolian* 孝廉). In the Eastern Han, annual recommendations for this last category were the most important, followed by special summons and being the son of an official.[142]

In this system of selection, starting from the time of Wudi, literati gradually became one of the pillars of the bureaucracy, especially as far as civil officials were concerned. In the Eastern Han, literati became the core of the bureaucracy, together with scribes.[143] Once this was the case, the literati came naturally to have considerable power to manipulate recommendations. Whether it involved examinations or special summons, the literati systematically chose their own kind and rejected others. Under these circumstances, whatever was not in accord with what the Confucian Classics and theories required came to be viewed as "heterodox" and was rejected or attacked, or at the very least looked down on.[144] If we consider the attitudes of intellectuals and the official class toward shamans at that time, they must have been considered

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[141] See *Xi Han huiyao*, "Xuanju," 44–45.451–73; *Dong Han huiyao*, "Xuanju," 26–27.279–302; Zheng Qinren, "Xiangju lixuan," pp. 193–99; Han Fuzhi, "Dong Han de xuanju," pp. 113–14.

[142] See Liu Tseng-kuei, "Handai haozu yanjiu—haozu de shizuhua yu guanliaohua," PhD thesis (Taibei, 1985), pp. 190–91.

[143] See Nagata Hidemasa, "Kandai no senkyo to kanryô kaikyû, *Tôhô gakuhô* 41 (1970), 157–96.

[144] See Xu Zhuoyun, "Qin Han zhishi fenzi," *Qiugu bian* (Taibei, 1984), pp. 483–514.

heterodox, meaning it would have been very difficult for any shaman to enter on an official career by recommendation. Over time, shamans or shaman families, even if they were not market-registered, would not have been considered—or would not have considered themselves—as recommendable. When Gao Feng says he is "from a shaman family and may not be an official," this may have been the truth in those social circumstances, but he must be referring not to the specialized shaman official but to any ordinary official.

From this it may be seen that it was very unlikely that a shaman become an ordinary official, and this was even more unlikely under the Eastern Han, for if they lived or practiced in a market area, they would have been forbidden, as market-registered individuals, from becoming an official. Even if a shaman was not registered in a market, his profession was looked down on by intellectuals and officialdom. Their activities were at odds with the demands of the Confucian Classics, even in conflict with the law, so the literati-dominated official class would reject them, and it would be difficult to become an official either by examination or special summons.

From the tribute system set in place during Wang Mang's reign we can see that, in the Han, shamanizing had already become a commoner's profession. Indeed, by that time it would seem that the majority of shamans had already fallen into the lowest social class and become professional shamans. Already during the debates on salt and iron[145] that took place in Chang'an in 81 BC, the representative of the bureaucracy, Sang Hongyang 桑弘羊, said this:

> When the proposal does not come from oneself, it is easy to praise. When it comes from someone else, it is easy to agree to. If one has to take charge, it is easy to become confused…It is like a shaman in a year of plague 疫歲之巫: all he can do is drum with his tongue in his mouth.[146]

This is a criticism of "worthy and excellent students of literature" 賢良文學 of commoner origin who, without position, published their empty theories. From it we can see the contempt in which Sang Hongyang held shamanic techniques of prayer and exorcism. Indeed, he elsewhere says that "one cannot sacrifice with shamans and invocators nor discuss

[145] See Xu Fuguan, "Yantie lun zhong de zhengzhi shehui wenhua wenti," *Liang Han sixiang shi* (Taibei, 1979), 3.117–216.

[146] Heng Kuan, *Yantie lun* (Taibei, 1980), "Jiukui," 6.60.

with students."[147] But the worthy and excellent students of literature of commoner origin are also negative about shamans:

> It is popular to prettify fabrications and act falsely and serve as shaman and invocator for the people in order to earn some pay…Some become rich through their profession, which is why lazy people study with them and there are shamans on every street and invocators in every ward.[148]

From the words of participants on both sides of the debate we can see that, already in the middle of the Western Han, the social image of shamans among intellectuals and officials was one of "fabricators and cheats." But if we consider they were "to be found in every street and alley," then their numbers and influence most emphatically cannot be overlooked.[149]

Contempt for and repression of shamans

There are frequent expressions of contempt for shamans in the texts of the time, as in Sima Qian's speaking of "the six illnesses for which there is no cure":

> Being proud and discoursing unreasonably is one incurable disease, looking lightly on one's person while valuing wealth is a second, and incapacity to adapt to food and clothing a third. When *yin* and *yang* come forth together and the energies of the viscera are unstable, this is the fourth incurable disease; being weak but unable to take medicine is the fifth; and trusting shamans rather than physicians 信巫不信醫 is the sixth. Whoever has one of these problems is most difficult to cure.[150]

Clearly, Sima Qian did not believe in the capacity of shamans to heal illness. The next example dates to 7 BC, when Du Ye 杜業, who had been chamberlain of ceremonials and was one of the feudal lords, presented a memorial on the occasion of Chancellor Di Fangjin's 翟方進 death:

> Shi Dan was a man of no particular ability and, together with the chamberlain for attendants Xu Shang, who was constantly ill, they obtained high office as members of Fangjin's entourage. In the hopes of reaping great benefits, Dan had earlier personally recommended a home town

[147] Ibid., "Lun zi," 9.93.
[148] Ibid., "San buzu," 6.57.
[149] Lin Fu-shih, *Handai de wuzhe*, pp. 49–86, 133–55; Wen Yongsheng, "Qin Han wuxi de diyu fenbu," *Wenshi zhishi* 1999.8 (1999), 107–12.
[150] *Shiji*, "Bian Cuo zhuan," 105.2794.

> son and the scribe of the district chancellor, who could cause shamans to bring down the gods and pray for good fortune for the state. Fortunately, Your Majesty was most enlightened and sent Mao Moru to first put them to the test. Mao proved them to be interlopers, and they were put to death. If Dan was aware of this when he recommended them, this is the crime of deliberate misleading; if he was unaware, this constitutes turning one's back on the Classics and being besotted with sinister ways. Both are capital crimes.[151]

Thus Du Ye considers an official who believes in shamans to be guilty of the capital crime of "turning his back on knowledge of the Classics and being misled by sinister ways."

At the end of the Western Han, Yang Xiong (53 BC–18 AD), in his *Fayan* 法言 (*Model sayings*)[152] written in his later years, says this:

> Someone asked about the life cycle of the Yellow Emperor. He replied: "That is a way of speaking. In antiquity, the man of the Si clan regulated the water and the land, and shaman steps now often imitate the Pace of Yu. (The famous physician) Bian Cuo 扁鵲 came from Lu 盧, and so many doctors are from Lu. When you want to create fakes, you rely on the real thing. Isn't this the case with Yu, with Lu, or with the life cycle (of the Yellow Emperor)?[153]

While this paragraph is primarily criticizing the contemporary theory of the cycle of the five agents, it incorporates a criticism of the false imitations of shamans and doctors.[154] Li Kui 李軌 of the Jin glosses this passage as follows:

> The man of the Si clan is Yu. In bringing order to land and water, he traversed mountains and rivers until his feet hurt, and he walked like a cripple. Yu being a sage, ghosts, gods, fierce animals, bees, scorpions, and snakes all obeyed him, so ordinary shamans frequently imitate his step.

Regardless of whether this really is the origin of the Pace of Yu (*Yubu* 禹步),[155] the fact Yang Xiong thinks shamans' stepping in this manner

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151 *Hanshu*, "Du Zhou zhuan," 60.2679–80.

152 Xu Fuguan thinks Yang Xiong may have begun writing the *Fayan* when he was about 58 years old, that is around 1 AD, and that he finished it around 10 AD; see Xu Fuguan, "Yang Xiong lunjiu," *Liang Han sixiang shi*, augmented ed. (Taibei, 1979), 2.501.

153 Yang Xiong, *Fayan* (Taibei, 1983), "Zhong Li," 10.1a–b.

154 See Xu Fuguan, "Yang Xiong lunjiu," pp. 522–23.

155 For a discussion, see Jao Tsung-i, *Yunmeng Qinjian rishu yanjiu*, pp. 20–23; Fujino Iwatomo, "Uhokô," *Chûgoku no bungaku to reizoku* (Tôkyô, 1976), pp. 302–16; Liu Zhaorui, "Lun 'Yubu' de qiyuan ji Yu yu wu, dao de guanxi," pp. 264–79.

is "fake" and constitutes "relying on the true to make the false," is a good indication of his contempt. Elsewhere, where he is reflecting on the usefulness of written texts (essays, discussions) and whether or not they are transmitted, he compares proponents of "useless theories" to "shamans drumming" 巫鼓. The phrase "shamans drumming" is commented on by Li Kui as referring to "wild talk": "wild talk harms truth; it is worse than saying nothing." Thus "shamans drumming" is a metaphor for wild and empty theories, and is tantamount to criticizing shamans for being untrue and useless.

In the Eastern Han, the attitude of contempt for shamans on the part of intellectuals and the official class became even more patent. Huan Tan (d. 56 AD), for example, who had a thorough knowledge of the Five Classics and served as court gentleman under Emperor Guangwu (r. 25–57), wrote as follows in the *Xinlun* 新論 (*New discourses*),[156] which he presented to the throne:

> King Ling of Chu rode roughshod over his subordinates, neglected men of worth and devoted himself to ghosts. Believing in the way of shamans and invocators, he purified himself and prepared fresh offerings for the worship of the Lord on High and in honor of the gods... When the people of Wu came to attack, citizens came to warn him of the danger, but King Ling went on amusing himself, drumming and dancing... When the Wu troops arrived, they took his heir apparent and queen captive: how distressing![157]

Our next example is Wang Chong, literatus and local official who, in his *Lunheng*, has this to say:

> People nowadays believe in sacrifices... Rather than improving their behavior, they enrich their incantations. Rather than being respectful to those above, they fear ghosts. Death and calamity they attribute to demonic attack, saying the curse has not yet entirely succeeded. When afflicted by a demonic attack, they sacrifice. When calamities pile up, they attribute it to the fact they were not reverent in their sacrifices. As for exorcisms, they are of no use; sacrifices are of no help; and shamans and invocators are powerless.[158]

Such is Wang Chong's description and criticism of contemporary commoners' beliefs. He would seem entirely to deny any power on the part of shamans to pray for good fortune or exorcise bad.

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[156] *Hou Hanshu*, "Huan Tan zhuan," 28A.955–61.
[157] Huan Tan, *Xin lun* (Taibei, 1976), 22b.
[158] Wang Chong, *Lunheng* (Taibei, 1981), "Jiechu pian," 25.7b–8a.

Our third example is Ban Gu (32–92), a person with a thoroughly Confucian education. In the preface to his *Hanshu* he writes:

> The sages of old worshiped the gods elaborately and made sacrifices to the Lord and to their ancestors, as well as the sacrifices from a distance to the mountains and the rivers. Their bright virtue spread its fragrance, and the harvests were always abundant. In the latter days there were illicit cults and befuddled belief in shamans and scribe-astrologers... Wanton charlatans (magicians) arose amidst the chaos. Having examined the before and after, I rectified ends and beginnings and wrote the fifth treatise, on sacrifices.[159]

Ban Gu clearly took a Confucian stance in writing his "treatise on sacrifices," hoping by his account and criticism of the changes in the ritual system over the dynasties and by using as his model the "register of sacrifices" (*sidian* 祀典) of Confucian orthodoxy, to correct the social phenomena then current of belief in shamans and veneration of illicit gods. His attitude of emphatic rejection of shamanic activities is clear enough.

Our fourth example is Wang Fu, good friend of the Confucian literati Ma Rong and Zhang Heng, who "in his youth loved to study" and who never held office. In his *Discourses of the hermit* he writes:

> When governing, not to have true worthies is like curing illness without true drugs. If to cure illness, real ginseng was needed but one takes radish instead, or if ophiopogon was needed but one takes steamed millet instead—if one does not know what the real thing is and compounds and eats the fake drug instead, the sickness will grow worse. Not knowing one has been cheated, one says the recipe was no good and drugs are of no use in curing the illness. Then one rejects drugs and dares not drink them but instead goes looking for a shaman, even if the result is death.[160]

This is metaphorical language, but it is clear that Wang Fu did not approve of people seeking help from shamans when they fell ill. Elsewhere, he writes:

> The *Songs* criticize "young girls who, instead of spinning hemp, indulge in dance." Nowadays, many women have abandoned domestic chores and have stopped caring for silkworms and weaving to learn how to shamanize and invoke, to play the drums and dance in the service of the gods. Thus do they cheat the little people and confuse them... The families of the sick person are terrified. They rush away from their seasonal tasks and

[159] *Hanshu*, "Xu chuan B," 49B.4242–43.
[160] Wang Fu, *Qianfu lun*, "Sixian," 2.80.

> leave their own homes...Those whose catastrophe or bad luck worsens and becomes severe are too many to count. Some reject doctors and drugs and go to serve the gods ever more urgently. Even when the result is death, people don't realize they have been cheated by the shaman but only regret they have come to him too late. This is most grievously to lead people astray.[161]

In criticizing how shamans cheat people, Wang Fu singles out their taking advantage of peoples' fears. In another passage he writes:

> People's fortune depends primarily on their behavior but is in the end determined by destiny...That which depends on oneself one can always do; that which is up to Heaven is a mystery. Shamans and their prayers may be of some help, but without virtue they will not work. Shamans, scribe-astrologers, and invocators, by their commerce with the gods can come to the rescue in minor matters, but when it comes to matters of life and death, they can do nothing.[162]

Although Wang Fu does not deny the shamans have some power, it is only in matters of little consequence. His contempt for shamanic techniques is clear enough.

The fifth example is Zhong Changtong 仲長統 (180–220), who served as secretarial court gentleman and also played a role in Cao Cao's army at the end of the Eastern Han.[163] In his *Changyan* 昌言 he writes:

> The great ministers in the empire do not take the time to understand the Way of Heaven. What they value in the Way of Heaven is above all taking care of the people's affairs in accord with the stars and following the four seasons to decide when to undertake public works. What can be known of good and bad auspices? Knowing all about the Way of Heaven and having no strategy for the people, that is what you expect from shamans, physicians, diviners, and invocators, from foolish people with no knowledge.[164]

Our sixth example is Fan Ye, who in his *Hou Hanshu* records Gong Chong's 宫崇 presentation of the *Taiping qingling shu* 太平清領書 during the reign of Shundi (r. 126–44):

> In the time of Shundi, Gong Chong of Langya came to the palace and presented the divine book in 170 chapters that his master, Gan Ji 干吉, had

[161] Ibid., "Fuyi," 3.125.
[162] Ibid., "Wulie," 6.301.
[163] See *Hou Hanshu*, "Wang Chong, Wang Fu, Zhong Changtong liezhuan," 49.1646.
[164] Yan Kejun, ed., *Quan shanggu sandai Qin Han Sanguo Liuchao wen*, vol. 1 (Kyoto, 1981), 89.955.

> received by the banks of the Quan in Quyang...It was called the *Taiping qingling shu* (*Book of the pure orders of Great Peace*). Based on the theories of *yin*, *yang*, and the five agents, it was full of the miscellaneous sayings of shamans. The authorities memorialized to say that what Chong had presented was mad and not canonical 妖妄不經. So it was put away.[165]

The concepts of *yin*, *yang* and the five agents were quite current in the Han, so we may suspect that it was because Gong Chong's book was full of "sayings of the shamans" that the authorities considered it mad. Later, under Huandi (r. 147–67), Xiang Kai presented the book again, and again it was not accepted. According to Fan Ye's account, in the year 166, because "the eunuchs dominated at court and punishments were excessive, heir-apparents died one after the other, and catastrophes and bizarre events occurred in number," Xiang Kai sent in a memorial in which he again promotes the *Taiping qingling shu*, saying it can enable the emperor to "make the country flourish and ensure many heirs."[166] But the chancellor memorialized as follows:

> Xiang Kai uses unorthodox words to speak of important matters. His analyses break the law and contravene classical knowledge (*jingyi* 經蓺). He relies falsely on the stars and the gods to invent ideas that fit his personal fancies, and he misleads the sovereign with lies. Please hand him over to the police, have him officially charged with a crime and sent to the Luoyang prison.[167]

Although Xiang Kai managed to get his proposal discussed because he criticized the eunuchs' monopoly on power,[168] the chancellor judged him guilty on the basis of the *Book of rites* passage on "The royal system" cited earlier.[169] Once again, his crime has to do with the *Taiping qingling jing*'s "relying falsely on the stars and the gods," that is, because this book is full of "the miscellaneous sayings of shamans." It would seem, then, that the official class of these two reigns looked with enmity on shamans.

Some officials adopted even fiercer and more concrete modes of attack on shamans. Thus the *Comprehensive meaning of customs* reads:

> Mounts Tang and Ju, located in the Junqiu 逡遒 prefecture of Jiujiang 九江 commandery, each had a spirit. Many shamans gathered there to

[165] *Hou Hanshu*, "Lang Kai, Xiang Kai liezhuan," 30B.1084.
[166] Ibid., 30B.1076–81.
[167] Ibid., 30B.1083.
[168] Ibid.
[169] *Liji*, "Wangzhi," 13.260.

> select consorts [for the gods]. They were rotated yearly, but the men and women were not allowed to take husbands or wives [afterwards]. The common people suffered from it...When Governor Song Jun 宋均 came to assume office...[he] said, "All these shamans are in agreement with the gods. They know their goals and wants. Yet in the end, they pick some humble commoner who is not a suitable match." He thereupon issued a list by which men and women of the shaman families [alone] were to provide consorts. The shamans kowtowed and admitted their guilt, after which [Song Jun] had them killed. Thereafter [the practice] ceased.[170]

This must have happened around 56 AD, when Sung Jun was prefect of Jiujiang.[171] Song did not just look on shamans with contempt, he executed them. Elsewhere in Ying Shao's text we read:

> There are many excessive sacrifices which are local practices in Guiji 會稽 commandery. [There the people] are fond of divining by turtle and milfoil. The people exclusively use oxen in sacrifice. The shamans exact fees and requisition goods in recompense...When Minister of Works Diwu Lun 第五倫 arrived at his post as governor, his first [official act] was to stop this custom...Diwu Lun insisted, "To achieve merit, to accomplish deeds, [that] lies in daring to be decisive. If we are to rule well, we ought to trust to the teachings of the Classics (*jingyi* 經義). There it says, 'Excessive sacrifices confer no blessings!' 'To [presume] to sacrifice to a spirit not in the proper [category] is to curry favor.' The statutes do not allow young animals to be butchered"...He then circulated a directive to the prefectures under his jurisdiction, [stipulating that] the people must be told that they are not to hold sacrifices outside the home...Shamans and invocators who invoke the ghosts and gods in order to terrorize ignorant people were all to be tried and convicted. Anyone who butchered an ox was to be punished immediately...The practices subsequently ceased.[172]

Diwu Lun was prefect of Guiji from 53 to 62 AD.[173] In forbidding local shamanic practices, he relied at once on Han law and the Confucian Classics.[174]

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[170] Ying Shao, *Fengsu tongyi*, "Guaishen," 9.401–02; translation based on Michael Nylan, "Ying Shao's 'Feng su tung yi': an exploration of problems in Han dynasty political, philosophical and social unity," PhD thesis (Princeton University, 1983), pp. 528–29.

[171] See *Hou Hanshu*, "Diwu, Zhongli, Song Han liezhuan," 41.1412–13.

[172] *Fengsu tongyi*, "Guaishen," 9.401–02; tr. Nylan, "Ying Shao," pp. 530–32.

[173] *Hou Hanshu*, "Diwu," 41.1397.

[174] The phrases "excessive sacrifices confer no blessings" and "to sacrifice to a spirit not in the proper category is to curry favor" come respectively from the *Liji*, "Quli B," and the *Lunyu*, "Wei zheng."

Another example of a late Han official and intellectual acting concretely to forbid shamanic activities is Luan Ba 欒巴, prefect of Yuzhang 豫章:

> In the commandery there were many ghosts and demons of the hills and rivers, and many little people ruined themselves to pay for prayers. After Ba…destroyed all private cults and got rid of the devious shamans, the strange events stopped.[175]

Reasons for interdicting shaman

There are three main reasons or considerations that led some Han officials to attack and forbid shamanism.

The register of sacrifices and illicit cults

It is perhaps under the influence of the pre-Qin ritual system and the Confucians that the Qin and the Han, as soon as they unified the world, created a national register of sacrifices (*sidian* 祀典) in which they clearly defined the objects of official sacrifice and the pertinent rites. Although this register changed frequently, any sacrifice that was not in it was "illicit" (*yinsi* 淫祀), and officialdom could therefore forbid it and root it out.[176] As already mentioned, at the beginning of the Han, shamans still had the responsibility for some of the official sacrifices. But starting under Yuandi (r. 48–33 BC) and right down to the end of the Western Han, the register of sacrifices entered a new phase of its development. During this period, because literati like Gong Yu 貢禹, Wei Xuancheng 韋玄成, and Kuang Heng served the one after the other as chief minister, and because "interpreters of the Classics" and "filial and incorrupt" literati increasingly filled important posts in the bureaucracy,[177] in the course of discussions on the Classics, the register of sacrifices, which had previously been changing, gradually came to

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[175] *Hou Hanshu*, "Du Le liezhuan," 57.1841. Luan Ba was in fact not just an official; he was a master of Daoist arts, someone who seems to have played a fairly important role in the formation of the Daoist religion. See Liu Cunren, "Luan Ba yu Zhang Tianshi," in Li Fengmao and Zhu Ronggui, eds, *Yishi, miaohui yu shequ: Daojiao, minjian xinyang yu minjian wenhua* (Taibei, 1996), pp. 19–48.

[176] See Lin Fu-shih, *Handai de wuzhe*, pp. 89–96.

[177] Nagata Hidemasa, "Kandai no senkyo," pp. 161–77.

be fixed.[178] Among the more important changes were the elimination of the ancestral temples in the commanderies and the creation of the sacrifices in the southern and northern suburbs of Chang'an.[179] As for the many cults of gods eliminated from the registry of sacrifices under Chengdi, they mostly continued to receive sacrifice.[180] In the Eastern Han the registry probably pretty much imitated that of the last years of the Western Han.[181] But, as we saw above, the role of shamans in state sacrifices changed with the shaman officials being shifted from the office of the chamberlain for ceremonials to that of the chamberlain for court revenues, meaning they apparently no longer were in charge of certain official sacrifices and sacrificial activities. This change must be related to the drive of the literati to gain complete control of the state registry of sacrifices, because in this domain the shamans were their chief rivals.

Economy and public security

The foundation of Qin and Han society was an economy of small farmers, and "valuing agriculture" was throughout a central state policy. Plowing and weaving were considered the basic professions, and merchants and other service trades were not encouraged and even, on occasion, repressed. It is in this context that professional shamans were considered

[178] On the way literati of this period sought to use the Confucian Classics to reform the government and its ritual system, see Xu Fuguan, *Zhongguo jingxue shi de jichu* (Taibei, 1982), pp. 223–33.

[179] Concerning the establishment of the suburban sacrifices, see Zhang Yancheng, "Xi Han de zongmiao yu jiaosi," MA thesis (Taiwan University, 1986). It is worth mentioning that, in 1956, in the western suburbs of modern Xi'an, a team of archaeologists found the remains of at least nine Han constructions, among them the altar of the southern suburb. Systematic exploration in 1958 led to the discovery that eight of these constructions had a very similar structure, being square and in layers like the character *hui* 回, with each side 180–260 meters long. All had the same central construction, surrounding walls, doors and angular buildings in the four corners of the walls. They could very well represent a group of ritual constructions. According to published studies, these constructions may be among those built by Wang Mang when he was in power under Pingdi. It is difficult to determine what kind of sacrificial sites these were, but given their situation and shape, if we compare them with the written record, they may be sites like the Hall of Light (Mingtang 明堂), the Biyong 辟雍, the altar of Zhurong 祝融畤 or that of the gods of earth and grain (*sheji* 社稷). See Sui Zhongru, "Xi'an xijiao faxian Handai jianzhu yizhi," *Kaogu tongxun* 1957.6 (1957), 26–30; "Han Chang'an cheng nanjiao lizhi jianzhu yizhi qun fajue jianbao," *Kaogu* 1960.7 (1960), 36–39; Huang Zhanyue, "Han Chang'an cheng nanjiao lizhi jianzhu de weizhi jiqi youguan wenti," *Kaogu* 1960.7 (1960), 52–58. See also the chapter in Volume Two by Marianne Bujard.

[180] See *Hanshu*, "Jiaosi zhi B," 25.1257–64.

[181] See Lin Fu-shih, *Handai de wuzhe*, pp. 98–100.

cheats who harmed the people, as we saw above in the cases of Diwu Lun and Luan Ba.

But what worried the rulers most was perhaps the fact that shamans could cheat and confuse the people and engender panic, doubt and disorder.[182] From the point of view of intellectuals or officials, not only could shamanic activities waste the people's wealth and mislead them with regard to their health, they could also be the cause of crowds gathering and causing trouble, disturbing the public order or even threatening the government. Nor was this worry utterly without foundation, because from the time of the Wang Mang interregnum (9–23 AD) to the end of the Eastern Han, there were many incidents of "perverse bandits" (*yaozei* 妖賊) revolting, among them cases in which shamans participated in or led the organizations.[183]

Curses, black magic, and erotic charms

Apart from outright violence and revolt, it was shamanic curses (*zhuzu* 祝詛), black magic (*wugu* 巫蠱), and erotic charms (*meidao* 媚道) that were perceived as threats it was difficult to protect against. All three techniques basically relied on curses[184] and, like all shamanic arts, were used to pray for good and exorcise bad fortune. However, these were techniques that were invariably used to harm people and gain an advantage for the initiator. For example, there was a technique of transferring a curse that was current at the court and among the people. Its basic idea was to use incantations to transfer a misfortune incurred by someone onto another person. The *Balanced assessments* of Wang Chong provides an example: "Shaman Xian knew how to use incantations to transfer a person's illness and cure their misfortune."[185] At the very latest, from the Qin dynasty on the court had an officer who specialized in this kind of "curse transfer" (*yanji* 延疾):

> Among the religious officials of the court was one called the secret invocator 秘祝. If any disaster or evil omen appeared, it was his duty to offer

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[182] The terms "doubt" 疑眾 and "disorder" 亂政 come from the *Liji*, "Wangzhi."

[183] See Lin Fu-shih, *Handai de wuzhe*, pp. 140–55; Fang Shiming, "Huangjin qiyi xianqu yu wu ji yuanshi Daojiao de guanxi—jian lun 'Huangjin' yu 'Huangshen yuezhang,'" *Lishi yanjiu* 3 (1993), 3–13; Higashi Shinji, "Gokan shoki no fuja no hanran ni tsuite," Nagoya daigaku tôyôshi kenkyû hôkoku 25 (2001), 113–27.

[184] Lin Fu-shih, *Handai de wuzhe*, pp. 71–80.

[185] *Lunheng*, "Yandu pian," 23.1b. For the meaning of *yan*, "to extend," as *yi*, "to transfer," see Liu Pansui, *Lunheng jijie* (Taibei, 1975), "Yandu pian," p. 457.

> sacrifices with all speed and pray that the blame for the mishap might be transferred 移過 from the ruler to the officials or the people.[186]

It would seem that this Qin dynasty practice continued in the Han until Wendi abolished it:

> In the thirteenth year of his reign (167 BC) Emperor Wen issued an edict saying, "At the present time the secret invocator is delegated to pray that the blame for any faults committed by me be transferred to himself or the lower officials. I find this practice wholly unacceptable. From now on, let the post of secret invocator be abolished!"[187]

Whether the court practice really stopped is hard to say, but commoner shamans certainly continued to use the technique, as can be seen from Yan Shigu's commentary on what the *Hanshu* refers to as the "interdiction of shamanic sacrifices along the roads" in the year 99 BC:

> Wenying (fl. 196–220) writes: "At first, the Han dynasty made sacrifices upon the roads, to take away misfortunes and calamities and transfer them upon travelers. The people considered this [practice] unorthodox, so he now stopped it." Shigu comments: "Wen's interpretation is mistaken, for Emperor Wen had previously done away with the secret invocator and the transference of faults [to others]. This [order] is now merely a general prohibition to commoner shamans who perform sacrifices upon the roads."[188]

The *Hanshu* account is too succinct to know exactly what is meant by "shamanic sacrifices along the roads" 祠道中. But Yan Shigu's idea that this refers to the practices of commoner shamans must be close to reality.

In sum, it would seem that people in the Han dynasty believed firmly that this kind of incantation could do harm, and quite a few shamans and their employers were severely sanctioned for using this technique. The *Shiji* gives the example of the Marquis Ze of Qiu 遒侯則 who in the year 88 BC, "because he had employed a shaman to go to Qi Shaojun's 齊少君 ancestral hall to curse him, was removed from his marquisate for behavior profoundly contrary to the Way."[189] The *Hanshu* provides another example:

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[186] *Shiji*, "Fengshan shu," 28.1377; tr. Watson, *Han II*, p. 18.

[187] Ibid., 28.1380; tr. Watson, *Han II*, p. 20.

[188] *Hanshu*, "Wudi ji," 6.203; translation based on Dubs, *Former Han*, vol. 2 (1944), p. 105, n. 34.2, with modification of the last line to conform to the present author's reading of this passage (translator's note).

[189] *Shiji*, "Hui Jing Xian houzhe nianbiao," 19.1019.

> During the black magic crisis, Guo Rang 郭穰 accused the wife of the chancellor, saying she had several times, at the behest of the chancellor, had a shaman sacrifice to the earth god and curse the ruler and speak evil words.[190]

This event also occurred under Wudi, when the chancellor was Liu Qu'ao 劉屈氂. His wife was later executed in the marketplace. Another *Hanshu* example took place in the time of Zhaodi and involved Liu Xu 劉胥, a son of Wudi who had been enfeoffed as King Li of Guangling 廣陵厲王:

> Seeing the emperor was young and had no sons, Xu had improper aspirations. In a place in Chu called Shaman-Ghost 巫鬼, Xu invited a shamaness called Li Nüxu to summon the god and curse…Xu gave her money frequently and had her pray on Shaman Hill 巫山…Then Zheng, king of Chang, also had a shaman engage in cursing. Later he was cashiered…When Xuandi came to the throne…he had Nüxu do curses as before.[191]

After Wudi's death, Xu, like every other prince, had an opportunity to succeed to the throne. Hence, regardless of who was on the throne, Xu had shamans curse and make sacrifices, in the hope that, if the emperor died, he might succeed him. This is a classic example of how the Han feudal princes used shamanic curses to try and seize power. Similar things happened in the feudal houses:

> When King Xiao (of Zhongshan) 中山孝王 died, he had a son who succeeded him as king but who was not yet a year old and had an eye disease. The queen herself took care of him, praying and sacrificing frequently to get rid of the disease. When Aidi came to the throne, he sent…Zhang You 張由 with a doctor to heal the young king of Zhongshan. You himself was manic…and falsely accused the queen of Zhongshan of cursing the emperor and empress…The censor Ding Xuan 丁玄 was sent to investigate, and the shaman Liu Wu 劉吾 confessed she had done the cursing.[192]

This would seem to be a case of revenge, but for our purposes what it shows is that people really did believe shamanic curses could cause harm. A similar event, involving Liu Yun 劉雲, King Yang of Dongping 東平煬王, occurred in the time of Aidi:

190 *Hanshu*, "Liu Qu'ao zhuan," 66.2883.
191 *Hanshu*, "Waiji zhuan," 97.4006.
192 Ibid.

> In the time of Aidi, the earth on Saltless Mountain was suddenly covered with grass in the shape of a straight highway. Also, on Gourd Mountain, a boulder began to turn and stand up. (Liu) Yun and his queen Ye 謁 went secretly to the stone to make sacrifice…In the year 4 BC, Xi Fugong 息夫躬, Sun Chong 孫寵 and others together went to see the minister Dong Xian 董賢 and accuse Yun. At that time, Aidi was ill and full of rancor. He confided the matter to the authorities, with the result the king and Queen Ye were put in prison to be investigated. It was said they had employed the shaman Fu Gong 傅恭 and the concubine Hehuan 合歡 to make sacrifice and curse the emperor so that Yun could become the Son of Heaven…Yun committed suicide, and Ye was executed in the marketplace.[193]

Regardless of whether Liu Yun and his queen really had employed the shaman Fu Gong and the concubine Hehuan to curse Aidi, the emperor and his courtiers believed the emperor's illness to be the result of black magic. So when the finger was pointed at Liu Yun, the accusation was readily believed. Moreover, Liu Yun really had employed shamans.

There is also so-called "black magic." Because of the name of this technique, scholars have long misunderstood it to involve "poisoning" 蠱毒 of the kind that was current in the southwest border regions during the Wei and the Jin.[194] That these are not identical methods may be seen from the law code drawn up by Cui Hao 崔浩 on behalf of Shizu (r. 424–51) around the year 430:

> In cases of poisoning, both the men and women involved were to be beheaded and their homes burned down. In cases of black magic, a goat was attached to their back, and they were drowned in a pit.[195]

Thus Cui Hao distinguished very clearly between the two in his new law code. In a case of outright poisoning, the punishment was beheading, a normal legal procedure. Burning down the house was designed to eliminate completely the poison. But in the case of black magic, as it involved incantations and demonic curses, the perpetrators were dealt with in ritual manner, by drowning.[196]

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[193] *Hanshu*, "Xuanyuan Liuwang zhuan," 80.3325.

[194] *Wugu* involves incantations, while *gudu* involves actual poison, usually derived from insects or snakes. Most scholars have confused the two. See Li Ben, "Shuo gudu yu wushu," *Zhongyang yanjiuyuan minzuxue yanjiusuo jikan* 9 (1960), 271–82; Qu Duizhi, *Zhongguo shehui shiliao congchao*, pp. 513–25.

[195] Wei Shou, *Weishu* (Beijing, 1974), "Xingfa zhi," 111.2874.

[196] See Lin Fu-shih, "Shi shi Shuihudi Qinjian zhong de 'li' yu 'dingsha,'" pp. 15–16. The Japanese scholar Tezuka Takayoshi 手塚隆義 also thinks black magic is a mode of cursing: see his "Hu wu kao," *Shiyuan* 11.3–4 (1938), 422–32.

During the reign of Wudi, in the years 92–90 BC, a series of cases of black magic occurred in the context of a wide-reaching political struggle. Wudi's biography in the *Hanshu* gives a detailed account of the events, which caused the death of several tens of thousands of people. The persons involved included the empress, the heir apparent, princesses, the prime minister and the famous general Li Guangli 李廣利.[197] It is fair to say that few other political incidents in the Han dynasty involved such highly placed individuals. Elsewhere, the *Hanshu* has this to say about it:

> Jailed, (Zhu Anshi 朱安世) wrote a memorial in which he denounced (Gongsun) Jingsheng 公孫敬聲 and Princess Yangshi 陽石 for having secretly planned to have a shaman make sacrifice and lay a curse on the emperor. They had puppets buried underneath the horse path to Ganquan 甘泉, and the curse contained words of hate. When the authorities investigated He (Gongsun Jingjing's father, who was prime minister), they punished him severely. Both father and son died in prison, and the whole clan was eliminated. The black magic began with Zhu Anshi, came to fruition with Jiang Chong 江充, and spread to the princess, the empress, and the heir apparent, all of whom came to grief.[198]

This is taken from the account of the beginning of this incident of black magic. From the way it is described we can see that so-called black magic is in fact not very different from cursing. It just adds the burial of puppets. Elsewhere, the *Hanshu* completes the narrative:

> The emperor proceeded to Ganquan, where he fell ill. (Jiang) Chong, seeing the emperor was old and fearing that, when the emperor died, he himself would be executed by the crown prince, engaged in subterfuge, stating in a memorial that the emperor's illness was the result of black magic. The emperor then commissioned Chong to deal with the case. Chong had a Hu shaman 胡巫 dig in the ground in search of puppets, and he arrested those engaging in witchcraft and, in night sacrifice, sighting ghosts. He arbitrarily arrested and interrogated the culprits, using a red hot iron to cauterize them and forcing them to submit. People then falsely accused each other of the crime of witchcraft, and officials arbitrarily charged people with the crime of treason. Several tens of thousands were implicated and put to death. At this time, the emperor was old, and he suspected

[197] See *Hanshu*, "Wudi ji," 6.208–10. Li Guangli's involvement in this affair of black magic was the cause of his surrender to the Xiongnu. Afraid he would be executed upon returning, he surrendered. The *Shiji*, "Xiongnu liezhuan," 110.2918, says: "When word reached him that his entire family had been wiped out as a result of the witchcraft affair, he and all his men surrendered to the Xiongnu"; tr. Watson, *Han II*, p. 161.

[198] *Hanshu*, "Gongsun, Liu, Tian zhuan," 66.2878–79.

> everyone of black magic and imprecations... When Chong realized this, he said that there were poisonous vapors in the palace. He first victimized those ladies in the palace who were less favored by the emperor, then the empress, and finally dug up the source of the poison in the crown prince's palace, where he found puppets of palownia wood.[199]

From the way Jiang Chong handled this matter we can see that black magic primarily involved sacrifice, incantations and the burial of wooden puppets. Its nucleus was the use of incantations, a fact we can prove from another incident that occurred in 102 AD:

> Hedi (r. 89–105) and his empress Yin 陰... had grown less fond of each other and had frequent disputes. The empress' maternal grandmother, Deng Zhu 鄧朱, came and went in the palace. In the summer of the year 102, a rumor had it that the empress and Zhu had engaged in black magic... The emperor had the palace attendant-in-ordinary Zhang Shen 張慎 and the imperial secretary Chen Bao 陳褒 interrogate them in the palace prison. Zhu and her two sons Feng and Yi, together with the empress' younger brothers Yi, Fu and Tang implicated each other, and it was judged to be a case of sacrificial cursing 祠祭祝詛, profoundly contrary to the Way.[200]

Empress Yin and her maternal grandmother were accused of "engaging in black magic," said to have involved sacrifice and cursing—proof there is no substantive difference between black magic and cursing.

Shamans may not have been the only persons who made use of the technique, but there must have been quite a few shamans who were well versed in it:

> When (Che) Qianqiu (車)千秋 saw what was happening, that the emperor had for years on end kept the crown prince in prison and had executed or fined many, so that all his subordinates lived in terror, he thought how to get the emperor to relax and bring consolation to the people. Together with the censor and the full 2000 bushel officials they wished the emperor long life and sung his praises, urging him to act with benevolence and relax the punishments, to take pleasure in listening to music, to nourish his will and harmonize his spirits, and, for the sake of the world, to enjoy himself. The emperor responded: "Because of my lack of virtue, ever since the assistant chancellor and the general of Sutrishna (Li Guangli) plotted rebellion, the calamity of black magic has affected many high-ranking officials. For months now I have been eating once a day: how could I listen to music?... The chancellor has himself dug up the evidence of

[199] *Hanshu*, "Kuai, Wu, Jiang, Xi Fu zhuan," 45.2178–79.
[200] *Hou Hanshu*, "Huanghou benji," 10.417.

> black magic at the Orchid Terrace, as everyone knows. To this day there are shamans who have escaped and who continue in secret to attack my person. Far and near people engage in black magic. I am very sorry, but how can I live long? Kindly do not raise your glass to toast!…Do not speak of this again."[201]

From Wudi's words we can see that quite a number of shamans must have been caught and killed, but others were still on the run. The emperor had the feeling that shamans everywhere were busy cursing him. This also shows that an important feature of shamanic activity was cursing.

Finally, there is "the way of seduction" (*meidao* 媚道). Some think this refers to the arts of the bedroom (*fangzhong shu* 房中術), others that it is female black magic which "could cause someone to lose favor and meet misfortune, or gain favor and fortune."[202] These two explanations are not in complete contradiction, but what really counts is that the nucleus here, too, is incantations:

> Emperor Jing's eldest son was Liu Rong 劉榮, whose mother was Lady Li 栗姬, a native of Qi. It was he whom Emperor Jing first designated as heir apparent. The eldest princess Piao had a daughter whom she wished to give to the heir apparent as a concubine, but Lady Li…did not allow it…The eldest princess, angered at Lady Li's refusal, took every opportunity to talk viciously of her shortcomings to the emperor: "Whenever Lady Li meets any of the ladies of the inner palace who are more honored and favored than herself, she has her attendants utter curses and magic spells and spit behind their backs. She is practicing perverse seduction 邪媚道 in an attempt to win your affections!"[203]

This passage means either that Lady Li had her attendants utter incantations and engage in "perverse seduction" or that the sorcery consisted in incantations and spitting. If it is the latter, then incantation is central to "perverse seduction" as well. Be that as it may, the fact the two phrases occur together means we must look at their relationship.

A second instance of "the way of seduction" took place in the time of Wudi:

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[201] *Hanshu*, "Gongsun, Liu, Tian zhuan," 66.2884–85.

[202] See Qian Zhongshu, *Guansui bian* (Beijing, 1979), vol. 1, pp. 296–99; Li Jianmin, "'Furen meidao' kao—chuantong jiating de chongtu yu huajie fangshu," *Xinshi xue* 7.4 (1996), 1–32.

[203] *Shiji*, "Waiji shijia," 49.1976; translation based on Burton Watson, tr., *Records of the grand historian of China*, vol. 1, *The early years of the Han dynasty 209 to 141 B.C.* (New York, 1961), pp. 387–88.

> Empress Chen 陳 finally resorted to the black arts of female sorcery in an effort to win his affection. The whole affair came to light, and as a result Empress Chen was dismissed.[204]

The *Hanshu* has a clearer account of this dismissal, which took place in the year 130 BC: "The heads of those who were arrested on account of witchcraft and black magic were all displayed in the marketplace."[205] Elsewhere, we read:

> Empress Chen was the daughter of the eldest princess, Piao . . . Because she was favored, she gave herself airs, but after more than ten years she had still not had a son . . . She then practiced the female way of seduction, and was discovered. In the year 130 BC, the emperor dealt severely with her case, and her daughter Chufu 楚服 and others were accused of doing black magic sacrifices and incantations on the empress' behalf and of doing what was profoundly contrary to the Way. Over 300 people were implicated and executed, and Chufu's head was displayed in the marketplace. The emperor had an official give the empress the following document: "The empress has failed to behave properly and has been led astray by shamans and invocators. She cannot enjoy the Mandate of Heaven. Let her return her seal of office and retire to live in the Changmen Palace."[206]

Together, these two accounts show that "the female way of seduction" is tantamount to an indictment whose content is not very different from that of cursing and black magic: all are founded on incantations, which are clearly the work of shamans. The shaman referred to in the document when it says Empress Chen has been "led astray by shamans" may be Chufu, who is called a female shaman in the *Han Xiaowu gushi* 漢孝武故事 (*The tale of Emperor Wu of the Han*) falsely attributed to Ban Gu.

A third example of this kind of sorcery took place in the year 18 BC in the palace of Chengdi:

> Zhao Feiyan 趙飛燕 accused Empress Xu 許 and the concubine Ban 班 of practicing the way of charms and of uttering imprecations in the rear palace that included curses of the emperor. Empress Xu was dismissed.[207]

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[204] Ibid., 49.1979; tr. Watson, *Han I*, p. 390.
[205] *Hanshu*, "Wudi ji," 6.164; tr. Dubs, *Former Han*, 2.41.
[206] *Hanshu*, "Waiji zhuan," 97.3948.
[207] Ibid., 97.3984.

Another passage reads:

> Time passed, the empress declined in favor, and in the rear palace there were many new loves. The empress' sister Ye 謁, wife of the Marquis of Ping'angang 平安剛, used charm incantations to harm pregnant ladies such as Wang the Beautiful 王美人 in the rear palace and [General] Feng 鳳. When this was found out…Empress Xu was dismissed and sent to live in the Zhaotai Palace.[208]

The stories of Empress Xu and Lady Li are very similar. In both cases, "the way of seduction" and "curses" are mentioned together. They could be read as referring to something different, but if we look at the three examples given above, we can affirm at a minimum that they all have to do with women fighting for favor and that all involve the use of incantations. Nonetheless, black magic and the way of seduction and curses are not identical. At the very least, they involve different instruments, puppets in the case of black magic, something else in the way of seduction:

> (The marquis of Jiangling), Shi Zihui 史子回, was enfeoffed as marquis because he was of the family of Emperor Xuan's grandmother…He married Yijun 宜君, the granddaughter of King Cheng. Jealous, she strangled over 40 concubines and broke off and stole the arms and legs of firstborns to use in the way of seduction. Someone reported this in a memorial to the throne, and the judgment was execution in the marketplace.[209]

So here the limbs of a baby were used. The *Hou Hanshu* reports yet another case of "perverse seduction":

> Empress Dou 竇…enjoyed unique imperial favor and completely monopolized the rear palace. Earlier, Madame Song 宋貴人 had given birth to Prince Qing 慶…The Empress had no sons and was jealous of her…so she slandered Madame Song and said she practiced perverse seduction.[210]
>
> Empress Dou was highly favored, but because the Song sisters were both favored by the emperor and the elder Madame Song's son Qing was heir apparent, Empress Dou was full of hate and plotted with her mother, Lady of Biyang 比陽, to ensnare Madame Song…Later, in the gate of the side courts they intercepted a letter written by Madame Song. It said: "I am ill and would like to have fresh rabbit; let family members go get one." They then falsely accused her of wishing to engage in black

[208] Ibid., 97.3982.
[209] *Shiji*, "Jianyuan yi lai houzhe nianbiao," 20.1065.
[210] *Hou Hanshu*, "Huanghou benji," 10.415.

> magic cursing, with the rabbit being the means to do it. Day and night they slandered her until the emperor gradually distanced himself from mother and child.[211]

Comparison of these two passages shows that, for people of the Han, the "way of seduction," cursing and "*gu* techniques" were all of the same kind, and that the rabbit was one of the items used.

These three forms of black magic may have used different items,[212] but all are forms of cursing, a technique Han shamans clearly excelled in. Because these techniques were thought really to be able to kill, and because they were secret, they were often used in political assassinations. This must have been one of the reasons the ruling class always sought strictly to control or even to repress shamans.

Conclusions

It is clear that, in ancient Chinese society, shamans played an important role. At the very least, prior to the Eastern Zhou they enjoyed a quite favorable social image. As to whether their political and social status was high or low, this is not a simple matter.

In the Shang dynasty, regardless of whether the Shang king can be called a "shaman king" and regardless of whether diviners can be considered shamans, if looked at from the record of myths, legends and the oracle bones, given the social circumstances and the nature of religious belief in those times, it is not plausible to think the shamans were excluded from ruling circles. By virtue of their techniques and rites for bringing down the gods, divining, healing, praying for blessings and averting misfortune, in a society which "loved ghosts" and "valued sacrifice," they must have played a very important role and enjoyed relatively great influence.

In the Zhou, at least in the Western Zhou, in the context of the feudal system, whether it be in the capital region of the Son of Heaven or in the various states, all had shaman officials and official shamans. They

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[211] *Hou Hanshu*, "Zhangdi bawang liezhuan," 55.1799.

[212] The items used in these three techniques may not have been limited to those mentioned, and there were no fixed rules for their use. Thus it may be that there was in fact no difference between the techniques as regards the objects used. On the basis of the limited material in our possession, we will temporarily consider that the techniques were different with regard to the instruments used.

were in charge of the sacrificial work and religious affairs of the ruling class and the entire society (state). In the highly differentiated class society of the Zhou, the status of the shamans must have been that of aristocrats, not commoners or slaves.

Starting in the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods, because the competition between the states for survival grew ever more fierce and wars ever more frequent, with small states being extinguished one after the other, not only did "the rites decay and music collapse," the feudal system gradually disintegrated. In addition, various officials who had once been a part of the entourage of the feudal leaders—shamans, invocators, sacrificers, diviners—lost their positions and could no longer rely on their techniques such as sacrifice, astrology, divination and healing to retain their position in the ruling class. Having lost their source of livelihood, they had little choice but to use their religious knowledge to "serve" (or "cheat" or "scare") ordinary members of society and thereby make a living.[213] Others turned to wandering from state to state, seeking new benefactors among the lords and aristocrats.

However, not all shamans fell to the status of commoner or peripatetic shaman. In "the important affairs of state, sacrifice 祀 and war 戎," the ruling circles still could not do without shamans. But with the increasingly fierce struggle for survival, the warrior class and the civil officials, those who could take charge of administration, gradually grew in importance, and the now unemployed royal officials gradually became peripatetics. In order to seize the best places in this new world, or even to become leaders of the new society as regards direction and social order, thinkers representing new ways of thought flourished: Confucians, Mohists, Daoists, Legalists and specialists of *yin* and *yang*, among others. Not only did they attack each other, all of them criticized the representatives of traditional religious culture, the shamans and their techniques. In other words, in this period not only did China undergo radical political and social change, it also gave rise to a major transformation of its religion, culture and thought.

Once the Qin had unified China and had set up the imperial and administrative systems involving registration of population, the concrete systems of politics and society and the intangible worlds of culture and

[213] The tale of Ximen Bao told above is a classic example of this.

thought[214] also gradually stabilized. In this new imperial system with its new cultural patterns of thought, a minority of shamans were still able to find a place in state sacrifices and, thereby, maintain a relatively high political and social position. But the vast majority of shamans fell to commoner status and became commoner shamans who exercised their profession for gain. They became the objects of attacks or even interdictions by the emperor and his officials. Once the imperial system had come into being, shamans fell into the lower classes and found it very difficult to recover their former glory.

[214] Concerning the particularities of Qin and Han political and social structure, see Du Zhengsheng, *Bianhu qimin: chuantong zhengzhi shehui jiegou zhi xingcheng* (Taibei, 1990).

THE SUBJECT AND THE SOVEREIGN: EXPLORING THE SELF IN EARLY CHINESE SELF-CULTIVATION

Romain Graziani

Introduction

One of the broadly shared assumptions of Western philosophy is that the dominant function in human beings is thinking and knowing. It deals with self-conscious subjects as the sole cause of their actions, transparent to—and sovereign over—themselves. Philosophers find, in the thoughts they entertain about their own thoughts, the very substance of their beings. They focus their sight and attention on thought as if it were the summit of their activity. They deliberately forget everything that is prior to thought, prior to language, prior to clear and distinct ideas, namely their inner dispositions, moods, frames of mind, mental impulse or life force. The essence of classical metaphysics revolves around the question: how is true knowledge possible? Plato's concept of *psyche*, Aristotles' *noos*, Descartes' *res cogitans*, or Kant's transcendental subject were all posited in order to answer this fundamental question of true knowledge.

From this very general perspective we can discern a duality that runs from ancient Greece through the Hellenic world down to Christianized Europe—a duality first outlined by Pierre Hadot and then by Michel Foucault—between a theoretical subject primarily conceived as a thinking being aspiring to authentic knowledge, and an ethical subject engaged in the process of transforming himself through various practices. The latter tendency seems to prevail in early China and constitutes one of its most salient orientations. These practices transform the self conceived as an *ethos*, defined by one's character, inner dispositions and behavior. Contrasting with the theoretical question of knowledge, the way of ethics explores the construction—but, as we will see below, also the dissolution—of the self. The subject or the self is conceived as the totality of its concrete aspects, not as an immortal ontological reality distinct from the body. How were these practices of the self envisioned and debated in their formative period? To what extent did they contribute to the development of a religious sensibility? What kind of body is shaped in

self-cultivation? Is there a compatibility between individual practices and social norms? How did the exploration of the self affect, and how was it in turn affected by, the conception of political authority? What is the role played by texts in the self-formation process?

The history of self-cultivation for the period of the Warring States can only be retraced through very incomplete records that offer a fragmentary portrait of the beliefs, discourses and practices developed at the time. The dating and authorship of the relevant writings is a matter of conjecture and frequently revised working hypotheses. Many texts pertaining to the so-called philosophical traditions have been read over the course of the past decades in the light of new material discovered in tombs. These materials confirm and strengthen the ties between philosophical speculation and concrete practices. It should be noted that in many cases manuscripts found in tombs have a higher degree of technicality than the transmitted texts from the same period. Such are the legal and administrative documents unearthed at Shuihudi 睡虎地, Zhangjiashan 張家山 and Juyan 居延. The tombs unearthed at Baoshan 抱山, Wangjiatai 王家台 and Yinwan 尹灣 contain divinatory speculations intertwined with administrative concerns, while political and cosmological insights define the overall hybrid inspiration of the scrolls and slips found at Guodian 郭店 and Yinqueshan 銀雀山. The site of Mawangdui, where one version of the *Wuxing pian* 五行篇 (*Five kinds of action*) was discovered in 1973, also harbored a wide array of technical texts, even if some of them do have a philosophical inspiration or offer a variant of transmitted texts such as the *Daode jing*. Among others, Mark Csikszentmihàlyi reminds us that our textual record has not only been augmented, but now enjoys an unprecedented variety of genres which dangerously shakes the frail edifice of received notions of schools and textual genres.[1] We must now take stock of this variety and variability of texts and patiently rewrite the intellectual history of pre-imperial China.

Historians also keep reminding us that an absolute beginning is never to be found anywhere. There is certainly a prehistory of self-cultivation practices in archaic China, or during the Spring and Autumn period. Unfortunately, what we know about it is most incomplete. The written records are often from a later time, and the earliest extant texts that

[1] Mark Csikszentmihàlyi, *Material virtue. Ethics and the body in early China* (Leiden and Boston, 2004), p. 1.

provide full-fledged description of self-cultivation practices mostly date from the Han. Furthermore, the meaning of many key terms is often hard to interpret and remains subject to conflicting interpretations by modern scholars.

As a phase subsequent to philological and text-critical discussion, the systematic analysis of the literary and rhetorical structures of self-cultivation texts, their characteristic stock of expressions, their influence on and relationship to texts labeled as "philosophical," and the history of their interaction with society are all topics that await exploration. The thorough study of all these contextual features is a Herculean undertaking which would require far more than a single monograph. But we must admit at the outset that far too little is known about the uses of these texts or the extent of their influence on society.

We have already noted that self-cultivation does not fit neatly into the traditional doxography of competing schools of "philosophy," as it concerns instructions for meditation as much as therapeutic principles, metaphysical speculations, gymnastic exercises and postures, culinary recipes, and cosmological considerations. While this disparate group of texts, brought together under the rubric "self-cultivation," constitutes a source of primary importance for understanding Chinese thought and the development of the Daoist religion, there is a marked difference between the long-lasting influence which these texts had on early Chinese thinkers (Xun Kuang 荀況 first of all, but also the anonymous writers of the Daoist-oriented encyclopedias, the *Annals of Sire Lü*, and the *Huainanzi*) and the striking absence of an exegetical tradition for foundational[2] texts such as the chapters of the "Art of the mind" in the *Guanzi*.[3]

Self-cultivation is furthermore an expression that may appear vague and too broad. Linguistically, it has, however, precise counterparts in primary sources, with a set of equivalent expressions using the term *xiu* 修 (to care for, to work on, to cultivate) and/or *yang* 養 (to nourish,

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[2] By "foundational," we mean that the technical terminology forged in these texts and their basic tenets exerted a long-lasting and pervasive influence on major Warring States and Han texts later viewed as Daoist or Legalist, but also on authors claiming they belonged to the Ru tradition.

[3] For a general overview, accessible to non-specialists, of the reasons for this disregard and the importance of archeological discoveries in recent decades as well as questions pertaining to labeling philosophical schools, see the work of Harold Roth, *Original Tao: "Inward training" (*Nei-yeh*) and the foundations of Taoist mysticism* (New York, 1999); see in particular the introduction and chap. 5.

to nurture), in combination with *shen* 身 (the self, or the body), *xin* 心 (the heart/mind) or *xing* 形 (the physical "form" or appearance). In its more general aspect, or if we try to take stock of its variable forms, self-cultivation consists of voluntary, personal, self-initiated practices that aim at moral achievement, cognitive enlightenment, vital flourishing, long life or immortality but also, and not infrequently, undisputed political domination. From a more negative standpoint, we can view the development of these practices in the context of kingdoms plagued by wars and daily violence, in an atmosphere of threats and dangers where the need to preserve oneself from natural catastrophes and political violence became a prominent concern. Self-cultivation is not so much focused on a theoretical doctrine as on the realization of a certain way of life and takes into account components of human experience of universal significance: hunger, disease, desire, death, the need for physical security and peace of mind, or the grounds for virtuous action. Some, like the various authors of the *Zhuangzi*, conceived ways not to fear death, disease or physical accidents; others sought ways to avoid death by a process of transformation leading to the production of a body impervious to decay and extinction.[4] Such attitudes, partly derived from ancient religious behavior, significantly patterned the development of Daoism during the Han dynasty.[5]

Self-cultivation comprises exercises and practices that concern the health of the body, the honing of sensory perception (chiefly seeing and hearing), the mastery of mental workings (feeling, thinking, speaking), and the efficacy of action. These exercises often take the form of a discipline of emotions, passions, and desires, ethical attention to one's words and deeds, and meditation leading to a cosmic conscience enabling one to shed individual biases, petty worries and attachment to the ego. They imply a constant effort of the will until natural spontaneity takes over partial ways of responding and acting. Self-cultivation thus presupposes without explicitly stating it a deep faith in human moral liberty and in the possibility of perfecting oneself. It is also conditioned by the deep awareness that human beings are the only creatures that deviate from

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[4] A practice later called *shijie* 尸解 "liberation from the dead body," documented among others in the *Biographies of arrayed immortals (Liexian zhuan)*, it is also called *qing shen* 輕身 "lightening the body."

[5] For instance, ethical attention to oneself and to the internal workings of the heart/mind is referred to by *jing* 精, which designates purity and deference in a sacrificial context. Many religious and ritual terms are "recycled" to name dispositions and frames of mind explored in self-cultivation.

their *xing* 性, their "inborn nature."[6] Many of these texts are, above all, concerned with a form of asceticism which bears a certain similarity to Stoicism,[7] though it must be noted that beyond this distant similarity, the Greek and Chinese approaches remain fundamentally distinct and rely on diverging assumptions.

Early self-cultivation texts evoke a state of ultimate perfection and portray the figure of the sage accordingly. This almost transcendent norm serves to express the possibility in everyone to gain an enlightened or ecstatic apprehension of the world, in a way that has often been seen by modern scholars as a religious or mystical experience. One of our working hypotheses, which finds its more manifest confirmation in Han Feizi's Daoist-rooted doctrine, is that each consistent conception of the sage elaborated in a given society develops in direct interaction with a certain view of rulership, and that the manner in which the full grasp of one's inner self is described displays similar features to the optimal efficiency of political power. In other words, the way a man is supposed to experience full possession of his inner reality and to fully develop his nature offers a paradigm which influences and is in turn influenced by the shaping of the political landscape and the nature of kingship. This is obviously the case in early China, and we shall first focus on the way the inner self was discovered, described and debated by early literati. We will explore the psycho-physiological discourses at the heart of the representations of human life in order to understand the development of a theory of sovereignty that played a pivotal role in the ideological creation of imperial China during the Warring States.

If meditative practice stands at the core of the most interesting early sources of self-cultivation, we should note that meditation can take many forms according to the various textual traditions. Some resemble Hellenistic and Roman practices such as, in the Confucian tradition, the habit of a daily recounting of one's behavior to others. It can imply the daily remembrance of one's deeds and words and the deliberation

[6] Shen Dao 慎到 (ca. 360–ca. 285 BC), a leading Daoist-oriented figure in the Jixia academy discussed below, is credited with a felicitous formula recorded in the last chapter of the *Zhuangzi*: "A simple clod of earth never loses the Way" 夫塊不失道 (*Zhuangzi jishi* [hereafter *ZZJS*], Beijing, 1961, repr. 1997), "Tian xia," 33.1088.

[7] Both aspire to a spiritual sovereignty freed from individuality, identify the principle of the genesis of all things with a material element, the original cosmic breath, in the perspective of a dynamic conception of nature, and locate the organ of thought in the breast.

of an inner judge on their moral value, as in the *Analects*, where Master Zeng confesses:

> Every day I examine myself on these three points: in acting on behalf of others, have I always been loyal to their interests? In intercourse with my friends, have I always been true to my word? Have I failed to repeat the precepts that have been handed down to me?[8]

This is one of the rare examples of moral and psychological introspection, which is in distinct contrast with the "Art of the mind," turned toward internal physiological processes rather than thoughts recollected in one's own sphere of intimacy.

Other forms of meditation involve more actively the resources of imagination as in the school of Zhuangzi or other Daoist milieus.[9] In the *Zhuangzi*, meditation on several key images—concerning the formation and dissolution of things, the alternation of life and death, the underlying unity of all beings, the cosmic contemplation of the vastness surrounding us—triggers the powers of imagination and highlights the insignificance of human existence in the immensity of space and time. Such principles must always be at hand so that they can serve in every circumstance of human life, as exemplified by the facetious character Master Si 子祀 in chapter six "Dazong shi" 大宗師, who restates them in an extravagant but serene manner on his deathbed.

As an incipient phase in meditation exercises, beginners were given a few formulae summarizing the defining orientations of the circle they joined: "The Great One generates water"; "human nature comes from

[8] *Lunyu* 1.4 (*Lunyu yizhu*, ed. Yang Bojun, Beijing 1980, repr. 1998), p. 3; trans. A. Waley, *The Analects of Confucius* (New York, 1938, London, repr. 2000).

[9] I continue to use the term "Daoism," as a pragmatic *a posteriori* but historically-rooted category, to refer not to an organized school of thought but to authors, texts, milieus and tendencies of the 4th and 3rd centuries BC that all have an *air de famille*. All consider the Way as a foundational ontological category, as the source of ultimate enlightenment, in opposition to a form of knowledge defined by learning and study, which accepts the paramount value of speech. Daoist discourse is furthermore associated with practices of the self aspiring to vitality, longevity and meditative trance, often discussed in terms of *qi* 氣, *jing* 精 and *shen* 神, leaving out of primary consideration the patterns of behavior dictated by the sages of the past. No strict borders separate these masters, disciples and textual lineages from the entourage of other circles such as doctors, diviners and magicians. The category "Huang-Lao," the famous "philosophical football" as Mark E. Lewis astutely puts it in *Writing and authority in early China* (Albany, 1997), denotes in this chapter texts and authors assuming most of these patterns, but with a strong emphasis on political and administrative concerns rooted in Daoist cosmology.

Heaven's decree"; "the quintessence of all living things, when arising, produces the array of stars." To endow these formulae with the greatest spiritual efficacy, they had to be brief and striking, enabling the disciple rapidly, in a single intuition, to grasp the essentials of the doctrine so as to have them with him at all times. The reading of texts, such as the *Laozi* or the "Art of the mind" of the *Guanzi*, could also be conceived of as a spiritual exercise, insofar as the words of the master were aimed at the inner modification of the listeners or the addressees.

Self-cultivation can thus refer to an immense domain, embracing daily instructions on eating, sleeping, breathing, or having sex, gymnastic[10] and hygienic exercises (such as *daoyin* 導引 "stretching and coiling"), meditative practices, cosmological discourse and moral self-inspection. Some texts emphasize the sole care of the body, others focus on moral personality, and yet others bring the mind to bear upon the principle of spontaneous agency inside the self. Each of these orientations represents a more or less distinct way of life determined by an ideal of well-being and wisdom. These practices are sometimes accompanied by an effort to explain the natural processes and the formation of things, but all pursue the goal of producing a deep transformation in the person who adopts them through the preservation and refinement of inner potency. Most masters from the Warring States deal with self-cultivation to some extent, for their "philosophy" cannot be conceived apart from a concrete way of life, be it socially involved in or utterly disengaged from the world of men.

[10] Evidence for gymnastic practices in the Warring States is rather scarce, but we have more records for the Qin and Han thanks to recent archeological finds, first in Mawangdui, with the text on bamboo slips "Ten questions" (*Shiwen* 十問) and a silk manuscript with 44 illustrations of gymnastic movements performed by all kinds of male and female persons of different age, social status and attire, some subtitled with the therapeutical indication associated with the movement performed. In Zhangjiashan (northern Chu), an excavated tomb revealed a "Document of gymnastics" (*Yinshu* 引書) that comments on gymnastic movements and which we can reasonably date to the beginning of the 2nd century BC. On the tomb site of Fuyang 阜陽 in modern Anhui, dated 165 BC, bamboo slips were found that mention gymnastic practices dealing with the circulation of vital breath. The archeological site of Shuihudi 睡虎地 at Yunmeng 雲夢 in modern Hubei also revealed a manuscript in the same vein. While we shall not comment on such practices attested for the Han period, I have little doubt that they already existed in the Warring States. For a detailed analysis and references, see Catherine Despeux, "La gymnastique *dao yin* 導引 dans la Chine ancienne," *Etudes chinoises* 23 (2004), 45–81, and Livia Kohn, "Yoga and Daoyin," in L. Kohn ed., *Daoist body cultivation. Traditional models and contemporary practices* (Magdalena, NM, 2006).

This would be the occasion to delve into the multifarious works, texts and discourses elaborated over the course of one of the most intellectually creative periods of Chinese history. Within the frame of this chapter, I will not be able to deal with all the relevant material, increasingly abundant and heterogeneous; nor shall I attempt to provide a complete overview of self-cultivation in Warring States China with its continuation in the Han, or a condensed and systematic outline, or the complete coverage of a single text or a single school. Instead, I will examine the distinctive features of self-cultivation practices and isolate patterns commonly found over the course of the pre-imperial period, and finally attempt a critical analysis of these recurring themes: the ties between self-cultivation and political authority, the religious nature of meditation, conflicting conceptions of the self, the status of language and the function of texts in practices of the self. Where my analysis has gaps I hope at least to make them clearly visible so they may soon be bridged by others. Daoist-oriented texts prevail in this study, chiefly the chapters of the "Art of the mind," for their focus on the biological foundations of ethical behavior marks a distinct rupture with a traditional education centered on the edifying behavior of the wise kings of yore or the prescriptions for codifying social relationships. These self-cultivation texts focus on the powers of the human mind (*xin* 心), and on capacities for acting upon oneself and achieving a radical process of transformation. They attempt to organize man's capacity for spiritual life in resonance with its cosmological aspects. Such themes gave birth to a wealth of expressions and patterns which would play an essential role in the later development of Daoism and therapeutic practices in general (traditional medicine and longevity techniques) as well as in the political imagination of the foundations of power, wisdom and sovereignty.

The other mains sources I mobilize here fall into two categories: 1) those which in the wake of this original Daoist program defined among other features by personal meditation and the rejection of outer learning in the process of self-formation, offer a full-fledged expression of what was only implied in these earlier texts; 2) those which express meaningful nuances or marked divergence with the functional aspects of self-cultivation originally defined in the chapters of the "Art of the mind," thereby enabling the reader to discern ongoing debates in the early period about the nature of the self and its final destination. The often irreconcilable views held in these works are examined in association with their strong stylistic differences.

Self-cultivation and the Art of the mind

The four chapters (*pian* 篇) customarily gathered under the heading "Art of the mind" ("Xinshu" 心術)[11] and collected in the *Guanzi* together with many Legalist chapters and syncretic Huang-Lao texts are the among the earliest documents on self-cultivation which have survived to the present. They share many, primarily quietist themes with the book attributed to Laozi, the *Classic of the Way and its power* (*Daode jing*).[12]

These chapters were in all likelihood composed between the 4th and the 2nd century BC by literati from the Jixia 稽下 academy in the state of Qi 齊 located in the central and northern part of modern Shandong and the southern part of modern Hebei.[13] The powerful state of Qi was the demographic and economic center of Warring States China, and its capital, Linzi 臨淄 one of the largest and richest cities of the time. King Wei 威 of Qi decided in the second half of the 4th century to grant titles and stipends to scholars who would assemble to discuss and compose essays or participate in court debates.[14] In the service of the Tian 田 rulers competing for kingship, these scholars produced recipes, devices and stratagems, and could act as consultants. They enjoyed ample pay without actively holding an administrative charge. Scholars gathered from all around to discuss and study, write and train disciples, and Jixia

[11] These four chapters bear the following titles: "Inward training" ("Neiye" 內業, *Guanzi* 16.49; "Art of the mind 1," ("Xinshu shang" 心術上, *Guanzi* 13.36); "Art of the mind 2," ("Xinshu xia" 心術下, *Guanzi*, 13.37); "Purifying the mind" ("Baixin" 白心, *Guanzi* 13.38).

[12] From the *Laozi* is drawn the conception of the Way and various cosmological insights, as well as the idea of emptying oneself of desires and thoughts (*Daode jing* 60) and making oneself a sanctuary of calm for the mystical apprehension of the Way. While the "Xinshu" chapters assume and develop the conception of the Way expressed in the *Laozi*, achieving its naturalization and giving a more systematic turn to the theory of vital breath and quintessence (*jingqi* 精氣), they also promote a cultivation of the heart/mind (*xin* 心) viewed as the commanding center of the body and a possible abode for the Way or the spirit (*shen* 神). The conception of the *xin* as holding a sovereign position in the body, as the organ of thought ruling other organs, the orifices, senses and limbs, may well be the major innovation of the Jixia school. These points are discussed in detail below.

[13] On the State of Qi, see Mark E. Lewis, "Warring States political history," in *The Cambridge history of ancient China: from the origins of civilization to 221 B.C.*, eds Michael Loewe and Edward L. Shaughnessy (Cambridge, Eng., 1999), pp. 587–650, particularly pp. 595, 599 and 643.

[14] Hu Jiacong, *Guanzi xintan* (Beijing, 2003), pp. 20–27. Cf. Mark E. Lewis, *Writing and authority*, p. 77.

thus became the center of major trends of thought over 150 years, from 374 down to 221 BC.

As the most renowned academic center of its time, Jixia was involved at many levels in the composition of texts such as the *Guanzi* or the *Xunzi*, but also of the now either lost or unclearly identified works of Song Jian 宋鈃, Shen Dao 慎到, Yin Wen 尹文 or Tian Pian 田駢.[15] The *Guanzi* is not the work of a single author, but of many anonymous brushes[16] composing over several generations, from the 4th century BC down to the beginning of the Han. The fact that Jixia developed along with the political reforms of the Tian clan and that its textual production saw the light in the contentious atmosphere of the Hundred Schools is of primary importance to understanding the tone and terms of the "Art of the mind."

Regarding its concrete philosophical significance, the "Art of the mind" defines its aim as the deliverance of man from the distracted and upset unfolding of his life in order to prepare him for a superior form of existence. It offers a set of procedures for intervening in human life by proposing an end beyond its ordinary goals and pursuing one's healing while defining a meditative experience in cosmic terms. Self-cultivation leads to the interiorization of social and ritual values by reuniting the mind (*xin*) and the spirit (*shen* 神). It consists in an ever-ascending path wherein one's basic vital energy (*qi* 氣) is transformed into quintessential energy, or vital essence (*jing* 精), which is itself, in turn, converted into spiritual energy, or spirit (*shen*). The association of these three notions borrowed from hitherto distinct spheres of experience, is initially conditioned by the pacification of the royal organ, the mind, which is progressively purged from what hinders communication with the spirit. All the while, the bodily form and its constituent parts accompany this process of internal transformation. In this sense, there is no distinction between knowing and acting upon life in self-cultivation. The four brief treatises of the "Art of the mind" describe how the human being may perfect himself through the controlled development and spontaneous transformation of his vital forces.

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[15] Cf. Hu Jiacong, *Guanzi xintan*, passim.

[16] We shall leave here out of consideration the debate on the authorship of the numerous chapters of the *Guanzi*. For a survey of this debate, see Allyn W. Rickett, *Guanzi. Political, economic, and philosophical essays from early China*, vol. 2 (Princeton, 1998), and for the "Xinshu" chapters in particular, Romain Graziani, "De la régence du monde à la souveraineté intérieure. Une étude des quatre chapitres de 'L'art de l'esprit' du 'Guanzi,' " PhD dissertation (University Paris 7, 2001).

Any person who embarks on the path of self-mastery becomes a distinct field of experience. The most characteristic texts in this intellectual current, which combine meditative principles, cosmological explanations and political considerations, were in ancient China like a declaration of independence of the human mind from divinatory procedures—we will come back to this idea below—and an affirmation of personal power over one's surrounding objective conditions (be they ritualistic, educative or social). The anonymous compilers of the "Art of the mind" assert that through the sole exertion of his own forces and mental discipline, the human being can attain to the spirit without initiatory ceremonies or religious procedures. What then are the actions and, more generally, the measures by which the individual accesses his internal reality? To what images do these texts have recourse in their attempts to represent the interior world? How is the paradigmatic experience of the sage who "obtains" (*de* 得) the spirit conveyed? And what exactly is meant by the possession of the spirit?

The first text, "Inward training" ("Neiye" 內業), which may be considered a, if not *the*, foundational text of Daoist thought, begins with a discussion of vital energy (*qi*), the fundamental substance of the universe and constitutive principle of all reality. We can find in this text the principal topics of self-cultivation that will later be developed in Daoist and Confucian schools: 1) the care for one's life and body (sensory organs, hair, skin, bones and sinews); 2) the search for the optimal development of cognitive and perceptive power, where knowledge is not conceived as a positive content of concrete information about objects, but as an optimal alertness of the senses; 3) the cultivation of inner dispositions (attention, quietness, good mood) tied to the study of forms of behavior and external conduct (ritual, poetry and music as regulators of emotions such as anger, worry or excitement); 4) rules for eating and drinking that extend the ideal of the regulation of *qi* to other specialized organs in the body; 5) returning to one's inborn nature and the consequent obtainment of a good and pacified heart (*shanxin anchu* 善心安處); 6) the ability to speak and act in such a way that all things of their own accord fall into step (as in the *Analects*, we find elements of magical thought in the asserted ability of the sage to command assent and get things done by his mere charisma and virtue;[17] 7) last, and most importantly, the

[17] This point is also developed in the *Guanzi* chapters "Xingshi" 形勢 and "Baixin" 白心, as well as in *Laozi* 2 and 27 (see Hu Jiacong, *Guanzi xintan*, p. 111). The strong

development of an art of ruling conceived as the natural extension of self-cultivated potency over the world. This point is virtually present in the "Neiye" and in *Laozi* 8, and fully developed in the "Xinshu shang" and in the "Baixin," as well as in the "Shuyan" 樞言.[18]

The ultimate aim of these teachings is the transformation of the mind (*xin*), the royal organ[19] which transcends the restricted role allotted the other organs. It is responsible for organizing the corporeal form by gathering vital energy. *Qi*, as the fundamental substance of life, is thus the point of departure for thinking about the self, as well as the genetic principle of the cosmogonic stanza that constitutes the overture of the "Neiye." Meditation on vital energy attempts to spread an almost divine mental clairvoyance and spiritual energy (*shen*) throughout the individual and thereby generate the presence of a quasi-divine spirit within. This unfurling is experienced on the subjective level as a sort of trance. At the same time, this divine mental clairvoyance, which is the culmination of the internal breaths, is used by the ruler to reign harmoniously, through the charismatic expression of his Power, over his court and the human community at large.

Let us first reconsider the relationship between the body and the mind, in order to sketch a few fundamental elements upon which the more specialized medical or religious discourses were later elaborated. These conceptions date from the period when ideas on human physiology began to proliferate in the 4th and 3rd centuries BC. Phenomena which appear as heterogeneous—streams of thought, bodily strength, physical violence, states of mind, moods or emotions—all stem from one fundamental source, vital energy. Differentiated according to its phases

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influence of the *Laozi* on the "Baixin" has been outlined by Hu Jiacong, who made comparative lists of all borrowings (ibid., p. 309).

[18] Hu Jiacong, *Guanzi xintan*, p. 111.

[19] In the "Art of the mind," the *xin* 心 appears as the sovereign element in the corporeal form responsible for ordering and regulating it: "The mind finds itself within the body in the position of the ruler. The functions shared between the nine apertures are divided like the responsibilities incumbent on officials. If the mind keeps with the spontaneous course of nature, the nine orifices follow the natural principles" (*Guanzi jiaoshi* [Changsha, 1996], Yan Changyao [1868–1944], edited by Xia Jianqin [hereafter *GZJS*], 13.36.323). On the political modeling of corporeal reality, cf. the beginning of the chapter "Cherishing life" ("Guisheng," *Lüshi chunqiu jiaoshi* [hereafter *LSCQ*], ed. Chen Qiyou, [Shanghai 1984], 2/2.1), where the organs (excepting the mind) are described as servants (*yi* 役) of life who cannot act on their own initiative and must be ordered by something which controls them. We find once again in this model of the human body an attempt which was very common at the end of the Warring States period, to anchor the legitimacy of the monarchical regime in the natural order.

and its forms, *qi* is at once the individual's vitality, vigor, dynamism, breath, mood and the entirety of his sensory experiences; it is also his aggressiveness as well as his inspiration, sensual desire and mental acumen. It constitutes the material components of the body through which it also circulates in different forms, with different degrees of fluidity. *Qi* is inside and outside the body, and self-cultivation practices work on the best way to regulate and harmonize the intake and outflow of this energy.

Prior to any physiological or psychological phenomena, *qi* in its cosmic dimension is the basic material which constitutes all beings, plants, animals and humans. The oldest meaning of *qi*, long before it was defined in a cosmological context as the universal fluid, either in its active (*yang*) or passive (*yin*) form, was very similar to the Greek word *pneuma* (wind, breath, air).[20] Already present in oracle-bone inscriptions, it seems indeed to have originally designated an external influence—air, wind—and, by later extension, the vital breath, the principle of animation, or "internal climate." This explains why such a term is as relevant for meteorology as it is for psychology, for inner moods and for external vapors, for time and for temperament. *Qi* is indeed matter that is always in motion—a principle of motion. In petty men, the *qi* moves in a chaotic way up and down the body, for they have only deviant *qi* (*xie qi* 邪氣), while the sage, enjoying a regular *qi* (*zheng qi* 正氣) can follow a straight path.[21] With a proper regimen, careful intake of food, sleep, moderation in desires and emotions, timely activity and

[20] Paul Unschuld has noted that Hippocratic medicine in the 4th century BC in Greece made reference in its inquiries into pathogenic agents in the expression *phusai ek ton perittomaston* Φυσαι εκ των περιττῶματων, which describes precisely the elements which are appropriate to *qi*, more specifically the fumes which rise from food; see Paul Unschuld, *Medecine in China: a history of ideas* (Berkeley, 1985), p. 72. Such a similarity is not surprising since it is common to the myths and cosmology of many civilizations to envision the creation of living beings through some sort of primordial breath. In the Biblical tradition for example, Yahweh models man with clay and then instills the "breath of life" into his creature's nostrils; analogous myths were developed in Egypt, Sumer and Greece. In each case, the human being, formed from some material (earth, wood or bone), receives the breath of the Creator. For a detailed study of the notion of breath in European philosophical and religious traditions, see Gérard Verbeke, *L'évolution de la doctrine du pneuma, du stoïcisme à Saint Augustin* (Paris, 1945); for a medical approach to the notion of *pneuma* in the Hellenistic world, see also Armelle Debru, *Le corps respirant. La pensée physiologique chez Galien* (Leiden, New York, 1996).

[21] *Huainan honglie jijie* (hereafter *HNZ*) edited by Liu Wendian (1893–1958), annotated by Feng Yi and Qiao Hua (Beijing, 1980, repr. 1997), 14.475.

sufficient rest, pernicious *qi* do not enter the body.[22] When a sensory organ is filled with *qi*, it is sharpened and works to its full capacity, allowing for a luminous apprehension of the world. *Qi* thus accounts for the atmospheric and environmental influences at large on the body. As such, it is the most precious resource of life and at the same time the source of all pathogenic agents liable to disrupt and harm the body from the outside. It is the medium through which humans can act not only on the whole human realm, but also on animals, and even move Heaven.[23] This energy, which pertains as much to thought as to matter (it may be situated more closely to one or the other depending on its degree of refinement), is thus the very substance of our physical and mental functioning. The mind-matter coupling of the Cartesian tradition is replaced by another, more relative complementarity, which considers the breath of life as either gross or refined, rough or subtle.

If to be human is to be one form among many forms, it also means being the only form which understands itself as having the capacity to refine and transform its energies by its own initiative. Materially speaking, vital energy is drawn from food. Considerations on the mind's power and abilities are coupled with dietetic instructions which punctuate the stanzas of many self-cultivation texts and injunctions to leave one's orifices open and control one's system of exchange with the outside world. Vital energy may become essential energy (*jing* 精)—"essential" in the sense of a perfume's extracted "essence"—by elevating it to a higher phase. This essence or quintessence is capable of transforming itself, suddenly and unpredictably, into spirit (*shen* 神). While the term *shen* originally referred to the manes of the dead, heavenly ancestors, and divinities in a religious context, it gradually came to signify spiritual energy in self-cultivation texts.[24] As will be examined in greater detail below, the transformation of basic energy (*qi*) into spiritual energy (*shen*) is achieved by the concentration of the mind on its own activity. In its preserved or refined state, the life force animating the body

[22] On the elimination of pernicious breath, see also *HNZ* 20. 668.

[23] On this point see Griet Vankeerberghen, *The Huainanzi and Liu An's claim to moral authority* (Albany, 2001), pp. 112–13; Mark E. Lewis, *Sanctioned violence in early China* (Albany, 1990), ch. 6; M. Csikszentmihàlyi, *Material virtue*, and S. Kuriyama, *The expressiveness of the body and the divergence of Greek and Chinese medicine* (New York, 2002).

[24] On the religious, medical and philosophical uses of the notion of *shen* in China, see *Of self and spirits. Exploring* shen *in China*, eds Romain Graziani and Roel Sterckx, *Extrême-Orient Extrême-Occident* 29 (2007).

might at any moment manifest itself in the form of a physical desire or a particular emotion. In its refined form, it constitutes the foundation for spiritual exaltation.

As Hu Jiacong has shown clearly in a detailed inquiry on the composition of the *Guanzi*,[25] the Jixia academy played a pivotal role in the development of a new holistic discourse grounded in *qi*, thereby creating a continuum between medicine and philosophy, cosmology and physiognomy. The famous opening passage of chapter three of the *Huainanzi*, "Tian wen" 天文, describes *qi* as the primal stuff which, through a process of differentiation, gives birth to the universe and all living beings, plants, animals and humans. In one of his rhapsodies no doubt influenced by the chapters of the "Art of the mind" and ingeniously written in the form of a riddle—thus making constant reference to the subject without ever naming it—Xun Kuang (ca. 312–235 BC) relies on these foundations of Chinese cosmology and physiology. He describes a cloud transformed into a sage by increasing its density (of movement and form), by concentrating its halo and vapors:

> When expanding, it forms a triad with Heaven and Earth,
> And its power condenses into Yao or Yu.[26]
> Its distilled essence is thinner than a hair,
> But in its expansion it fills the entire world.[27]

The sage and the cloud are formed by the same essence. This remains the most concise expression of the fundamental substratum of all things and of the continuity between matter and mind. A "material" substance stores in itself a form of energy that can be transformed into something entirely spiritual by proper mental acumen. It is imaginable that Xun Kuang, who on a number of occasions uses the expression "Art of the mind" ("Xinshu") and who spent some of his formative years studying at the Jixia academy, to which he returned for a decade in his maturity as a renowned scholar, around 275–265 BC, is harking back to the

[25] Hu Jiacong, *Guanzi xintan*, *passim*. I cannot approve Nathan Sivin's absurd rejection of the Jixia academy as a myth (see N. Sivin, "The myths of the Naturalists," in *Medecine, philosophy and religion in ancient China* (Aldershot, 1995), ch. 4.

[26] Yao and Yu the Great, two paragons of steadfast virtue in the Confucian tradition, incarnate the ideal of enlightened governance. By the time of Xun Kuang, reference to them is a cliché, a sort of *image d'Epinal* in literati discourse.

[27] *Xunzi jijie*, ed. Wang Xianqian (Beijing, repr. 1988), 18.26.474. The poem on the cloud is in fact conceived as a riddle for speaking of the Dao, evoking its ubiquity and its dazzling speed as well as its nebulous and protean aspects.

foundational text, "Inward training."[28] Let us now delve deeper into the ethical program of this arch-text.

Dating most likely from the 4th century BC, "Inward training" is a long meditative poem (approximately 1500 characters) which opens with a description of the formation of things and portrays the sage and the stars as formed from the same essence. Like the *Xunzi*, the author seems to admit that certain "material" substances contain a quintessential form of energy and envisions the universe as a continuum that relates the lowest things to divine beings (*gui* 鬼 and *shen* 神). Ideologically more sober than the *Xunzi*, the "Inward training" refuses the habitual hagiographical features of the sage sovereigns of the past. Xun Kuang was part of a later generation, a period when the cosmic models of absolute sovereignty became prominent, on the eve of the creation of the Chinese empire. In the following overture, "Inward training" portrays the sage from a purely genetic perspective:

> Every time for all things, the essential energy
> When it appears, gives them life;
> When descending, it begets the five grains
> And, when rising, produces the constellations.
> When flowing amidst Heaven and Earth
> We call it ghost or spirit.
> It is stored in the breast
> Of he whom we call sage.[29]

The formations of essential energy vary according to their position in space. But whether speaking of stars, sages, spirits or grain, it is always the same substance that generates all possible forms of life, from the most concrete to the most animated. The generative power of *jing* 精, which appears as an elixir of life and as the most purified and refined form of vital breath, is best understood from a medical point of view, where it can specifically refer to the seminal fluid produced by the kidneys. "Inward training" attempts to connect us with this power and emphasizes the necessity of assimilating and interiorizing it (as opposed to the inculcation of principles). Wisdom results from this process of assimilation.

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[28] Parallels between the "Inward training" and the *Xunzi* have been often outlined by Chinese scholars. See for instance Hu Jiacong's comparative lists of similar passages between prominent thinkers from Jixia and the *Xunzi* in his *Guanzi xintan*, pp. 498–506.

[29] "Inward training" (*GZJS* 16.49.396).

In this perspective, the body is never reified nor treated as an object of study because physical force and mental potency emerge from a common substratum. There is not the body here and the mind there (this body which I am not, which is not me, but which I possess and control), constituted as two objective givens, but rather a configuration of energy animated by a diffuse power from which all actions, at every instant, draw their dynamism. It is a body in the first person, which regulates itself based upon its own reactions. In this study, I shall sometimes speak of "form" or of "corporeal form" (*xing* 形, a term repeatedly used by the "Xinshu" chapters, the *Zhuangzi*, and the *Huainanzi*), in an effort to avoid the weighty and inert connotations of "body."

But how, then, shall we understand the mind? The term *xin* 心 in Chinese designates a single organ for functions which are generally divided in Western culture between the heart and the mind. It refers to that organ, or rather that sense, through which we conceive and feel at the same time, and pertains as much to the realm of meaning as of emotion. The first consequence of this apparent unity is that the exploration of the self almost never leads to the formulation of an inner conflict (as between reason and feeling, desire and will, the animal and the reasonable parts within us), for *xin* is as much the faculty which decides as the organ which conforms, as much the command center as the seat of affects. The mind, which is also the heart, can only be pushed along and progressively conditioned by itself. It is either correctly or incorrectly oriented and while it might be influenced by lustful desires, lowered from its royal position, and subordinated to other organs, it is almost never subject to an internal separation in which two rival parts struggle for supremacy.[30]

[30] We find in early texts persons confronted with contradictory choices, as between filial piety 孝 and loyalty 忠, but not facing the psychological complexity of inner division between diverging faculties, such as reason and sensibility, rightful moral perception and weakness of the will or impotency in action, such as the attitude epitomized by Mede in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* which was to inspire Saint Paul in his *Epistle to the Romans*: "Video meliora proboque, deteriora sequor"; "I see the right way, approve it, and just do the opposite." Mark Csikszentmihàlyi offers a detailed and interesting analysis of many moral quandaries recorded in early Chinese texts, that require "one to balance different impulses arising from different virtues" (*Material Virtue*, p. 255), among which the famous episode of Tian Chang's 田常 *coup d'état* in Qi in 481 BC (14th year of Duke Ai), tersely mentioned in the *Annals* and discussed in the *Hanshi waizhuan* 6.12, which divided the population between two rival kinds of loyalty. In the instances and templates culled by Csikszentmihàlyi (see *Material Virtue*, pp. 114 ff.), we do not witness a conflict of faculties, only the difficulty of a choice for the heart/mind. The character facing such a dilemma may even commit suicide so as not to endure the

Rather than speak in isolated terms of body and mind, it is more appropriate thus to speak of a corporeal way of life (one that leaves enough room for desires and emotions to dethrone the heart-mind from its pre-eminent position) and a spiritual way of life—two paths which are presented to us in the "Art of the mind" as in many other self-cultivation texts—either in the form of an attitude conditioned by the senses, spurred by desire, giddily hurrying after profit, scrambling for possession; or, on the other hand, a behavior regulated solely by the impetus of a composed and potent mind. These modes of behavior are associated with the common man on the one hand and the sage on the other. Sages are those able to reestablish within themselves the true hierarchical relationship between the elements composing their psycho-physical structure.

Meditative exercises teach how to develop a form of physiological consciousness. In the "Art of the mind" the corporeal form is spiritualized to the furthest extent and radiates the force which it accumulates and preserves. This internal Potency (*de* 德) leads to a long and flourishing existence and provides for an unhindered efficiency in one's words and gestures, revealing that one has integrated the natural principle of the functioning of things or, to use the recurring formula, "has obtained the Dao" (*de dao* 得道). "Inward training," in a remarkable homage to the functions and organs which constitute the human form, exalts in many a stanza the sage's constitution: his flexible tendons, his luminous skin, his glowing complexion, his firm muscles and his vigorous members. The physical manifestations of wisdom are always associated with acts of internal concentration:

> When one is capable of remaining regulated and quiescent,
> One's flesh is full and round,
> One's hearing sharp and vision clear,
> With firm muscles and bones robust…[31]

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shame and humiliation of not living up to his moral standard, but we never witness the typically Greek tragic essence of one's inner multiplicity, of rebellious and conflicting feelings, or correct action performed with a sense of frustration (*enkrateia* in Greek), or the doing of an incorrect thing in spite of good feelings and a knowledge of good principles (*akrasia*, weakness of the will). We do, nonetheless, find examples in the *Huainanzi* of explicit inner conflicts between antagonistic desires. Confucius's disciple, Zixia, explains how two rival desires battling in the heart (*xin zhan* 心戰) emaciated him: the desire for fame and wealth and the desire to abide by the rules of the wise kings of the past (*HNZ* "Yuan Dao," 1.33).

[31] "Inward training" (*GZJS* 16.49.404). Cf. also in the *Huainanzi* chapter "The Duty of cultivation" ("Xiuwu"), the description of the bodies of the ancient saintly kings: "Yao

When one has attained the Way
One's traits reveal it, one's hair exudes it.[32]

Various practices in the text are designed to help "obtain the Way" or "gain its Power"[33] through the uttermost refinement of the unsuspected resources everyone can draw from physiological inner processes. Most of the prescribed actions on oneself are referred to in terms borrowed from the field of politics,[34] of ritual and religion[35] or medicine.[36] The practitioner looks upon himself with the eyes of an administrator, a healer and an officer of rituals. The phases of this therapy vary according to different texts, but we recurrently find from the "Inward training" onwards the recommendation to vitalize the body by storing *cang* (藏), preserving (*shou* 守) and refining (*jing* 精) vital breath,[37] thereby achieving a state of deep calm (*jing* 靜) and concentration (*ding* 定); the necessity of mastering emotional responses through the expulsion of "positive" (excitement or joy) as well as "negative" affects (sadness or anger); and the celebration of a unity (*yi* 一) in apprehension and action, leading to sovereignty over one's inner processes and ascendance over one's entourage.

The first action in the work of the mind consists of expelling all turbulent and disturbing elements from the corporeal form. Emotions constitute an obstacle to the preservation and refinement of the basic vital breath:

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had a halo of eight colors and his breath circulated freely through nine orifices…Shun had two pupils in each eye, which doubled his clairvoyance…Yu had three orifices in each ear, which is said to have given him a vast understanding…King Wen had three nipples, which was proof of his tremendous humanity" (*HNZ* 19.923).

[32] "Inward training" (*GZJS* 16.49.408).

[33] Cf. the explanatory section of the "Art of the mind, 1": "'Not to busy oneself' refers to the Way: 'producing talents' refers to the Power. Nothing, then, separates the Way and the Power: thus, he who speaks of them cannot differentiate between them" (*GZJS* 13.36.328). The *de* is the manifest power of the *dao*, the efficient display of its hidden source.

[34] To order (*zhi* 治), to pacify (*an* 安), to control (*zhi* 制), to rectify (*zheng* 正).

[35] To purify (*jing* 精), to clean and sweep (*jie* 潔 , *sao* 掃), to treat with attention and reverence (*jing* 敬).

[36] To cure (*zhi* 治) and to nurture (*yang* 養), to expel (*qu* 去) and dissipate (*jie* 解).

[37] Like the "Inward training," the *Huainanzi* advocates the sparing use of one's *qi* and envisages the possibility of increasing one's energetic resources; see for instance *HNZ* ch. 7 "Jingshen" 精神, which details the causes of loss or gain of vital breaths; on the accumulation of breaths see ch. 17 "Shuolin" 說林.

> Clean the spirit's mansion [i.e.: the mind] with great deference,
> And the vital essence will arrive of itself.[38]
> Empty yourself of desires
> And the spirit will enter the abode.[39]
> If you wipe away what is unclean,
> Then the spirit will remain within you.[40]

Affects, desires and emotions are modalities of vital energy in its unrefined form, and all have the ability to de-center the mind and thus to set it into chaotic motion (*luan* 亂).

> Each time, the mind's fundamental disposition
> Is naturally filled and by itself abounds in energy;
> It spontaneously begets and accomplishes itself.
> The loss of this mind's fundamental disposition
> Is invariably due to sadness and joy, pleasure and anger, desire and the pursuit of profit.
> If one can reject them all,
> The mind will revert to its optimal state.[41]

Emotions and desires are criticized because they warp our perception of the world and our way of responding. Obtaining the Way (*de dao* 得道) means identifying oneself with something universal, the global process of things, whereas emotions such as joy or distress make us partial to our environment. They create a certain disposition rather than keeping us in the interior realm called "emptiness" (*xu*) in the "Baixin" and the "Xinshu xia." In the realm of action, emotions engender rigid attitudes which are oftentimes out of touch with the issues at hand or the demands of the moment.[42] In spite of an apparent spontaneity, affects are more than a brisk and unthought moment, they recount an entire history

[38] "Inward training" (*GZJS* 16.49.402).

[39] The dwelling-place is a metaphor for the mind which hosts the vital force in its superior form once it is cleaned and purified, similar to the way in which a mansion might receive an eminent guest. See as well *GZJS* 13.36.327: "The spirit is what is most noble. If a mansion is not appropriately clean, a noble will not stay in it. This is why it is stated: 'The spirit cannot reside in an unclean house.'"

[40] "Art of the mind, 1" (*GZJS* 13.36.323).

[41] "Inward training" (*GZJS* 16.49.397).

[42] Cf. chapter 21 of the *Xunzi*, "Dispelling what beclouds the mind" ("Jiebi"), where the author lists the causes responsible for beclouding the mind. The problem according to the author's diagnosis does not so much come from the nature of things we are drawn to as from the distortion created by the mind's prism. Here Xun Kuang picks up on well-known arguments from the period and borrows the most developed aspects of the thought of philosophers whom he criticizes elsewhere.

inscribed in the body. Internal activity attempts to erase this historicity along the lines of the sage who accumulates nothing:

> In his reactions, nothing is pre-established;
> In his movements, nothing is chosen.[43]

The real spontaneity (*zi* 自), which is characteristic of the mind's optimal functioning, disappears with the rise of emotions when one's energy is lured to objects, drawn by something outside the corporeal form. The two possible uses of vital energy have their correlate in the two types of existence previously distinguished. Either one chooses to give free rein to one's emotions, which necessarily leads to the squandering of the seminal principle of internal rebuilding, or one chooses to preserve one's primary energy, channeling (*li* 理), cultivating and refining it through internal concentration in an effort to obtain a superior functioning of vital activity, an increased perceptive acuity, and internal peace.[44]

The suppression of the self

Oddly enough, this great "internal undertaking" (another possible translation of "Neiye" 內業) is often limited to a physiological cleansing or an emotional hygiene which disregards the particular content of intentions or thoughts, or even an analysis of affects understood as singular phenomena in themselves. It is a form of internal purification, not a moral analysis. Expelling emotions is a means of freeing oneself from one's particularity, of getting rid of one's personal emotional profile. Regulating the physiological substratum of emotions does not imply questioning their meaning. This inner task is devoid of references to evil, contamination or fault, and instead focuses on failure or excess. This way of thinking defines a form of self-cultivation in which there is neither a moralistic tone nor the hint of a potential subject. Life is never understood according to the particular meaning that it might have for a given person. Only generic and impersonal characteristics

[43] "Art of the mind, 1" (*GZJS* 13.36.326).

[44] This tendency to define wisdom according to the acuity of sensory processes exists in numerous texts from a wide variety of schools. On this subject see Roel Sterckx, "Le pouvoir des sens. Sagesse et perception sensorielle en Chine ancienne," *Cahier du centre Marcel Granet* 1 (Paris, 2003), 71–92.

are described such as organs, dynamism, causes of disorder and order, power and weakness, acuity and sickness.

Moral stipulations and ritual norms are also conspicuously absent in the "Art of the mind" and this aspect clearly distinguishes it from the recently excavated manuscript *Five activations* or *Five kinds of action* (*Wuxing pian* 五行篇), where self-cultivation is intimately linked to the practice of social virtues. In the "Art of the mind," we find the fundamental assumption that by acting upon the very impulse of thought (*qi yi* 氣意), by placing our fundamental dispositions (those which precede and produce the contents of our thoughts and determine our words and actions) in a calm and concentrated atmosphere, our "form" will spontaneously follow an ethical path. By working on oneself, at the level of the mind and *on* the mind, one avoids any moral questioning or debate, since the mind is directly in contact with the very source of its power to act and to determine itself. Morality needs neither to be explained nor founded. It must be pointed out however—and this is the implicit argument of these chapters—that the values of life (strength, health, mastery, acuity) do not contradict social and moral norms; vital impulse and ethical tendency are fundamentally one. In this sense, social harmony is intimately linked to individual health. A major trend of self-cultivation that runs from the "Inward training" to the *Huainanzi* makes a fundamental link between the security and the well-being of the state and the health of the prince who rules it (for that matter, this orientation is hardly specific to the Chinese).

The reader must nonetheless be aware of the decisive fact that the functions of the mind which maintain a conscious and constitutive relationship with the self, which allow us to speak of ipseity—such as the active reflection upon oneself, the assertive remembrance of one's thoughts and deeds, the history of one's emotions, the search for one's identity, the process of filtering certain representations—are all systematically absent from Daoist self-cultivation texts in the Warring States. The key elements of self-cultivation lend themselves more to a disappearance of the self than to an ipseity. The self is an organism without particularities; it manages the relationships between internal functions and external incitements without the interference of any personal qualities (based on personal tastes, preferences, habits or one's personal experiences). Nothing corresponds to the ontological concept of the individual, understood as singular and unique (*hic*), nor to the psychological concept of the individual as characterized by self-awareness—a subjectivity which is aware of and makes reference

to itself (*ipse*). The self, individuated by its emotions and preferences, is dissolved into the sphere of vital activity regulated by the central organ, the heart/mind.

Ru *self-cultivation and the five actions*

The *Wuxing* is one of the many textual discoveries made over the past four decades which have considerably broadened our understanding of the scope of ancient Chinese thought and self-cultivation practices. This previously lost work, the existence of which had long been suspected by a reference in the *Xunzi*, along with a commentary to the *Wuxing* unearthed at Mawangdui, "provides a detailed moral psychology describing the process of the cultivation of the virtues, and [they] explain the virtues in terms similar to bodily humors."[45]

The *Wuxing* seems to date from the 4th century BC, a period when texts were still transmitted by restricted groups of masters and disciples.[46] One might characterize the tradition of the *Wuxing* as a moral culture of the individual based on Confucius' thought as conveyed in the *Analects*.

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[45] Csikszentmihàlyi, *Material virtue*, p. 7. The author examines the provenance of the *Wuxing*, the circumstances of its discovery, its impact of on our understanding of ethical debate in early China, its connection with the school of Zisi and Mengzi, and the reasons it was criticized by Xun Kuang. It also provides a thoroughly annotated translation of the different versions of the text and its commentary and analyzes its content, style and vocabulary in great detail. Csikszentmihàlyi, drawing on the diverging researches initiated by Ding Sixin and Kageyama, challenges Li Xueqin's views, according to which the *Wuxing* was composed by Zisi, wrongly deemed to be Confucius's grandson according to a spurious genealogy of the Han.

[46] Published in 1980, the excavated text is a manuscript on silk found amidst a set of other texts on bamboo and silk in the outer coffin of tomb 3 at Mawangdui, Hunan, sealed in 168 BC and found in 1973. In 1993 an older version of the *Wuxing*, without the partial commentary found at Mawangdui, was found in a tomb near the site of Guodian in modern Hubei province. Since it is thought to have been buried around 300 BC and certainly before 278 BC, the *Wuxing* was very likely composed during the 4th century. According to Csikszentmihàlyi, the *Wuxing* predates the *Mencius*, and the *Mencius* predates the commentary to the *Wuxing*. Since the commentary of this text was probably composed and recopied between 207 and 195 BC, and given the fact the medium on which it was inscribed (long bamboo slips and silk) was a precious one, we may assume it was a quite important text transmitted and discussed throughout the 3rd century (cf. Csikszentmihàlyi, *Material Virtue*, p. 64). While the date of its composition remains unclear, it is impossible today to reflect on self-cultivation without taking this text into account. It is exemplary in that it reveals certain elements of thought from the Warring States period that archeology has allowed us to integrate into our understanding of the origins of philosophical discourse in China and of its ties with the medical and meditative milieus.

In spite of its moral orientation contrasting with the "Art of the mind," the *Wuxing*[47] seems to tacitly assume the impersonal conception of the self. The radical approach of this brief treatise understands the human being as an assemblage of processes which may be activated—processes whose description completely undermines any notion of an individual self. The training devoted to internalizing moral virtues is the condition for the activation of a spiritual and moral Power (*de*) or Virtue. The ordinary forms of goodness and morality can thus be sublimated to this Virtue through various forms of internalization. The *Wuxing* describes the internal processes through which one accesses the five fundamental virtuous dispositions: sense of humanity or benevolence (*ren* 仁), justice or righteousness (*yi* 義), perspicacity or intelligence (*zhi* 智), spirit of ritual or ritual propriety (*li* 禮)[48] and wisdom (*sheng* 聖). Each virtue results from a chain of moods, emotions and perceptions whose order is defined according to its final outcome. The text begins with five fundamental propositions. By the repetition of brief formulaic and easily memorized expressions, a distinction is made between simple action (*xing* 行) and action out of Virtue (*de zhi xing* 德之行). The *Wuxing* thus differentiates genuinely virtuous actions—actions that stem from moral considerations—from actions which are merely compatible with morals but are not done with virtue in mind. This is done without pre-defining the meaning of either of these two notions.

> When benevolence forms within, we can say that Virtue is activated;
> When it does not form within, one can simply speak of its action.
> When righteousness forms within, we can say that Virtue is activated;
> When it does not form, one can simply speak of its action.
> When ritual propriety forms within, we can say that Virtue is activated;

[47] The text was edited and transcribed in the *Guodian Chumu zhujian* (Beijing, 1998), pp. 149–54. For the sake of concision and clarity, I rely on the Guodian version, with a few exceptions in favor of the Mawangdui variant. I do not deal here with the question of divergences between the two editions and the textual difficulties raised by the two manuscripts.

[48] Confucius had already imagined that human relationships could become harmonious and graceful through an intelligent study of ritual forms. The gestures of greeting, the different ways of positioning oneself in a ceremony, sitting at a banquet, placing one's foot, one's bearing and rank, all gestures, manners and words which structure life in society and regulate relationships, all of this perfectly internalized would allow for development within a community without effort, hypocrisy or misconduct. All of the members of the entourage would thus evolve ideally as if in a ballet, progressing in a well-ordered sequence of gestures and words, whose choreography was to be exhaustively recorded in the ritual canon.

When it does not form, one speaks simply of action.
When perspicacity forms within, we can say that Virtue is activated;
When it does not, one can simply speak of its action.
When wisdom forms within, we can say that Virtue is activated;
When it does not, one can simply speak of its action.[49]

Through a set of parallel statements and the repetition of a formula in the positive and negative mode, this opening passage alludes to five virtues which are familiar to readers of Confucius's *Analects* and inserts them into a discourse where they do not designate accomplishments in themselves, but rather points of departure for the realization of a superior form of moral potency. These five moral dispositions are directly associated with an act of interiorization. A key expression in this work is the *de zhi xing* 德之行, the activation of moral Potency or Virtue, by means of which moral qualities (humanity, justice, ritual propriety, intelligence and wisdom) take on a heightened fullness, as if it were possible to integrate them into one's person and thereby move beyond morality defined by external conformity to moral standards. We are no longer in a moral world where one must simply and strictly abide by proper normative conduct (by simply "acting"). Virtue is the apex where the five moral dispositions culminate and converge. It is no longer a question of defining the distinctive traits of these virtues but of understanding that each of them is capable, when taking form inside, of activating this superior Virtue called *de* 德. Thus such an ostensibly neutral and descriptive heading implicitly encourages the gentleman to internalize these orientations and transform himself into a sovereign man (*junzi* 君子).

The workings of Virtue:
When these five qualities come to an accord, we call it "Virtue,"
When only four of them are in accord, we call it "goodness."
Goodness is the Way of Man,
Virtue, the Way of Heaven.[50]

[49] We adopt for the last line the Mawangdui version. This makes more sense, though the Guodian version also has its defenders.

[50] This most likely makes reference to the five virtues listed above, less wisdom (*sheng*). In Mencius, they are the four germs (*siduan* 四端) of morality in the heart, which lead to these four virtues. On this point, see Li Cunshan "Cong jianben wuxing dao boshu wuxing," *Guodian chujian guoji xueshu yanjiuhui lunwenji* (Wuhan, 2000), pp. 204–48.

Virtue is the spontaneous result of internalizing and organizing the five moral qualities. It is not one among many moral qualities. But the way each one functions within us once it has been integrated and blended in with the others. One is reminded here of the notion of justice in book IV of Plato's *Republic*, where it is described as the foundation for the three virtues, wisdom, courage and temperance. Inherent within each of these virtues, justice produces their natural equilibrium and ensures their own functioning.[51] Justice is therefore the ultimate virtue ensuring that each particular virtue find its place, its ability to come forth and to be preserved. Let us now look at the third paragraph:

> The man in whom these five kinds of action take form within and are practiced at the right Time, we call a nobleman (*jun[zi]* 君子).
> When the gentleman sets his mind on the way of the nobleman,
> We call him an "aspiring gentleman" (*zhishi* 志士).[52]

But what exactly is this internalization of a moral quality, what does it mean to "shape it from within" 形於內? While this inner gesture is neither explicitly defined nor exemplified, it may be construed in opposition with the mere habit or constraint of passively observing external standards. It is a way of being the autonomous agent of one's behavior, a result of the authentic will to act in a certain way and not merely in accordance with this way. To serve this ambitious purpose, different sequences of feelings and dispositions are posited which culminate in the active endorsement of a virtue. Such sequences might serve as spontaneous points of departure which would orient one's thought and behavior. The human being appears to be the impersonal site of internal configurations that the mind may manipulate, connect or control so that Virtue (*de*) may blossom within. The sections which follow are equally complex, with their lists replete with seemingly logical contra-

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[51] "In any case, seen from this perspective, it looks more like a sort of agreement and harmony than the qualities which were previously examined" (Plato, *The Republic*, 430e).

[52] We follow here the silk version of the Mawangdui manuscript in order to restore the character *zi* 子 missing after *jun* 君 and reestablish the classical expression in the Ru milieu referring to the morally superior man, the *junzi* 君子. This incarnation of moral and spiritual power is superior to another type of man, the *shi* 士, the gentleman who stands at the lowest degree in the hierarchy of nobility, the knight whose expertise in arms was gradually replaced by the arts of the brush during the Warring States. Transposed onto a moral order, the *shi* finds himself below the *junzi* and aspires to become like him. The term *de* 德 is still associated with nobility, but the notion in this case serves to establish a hierarchy between men on the path of Virtue and spiritual accomplishment.

dictions, as if the authors took pleasure in playing with the traditional notions of moral thought and reworked them on a dialectical model. Each notion can only be defined in relation to the others and its place within the enumerations. None of the virtues are sufficient in themselves; all require a process of interiorization.[53] The exclusive cultivation of a virtue can lead to vice if not offset by the practice of a complementary virtue. The choice of the appropriate virtue is determined by particular circumstances, and the use of such a virtue in turn requires the introduction of another. The latter virtue then gives rise to the necessity of yet another virtue. In some situations, it is propitious to join goodness and benevolence, in other cases perspicacity and benevolence.

Toward a wordless world?

Whether assimilating vital energy by reverting to a state of deep calm, as the "Art of the mind" exhorts, or internalizing the five virtues in order to reach a superior moral potency, as in the *Wuxing*, we seem to always remain in a world where language stands at the periphery of the sage's concern, as if the world of wisdom in China were fundamentally non-discursive and non-dialectical, and that seems as much the case for the period of the Warring States as for subsequent periods.[54] The extrinsic role of language—when it is not rejected outright as a hindrance—is flagrant in most philosophical texts portraying the sage, whether they be from Ru or from Daoist traditions. This salient feature of self-cultivation is also a perennial aspect of Chinese thought, and may partly account for many specific modes of discourse in early China, from the

[53] Confucius speaks with Zilu on the dangers of letting the mind become clouded by practicing only one virtue: see *Analects* 17.8. The *Huainanzi* also puts on guard against the danger of sticking to one virtue and offers various models of behavior: see G. Vankeerberghen, *The Huainanzi and Liu An's claim to moral authority*, p. 116.

[54] The chapter "Purifying the mind" ("Baixin") of the *Guanzi* states: "Thus the sage detests what is written and scorns what is spoken." Confucius's reticence to speak is well-known and was subtly analyzed by Jean Levi in his biography *Confucius* (Paris, 2002). One might also make reference in this case to the story of wheelwright Pian in the *Zhuangzi*, chapter "Tian dao" 天道, who professes to Duke Huan his scorn of writings from the past. For him books are no more than the dregs of the men of old (*ZZJS*, 13.490–491). See also the *Annals of Sire Lü*: "Such a man (who is able to preserve his nature and attain the level of the spirit) acquires the confidence of another without speaking a word, acts justly without making any plans, succeeds without planning in advance" (*LSCQ* I/2.4).

propensity to pithy aphorisms and concise sayings to the extensive use of diagrams and figures. In other words, language is far from being a privileged mode of intervening in the work of self-cultivation, and this fact should elicit a reflection on the status of self-cultivation texts themselves. We must recognize the fact that they have lost a significant part of their coherence once detached from the exercises (*gongfu* 工夫) which accompanied them. Indeed they are at best the fading traces and imprints of gestures and postures that conditioned a shift toward a modified form of consciousness. And it is precisely from that perspective that one is enabled to see the world afresh, and perceive how language interferes.

Self-cultivation texts are in general extremely brief, do not teem with demonstrations, logical arguments or systematic presentations. They do not focus on the hows and the whys of this world, but seek practical solutions to enhancing one's vital possibilities and moral power and putting the mind in control of bodily and mental processes. If we do not make sense of this subordination of theoretical discourse to practical efficacy and vital imperatives, and if we do not shed be it only a flickering light on certain radical stands against logic and language, we will miss the critical dimension of self-cultivation that stands as a preamble to the reform of the self. Nor shall we be able to silence the recurring reproaches and objections raised against Chinese philosophical texts by most Western philosophers, whose analytical minds cannot help but see Chinese texts as fraught with contradictions, deficient in logical rigor, vague to the point of obscurity, and lacking in clear definitions and demonstrations. If early Chinese texts were produced in radically different conditions from those of modern times, it is not only because of the material factor of the medium used to write, which entails its own constraints, but because texts are never really freed from the constraints of orality. Many self-cultivation texts that we label today as philosophical, like the "Art of the mind," may have been only notes on lectures of the master, or instructions for collective meditation. Even when duly composed, the general movement of thought in these texts, their rhythm, their tempo and temporality, develop according to the standards of oral speech. This is a major constraint, which certainly accounts for many of the features regarded as logical deficiencies in ancient Chinese thought. A text often unfolds according to associations of ideas without any systematic rigor, it eludes and resumes ideas at will instead of exposing them one by one—all features that are typical of speech, even if in written notes it was always possible to optimize the composition, add introductory parts, conclusions, or transitions.

In salient contrast with Greek and Hellenistic philosophers, be they Platonists, Aristotelians, Stoics or even Skeptics, authors of self-cultivation texts in China never seem to assert that logical validity of discourse, argumentative consistency, or assumption of shared universal truths are a means to deliver oneself from every possible source of outer tyranny, be it received customs, socially taught beliefs, religious practices, social status or political conditions.[55] The use of discourse to achieve self-fulfillment stands on the outskirts of the early Chinese philosophical landscape. Elaborate reasoning, logical rigor and commitment to rational argument can but rarely be glimpsed in this context. This does not mean that rational arguments or theoretical statements are absent from this period of Chinese thought, but they never take in self-cultivation texts the form of therapeutic exercises consisting in the healing of passions or emotions through dialogue or discourse of the self (with the sole exception perhaps of the *Zhuangzi*, as we shall see later). Among spiritual exercises, we do not find a rhetorical or dialectical training in the art of speaking and debating. When someone transcends his own individuality in a superior principle, he is outside language, in the silent processes of the natural order, never in something akin to the Greek *logos*. The superior form of intelligence or knowledge is an alertness of the sensory apparatus, a faculty of seeing and hearing, far from the conception of thought as an inner and silent dialogue between the mind and itself. Chinese self-cultivation texts are much more inclined to emphasize the limits of language, the weakness of argumentation and the impossibility of imparting the ultimate experience of the spiritual forces that animate the world and which may rest ephemerally within our corporeal form when the latter is made as pure as a sacrificial vessel.

This suspicion of language and its ontological impotency are recurrently highlighted in the various philosophical traditions. Daoist-oriented self-cultivation texts certainly stand in the *avant-garde* of this general attack against discourse and the pretention of language to convey an authentic experience of reality or an adequate description of things as they are in the light of Heaven. It partly accounts for the split between two conceptions of philosophy. From the standpoint of classical Western philosophy, self-cultivation is merely an art of wisdom or a form of mysticism, in great part because of its non-discursive view of reality.

[55] Martha Nussbaum has examined these practical and logical aspects in Greek and Roman schools of philosophy in *The therapy of desire. Theory and practice in Hellenistic ethics* (Princeton, N.J., 1994).

What makes the essence of self-cultivation is the choice of a certain way of life, the experience of certain frames of mind, the embodiment of inner dispositions, all of which can hardly be expressed in words. This is manifest when we turn to the descriptions of the intuition of the Way or the experience of the spirit (*shen* 神) in early texts such as the *Daode jing* or the "Art of the mind," not to mention innumerable later sources drawing on them. These texts do not recount the author's subjective experience but rather define the possible uses of the mind through an anonymous and impersonal discursive form. The maxims of the *Daode jing* on the inefficiency or the impotence of language were quoted, assumed and commented upon throughout the Chinese tradition: The sage practices "teaching without words" (*buyan zhi dao* 不言之道);[56] "He who knows does not speak. He who speaks does not know."[57] Of the ruler it is said, "Hesitant, he does not utter words lightly,"[58] and chapter 23 reminds us that "to use words but rarely is to be natural,"[59] both perhaps echoing the untranslatable pun attributed to Confucius in the *Analects, renzhe, qi yan ye ren* 仁者其言也訒:[60] "A man endowed with humanity is slow and dull when he speaks." The *Annals of Sire Lü* assert that a man able to preserve his nature and attain the spirit is trusted by other men without having to speak.[61] In the "Art of the mind," interaction with things requires that one quiet the solicitations of desire and interest: "Get rid of everything personal and selfish in you; do not speak, and the clairvoyance of the spirits will remain present."[62] The man who possesses the Way, as is suggested further on, "responds to the world as if he were its partner: such is the art of 'following in silence.'" It is not so much self-knowledge that is being considered (whether it refers to motivations, feelings, desires or the understanding of one's own experience) but the ability to act upon one's internal functioning (begetting emotions, gathering one's attention, adjusting one's thoughts to changes, expelling biases and private points of view). Even cognition seems to be conceived in order to annihilate the individual rather than to construct a personal identity.

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[56] *Daode jing* 2 and 43.
[57] *Daode jing* 56.
[58] *Daode jing* 17, trans. D.C. Lau, *Tao Te Ching* (Baltimore 1963, repr. Penguin Classics), p. 21.
[59] Trans. D.C. Lau, *Tao Te Ching*, p. 28.
[60] *Lunyu* 12.3 (*Lunyu yizhu*, p. 124).
[61] *LSCQ* I/2.4.
[62] "Art of the mind, 1" (*GZJS* 13.36.325).

Along the lines of the *Daode jing* and its famous opening statement, the *Zhuangzi* teems with radical anti-intellectual slogans: "The great Way has no name. The great debate does not speak" 夫大道不稱, 大辯不言.[63] The one-footed Master Wang Tai 王駘 is described as teaching without uttering any words; yet, his students come to him empty and return home filled 虛而往, 實而歸.[64]

How can we account for the advocacy of a minimal use of language and the mistrust of speech in early Chinese texts and more particularly in self-cultivation milieus? Underlying some critical statements against language, in the *Laozi* and the *Zhuangzi*, we may sense a kind of sociological intuition that language internalizes society's preferences and traditional values at the expense of a full grasp of things as they genuinely are. From this well-known perspective, language is an instrument in the inculcation of beliefs and behavioral norms, and it accounts for the dichotomies according to which we face the outward world. A critical attitude toward language allows for the discovery of the most subtle forms of influence of the milieu on oneself. Zhuangzi's second chapter "All things on a par" ("Qiwu lun" 齊物論) shows us that things are ordered according to the categories "this" and "that," "high" and "low," "left" and "right," "good" and "bad," and all these spatial and logical indicators are the foundations of political authority within us. These dichotomies are not mere oppositions. They are a way of shaping our experience of life through a drastic selection in the field of our sensitivity, to such an extent that it eventually becomes impossible to admit there are many other possible ways. Now there is an infinite variety of worlds that are all equal and all absolute in themselves, since none of them may be a yardstick or a standard for the others. Then what appear as contradictions may be seen as variety. Meditation in the *Zhuangzi* is a means to revert to the moment within us before the conversion of our mind to a discursive regime and the subsequent categorization of things.

We could say as a general hypothesis that the universal principle of order, the Way, is found in nature, in a realm outside the jurisdiction of *logos*. There is no universal truth or ultimate knowledge to be found in language. The sage finds clarity of vision in the attuning of his sensory abilities and the refinement of his stock of vital resources, not in the

[63] *ZZJS* 2.83.
[64] *ZZJS* 5.187.

sphere of a pure conscience severed from physiological processes. Even within the Confucian tradition, the expression of ultimate order was located in ritual, in the manners and gestures or words that it commands, not in language itself as providing the logical structure of reality.[65]

Now, the rejection of language, seen as an obstacle to true knowledge and clear-sighted vision of things as they are, is intimately associated in most self-cultivation texts with the suppression of the self. In spite of certain differences in the diverse and rival textual lineages, one general and prominent feature of the sage is selflessness. The interiorization of the principle of totality (the "obtainment" of the Way) is achieved at the expense of understanding the self. The self is eclipsed from discourse in order to make a place for a vital activity pushed to its greatest heights and spreading spontaneously and impersonally like Nature. In other words, self-cultivation does not construct an individual identity but dissolves the individual. The wise sovereign avoids action *and* discourse. Even when the Daoist theory of non-action (*wuwei* 無爲) is reworked within a Ru frame, as is the case in the chapter "The Duty of cultivation" ("Xiuwu" 修務) of the *Huainanzi*, the definition of authentic action remains explicitly impersonal:

> What I mean by "non-action" is what takes place when private individual intentions do not interfere with the common way all things follow, when desires and appetites do not distort the proper methods, when one undertakes affairs by complying with the natural order, when one rises by following one's potential and lets oneself be spontaneously driven by the propensity of things so that neither cunning nor artifice may manifest themselves.[66]

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[65] Cf. for instance the *Zuozhuan* or the *Xunzi*'s praise of *li* as a cosmic and social principle of order and harmony in chapter 19 "Lilun" (Discussion on ritual). In the *Zuo commentary*, ritual is that which informs proper human conduct; it is said to be the foundation of life, the key to the preservation of the self and of the State, and the guiding principle of the cosmos. Mark E. Lewis provides an insightful analysis into this aspect of ritual in the *Zuozhuan* in *Writing and authority in early China*, pp. 132–39.

[66] *HNZ* 19.634. On the possible translations of the title of this chapter, cf. Csikszentmihàlyi, *Material virtue*, p. 24 n. 24. Anne Cheng rightly notices: "We find in this chapter an admirable and successful effort to reveal the common concept which is at the source of Daoism and Confucianism. This desire for a synthesis under the aegis of Daoism reflects well the Huang-Lao intellectual current of which the *Huainanzi* is undoubtedly one of the best representatives" (*Philosophes taoïstes*, vol. 2, p. 909). This effort to reconcile the ideas of Daoism with the demands of personal study, noble efforts and a desire to act for the sake of others without reserve, even to the extent of neglecting one's health and accelerating one's demise, is nonetheless somewhat paradoxical in a chapter on self-cultivation.

As Griet Vankeerberghen rightly reminds us: "The *Huainanzi* is anxious to dismiss the impression that through *wuwei* it is recommending disengagement and motionlessness."[67] What is advocated is selfless agency and not passivity in action. The sage is less an eminent personality than a non-self, an actor without intentionality. In the *Huainanzi*, the conception of *wuwei* consists in actions springing from within 出於中, a source markedly distinct from the self (*ji* 己). The inside of the sage is conceived in non-subjective terms, it is what binds him to the entire universe. The self is regarded as something negative, as a "human construct that bears no relation to the agent's true nature."[68] The self is what hinders the possibility of genuine moral action. By "non-action," the *Huainanzi* means casting aside the intentional self when acting, leaving out of consideration the sphere of personal interests and tastes that define the individual in his singularity.[69]

In the "Art of the mind," the spirit and the Way are not grasped dialectically through a reflective process, but stored and received in a purified and empty mind. It is a state of calm concentration of one's inner activity rather than the working of the intellect which is necessary for gaining access to the spiritual dimension of the world. When the "Inward training" says that the mind meets or welcomes 迎 the Dao, it points out the connection between the body's principle of unity and the dynamic principle underlying all reality. The presence of the Dao in the mind or in the bosom 胸 of the sage signifies the optimal interaction between the sphere of internal workings and the outside world.

Authentic knowledge, then, does not require mental speculation nor the explanation of natural phenomena; it is merely conditioned by a calm and silent concentration and the refinement of vital energy into spirit-like Power: "The great Way, one may draw peace from it, but one cannot explain it,"[70] and, further on, "This is why the sovereign man…leaves behind reason and intelligence."[71] In the chapter "Purifying the mind" we find the following instructions: "Remain firm and dwell in waiting, be open and available without dividing yourself, and in this calm you will naturally clarify."[72] Because these spiritual exercises

[67] Vankeerberghen, *The Huainanzi and Liu An's claim to moral authority*, p. 97.
[68] Vankeerberghen, *The Huainanzi and Liu An's claim to moral authority*, p. 98.
[69] See in particular chapter 9, "The art of mastery" 主術.
[70] "Art of the mind, 1," *GZJS* 13.36.325.
[71] "Art of the mind, 1," *GZJS* 13.36.325.
[72] "Purifying the Mind, 1," *GZJS* 13.38.341.

dispense with language, there is no rupture in the continuum between life and knowledge, between the basic vital energy and the quasi divine power of the mind. Knowledge appears as a capacity to see all things afresh, to envision the world as a whole, leaving behind what usually muddles or befuddles the mind (worries, habits, desires, restlessness); it is a keen perception, irrigated by the most concentrated form of energy. In "Inward training" the description of the cognitive process intimately links the vital breath (*qi* 氣) and the impulse of the mind to meaningful expression (*yi* 意). Knowledge is also described as the intelligent manifestation of an ever-expanding vital force:

> When energy is channeled, it begins to generate;
> With this generation, thought appears;
> With thought, knowledge emerges;
> With knowledge, you can bring this process to a halt.[73]

Knowledge is considered from the dynamic perspective of vital breath rather than that of a subject with cognitive faculties or of an object of study. Life and knowledge of vital activity are inseparable. The awareness of one's inner processes cannot be considered knowledge of the individual self. Rather, one empties oneself of all that individuates in order to focus one's attention on the underlying forces which makes man live, breathe, think, know and act.

> Men all desire knowledge
> But no one seeks to know what makes one know.
> Knowledge, knowledge!
> Hurl it away, far beyond the seas! Don't let it abduct your self!
> Rather than search for it, better empty oneself of it.
> Upright men do not search for it
> And thus are able to remain empty and vacuous.[74]

Objects of knowledge are thus set aside in favor of the understanding by which knowing is made possible, as if mental activity turned back on itself in order to shed light on its very nature. Other texts suggest that when it is turned toward the external world, authentic knowing is a sheer reflective activity in the optical sense. The well-known analogy of the mind like a mirror is to be found for the first time in chapter seven of the *Zhuangzi*. "Responding to emperors and kings" ("Ying

[73] "Inward training," *GZJS* 16.49.400.
[74] "Art of the mind, 1," *GZJS* 13.36.324.

diwang" 應帝王), and expresses the injunction to empty oneself of any content:

> Stop acting as a manager of names, do not be a storehouse for schemes, do not play the one in charge, do not play the master of wisdom. Fuse with the infinite and roam without a trace. Avail yourself of what you've received from Heaven but do not seek profit from it; remain empty, nothing more! The utmost man uses his mind like a mirror: a mirror does not let in nor walk along with what comes and goes of itself; it responds without retaining. Thereby he can overcome things and remain unharmed.[75]

This analogy is to be understood primarily as an attitude of protection and independence from the outside world. Comparing the mind to a mirror implies that external happenings merely graze the surface of the body and never find a way inside. The mirror-like perceptiveness of the mind is not beclouded nor jaundiced by inner moods. The *Huainanzi* reemploys this analogy to express the ability of the sage to respond to persons and situations spontaneously without the distortions caused by memory or personal inclinations. Following the *Mengzi* and the *Zhuangzi*, as is not infrequently the case for its best ideas, the *Xunzi* compares the centered mind to a clear and unrippled surface of water, reflecting everything without ever being affected by what it reflects.[76] The metaphor of a surface of water is even more apt than that of a mirror since it can be stirred and disturbed and thus may reflect a distorted image or no image at all. In contrast to the mirror, it provides an analogy for the different states of the mind and not simply the normative state of limpid reflection. The momentary imprints of things leave no trace and cannot prevent the reflection of new images. In the *Xunzi* this analogy serves a purpose slightly different from the *Zhuangzi*: it describes the synthetic function of the mind in its relations with the outside world, able to hold everything in its purview. It expresses the synthetic unity of impressions and thoughts by a mind able to "digest" and assimilate everything that appears before it while still holding to its capacity to encompass them. In this regard, it marks a clear-cut contrast with the fasting, emptiness, and forgetfulness of the mind advocated in the *Zhuangzi*.

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[75] *ZZJS* 7.307.

[76] *Xunzi jijie*, XV.21.395. For a Confucianist appropriation of the mirror metaphor which valorizes the polishing of the mind, cf. *Huainanzi*, ch. 19 "Duty of cultivation" ("Xiuwu").

Thinking or reflecting, then, no longer signifies stirring one's thoughts, but rather the capacity to let the images of the world imprint themselves on an unmoved mind, as on a *tabula rasa*. The only active role which the individual plays in this form of knowledge consists in maintaining one's calm, persevering with a clear mind. Knowledge is thus tied to the quality of one's perception, which is in turn conditioned by quietude. The problem of cognition is posed in terms of emotional dispositions. That knowledge emerges through calm and concentration reveals to what extent it was conceived from the outset as a form of reception as opposed to a methodological construction. The "Art of the mind" is less concerned with the mind's thoughts, transformed by the drive for knowledge, than with inciting us to focus on the source of the activity which produces our thoughts and dispositions—to focus on this source and peacefully settle in it. In this sense, one might suggest that the work of the mind is less speculative than specular.[77]

The "Mind within the mind" seen as a form of non-mystical meditation

Who, or rather what, within ourselves is responsible for accomplishing this task? The mind of course, but in what sense, in what mode? "Inward training" provides an answer to this question:

> If my mind is regulated, my senses are as well;
> If my mind is peaceful, my senses are as well.
> What regulates them is the mind;
> What appeases them is the mind.
> The mind harbors another mind:
> Inside the mind there is still another mind.
> For this mind within the mind
> Thought precedes words.
> After thought, dispositions appear;
> After dispositions come words.[78]

The reference to two minds, one which contains and another which is contained, corresponds to a distinction between the mind as the object of inward training, the physical organ upon which one works, and the mind as a principle of action and a command center, apprehended prior

[77] Cf. again "Purifying the mind": "When speculation gains in subtlety, clairvoyance increasingly declines" (*GZJS* 13.38.344).
[78] *GZJS* 16.49.403.

to discursive thought. The mind is first conceived as a site which can be attended to and purified and, in this sense, is compared to a residence or an abode (*she* 舍, *gong* 宮), whereas the "inner mind" seems to designate the agent which initiates the cleaning process. In fact, there is no duality in this process, any more than there is duality of body and mind, rather there is a differentiated unity. In phenomenological terms, we could rephrase this argument in the following manner: when I see or hear, I am aware of the physical phenomena outside me. But at the same time, I am able to develop an awareness of my internal perception of these phenomena and can refine it through attention and calm. Even more, I can focus my silent attention on that which, within me, is listening or observing; not only do I see or hear something, but I am able to feel myself as a form of vital activity which perceives things and perceives itself within the self-same process of reflection. The consciousness of outer objects is coupled by an awareness of this perceptive activity. This reflective form of listening or seeing does not constitute a field of knowable objects as in the realm of direct perception. When the mind shifts its attention from the natural objects of perception to the act of perception itself through which it relates to these objects, one does not have to divide oneself internally but rather one discovers the fundamental unity of vital activity.

It is precisely this primordial mind which is called upon in the transformation of the self described by the "Art of the mind" and to which the above passage refers in a deliberately paradoxical way. The mind perceives its own activity from an inner space which is evoked as a "center" (*zhong* 中), as the imaginary site where one is united or concentrated. There the mind frees itself from the normal sphere of transitive consciousness and turns toward a contemplation of its operations within which there is no distance between the awareness of these acts and the acts themselves; they are unified in a shared attention. Whereas ordinary transitive consciousness refers to physical phenomena (forms, sounds, odors), "the mind within the mind" relates to mental phenomena (the hearing of a sound, the smelling of an odor), to the workings of inner activity. The "mind within the mind" is in direct contact with the source of our internal power of seeing. It is neither solicited by nor available for the interactions between the mind and those things which disperse and exhaust our vital power outside the body. The "mind within the mind" is freed from external relationships and becomes completely accessible in the moments when one's attention turns back on itself, moments when the constant appeal of the

outside world is held at a distance. The almost obsessive reiterations in the "Art of the mind" of the benefits of stillness and peace of mind, the repeated urging to dispel affections and reflections and revert to a state of emptiness,[79] remind us that the "mind within the mind" can only be fully attained by calming our tendency to constantly worry and busy ourselves, to dissipate our focus on the present and rush headlong into the blinding and deafening world of things.

The intensity of this original mind increases as intentional consciousness decreases. When one is able through meditation to completely overcome the first mind, that of intentional consciousness (be it on the plane of volition, desire or simply cognition), then the activity of the mind, liberated from its tension toward the outside, stabilizes and concentrates on itself.[80] As the mind's intentionality no longer focuses on a particular object nor projects itself onto it, it is able to evolve purely through internal attention. When internal attention is focused (*zhuan* 專) uniquely on the stream of activity emanating from inside—a field of energy of which this attention is an integral part, as a kind of reverberation—then the vital breath, entirely lodged within, spontaneously purifies itself. The excitement of the *qi* under the spur of desire or the lure of outward beings is soothed, and an unexpected surplus of inner resources fortifies the apprehension of the mind's activity. The mind then suffuses with energy, as the "Inward training" asserts. The

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[79] "Art of the mind, 1": "Man establishes himself through force; he strives to excel; he delights in his capacities; he is motivated by reasons. The sage dispenses with all this. Dispensing with all this, he stands apart from everything else. Because he stands apart, he remains in a state of vacuity. And vacuity is the beginning of all things" (*GZJS* 13.36.330).

[80] Here we are taking up the concept of intentionality in the phenomenological sense of the word as defined by the Austrian philosopher Franz Brentano (1838–1917), the professor of Husserl and the father of phenomenology (cf. *Psychologie von empirischen Standpunkt*, Hamburg, 1874 and 1911). It is to Brentano that we owe our modern and now classic formulation of intentionality. This definition would inspire the first phenomenological analyses of Husserl as well as the works of Alexius Meinong and Kasimir Twardowski on the representation of mental objects. It is, of course, this modern meaning of intentionality to which we are referring when we speak of the end of intentional life in order to attain calm in the "Inward training." Intentionality does not simply have a volitional meaning but makes reference to consciousness of any object, any tension of the mind toward an object of representation. Husserl would then make of intentionality the distinctive property of mental phenomena as opposed to physical phenomena. In the texts of self-cultivation, the mind which lets go of the intentional order and turns its attention toward its very grasping is not a second internal consciousness within the act of grasping physical phenomena (its primary object), nor is it a thinking consciousness which envisions the phenomenal self. It is a fundamental mind which discovers itself as a purely vital activity without any reference to the self.

perceptive, physical and cognitive effects can thus be immediately felt (we all know *a contrario* as a universal component of human experience that the increase of fatigue, hunger, weariness, or sensitivity to cold are the natural outcomes of an inconsiderate outflow of *qi*, caused by strong emotions, strenuous motions or emission of semen.)

From the descriptions of meditative experiences in the "Art of the mind," it seems the mind may in certain moments perceive itself as a form of spiritual energy which, liberated from objects, reflects and refines itself. However we may conceive this reversion to the original mind, it should be noted that this meditation does not lead to the constitution of a personal subject—either as a singularity to be explored or a will to be realized. The activity through which the mind discovers itself is none other than the expression of one's purest energy. Through the progressive awareness of one's hidden source of activity one does attend to oneself, but such a meditative approach does not develop within the context of an individual personality which is limited or defined according to what it is not. The full realization of man's innate potentialities avoids any notion of self-knowledge. Listening to the "mind within the mind" can on the contrary be best understood as a kind of reverberation of the mind's activity when it focuses solely on its inner dynamism and the source of all its various operations. The mind can see itself seeing. The practitioner experiences the pure stream of life, and the peaceful focus of the mind on its own power is sufficient to transform the intensity and the quality of this life breath. In this "frame of mind," all the elements that constitute an individual as a social person with a name, a lineage, a status, but also with definite desires, habits and preconceptions, dissolve and disappear.

*From heavenly powers to almighty energy: the redefinition of "spirit" (*shen*) in self-cultivation*

As we have seen above, the essential characteristics of self-cultivation might be broadly defined as a series of acts (aligning, regulating, expelling, fixing) concentrated and vigorous enough to overcome the limitations of vital activity, perception and action in order to grasp the spiritual energy of which gods and daemons are made. The term *shen* 神 which refers to an external and heavenly divinity in a religious context, is redefined as the ultimate phase of internal power within a naturalistic frame:

> If you think about it but still cannot get it, you may learn of it through spirits and daemons. But this won't be due to a special force in them, it will only be result of the culmination of vital and essential energies.[81]

As the ultimate form of intelligence and clairvoyance, *shen* cannot be disassociated from perceptive acuity;[82] it is the culminating point of vital and essential energies containing the powers and benefits which it accords the sage such as flourishing health, unparalleled sagacity, unlimited control over all that exists, unified perception of the self and the world, and finally a quasi magical protection from all types of curses and catastrophes. There is not one end in self-cultivation but rather a complex set of finalities which allow for different approaches. The ultimate aim of self-cultivation could be understood as spiritual blossoming, political power or bodily health, depending on the perspectives or the values one adopts. But whether it is good health, sagacity or right conduct, the aim is always a transformation or, more specifically, the transformation of vital energy from its basic state into spiritual power. If Confucius was said to keep spirits at bay, and if the chapter "Chu yu B" 楚語下 of the *Discourses of the states* (*Guoyu* 國語) attempted to maintain a strict separation through ritual between humans and spirits, the "Inward training" is probably the first text to voice the possibility for humans to equal the divine efficacy of spirits:[83]

> To see things in their unity and be able to transform them
> We may call that "divine" (*shen*).
> To embrace the whole of human affairs and be able to change accordingly
> We may call it "intelligence."
> To evolve without altering one's vital force,
> To change without altering one's intelligence,
> Only the sovereign man, who maintains this unity, is capable of this.[84]

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[81] "Art of the mind, 2," *GZJS* 13.37.332 and 16.49.405.

[82] Access to this superior level of the functioning of vital energy is referred to in "Inward training" in terms suggesting the highest forms of power: *shen* (神), the spirit of the deceased, and *ling* (靈), the efficacious action of the spirits who accomplish men's wishes. The arrival of *shen* is often associated, in early texts, with a quasi divine clairvoyance or even the magical protection of a force which inhabits us momentarily, that of the ancestor or the dead parent, the spirit of which is hosted by the body; see, for example, in the *Book of songs*, "Fang luo" 訪落, where the spirit of the dead father visits his son and then protects and enlightens him (Mao 287, *Shisan jing zhushu* 19C.21a).

[83] On this point, cf. Michael Puett, *To become a god. Cosmology, sacrifice and self-divinization in early China* (Cambridge, Mass., and London, 2002), p. 109.

[84] "Inward training" (*GZJS* 16.49.401).

In opposition to divination, self-cultivation is not a means to fathom the will of ghosts and spirits or to probe what they may know; it is rather a way of elevating oneself to the same level of apprehension, to the same degree of influential action on the world. When one has refined the material principle of one's activity, one may see clearly through the natural processes and enjoy the same acuity as formless and free-floating beings do. This idea first presented in the "Art of the mind" will gain popularity in texts imbued with Daoist thought and will challenge the traditional monopoly of court diviners and shamans over the spiritual world. The "Inward training" contends that man can avail himself of the powers that define spirits while depriving ritual specialists of their prerogatives and getting rid of the superstition they deliberately maintain.[85]

To summarize Michael Puett's analysis, these crucial statements in the "Inward training" undoubtedly contributed to a new definition of human beings and of the nature of spirits, as well as to a new understanding of the relations between the two. It provided the matrix for the ongoing debate in the Warring States and the Han on the possibility of self-divinization and therefore deeply shook the religious and political structure advocated by the Ru tradition. It also challenged the Mohist school, which explicitly denied the possibility of humans gaining power from the divine realm.

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[85] Aside from Michael Puett, this point has been examined by Hu Jiacong in *Guanzi xintan*, p. 102. On the divinization of the ruler and the debate on the possibility of becoming spirit-like through methods of self-cultivation, see *To become a god*, pp. 276–77. As M. Puett explains: "By claiming to be in possession of techniques that allow the practioner to obtain the power of spirits without resorting to the art of divination patronized at the courts, the authors were making an argument for their own authority: instead of trying to divine the intentions of the spirits and to control them through sacrifices, they claim the ability to divinize themselves." The influence of medical milieus and reflections on human physiology on this aspect of the "Neiye" is very plausible. Donald Harper discusses the meaning of *shen* in the Mawangdui macrobiotic texts as a principle of inner potency that can be nurtured and developed and ties it to the religious background and its impact on self-cultivation in the "Inward training"; cf. Donald Harper, *The Mawangdui medical manuscripts* (London and New York, 1998), pp. 120–21.

Can you be a spirit, and for how long?

Let us venture a step further in the exploration of the *shen*. The experience of spiritual energy, along with the power or ascendance which it confers (*de* 德), and the experience of the Principle of all things (the Way), are all described along the lines of an event, of something coming from outside:

> He whose corporeal form is not regulated,
> The Power (*de*) cannot come to him.[86]

This state in which the mind functions optimally and spontaneously manifests itself suddenly and without warning from one's consciousness, not unlike the whimsical spirits summoned, often to no avail, in sacrificial procedures, as echoed in the laments of the "Nine songs" ("Jiuge" 九歌) in the *Chuci* 楚辭 (*Songs of the South*):

> Spiritual energy takes place of its own accord.
> Now it comes, now it leaves,
> It is beyond the reach of our thinking.[87]

> The divine efficacy of spirits is present in the mind,
> Now arriving, now departing.[88]

The unexpected arrival of the spirit resembles more a sudden intrusion than a calculated effect. The contact with invisible powers, even if they become more or less immanent to the human form, is described in terms which recall the Zhou ancestral cults or the spirit's visitation in the body of a medium who goes into trance. But "Inward training" clearly explains that the spirit is not an external force which possesses the person; spiritual energy results from a progressive refinement of the vital resources of the body from a material point of view and an attitude of inner concentration from a mental perspective. We can detect in the "Art of the mind" a decisive moment of rupture in the process that connects man with the invisible. The ecstatic trance, the loss of consciousness, and the wandering of the soul do not define here the ultimate spiritual experiences. The powers of the sage are defined according to concurrent paradigms, first that of the center, of a clear vision and internal control. It is this trait which distinguishes the form

[86] "Inward training," *GZJS* 16.49.402 and "Art of the mind, 2," *GZJS* 13.37.332.
[87] "Inward training," *GZJS* 16.49.402.
[88] "Inward training," *GZJS* 16.49.408.

of self-cultivation promoted by Jixia scholars in the regional culture of Qi from the southern literary culture of Chu adumbrated in the *Songs of the South* and the *Zhuangzi*. The "Art of the mind" stands here in clear-cut contrast with the descriptions of spiritual experience related in the Inner Chapters of the *Zhuangzi,* which oftentimes illustrate the final achievement of the human mind in terms of escaping the narrow frontiers of the world, evading the corporeal form, and blithely wandering in nowhere lands. As Anonymous retorts to Heavenly Root, who just enquired of him about the way to govern the empire:

> Beat it, you squat man! You bore me with your questions. Don't you know the Creator and I are like buddies? And when I feel weary of it, I will ride the vapors on the wing, pass the rims of this world and wander in the land of non-being before settling in the vast wilds. How dare you bother me with your stupid questions on the empire?[89]

In clear opposition to the prevailing images of the mind as a command center of outer realities, best exemplified in the *Guanzi*, the *Zhuangzi* and certain chapters of the *Huainanzi* tend to favor, in a distinct moral psychology, the imagery of the ecstatic wanderer in a heavenly ascent, deserting the social and political community. This imagery pertains to an individualistic vein of self-cultivation running from the *Zhuangzi* down to the Wei-Jin period, in poets and philosophers like Xi Kang 嵇康 or Ruan Ji 阮籍,[90] who all assert the detrimental effects of society on personal well-being, and the deadening impact of political reality on their ideals.

Assertive as the effort of the mind to keep control over the body in the "Art of the mind" may seem in comparison, the arrival of the spirit can never occur at will, and is a key marker of the limits of voluntary action. Whereas Western moral philosophy has mainly accounted for recurrent failures in action and irrational behavior by the weakness of the will, many early Chinese texts on self-cultivation, primarily the *Zhuangzi*, stand for a philosophical position that explains our frustrations and failures by an excess of the will. If self-cultivation teaches us how to keep ourselves prepared to receive the Power or the Principle,

[89] *ZZJS* 7.293.

[90] Yu Dunkang, *Wei Jin xuanxue shi* (Beijing, 2002), pp. 299–325. Cf. also Donald Holzman, *Poetry and politics: the life and works of Juan Chi (A.D. 210–263)* (Cambridge, Eng., 1976), Xu Gongchi, *Ruan Ji yu Xi Kang* (Shanghai 1986), and *La vie et la pensée de Hi K'ang (223–262 ap. J.-C.)*, (Leiden, 1957). On negative individualism in the *Zhuangzi*, we recommend Xu Keqian, *Zhuangzi zhexue xintan* (Beijing, 2005), pp. 193–207.

we are not capable of provoking this encounter as a causal agent. The "arrival" 來 of the spirit is not an effect one can deliberately bring about, it is essentially a "by-product state" as the philosopher Jon Elster defines it.[91] The direct intention to produce such states invariably precludes the desired outcome from occurring, thereby highlighting the impotence of intentional and voluntary consciousness in the ultimate phase of self-liberation. Many are the highly desirable and divine (*shen*) states of mind in the *Zhuangzi* that should be conceived as such. Notions of non-action and oblivion of oneself partly serve to stress the self-defeating nature of our intention to attain something that cannot be willed.[92]

Thus, the analogy drawn in the "Inward training" with the arrival of a noble guest illustrates the unpredictable and almost whimsical nature of this force, which does not directly depend on good will, on physical resources, nor on personal schemes or recipes, but nonetheless requires a constant personal discipline to keep the "inner lodging" pure and unencumbered. The "Inward training" emphasizes the limited capacity of humans to enjoy this divine condition. The sage can only enjoy in an intermittent way a divine state that ghosts and daemons enjoy permanently. Spiritual energy emerges from within, but the independence and unpredictability of its manifestation, and the intermittent state of mind it sets into motion suggest that it might be understood as if it were an external force. This is perhaps the most adequate means of communicating the experience as it is undergone in the first person.[93]

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[91] See Elster Jon, *Sour grapes. Studies in the subversion of rationality* (Cambridge, 1983).

[92] On the limits of autonomy in moral action, see Romain Graziani, "Optimal states and self-defeating plans: the problem of intentionality in early Chinese self-cultivation," *Philosophy East and West* (Oct. 2009).

[93] When in today's world a painter declares that he was inspired after a long period of apathy, or if he lightheartedly confesses that he was visited by the muses overnight, he does not claim an attachment to the ancient belief in divine beings which entered the body, possessed it and expressed themselves through the artistic medium. And yet, when we replace outdated terms like muse or *daimon* with those of inspiration or grace, we continue to speak of this momentary transformation of perceptive powers, of this experience of intensification of the presence of things, as a state caused by something external, as if it came from the outside, as an event. There are many psychophysical states more common than this sort of pictorial inspiration (but which is, in one sense, the full expression of the Power described in "The Art of the mind," i.e., the power to gather and coordinate vital breaths, the acuity of the gaze, and the genesis of forms)—many states independent of our consciousness, when one for instance feels in good shape, or even in any given sport, when one suddenly experiences an outstanding concentration and efficiency until the moment when this state of favor is abruptly disrupted. These

Further on in the passage already cited above, the Dao is described not unlike the Holy Spirit, who blows where it will:

> It leaves without returning
> It comes without staying.
> How silent! No one hears a sound!
> How sudden, when present in the mind!
> How obscure! No one sees its shape!
> How overwhelming, it surges and rises along with us!
> Its shape cannot be seen
> Its sound cannot be heard
> Though it orders what it accomplishes:
> This is what we call the Way.[94]

To say that the moment when spiritual energy will arrive is unpredictable means that we cannot explain it just by listing its conditions (even if these texts are constantly making recommendations, giving advice and describing preparatory actions). While it depends on the steps leading up to it (getting rid of "objective" knowledge, channeling animal energy, regulating one's body, managing organs, ensuring the free unhindered circulation of air through the orifices, eliminating emotions, concentrating one's attention on the power which produces it, returning to the unique source of one's vital activity), this final phase of the "Art of the mind" is not entirely determined by these preparatory measures. Understanding the ultimate transformation comes down to realizing that it brings about the spontaneous reconfiguration of the entire person in his physical, emotional, intellectual and perceptive dimensions. Even if the "Art of the mind" provides the means to preserve and renew this fortunate state as often as possible, all we know is that it comes and goes, and we will never know when or why it does so at this or that moment in particular. We can only provide a few conditions which should prepare its return, and describe the effects of this power within us.

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experiences reveal to us, to a lesser degree, the fluctuating nature of a state which we can feel only provisionally, which we cannot provoke at will, and which can disappear at any moment. The writers of the "Art of the mind" were extremely clear on this unsustainable state of grace and explained on many occasions the necessary and irremediable loss of this favor (*fu* 福).

[94] "Inward training," *GZJS* 16.49.398.

The look of wisdom and the aestheticization of the sage

In the "Inward training," the understanding of natural workings in the sage coincides with a radical reshaping of his whole being. It provokes an utter transformation resembling a rebirth: emotions, thoughts and relationships with the outside world, skin, hair, muscles, organs and orifices are all affected by this transformation. The unwavering unity which characterizes the sage is created by the fundamental unity of his mental activity and his physiological structure. Spiritual exaltation emerges alongside the muscular, nervous and epidermal reconfiguration of the human form, for their common substratum is vital energy carried to its highest degree of concentration. In "Inward training," these physical transformations are mentioned in the descriptions of the radiant mien of the sage who has enhanced, refined and fully integrated his vital force.[95] The sage's appearance is transformed by the workings of virtue, which offer observable physiological changes.

This is a common trait between the *Wuxing* and the "Art of the mind," though much more salient in the latter. Mencius, drawing on the *Wuxing* its concern for moral motivation, its psychologically-oriented vocabulary, and its taxonomy of virtues, also describes in 7A.21 the physical effects of virtue on the ruler: "a lustrous glossiness that may be seen on the face" 睟然見於面 reminiscent of the "jade-like complexion" 玉色 evoked in the *Wuxing*. As Mark Csikszentmihàlyi observes:

> The shared use of the metaphor of jade to describe the appearance of the person who has reached the final stage of ethical cultivation is but one of several core ideas about moral self-cultivation and about the relationship between human beings and the natural world that are shared by the two texts.[96]

It may mean from Mencius' point of view that virtue is acquired from the inside and impacts the overall substratum of life, the *qi*, as opposed to actions elicited under the pressure of external factors,[97] in contrast

[95] Cf. "Inward training": "When essential energy is conserved...one shines calmly" (*GZJS* 16.49.403); "When one is capable of remaining regulated and quiescent, one's flesh is full and round, one's hearing sharp and vision clear, with firm muscles and robust bones" (*GZJS* 16.49.404). And, on obtaining the Dao, "This can be seen in someone's general appearance, in his skin, in his face" (ibid.).

[96] Csikszentmihàlyi, *Material Virtue*, p. 102.

[97] Mencius also explicitly avails himself of the metaphor of the accumulation of *qi* in the context of self-cultivation. Csikszentmihàlyi (op. cit.) examines Mengzi's discussion in 2A.2 on *qi* and moral cultivation from three points of view: the immovable mind,

with Mencius' opponent, Gaozi, who defines morality in terms of external rules. Csikszentmihàlyi shows convincingly that parts of the *Mengzi* were written under the textual influence of the *Wuxing*. Virtue has material and visible signs, and this rhetoric runs through the Han period and can be seen in texts such as the "Far-off journey" ("Yuanyou" 遠遊) of the *Chuci* or in the poem "spirit-woman" ("Shennü" 神女, 1st century BC).[98]

But why did Jixia scholars like the authors of the *Wuxing* and thinkers like Mencius try so hard to associate the sage with a specific external appearance, radiant, sleek, and bright, along the lines of contemporary theories of music and medicine?[99] Was it to gain the interest of an audience by parading the cosmetic benefits of self-cultivation? This aspect of self-cultivation is one of its distinctive characteristics, for the association of a harmonious physiognomy and a radiant presence in the figure of the man endowed with spiritual potency is quite out of line with previous religious patterns. The shaman was preferably described as a deformed or monstrous being: he is either a midget or a hunchback, as if his physical defectiveness or his infirmity were that which allowed for a "spiritual surplus." Katô Jôken observes that the Duke of Zhou is described as a hunchback midget credited with shamanic powers and tries to show that his father and uncle were also hunchbacks and shamans.[100] The Great Yu, evoked in his shamanic prowess to make the

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the nurturing of heavenly *qi*, and the interior location of virtues. Mengzi sojourned twice in Qi, once during the reign of King Wei, and once under King Xuan. It is very unlikely he did not participate in the debates in Jixia. It is Hu Jiacong opinion's, which we follow, that he took a lot and brought little to the Jixia scholars, and integrated the thought developed in the "Inward training" in his own philosophy. Guo Moruo was the first to analyze the influence of the "Art of the mind" on Mencius' thought (*Jixia Huang-Lao xuepai de pipan*, in *Shi pipan shu*, Beijing, repr. 1996). Hu Jiacong in *Guanzi xintan* compares political theories in the *Guanzi* and the *Mencius* (pp. 474 ff.) and lists all the similar passages in the "Xinshu" chapters and the *Mengzi*'s "Gaozi shang," "Jinxin shang" and "Jinxin xia" (p. 334).

[98] Csikszentmihàlyi, *Material virtue*, pp. 134–35.

[99] Contrast this with Socrates's ugly physical appearance, which is the sanctuary of a beautiful, invisible soul, maliciously discussed by Montaigne in *Essais* III.12 "De la physionomie." Such a clear-cut contrast between the look of the body and the nature of the soul cannot be conceived in the self-cultivation texts we examine—aside from *Zhuangzi*—for ideological reasons and also as a consequence of the continuity between the material body and the inner spirit.

[100] Cf. Katô Jôken, *Chûgoku kodai bunka no kenkyû* (Tôkyô, 1980), pp. 366–67, quoted by Julia Ching. As Julia Ching writes in *Mysticism and kingship. The heart of Chinese wisdom* (Cambridge, UK, 1997): "If a certain deformity was considered to be the sign of a possible religious talent, other disabilities have been regarded widely as the sign of possible compensatory gifts. The mythical K'uei, patron of musicians, is described as

rain come by the sole virtue of his dancing pace, ended up lame and stricken with hemiplegia. Such physical anomaly, deformity, paralysis or blindness may be understood as the negative sign of a privileged and compensatory relationship with the divine. The body of the man gaining divine power must be deformed or destroyed, or the body of the woman for that matter, as we are reminded by two intriguing characters in a later source, the *Lienü zhuan* 烈女傳, Zhongli Chun 鍾離春, spouse of the duke Xuan 宣公 of Qi 齊, and the Orphan Girl 孤逐女, both described as physically ugly women endowed with supernatural powers and a superior political intelligence.[101]

Between this trait of archaic culture and the aesthetics of the body in self-cultivation, the moral reflection developed in Confucian milieus contributed to the secularization of the notion of *de* 德 as spiritual potency, within the reach of anyone engaged on the path of moral reformation. Starting with mythical, half fabulous half monstrous features, the image of the body undergoes a process of socialization when the self/body (*shen*) becomes the locus of voluntary practices. It is from this moment that we begin to encounter contending paradigms promoting the harmonious and graceful shape of the sage, in the *Five kinds of action*, the "Art of the mind," or later in the *Mencius*. A beautiful appearance becomes the natural expression of the moral reformation of the self. The ostensible signs of spiritual acumen are not to be found any longer in frightening or defective shapes but in radiant and robust corporeal forms. Infirm figures are "rewritten" to become compatible with these aesthetic standards promoted by various forms of self-cultivation. Physical deformity becomes suspect, and is associated with the outcast and shameful condition of amputated men punished by the almighty law. Typical of this evolution is the fictitious discussion recorded in the *Han Feizi* and in the *Annals of Sire Lü* in which Confucius denies the understanding of the expression *yi zu*

a one-legged monster who taught men how to play on stones to call down the ghosts and spirits. The ritual and historical texts also speak of the blind musicians who played an important part at sacrificial rituals, presumably including rain-dances." Ching also reminds us (p. 54) that blind musicians at the Zhou court were in charge of predicting the weather. They were seen as capable of sensing and hearing better than anyone else the resonances and currents that blow and flow through the air.

[101] Huang Fumi, *Lienü zhuan*, ch. 6 "Biantong zhuan" (Shanghai 1989), pp. 107 and 113.

一足 applied to music master Kui 夔 as meaning "one-footed."[102] We know that if Kui appears most frequently as the music master of the wise emperors of the past Shun 舜 and sometimes Yao 堯, he is also evoked in other textual sources as a strange one-footed creature. The moral imperative of holding fast to the integrity of the body sanctified by the Confucians was exploited by the Legalists, whose systematized policy of penal mutilation strengthened the ties between outlaws and cripples: every immoral person must become deformed and incomplete. By the complementarity of moral self-cultivation and penal policy, the former producing complete and radiant bodies, the latter mutilated and crippled ones, both Confucianism and Legalism play on the same keyboard of aesthetic values albeit in a different mode. If we consider what is prescribed in Confucian self-cultivation and what is proscribed in the Legalist technique of government, we find a coincidence of the political values ascribed to the corporeal form.

There is a possible common sense explanation of the association of a beautiful appearance with the cultivation of virtue: physical changes in the body are a simple outcome of the preservation and refinement of the *qi*, the very stuff we are made off, "body and soul." Since *qi* accounts for the physical body and its animation, material and mental changes occur together. There is hence a justified continuity between therapeutic practices and moral cultivation; the moral and humoral aspects of the self are intimately linked together. Conversely, the lack of moral integrity may provoke the intrusion of a pernicious *qi* that brings about a bad complexion, a disruption in the natural workings of the body, sometimes even death. Such is the view held in many chapters of the *Guanzi* like the "Inward training" or the "Xingshi jie" 形勢解. But we have the hint that the decisive explanation of this association between a moral mind and a beautiful appearance in self-cultivation may rather be situated on the ideological plane. Csikszentmihàlyi suggests that in the *Mengzi*, the physical appearance of the sage, his jade coloration, and his bright

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[102] "Duke Ai inquired of Confucius: 'I heard that Kui was one-footed, is it true?' Confucius replied: 'Kui was a human, how could he be one-footed? He was indeed a most penetrating musician, but certainly not of a different species. What Yao said was this: 'Having one person like Kui is fully enough,' and he appointed him as music master. Whence, noblemen rephrased his words like this: 'One like Kui is enough,' and they did not mean 'being one-footed' " (Chen Qiyou, ed., *Han Feizi xin jiaozhu*, [Shanghai, 2000], 33.731). This anecdote, with a few variations also figures in the *Annals of Sire Lü* (*LSCQ* 22/6). For a study of Kui, see Marcel Granet, *Danses et légendes de la Chine ancienne* (Paris, 1994 repr.), pp. 505–15.

eyes transparently express the authenticity of moral motivation and thus silence possible accusations of bigotry leveled at the Ru. The body of the sage shows everyone that his virtue cannot possibly be faked.[103] As to the rhetorical tie between outward beauty and inner moral integrity in the "Art of the mind," it seems primarily of medical and physiological inspiration, in which *qi* is the decisive factor of health and moral force. But it may also be a way of publicizing the benefits of the art of the mind at Jixia in a context of rivalry in recommending itself to the ruler as the most desirable method of government reconciling personal well being and common concern.

Self-cultivation and the praise of deformity

The rhetorical conflation of moral excellence and a physical appearance graced with luster and sleekness[104] seems to have irked the authors of the *Zhuangzi* more than anyone else. The *Zhuangzi* not only derides the vanity of technical exercises performed by self-cultivation adepts and the assertive search of immortality that were to become the core of Daoist practices.[105] It also distills its black irony against Confucian self-cultivation, which assumes a necessary tie between moral integrity and physical completeness, and conceives of physical appearance as the radiant expression of inner flourishing, the natural outcome of refined vital breath and essence.

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[103] Csikszentmihàlyi, *Material virtue*, p. 156.

[104] The justification of this association is discussed and justified in detail in the dialogue Xun Kuang invents between Confucius and his disciple Zigong (cf. Csikszentmihàlyi, *Material virtue*, pp. 128–29). Variants of this didactic gloss on the correct meaning of the association of jade with the *junzi* in the *Songs* appear in the *Liji*, in the *Guanzi*, in Liu Xiang's 劉向 *Shuoyuan* 說苑 and Wang Su's 王肅 *Kongzi jiayu* 孔子家語.

[105] See for instance *Zhuangzi's* chapter 15 "Keyi" 刻意, "Torturing one's mind," which examines the erroneous practices of self-cultivation, among which figure classical forms of eremitism, breathing and gymnastic exercises. Even if this chapter was in all likelihood written during the Han (see Zhang Hengshou's discussion on this point in *Zhuangzi xintan* [Hubei, 1983], pp. 174–77), it is in the direct line of Zhuangzi's criticism of a set of impersonal, assertive and self-defeating external rules for the conduct of life at the expense of a singular and ever-reinvented way of life. Zhang Hengshou, however, thinks that the rather linear doctrinal style of the chapter and the suggestions of other forms of self-cultivation, together with the images of the intact swords, are nonetheless in blatant contradiction with the oblivion of the self and the colorful fictions of the Inner Chapters.

Zhuangzi's repeated attacks on the aesthetic tenet of many forms of self-cultivation can be traced at least in three directions: 1) the facetious celebration of divine hideousness; 2) the moral rehabilitation of incomplete bodies (among which amputated outlaws);[106] and 3) the lethargic or cadaverous mien of sages who merge with the structuring forces of the universe in their trances.

1. The crippled, deformed, or ugly characters portrayed in the text, particularly in chapter five "Signs of virtue complete" ("Dechong fu" 德充符), embody a ferocious response to the aestheticization of the virtuous man and the ruthless domination he exerts on the weak.[107] Some of them fit quite adequately the descriptions of the fabulous and deficient beings from the archaic period mentioned above (cripples and hunchbacks), and express more particularly a critical reaction against the socialized forms of spiritual potency.[108] The aforementioned chapter portrays among others a character of uncommon ugliness, Ai Taituo 哀駘它, maliciously qualified as *e* 惡, "ugly, unhealthy, sick, abhorrent," who nonetheless attracts, fascinates, and seduces anyone who gets acquainted with him. From his person emanates a charismatic aura which makes women fall madly in love with him, to such an extent that they beg their husbands' permission to leave, for they had rather be one among the many concubines of such a man than the official spouse of another. Zhuangzi's position is situated at the antipodes of

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[106] We find indeed many colorful one-footed characters in the *Zhuangzi*, whose discussions with historical figures like Confucius or chief minister of Zheng, Zichan 子產, often leave the impression that it is these paragons of virtue and prestigious grandees that are in fact monstrous. Such episodes, far from being gimmicks, play a crucial role in the expression of Zhuangzi's political ideas. Among them we find: Youshi 右師 (3.125), Master on the right side; Wang Tai 王駘 (5.187), toward whom disciples flock; Shen tujia 申徒嘉 (5.196), Gracious Stretching Foot, classmate of Zichan; Shushan wuzhi 叔山無趾 (5.202) who, after being scolded by Confucius, makes him realize his pettiness.

[107] On the political significance of the deformed bodies and amputated outlaws in the *Zhuangzi*, see Albert Galvany, "Pensar desde la exclusion: monstruos y seres extraordinarios en le Zhuangzi," PhD dissertation (University of Granada, 2007). Galvany offers valuable and remarkably documented analysis on many stories in the *Zhuangzi* which cast characters with hideous or crippled bodies and shows how they challenge the ethics and aesthetics of corporeal form in the Ritualist and Legalist schools.

[108] The Inner Chapters of the *Zhuangzi* introduce many a deformed character: Zhili shu 支離叔 or Uncle Departed-Limb (4.180), a sort of dismembered hunchback who on the grounds of his physical condition is lucky enough to be dispensed from state mandatory labor and stipended by the state; the hunchback Yinqi zhili wushen 闉跂支離無脤, Crooked-Foot Departed-Limb No-Lips (5.216), who is also the favorite advisor of Prince Ling of Wei; Weng'ang daying 甕㼜大癭 (5.216), Jar-Shaped Goiterous-Neck, favorite advisor of Prince Huan of Qi; Master Yu 子輿 (6.258), whose body becomes twisted and who ends up monstrous but satisfied with his fate.

the representation of virtue and personal ascendancy by a harmonious physical shape, a representation that seems to have become one of the key markers of self-cultivation. Zhuangzi does not recoil from the subtlety of postulating the radical and almost necessary split between external form and inner qualities of grace and power.

2. Vehemently flouting the basic tenet of Confucianism according to which the body is the ethical expression of the moral self and which consequently makes of physical integrity the sign of a pious and virtuous life, the *Zhuangzi* depicts compliance to the rites and laws as a means to cripple one's inborn nature.[109] What is conceived as the supreme way of shaping the self—ritual manners, graceful recitation, and earnest study of texts—is precisely what one needs to forget in order to make room for Heaven within the self, that is, to revert to a spontaneous and selfless regime of vital activity. The *Zhuangzi* lampoons the "punitive orthopedics" practiced since the Shang and radicalized by Legalist statesmen[110] in a society where an amputated person is necessarily an evil one. The sage's serene indifference to outward contingencies is praised as the privilege of amputated men. Amputation is a stroke of luck that frees one from ordinary worries and fears, and from a narrow-minded individual perspective on life:

> The man who has had his feet cut off in punishment discards his fancy clothes because praise and blame no longer touch him. The chained convict climbs the highest peak without fear because he has abandoned all thought of life and death. These two are submissive and unashamed because they have forgotten other men, and by forgetting other men they have become men of Heaven.[111]

3. Thirdly, the apex of vital resources is repeatedly evoked in the *Zhuangzi* as provoking a momentary extinction of the physical body. Sages who enter a trance-like state and voyage beyond the world of visible forms have a frightening look of doltishness. They appear as dead or plunged in a state of idiocy.[112] In chapter 21, Laozi is described

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[109] Cf. *Zhuangzi*'s chapter six "Dazong shi." On deformity and disease in the *Zhuangzi*, see Romain Graziani, *Fictions philosophiques du Tchouang-tseu* (Paris, 2006), ch. 3.

[110] Chen Anli, "Kaogu ziliao suo fanying de Shang Zhou yuexing," in *Zhou wenhua lunji* (Xi'an, 1993), pp. 155–60.

[111] *ZZJS* 23.815; trans. Burton Watson, *The complete works of Chuang Tzu* (New York, 1968), p. 260.

[112] Cf. also the beautiful and ironically self-deprecating lament in *Daode jing* 20: "Indeed I have an idiotic mind, so bare and blank! People are clear and clever, I alone appear confused! People are perceptive and penetrating, I alone am dull and dumb!"

by a baffled Confucius as a desiccated tree.[113] "He who can grasp that which unites all things and identify with it considers his limbs and his skeleton as dust and dirt," asserts the Old Master to Confucius. Nanguo Ziqi 南國子綦, in the famous overture of chapter 2, "All things on a par," renders his mind like cold ashes and his body like dead wood. These passages with an obviously parodist intention play at cross-purposes with the descriptions of the material effects the cultivation of virtue in Ru circles or in the school of the art of the mind at Jixia are supposed to bring about: dynamic outlook, erect and upright (*zheng* 正) body, charismatic presence, sharp vision. The semantic code of self-cultivation is overturned so that spiritual penetration appears as totally estranged from social practices and cannot be placed in continuity with political authority any longer. The particular human type of the *junzi* 君子, the gentleman, the male member of nobility who cherishes his corporal integrity, who cultivates rituals and flourishes in the adequate performance of his social role, is in no way superior to other human types in the variegated profusion of beings; no one can act as the moral template, the universal norm, or the paragon of humanity, and thereby censure other beings. Zhuangzi's vision of self-independence is induced by the painful awareness of the irretrievable breach between social values and vital élan, between individual liberation and the necessity to conform to one's role in society.

The irony of the *Zhuangzi*'s lampoons against the pretense of imposing a universal moral and aesthetic norm on human beings, along with an ideologically corresponding form of self-cultivation, can still be savored today as a superb exercise of self-liberation against a refined form of political tyranny of the body. This critique was all the more to the point when we know that over the course of the 3rd century BC, the self-cultivation school of Jixia increasingly became a political instrument and an ideological discourse focused on the sovereign.

Conclusion

Meditative practices can essentially follow two directions, though in most self-cultivation texts these tendencies may influence each other and freely coexist: in the first, one tends to an acute form of attention

[113] *ZZJS* 21.243.

to self—words and acts, intentions and demeanor—and thereby works in continuity with one's social persona. The individual examines himself and concentrates on his inner dispositions. In this general form of self-cultivation specified among others by the Ru, textual knowledge and ritual practices play a full part in the process of education, and we do not face a breach between "outer" learning and inner clear-sightedness. Self-cultivation is the art of harmonizing norms and forms and therefore puts a strong emphasis on the completeness of the body. The individual character, the singular personality, far from being valued, yield under the imperative of playing one's assigned role in society and adapting to changing circumstances. In the Ru tradition, with Confucius, Mencius or Xun Kuang, the perfected man is referred to as the *junzi*, the gentleman, committed to the social and political community, actively playing a role in the moral reform of the ruler and his people. Self-cultivation and work on the mind are narrowly tied to ritual observance (sacrifice, ceremonies, fasting). In the *Wuxing* for instance, the accent prevails on the social and ritual awareness of the educated person who aspires to encounter a sage.

The other orientation aspires to a more radical purification of the self, in which every vestige of individuality defined by tastes, habits and goals, every aspect of social persona and ordinary self-conscience are ideally discarded and forgotten. When freed from these elements, one is face to face with pure vital activity and, subjectively, in a state of emptiness. "Though one's old self has disappeared, there still exists something in me that does not disappear."[114] The paradigmatic and foundational experience of wisdom is the dissolution of the self in the spontaneous workings of Nature. It aims at a modified regime of mental activity, a divine state of unknowingness sometimes described as the experience of the sudden intensification of the feeling that one is carried along by the flowing activity of the universal process. In order to attain this blissful state, the mind first regulates its inner dynamic motions and, when it attains a state of deep calm, discovers it is ethically distinct and independent from those outer realities ordinarily clung to in desires and emotions. External practices and knowledge (ritual, divination, study of texts) are discarded in favor of a personal intuition of the workings of the Way within the self, leading to an unprecedented state of vitality and inspiration which can be conceived of as the secularization

[114] *ZZJS* 21.709.

of the experience of the spirit in a religious context. In the *Zhuangzi* a strong emphasis is placed on an absolute state of oblivion, conceived not as a defect of memory, but as an active resource. Meditants in many stories lose their selves, dispense with their individual lives, "treat life as something external" 外生 and wander in the chaotic wastes of space. In this form of extraversion, the ultimate experience of the sage is not the divine capacity to seize and rule the world but the joy of dilating oneself while freely roaming across the "vasty fields" of imagination. The self experiences its unimportance as a tiny point in space and time, and coincidentally the ability to enjoy momentarily a state of non-separation with the world in its dynamic dimension (as opposed to its visible and concrete aspects defined by "forms," *xing* 形).

As another contrast with the first major orientation of self-cultivation, in the *Zhuangzi* or certain parts of the *Huainanzi* that unambiguously plagiarize it, the sage is not called the gentleman but is felicitously termed the "ultimate man" (*zhiren* 至人), or the "authentic man" (*zhenren* 真人), or even more audaciously the "irregular man" (*jiren* 畸人), in open conflict with the social models of wisdom and virtue elaborated in the Ru schools. It is in the *Zhuangzi* that we find for the first time the dithyrambic praise of an individualistic, eremitic way of life, shunning the turmoil of the human world. Cultivation of the self and individual flourishing are almost incompatible with the exercise of power, as is repeatedly illustrated in the chapter "Kings who abdicate" ("Rang wang" 讓王). The secession from political commitment is also ironically emblematized in the dream-like figures of the spirit-men (*shenren* 神人) as ideal models and companions for the immortality-seekers following stern dietary strictures (virtual abstention from solid food), applying breathing techniques (expulsion of pernicious breaths, circulation of breath and blood), and ingesting vegetal and mineral drugs in order to attain a similar self-divinized condition. It is only at the very end of the Warring States that the quest for immortality appears in the northeastern state of Qi and the southern state of Chu, and partially supersedes the search for an unharmed and secure long life which was one of the most distinctive features of self-cultivation.

Far from searching for immortality or adumbrating methods of self-divinization, an important part of the *Zhuangzi* linked to self-cultivation is dedicated to the half playful, half wavering acceptance of death envisioned as a personal event superceding the social perspective adopted in the ongoing debate on funerary rites. Zhuangzi invents fictions served by a powerful rhetoric and a scathing critical sense in

order to strike our minds and prepare us to experience indifferently all the phases of human life. Since the whole of the *Zhuangzi* teems with stories of death, disease, or deformity, many a time seen from a subjective perspective (Master Yu facetiously commenting on his becoming a grotesque monster, Master Si interviewed on his deathbed, Zhuang Zhou scolding his disciples while dying, Shen Tujia retorting to the brash Zichan about how he managed to overcome the grief and humiliation of losing one foot), we may wonder if they should not be reckoned as meditative exercises preparing the reader for any kind of event that may affect him, very much like the *praemeditatio* of the Stoics, as if Zhuangzi had decided to ponder at length the matters and events that make humans unhappy—amputation, poverty, hunger, ugliness, suffering and death—in order to persuade us these are not evils since they do lie within our power but are the expression of fate, *ming* 命.[115]

This way of provoking drastic changes in moral sensibility by resorting to the striking power of images (as a contrast with most self-cultivation texts, which use a more pedestrian style and imagination) is one of the most refined expressions of self-cultivation practices in early China and one of the more distinctive achievements of its philosophical literature. But the *Zhuangzi* is an exception in many regards, and the way self-cultivation is viewed or reinvented in its chapters would need a separate study (there is, for instance, the rehabilitation of menial tasks and the valorization of playful activities such as the divine butchering of an ox by the virtuoso cook Ding, the prodigious mental askesis performed by a hunchback from Chu in catching cicadas on a stick or the mystical design of a bell-rack by carpenter Qing). In a more common vein running through pre-imperial self-cultivation texts, the way the self reflects upon itself, the anonymous formulation of discourse and the paradigmatic mode of existence represented by the sage all bear the strong mark of impersonality. The comprehension of the person from the outset as a configuration of energy and as an expression of cosmic sovereignty in its final stage of spiritual ascension destroys any particular character it might have. Personal experience has no weight because self-cultivation is not founded on personality but rather results from an impersonal state of existence, through meditation (as the psychological experience of the state of emptiness) or kingship (as a political role requiring cutting

[115] On the notion of *ming* 命 in the *Zhuangzi*, see Xu Keqian, *Zhuangzi zhexue xintan* (Beijing, 2005), ch. 7, pp. 173–92.

bonds with human sensibility, as described at length in the *Han Feizi*). In these two cases the individual attempts to incorporate the Way by eliminating distinctive forms and features. Man is never perceived in an historical or biographical mode. The perspective is rather *biological* in the broadest sense. The realm of a personal life experience (*hic*) dissolves in the mind's meditation; the particular relationship which the individual might have with himself is thus insignificant. The problem of the mind is in no way personal: the mind's reflection does not *constitute* a self just as the individual does not consider his own personal life, but rather life in general as a dynamic process. Self-cultivation shifts from the energetic and organic apprehension of the individual to the political and social realm, leaving out of consideration the singularity of the mind and its sphere of personal experience. The concentration of the self never amounts to a consciousness of one's own individuality, as it is shaped by personal history, core beliefs and values, but rather a consideration of that which, by contributing to his individualization, harms the vital principle within him.[116] It is less the *interior* world than the *internal* functions which are explored in self-cultivation. It is concerned with the task of perfecting oneself, but it avoids any interest in the individual, his sentiments, the state of his soul, his particular mental states—in short anything which might contribute to the visible identification of an individuality.

Human nature appears as the sum of vital functions which, fully appropriated and fully developed through progressive refinement, can transform any person into a sage. Self-cultivation does not lead to self-knowledge, but rather to a capacity to act on the source of one's vital energy and to learn how, through it, to transform oneself. This approach has remained at the heart of Chinese thought up to the 20th century and continues to be one of its most distinctive traits. The sage's emptiness[117] reveals to what extent he is an impersonal figure without subjectivity. In the "Art of the mind" the sage cannot be defined by

[116] See "Valuing the self" ("Zhongji" 重己) in the *Annals of Sire Lü* (*LSCQ* I/3). It is worth noting that in spite of its title, this chapter only speaks of the care of our nature (*xing*), and chastizes those who do not understand its fundamental characteristics (*xingming zhi qing* 性命之情). The sphere of the individual which might be suggested by the mention of the self is dissolved in considerations of what might do harm to or benefit life.

[117] "Art of the mind, 1": "Empty, he is the beginning of all beings. This is why it is said that he can be considered the origin of the world" (*GZJS* 13.36.330).

individual traits or individual acts.[118] He has no personality and the expression used in reference to him, *shengren* 聖人, is less the generic indication of an outstanding person than the rhetorical condensation of a series of actions whose connections and coherence prevail over the agent executing them.[119] The sage is above all a sphere of operations, all necessary, spontaneous and supremely efficient, identified with the way Nature works, beyond any particular determination.[120] His being is an extension of his doing. His behavior flows directly from his *morphê*: with his nine bodily apertures unencumbered, he circulates freely throughout the world; with his energies regulated and coordinated, he moves easily among men. His firm muscles and robust bones assure him a liberal and influential conduct, just as his concise but striking words bring about the submission of all under Heaven. The sage experiences an untrammeled unity between his organism and the world he organizes.

The conception of man developed in the "Art of the mind" finds its ultimate ideological expression in the topic of power and political authority which haunts early Chinese debates. Conceived after the model of the Way, the sage impersonates the sublimated conception of the sovereign. In return, the expression of the Way tends to become the idealized hypostasis of sovereignty. We would be wrong to see in the move toward internal pacification a quietist philosophy solely occupied with the search for internal calm and a return to emptiness. If the sage empties his mind of all the inclinations likely to influence him, it is in order to prepare himself for the reception of the spiritual energy which bestows power, mastery and knowledge. This power of the mind never serves as a means to know things in themselves, or to contemplate a

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[118] In contrast for example with the Three Emperors (*sanhuang*) and the Five Lords (*wudi*), who are characterized by their own virtues or their singular inventions; on this subject, see Marcel Granet, *La civilisation chinoise* (Paris, repr. 1968), chapters 1 and 2.

[119] Once again, the *Zhuangzi* is exceptional in this matter. Zhuang Zhou and those who continued his writings generally think in terms of living figures and do not conceive of wisdom or philosophy without casting a specific character for each particular episode. The sage, in his various guises and multiple manifestations, is always present in the *Zhuangzi*. We are constantly confronted with him as he acts, speaks, or even blunders before us; these concrete images speak to us as equal human beings, and not as philosophers in search of wisdom or contenders for power.

[120] See for example "Art of the mind, 1," in which the description of the Way also signifies the sage's path through the world: "The Way of Heaven is empty and formless; being empty, it bends before nothing; being formless, it struggles with nothing. Struggling with nothing, it circulates freely through all beings without altering itself. Power is what the Way grants. Those who obtain it may grow and generate" (*GZJS* 13.36.328).

supreme transcendent being; it is a means to rule, subjugate and grasp the world. The sociological conditions surrounding the practice of speculative thought in ancient China, the prevalence of public forms of writing situated at the crossroads between religious practices and political authority, the fact that most literati rose from social classes which were below that of the high nobility and aspired to the position of minister or high-ranking civil servant (when they were not already part of the sovereign's intimate circle) might each in their own way account for the omnipresence of the theme of kingship among the learned. The increasing importance of patronage and sponsorship during the second half of the Warring States, as well as the emergence of textual traditions centered on politics, reinforced the ties between the state and the schools of thought. The king remained the privileged figure of the accomplished man in the Daoist tradition of self-cultivation. This tradition, combining with the Confucian moral reminiscence of the wise sovereigns' heyday, contributed mightily to the Legalist rethinking of the acquisition and preservation of absolute power concentrated solely in the hands of the king.

Between the noble nostalgia of a golden age where virtuous emperors governed by civilizing their peoples and the messianic dream of restoring unity "under heaven" through the quasi divine powers of the One Man, these philosophical currents redirected the demands of individual self-perfection toward a form of sovereignty and a focus on royal omnipotence. It is in this way that the reflections on self-cultivation never gained their independence, as if the literati of the ancient world had given precedence to the king over the self, and valued subjection over subjectivity.

ETHICS AND SELF-CULTIVATION PRACTICE IN EARLY CHINA

Mark Csikszentmihàlyi

While much descriptive work on China rightly uses "emic" categories (i.e., those consistent with the viewpoint of the culture being studied) rather than "etic" ones (i.e., those meaningful to the communities studying the culture), there are times when using the latter is useful because it automatically draws the study of China into a comparative frame. The comparative frame is especially useful in cases where there is a possibility of cultural diffusion, where there is advantage in engaging scholarship or theory about similar phenomena in other cultures, or a need to bring the discussion of Chinese categories into cross-cultural dialogue. The challenge of using etic categories to speak about early China is to maintain a connection to culturally-specific constructions while acknowledging that similarities across human psychology and physiology coupled with common environmental factors that frame daily experience might lead to parallels between cultural formations across time and space.

Yet despite the fact we have all come across cultural parallels that would seem to allow the use of etic categories, the subjectivity inherent in the process of translating between emic and etic categories render such comparative projects suspect in the eyes of many. Indeed, the distinction between these two categories was popularized by cultural anthropologists who drew an analogy between their field and that of linguistics, and its use generally assumes access to native informants whose testimony provides the basis for the emic categories and who test their connection to etic ones. While each passing year witnesses an increase in the textual resources available to students of premodern China, it is safe to speculate that access to native informants will remain in the domain of science fiction for some time to come. Still, it is worth visiting this issue at the outset of a study concerning early China that is predicated on the connection between two terms that do not have unambiguous counterparts in the language of early China: ethics and self-cultivation practice.

Both "ethics" and "self-cultivation" are terms that have clearer counterparts in later China but do not map neatly onto the intellectual landscape of pre-imperial and early imperial China. Therefore, it is not surprising that, of the different aspects of the contemporary study of morality, certain aspects are more germane to the study of early China than others. Moral psychology is a major concern for many early Chinese writers, who generally view decision-making as not driven by a single faculty such as reason. There is less of a concern with right action considered independently of good character for most writers in the mainstream traditions, although Mozi 墨子 and his followers are important exceptions. By contrast, many contemporary ethical systems determine what is right and wrong by evaluating the results of actions, and in this way they differ from counterparts in the ancient world that stressed the intentions behind the actions. One reason for the modern turn away from "virtue ethics" theories is that the actual nature of intention is difficult to determine for the observer, and even at times for the actor. At a time when the vocabulary of contemporary moral theory includes notions like weakness of will, self-alienation and suspicion, it may be difficult to imagine how ancients could have believed that intentions were transparent enough to be evaluated. In comparison with contemporary theory, was ancient Chinese moral psychology, based on the cultivation of a set of virtues, relatively naïve?

This essay argues that the vocabulary of ritual performance provided a resource for just such a test of the sincerity of intentions, and that this vocabulary should as a result be seen as an integral part of not only early Chinese moral psychology, but also cultivation practice—here defined as practice or training that alters the actor's dispositions. It treats three sets of texts that focus on qualities of action, showing how the cultivation of behaviors and skills was marked by attention to the mental or spiritual state of the actor at the moment of the action. The domain of this study is the set of pre-imperial texts that focus on three types of self-cultivation: 1) those in the ethical discourse that trained readers to develop virtues such as *ren* 仁 (benevolence) and *yi* 義 (righteousness), 2) those in the physical cultivation discourse that trained readers to strengthen their *qi* 氣 and lengthen their lives, and 3) those in the spiritual cultivation discourse that trained readers to communicate with *tian* 天 (Heaven, the cosmos) and the spirits in order to receive their blessings. In order for the process to reach the proper outcome, actors needed to perform actions in an authentic way. Terms like *wei*

畏 (fear or awe), *jing* 敬 (reverence) and *cheng* 誠 (sincerity or grace) are often used to describe attitudes or qualities of the performance of actions that connote such authenticity. While the goals of these self-cultivation practices differ, there are structural similarities in how they are described and explained.

Ritual self-cultivation

The link between practice and the cultivation of moral dispositions is most clearly theorized in the realm of ritual, and the vocabulary used to describe the proper attitude to self-cultivation derives from ritual practice. Ritual performance is central to the cultivation of the three virtues of *ren, yi* and *li* 禮 (ritual propriety). Yet early sources differ or, more often, remain silent about the mechanisms whereby practice results in the cultivation of morality. In order to better understand these implicit mechanisms, it is necessary to explore the relationship between the virtues and explanations of the efficacy of ritual action.

"Virtue ethics" refers to a theory of morality that emphasizes individual character, in contrast to approaches that emphasize duties (deontology) or the consequences of actions (consequentialism). In *Virtue ethics and consequentialism in early Chinese philosophy*, Bryan Van Norden argues that early theorists writing in the tradition of Kongzi (he calls this tradition "Ruism") is a virtue ethic, using a definition that has four elements:

> (1) an account of what a "flourishing" human life is like, (2) an account of what virtues contribute to leading such a life, (3) an account of how one acquires those virtues, and (4) a philosophical anthropology that explains what humans are like, such that they can acquire those virtues so as to flourish in that kind of life."[1]

While we will see below that good character rather than the consequences of action is key to the development of the ideal of the *junzi* 君子 (gentleman) in works like the *Lunyu* 論語, the notion of "flourishing" is perhaps different in important ways from other forms of virtue ethics.

[1] Bryan W. Van Norden, *Virtue ethics and consequentialism in early Chinese philosophy* (New York, 2007), p. 21. Van Norden's treatment of Ruism as an ethics of virtue draws on earlier work by Lee Yearley and Philip J. Ivanhoe. Another early work on virtue ethics that is particularly relevant to Chinese examples is Joel Kupperman's examination of the workings of *Character* (New York, 1991).

As Van Norden notes, there are differences between the emphasis on contemplating a higher reality in the European context and the immersion in cultural forms such as ritual and the classics in the Chinese one.[2] There is more than one way that Chinese writers have linked ritual to virtue, however, and the following section examines two major ways in which this has been done: "social" and "individual" explanations of the ritual-ethics connection.

When Hu Shi 胡適 (1891–1962) described his theory of the three progressive states of ritual in his 1918 *Zhongguo zhexue shi dagang* 中國哲學史大綱 (*An outline history of Chinese philosophy*), Emile Durkheim's *Elementary forms of religious life* had been in print for a scant six years. Both works grew out of the background of 19th century evolutionary accounts of religion. Perhaps because of that, they both describe how ceremonies with symbolic importance in a specific religious context gain significance for the broader society as their components become indexed to the values of the collective. This connection between personal ritual performance and social norms is the first of two that are sometimes drawn between ritual practice and moral action, which I will call the "social" ritual-ethical connection.

Hu Shi's theory of the connection between ritual and notions of right and wrong began with what can only be described as an evolutionary account of the development of a deeper level of meaning behind ritual practice. Hu noted that his view that *li* has multiple meanings was consistent with "many Western Sinologists who admit the Chinese word *li* has no absolute translation."[3] Hu described ritual as starting as religious ceremony, going through a stage in which the rules of the ceremony were acknowledged as customary across the society, and ending when rules became aligned with moral principles and thus became subject to modification.[4] Behind this scheme is a commonly accepted early 20th century formula: societies move from (primitive) religion to (civilized) philosophy.

The Durkheimian model is influential in studies of ritual performance. For example, Herbert Fingarette posited not a development from sacred to secular, but described secular rites whose performance had a

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[2] A related difference that Van Norden notes is the nature of the virtues: in China they are practical as opposed to theoretical, agent-relative, and non-theological. See Van Norden, *Virtue ethics*, p. 125.

[3] *Zhongguo zhexue shi dagang* (Shijiazhuang, 2001), p. 103.

[4] Ibid., p. 105.

sacred dimension. Fingarette relies on Durkheim's understanding that the sacred may only derive from the social, and so shares some of Hu's assumptions about ethical norms being relational and hence requiring a social context. He writes that "rite brings out forcefully not only the harmony and beauty of social forms, the inherent and ultimate dignity of human intercourse; it brings out also the moral perfection implicit in achieving one's ends by dealing with others as beings of equal dignity, as free coparticipants in *li*."[5] Such a reading highlights the social dimension of ritual practice but neglects the personal effects of activities like reading, meditation, and solitary reflection.

Ritual was linked to self-cultivation practice not just on the level of society but also on that of the individual. The effect of ritual practice on individual moral psychology is at the heart of the second way of explaining its efficacy in forming dispositions to moral behavior. The function of ritual has been seen in China as a kind of block against or prevention of the influence of desires or selfish behavior. This is one of the most widely used metaphors in descriptions of the function of the rites, and its presence usually signals the first stage in an analysis of how personal moral development occurs. A term used in several pre-imperial works is *fang* 防/坊, which means "embankment dam" and is used to illustrate the way that ritual unconsciously prevents the development of behaviors that are detrimental to the social order. A particularly clear explanation of this function of the *li* is found in chapter 46 of the *Da Dai liji* 大戴禮記 (*Book of rites of the Elder Dai*):

> Confucius said:
> "I might compare the Way of the Gentleman to an embankment dam 防. The way that ritual blocks those things from which chaos 亂 is engendered is the same way that an embankment dam blocks 塞 those things from which a flood is engendered. So if you think an old embankment dam is useless and destroy it, that will certainly result in flooding and loss, just as if you think the old rites are obsolete and get rid of them, that will certainly result in chaos and disaster."[6]

Here, several aspects of the metaphor are emphasized. The main comparison is that like a dam, the rites prevent the rise of unnamed precursors of chaos, and this function of the rites is forgotten by those who would condemn them as obsolete.

[5] See Herbert Fingarette, *Confucius—the secular as sacred* (New York, 1972), p. 16.
[6] In the "Licha" 禮察 chapter; see Wang Pinzhen, ed., *Da Dai liji jiegu* (Beijing, 1985), p. 21.

The same metaphor is used in several different ways in the "Fangji" 坊記 ("Record of the embankment dams") chapter of the *Book of rites* (*Liji* 禮記). There, the rites are described as an embankment dam that aids two particular groups in screening out a potentially disruptive environmental influence. Specifically, economic factors can be a challenge for a person trying to cultivate virtue. The chapter includes this description of the two ends of the socioeconomic spectrum:

> The Master said:
> "When a lesser person is impoverished, he or she becomes constrained, and when rich, becomes proud. Constraints lead to stealing while pride leads to disorderly behavior. The regulations and patterns of ritual were created based on human affective dispositions, in order to serve as an embankment dam 坊 for the people."
> Therefore the sages administrated wealth and honor so that when the people were wealthy they were not satiated enough to grow proud. When [the people] were poor they did not reach the point of being constrained. When [the people] had noble rank, they were not dissatisfied with those below them. That is why disorder decreased.[7]

This function of the rites does not construct dispositions, but rather blocks outside factors that might result in their construction. Specifically, wealth leads to a level of satiety that leads to pride, while poverty results in stealing. As with the above passage, the rites are compared to a dam in the way that they prevent these antisocial behaviors.

The need for the rites is then tied to a view that environmental factors may lead one to develop selfish behaviors, a focus on the way these factors limit one's ability to cultivate moral dispositions that is found in late 4th and 3rd century BC texts like the *Mengzi* and the *Xunzi*. The clearest expression of this idea, perhaps influenced by the latter work, is in the *Han Feizi* 韓非子, associated with Prince Fei of the state of Han (ca. 280–ca. 233 BC). There one of the objections to the cultivation of virtuous dispositions is exactly the one that the "Record of the embankment dams" tries to answer:

> This is the reason that when the ancients were easy about material goods, it was not their benevolence but that material goods were plentiful. Similarly, when people today compete to acquire them, it is not a matter of baseness but rather that material goods are scarce.[8]

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[7] *Liji jijie* (Beijing, 1998), 50.1281.
[8] *Han Feizi jijie* (Beijing, 1998), 19.1041.

Here the *Han Feizi* argues that a person in straightened circumstances has no leisure to develop moral sensibilities. This is the problem that the above descriptions of the "dam" quality of ritual addresses. Formulations like "ritual serves as an embankment dam to prevent the rise of the people's depraved thoughts" 禮坊民所淫 speak to ways that ritual limits the negative effects of environment. In Joel Kupperman's description of the *Xunzi*, this is the "first stage of development" in the development of morality.[9] Although the blockage or prevention of disorderly behavior benefits society and gives the individual cognitive space, this is no more than one part or an initial stage of that development.

If participation in ritual limits desires, how does it create dispositions that change behavior? In part by creating new attitudes that filter or replace desires, creating the basis for the development of virtuous dispositions. The proper ritual attitudes for the participant in many early texts including the *Lunyu* 論語 (*Analects*), are those of reverence, awe and sincerity.

Reverence is a spiritual attitude that is optimal in ritual contexts. The attitude of reverence, *jing* 敬, is optimal in sacrificial contexts while grief, *ai* 哀, is appropriate to funerals (see *Lunyu* 3.26 and 19.1). Reverence is also at the core of the moral distinction in *Lunyu* 2.7 between human filial devotion and the care of domestic animals. There, the "right action" of feeding one's parents may or not be moral, and what determines its morality is the presence of reverence: "If it is not done reverently 不敬, what basis is there to distinguish them 何以別乎?" Moral action, then, can take place if and only if one's attitude is reverent when one performs it.[10] In contrast to a view that moral action may solely be

[9] In his "Xunzi: morality as psychological constraint," Kupperman likens the *Xunzi*'s description of ritually cultivated morality to theories of moral development like those of Piaget and Kohlberg. See *Virtue, nature and moral agency in the Xunzi*, eds Kline and Ivanhoe (Cambridge, Mass., 2000), pp. 89–102.

[10] But what is reverence? Is it a type of behavior, an attitude or a disposition? When the *Mengzi* describes the development of the virtues in the mind in section 4A6, it describes certain features of the mind that all people possess, on a par with the mind that "approves and disapproves" (*shifei* 是非). If we were to describe morality as the presence of virtuous dispositions, the innate impulse to reverence would be "pre-moral" because it requires cultivation to be turned into the virtue of ritual propriety. This developmental model is also found in the excavated *Wuxing* text, which identifies reverence as a stage in the development of ritual propriety. Section 19 of that text begins with the "distance" that derives from interacting with others with one's "outer mind": "Using one's outer mind when interacting with others is keeping one's distance" 以其外心與人交 遠也. That is followed by a phrase to the effect that "distance" is the basis of "reverence": "Keeping one's distance and being grave is reverence" 遠而莊之 敬也

evaluated by intention, reverence must be a characteristic of an action for that action to be moral.[11] *Analects* 15.18 puts this another way: it is the righteousness that forms the substance 質 of an action, and it is through the rites that one enacts it 行之. In effect, this is a test for authenticity that seeks to rule out actions that are simulacra of virtuous actions, the kind performed for ulterior motives.

Wei, fear or awe, is another attitude that is key to ritual performance and to the development of moral dispositions, particularly in the context of sacred power. An example of a context that calls for awe is given in *Lunyu* 16.8:

> The gentleman 君子 is awed by three things. He is awed by *tian*'s mandate 天命, he is awed by great people 大人, and he is awed by the words of the sages 聖人. A lesser person 小人 does not recognize *tian*'s mandate and so is not in awe of it, he is improperly familiar with great people, and he deprecates the words of the sages.[12]

The authority of the sacred triangle of *tian*, great people and the sages commands awe from the gentleman and scorn from the lesser man. A Han commentary to this passage contained in the "Shunming" 順命 chapter of the *Chunqiu fanlu* 春秋繁露 (*Luxuriant dew of the Annals*) quotes this passage and then links the attitude to sacrifice in the following way:

> When you sacrifice at the altars of the earth (*sheji* 社稷), ancestral temple (*zongmiao* 宗廟), or to the ghosts and spirits of the mountains and rivers 山川鬼神, even if you do not do it in the proper way, there will be no calamity. But when it comes to a sacrifice to *tian* not being accepted or being conducted contrary to the results of a divination, it will cause

[19.2]. See Mark Csikszentmihalyi, *Material virtue: ethics and the body in early China* (Leiden, 2004), pp. 83–84.

[11] This is an important contrast that might be drawn between two kinds of "virtue ethics." The idea that in China reverence somehow is a different way of knowing is implicit in Paul Woodruff's observation that "ancient Greek culture harps on the cognitive aspect of this virtue—on knowing human limitations—while Confucian practices build an implicit sense of those limitations through the careful observance of ceremony." See *Reverence: renewing a forgotten virtue* (Oxford and New York, 2001), p. 104.

[12] *Lunyu jishi* (Beijing, 1996), 33.1156–1158. There is a difference of opinion about whether the "great" in "great people" (*daren* 大人) connotes official position, as Zheng Xuan 鄭玄 (127–200 AD) argues, or has an additional moral dimension as He Yan 何晏 (190–249 AD) and later Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130–1200 AD) hold.

> the ox to have a deformed mouth, or allow rats to gnaw on the horns of the ox.[13]

The passage from the *Lunyu* is here interpreted as reading "in awe" as linked to the proper performance of sacrifice. It explains the spiritual attitude of *wei* as paying attention to conducting the sacrifice in the appropriate way. The awe is of *tian*, because it is *tian* that rejects sacrifices done without that attitude, as empirically evidenced by two outcomes historically attested in the *Annals*.

The attitude most closely connected to the influence of other virtuous exemplars is *cheng*, usually translated as "sincerity." *Cheng*, too, is often used to describe a characteristic of ritual performance, as in the "Quli" 曲禮 chapter of the *Liji*:

> In carrying out the *dao* 禱, *ci* 祠, and other sacrifices to the ghosts and spirits, if it is not ritually proper, then there will be neither sincerity nor gravity. This is why the gentleman is respectful, reverent, frugal, retiring, and yielding in order to clarify the ritual.[14]

However, it is later adopted in contexts that expand its meaning past this strict sense in the context of ritual performance. In the "Zhongyong" 中庸 chapter of the *Liji*, the ability to "reach sincerity" 至誠 is associated with foreknowledge 先知 and capacity to transform 能化 and compared to being like the spirits. *Mengzi* 4A12 quotes one "Zhongyong" passage that summarizes a connection between *tian*'s Way and the human way, and describes it as *cheng*. The text continues: "It has never happened that a person has reached sincerity but has not moved others 不動者. There has never been an insincere person who was able to move others."[15] As opposed to *jing* and *wei, cheng* is perhaps more than simply a spiritual attitude, because it entails an ability to affect others, but this ability is grounded in the attitude required for proper sacrificial practice.[16]

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[13] Zhong Zhaopeng, ed., *Chunqiu fanlu jiaoshi* (Jinan, 1994), 15.950–54. The reference to the cow with a damaged mouth is to a sacrifice in year three of the reign of Duke Xuan in the Zuo commentary to the *Chunqiu* (*Annals*). For the reference to the rat gnawing the horns off the sacrificial ox, see year seven of the reign of Duke Cheng. See Yang Bojun, ed., *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu* (Beijing, 1991), pp. 666 and 831.

[14] *Liji jijie* 1.9.

[15] See Jiao Xun, ed., *Mengzi zhengyi* (Beijing, 1996), p. 509. Zhao Qi notes that if one has ultimate sincerity, one may "move metal [bells] and jade [chimestones]" 動金石.

[16] In a detailed study of one early metaphor based on musical resonance used to define *cheng*, I have argued that the term can mean "the process of affecting others through the influence of one's essence and *qi*" and that this was an important aspect

There are several things that these three attitudes have in common. First, they all originate in descriptions of ritual performance, specifically in the presentation of sacrifice. The efficacy of sacrifice is contingent on being in awe of, sincere, or reverent to *tian*. Second, these attitudes became important in non-sacrificial contexts, too, and in such cases were seen as also necessary for the efficacy of individual moral practice. Here the efficacy of ritual in producing authentic action may no longer be explained solely as the result of the "social" ritual-ethical connection, but is also a matter of a connection on the level of the individual. Hu Shi's evolutionary scheme has no place for this phenomenon, because here the relationship between performance and good actions is not created gradually on the level of society, but rather is a physical, material transformation in the body of the individual. A robust account of the relationship between moral action and ritual practice must take into account both its social and individual aspects. This dual aspect is also present for other practices that adopted features of the structure of moral self-cultivation practice. To look more closely at some of the structural similarities, let us turn to what at first might seem a rather different program, the physical self-cultivation program associated with Pengzu 彭祖.

Physical self-cultivation

Applying labels like macrobiotic, medical, or sexual techniques to practices whose explicit goal is altering personal physiology has both a clarifying and an obscuring effect on our reception of such texts. Dietary practices such as abstaining from grain are formally similar to some dietary restrictions today, but were conceptualized differently. Applying labels such as "medical" to it implies a teleology that may obscure the different ends to which the practice was put in ancient China. Specifically, in an atmosphere where there is a rigid mind/body distinction, parallel modern practices are generally seen as mostly "body" examples. Yet the early Chinese saw such practices as being spiritually efficacious. As with Marcel Granet's phrase "bodily techniques," the section title "physical self-cultivation" intentionally conflates techniques that

of the early model of sagely rulership in a set of early Confucian texts. See *Material virtue*, p. 188.

resemble procedures that today are used to different ends and so are part of mutually exclusive discourses.

It is, of course, possible to view early sexual techniques as teleologically neutral "technologies" that might be used to multiple ends from ensuring offspring to longevity, pleasure, or controlling desires. Indeed, the way some Han texts document the repackaging of a single technique to rather different purposes supports such an approach. On the other hand, to read this assumption into all instances of historical practice runs the risk of jumping to questionable conclusions. Specifically, the assumption behind such a view is that techniques are devoid of meaningful "content" in and of themselves, a view that would imply that any practice might be deployed to any end at any time. Instead, the historical record more commonly reveals clusters of overlapping ends coming from a common metaphorical or methodological stem. In the following section, I will survey the "overlapping" aspect of texts and techniques associated with the Warring States figure Pengzu, whose techniques are directed to ends that, in the earliest exemplars, are by no means limited to longevity.[17]

The wide scope of techniques that potentially restrict desires or affect one's behavior in ethical contexts means that no one text could adequately represent the entire corpus of physical self-cultivation texts. With the figure of Pengzu, however, numerous recent archaeological finds and the presence of a late exemplar of the *Pengzu jing* 彭祖經 in chapter 28 of the medieval Japanese collection *Ishinpô* 醫心方 make it a particularly fruitful example to survey the cluster of ends with which his techniques were associated.

Pengzu appears in both a Chu Warring States manuscript included in the Shanghai Museum materials from the early 3rd century BC and in Western Han texts from Mawangdui and Zhangjiashan. Eight slips of bamboo comprise a Shanghai Museum text with no internal title, dubbed *Pengzu* by its first modern editors.[18] In the form of a dialog

[17] Pengzu is only one figure associated with multiple practices in the Han. For a fuller discussion of such figures and the physical cultivation practices with which they are associated, see Donald Harper, "Warring States natural philosophy and occult thought," in *The Cambridge history of ancient China, from the origins of civilization to 221 BC*, eds Michael Loewe and Edward Shaughnessy (Cambridge, 1999), pp. 813–84, and Mark Csikszentmihalyi, "Han cosmology and mantic practices," in *Daoism handbook*, ed. Livia Kohn (Leiden, 2000), pp. 53–73.

[18] Ma Chengyuan et al., eds, *Shanghai bowuguan cang Zhanguo Chu zhushu*, vol. 3. (Shanghai, 2003), pp. 301–08. There is disagreement about the correct order of these

between a ruler named Goulao 耇老 and his advisor Pengzu, the Shanghai manuscript *Pengzu* consists of at least three questions and answers. The initial question that Goulao asks (slip 1) concerns the way to maintain the mandate that his clan had received from the Lord on High (Shangdi 上帝):

> The awe in the minds of the Gou clan has never been forgotten, and so we have been able to hold Heaven's Mandate for a long time. What capacities and conduct do I need so that I will receive it upon my person, and then secure it through *di* and *chang* sacrifices 帝(禘)嘗?[19]

By saying that he is interested in advice that would increase his capacities and change his actions, Goulao is interested in changing his behavior in a way that will allow him to preserve his clan's receipt of Heaven's Mandate. This concern, if it was expressed in the context of one of the "Confucian classics," would be categorized as a query about ethics as it relates to imperial authority. The particular practices described in subsequent slips would indicate that this is a medical or hygiene self-cultivation text, but the explicit claim to political authority reminds us of the dual role of the word *de* 德 in "Confucian" texts about *tian*'s Mandate, and in "Daoist" texts about the cultivation of *qi*.

In the particular case of the Shanghai Museum version of Pengzu's methods, the physical self-cultivation techniques are oriented to goals that are in some cases similar to those found in political-philosophical texts of the same period. Among the different goals that Pengzu lays out as part of the answer to this and other cosmologically-framed questions are several that echo the cultivation practices of the classical ritual variety. On slip 2, Pengzu describes the ideal of *dakuang* 大匡, the essentials of which entail: "guarding against things while avoiding arrogance, exercising care to the end and preserving diligence" 戒之毋驕 慎終保勞. He further notes that "what is difficult and easy refers to matters of reducing desires" 難易言欠(卻)欲. As with ritual practices

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slips. If the order of Li Ling's arrangement (in Ma Chengyuan, et al.) is numbered one through eight, then Zhao Bingqing amends it to 1, 2, 5, 3, 4, 6, 7, and 8, and Yang Fen amends it to 1, 4, 3, 2, 5, 6, 7, and 8. While it does seem that the text begins with slip 1 and ends with slip 8, and 5–3–2 and 7–8 are coherent sequences, the complete order of the text is difficult to know with certainty. Both articles may be found at www.bsm.org.cn/. Zhao's 上博三《彭祖》篇的性質探析 at show_article.php?id=104, and Yang's 上博(三)彭祖簡編排小議 at show_article.php?id=360.

[19] The *di* 禘 and *chang* 嘗 sacrifices are ancestral sacrifices carried out in the summer and autumn, respectively. See *Shanghai bowuguan cang Zhanguo Chu zhushu*, vol. 3, p. 303.

that "dam" the appetites, controlling desires is an important goal of Pengzu's methods. In both cases, a lack of desire is connected with the authority to rule. The term *dakuang* is a chapter title of both the *Guanzi* 管子 and the *Yi Zhoushu* 逸周書 (*Remnant Zhou documents*), where in both cases, the term refers to the highest of three kinds of corrective measures that will aid in governing a state. In the latter text, this state is associated with the ability of the ruler, through an attitude of reverence, to use ritual to transform the state to good order: "If one gives birth to reverence in the state, the [people of] the state will all submit. They will submit only if there is reverence, there will be reverence only if there is yielding, there will be yielding only if there are rites" 生敬在國國咸順 順維敬 敬維讓 讓維禮.[20] While the specific content of the ideal of *dakuang* varies quite a bit, in both texts it is a type of self-control that allows the desired state of *dakuang* to come about.

Physiological transformation is also part of Pengzu's advice. In another passage on slip 6, the ideal of "circumspect thinking" (*yuansi* 遠思) that allows planning and preparation is associated with the cultivation of "purity" (*su* 素) that results in a "white mind and lustrous body" 心白身澤.[21] Both these terms are common descriptions of the transcendent body in pre-imperial texts. The term "white mind" is the title of a chapter in the *Guanzi*, and is used in several early texts to refer to self-cultivation techniques that bring one closer to the spirit world. Some historians have related "whitening the mind" to the discussions of the moral dimension of "radiantly bright" *qi* in the *Mengzi*.[22] Similarly, "luster" is a quality of the transcendent person's eyes, as well as of jade.[23] That these terms are used in political-philosophical contexts elsewhere, but here are associated with a figure known for longevity underscores the way that from its opening line, the Shanghai *Pengzu* is very political in its nature. Pengzu's last answer links practices as diverse as avoiding conspicuous consumption, repressing worthies and being fond of fine

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[20] Huang Huaixin, ed., *Yi Zhoushu jiaobu zhushi* (Xi'an, 1996), pp. 188–90, see also Zhang Guye, "Lun *Guanzi* 'Sankuang' mingming fenpian zhi yi," *Yantai shifan xueyuan xuebao* 19.4 (2002), pp. 18–22, 44.

[21] This punctuation differs from the original version, but has been adopted by several scholars. See Meng Pengsheng, "Pengzu ziyi shuzheng," http://www.jianbo.org/admin3/2005/mengpengsheng004.htm, accessed 11/5/06. Compare *Shanghai bowuguan cang Zhanguo Chu zhushu*, vol. 3, p. 307.

[22] *Material virtue*, pp. 157–58.

[23] *Material* virtue, pp. 130–35. Meng Pengsheng, "Pengzu ziyi shuzheng," quotes the *Shenyi jing* 神異經 to the effect that a lustrous body is produced by eating of a certain tree.

food and music, to domains such as rulership and producing heirs. The reduction of desires on the part of the ruler is apparently the ethical justification for the clan's political authority.

Producing heirs is also a concern of the "Ten questions" (*Shiwen* 十問) manuscript found at the Western Han tomb at Mawangdui, a text that shows how the concerns of Pengzu became more narrowly circumscribed as technical disciplines became specialized in the early empire. In it, Pengzu is chiefly concerned with the cultivation of what Donald Harper translates as "penile essence" 朘精 as a means to longevity. Part of the method for doing this involves rubbing the body so as to "follow *yin* and follow *yang*" 從陰從陽. Indeed, natural cycles are very important to the methods of the "Ten questions," as can be seen in a section of the text that some read as voiced by Pengzu and others by Rong Cheng 容成: "Wuchengzhao 務成昭 took the four seasons as his assistants and Heaven and Earth as his canonical texts 經."[24] Whether or not this passage is associated with Pengzu, other Pengzu texts that will be examined below confirm a central association of Pengzu with the four seasons. In the case of this particular one, the diverse ends to which his methods are put bear out the assertion that physical cultivation practices rely on cosmologically-derived "technologies" that may be used to multiple ends.

Taken together, these references to Pengzu's methods for reducing desire and cultivating essence are rather different in their immediate goals, but are both programs that promise to adjust the body so that it occupies a new place in the body politic or transforms the body. The physical methods for self-cultivation in the earliest Pengzu text share a number of concerns with the ritual methods of ethical texts that sought to restrict desires so as to create ritual propriety. By changing the body so that it receives the favor of Heaven, the *Pengzu* is using a formula that is found in many texts concerned with securing divine aid.

Self-cultivation and the spirits

The vocabulary used in ethical training of the body also appears in texts concerned with spiritual protection, in no small part because good

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[24] Harper's arrangement of the text follows slip 51 with slip 41, an editorial decision explained on p. 396 n. 8 of *Early Chinese medical literature: the Mawangdui medical manuscripts* (London, 1998). See *Mawangdui yishu kaozhu* (Tianjin, 1989), pp. 381–82.

behavior had been a prerequisite for divine favor since the theme of *tianming* 天命 began to associate them in the Zhou dynasty. While doing good for its own sake is laudable, the existence of a redundant system that brings rewards to good people is a feature of many religious views. Peter Brown's description of self-formation in the early Christian church, for example, examines the adaptation of the Stoic ideal of *apatheia*, a life freed of passions, by Clement of Alexandria in the 2nd century AD. Clement's sage went through a meticulous and exacting process, resulting in a state where good actions were produced spontaneously "as gently as a shadow fell from the body." Such actions caused Christ to "bend his ear to hear" the sages.[25] The way that good and bad actions result in reward and punishment by the spirits is a characteristic of stories from early Chinese texts like the *Mozi* 墨子 and *Guoyu* 國語. By the time of works like the *Xiang'er* 想爾 commentary to the *Laozi* 老子, the picture of how good people are protected by the spirits had developed into one in which people's essences and spirits were able to "communicate with" *tian* if and only if they accumulated meritorious actions.[26]

This is a common motif in Celestial Masters texts, but a link between pre-imperial and later imperial models of communication between the human and Heavenly realms may be found in their common valuation of the quality of *cheng* "sincerity" as a condition of such communication. In a number of pre-Qin texts, *cheng* is identified with the "Way of *tian*" 天道.[27] The cultivation of sincerity gave the sage an ability to affect others through what is ultimately a moral quality but at the same time seems to be a natural process. In the Eastern Han, the explanation that "reaching sincerity" allowed one to communicate with or affect *tian* is attested in Wang Chong's "Bianxu" 變虛 ("Falsehoods about anomalies") chapter. There, a story about the ability of Duke Jing of Song's words to correct the misalignment of Mars in the night sky is roundly attacked on a number of different levels, consistent with Wang's rejection of theories in which human action attracts the attention and excites the action of an anthropomorphic *tian*. He recounts the popular

[25] Peter Brown, *The body and society: men, women, and sexual renunciation in early Christianity* (New York, 1988), pp. 130–31.

[26] See the commentary to chapter five as translated by Stephen R. Bokenkamp, *Early Daoist scriptures* (Berkeley, 1997), p. 82.

[27] For the identification with the Way of *tian*, see, e.g., *Mengzi* 4A12 and section 21 of the "Zhongyong," which both contain the phrase: 誠者天之道也. Because *cheng* was especially important in the Four Books, it took on an important role in the Song revival of pre-Qin thought.

view that the action in the heavens is a result of the stimulus of the duke's "reaching sincerity":

> Sometimes Mars remains in the Heart celestial palace indicating a drought or calamity but not the death of the lord. But since Ziwei 子韋 did not know this, he saw it as [a sign of] the disaster of death. He believed the commonplace that "reaching sincerity" stimulated (*gan* 感) Mars to lodge among particular stars. It was by coincidence that it left this position on its own, and Duke Jing, on his own, did not die. The world then said that Ziwei's words were borne out, and that Duke Jing's sincerity had moved Heaven.[28]

While Wang Chong does not endorse this particular idea about sincerity, he accepts the idea that astral anomalies may indicate a drought, since this is a simple matter of cause and effect in his view of a universe ruled by resonances between Heaven and Earth. It is the link between Heaven and the human realm, something which others attribute to sincerity, that Wang questions. Yet his passage makes it clear that his contemporaries often accepted this link.

Even among those who were skeptical about popular customs, however, the effect of sincerity is associated with the reduction of anomalies. Ying Shao 應劭, in a discussion in *Fengsu tongyi* 風俗通義 (*Comprehensive meaning of customs*) about ritual and the effects of ritual, explains why it is that sincerity allows one to avoid misfortune:

> Looking at things from this perspective, those who are licentious and rash and so fear [anomalies] bring on disasters themselves, and so afflictions and misfortunes echo back at them 嚮應. By returning to sincerity and relying on righteousness, "examining one's interior and finding no guilt" 內省不疚者, then outside things cannot move one, and disasters will be turned into good fortune.[29]

What Ying Shao endorses is the cultivation of sincerity in order to avoid the addictions that immorality engenders. Like Wang Chong, Ying Shao evinces a skeptical approach to popular religion, but at the same time draws on something close to the "popular" theory condemned by Wang Chong. Yet neither Wang nor Ying would be comfortable with a third alternative, which is that there is a connection between ethical action and an equal reaction.

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[28] Huang Hui, ed., *Lunheng jiaoshi*, 4 vols (Beijing, 1990), 4.211, see also A. Forke, trans. *Lun-Hêng*, 2 vols (New York, 1962), vol. II, p. 158.

[29] Wang Liqi, ed., *Fengsu tongyi jiaozhu* (Taibei, 1982), p. 386. The quotation is from the *Lunyu*: 內省不疚 夫何憂何懼.

Such an effect of sincerity is seen most clearly in the context of the *Taiping jing* 太平經 (*Scripture of Great Peace*). There the term reaching sincerity 至誠 connotes attaining a level of self-cultivation that allows the spirits of Heaven and Earth to act providentially on one's behalf. In section 153 (Great Admonition on bearing disgrace, modeling on Heaven and Earth, reaching sincerity, and echoing together with the spirits 忍辱象天地至誠與神相應大戒), the anthropomorphic spirits of Heaven and Earth protect one based on the morality of one's behavior, but that morality is evident through "sincerity."

This section is a dialog between a *tianshi* 天師 "Celestial Master" and six acolyte "true persons" (*zhenren* 真人) in the context of the transmission of texts. In it, the protection or enmity of the "spirit numina" (*shenling* 神靈) are a function of the moral behavior of individuals, which is communicated to the highest deities of sun and moon because of their sincerity. This role of sincerity is summarized near the end of the chapter:

> So those seeking the Way and Virtue in all human activities, in all cases begin by reaching sincerity, and so Heaven and Earth echo them 應之, and the spirit numina come to inform on them 告之. If they do not reach sincerity, then they cannot move 感動 Heaven and Earth and cause the spirit numina to move.[30]

The text gives an example of the way that the individual's physiological state determines the actions of protective deities. When the deity in a person's brain is "sagely" (*sheng* 聖) it is pure *yang* and so fire can circulate. When the brain of someone who has reached sincerity is ill, the sagely spirit of the mind is able to go to the sun, which is the "prince" (*wang* 王) of fire, an official of Heaven, and who reports it to Heaven. The alternative is exemplified by the past case of people who did not reach sincerity, and tried to cheat Heaven and Earth, with the result that "the spirit numina injured them unceasingly" 神靈害之不止也. In this way, the program of moral self-cultivation is linked to the hierarchy of spirits and to the goals of health and longevity that may be achieved through their protection.

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[30] See Wang Ming, ed., *Taiping jing hejiao* (Beijing, 1960), p. 427; Long Hui, et al., *Taiping jing quanyi* (Guiyang, 2002), p. 879. Here, *fan* 凡 might be a mistake for *zhi* 之: "So, the human activities of seeking the Way and Virtue…" Another possible error is *er* 而, which may mean *ke* 可.

The "Great Admonition on bearing disgrace, modelling on Heaven and Earth, reaching sincerity, and echoing together with the spirits" uses physiological models to explain how correct spiritual attitudes connect with certain practices and lead to certain physical signs. The sincere person envisioning things (*nian* 念 or *si* 思) may lead to those things afflicting one, but envisioning spirits can make the spirits appear. For a sincere person, tears are signs of reaching benevolence, because of the connection between the eyes and the liver. But the point that is mentioned most often is the need to model on Heaven and Earth in acting in accord with the Way and Virtue. In one section, the "Xici" 繫辭 appendix to the *Yijing* is paraphrased: "Above look to Heaven and act by imaging oneself on Heaven's Way 象天道 one can cause [Heaven] to do something. Below look to Earth and act by imaging oneself on Earth's Virtue 象地德 one can cause [the spirits] to move." In these texts from the Warring States period through the early Six Dynasties period, the attitude of sincerity results in a myriad of benefits that come either from Heaven or the spirit world aiding one. In this way, the spiritual cultivation practice results in an attitude that, as with the practices examined above, results in concrete benefits for the practitioner.

What both Ying Shao and the *Taiping jing* are clear about is that there is a moral dimension to sincerity and securing the favor of the spirits. Specifically, relying on righteousness and seeking the Way and Virtue are early steps in the process of cultivating sincerity. As with the other self-cultivation programs, there is a strong ritual dimension that transforms the body to re-adjust it to the universe around it. This is exactly the cosmological assumption that allows the spirits to recognize and aid a person who has reached the particular ideal that is advocated.

Ethics and the body

The location of discussions of early Chinese ethics in traditions associated with Confucius has resulted in the notion that ritual self-cultivation practices are best understood in that context. For this reason, what are actually rather similar practices in "ethical" and "non-ethical" contexts are rarely compared directly. This is in part due to the fact that the term "ritual" is most often invoked in discussions of action in "sacred" contexts, where the normative character of the idealized behaviors it describes borders on tautology. At times, discussion of the Chinese word *li* 禮, a term most often translated as "rite," "ritual" and "ritual propriety," is similarly circular: when something described as *li* is practiced without

reference to moral language, it is seen as a religious rite, but when it is clearly normative it is seen as part of a process of moral self-transformation. So when James Legge discussed the meaning of *li* in the context of the *Liji*, he made the same bifurcation that Hu Shi did a century ago: "This twofold symbolism of it—the religious and the moral—must be kept in mind in the study of our classic." But of course the original is not twofold; it is only in Legge's age that the distinction he is making comes into being.

Self-cultivation regimens could alternatively be understood as belonging to no particular school or textual corpus. As with other conceptual structures that move freely between different philosophical orientations and fill different social functions—the notion of non-action (*wuwei* 無爲), or the imperative to promote worthies (*shangxian* 尙賢)—there are good reasons to think of these structures as not being defined by scholastic or functional "content." The above comparisons point to at least three common points between the self-cultivation processes outlined above. First, they assume similar models of how the body works, one in which training the body to reduce desires will result in a change. Second, the trained body is in a different relation to the universe, one that, according to the implicit cosmology behind the practices, will benefit the practitioner. Third, the changed relation to the universe is often described as what I have called a "spiritual attitude" such as reverence or sincerity, necessary to secure particular benefits, such as virtue or spiritual help.

A cultivated attitude of reverence in the context of funerary ritual, reduction of desires through physical cultivation practices, a sincerity that develops out of spiritual cultivation practice are all spiritual attitudes that signify the body has been transformed to occupy a more powerful place in the universe. In the case of *cheng*, the "Jubei" 具備 chapter of the *Lüshi chunqiu* 呂氏春秋 (*Annals of Sire Lü*) explains the attitude's power:

> Therefore it is when "sincerity" has sincerity that it is joined to disposition 情. It is when "essence" 精 has essence that it communicates with Heaven 通於天. Once one communicates with Heaven then one can move 可動 the nature of water, wood and stone. How much the more so someone made of blood and *qi*? For all those who work at persuasion and governing, nothing is as good as sincerity.[31]

[31] Chen Qiyou, ed., *Lüshi chunqiu xin jiaoshi*, 2 vols (Shanghai, 2002), p. 1235.

Different cultivation programs have not only a similar emphasis on attitude, but also a cosmological model in which that attitude is efficacious.

Many of the texts examined above are predicated on a model of a universe in which the human realm and the cosmic realm are connected through the resonating medium of *qi*. In particular, the sages' mastery of self-cultivation techniques is a result of their ability to match *tian*. So Pengzu's method, according to the *Book on conductance* (*Yinshu* 引書) excavated at Zhangjiashan 張家山 in Hubei province, is a matter of alignment with the seasons: "Producing in spring, maturing in summer, harvesting in autumn, and storing in winter; this was the Way of Pengzu."[32] The text that follows this passage applies this knowledge of seasonal cycles to the methods for limiting the effect of harmful pneumas (*shangqi* 傷氣). Yet this is exactly the same formula identified in the Xunzi's 荀子 "Royal regulations" ("Wangzhi" 王制) chapter as the ideal "administration of the sage kings" 聖王之制.[33] The *Xunzi* outlines the way that natural resources should be husbanded by the sage in order to provide adequately for the common people. There is little question that the general reliance on the agricultural cycle of the four seasons translated into different techniques as it was applied to different realms, but shared cosmological assumptions meant that the techniques themselves had common characteristics.

Among the basic constructs that a cosmology based on the resonance between *tian* and the human realm imply are several that are not characteristic of early Chinese writing in general. One is that the same principles govern different realms and therefore that access to the principles through communication with another realm leads to the power to master the human realm. This is the case for the virtuous person in the Warring States *Wuxing* text who is imbued with the fifth moral virtue, that of *sheng* 聖, sagacity, by Heaven. Some discussions of four other moral virtues in the *Mengzi* lack reference to Heaven and in that sense are concerned with the cultivation of those virtues explicitly identified with the human realm and not Heaven as in the *Wuxing*. A second assumption is a corollary to the first, that through knowledge of their common principle, all realms are in some sense accessible and may potentially affect each other. Consider the application of the above

[32] *Zhangjiashan Hanmu zhujian* (*247 hao*) (Beijing, 2001), p. 285.
[33] Wang Xianqian, ed., *Xunzi jijie* (Beijing, 1988), 5.165.

principle of the seasonal cycle to the virtues, to ritual and music, and ultimately to the control of spiritual forces in the "Yueji" 樂記 chapter of the *Liji* 禮記:

> Creating in spring and maturing in summer, this is benevolence 仁. Gathering in autumn and storing in winter, this is righteousness 義. Benevolence is close to music, and righteousness is close to ritual. Music is a matter of honesty and harmony 敦和, and so one leads the spirits by following Heaven 率神而從天. Ritual is a matter of segregation and appropriateness 別宜, and so one lodges the demons by following Earth 居鬼而從地. Thus when the sages created music they did it by echoing Heaven 應天, and when they designed the rites they did it to match the Earth 配地.

The cardinal virtues of benevolence and righteousness are here each associated with half the year, in what amounts to both a correlation with the four seasons and, implicitly, with *yinyang* dualism. The same seasonal cycle that is applied in the realms of governing and hygiene is here used to explain the importance of ritual and music. The domain is different, but the structure of the explanation incorporates the same basic cosmological assumptions. In this way, one could say they ultimately subsume ethics under the aegis of cosmology.

Correspondences such as those between ethical categories and the body were an important part of physiology outside of China, too. The system of the Greek physician Galen (129–200) related the three systems based in the liver and veins, heart and arteries, and brain and nerves to the soul's nutritive, vital and sensitive spirits, respectively.[34] Like correspondences were an important part of Medieval and Renaissance medicine, as Roger Smith's description makes clear:

> It was understood that systems of signs linked the heavens, the political sphere, the well-being of communities, the health of bodies and individual fortune, temperament and mood. This worldview did not simply play with metaphor, though metaphor was commonplace, but articulated belief in a web of reciprocal exchanges of meaning.[35]

Within such a scheme, an adjustment of the body could re-align the individual relative to the corresponding spheres in such a way as to bring benefit to the individual. For this reason, particular practices based on controlling appetitive desires became a cornerstone of the origins of religious traditions in the West. In his *The origins of Christian morality:*

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[34] O. Tempkin, *Galenism: rise and decline of a medical philosophy* (Ithaca, 1973).
[35] *The Norton history of the human sciences* (1997), p. 59.

the first two centuries, Wayne Meeks writes that "ordinary people could, with only their own bodies as their material and instruments, become heroes of the faith by martyrdom or extravagant renunciation of food, comfort and sex."[36]

In China, the performance of self-cultivation practices in different realms shared an emphasis on the presence of an attitude that transforms or limits desires. From a Foucauldian perspective, practices that limit desires are the kind of *mode d'assujettissement* that leads to the creation of moral obligations. As these examples show, there is a common aspect to the programs that society develops to restrict desires in different areas. Both ethical cultivation programs and their counterparts in other areas similarly attempt to alter the body and so create proper spiritual attitudes.

Conclusion: ritual and spiritual attitudes

While the role of the virtues is seen as central to moral self-cultivation, the role of attitudes like *jing*, *wei* and *cheng* in moral action is less studied. It would be possible to talk about these qualities as virtuous tendencies in themselves, and pair them with vices such as being "false" 僞 or "deprecatory" or "disrespectful" 侮. Yet in contrast to terms that are usually labeled "virtues" like *ren* "benevolence," the qualities this chapter argues are key to ritual and self-cultivation practice are primarily associated with the moral actor at the moment of action, and with the act itself. This is in contrast to benevolence, which is almost always a quality of the actor, a matter of character that is not indexed to a particular moment or action. The qualities treated in this chapter were seen as personally effective in concentrating the actor's attention, but are also at times valued as external signs of authenticity of practice.

These qualities of attention or authenticity accompany ritual performance, and later became associated with moral action. In the context of the Stoics, Pierre Hadot identifies a set of proper "spiritual attitudes,"

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[36] Wayne Meeks, *The origins of Christian morality* (New Haven, 1993), p. 131. Some contend that an important difference between the Christian and the early Chinese picture is the presence of a naturalized Heaven in China. But this also appears at times in the Christian tradition. John Philoponus, a 6th century Alexandrian Christian, attacked the prevalent idea that the heavens were divine, and argued that both the heavens and the earth were equally divine creations. See Samuel Sambursky, "John Philoponus," in *Dictionary of scientific biography* (New York, 1970–1980), vol. 7, pp. 134–39.

and here I will borrow that nomenclature. In a robust description of self-cultivation practices, whether the desired outcome was virtue, bodily equilibrium, or "azure bones," the outcome often hinged on the practitioner's spiritual attitude, and the resulting notion of orthopraxy supplied a means to guarantee the authenticity of self-cultivation practice.[37]

While Hadot's use of attention (*prosoche*) as an example of a spiritual attitude is not directly parallel to any of the terms examined here, it is the aspect of attention that allows the actor to concentrate on translating moral dispositions into action that is similar to the Chinese examples. Hadot writes that the attitude "frees us from the passions," acting something like the "embankment dam." In the Warring States *Junzi weili* 君子爲禮 (*Gentleman's performance of ritual*) text, part of the cache of texts purchased by the Shanghai Museum, the theme is treated in four or five fragmentary passages that are the length and format of passages in the *Lunyu*. There the imperative, "If to look at it would be improper 不義, then the eye does not look [at it]" (slip 1) is an expanded counterpart of *Lunyu* 12.1, "If it is not ritually correct 非禮, then do not look [at it]." More specifically, another passage gives specific instructions for how one should use the eyes: "In all cases, one's eyes should not wander, they should fixedly look at their object without wandering or leaving it" 凡目毋遊 定視是求 毋欽毋去 (slip 6).[38] In these examples, the imperative to not look at certain things, or to look at things only in a certain way, is associated with the correct performance of ritual. The implication is that the ability to self-regulate in these ways is a sign of the proper attitude to ritual, effectively a test for authentic action in a generic ritual context. Compare this with the imperative of Epictetus: "You must not separate yourself from these general principles. Do not sleep, eat, drink, or converse with other men without it."[39]

In the context of other religious traditions, spiritual attitudes might be associated with the quality of piety. Indeed, we have seen that each of these qualities is, in the original ritual context, associated with *tian* in one way or another. Yet simply reducing these attitudes to piety would be to neglect their central role in explanations of the efficacy of practice once they are generalized and removed from their original ritual context. In this sense, the ritual origins of these terms matter,

[37] See Arnold I. Davidson's translation of Pierre Hadot, *Philosophy as a way of life* (Oxford, 1995), p. 84.

[38] See Ma Chengyuan, et al., eds, *Shanghai bowuguan cang*, vol. 5, pp. 253–64.

[39] Pierre Hadot, *Philosophy as a way of life*, p. 84.

because, as Van Norden observes: "It is striking that [ritual] is central to Ruism yet almost absent from the Aristotelean and Platonistic versions of virtue ethics."[40]

This is the tension that arises whenever one applies terms like "ethics" and "self-cultivation" to China. On one level, etic categories like "attention" and the common role of certain attitudes to promote attention to moral action appear to indicate cross-cultural patterns of moral self cultivation practice. At the same time, historical differences such as the central role of ritual in early China give rise to emic terms like the spiritual attitudes discussed above, that have no exact analogy outside of the Chinese context.

[40] Van Norden, *Virtue ethics*, p. 107.

THE MYTHOLOGY OF EARLY CHINA

Mark Edward Lewis

This chapter surveys early Chinese "mythology," a vexed term which will require a brief discussion prior to the body of the work. This is a topic that did not exist prior to the 20th century, because the very notion of a "mythology" did not emerge within China, but was imported from the West. Only under the impact of Western social sciences did the Chinese become convinced that they, too, had a mythology and then begin the search to recover it. Consequently, many of the studies of the topic have begun with the assertion that the singular lack of early Chinese myths is a phenomenon that requires explanation, even while producing massive articles and books that sort through substantial amounts of material. This procedure will not be repeated here, but I will begin with a brief review of earlier systematic studies, in order to understand why modern scholars perceived an absence of mythology in the face of clear evidence to the contrary. This will be followed by a brief discussion of the problem of defining the term "myth," a problem which is central to the earlier question of prior investigations of the Chinese case. The balance of the chapter will then group the most important earlier Chinese myths into five categories: myths of the early culture-hero sage kings (two sections), myths of historical figures, myths of figures found in tombs, myths related to local cults, and myths related to crafts.

Earlier studies of Chinese myths

The systematic study of Chinese mythology, or perhaps we should say its invention, began with the critical assault on accounts of the Golden Age of the sage kings in high antiquity. These accounts, elaborated in the Eastern Zhou and early imperial periods, had served as the model of an idealized ancient world that underpinned the imperial system. The attack on this tradition had begun with Qing dynasty textual criticism, which demonstrated that several of the classics and related texts were later forgeries. However, this criticism had been carried out by committed Confucians hoping to produce a correct version of the Golden

Age by eliminating later dross. The full assault on the glorification of antiquity began with the group around Gu Jiegang 顧頡剛 (1893–1980) who produced the multi-volume *Critiques of ancient history* (*Gushi bian* 古史辨) between 1926 and 1941. Inspired by Hu Shi's 胡適 call to use the vernacular language and associated popular culture as a means of creating a strong Chinese nation, Gu Jiegang had begun his career in association with the Folklore Movement. However, he approached folklore from a historical point of view, hoping to use materials gathered in the countryside to critically re-think the Chinese past in order to assist its future.[1] This early turn to folklore, while not crucial to Gu's work, is of significance for the history of myth studies in China.

It was in the essays compiled in *Critiques of ancient history* that Gu Jiegang and his followers initiated the study of mythology in China. Arguing through detailed textual criticism that all the texts which provided the basis for Chinese accounts of high antiquity were written after the fall of the Western Zhou (771 BC), he drew two crucial conclusions. First, the entire history of China's high antiquity was spurious. Second, and more important both for him and us, while the "fraudulent" texts told us nothing about the truth of the ancient past, they were invaluable as sources for the periods that produced them. By working through the sequence in which the texts emerged, and the issues with which they dealt, the critical historian could shed new light on the concerns, values and conduct of the intellectuals of the Warring States and early empires. On the basis of these insights the contributors to *Critiques* systematically dismantled the genealogy of the early sage kings and the assorted stories dealing with their deeds.[2]

While the initial project was fundamentally historical and political, the patterns which Gu Jiegang discerned in the formation of his texts unveiled the working of myths. Thus one of Gu's great discoveries was that the later a text was composed, the earlier was the supposed career of its leading figure, and the more detailed and fabulous were the narratives. The later genealogy of the sage kings began with the Yellow Emperor 黃帝, passed through Yao 堯 and Shun 舜, to be followed by Yu 禹 the flood-tamer and finally the kings of the Shang and the Zhou. However, the earliest texts, such as the *Book of songs* (*Shijing* 詩經), mentioned only

[1] Lawrence Schneider, *Ku Chieh-kang and China's new history: nationalism and the quest for alternative traditions* (Berkeley, 1971), ch. 4–5. Hung Chang-tai, *Going to the people: Chinese intellectuals and folk literature* (Cambridge, Mass., 1985).

[2] Schneider, *Ku Chieh-kang*, ch. 6.

Yu, while Yao and Shun were not mentioned until the later chapters of the *Book of documents* (*Shangshu* 尙書), and the Yellow Emperor was not mentioned until texts from the late Warring States. Second, and more important, in the earlier texts Yu appeared as a powerful spirit, while over time he was progressively humanized. (One must note here that Gu's argument hinged on the exclusion of less canonical works from the later period, such as the *Classic of mountains and seas* [*Shanhai jing* 山海經].) This led Gu and his followers to hypothesize that the early sage kings had originally been gods or powerful spirits, frequently attributed to specific regional and even non-Han traditions, who had been transformed into humans by rationalist scholars seeking ancient precedents for their own intellectual programs. These ideas were given their most thorough elaboration in Yang Kuan's 楊寬 monumental *Introduction to the ancient history of China* (*Zhongguo shanggu shi daolun* 中國上古史導論), which, as the final volume of the *Critiques*, reworked virtually the entirety of China's accounts of its high antiquity into tales—often regional in origin—of assorted nature deities and animal spirits.[3]

Even as the authors of the *Critiques* were unmasking a world of ancient regional gods and myths hidden by the intellectual programs of the early Confucians, a handful of leading Western scholars were developing similar lines of argument. In his "Légendes mythologiques dans le *Chou King*," Henri Maspero used modern ethnographic accounts of myths collected in France's Southeast Asian colonies to argue that the accounts of Yao, Shun and Yu were derived from early creation myths in which the sage kings had originally figured as gods.[4] Two years later Marcel Granet published *Danses et légendes de la Chine ancienne*, which remains in many ways the single most brilliant work written on Chinese myth. Like Gu Jiegang, whose major work began to appear in the same year, he was committed to the idea that the legends of ancient China were the keys to the reconstruction not of a high antiquity but of the later times

[3] Schneider, *Ku Chieh-kang*, ch. 7; Sarah Allan, *The shape of the turtle: myth, art, and cosmos in early China* (Albany, 1991), pp. 20–21; Gu Jiegang et al., *Gushi bian*, 7 vols, reprint edition (Shanghai, 1982). On the significance of Yang Kuan's work, see also K.C. Chang, *Early Chinese civilization: anthropological perspectives* (Cambridge, Mass., 1976), pp. 168–70, 174.

[4] Henri Maspero, "Légendes mythologiques dans le *Chou King*," *Journal Asiatique* CCIV (1924), 11–100.

that produced those myths. He also shared with Gu the hypothesis that the tales with which he dealt were "historicized legends."[5]

Subsequent studies in China, the West and Japan have become empirically much richer, but in terms of providing insight into early China or its myths they have gone little beyond these pioneers. In 1942 Wolfram Eberhard published the two volumes of *Lokalkulturen im alten China*. With an approach stemming largely from the traditions of folklore, he collected textual and modern versions of tales which he assembled into clusters based on their regional distribution.[6] In this way he sought to reconstruct the diverse ethnic and regional cultures which had combined to form China. However, his decision to bring together versions from across the full sweep of Chinese history renders the work of limited utility for the study of early myths.

In 1946 Bernhard Karlgren published the massive "Legends and cults in ancient China." This work is notable for two points. First, he argued that the superhuman or animal characteristics of the early sage kings were due to the fact that they were the ancestors of Zhou noble houses who had been "mythologized" by their clans. Second, since the late Warring States period had witnessed the destruction of this nobility, any analysis had to rigorously distinguish between "free" texts from Zhou times and "systematizing" texts from the early empire. As Eberhard pointed out in an early review, both of these arguments are clearly wrong. First, modern ethnological studies had invalidated the old argument of Euhemerus that gods were originally human heroes. Second, the date at which a story is first recorded cannot be treated as the date of its origin. Long-existent traditions may be set down relatively late.[7] While Karlgren's central arguments are now rejected, the work remains a valuable compendium of stories.

With the exception of a brief but useful essay by Derk Bodde—which sketches the problems in studying early Chinese myths, cites his leading predecessors and studies the major etiological myths—all subsequent overarching works on Chinese mythology are compendia of varying thoroughness. A series of leading Japanese scholars have written surveys

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[5] Marcel Granet, *Danses et légendes de la Chine ancienne*, 3rd ed., corrected and annotated by Rémi Mathieu (Paris, 1994).

[6] Wolfram Eberhard, *Lokalkulturen im alten China*, vol. 1 (Leiden, 1942); vol. 2 (Beijing, 1942).

[7] Bernhard Karlgren, "Legends and cults in ancient China," *Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities* 18 (1946), 199–365; Wolfram Eberhard, Review of Karlgren, "Legends and cults," in *Artibus Asiae* IX (1946), 355–64.

of mythology organized by theme or topic. The leading Chinese scholar, Yuan Ke 袁珂, has similarly devoted himself to compiling sourcebooks of myths and an annotated edition of the *Classic of mountains and seas*. Rémi Mathieu has done similar work in French. Finally, Anne Birrell has likewise done a translation of the *Mountains and seas* and a thematically organized compendium of Chinese myths.[8]

One point that unites all approaches to Chinese myth is the conviction that those who transmitted them to us were attempting to hide or eliminate them. In the case of Gu Jiegang and his followers this was part of a conscious political critique of the imperial heritage grounded in the tales of the sage kings. By showing how these were inventions of rationalizing Confucians, the *Critiques* group created the possibility of recasting tales of early China as a "national" mythology in the manner that had become essential to nationalisms in Europe. However, it is notable that they did not actually attempt such a national mythology, which was left to the Marxist social historians and the Guomindang.[9] While the Europeans had no such explicit political agenda, a shared conviction that the writings of the Warring States and early imperial periods did not show a "mythology" along the model provided by the Greeks, Romans and South Asians, while still having many tales of superhuman beings and culture heroes, led to a similar conviction that a self-interested political group had tried to re-write or purge an existing mythology. While the hypotheses of what had been hidden varied with the program of the writer—regional legends buried under a centralized political order, tales of noble ancestors eliminated along with the clans who worshipped them or tales of a rural and feudal order purged by the rationalizing agents of an imperial structure—they agreed that the texts of the Warring States and early empires were fundamentally duplicitous.

These arguments are weak for three reasons. First, for all the claims that the texts are rationalizing or engaging in reverse euhemerization,

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[8] Anne Birrell, *Chinese mythology: an introduction* (Baltimore, 1993). Pp. 15–17 of her useful introduction list most of the major titles, which also appear in her bibliography.

[9] Schneider, *Ku Chieh-kang*, pp. 251–57. On attempts to form a nationalist mythology, once again in association with folklore, see also Lawrence Schneider, *A madman of Ch'u: the Chinese myth of loyalty and dissent* (Berkeley, 1980), ch. 3–5; Hung, *Going to the people*, ch. 4. On myths and nationalism in Europe, see George S. Williamson, *The longing for myth in modern Germany: religion and aesthetic culture from romanticism to Nietzsche* (Chicago, 2004).

the super-human or non-human aspects of the major characters remain apparent. Even the few texts of a moderate skepticism, such as Wang Chong's *Balanced assessments* (*Lunheng* 論衡), testify to the nearly universal acceptance of numerous tales of the supernatural, many of which they record. Second, the belief that the limited number of accounts dealing with gods results from censorship hinges on taking the Greek and South Asian cases—where the distinction between gods and men is fixed and fundamental—as definitive of "mythology." For the entire historical period, the boundary between gods and men in China was blurred or porous; the vast majority of gods were dead men.[10] Consequently, the blurring of this line in early stories reflects a basic pre-supposition of the culture that produced them. Claims by Western scholars, such as Bodde, that myths necessarily pertain to gods are not useful in the Chinese case. Finally, the supposed skepticism about spirits and divinities that many scholars have attributed to early Chinese intellectuals is not visible in the texts which have been recently excavated, nor is it visible in the received literary record if carefully read. If the Warring States and early imperial writers had been truly rationalist or skeptical, the elaborate reconstructions of 20th-century mythographers would have been impossible.

Consequently, I will adopt a different approach. Since our earliest usable stories date from the Eastern Zhou, primarily from the Warring States and later, I will read those stories as evidence of the attitudes of the people of that period. In doing so, I do not reject the recent attempts of certain scholars to work out traces of a Shang mythology on the basis of echoes of later mythic texts found in the oracle bones and bronze décor. However, the nature of the Shang sources means that such arguments are at best suggestive, so I will not deal with any tentatively reconstructed mythology of the Shang period.[11] Since the Eastern Zhou sources are biased toward literati concerns, the stories will serve as evidence of the commitments and dilemmas of the literati. In addition, scattered evidence on local cults, ideas of the less intellectually committed members of the elite as suggested in tomb art and cults pertaining to workers will also be discussed.

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[10] Jean Levi, *Les fonctionnaires divins: politique, despotisme, et mystique en Chine ancienne* (Paris, 1989), pp. 203–18.

[11] Chang, *Early Chinese civilization*, ch. 8–9; Allan, *The shape of the turtle*, ch. 2–4. For an important early attempt to recover a Shang mythology, see Chen Mengjia, "Shang dai de shenhua yu wushu," *Yanjing xuebao* 20 (1936), 485–576.

Defining "myths"

In this essay "myth" refers to any "traditional tale with secondary, partial reference to something of collective importance," where "traditional" means that it has no identifiable author but appears in several sources and develops over time. These stories "express dramatically the ideology under which a society lives," reflect on the elements and tensions that form a society and "justify the rules and traditional practices without which everything in a society would disintegrate."[12] Myths thus belong to and serve to define particular groups, and both their form and significance depend upon the uses to which they are put by those groups. These groups could include virtually all of a given society, or only particular occupational or status groups. As the groups change across time, the form of the myths and their uses will likewise change, or the stories will simply be forgotten. Preservation across time of the stories thus indicates their continued utility and interest to those who told them.

This account of myths means that they cannot be defined as an objective "substance" that exists outside or apart from the people who create and employ them. The impossibility of any "substantial" definition of myth has been pointed out in recent years by scholars who have shown that myths are not a distinctive mode or genre of narrative that can be distinguished from other stories by any substantive trait or linguistic mark. Such scholars have usually concluded that the category "myth" is an illusion or a modern construct used to deride certain stories in the service of some rival program that claims to transcend "primitive" myths, e.g., philosophy, dogmatic religion, science or history. Rival intellectual programs, such as Gnosticism or some forms of Romanticism, embraced the same hypostasized concept of "myth" as a weapon against the all-encompassing claims of dogma, reason or modernity.[13]

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[12] Walter Burkert, *Structure and history in Greek mythology and ritual* (Berkeley, 1979), p. 23; Georges Dumezil, *The destiny of the warrior*, trans. Alf Hiltebeitel (Chicago, 1970), pp. 1–2; G.S. Kirk, *Myth: its meaning and functions in ancient and other cultures* (Berkeley, 1970), pp. 31–41, 251–62. On the importance of myth's being "anonymous" and "traditional," see Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The raw and the cooked*, trans. J. Weightman and D. Weightman (New York, 1970), p. 18.

[13] Marcel Detienne, *L'Invention de la mythologie* (Paris, 1981), esp. ch. 7, "Le mythe introuvable"; Ivan Strenski, *Four theories of myth in twentieth-century history: Cassirer, Eliade, Lévi-Strauss, and Malinowski* (Iowa City, 1987); Robert Elwood, *The politics of myth: a study of C.J. Jung, Mircea Eliade, and Joseph Campbell* (Albany, 1999); Bruce Lincoln, *Theorizing myth: narrative, ideology, and scholarship* (Chicago, 1999); Andrew

However, this dismissal of the category of "myth" can be challenged in several ways.

First, while "myths" are not distinguished from other stories by any definitive attributes, they can be "operationally" defined in terms of who told them, on what occasion and for what purposes. Thus Lowell Edmunds in his introduction to *Approaches to Greek myth* examines discussions of stories and storytelling in ancient Greece, and shows how certain stories that we would call myths were distinguished by the Greeks on the basis of their subject matter (supernatural or heroic), their variable forms of transmission (poetry for pan-Hellenic or oral for local), the motives for telling them and their constant reappearance in new versions depending on their range (pan-Hellenic or local) or context.[14] While the theory of a category of stories called "myths" was not formulated until Plato created it as a negative term to valorize his own definition of "philosophy," Edmunds shows how an incipient category already operated in the writings of Pindar, Aristophanes and Herodotus.

Second, even the critics who coined "myth" as a negative term to set off the glories of their own programs elaborated their own myths. Plato's use of stories about the afterlife, Atlantis, the origins of the world and other clearly "mythic" themes has been the object of considerable study. The traditional myths condemned by Plato were in turn interpreted as poetic truths by Aristotle, or as veridical allegories by the Hellenistic philosophers.[15] The apostle Paul contrasted the "godless and silly myths" of the Greeks with the Christian *logos* (adopting Plato's categories), Clement of Alexandria and Irenaeus denounced classical mythology as demonic, and the rejection of Gnosticism hinged in part on its reliance on an elaborate mythology. Nevertheless, elaborate tales spun out from the New Testament and, later, lives of saints formed a "Christian mythology" as analyzed by scholars of the Enlightenment and the early

Von Hendy, *The modern construction of myth* (Bloomington, 2002); Richard Terdiman, *Present past: modernity and memory crisis* (Ithaca, 1993), pp. 3–4; Hans Blumenberg, *Work on myth*, trans. Robert M. Wallace (Cambridge, Mass., 1985), Part II, ch. 2–3.

[14] Lowell Edmunds, ed., *Approaches to Greek myth* (Baltimore, 1990), pp. 1–20. See also Luc Brisson, *Platon, les mots et les mythes* (Paris, 1982), pp. 168–73.

[15] Luc Brisson, *How philosophers saved myths: allegorical interpretations of classical mythology*, trans. Catherine Tihanyi (Chicago, 2004). On the pivotal role of the allegorical reading in preserving classical myths, see also Von Hendy, *The modern construction of myth*, ch. 1.

Romantic movement.[16] Similarly, propagandists proclaimed that modern science supplanted the errors of myth, which Francis Bacon and others described as a primitive attempt to answer the questions that true science would resolve. Nevertheless science elaborated mythic accounts of its own heroic origins, e.g., the misrepresented trial of Galileo. As Kurt Hübner has shown, the tale of science supplanting myth is only one version of numerous mythicizing accounts of the end of mythology.[17] Finally, whereas historians from the time of Thucydides have defined themselves against myth, and modern positivist historiography made the supplanting of earlier myths one of its chief tasks, increasing numbers of modern historians have incorporated myths into their work, making studying the work of mythology a central topic of their research. This constant resurgence of mythic tales within the works of those who demonize mythology suggests that it is not purely the invention of those critics.[18]

Finally, the operative definition of myth avoids the criticism that the category of "myth" is an "illusion" or "invention" by defining it not through the nature of the tales but through the attitudes of their tellers and listeners. This point is clearest in Hans Blumenberg's *Work on myth* (*Arbeit am Mythos*). As the title indicates, this book elaborates its theory of mythology in terms of what is done *with* the stories, rather than some quality of the stories themselves. Blumenberg applies to myth the same sort of ideas as those used for literature in the "reception" theories elaborated by Ingarden, Iser and Jauss, in which the assumptions and rules of reading provided by the audience re-shape the meaning of the text. The primary difference is that unlike literature, where new readings are applied to a fixed text, in the case of a myth the story itself is adapted and rewritten as the concerns of its tellers and audience change. It is for this reason that myths are "stories that are distinguished by a high degree of constancy in their narrative core" but by an equally pronounced capacity for variation. It is these correlate attributes that allow myths to be transmitted over centuries; their constancy produces the attraction and the authority of familiarity,

[16] Williamson, *The longing for myth in modern Germany*, ch. 1, 4; Blumenberg, *Work on myth*, Part II, ch. 2–3.

[17] Christoph Jamme, *Einführung in die Philosophie des Mythos, Band 2: Neuzeit und Gegenwart* (Darmstadt, 1991), pp. 10–11, 139; Kurt Hübner, *Die Wahrheit des Mythos* (Munich, 1985). See also Blumenberg, *Work on myth*, "Translator's introduction."

[18] Joseph Mali, *Mythistory: the making of a modern historiography* (Chicago, 2003).

while their variability allows for constant adaptation to new intellectual needs.[19] This combination helps account for the power of myths, which, as Blumenberg argues, are the product of a "Darwinism of words" in which stories that seize attention and help people cope with their world are selected for repetition, and in which these same stories are adapted over time to changing circumstances.

This variability of myths, in which new versions are constantly elaborated to gloss or supplant old ones, also helps to explain why mythology is routinely theorized by those who claim to refute it, only to fashion new myths in their own turn. As Lowell Edmunds has pointed out, even before "myth" was theoretically formulated by Plato as a negative category, the term was often applied to stories which the author rejected in favor of another version or tale. Thus in Aristophanes's *Wasps* Bdelycleon tells his father not to tell "myths [*mythoi*]" about supernatural creatures, but "stories of the human kind." Likewise Pindar prefaces his version of the story of Pelops by repudiating a version of the myth that he claims was started by "malicious neighbors" of Pelops' family. Thus Edmunds concludes that for many Greeks, "My version is the truth, but yours is a *mythos*."[20] Since the coining of variants and competition between these versions was a feature of the tales that emerged as myths, the repeated theorization of mythology as a target of criticism is not a proof of the illusory character of the category, but rather of its mode of generation and perpetuation.

While I have defined myths in a manner which rejects any specific properties that would distinguish them as a form of narrative, save for their significance to the people who tell them, one use of narratives as a mode of argument is worth noting here. In contrast with the dogmatic propositions of religions or formal arguments of philosophy, which result in such statements as "thou shalt not kill" or "killing is bad," narratives cannot assert universal truths or commands. A story can be incorporated in an argument, but does not itself constitute one. In this way, telling or citing stories often serves to assert a particular truth or value, while

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[19] Blumenberg, *Work on myth*, pp. 5–7, 21, 34, 150–54, 270–71. For useful evaluations of the book, see the "Translator's introduction" and Von Hendy, *The modern construction of myth*, pp. 320–26. Blumenberg demonstrates this capacity of myths to evolve by devoting the second half of his book to a study of the myth of Prometheus from its earliest appearance in Hesiod to its 20th-century versions in Kafka and Gide.

[20] Edmunds, *Approaches to Greek myth*, pp. 2–3, 13–15.

at the same time incorporating—often unacknowledged—contradictory values that are essential to the teller and audience.

Thus the aforementioned absolute condemnation of killing in the Decalogue also condemns rulers who engage in wars and punish criminals. While some rigorous religious thinkers accepted this, others reconciled the contradictory rejection of killing and support of political rulers with analogies which served as miniature, nested myths. Thus Augustine suggested that a state was a bandit gang with justice, while Luther identified rulers as "God's hangmen." These miniature myths allow two contradictory values to be reconciled ("The God who condemns killing recognizes the necessity of killing bad people, so he appoints rulers to do this for him."). This idea of myths as narratives that mediate a society's internal contradictions is inspired by Levi-Strauss's discussion of this function of myths. However, it does not employ his arguments or methods, which rely on a systematic decoding of myths into structurally framed antithetical elements hidden within surface narratives.[21]

One final point that should be discussed before outlining the myths themselves is the status of "comparative mythology" in light of the above arguments. To argue that the category "myth" has no substantive character, but is determined by the concerns of the culture that produces a given story or stories, entails certain consequences for any application of comparative methods, an approach which is advocated by Anne Birrell in her aforementioned compendium of Chinese myths. If there is nothing inherent in the structure or content of a story that marks it as a myth, than any resemblance in such contents or structures across cultures is not necessarily of any significance, and the tracing of such resemblances without first analyzing the place(s) and meaning(s) of a story within its own culture will not produce useful insights. Any argument, such as that of Schelling in 1857, that myth has its own autonomy as a mode of thought ultimately depends on the elaboration of some theory that sets myths apart as a distinctive form of thought or language. In the absence of such a theory, to posit myth as an autonomous realm with its own order is incoherent, and explanations of stories in one culture

[21] For a brief summation of Levi-Strauss's methods as potentially applied to Chinese myths, see Sarah Allan, *The heir and the sage: dynastic legend in early China* (San Francisco, 1981), pp. 13–24. On the manner in which Levi-Strauss's approach to myth denies their character as narratives, in an attempt to turn them into charts, see Von Hendy, *The modern construction of myth*, pp. 240–50.

by reference to those from another which is not historically related are illusory.[22]

Mythology of the sage kings

First, it is important to note that although modern scholars state that the early Chinese treated the sage kings as human beings, this was not entirely true. During the Warring States and early empires the idea became widespread, if not universal, that the sage kings and dynastic founders—including the Han founder, about whom even the moderately skeptical Sima Qian recorded that he was sired by a dragon—were in fact the offspring of powerful spirits, dragons or forces of nature sired on human women. This assumption shows that the sage kings were not in any sense simply human. They were rather semi-divine beings, who marked the interface between the human world and the spirits.[23] This clear distinction between the sage and the ordinary human led many people of the period to assert that the sage kings had no emotions or did not dream.[24] The idea that Confucius was a prophet who had foretold the rise of the Han and its institutional form was part of the same complex of ideas. Thus the early Chinese for the most part believed that the sage kings were not mere human beings, but creatures

[22] Birrell explicitly rejects any single disciplinary or theoretical approach that would distinguish myths, while at the same time arguing that myths form an autonomous intellectual sphere where a myth in one culture is best explained in light of one from another. See pp. 2–5, 10–13. As an example of the weakness of this approach, I would cite her discussion of Chang O on p. 11. Dismissing earlier studies that treat this woman "in a limited way [!] in the context of immortality and lunar iconography," she asserts that she could best be viewed as a "trickster" figure. In fact, if one considers the numerous recurring early Chinese stories in which women like Chang O either bestow the arts of immortality on men or take them away, looks at the role of goddesses in the realms of immortality and the tomb, and reflects on the image of sex as a battleground for the energies that will prolong life, the traditional approach to Chang O reveals major aspects of Chinese culture. Furthermore, comparison of these stories with such major Greek myths as those of Medea (who uses the lure of immortality to take away life) or Meleager and his mother, as well as Indian myths on sexual relations and immortality, would draw the Chang O myths into a major and insightful comparative endeavor. By contrast, to simply attach to her the rubric "trickster," a term almost as emptied through overuse as "hero," tells us virtually nothing.

[23] Lewis, *Sanctioned violence in early China* (Albany, 1990), pp. 180–81, 307 note 54; Lewis, *Writing and authority in early China* (Albany, 1999), pp. 219, 547–48 note 117.

[24] Jean-Pierre Diény, "Le saint ne rêve pas: de Zhuangzi à Michel Jouvet," *Études chinoises* 20.1–2 (spring-fall, 2001), 127–200.

who were separated from humans through their magical paternity and the powers that this bestowed on them.

The tales of the sage kings were told by the Warring States and early imperial Chinese elite to explain the origins and define the nature of their political and social institutions. As "charter myths," these tales of the deeds and creations of ancient sage kings provided a sacred prototype for the usage and institutions of their own day. They offered a means of representing a complex social reality, formulating its principles in vivid and dramatic terms and reflecting on its inherent tensions. Some of these stories were reworked or reinterpreted versions of earlier tales; others were original creations which due to their aptness or power became widely known and frequently cited, but they all formed a common repertoire of stories that provided both etiologies and models for social action.

These tales through which the elite dramatically expressed their ideology and self-understanding took the form of accounts of the emergence of human civilization. Their heroes were the sage kings, whose superhuman powers allowed them to recognize the celestial patterns hidden in nature and bring mankind into accord with them. To the sage kings were attributed—as given classical expression in the "Attached phrases" (*Xici* 繫辭) commentary to the *Book of changes* (*Yijing* 易經)—all the tools and procedures that formed Chinese civilization. Consequently the invention of tools became a hallmark of the sage kings denied to lesser beings.[25]

But the sage kings were not simply inventors of tools. They introduced all the values and institutions that enabled a human existence, as understood by the Warring States elite. In his defeat of Chiyou 蚩尤 and other rivals, the Yellow Emperor provided a model for the creation of a stable political order based on organized violence. In yielding the throne to the most capable, Yao and Shun set a distinctive public rule apart from the claims of kinship and inheritance, provided a mythic charter for the claims of officials against the ruler, and offered a rationalization and model for the practice of changing dynasties. In taming the flood, Yu defined the nature of an ordered human geography, provided a mythical prototype for the irrigation and water control projects of the

[25] Qi Sihe, "Huangdi de zhi qi gushi," in *Zhongguo shi tanyan* (Beijing, 1981), pp. 201–17.

Warring States period, and established links between the cultivation of the body and the establishment of political order.[26]

However, the scattered references to the work of the sage kings lack the systematic character suggested here. The sage kings did not arise together in a pantheon of mutual opposition and complementarity, with the diverse spheres of the human and natural worlds parceled out among their patrons. As discussed above, modern scholars of myth generally agree that the sage kings were partially humanized transformations of earlier, supernatural beings who figured in shamanic rituals, cosmogonic myths or tales of the origins of tribes and clans.[27] The sage kings arose independently in various regions or among different peoples, and they were drawn into a single pantheon—or, rather, a "genealogy"—through the centuries-long process of amalgamation and assimilation that created the Chinese empire. Consequently, the feats or attributes of one can occasionally be attributed to another. However, the divisions between the works and characters of the different sage kings are generally consistent.

In addition to being the products of distinct local cultures, certain sage kings were promoted by specific philosophical schools. At the end of his chapter on the "Five Emperors," Sima Qian 司馬遷 observed that scholars had spoken of the Five Emperors from of old, but the *Book of documents* preserved by the Confucians recorded nothing prior to Yao. While the "myriad schools" spoke of the Yellow Emperor, their writings were "neither proper nor in accord with reason," and even the discussions of the Yellow Emperor attributed to Confucius were not transmitted by the Confucians of Sima Qian's day. Ban Gu 班固 observed that the Confucians "traced their ancestry back to Yao and Shun," while the "earlier" sage kings fell outside their intellectual genealogy. The Yellow Emperor, for his part, was intellectually associated with the Huang-Lao (黃老) tradition of political Daoism and the "scholars of [esoteric] techniques" (*fangshi* 方士). In a similar fashion, the Divine Husbandman

[26] Mark Edward Lewis, *Sanctioned violence*, ch. 5; Mori Yasutarō, *Kōtei densetsu: kodai Chūgoku shinwa no kenkyū* (Kyoto, 1970), ch. 1; Sarah Allan, *The heir and the sage: dynastic legend in early China*; Mark Edward Lewis, *The flood myths of early China* (Albany, 2006); Deborah Porter, *From deluge to discourse: myth, history, and the generation of Chinese fiction* (Albany, 1996); Rémi Mathieu, "Yu le grand et le myth du déluge dans la Chine ancienne," *T'oung Pao* 78 (1992), 162–90; William B. Boltz, "Kung Kung and the flood: reverse euhemerism in the Yao Tien," *T'oung Pao* 67 (1981), 141–53.

[27] In addition to the works discussed in the section on "Earlier Studies," see Gu Jiegang and Yang Xiangkui, *Sanhuang kao* (Beijing, 1936).

神農 was the patron sage of a school of agrarian primitivists who argued that everyone, including the king and his high ministers, should grow his own crops.[28] Thus the Warring States myths of the sage kings were generally adapted as elements in the political or social program of a given school, which means that they were tied into attempts to think about the emerging political order.

In this way the tales of the sage kings gradually formed a coherent body of myths that articulated the interests, concerns and dilemmas of the Chinese elite. Specifically, they constituted a mythology of statecraft, dealing with the concerns produced by the creation of a new form of polity by the rising territorial lords. The stories of the Yellow Emperor's battles dramatically represented the re-organization and revaluation of political violence as mass, peasant armies under the command of the court replaced the chariot armies of the warrior aristocracy and new forms of law redefined the social order. The tales of Yao and Shun dealt with the competing claims of virtue/talent and heredity that became an issue as dependent ministers recruited for their skills replaced the nobility that had held office as a hereditary privilege. The myths of Yu's taming of the flood reflected the transformed relation of the political order to the land in a state that was created through the extension of direct control into the countryside, the mobilization of the agrarian populace and the allocation of land in exchange for taxes and service.[29] In reformulating cosmogonies and clan myths, the makers and advocates of the new order traced the principles that underlay their rule to the very origins of human civilization.

For the mythology of the sage kings was a history of the emergence of humankind out of a savage state of nature, an emergence achieved through the powers of supremely able rulers who served as prototypes for political actors in the Warring States. Underlying the tales about the sage kings was the belief that in the earliest times people had not been distinguished from animals. They lived intermixed with animals in the

[28] *Shiji* (Beijing, 1959), ch. 1, p. 46; ch. 28, pp. 1368–69; ch. 74, pp. 2346–47; *Hanshu* (Beijing, 1962), ch. 30, p. 1728; Kanaya Osamu, *Shin kan shisō shi kenkyū* (Kyoto, 1981), pp. 113–226; Gu Jiegang, *Qin Han de fangshi yu rusheng*, rep. ed. (Shanghai, 1955); Chen Pan, "Zhanguo Qin Han jian fangshi kaolun," *Zhongyang yanjiuyuan lishi yuyan yanjiusuo jikan* 17 (1948), 7–57; A.C. Graham, "The *nung-chia* 'school of the tillers' and origins of peasant utopianism in China," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 42 (1979), 66–100; Oshima Riichi, "Shin Nō no nōkasha ryū," in *Haneda Hakushi shōju kinen tōyōshi ronsō* (Kyoto, 1950), pp. 353–81.

[29] Lewis, *Sanctioned violence*, esp. ch. 5.

wilds, went naked or wore animal skins, built nests in trees or dwelt in caves, and ate wild plants or raw meat. The fundamental work of the sage kings was to create a distinctive human world by separating people from animals. This work had three basic aspects: the physical separation, the transformation of the material conditions of existence through inventing tools and technological processes, and the introduction of a specifically human code of conduct. These aspects were united in the overarching image of "separation" or "distinction": physical separation, the distinctions of correct perception and the social divisions of superior and subordinate that uniquely characterized man. Through the drawing of lines and the introduction of appropriate divisions, the sage kings created the human world out of physical and moral chaos.[30]

The idea that humanity was created *within* history by the sage kings was shared by all the philosophical traditions of the period, but each tradition defined its own ideal of society through specifying different innovations as the crucial ones. Thus Legalist texts such as the *Book of Lord Shang* (*Shangjun shu* 商君書) and the *Master Guan* (*Guanzi* 管子) described how the sage kings distinguished men from animals through creating the laws and units of measure which were central to their own programs. The fundamental text of the Mohist school tells of a primal "Humpty Dumpty" world in which each man used the terms of moral judgment in whatever manner he chose. This moral and linguistic chaos shattered all social bonds and reduced humanity to the level of birds and beasts. So the first rulers had to unify the language of moral judgments. This argument posits rigorous linguistic definitions, such as those elaborated in the later chapters of the Mohist canon reconstructed by A.C. Graham, as to what separated people from beasts. The major Daoist texts also described a "state of nature" in which men were mixed with animals, and they attributed the subsequent separation to the former rulers. They disagreed with the other schools only in that they celebrated the primal unity and treated the separation as a decline. One passage in the *Master Zhuang* (*Zhuangzi* 莊子) stated that what made a human a human was having the distinction between right and wrong, and then argued that this distinction should be abandoned. Consequently the Daoists denied the title of "sage" to the former kings and reserved

[30] Lewis, *Sanctioned violence*, pp. 169–72. On the relations between men and animals as an issue in early China, see Roel Sterckx, *The animal and the daemon in early China* (Albany, 2002). On animals as spirit powers in early Chinese art, see Chang, *Early Chinese civilization*, ch. 9.

that term for their own ideal of the perfected man.[31] Thus the various feats by which the sage kings separated ancient men from animals, feats which were probably derived from earlier accounts of primal battles and floods, were reworked to justify or give vivid form to the political programs of the rival intellectual traditions of the period.

Perhaps because they assigned the highest importance to the authority of the past and the careers of former rulers, the Confucians presented the most detailed versions of the creation of human society out of a primal chaos. The *Mencius* 孟子 elaborates the entire process of the creation of the human world through separation from animals:

> In the time of Yao the world was not yet stabilized. Floods ran rampant and inundated the world, grasses and trees grew in profusion, birds and animals multiplied wildly, and the five grains did not grow. These birds and animals pressed close to men, and their tracks crisscrossed throughout the Middle Kingdoms. Yao, in his solitude, worried about this, and he raised up Shun and sent him to rectify it. Shun commanded Yi 益 to take fire and set the mountains and highlands ablaze, so the animals fled and hid. Yu then channeled the nine rivers and led them, rippling and swirling, to the sea…Hou Ji 后稷 taught the people husbandry, the planting and reaping of the five grains. The five grains ripened, and the people thrived.
>
> It is the way of men that when they can eat their fill, have warm clothing, live at peace, but have no instruction, then they are like beasts. Among the sage kings there were those who cared for men, and they sent Qi 契 to be Overseer of the Masses and instruct them in the proper human relations. So fathers and sons had familial affection, lords and servants had duty, husbands and wives were properly distinguished, seniors and juniors had their proper order, and comrades had mutual trust.[32]

Here the three steps of physical separation, technological inventions and moral instruction were neatly laid out in a program of the creation of human society. It is also noteworthy that the physical separation is parallel to a *moral* separation which is the ultimate end of the process. It is through instruction and the imposition of hierarchy that people,

[31] *Shang Jun shu zhuyi*, pp. 182–83; ch. 14, pp. 296–97; ch. 18, pp. 374–76; *Guanzi jiaozheng*, in *Xinbian zhuzi jicheng* (Taibei, 1974), vol. 5, p. 174; *Han Feizi jishi* (Shanghai, 1974), p. 1040; *Mozi jiangu*, in *Xinbian zhuzi jicheng* (Taibei, 1974), vol. 6, pp. 44, 47; *Laozi daode jing zhu*, in *Xinbian zhuzi jicheng* (Taibei, 1974), vol. 3, pp. 10, 18–19, 23, 46–47; *Zhuangzi jijie*, in *Xinbian zhuzi jicheng* (Taibei, 1974), vol. 4, pp. 57–58, 194–98. For the reconstructed later Mohist chapters, see A.C. Graham, *Later Mohist logic, ethics and science* (Hong Kong, 1978).

[32] *Mengzi zhengyi*, in *Xinbian zhuzi jicheng* (Taibei, 1974), vol. 1, p. 219.

even when no longer living amidst animals, cease to be animals themselves.

This parallel of physical and moral separation, with the ultimate focus on the elimination of deviance or criminality, is elaborated in another passage from the same text that ties the taming of the flood directly to the suppression of criminality, in the form of deviant rulers and philosophers:

> In the time of Yao the waters reversed their course and overflowed the Middle Kingdoms so that snakes and dragons dwelt there. The people had no fixed dwellings, so those in lower regions made nests in trees, while those in higher ones lived in mountain caves … Yao had Yu impose order on it. Yu dredged out the land and channeled the rivers to the sea. He expelled the snakes and dragons to the grassy swamps. The movement of the water outward from the land formed the Jiang, Huai, Han, and Yellow rivers. As the dangers were removed to the distant regions, the harm of the snakes and dragons vanished. Only then were people able to obtain level land to dwell on.
>
> When Yao and Shun died, the Way of the sages declined, and violent rulers arose in succession. They destroyed houses to make them into pools and ponds, so the people had no place to rest. They eliminated agricultural fields to make them into gardens and orchards, so the people had no clothes or food. Heterodox doctrines and violent conduct also arose. Since pools, ponds, gardens, orchards, and marshes were numerous, the birds and wild animals arrived. When it reached the time of King Zhou 紂 [of Shang], the whole world was again chaotic. The Duke of Zhou 周公 assisted King Wu 武 to execute Zhou. He attacked Yin [Shang] and after three years punished its ruler. He expelled Feilian 飛廉 to the edge of the sea and executed him. He destroyed fifty states. He drove out the tigers, leopards, rhinoceroses, and elephants to distant lands, and the whole world was happy …
>
> The generations degenerated and the Way declined. Heterodox theories and violent conduct again arose. There were ministers who assassinated their rulers and sons who killed their fathers. Confucius 孔子 was afraid, so he wrote the *Spring and autumn annals*. This is the task of the Son of Heaven. Therefore Confucius said, "Will those who appreciate me do it only through the *Annals*? Will those who regard me as a criminal do it only because of the *Annals*?" A sage king does not now arise, the feudal lords are unrestrained, and unemployed scholars engage in wild criticism. The words of Yang Zhu 楊朱 and Mo Di 墨翟 fill the world. All discourse in the world that does not tend toward Yang tends toward Mo. Master Yang's advocacy of being for oneself means having no ruler. Master Mo's advocacy of caring equally for all means having no father. To have no ruler and no father means to be a bird or beast. Gongming Yi 公明儀 said, "If the ruler's kitchens have fat meat and his stables sleek horses, while the people appear hungry and there are bodies of those who have starved in

> the fields, this is leading the animals to eat people." If the Way of Yang and Mo does not cease and the Way of Confucius does not become well-known, then heterodox theories and slanderous people will block up the teachings of humanity and duty. If the teachings of humanity and duty are blocked up, then you will lead the animals to eat people, and people will also eat one another. For this reason, I am afraid. I study the former sages, block Yang and Mo, and reject excessive phrases, so that heterodox theories cannot arise…
>
> Long ago Yu suppressed the flood and the world became level. The Duke of Zhou conquered the barbarians, expelled the wild beasts, and the peasants were at peace. Confucius completed the *Annals*, and rebellious ministers and criminal sons became afraid…I also desire to correct people's minds, halt heterodox theories, block disputatious conduct, expel excessive phrases, and thereby be heir to the three sages. How could it be that I love disputation? I have no alternative. One who through words can block Yang and Mo is the disciple of the sages.[33]

In this account, the flood is only the earliest and most graphic form of a regularly repeated social collapse. As in the preceding passage, the image that epitomizes this collapse is the disappearance of the distinction between men and beasts. Yu ends the flood, but he is celebrated for expelling the snakes and dragons from the human world to the edges of the earth. In the same way, the Duke of Zhou ends the succession of evil kings by defeating King Zhou of Shang, but this achievement is paired with the expulsion of harmful wild animals that had been allowed back into the human realm by the rulers' crimes. Finally, the chaos triggered by rejecting Confucius and embracing rival schools is also marked by animals eating people, and by people becoming animals through the crime of cannibalism. Thus both of the *Mencius*' accounts of the flood are not about the control of water or its separation from dry land, but about finding in the original construction of an ordered, human space a mythic prototype for the text's own social and intellectual program. In this schema the flood, and the primal chaos with which it is linked, stand for all the criminality, bad government and intellectual deviance that threatened the social order. It demonstrates graphically how the accounts of the sage kings formed a central element in the polemics of the Warring States period, and how these polemics served to criticize government policies and rival intellectual traditions.

The manner in which the Mencian narrative equates contemporary deviance with the resurgence of animality highlights one final element

[33] *Mengzi zhengyi*, pp. 263–72.

of the mythology of the sage kings. One consequence of the idea that humanity was created through a historical separation from the animal world was that the fundamental distinction between men and animals was not biological but technological and, above all, moral. Man was an animal with a particular ensemble of productive skills and social relations, and should he lose them he would return to his animal state. The humanity of man was not given at birth. As Xun Kuang 荀況 said (*pace* Plato), "The reason a man is a man is not simply that he has two legs and no feathers; it is because he has distinctions [intellectual, moral, and social]."[34] Since humanity was acquired through education it could, under certain circumstances, be lost.

Nor was this threat simply a theoretical possibility, for the early Chinese lived in a world where men became beasts. Philosophers stated that people without specified moral virtues or ritual conduct were animals. The mythic evil rulers at the end of the Xia and Shang were also said to be beasts. Examples of apparent men who were truly beasts were even more common in accounts of the tribes who lived at the edges of the Chinese world. These people lacked the agriculture, sericulture and fixed dwellings of the Chinese, and their kinship systems and social hierarchies were not readily comprehensible. As a result they lacked the "duty" and "moral instruction" that were the hallmarks of humanity. Not only did the Chinese regularly tag the characters for their generic and tribal names with animal significs, but Chinese authors stated explicitly that they were "wild beasts." If the central, Chinese states lost the rituals that preserved social order, their people would also become animals themselves. Finally, the most common category of men who fell into the animal realm was the warrior. Due to their strength, savagery and violent nature, such men were routinely named and even attired as beasts.[35]

This fragility of the boundaries between humanity and animality, and the constant danger of reverting to the latter, were the fundamental underpinnings of the myths of the sage kings. The idea that in the beginning men were not separate from beasts, and that humanity had

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[34] *Xunzi jijie*, in *Xinbian zhuzi jicheng* (Taibei, 1974), vol. 2, p. 50. See also p. 7: "If you carry out duty then you are a man; if you abandon it then you are a beast." That men who abandon duty become beasts is also stated in the *Zuo zhuan*. See *Chun qiu Zuo zhuan zhu* (Beijing, 1981), p. 626.

[35] In addition to examples in the preceding note, see Lewis, *Sancioned violence*, p. 304 notes 22–29.

been created by *rulers* and *ministers* through their superhuman powers, marked an extraordinary claim to political authority. If people became people solely through a set of technologies and teachings created by former kings and maintained by present rulers, then subjects were human only through submission to their masters. Without the controls and institutions imposed by the elite, the common people were nothing but beasts. In their accounts of ancient history, the Warring States elite thus justified their political authority as the definition of humanity.

The sage kings

The earliest of these accounts in terms of the time where they were set, although they arose late in the Warring States period, were tales of the Divine Husbandman. These related certain miracles associated with the introduction of agriculture by this sage. They went on to describe an agrarian utopia prior to the existence of the state, a realm resembling Daoist accounts of the blessed state of non-differentiation, except that men and women had to toil in order to feed and clothe themselves. What set this realm apart from others was the absence of a social or political hierarchy, or of any division of labor. Instead, each household produced everything for its own needs through the labor of its own members. This mythic antecedent of the "Peach blossom spring" (*taohua yuan ji* 桃花源記) was advocated by a school known only through being criticized in the *Mencius*. However, essential aspects of it became part of Legalist and Confucian political discourse because of its celebration of agriculture as the ultimate foundation of society, and the rejection of the mercantile exchange and crafts that defined an alternative, urban order. This privileging of agriculture as the basis of society reflected the political structure of the Warring States and early imperial polity, where peasants were the primary payers of taxes and providers of service in the infantry armies.[36]

While the myth looks like a straightforward invention or reworking of a mythic golden age to underpin a contemporary political argument, it also shows how tales of the sage kings both mediated and highlighted internal contradictions of philosophy. Thus, on the one hand, the vision of a world where all men were farmers and all women weavers directly

[36] Graham, "The *nung-chia*;" Lewis, *Sanctioned violence*, pp. 53–96, 176–78.

expressed the belief that the farming household was the necessary foundation of any society and the sole source of wealth. On the other hand, the exclusion of rulers and merchants from such a world highlighted the contradiction between any utilitarian or sentimental advocacy of the state as the protector of the peasantry, and the actual conflict of interests between the farmers and their supposed protectors. These tensions, in turn, manifested themselves in the total failure of Han policies that were supposedly intended to "protect" the small, free-holding peasantry, but actually ruined them.[37]

The sole intellectual attempt to square the circle of positing an agrarian-centered state located in the cities was an argument in the *Mencius* insisting on the necessity of a division of labor within society in order to provide all the goods necessary for a human existence. This argument was also a denunciation of the ideal of autarky embodied in a noble's estate as celebrated in the *Book of songs*, precisely in the centuries when the last of the old nobility was disappearing. However, the *Mencius*'s argument is again tangled in contradictions, as it is based on a demonstration of the necessity of merchants, and only justifies the existence of rulers through an intellectual sleight of hand.[38] Thus the state can be re-introduced only in conjunction with the merchants and an urban-based world, which expresses the actual urban-based nature of the Warring States and early imperial polity, but which contradicts the explicit political and intellectual hostility to merchants.

The utopia of the Divine Husbandman served as a mythic prelude to the emergence of the next great sage, the Yellow Emperor. Texts of the period contrast the two in that the Husbandman ruled without force—no hunting, punishments or warfare—while the Yellow Emperor was the first to introduce both punishments and warfare as the foundations of the state. Thus, the myths of the Yellow Emperor resolve the challenge of the stateless world of the Divine Husbandman; as the texts of the period note, the Husbandman (or his descendants) could not stop violence, because they themselves lacked the instruments of force. The preservation of order required the introduction of punishments and warfare, which was the highest form of punishment. This provides a necessary role for the ruler and his servants, who had been

[37] Mark Edward Lewis, *The early Chinese empires: Qin and Han* (Cambridge, Mass., 2007), ch. 5.

[38] Mark Edward Lewis, *The construction of space in early China* (Albany, 2006), pp. 101–03.

undifferentiated members of the agrarian community in the world of the Divine Husbandman.[39]

Like the other sage kings, the Yellow Emperor was the subject of tales or remarks that provide evidence of his earlier nature as a god, and of the manner in which his divine attributes facilitated his transformation into a superhuman ruler. According to the *Records of the historian* (*Shiji* 史記), whose author still had access to Qin chronicles, the Yellow Emperor first received sacrifice from Qin state in the 5th century BC in association with a deity known as the Fiery Emperor (Yandi 炎帝). Several stories, as well as the personal name of the Yellow Emperor, indicate that he was a dragon spirit who acted as a deity of the storm, while the associated Fiery Emperor was a spirit of drought. Stories of battles between these deities, and of their use of "natural" weapons of water and fire, show their early ritual links to combat.[40]

In later versions of the story, however, these accounts of natural violence were reworked into tales of the origins of punishments and warfare as licit and necessary forms of political action. The primary figure in these stories, in addition to the Yellow Emperor, was a being named Chiyou. While the myths and rituals related to this figure are varied, they cluster around his role as an animal or demon (sometimes tiger, sometimes bear, sometimes horned beast or dragon) who served as the mythic prototype for the "exorcist" who played a central role in the New Year's festivals and in sacrifices to protect travelers. In the myths of the Yellow Emperor, he figured as the inventor of weapons (or metal weapons) who introduced violence into the world, rebelled against the Yellow Emperor, but was ultimately vanquished by him. Some versions also describe how Chiyou himself, or his image, was used by the Yellow Emperor to suppress rebels and malefactors. These mythic roles paralleled the ritual role of the exorcist, who dressed as a demonic animal that was used to quell or expel other demons.

These stories are notable in that they repeatedly invoke a double origin of violence. In an account of the origin of law, Chiyou is said to have introduced disorder into the world, presumably through his invention of weapons and his rebelliousness. This led to the introduction of a

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[39] Lewis, *Sanctioned violence*, pp. 174–79.

[40] Lewis, *Sanctioned violence*, pp. 179–83; Mitarai Masaru, "On the legends of the Yellow Sovereign," in *East Asian civilizations: new attempts at understanding traditions*, ed., Wolfram Eberhard, Krzysztof Gawlikowski, and Carl-Albrecht Seyschab (Bremen, 1983), pp. 67–96.

violent law without legal process, which simply replicated the criminality that it punished. The Yellow Emperor then instituted "punishments of Heaven" that were based on celestial patterns and proper procedure, thereby humanizing the violence of rampant punishments and restoring order to the world. Accounts of warfare similarly contrast Chiyou's rebel war—based on his violent use of weapons—with the licit warfare introduced by the Yellow Emperor. The proper nature of the Yellow Emperor's warfare is based on several features. First, he created armies made up of wild beasts who submitted to his potent charisma. Second, he received magically revealed texts or tools that transformed combat into a mental art. Third, he modeled his combat on the celestial patterns of Heaven through introducing the doctrine of employing combat in the killing seasons of the year, fall and winter.[41]

These stories, like those of the other feats of the sage kings, are first of all a critique of the old political order and a defense of the new polity that emerged in the Warring States and early empires. The Zhou state had been dominated by a warrior aristocracy whose violence in the forms of hunting, warfare, and sacrifice had been both the expression and mainstay of their power. The mythic negation of martial prowess, in the figure of Chiyou, expressed the political elimination and philosophical rejection of this aristocracy. At the same time, the innovations of the Yellow Emperor—his reliance on discipline that transformed beasts into soldiers, his employment of revealed texts that embodied the commander's art, and his subsuming of political violence to natural pattern through calendrical rituals—gave mythic origins to the elements of the new style of warfare that had emerged. These included the reliance on infantry armies composed of peasants, the emergence of military specialists who were masters of new doctrines and technologies, and the incorporation of these armies and specialists into a state order defined by the semi-divine ruler and his ritual performances. The tales of the origins of a proper law based on celestial pattern likewise provided a mythic sanction for the legal codes that had become fundamental to the political order.

The double origin of violence in these stories both mediates internal contradictions and expresses the failure of that mediation. The rejection of violence was fundamental to the political and philosophical programs of the period in three ways. First, as noted above, this violence had been

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[41] Lewis, *Sanctioned violence*, pp. 98–103, 148–60, 183–205, 231–39.

the hallmark of the Zhou nobility whose elimination was central to the emergence of the new state order. Second, violence in the forms of criminality and rebellion threatened any state. Third, in the new order, rank was inversely proportional to actual participation in violence. Combat was the duty of peasants, and the carrying out of legal punishments was performed by designated torturers or executioners. Command of armies or the adjudication of cases was performed by servants of the ruler trained in specific skills and arts. Finally, the ruler himself was the guarantor of links to Heaven or the natural world which guaranteed the correctness of state-sanctioned violence, but himself played no part in it. (This excludes his role as an occasional sacrificer, the violent character of which was steadily suppressed.) Thus violence in its original state figured as an evil, but violence humanized through education, law, mental arts, and divine pattern could become a source of order.

However, the transformation of bestial violence into the licit foundations of the state as performed in the myths was never secure or complete. Throughout the early imperial period, and indeed the rest of Chinese history, the claims of licit violence were perpetually undercut. One of the most dramatic cases of this was the doctrine of the Mandate of Heaven, in which a violent rebel, if successful, was supposed to be magically transformed into the chosen one of Heaven. However, the denunciations as criminals of the "sage" founders of the Shang and Zhou in the *Master Han Fei* (*Han Feizi* 韓非子) and related texts show that the fact of rebellion could never be fully suppressed or ignored. Violence against a ruler, no matter how morally deficient he was, always remained problematic.[42] Similarly the idea that proper laws or procedure could legitimate the violence of mutilating punishments and executions was perpetually undercut by denunciations of the conduct of officials, debates over the propriety of mutilating punishments, and constant pressure on the ruler to grant ever more frequent pardons in the name of his life-giving, celestial character.[43] Finally, the attempted legitimation of warfare as a form of punishment or the fulfillment of celestial pattern never eliminated the idea that it was a mark of the

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[42] Lewis, *Sanctioned violence*, pp. 205–10; Allan, *The heir and the sage*, pp. 30, 49, 89.

[43] Criticisms of officials' use of the law are frequent, but a handy compendium is *Shiji* 122, the "Biographies of the harsh officials." On amnesties, see Brian McKnight, *The quality of mercy: amnesties and traditional Chinese justice* (Honolulu, 1981), ch. 2; A.F.P. Hulsewé, *Remnants of Han law* (Leiden, 1955), pp. 209–14, 225–50. This also contains a translation of *Hanshu* 23, which is full of debates over the propriety of mutilating punishments.

ruler's failure. All the intellectual traditions of early China agreed that a truly successful ruler would eliminate the need for warfare, whether through his rigorous enforcement of laws or the transforming power of his life-giving moral charisma. Thus any recourse to war meant that the ruler had failed. Similarly, actual performance of combat by the decent and obedient subjects of the empire was repeatedly called into question, and the Han government gradually transferred all combat roles to barbarians, convicts and volunteers drawn from bullies and troublemakers.[44] Even in the service of the state, warfare repeatedly reverted to the bestial.

Before proceeding, it is worth noting that the Yellow Emperor played a different mythic role in the Daoist traditions related to the cultivation of the body, the medical traditions and those of sexual yoga. In these fields he was often a founding patron, but rarely a master. Instead he routinely received instruction from ministers, medical experts or Daoist sages who initiated him in the methods of healing or perfecting the body. Only in his seven dialogues with Lei Gong 雷公 does he actually appear as a master of esoteric lore in the Daoist and medical traditions.[45] A related phenomenon was the tales of his receipt from Daoist spirit women of magically revealed military texts or weapons that allowed him to conquer his enemies. Stories of the Yellow Emperor in the Huang-Lao manuscripts discovered at Mawangdui 馬王堆 also emphasize the importance of the guidance that he receives from his ministers.[46]

The central role of ministers in these tales of the Yellow Emperor became the major theme of the next set of myths, which deal with the sage kings Yao and Shun. These tales focus on the transfer of political power, both from ruler to ruler and from dynasty to dynasty. While the details vary, what became the standard versions assert that Yao and Shun had immoral sons who were not fit to receive the throne, so

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[44] Mark Edward Lewis, "The Han abolition of universal military service," in *Warfare in Chinese history*, ed., Hans Van de Ven (Cambridge, 2000).

[45] Anna K. Seidel, *La divinisation de Lao Tseu dans le taoïsme des Han* (Paris, 1969), p. 51; Paul U. Unschuld, *Huang Di nei jing su wen: nature, knowledge, imagery in an ancient Chinese medical text* (Berkeley, 2003), pp. 8–14; R.H. Van Gulik, *Sexual life in ancient China: a preliminary survey of Chinese sex and society from ca. 1500 BC till 1644 AD*, rev. ed. (Leiden, 2003), pp. 73–78.

[46] Robin D.S. Yates, *Five lost classics: dao, Huanglao, and yin-yang in Han China* (New York, 1997); R.P. Peerenboom, *Law and morality in ancient China: the silk manuscripts of Huang-Lao* (Albany, 1993), pp. 84–92, 164–67; Jan Yun-hua, "The change of images: the Yellow Emperor in ancient Chinese literature," *Journal of Oriental Studies* 19.2 (1981), 123.

they yielded it to the best man in the kingdom. In the case of Yao, this meant leaving the throne to Shun, while Shun yielded the throne to Yu. In some versions Shun and Yu had proven their worth by decades of work as ministers, and in some texts Yao had effectively adopted Shun by giving the latter his two daughters in marriage. In other versions the ruler first offered the throne to a figure who declined out of modesty, or because he was a hermit who regarded world rulership as a fatal trap. In some cases the ultimate recipient of the throne was first set up as regent, so his assumption of the throne contrasts with figures such as the Duke of Zhou (see below) who served as regents only to yield the throne to the true heir, sometimes after being accused of harboring rebellious thoughts.[47]

These stories are often linked with accounts of later changes in the methods of transferring power. In the conventional narratives Yu becomes the first ruler to transfer the throne to his son, thereby replacing the principle of moral virtue with that of heredity. In one or two versions, however, Yu leaves the throne to a virtuous minister, but his son rebels and thereby brings an end to the period of rule through virtue. These events are followed in turn by accounts of the foundations of the Shang and the Zhou dynasties, in which "evil last rulers" are overthrown by virtuous rebels. In this way the accounts were gradually built into a continuous narrative in which transfer of power by yielding was replaced by heredity, and then by force. However, as Sarah Allan has demonstrated, most accounts of transfer by force also tell of a virtuous minister whose assistance is crucial to establishing the new dynasty. Such ministers to a degree constitute a masked continuation of the practice of passing the throne to the most virtuous minister.[48] However, in its new form the practice of yielding to the virtuous appears only in the transition between dynasties, while other transfers of power follow the principle of heredity.

As analyzed by Sarah Allan, who makes a thorough study of the numerous variations and their systematic relationships, these tales constitute an extended attempt to mythically mediate the contradiction

[47] Allan, *The heir and the sage*, ch. 2. Accusations against the Duke of Zhou are the subject of the "Metal case" ("Jinteng") chapter of the *Book of documents*. Mark Edward Lewis, *Writing and authority*, pp. 211–16.

[48] Allan, *The heir and the sage*, ch. 3–5. This crucial role of the "founding minister" is also analyzed in Allan, "The identities of Taigong Wang in Zhou and Han literature," *Monumenta Serica* 30 (1972–73), 57–99.

between the rule by hereditary right that defined the dynasty, and the rule by virtue that justified ministerial appointments. This became an issue of particular import in China beginning in the Eastern Zhou, as the old kin-based nobility—for whom loyalty to the kin group was also loyalty to the state—disappeared, to be replaced by a new form of state built through the recruitment of non-kin on the basis of their presumed talents.[49] In this way the stories represented the claims of philosophers or aspiring officials to the right to share in ruling the realm, without ultimately denying the dynastic principle that justified the power of their political masters.

However, once again this mediation of contradictory principles tends to break down, or to manifest itself in unpleasant corollaries. First, the comprehensive narrative places in high antiquity the principle of yielding to the most virtuous, which tends to indicate that it is a superior practice. This idea is particularly strong in those versions of the text which contrast the peaceful yielding of power in antiquity with the forcible transfer through rebellion that appears in later eras. It is even clearer in the aforementioned versions in which Yu's son rebels against his father's designated successor. These stories treat hereditary succession, which defined the Warring States and early imperial polities, as a criminal aberration.

This mythic denigration of the hereditary principle, treating it as a symptom of decay, manifested itself in several aspects of later Chinese history. First, as Miyakawa Hisayuki 宮川尙志 has demonstrated, during the Northern and Southern Dynasties and into the Tang, the ritual for transferring power from one dynasty to another was patterned on the peaceful yielding of the throne as dramatized in the early accounts of Yao and Shun.[50] While the moral condemnation of a "bad last ruler" was one political option for justifying the establishment of a new dynasty, and is often treated by Western scholars as though it were a universal recourse, in reality the Chinese of the early imperial period preferred to stage a peaceful yielding of the throne modeled on myths that condemned the hereditary principle. In the Tang dynasty this appeal to virtue over heredity was routinely enacted in the accession rituals so that, even in the case of choosing an heir from within the Tang imperial family, it

[49] Allan, *The heir and the sage*, pp. 9–12, 141–43.
[50] Miyakawa Hisayuki, *Rikuchō shi kenkyū*: *seiji shakai hen* (Kyoto, 1964), pp. 73–172.

was claimed that the specific son chosen had been designated on the basis of his surpassing virtue rather than mere kin ties.[51]

The correlate of this suppression of the hereditary principle that actually underpinned the state was the literati emphasis on their own fundamental importance to the political order. To the extent that the "founding minister" was the mythic embodiment of the continuation of the principle of virtue in the age of heredity, officials could claim that they were the true embodiment of the ideal state that had existed in high antiquity, while the rulers were manifestations of the decay of later times. While such an explicit challenge to the emperor could never actually be written, the glorification of ministers in these myths did encourage a vaulting sense of literati entitlement. The perpetual frustration of this mythically-sanctioned greatness manifested itself at the levels of the individual, in the endless works of literature bemoaning the ruler's failure to appreciate the author and of the literati group as a whole, in the perpetual shifts of power away from the formal bureaucracy to an inner court, and the consequent shedding of ink and blood elicited by some officials' refusal to accept the objective limits of their own position.

A final negative corollary of these myths of yielding the throne was the mythic elaboration of the idea that the sage kings were bad fathers and sons. Given that the sage kings had to yield the throne to an official because of the moral failings of their sons, they were clearly bad fathers. To the extent that the recipient of the throne accepted the de facto paternity of the previous ruler, and hence denied his own parent, he was a bad son. These ideas were elaborated in tales pertaining to Yao, Shun, and Yu in which each of them had a morally deficient father and in turn spawned degenerate sons. Indeed the writers of the period argued that since they were the sons of such morally exemplary parents, the wicked sons of the sage kings had to be the greatest villains that ever lived. This pattern was noted by Warring States writers, some of whom used it to attack the unfilial character of the sage kings themselves. For others, the period in which the throne was yielded to the most virtuous came to be understood as an era prior to the existence of true families

[51] Howard Wechsler, *Offerings of jade and silk: ritual and symbol in the legitimation of the T'ang dynasty* (New Haven, 1985). On the accession rituals, see ch. 4.

or lineages.[52] In this way the exaltation of antiquity as a time when ministers were uniquely honored threatened to undercut the devotion to kin that became an increasingly absolute virtue under the Han.

The next set of tales on the sage kings dealt with Yu—already noted above in accounts of the shifting pattern of transferring power—and his taming of the flood. In addition to Yu, in a few texts the feat of taming the flood was also attributed to Gun and Nüwa, who will be discussed below, but these versions of the tales are best understood in the context of the tales that conventionally attribute the achievement to Yu. These stories dealing with the rescue of the world and its inhabitants from the chaos of a universal flood dramatized early Chinese ideas about the construction of an ordered, human space, which provided an ideal geographic image of the empire. In fact references to Yu's work in the *Book of songs* and on a recently discovered bronze show that the story of his feats may be the most ancient preserved in the mythology of the Warring States.

However, the earliest surviving full account of his deeds appears in a series of chapters in the *Book of documents* culminating in the "Tribute of Yu" ("Yugong" 禹貢), and subsequently in the *Classic of mountains and seas*. These works describe Yu's labors in restoring the world to order, as well as the structure of the world that he fashioned. Thus the mythology of the flood provided a background for accounts of the structure of the Warring States and early imperial Chinese world, and of the forces that made that structure possible. In narrating the *re-creation* of the world, for the taming of the flood paralleled within human history the process by which the physical world had first emerged, the myths of the flood provided a charter for institutions of Warring States and early imperial China.

In addition to their use in modeling the world, and thereby providing a sanction for the major political institutions which created a unified world, the early Chinese accounts of the flood also offered a mythology of contemporary practices of water control, in both its literal and figurative uses. This mythology was based on the contrast between the techniques of Gun 鯀 and Gonggong 共工, on the one hand, and those of Yu, on the other. The former two were accused of trying to block up floods with walls, while the latter eliminated floods by dredging channels

[52] Lewis, *The flood myths of early China* (Albany, 2006), pp. 81–85. Much of the relevant material is also scattered through Allan, *The heir and the sage*.

and guiding water to the sea. This contrast provided a classic sanction for Warring States and early imperial innovations in hydrology, and was also invoked to criticize the failures of contemporary rulers and to call for creating a single state that encompassed the entire world. The superiority of drainage to blocking also provided a standard image for regulating the world through the use of its own internal tendencies, as opposed to trying to impose order by the application of external force.[53]

While certain stories dealt with water control, many also used accounts of the flood as a means of discussing social order and criminality. In these accounts, as in the passage from the *Mencius* cited above, the flood served as an image for the collapse of all distinctions. It was equated with the disappearance of the fundamental division between men and beasts, and became the prototype for all later periods of social collapse. Given this equation, accounts of taming the flood dealt largely with the expulsion of the beasts and the re-imposition of order through executing archetypal criminals or exiling them to the edges of the earth. In the most common forms of the latter version, order was restored through exiling a group of four named malefactors to the four edges of the earth, where they became forces for order. Such accounts of the flood and its suppression provided a mythic prototype for the classic model of the world structured as a fixed center ringed by the four cardinal directions.[54] They also posited the ruler's punishing power, already seen as a major theme of the myths of the Yellow Emperor, as essential to the creation of an ordered human space.

One notable feature of the accounts of expulsions was that the four malefactors were identified as the offspring or descendants of earlier rulers. While this in part indicated the belief that a new regime had to expel the polluting traces of earlier rulers, it also indicates the key role of father-son relations in accounts of the flood. The most common accounts of Yu's work indicate that he was preceded by his father, Gun, who failed in the task. Not only did Yu surpass his father, but, in many accounts, his father was executed prior to Yu's appointment. Moreover, accounts of Yu's toils in the flood often emphasize how he neglected his own wife and children in the decades that he devoted to his work. Finally, one of the central roles of Yu within another body of myths was to mark the shift from the transmission of the ruler's authority to the

[53] Lewis, *The flood myths*, ch. 1.
[54] Lewis, *The flood myths*, ch. 2.

best man in the next generation, to that of transmission from father to son. These myths thus provided an account of the origins of the lineage system formed by the regular transfer of property and status from father to son through the generations.[55]

These tales of the origins of lineages can best be explained within the broader context of the aforementioned tales of Yao and Shun, in which the ideal of transfer of authority on the basis of merit necessitated the belief that the sage kings invariably had evil parents and produced evil offspring. For some writers of the period, the absence of transmission of political authority from father to son demonstrated that families in the full sense of the term did not yet exist. In this context, Yu's taming of the flood and his transfer of authority to his son converged as two simultaneous forms of constructing order. At the same time that he fashioned an orderly world, he also founded the lineage based on properly defined roles of fathers and sons.

The mythological equation of the ordering of the world and that of the lineage as marked in the shift from Shun to Yu not only provided an account of the origins of kin groups, but also mediated fundamental tensions within those groups. Specifically, the opposition between fathers and sons in myths of the generational alternation of virtues at the time of the sage kings reflected an enduring tension in the Chinese lineage. Several early literary sources spoke of offspring who were destined to destroy their families and, consequently, should be killed. These offspring fell into two categories: those who had an animal nature and hence were alien to their own families, and those who were too close a duplication of their parents. It is the latter category that is particularly important for the stories of the sage kings' families as prototypes for the tensions of Chinese kinship.

In the most important cases where sage kings had villainous parents and children, particularly the father-to-son succession of Gu Sou 瞽叟-Shun-Shang Jun 商均 and that of Gun-Yu-Qi 啓, the sage shared major mythic attributes with both his father and his son. Thus the wicked Gu Sou, who repeatedly attempted to murder his son Shun, was a spirit of music as was Shun himself. In the next generation, the irremediably wicked Shang Jun figures in several texts as an agricultural deity, a role also assigned to Shun. Gun and Yu likewise share many attributes as snake or dragon spirits, as well as being linked as tamers

[55] Lewis, *The flood myths*, ch. 3.

of the flood. Indeed, in a few accounts Yu is directly born from Gun's body. Similarly, many of the same historical enemies or achievements, such as founding the Xia dynasty, are attributed either to Yu or Qi. Thus the tension between generations in the sage kings' families reflects the same principle as do the beliefs about dangerous children. In both cases the overly close identification of father and son results in moral wickedness or menace.[56]

The threat of a son who is identical to his father manifests itself primarily in the question of succession and inheritance. In the process of becoming a father, the son transforms his own father into a dead ancestor. Furthermore, to the extent that the father-son relationship was imagined in terms of an authority parallel to that of a ruler and his ministers, which had become a cliché in Chinese political thought, the son's inducing the death of his father in the act of becoming an adult took on the trappings of rebellion or regicide. It is these problems generated in the conflation of household and state authority that are elaborated within the mythology of Yu through linking his actions as world fashioner, ruler and father.[57]

A final aspect of spatial order treated in the stories of the flood deals with the creation of the married couple and ultimately of the human body that was generated by such couples. This theme is clearest in the mythology of Nüwa 女媧, who in different texts is fashioner of the human body, goddess of fertility in her guise as the High Matchmaker, founder of marriage, presiding deity of the physical transformations of the human fetus and tamer of the flood. However, since Nüwa is not a sage king, and since she is most prominent as a figure in Han tomb art, I will discuss her myths and those of her consort Fuxi in the section on the mythology of beings depicted in the tomb.

The themes of sexual coupling, the generation of bodies, and their controlled transformations also run through the myths of Yu. First, Yu and Nüwa are described as husband and wife in several accounts of the taming of the flood. Second, Yu is described in several texts as the mythic prototype for the god of the altar of the soil. This altar had many parallels with the altar of the High Matchmaker, of which Nüwa was the primary mythic prototype. These parallels included playing a central role in rituals dealing with mating and fertility, as well as

[56] Lewis, *The flood myths*, pp. 100–06.
[57] Lewis, *The flood myths*, pp. 85–99.

the placing of a stone or a stone figure on the altar as the recipient of sacrifices. Such stones are closely linked to fertility in early Chinese mythology, in the cases of both Nüwa and Yu. Specifically, several texts recount that Yu was born from a stone, or in a place named for a stone. In other versions his mother was inseminated by a magical stone or meteor. Other texts tell how Yu's son Qi was also born from a stone, or rather a mother—in some texts identified with Nüwa—who had been transformed into a stone.[58]

In addition to Yu's role in rituals of fertility, and the birth myths associated with that role, the body of Yu also figured prominently in tales of the flood. In several stories Yu's taming of the flood is associated with his transformation into a dragon or bear so he can work more effectively. More commonly, the stories emphasize the physical toil entailed in Yu's taming of the flood, and mark the extent of this toil with references to the alterations or deformations inflicted on his body. Some tell how his body lost its hair and nails, reverting to a fishlike condition which may well reflect his origins in an aquatic deity. Others speak of his being lamed, or reduced to a strange, hobbling gait. This latter was reproduced in the "Pace of Yu" (*Yubu* 禹步) which became a central element in ritual procedures associated with two of the spatial realms with which Yu's work is linked: the ordering of the world and the formation of the body. In the former context, the Pace of Yu was employed in rituals to protect travelers, often those whose journeys entailed moving through mountains in a manner that recapitulated Yu's structuring of the world. In the latter context, the Pace was used in rituals to cure a variety of ailments and thus restore the body to proper order. In one medical text this bodily treatment was also presented as a means of restoring order within the household, thus drawing in the aforementioned role of Yu as patron and protector of the kin group or family.[59]

In summation, the flood myths that developed around the figures of Yu and Nüwa provided a comprehensive mythology for the origins of virtually all the units in terms of which the early Chinese articulated their notions of a structured space. These tales elaborated in dramatic form the principles that underlay an orderly world, lineage, household/couple and human body. While availing themselves of earlier stories and of central religious rituals of the period, the versions of these stories

[58] Lewis, *The flood myths*, pp. 134–39.
[59] Lewis, *The flood myths*, pp. 103–04, 139–43.

that developed in the Warring States and early empires turned both Yu and Nüwa into early rulers, or ministers who became rulers. By transforming the creators of orderly space into political figures, these tales paralleled the other accounts of the sage kings in the same period which interpreted the emergence of all aspects of human civilization as the work of early rulers. In so doing they provided both etiologies and legitimation for the political institutions that emerged in the Warring States and culminated in the unitary empire. In the tales of Yu, as in those of all the sage kings, the literate Chinese of the period created mythic prototypes for their own actions, which they claimed imposed order and definition upon a world that would otherwise collapse into chaos.

Mythology depicted in tombs

Although the sage kings were the most prominent figures in the myths of the period found in texts, images from tombs provide a very different pantheon of spiritual powers. While one could devote a monograph to the images in Han tombs, and the identifications of the figures depicted, I will here focus on only a few of the most important figures: Chiyou, Nüwa, Fuxi and the Queen Mother of the West. These figures are notable in that, with the possible exception of Chiyou, they are much more prominent in the tomb art of the period than in the texts. They are also significant in that the most important of them—Nüwa and the Queen Mother—are women. The significance of this will be discussed below.

Since Chiyou has been discussed earlier, I will here only briefly sketch his role in the tomb and the manner in which it relates to his ritual roles in the period. Chiyou served as the mythic prototype for the exorcist, who imitated him by wearing animal skins and four eyes and carrying a weapon with which to ward off evil influences. One of the exorcist's roles was to clear the road of evil influences in order to protect travelers, a role also assigned to Chiyou in a prayer from the period. The exorcist also cleared the road for funeral processions on the way to the tomb, and struck the four corners of the tomb chamber with his spear to make it safe for the deceased.

The most direct evidence of Chiyou's role in securing the tomb, however, comes from the use of his image in Eastern Han funerary art. The most notable example is in the tomb at Yinan 沂南, where he appears on the northern wall of the front tomb chamber, directly

over the doorway leading to the central chamber where the corpse was interred. With his weapons, tiger visage and horns in the form of a crossbow, he functioned as a tomb guardian to keep evil spirits and perhaps grave robbers from intruding in the inner chambers. Equally notable is the fact that he is surrounded by images of the animals of the four quarters, just as he was in the prayer for the travel sacrifice. Since this sacrifice was performed prior to carrying the corpse to the tomb, these wall illustrations permanently fixed in defense of the corpse the spirit forces marshaled to guard it on the way to the tomb.[60]

The second major figure I will discuss is Nüwa, who figures in tomb art only together with her consort Fuxi, where the two appear as half-human, half-snake beings whose snake-like lower bodies intertwine. In this form they constitute a primal couple that joins together in sexual union to generate and maintain the world. In later accounts they are described as a sibling pair, which is also found in tales throughout Southeast Asia and the Pacific, whose incestuous mating re-populated the world after the human race had been destroyed by the flood. While it is uncertain that such stories existed in early times, or even that the couple was specifically involved in tales of the flood, their images in Han art show how they were related to the themes of the flood myth.

First, they were depicted as hybrid beings whose intertwining lower halves were snakes or dragons, while their upper bodies were human. Compositionally linked on coffin lids to the sun and the moon, and often shown holding the compass and the carpenter's square, they embodied the tripartite division of the world into Heaven, Earth and the human realm, and through their tools symbolized the processes that maintained these divisions. Second, regularly placed on doorways in association with guardian figures, they served to divide "inner" from "outer." They thereby established the tomb as a distinct realm, and maintained that realm from the incursions of the watery forces of pollution and chaos. It is notable in this regard that the Chinese underworld was imagined as a realm of water known as the "Yellow Springs." In these ways the conjoined images of Nüwa and Fuxi produced a spatial order structured in both the vertical and horizontal dimensions, an order that was generated within the sexual act that conventionally produced the human body. Their close link to the tomb is indicated by the fact that as pointed

[60] Lewis, *Sanctioned violence*, pp. 187–91.

out by Hayashi Minao 林巳奈夫, they appear only in art related to the tomb, and not on mirrors and other surviving Han artifacts.[61]

The symbolism of the tomb art can be supplemented with the brief textual accounts of Nüwa's taming of the flood. The best preserved of these accounts derives the techniques she employs from her other mythical roles. Thus when the world is plunged into chaos by the flood, she patches up the sky with smelted "five-colored stones," which elsewhere figure as powerful medicines. Versions of the same stones also appear in accounts of metallurgy where the casting of swords is treated as a sexual process that parallels the generation of a body, and may even incorporate bodily parts. Nüwa also restores the world to an even level by placing it on four giant tortoise legs. She thus not only uses bodily parts to restore the world, but also turns the world into one vast tortoise body with the shell equivalent to the sky, the plastron to the five regions that make up the earth and the legs to support it. She also staunched the flood with burned reeds, another organic substance that appears elsewhere as the material for her mythological inventions of musical instruments that generate life and encourage fertility.[62]

Fuxi, for his part, has a distinct mythological role in texts which has no clear relation to his generative and structuring function within the tomb. In the full-blown sequence of sage kings that took shape by the beginning of the empire, he was described as the creator of the role of king, whose key mythological inventions were the trigrams of the *Book of changes*, and by extension of writing and mathematics. All the other inventions of the sage kings existed *in nuce* within the potent symbols of the trigrams, which as generative forces in their own right produced the entirety of human civilization. The one feature of the written myths linked to his role in the tomb is the fact that his name and several late-appearing stories suggest that Fuxi was a dragon spirit, closely linked to his snake body in the art.[63]

The last mythic figure who plays a prominent role in Han tomb art, indeed the *most* prominent role, is the Queen Mother of the West (Xiwangmu 西王母). Like Fuxi and Nüwa, she appears in a handful of references in Warring States and early Han philosophy and poetry.

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[61] Lewis, *The flood myths*, pp. 125–33; Hayashi Minao, *Kan dai no kamigami* (Kyoto, 1989), p. 294.

[62] Lewis, *The flood myths*, pp. 110–16.

[63] The full mythology of Fuxi is elaborated in Lewis, *Writing and authority*, pp. 197–209.

Although they vary in accounts of her appearance and powers, she is most commonly described as an eternal goddess living on a mountain at the western edge of the world. She has animal aspects or assistants, controls certain astral phenomena and is the mistress of arts related to immortality. These accounts suggest that she was a cosmic deity associated with death, which was linked to the west. More notably, she appears in Han historical records as the patron deity of a mass movement that arose in 3 BC in response to a major drought in the northeast. Large processions of people, wearing their hair loose and going barefoot, carried straw figurines and tokens of the deity as they paraded through the fields and into the towns, staging torch-lit processions across the roofs at night. They proclaimed the imminent arrival of the Queen Mother, and declared that her believers would not die. While these records were placed in the dynastic history only because they were after the fact interpreted as omens of the usurpation of Wang Mang 王莽, they show the existence of the cult of the Queen Mother at the popular level.[64]

Although the scattered literary remarks are of interest, the clearest evidence of the important role of the Queen Mother in Han religion comes from art. She was depicted in wall carvings on shrines, wall paintings in tombs, stamped clay bricks from tomb walls, the non-reflecting side of mirrors, stands of the bronze "money trees" found in Sichuan, some lacquer ware and at least one jade screen. Her iconography includes her distinctive headdress, her animal attendants (dragon and tiger as a seat, hare grinding the elixirs of immortality, the toad in the moon, the crow in the sun, the nine-tailed fox), a cosmic tree or pillar, Mt. Kunlun and, sometimes, the game/divination device *liubo* 六博. Her image is found throughout China, indicating that her cult was widespread, if not universal. In the art of both the shrines and tombs she is often located in a paradise which appears to be the ultimate goal of the departed, and she or her assistants may guide them. Inscriptions on the mirrors where she appears generally refer to her long life and to the blessed life of the immortals, over whom she is the ruling deity. In summation, she appears as a deity of the west, located at the peak of a mountain that links Heaven to earth, who presides over a paradise of immortals. She

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[64] There is a large secondary literature about the Queen Mother in the Warring States and Han. Among the most useful are Suzanne Cahill, *Transcendence and divine passion: the Queen Mother of the West in medieval China* (Berkeley, 1993), pp. 11–32; Michael Loewe, *Ways to paradise: the Chinese quest for immortality* (London, 1979), ch. 4.

acts as a protector or guide of the dead, a master of communication between the divine and the human world and a deity who presides over the cosmic order embodied in the major asterisms.[65]

Unlike the sage kings, for whom we possess stories which only allow us to guess at their cultic roots, we possess considerable evidence of the Queen Mother's cultic nature, while lacking much mythology. Even the limited body of written evidence largely consists of descriptions of her divine attributes, with almost no early narratives. The one surviving exception is the *Biography of the Son of Heaven Mu* (*Mu tianzi zhuan* 穆天子傳). In this text, which was discovered in a tomb in 281 AD and probably dates from the late Warring States, King Mu of the Zhou travels to the far west where he encounters the Queen Mother, exchanges poems with her which touch on the theme of immortality and then returns home. As Deborah Porter has shown, the work draws heavily on the "Tribute of Yu" chapter of the *Book of documents*, and thus is closely related to the mythology of Yu. The Queen Mother in this text already has many of the major attributes that appear in the Han accounts, so it clearly represents a myth tied to her cult.

In post-Han fiction and prose the Queen Mother emerged in a whole set of elaborate accounts in which she appears to an earthly ruler, notably King Mu or Emperor Wu 武 of the Han, and either bestows immortality upon him, or ultimately fails to do so. In this way the Queen Mother mythically served as the highest of the female divinities who bestowed the arts of sexuality and immortality on earthly men, figures who were briefly cited above in the myths of the Yellow Emperor as patron of the arts of the body. The stories of her meetings with earthly rulers might also be related to a broader set of astral myths on key meetings in the sky, a set which includes the tales of the Cowherd and the Weaver Girl.[66]

Before concluding this discussion of the mythic figures depicted in tombs, it is important to note that in contrast with the tales of the

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[65] The most exhaustive study of her iconography is Li Song, *Lun Han dai yishu zhong de Xi Wang Mu tuxiang* (Changsha, 2000). For briefer studies in English, see Cahill, *Transcendence and divine passion*, pp. 24–31; Loewe, *Ways to paradise*, pp. 101–15; Jean James, *A guide to the tomb and shrine art of the Han dynasty* (Lewiston, 1996), pp. 30–32, 69–76, 81–86, 91, 98, 109, 112–113, 115, 119–20; and the chapter by Michèle Pirazzoli-t'Serstevens in Volume Two.

[66] Porter, *From deluge to discourse*, ch. 2, esp. p. 27; pp. 61–65, 73–75, 79–84, 89–90, 119–23, 130–31, 137–38, 144–47; Mark Edward Lewis, *The construction of space in early China* (Albany, 2006), pp. 258–60; Loewe, *Ways to paradise*, pp. 115–26; Cahill, *Transcendence and divine passion*, ch. 3.

sage kings, several of the most important figures are women. This has several explanations. First, the tombs represent the beliefs and interests of a broader segment of the population than do the texts, which were limited to a highly literate minority. While still elite products, the tomb art was produced for many people of no literary pretensions. Second, the tomb and shrine art preserves a religious character which is hidden in the tales of the sage kings, and female deities played a crucial role throughout the history of Chinese religion. Third, the tomb was constructed as the earthly equivalent of the household, as a dwelling place for the deceased. Consequently, it reflected both the physical and social structure of the household, in which women played a much more important role than in the lineage or the state.[67] For all of these reasons, the mythology hinted at in the tombs is much more cognizant of female powers than are the tales of the early sage kings.

Historical myths

While myth and history are often presented as contradictory methods of narrating the past, it is also conventional to think of much of our own approach to the historical past as myth. Thus the 15–21 September 2007 issue of *The Economist* states that Margaret Thatcher "is now entering the phase of myth, with all its distortions" (see p. 72). The use of the word "Munich" as a code for appeasement has likewise entered the realm of myth. In a not entirely serious variation on Lévi-Strauss' theory of myth as the play of structural oppositions, E.R. Leach noted that conventional knowledge about Henry VIII and Elizabeth I focused on the contrast between the father with six wives, who indulged in the pleasures of the flesh, and his virgin daughter. A classic American historical myth is the tale of the first Thanksgiving feast, celebrated when friendly Native Americans helped the settlers avoid famine. This imaginative reworking of an actual event not only served as the charter for a national holiday invented centuries later, but also communicated a whole set of falsifying ideological messages about relations with the natives, the priority of the northern colonies over the southern (records of harvest festivals in Virginia antedate those in New England), and

[67] Lewis, *The construction of space*, pp. 119–30.

the absence of a debt to England (where harvest festivals had been celebrated for centuries).

Such mythical transformations of historical events and characters were also a major element of early Chinese storytelling. Any reader of later Chinese history, poetry or literature encounters numerous cases of such early historical figures who have become iconic tokens for talking about certain ideas or problems. Here I will only examine a few particularly important cases, and also a few cases of historical figures who became deities in later imperial China.

Probably the first clear case of a historical figure who entered the realm of myth was the Duke of Zhou. An actual brother of the founder of the Zhou dynasty, this figure played a significant role in conquering the eastern part of the Yellow River's flood plain, and records of him have been found on Zhou bronzes. However, by the time of the composition of the earlier chapters of the *Book of documents* he had already begun to transform into a mythic embodiment, perhaps the prototype, of the "founding minister" cited above in the myths of Yao and Shun. A loyal regent who served as king without actually usurping his position, he came to embody the ideal of a de facto kingship based on talent rather than heredity that was embraced by ambitious ministers as a charter for their own powers. Speeches attributed to him in the *Documents* proclaim a policy of making appointments on the basis of worth. These speeches, which read the Eastern Zhou situation back into the time of dynastic founding, suggest that the elevation of the Duke of Zhou to a position of co-founder reflected the decline of royal power and the rise of ducal and ministerial lines who sought to claim for themselves a position on a par with that of direct descendants of the king.

In association with these myths of the Duke of Zhou as the ministerial double of the monarch, there developed a range of stories and attributions that made him the archetype for rule through the power of writing. In addition to the chapters of the *Documents* attributed to him, he was also credited with being the inventor of the Zhou ritual system, or author of the later *Rites of Zhou* (*Zhouli* 周禮) text. Furthermore, he was credited with the development of the *Changes*, and with the composition of at least one of the *Songs*. In this way virtually the entirety of the Zhou canon was linked to his name, just as it would later be linked to Confucius.[68]

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[68] Lewis, *Writing and authority*, pp. 210–18.

Confucius himself was the single most important mythic historical figure of Chinese antiquity. Around the earliest collections of his remarks gathered by his friends or disciples, there gradually developed an elaborate body of anecdotes that were preserved in what became the *Analects* (*Lunyu* 論語) and later parts of the *Book of Rites* (*Liji* 禮記). As he became a more eminent figure, the authors of the *Master Zhuang* likewise began to write stories in which Confucius was instructed in Daoism's truths by Lao Dan 老聃, or in which Confucius testified to his own disciples about his inferiority to the true Daoist sages. By the early Han there had developed a considerable body of lore about Confucius and his relations to the texts of the Confucian canon, and these were brought together for the first time into a single narrative by Sima Qian.[69] In these stories Confucius emerged as the prototype of the worthy scholar who fails to find a worthy ruler to employ him, and so must ultimately confine his activities to the textual realm of "empty words." As the "uncrowned king" who had magically predicted the rise and institutional form of the Han, he even rose to the rank of a near divinity, but ultimately sank back into the role of the model teacher, whose state-sponsored cult provided ritualized consolation to all those who had aspired to worldly greatness but had to settle for teaching children and youths.

Almost on a par with the tales of Confucius as a mythic prototype for the vaulting ambitions and perennial discontents of the literati was yet another historical myth, that of Qu Yuan 屈原. Probably an actual minister in late Warring States Chu, he first appeared in a couple of early literary works as an upright official who had lost favor with the monarch, resigned and committed suicide through drowning. Over the course of the century following his death, several poems apparently derived from songs enacting failed meetings of goddesses and mortals (anticipating motifs associated with the Queen Mother) were attributed to him and re-read as allegories of the failure of a righteous official to establish ties to the ruler. These poems established the prototype for an entire genre of poetry on this theme that was elaborated over the course of the Han. In this way Qu Yuan became the mythic model for verse lamentations by literati for career failures, just as Confucius did for recourse to textual scholarship as a substitute for a political life.[70]

[69] Lewis, *Writing and authority*, pp. 218–38.
[70] Lewis, *Writing and authority*, pp. 185–92; Schneider, *A madman of Ch'u*, ch. 1.

Another notable feature of the mythology that developed around Qu Yuan was that his association with drowning led to the identification of numerous rituals and sacrifices offered to southern rivers or the Hangzhou tidal bore as commemorations of his death. Originally, most of these rituals had involved the sacrifice of women and offerings to goddesses of the waters, but during the Han they were made more acceptable to the imperial elite by naming a masculine deity as the recipient. The earliest records of this gender change identified the recipient as Wu Zixu 伍子胥, a semi-historical figure associated with the wars between Wu and Yue in the lower Yangzi in the 6th century BC. Like the later Qu Yuan, he had supposedly been drowned, although he had been executed rather than committed suicide. The rituals were explained as attempts to appease his angry spirit. After the Han, the violent and rebellious Wu Zixu was gradually supplanted among the elite, and ultimately among the people, by the less dangerous Qu Yuan.[71]

This replacement of local water spirits, goddesses and the ghosts of drowned women with historical figures from the literary records indicates one of the most important functions of turning people into gods in Chinese civilization. In the cases of both Wu Zixu and Qu Yuan, the deification of these historical humans permitted the incorporation of illicit local cults and customs into the ritual repertoire of the elite. As the imperial system and its adherents penetrated into the south, or any frontier region, the beliefs and practices of the local people could be made acceptable to the political center by converting wild, often nonhuman, gods into canonical figures from Chinese historical sources. By telling new stories about the local gods, i.e., by Sinicizing their myths, alien and threatening beings could be converted into benign spiritual agents of the imperial order. Such absorption into China through the rewriting of myths could well have been actively supported by local elites seeking the heightened status of ties to the imperial court. This pattern of extending Chinese political and cultural hegemony into new regions through the mythic conversion of local gods will be discussed further in the next section.

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[71] David Johnson, "The Wu Tzu-hsu pien-wen and its sources: Part II," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 40.2 (Dec., 1980), 472–80; Schneider, *A madman of Ch'u*, ch. 4; Edward H. Schafer, *The divine woman: dragon ladies and rain maidens in T'ang literature* (Berkeley, 1973), pp. 22–29, 46, 116.

Local mythology

Local mythology took at least four forms. First, there were tales of local nature divinities: dragons, tigers, snakes, mountains, strange rocks, springs, trees and so on. Second, there were stories of local heroes or people held to be remarkable in the community or region. Third, there were tales of the local activities of the ancient sage kings or other sanctioned figures from the imperial center to whom were assigned achievements in a given locality, presumably by members of the local elite with a strong literary background. Fourth, there were tales of immortals who, often linked to notable local mountains, became emblematic figures of tensions between localities and the court. I will discuss each of these in turn.

Records of the first category of local deity, potent nature spirits, are very rare from the Han dynasty. In general they figure only briefly in written records where members of the government came into conflict with them, or in accounts by local officials of the ridiculous character of local cults that rise and fall with remarkable rapidity to strange trees or plants. A useful compendium of such stories is the chapter on "Strange spirits" ("Guaishen" 怪神) in the late-Han *Comprehensive meaning of customs* (*Fengsu tongyi* 風俗通義). However, the much greater frequency of accounts of such cults from subsequent centuries would indicate that there were many such cults, but that they existed below the level of early literati concerns. One exception is local cults to mountains, which are recorded in numerous stone inscriptions, but there is only a limited "mythology" for such mountains. First, they could bring rain. Second, as will be discussed below, there were mountain temples devoted to Yu and his family.[72]

Evidence of unsanctioned cults to local heroes, sometimes in explicit opposition to the imperial state, is also rare for the Han, but not unknown. The best documented case is the cult of King Jing of Chengyang 城陽景王. Originally established as a legal cult in his hometown

[72] *Fengsu tongyi jiaoshi* (Tianjin, 1980), pp. 325–64. On Han local mountain cults, see K.E. Brashier, "The spirit lord of Baishi Mountain: feeding the deities or heeding the *yinyang*," *Early China* 26–27 (2001–2002), 159–231; Marianne Bujard, "Célébration et promotion des cultes locaux: six stèles des Han Orientaux," *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient* 87 (2000), 247–66; Lewis, *The construction of space*, pp. 233–34. On records of tensions between local nature spirits and the imperial state in later centuries, see David Johnson, "The city-god cults of T'ang and Sung China," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 45.2 (Dec., 1985), 424–50.

for the services that he rendered to the Han state, it spread across Shandong. When the Red Eyebrows rebelled against Wang Mang in Shandong it became their primary cult. At the end of the Eastern Han, Ying Shao 應劭 in the *Comprehensive meaning of customs* gave a detailed description of the widespread illicit cult to King Jing, and of the state's attempts to destroy it.[73]

A more striking example, although one that is probably post-Han, was the cult to Xiang Yu 項羽, the southern-based historical rival of the Han founder, in the region of Lake Tai in modern Zhejiang. As reconstructed by Miyakawa Hisayuki, the spirit of Xiang Yu had been conflated by the local people with the god of Bian Mountain, where a temple to the dead general was located. Here we see yet another case of a local nature spirit being mythically re-written as a historical individual. However, the cult to Xiang Yu was purely local in character. The story arose that the spirit of Xiang Yu had occupied the local yamen and killed any official dispatched by the central government who did not make offerings to him. According to the records repeated officials sent out from the court died under mysterious circumstances, until the angry spirit of the general was finally pacified by a particularly resolute official in the early 6th century. Nevertheless, the unsanctioned cult to Xiang Yu continued to thrive in the locality.[74]

In addition to cults to local or regional heroes, there were also local myths and cults devoted to the sage kings or comparable figures. The most prominent example of this was the sage Yu, who due to his role as the creator of a structured Chinese space was also the creator of the diverse regions and localities that made up China. Two notable examples are the aforementioned mountain inscriptions devoted to Yu. One of these was set up at Songgao Mountain in 123 AD, and the other at Mt. Hua, the western marchmount near the Western Han capital. In the course of his work in taming the flood, Yu had established the "nine provinces" that defined China, and also the sacred mountain for each province. Thus, local people who hoped to have their mountain cult recognized by the state began their inscription with a recounting of the deeds of Yu.[75]

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[73] Lewis, *The construction of space*, pp. 229–230.
[74] Miyakawa Hisayuki, *Rikuchō shi kenkyū*: *shūkyō hen* (Kyoto, 1964), ch. 15.
[75] Lewis, *The flood myths*, pp. 43–44.

There is also evidence for the importance of Yu as a local deity in the region occupied by the Yue people, to the south of modern Hangzhou Bay. Both the *Annals of Wu and Yue* (*Wu Yue chunqiu* 吳越春秋) and the *Book of the destruction of Yue* (*Yue jue shu* 越絕書), works probably largely compiled in the Eastern Han although later modified, trace the origins of the region's culture to Yu. This is elaborated at the greatest length in the *Book of the destruction of Yue*, which makes Yu the king who established Yue as a state, describes him as a visitor to the region, locates the culminating act of his construction of world order in Yue, lists his grave as Yue's first sacred site, explains local mores and distinctive practices as a result of his work, and gives the location of a temple and an altar of grain dedicated to him.

The most widespread myth linking Yu to the Yue region pertains to the great assembly of the spirits which he gathered there at Guiji 會稽. One version of the story appears in the *Discourses of the states* (*Guoyu* 國語), probably from the late 4th century BC. It tells how Confucius identified a giant bone discovered at Guiji as that of the giant Fangfeng 防風 who was executed for arriving late to Yu's assembly. This story is significant, because texts dating back to Ren Fang's 任昉 (AD 460–508) *Record of strange phenomena* (*Shuyi ji* 述異記) describe an active cult to Fangfeng in the Hangzhou Bay region. A major variant of this story appeared in the 4th-century BC *Zuo commentary* (*Zuozhuan* 左傳), which stated that Yu assembled the feudal lords at Mt. Tu. This is noteworthy because Mt. Tu was the place of origin of Yu's wife in certain myths. The *History of the Han* (*Hanshu* 漢書) also refers to the fact that Yue state was established by Yu. The flood tamer in these texts acts as the patron divinity of the southeast region, a figure who both established Yue as a distinct region and initiated its defining mores and religious practices.[76]

There is also evidence of Yu as a patron of local culture in Sichuan. First, a fragment of a *Chronicle of the kings of Shu*, written at the end of the Western Han by Yang Xiong 楊雄, recounts Yu's miraculous birth. Since the old Shu state, the land of Yang Xiong's birth, had been in Sichuan, the inclusion of such a myth shows that this eminent native scholar traced the history of his home region back to Yu. Moreover the earliest surviving Chinese local history, the *Record of the lands south of Mt. Hua* (*Huayang guozhi* 華陽國志), is devoted to Sichuan.

[76] Lewis, *The flood myths*, pp. 44–46.

It begins with an account of Yu's fashioning of the Nine Provinces and then focuses on his unique relation to Sichuan. This text even locates the scene of Yu's wedding ceremony on a mountain in this region. Like the sites in the Hangzhou Bay area associated with Yu, this mountain became the site of temples dedicated to him and his wife. Also like those around Hangzhou Bay, these temples were treated as among the most important in their region. In a purge of shrines in Sichuan during the Jin dynasty in the 3rd century AD, only the temples to Yu and Han Emperor Wu were left untouched.

More important for their local significance than the myths of Yu was a derivative set of stories located in Sichuan that was patterned on his work as a flood tamer. These deal with the achievements of the historical Li Bing 李冰 and his mythic son Erlang 二郎 as tamers of floods. Li Bing was an actual man, a Qin administrator who in the 3rd century BC had built the great Dujiangyan 都江堰 water diversion and irrigation system that had turned the Chengdu plain into one of the most productive regions in China. However, as early as the Han he had become a legendary being who was depicted in sculpture, received regular offerings in a temple and figured as the hero of a set of tales in which he tamed the river by defeating its god in armed combat. As several scholars have pointed out, there are numerous common points between these stories dealing with Li Bing and the earlier myths of Yu. Thus the role of Yu as the founder of Sichuan's culture and the cultic importance attributed to Li Bing there express their shared mythic attributes.

The theme of taming floods by defeating hostile gods of nature developed even further in Sichuan in stories of a local god, Erlang, who was eventually identified as the son of Li Bing and received sacrifices together with him. In the later versions of these stories, which are preserved in local histories, as well as oral tales collected in this century, it is Erlang who discovers the wicked dragon that causes the floods in Sichuan, defeats the miscreant in combat and imprisons him in a deep pond beneath a stone pillar. Li Bing, the hero of the earlier tales, plays no role in these later versions.[77]

The final major form of explicitly local myths in the Han was stories devoted to immortals. Several stone inscriptions devoted to local cults to immortals which include the myths pertaining to these figures have been discovered. The most notable of these inscriptions describes the

[77] Lewis, *The flood myths*, pp. 46–47.

career of the immortal Tang Gongfang 唐公房 in the Hanzhong region of Shaanxi. The stele narrates how he became an immortal, used his powers to assist the local government, was recommended to a governor for whom he trapped and killed a rat that had damaged the governor's chariot canopy, refused to divulge his arts to the governor and fled the latter's wrath with a magic potion that allowed him and his entire household to rise into the sky. After comparing him favorably to the famous immortals of antiquity, the inscription states that, due to his lingering influence, neither insects in the summer nor frosts in the winter harmed the people. Epidemics and evil influences did not linger, all pests were eradicated and harvests were more abundant than in other places. The head of the commandery, in association with a group of local patrons, states that he had repaired the temple to Tang Gongfang and had the inscription carved in order to pray for blessings and to preserve the memory of the immortal.

This story insists on the local nature of the cult. Tang benefited his own town, but was menaced and forced to flee by a provincial governor. After departing he continued to bless his own locality, granting it good fortune not found elsewhere. The list of donors on the back of the stele names 15 people, two of whom are from Tang Gongfang's home town, and the rest from a neighboring district. These appear to be local notables, many of whom had served as local magistrates or minor officials, and the rest are described as "retired scholars." None of them appears in any literary source, which indicates that they did not make a career in the higher levels of the imperial government. From later sources, we know that several temples to the cult were built in nearby towns.

A more recently discovered inscription tells of an otherwise unknown immortal named Fei Zhi 肥致. In addition to relating his eccentric behavior and his relations with the imperial court, the inscription tells how he gathered disciples, especially members of the Xu family. Xu You 許由 is said to have encountered the Queen Mother of the West, and his son Xu Jian 建 initiated sacrifices to Fei Zhi in AD 169. Five disciples of Xu You are said to have consumed a drug called "stone marrow" and thus become immortals. In addition to these two stelae, historical documents also mention a cult to the immortal Wangzi Qiao 王子喬 established in AD 165 near Mount Song.

There are also many references to local cults dedicated to immortals in the *Biographies of arrayed immortals* (*Liexian zhuan* 列仙傳). This work was almost certainly begun under the Han, although the current edition includes later additions. It is an anthology of the lives of

celebrated immortals, but many biographies describe the popular cults which grew up around their subjects. Thus Xiaofu, a man who repaired sandals in the market of his town, never grew old and ultimately rose into the sky. Many people in his town offered sacrifice to him. Ma Dan, a man of Jin in the Spring and Autumn period, departed in a whirlwind and "the men of the north honored and made sacrifices to him." Ge You ascended Mt. Sui as an immortal, followed by many of the nobles of Shu. Several dozen shrines to him were erected at the base of the mountain. Master Guan was put to death by a ruler to whom he refused to reveal his arts, much like Tang Gongfang. He re-appeared several decades later, only to fly off after a few weeks. As a result "every household in Song made offerings to him." Many other stories in the collection follow this pattern in which an immortal departs from the human world and then becomes the object of a cult. They are notable in that all of the cults, even those to figures such as Wangzi Qiao who were known throughout the empire, are described as being confined to a single site or region, often the place where he or she was last seen. Other figures are associated with particular families, such as You Bozi, who reappears several times over the course of the decade to assist the Su family, with whom he had been a retainer under the Zhou. Given the evidence of the discovered stelae, there is no reason to doubt the historicity of local cults of this nature, and their associated myths.[78]

It is not surprising that immortals and hermits, both associated with the mountains and wild areas just beyond the city and clearly distinguished from the state-sponsored exemplars on the sacrificial registers, became local benefactors and the deities of cults devoted exclusively to the well-being of a specific town or small region. In the stories, the recurring theme of tensions with kings and high officials likewise expresses the particularist, local nature of many of these cults.

Myths of crafts

A final category of myths that date from the early empires is the myths of the patron deities of particular crafts. The *Annals of Wu and Yue* contains the story of the miraculous casting of the swords Ganjiang and Moye 干將莫邪 through a modified form of human sacrifice. In

[78] Lewis, *The construction of space*, pp. 231–32.

some later versions of this story this involves the actual sacrifice of the caster's wife who then joins sexually with the Furnace God. While the story probably dates to the Han, and belief in some deity of the forge is more than likely, we have no clear Han testimony to that affect.[79]

There is, however, evidence of a deity specifically associated with the casting of iron. The aforementioned *Record of the lands south of Mt. Hua* tells of a shrine dedicated to the Iron Ancestor (Tiezu 鐵祖) on a mountain at the southwest edge of the Chengdu plain. This was an area with much iron ore, where the Zhuo 卓 family described by Sima Qian in his chapter on merchant capitalists had set up a large ironworks under the Qin. A later gazetteer mentions a shrine to the Iron Ancestor still in the vicinity, where the families of ironworkers made frequent sacrifices. The exact identity of the Iron Ancestor remains uncertain, but he was presumably either a mythic inventor of iron casting, or possibly a divinized ancestor of the Zhuo family to whom the birth of the iron industry in the region was attributed.

There is also evidence from the Qin and Han periods of belief in a spirit called the Lacquer King (Qiwang 漆王). Unlike the Iron Ancestor, we are fortunate to have an account of the origins of this spirit. According to the ritual text for eliminating lacquer poisoning that is preserved in the *Recipes for fifty-two ailments* (*Wushi'er bingfang* 五十二病方) discovered at Mawangdui, the Lacquer King was sent to earth by the Lord of Heaven (Tiandi 天帝) to help artisans apply lacquer to weapons and armor. However, he rebelled against his divine master and caused a rash to appear on the craftsmen's skin. To heal the disease, the shaman-doctor smeared pig, chicken or rat feces on a statue of the Lacquer King, hit it with his shoe, threatened to stab it or had the victim spit on it seven times (14 in the case of a woman). These constituted either modes of exorcism (for which the use of animal feces was routine) or forms of punishment that would force the deity to cease his attacks on the skin of the worker.[80]

This account provides more insight into the Lacquer King than is available for the Iron Master. An agent of a celestial ruler, his title indicates a position comparable to that of the kings enfeoffed by the Han emperor. He was credited with the introduction of lacquer technology

[79] On the story of Ganjiang and Moye, see Lewis, *The flood myths*, pp. 114–15.

[80] On the Iron Ancestor and Lacquer King, see Anthony Barbieri-Low, *Artisans in early imperial China* (Seattle, 2007), ch. 2, section 6, "Religious beliefs of artisans."

into the world, or at any rate with assuring the successful completion of its production. However, he is also held responsible for a contradiction in the process of producing lacquer, which was an essential and valuable product but which caused a form of contact dermatitis in those who fashioned it. Thus he is described as both rebel and servant, in the manner of Chiyou, who simultaneously introduces a useful technology and the harm associated with it. This parallel is suggestive, since in funerary texts the Heavenly Emperor appears as another version of the Yellow Emperor, commanding Chiyou and his weapons to drive away demonic forces that menace the tomb.[81]

Conclusion

This chapter has not dealt with all the tales of early China that could be called "myths." Apart from the numerous historical figures who had entered the realm of myth, I have also omitted, for example, tales of the origin of the world or humanity. I have done so because there are few such tales, and they play a minor role in early Chinese mythology. In fact, the tales of the separation of Heaven and earth, the closest that we possess to an account of a physical creation among the surviving stories from the period, primarily deal with the origins of sacrifice, social hierarchy and the politicized hierarchy of substances in the human body. The only story of the creation of the human race, a late Eastern Han account of the work of Nüwa, is primarily a myth of the origins of social classes, and only secondarily of the physical creation of mankind.[82] Thus even the tales of physical origins become primarily extensions of the myths of the sage kings, i.e., accounts of the institutions and practices that constitute human society.

The focus of Warring States and early imperial Chinese myths, in fact, directly expressed the nature of religion in the period, even though

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[81] Anna Seidel, "Traces of Han religion in funerary texts found in tombs," in *Dōkyō to shūkyō bunka*, ed., Akizuki Kan'ei (Tokyo, 1987), pp. 28–30.

[82] Several anthologists of myth have assembled the few accounts of origins, fleshed out with lengthy commentaries, at the beginning of their collections. See Birrell, *Chinese mythology*, pp. 23–39; Rémi Mathieu, *Anthologie des mythes et legendes de la Chine ancienne* (Paris, 1989), pp. 27–41. In his essay on Chinese myth, Bodde discusses no myths except those of origins, including the flood. See Bodde, "Myths of ancient China," pp. 382–403. On the social focus of what seem like tales of creation, see Bodde, "Myths of ancient China," pp. 389–94; Lewis, *The construction of space*, pp. 42–46.

the myths are not limited to religion. As has often been noted, Chinese religion throughout its history has been largely embedded within the social structure. Each constituent group of the society has a religious aspect, and the head or heads of that group are religious leaders or chief sacrificers. This was even truer in the Warring States and early empires, prior to the rise of institutional Daoism and Buddhism. The state was a religious or ritual institution, with the king or emperor as the chief sacrificer. Regions and localities had their defining rituals and cults directed by their powerful families, and lineages and households each participated in ancestor worship under the direction of their respective heads.

In the same way, the myths of the sage kings dealt with the issues that concerned those who served the state (or aspired to do so), and the tensions elicited by the political developments of the period or the problem of defining newly emergent roles. The local cults and myths served to define the distinctive customs of the region, and to establish its relations to the central power. These could consist either of resistance (immortals and nature deities) or attempts to establish membership (re-writing local myths in terms of heroes or sage kings recognized in the literary tradition). The deities in tomb art both dramatized the distinctive attributes of the household, with its powerful females, and linked the members of the household to the broader structures of the cosmos. Finally, the few traces that we have of cults related to crafts show that even in the lower reaches of society groups of people organized themselves around the worship of their distinctive deities, and told stories about those deities that both legitimized their activities and highlighted their tensions.

RITUAL PRACTICES FOR CONSTRUCTING TERRESTRIAL SPACE (WARRING STATES-EARLY HAN)

Vera Dorofeeva-Lichtmann

In contrast to the capital cities and the Mingtang 明堂 (Hall of Light), the basic system of symbolic terrestrial division, the Nine Provinces (*jiuzhou* 九州), is rarely regarded from a ritual perspective. The Nine Provinces are either discussed for the sake of their topographical and historical background[1] or evaluated with respect to "geometrical" or "schematic cosmography."[2] The latter studies, focused on structural attributes of these systems, present them as static survey schemes mapping the civilized, inhabited world, or even the whole world in a regular and hierarchical way.

Yet the system of the Nine Provinces originates from a step-by-step ordering of terrestrial space by the mythical emperor Yu 禹. In other words, it possesses the attributes of a process-oriented scheme for assembling a properly organized terrestrial division that symbolizes world order, the supreme goal of Chinese statecraft. Quite surprisingly, this key aspect of the Nine Provinces is given little consideration in sinological literature. A good example of the state of the art is provided by the recent survey study of conceptions of space in ancient China by Mark Lewis who, having briefly mentioned this point, does not develop it but moves directly on to discussing geometrical or schematic versions of the Nine Provinces.[3]

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[1] See, e.g., the seminal studies of the Nine Provinces by Gu Jiegang, "Zhou yu yue de yanbian," *Shixue nianbao (chubian)* 1.5 (1933), 11–33; Gu Jiegang and Tong Shuye, "Handai yiqian Zhongguoren de shijie guannian yu yuwai jiaotong de gushi," *Yugong ban yue kan* 5.3–4 (April 1936), 97–120.

[2] John B. Henderson, *The development and decline of Chinese cosmology* (New York, 1984); "Chinese cosmographical thought: the high intellectual tradition," in *Cartography in traditional East and Southeast Asian societies* (*The history of cartography*, vol. II.2), eds John B. Harley and David Woodward (Chicago, London, 1994), pp. 203–27; John S. Major, "The five phases, magic squares and schematic cosmography," in *Explorations in early Chinese cosmology,* ed. Henry Rosemont (Chicago, 1984), pp. 133–66.

[3] Mark Edward Lewis, *The construction of space in early China* (New York, 2006), pp. 248–58, esp. p. 249.

In this chapter I will reconsider the transmitted descriptions of the Nine Provinces with respect to their process-oriented character and explore the recently discovered description of the Nine Provinces in the *Rong Cheng shi* 容成氏 manuscript, where the sequence of establishing the provinces is accentuated. This approach throws new light on the transmitted versions of the Nine Provinces. In particular, it shows that they are, in effect, concurring versions of Yu's deeds rather than territorial systems characteristic of successive historical periods, as they are presented in Chinese commentarial and historiographic tradition. The process-oriented perspective also allows one to revise the view of the transmitted descriptions of the Nine Provinces as an evolution from a "naturalistic" view toward their schematic representation, that has long been accepted in sinological literature.

The process-oriented character of Yu's regulation of terrestrial space is also strongly manifest in the *Shanhai jing* 山海經 (*Classic of mountains and seas*, ca. 1st century BC), a description of terrestrial space that builds on a system of itineraries marked by mountains. In contrast to the extant versions of the Nine Provinces, the system of itineraries lays special emphasis on local spirits. In particular, an itinerary encompasses mountains that share the same guardian spirits. The itineraries are, therefore, delineated according to the spatial dispersion of divine powers and represent a sacred space that I refer to as a "spiritual landscape." Delineating the itineraries is attributed to Yu. Support given Yu by local spirits, as the major source of his power over the landscape, is also mentioned in other extant texts and is strongly present in many of the recently-found manuscripts dating from the late Warring States period through the early Han dynasty. But there are also sources referring to Yu's regulations from which the spirits are totally absent.

I aim here to explore the demarcation line between two versions of Yu's regulating actions: establishing an "administrative" territorial division devoid of any allusions to spirits as opposed to creating a "spiritual landscape" by means of divine support. The former version became officially recognized because it was adopted by imperial historiography, while the latter version is characteristic of texts that may be loosely referred to as an "unofficial" tradition.

Finally, I shall call attention to the typological similarity of Yu's regulating actions to the so-called "tours of inspection," whose initiation was attributed to Yu's predecessor, Emperor Shun 舜, and which was revived as one of the major statecraft practices by Qin (221–207 BC) and Han emperors. Yu's and Shun's functions are combined in the

unofficial versions of Yu's regulations, but are sharply distinguished in the officially recognized descriptions of their deeds. I shall demonstrate that the demarcation line is once again drawn with respect to spirits.

Architectural symbols of power in ancient China as ideal symbols of the world

Constructing an orderly space played a very important role in Chinese culture and state ritual from the origins of Chinese civilization through the entire imperial period. This fact has been noted by many scholars and can be clearly seen from the regular cardinally-oriented structure of the architectural symbols of power in China: capital cities and buildings of state importance (palaces, state temples, royal tombs). Although such regular constructions are not only characteristic of Chinese civilization, the Chinese cases are still outstanding in the degree of regularity, the strictness of cardinal orientation and the continuity of the city planning tradition.

The groundbreaking study of early Chinese city planning is the famous book by Paul Wheatley, whose comparative approach favored its recognition in various studies in the history of city planning and cosmological conceptions far beyond sinology.[4] Wheatley pinpoints the prominence of centrality and cardinally-oriented axiality in Shang and Western Zhou cities and concludes that the ancient Chinese city served as a cosmo-magical symbol.[5] The title of the book—*The pivot of the four quarters*—highlights this view. The typologically similar structure of royal tombs of the Shang dynasty has been pointed out by Sarah Allan.[6] Wheatley's interpretation is summarized in a study of Chinese cosmography by Major,[7] and about the same time Henderson published his historical outline of Chinese cosmology.[8] Henderson complements Wheatley's interpretation with observations by Arthur Wright on city planning in subsequent periods of Chinese history.[9] City planning in

[4] Paul Wheatley, *The pivot of the four quarters* (Edinburgh, 1971).
[5] Wheatley, *Pivot*, pp. 414–52.
[6] Sarah Allan, *The shape of the turtle: myth, art and cosmos in early China* (Albany, 1991), pp. 74–111.
[7] Major, "Five phases," pp. 153–55.
[8] Henderson, *Development and decline*, pp. 70–74.
[9] Henderson refers to Arthur F. Wright, "The cosmology of the Chinese city," *The city in late imperial China*, ed. G. William Skinner (Stanford, 1977).

imperial China is discussed in detail by Nancy Steinhardt who, apart from bringing together an impressive range of sources on all the known Chinese capitals, considerably revises the research approach. In particular, she focuses on the nuances of specific cases and, while giving full credit to the fundamental structural principles of Chinese cities, argues that the notion of a single tradition of Chinese city planning is too simplistic.[10] Nancy Price reassesses Wheatley's study in a broad theoretical and comparative perspective and Wang Aihe with respect to political culture.[11] Wu Hung studies monumentality in Chinese art and architecture providing a survey of temples, palaces and tombs from Shang through the Eastern Han dynasty and focusing on the Han capital city of Chang'an.[12] Finally, the development of city planning in China from its origins through the "invention of the imperial capital" as well as studies of this subject are reviewed in the recent book by Lewis on the conceptions of space in early China.[13]

Chinese cultural tradition first articulated a cosmological explanation for such structures around the end of the 3rd century BC. One form of this articulation is descriptions of the ideal models of architectural constructions of state importance, in particular, the plan of the royal capital or the "ruler's city" 王城 in the "Kaogong ji" 考工記 ("Records of the investigation of crafts") chapter of the *Zhouli* 周禮 (*Rites of Zhou*).[14] According to this text, the capital city is a square with a side of nine *li*, three gates on each side, and nine north-south and nine east-west avenues.[15]

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[10] Nancy Shatzman Steinhardt, *Chinese imperial city planning* (1990; repr. Honolulu, 1999).

[11] See Nancy Thompson Price, "The pivot: comparative perspectives from the four quarters," *Early China* 20 (1995), 93–210; Wang Aihe, *Cosmology and political culture* (Cambridge, 2000), esp. pp. 23–74, 173–216.

[12] Wu Hung, *Monumentality in early Chinese art and architecture* (Stanford, 1995), ch. 2 ("Temple, palace, and tomb") and ch. 3 ("The monumental city Chang'an"), respectively.

[13] Lewis, *Construction of space*, ch. 3 ("Cities and capitals").

[14] The "Kaogong ji" chapter, which already in the Former Han period replaced a lost part of the *Zhouli*, may be a work of the late Warring States period; see William G. Boltz, "Chou li," in *Early Chinese texts: a bibliographical guide*, ed. Michael Loewe (Berkeley, 1993), pp. 25–26. This ritual compendium existed in something close to its extant form in the mid-2nd century BC, possibly even earlier.

[15] *Zhouli Zhengzhu* 周禮鄭注, p. 41.14b3–5, Edouard Biot, trans., *Le Tcheou-li, Rites des Zhou* (1851; repr. Taibei, 1969), p. 556. For an analysis of the passage from the "Kaogong ji" and graphic representations of the "ruler's city," see Wheatley, *Pivot*, pp. 411–15; Steinhardt, *Chinese imperial city planning*, pp. 33–6; Henderson, "Chinese cosmographical thought," pp. 210–11. The extant graphic representations of the royal city date from the early-15th century and later.

The Hall of Light (Mingtang) occupies a special place among the ideal constructions of state importance described in a series of texts dating from the 4th century BC through the 2nd century AD. These descriptions are further discussed, often with "graphic representations" (*tu* 圖) of the Mingtang, in later Chinese scholarship. The Hall of Light is also associated with certain architectural constructions in imperial China, some of which have survived to this day, and also with ornaments found on some excavated objects. Not surprisingly, the Hall of Light has long attracted research interest and has become an integral part of studies in Chinese cosmology and city planning.[16] The study of reference of the hall is the dissertation by Hwang Ming-chorng.[17] This comprehensive work explores a large number of texts conveying relevant cosmological concepts, examines in detail all the extant texts describing the Mingtang, and compares textual sources to the data derived from various archaeological finds (ground plans, ornaments). Another attempt at a comprehensive study of the Hall of Light was made recently by Zhang Yibing.[18] Two representations of the Mingtang are singled out in the Chinese cultural traditions: the five-chamber Mingtang 五室明堂 and the nine-chamber Mingtang 九室明堂, associated primarily with the "Kaogong ji" and the "Mingtang" chapter of the *Da Dai liji* 大戴禮記 (*Book of rites of the Elder Dai*),[19] respectively. Both models are also conceived in relation to the temporal-spatial system of the "Yueling" 月令 ("Monthly ordinances") chapter of the *Liji* 禮記 (*Book of rites*).[20]

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[16] See, e.g., Henri Maspero, "Le Ming-t'ang et la crise religieuse avant les Han," *Mélanges chinois et bouddhiques* 9 (1948–51), 1–71; William Edward Soothill, *The Hall of Light: a study of early Chinese kingship* (London, 1951), pp. 84–96; Laurence Sickman, and Alexander Soper, *The art and architecture of China* (Harmondsworth, 1956), p. 212; Henderson, *Development and decline*, pp. 59–87, "Chinese cosmographical thought," pp. 212–16; Allan, *Shape*, p. 92; Wu Hung, *Monumentality*, pp. 176–87; Wu Hung, "Picturing or diagramming the universe," in *Graphics and text in the production of technical knowledge in China: the warp and the weft*, eds Francesca Bray, Vera Dorofeeva-Lichtmann, and Georges Métailié (Leiden, 2007), pp. 191–97; Steinhardt, *Chinese imperial city planning*, pp. 15–16; Lewis, *Construction of space*, pp. 260–73.

[17] Hwang Ming-Chorng, "Ming-Tang: cosmology, political order and monuments in early China," PhD thesis (Harvard University, 1996); the dissertation contains an almost exhaustive bibliography of Mingtang studies.

[18] Zhang Yibing, *Mingtang zhidu yanjiu* (Beijing, 2005).

[19] Compilation of the *Da Dai liji* is attributed to Dai De 戴德 (1st century BC), but it most likely did not appear earlier than the beginning of the 2nd century AD.

[20] This ritual compendium was compiled around the 1st century AD. For a discussion of the "Kaogong ji," the "Yueling" and the "Mingtang" chapter of the *Da Dai liji* with original texts, their translation, and references to previous studies, see Hwang, "Ming-Tang," pp. 33–36, 44–47, 47–52, respectively. For surveys of these texts, see also

The "Monthly ordinances" describes the annual circulation of the Zhou ruler in the Hall of Light which, according to this text, consists of 13 temporal-spatial units: 12 months corresponding to 12 peripheral divisions of space arranged according to the four cardinal directions/seasons, plus the additional month corresponding to the center.[21] The 13 units of the "Yueling" representation of the Mingtang can be inscribed both into a five-chamber and a nine-chamber frame.

One of the earliest surviving representations of the five-chamber and the nine-chamber Mingtang is found in the *Sanli tu* 三禮圖 (*Graphic representations of the three ritual* [*classics*], by Nie Chongyi 聶崇義 (fl. mid-10th century). Despite the huge time span between these representations and the textual sources they are derived from, there is some evidence that the representations continue an earlier scholarly tradition that can be traced back at least to the Han dynasty. They have apparent structural similarities with the ground-plan of a construction discovered in Chang'an excavations and considered to be the Hall of Light of Wang Mang (r. AD 9–23), especially the emphasis on the diagonal dimensions.[22]

The reason for the special scholarly interest in the Mingtang is the ritual function of its orderly structure, as can be clearly seen from the description in the "Monthly Ordinances" of the Zhou ruler's ritual movement through the Hall of Light, which represents the annual cycle. Another chapter of the *Liji*, the "Mingtang wei" 明堂位 ("Positions in the Hall of Light"), describes one more ritual performed in the hall, namely, the royal audience given by the kings of the Western Zhou to the rulers of principalities (*zhuhou* 諸侯) and the chiefs of "barbarians." The opening section of the "Mingtang wei" provides a list of orderly positions for its participants. Each position symbolizes a territorial unit

Maspero, "Le Ming-t'ang," pp. 38–54, and Soothill, "The Hall of Light," pp. 84–96. For "Yueling"-type calendars, see W. Allyn Rickett, *Guan zi: political, economic, and philosophical essays from early China, a study and translation*, vol. 1, chaps I, 1–XI, 34 and XX, 64–XXI, 65–66 (Princeton, 1985), pp. 158–63; Hwang, "Ming-Tang," pp. 53–91.

[21] For a reconstruction of this temporal-spatial system, see Wu Hung, *Monumentality*, p. 181.

[22] For a juxtaposition of the representations of the Mingtang from the *Sanli tu* and the ground plan of the excavated Mingtang of Wang Mang, see Hwang, "Ming-Tang," pp. 694–95. There are several slightly different reconstructions of this archeological find, but their differences do not affect the similarity of its ground plan with the Song graphic representations of the Mingtang. For a critical survey of the proposed reconstructions, see Hwang, "Ming-Tang," pp. 27–32; see also Wu Hung, *Monumentality*, chap. 3 ("The monumental city Chang'an").

of the Western Zhou designated here as "state" (*guo* 國) both with respect to principalities and "barbarian" territories. Inside the hall the rulers of principalities are arranged in orderly fashion, with the representatives of barbarian states placed outside the four cardinally-oriented doors. The spatial arrangement of positions represents an ideal territorial division of the Western Zhou. The sequence of positions corresponds to the order of their occupation during the ritual.[23] Different ritual aspects of the Hall of Light are pointed out in the study by Bilsky.[24]

The Hall of Light and other architectural symbols of power serve to convey ideal images of the world. The case of the Mingtang shows that rituals performed in such constructions are aimed at delineating the conventional units of terrestrial division and assigning them their proper hierarchical places. The goal is to assemble the ideal organization of the world. Proper positions could be determined by special tools for spatial regulation, e.g., the divination board or cosmograph (*shi* 式),[25] divinatory schemes and "magic" mirrors.[26] The special interest in the

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[23] For a translation and a study of the "Mingtang wei," see Hwang, "Ming-Tang," pp. 36–44. I discussed a scheme of the Mingtang that can be derived from this text and its process-oriented function in my paper "The *Ming tang wei*: a description of a ritual or a prescriptive scheme (tu)?" presented at the Ninth International Conference on the History of Science in East Asia (August 23–27, 1999, National University of Singapore, Singapore).

[24] James Lester Bilsky, *State religion of ancient China*, 2 vols (Taibei, 1975), pp. 290–99, 324–30.

[25] The earliest of the discovered cosmographs date from the Former Han dynasty. For the cosmograph, see Donald J. Harper, "The Han cosmic board (*shi*)," *Early China* 4 (1978–79), 1–10; Michael Loewe, *Ways to paradise: the Chinese quest for immortality* (London, 1979), pp. 75–80; Christopher Cullen, "Some further points on the *shih*," *Early China* 6 (1980–81), 31–46; Stephen Field, "Cosmos, cosmograph, and the inquiring poet: new answers to the 'Heaven Questions,'" *Early China* 17 (1992), 83–110; Li Ling, "Chuboshu yu 'shitu,'" *Jiang Han kaogu* 1991.1, 59–62, and *Zhongguo fangshu kao* (1993; repr. Beijing, 2000), pp. 89–176; John S. Major, trans., *Heaven and earth in early Chinese thought (chapters three, four and five of the Huai nan zi)* (Albany, 1993), pp. 39–43, "Characteristics of late Chu religion," in *Defining Chu: image and reality in ancient China,* eds Constance A. Cook and John S. Major (Honolulu, 1999), pp. 141–2; Li Ling and Constance A. Cook, "Translation of the Chu silk manuscript," in *Defining Chu*, p. 172; Sarah Allan, "The Great One, water and the *Laozi*: new light from Guodian," *T'oung Pao* 89 (2003), 237–85; Marc Kalinowski, "The *Xingde* 刑德 texts from Mawangdui," *Early China* 23–24 (1998–99), 125–202, "Fonctionnalité calendaire dans les cosmogonies anciennes de la Chine," *Etudes chinoises* 23 (2004), 87–122 (for criticisms of Allan's paper, see n. 58 on pp. 116–17); John Lagerwey, "Deux écrits taoïstes anciens," *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie* 14 (2004), 139–71; David Pankenier, "A brief history of *Beiji* 北極 (Northern Culmen), with an excursus on the origin of the character *di* 帝," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 124.2 (April–June 2004), 211–36.

[26] Loewe, *Ways to paradise*, pp. 60–85; Li Ling, *Zhongguo fangshu kao*, pp. 89–176; Marc Kalinowski, "Astrologie calendaire et calcul de position dans la Chine ancienne.

conception of the Mingtang, "world-making" rituals,[27] and the tools for tailoring space is in strong evidence from the end of the Warring States through the Former Han, that is, coincides with the formative period of the imperial system in China.

The Nine Provinces and the concentric zones in transmitted sources

The provinces and zones as model cosmograms

The invention of the orderly territorial division of the world is associated with the legendary emperor Yu, or Yu the Great 大禹, the founding ancestor of the Xia dynasty.[28] It was he who finally succeeded in overcoming the flood that brought chaos to the world.[29] Having drained the flood waters, Yu proceeded to organize terrestrial space. Although the emperor Yu's time refers to remote antiquity, descriptions of his deeds date from the period of the end of the Warring States and the Former Han and, therefore, belong to the just mentioned group of sources.

The main reference text for Yu's organization of space is the "Yugong" 禹貢 ("Tribute of Yu"; ca. 5th–3rd centuries BC) chapter of the *Book of documents* (*Shangshu* 尚書).[30] According to this text, Yu first focussed

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Les mutations de l'hémérologie sexagésimale entre le IVe et le IIe siècle av. J.C.," *Extrême-Orient—Extrême-Occident* 18 (1996), 71–114, "The Xingde Texts"; Lillian Lan-ying Tseng, "Representation and appropriation: rethinking the TLV in Han China," *Early China* 29 (2004), 163–215. For a survey of studies of "magic" mirrors and divinatory schemes and boards, see Lewis, *Construction of space*, pp. 273–84.

[27] Bilsky, *State religion*, pp. 248–50.

[28] The Xia dynasty did not leave written sources. For possible identifications of archeological finds with the Xia dynasty, see Robert I. Thorp, "Erlitou and the search for the Xia," *Early China* 16 (1991), 1–38. The history of the Xia dynasty constitutes the first chapter of the *Shiji* by Sima Qian (ca. 145–ca. 87 BC), the "Xia benji"; see *Shiji* (Beijing, 1975), pp. 49–90; William H. Nienhauser, ed., *The Grand Scribe's Records, vol. I, The Basic Annals of Pre-Han China by Ssu-ma Ch'ien* (Bloomington and Indianapolis, 1994), pp. 21–38.

[29] See a series of papers on the description of the flood in Chinese classical texts published in *T'oung Pao*: William G. Boltz, "Kung Kung and the flood: reverse euhemerism in the Yao Tien," *T'oung Pao* 67.3–5 (1981), 141–53; Rémi Mathieu, "Yu le Grand et le mythe du déluge dans la Chine ancienne," *T'oung Pao* 78 (1992), 162–90; Anne Birrell, "The four flood myth traditions of classical China," *T'oung Pao* 83.1–3 (1997), 212–59. See now a survey study by Mark Edward Lewis, *The flood myths of early China* (New York, 2006), and his chapter in this book.

[30] *Shangshu zhengyi* 6.1b6–19b3; James Legge, trans., *The Chinese Classics*, vol. 3, part 1 *Shoo King* (Hongkong, London, 1865), pp. 92–151; Séraphin Couvreur, trans., *Chou King* (1897; repr. Taibei, 1971), pp. 61–89; Bernhard Karlgren, trans., "The Book

on the civilized world—the territories in the basins of the Yellow and the Yangzi rivers occupied by Chinese civilization. He demarcated these territories into the Nine Provinces (literally, Nine Isles) and delineated (*dao* 導) through the provinces a system of communications: nine land and nine river itineraries. Then he outlined a division of the whole world into five concentric zones (*wufu* 五服). The "Yugong" gives primary attention to the nonary terrestrial divisions—the provinces with the sets of itineraries—whose description occupies most of the text. The system of zones is concisely featured at the end of the text and apparently plays a complementary role. For that reason this chapter is mostly concerned with the Nine Provinces.

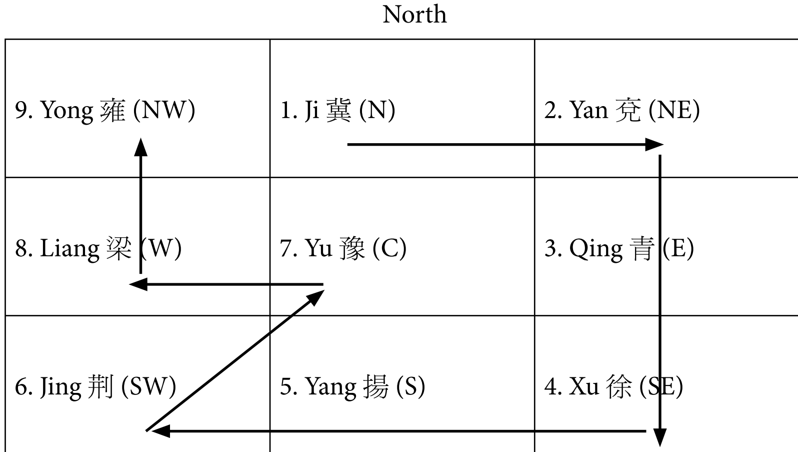
The Nine Provinces are symbolically represented as a 3 × 3 square grid, with the length of a side of each square being 1,000 *li* (see Table 1a). The five concentric zones are a nest of concentric squares, with the width of each zone being 500 *li*. The Nine Provinces and five concentric zones are orderly and hierarchically structured representations of the world—the civilized world and the whole world respectively—and may therefore be referred to as global schemes or cosmograms. Such cosmograms are products of the application of a system of cosmological principles which impose strong constraints on the conventional tailoring of space. Structures generated through these constraints necessarily have regular form and are organized as a set of hierarchically interrelated positions.[31] The Nine Provinces and five concentric zones serve as the two model cosmograms representing the two basic patterns for mapping terrestrial space: the square grid and the nest of concentric squares.[32] The shapes of "applied" cosmograms (e.g., ground plans of

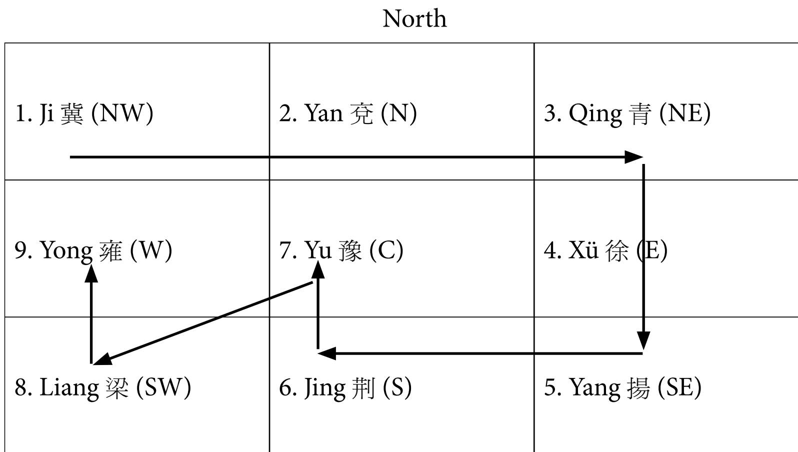
of documents," *Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities* 22 (1950), pp. 12–18; Bernhard Karlgren, "Glosses on the Book of documents," *Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities* 20 (1948), glosses 1352–96. Hereafter I shall refer to Karlgren's translation. For different views on the dating of the "Yugong," see Qu Wanli, "Lun Yugong zhucheng de shidai," *Zhongyang yanjiuyuan lishi yuyan yanjiusuo jikan* 35 (1964), 53–86. Draining of waters is described in one of the preceding chapters of the *Shangshu*, chap. "Yi [and Hou] Ji" 益稷, *Shangshu*., 5.1a8–13; Karlgren, "The Book of documents" (here chap. "Gao Yao mo2" 皋陶謨), pp. 9–10 (§ 9).

[31] E.g., the central position has a higher value than a peripheral one, the eastern position than the western; see Vera Dorofeeva-Lichtmann, "Political concept behind an interplay of spatial 'positions,'" *Extrême-Orient—Extrême-Occident* 18 (1996), pp. 9–33, esp. pp. 11–12.

[32] For the term "cosmogram" and its applications in the form of the 3 x 3 square grid and the nest of concentric squares, see Major, "The five phases," pp. 133–66. Major points out the compatibility of these models, ibid., pp. 143–45; the 3 x 3 grid model is the focus of Henderson, *Development and decline*, pp. 59–87, "Chinese cosmographical

Table 1a. *Jiugong* 九宫 (above) and *Taiyi* 太一 (below) dispositions of the "Yugong" provinces (according to the *Wuxing dayi*).





capital cities, temples, royal tombs, versions of the Mingtang) can vary within the limits of possible varieties of the basic patterns and their combinations, as long as the system of cosmological principles just mentioned is respected. The regular form of the cosmograms serves, first of all, to symbolize the primary aim of statecraft as conceived in ancient China, that is, maintaining hierarchical order, balance and harmony in the world. It is for this reason that cosmograms are so systematically imprinted on the architectural symbols of power in China. For the same reason the interest in orderly structures of space and rituals and instruments serving to obtain such structures increased during the formative period of Chinese empire.

To summarize, cosmograms are instrumental in conveying conceptions of space dominated by closely interrelated political and religious meanings. In order to match these meanings, real topography could be, and in fact should be corrected or even considerably transformed. Moreover, in the Chinese tradition of mapping terrestrial space, cosmograms possess the highest conceptual status. As a result, because of their conceptual domination in the majority of "global" maps, real topography is sacrificed for cosmological harmony, and topographically accurate maps are more the exception than the rule.[33]

Tracing schematic representations of the Nine Provinces and concentric zones

No schematic representations of the Nine Provinces or the five concentric zones dating from the period when the "Yugong" was composed have been discovered so far. Their acknowledged schematic outlines

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thought," pp. 204–16. For the cosmological principles underlying the cosmograms and an attempt at their typological analysis, see Vera Dorofeeva-Lichtmann, "Conception of terrestrial organization in the *Shan hai jing*," *Bulletin de l'Ecole Française d'Extrême Orient* 82 (1995), 63–69; "Political concept," pp. 10–12; "Topographical accuracy or conceptual organization of space? (Some remarks on the system of locations found in the *Shan hai jing*)," in *Current perspectives in the history of science in East Asia*, eds Kim Yung-Sik and Francesca Bray (Seoul, 1999), pp. 168–72; "Mapping a 'spiritual' landscape: representing terrestrial space in the *Shan hai jing*," in *Political frontiers, ethnic boundaries, and human geographies in Chinese history*, eds Nicola di Cosmo and Don Wyatt (London, 2003), pp. 40–42.

[33] Cosmograms and maps are not distinguished on the terminological level, both being designated by the term *tu* 圖, "graphic representation." For the relationship between maps and cosmograms and the fuzzy borders between them, see Dorofeeva-Lichtmann, "Mapping a 'spiritual' landscape," pp. 38–43.

are derived from their descriptions in texts, beginning with the main reference text, the "Yugong." Indeed, the transmitted accounts of the Nine Provinces and the systems of concentric zones, all dating from the Warring States and the Former Han periods, necessarily comprise a definition of the spatial positions of each province or zone that precedes all further information about the territorial units. Let us take a brief look at these sources.

The transmitted accounts of the Nine Provinces are as follows:

- the "Yugong."[34]
- the "Youshi lan" 有始覽 ("Observations on the beginning") chapter of the *Lüshi chunqiu* 呂氏春秋 (*Annals of Sire Lü*); comp. ca. 239 BC.[35]
- the "Shidi" 釋地 ("Explaining the earth") chapter of the *Erya* 爾雅 dictionary (ca. 2nd century BC);[36] reproduced with a difference in the name of one province in the "Bianwu" 辨物 ("Distinguishing beings and things") chapter of the *Shuoyuan* 說苑 (*Abundance of elucidations*) by Liu Xiang 劉向 (79–8 BC).
- the "Zhifang shi" 職方氏 ("Official in charge of the [four] cardinal directions") chapter of the *Zhouli*;[37] similar to the 62nd chapter of the *Yi Zhoushu* 逸周書 (*Remnant Zhou documents*), which includes texts dating from the 4th to the 2nd centuries BC, it is possibly borrowed from it.
- the "Dixing xun" 墜形訓 ("Treatise on terrestrial shapes") chapter of the *Huainanzi* 淮南子 (*Master Huainan*); comp. ca. 139 BC.[38]

The number of zones varies from five to nine:

- five zones in the "Yugong"[39] and in the "Zhouyu" 周語 ("Discourses of Zhou" [part 1], composed about 431 BC) chapter of the *Guoyu* 國語 (*Discourses of the states*);[40]

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[34] For the description of the Nine Provinces in the "Yugong", see *Shangshu*, 6.2a2–12b10; Karlgren, "The Book of documents," pp. 12–17 (§§ 2–19).

[35] *Lüshi chunqiu*, 2a1–5; John Knoblock and Jeffrey Riegel, trans., *The Annals of Lü Buwei: a complete translation and study* (Stanford, 2000), p. 280. For discussion of the dating problems of the *Lüshi chunqiu*, see contributions to the Warring States Project http://www.umass.edu/wsp/conferences/aas/2003/aspects/index.html.

[36] *Erya Guozhu* 爾雅郭注, 6.1a5–2a3.

[37] *Zhouli* 33.6a8–8b3; Biot, *Le Tcheou-li*, pp. 277–79.

[38] *Huainan honglie jijie*, pp. 130–31; Major, *Heaven and earth*, pp. 141–47.

[39] *Shangshu* 6.17b5–19a3; Karlgren, "The Book of documents," pp. 16, 18 (§§ 33–37).

[40] *Guoyu* 1.3b2–3a6, André Hormon, trans., *Guoyu, Propos sur les principautés, I—Zhouyu* (Paris, 1985), p. 56 (§1); Vsevolod S. Taskin, trans., *Go yu* (*Rechi tsarstv*) (Moscow, 1897), p. 24 (§ 1).

- nine zones in the "Zhifang shi" chapter of the *Zhouli*;[41]
- nine outlying areas (*jiuji* 九畿) in the "Da sima" 大司馬 chapter of the *Zhouli*.[42]

The shift in the number of zones marks a shift in time: the five zones were established by the emperor Yu and then extended to the nine zones or the nine outlying areas under the Zhou dynasty. All sets of zones share the same nucleus of names and the same sequence of enumeration and regulation, from the center to the periphery. Descriptions of the system of concentric zones are less detailed and structurally simpler than those of the Nine Provinces, which is to be expected from a complementary terrestrial division. A zone in the "Yugong" is delineated by giving the distance to its outer boundary from the outer boundary of the preceding zone, each of these distances (the width of the zone) being 500 *li* in length (e.g., *wubai li houfu* 五百里侯服 "500 li [in each cardinal direction outside the preceding zone] is the the princes' zone (*houfu*)."[43] The same method of location is applied in the "Zhifang shi" and the "Da sima," but not in the "Zhouyu," where the distance between the zones is not given. Its account of the five zones has, however, an obvious affiliation with that of the "Yugong," differing with it in the name of only one zone.[44] The schematic structure of the concentric zones is easily derived from the concept of the symbolic squareness of the earth and the units of its division characteristic of the Chinese cosmographical tradition.

In contrast to this purely schematic delineation of zones, explicit indicators of the configuration of the Nine Provinces appear gradually. In the "Yugong" a province is located with respect to prominent landmarks (rivers, mountains and the sea), e.g., "between rivers A and B," "between river C and mountain D" (see Table 1). In a cluster of sources composed slightly later than the "Yugong"—the "Youshi lan," the "Zhifang shi" and the "Shidi" chapters mentioned above—cardinally-oriented locations of provinces appear either with respect to rivers, with no reference to mountains (e.g., "to the south of river A"), or simply at a cardinally-oriented point (e.g., "in the southeast," see Tables 2–4). These texts share the same nucleus of names of the provinces with the

[41] *Zhouli* 33.8b7–9a2., Biot, *Le Tcheou-li*, pp. 276–77.

[42] *Zhouli* 29.3b3–8, Biot, *Le Tcheou-li*, pp. 167–68.

[43] The zones of the "Yugong" are subdivided into sub-zones of 100 by 300 *li* wide. This subdivision is not found in the other accounts of the concentric zones.

[44] The third zone bears the name *sui* 綏 in the "Yugong" and *bin* 賓 in the "Zhouyu."

Table 1. Account of the Nine Provinces in the "Yugong" (*Shangshu*).

Name	Given location	Translation
1. Ji 冀	—	—
2. Yan 兗	*Ji He* wei Yan zhou 濟河惟兗州	[Between] *the Ji* [and] the *He* [*rivers*]: Yan province.
3. Qing 青	*Hai* Dai wei Qing zhou 海岱惟青州	[Between] *the sea* [and] Dai [mountain]: Qing province.
4. Xu 徐	*Hai* Dai ji *Huai* wei Xu zhou 海岱及淮惟徐州	[Between] *the sea*, Dai [mountain] and the *Huai* [*river*]: Xu province.
5. Yang 揚	*Huai Hai* wei Yang zhou 淮海惟揚州	[Between the] *Huai* [*river* and] *the sea*: Yang province.
6. Jing 荆	Jing ji Hengyang wei Jing zhou 荆及衡陽惟荆州	[Between] Jing [mountain] and the southern side of Heng [mountain]: Jing province.
7. Yu 豫	Jing *He* wei Yu zhou 荆河惟豫州	[Between] Jing [mountain and] *the He* [*river*]: Yu province.
8. Liang 梁	Huayang *Heishui* wei Liang zhou 華陽黑水惟梁州	[Between] the southern side of Hua [mountain] and *the Hei (Black) river:* Liang province.
9. Yong 雍	*Heishui Xihe* wei Yongzhou 黑水西河惟雍州	[Between] *the Hei (Black) river* and *the Western He* [*river*]: Yong province.

Italics: rivers
Underlined: mountains

"Yugong" (six common provinces), the entire sets differing from each other in only one or two names (see Table 6). I refer to them hereafter as the "Yugong" group of accounts of the Nine Provinces. The difference in names is traditionally explained by referring the sets of provinces to different periods of Chinese history.[45]

Locating a province simply at a cardinally-oriented point, e.g., "in the south," is an attribute of a 3 × 3 square grid, its nine squares corresponding to the eight cardinal directions and the center. Five of the "Youshi lan" provinces and six of the "Zhifang shi" provinces refer to the cardinally-oriented squares of the grid (see Tables 2a and 4a,

[45] The "Shidi" set is considered to represent the territorial division during the Shang-Yin dynasty, the "Zhifang shi" the Western Zhou and the "Youshi lan" the Spring and Autumn period.

Table 2. Account of the Nine Provinces in the "Youshi lan" (*Lüshi chunqiu*).

Name	Given location	Translation
1. Yu 豫	*He Han zhi jian* wei Yu zhou, ***Zhou*** ye 河漢之閒爲豫州周也	*Between the He* [*and*] *the Han* [*rivers*] there is Yu province, [corresponds to] ***Zhou***.
2. Ji 冀	*Liang he zhi jian* wei Ji zhou, ***Jin*** ye 兩河之閒爲冀州晉也	*Between the two He* [*rivers*] there is Ji province, [corresponds to] ***Jin***.
3. Yan 兗	*He Ji zhi jian* wei Yan zhou, ***Wei*** ye 河濟之閒爲兗州衛也	*Between the He* [*and*] *the Ji* [*rivers*] there is Yan province, [corresponds to] ***Wei***.
4. Qing 青	**Dongfang** wei Qing zhou, ***Qi*** ye 東方爲青州齊也	In the **east** there is Qing province, [corresponds to] ***Qi***.
5. Xu 徐	*Si shang* wei Xu zhou, ***Lu*** ye 泗上爲徐州魯也	*Above the Si* [*river*] there is Xu province, [corresponds to] ***Lu***.
6. Yang 揚	**Dongnan** wei Yang zhou, ***Yue*** ye 東南爲揚州越也	In the **southeast** there is Yang province, [corresponds to] ***Yue***.
7. Jing 荊	**Nanfang** wei Jing zhou, ***Chu*** ye 南方爲荊州楚也	In the **south** there is Jing province, [corresponds to] ***Chu***.
8. Yong 雍	**Xifang** wei Yong zhou, ***Qin*** ye 西方爲雍州秦也	In the **west** is situated Yong province, [corresponds to] ***Qin***.
9. <u>You 幽</u> (new with respect to the "Yugong" set)	**Beifang** wei You zhou, ***Yan*** ye 北方爲幽州燕也	In the **north** is situated You province, [corresponds to] ***Yan***.

Italics: rivers
Bold: cardinal directions
<u>Underlined</u>: new provinces
Bold italics: principalities/kingdoms

Table 3. Account of the Nine Provinces in the "Shidi" (*Erya*).

Name	Given location	Translation
1. Ji 冀	*Liang He jian* yue Ji zhou 兩河間曰冀州	[The territory] between *the two He* [*rivers*] is called Ji province
2. Yu 豫	*He* **nan** yue Yu zhou 河南曰豫州	[The territory] to the **south** of *the He* [*river*] is called Yu province
3. Yong 雝（雍）	*He* **xi** yue Yong zhou 河西曰雝州	[The territory] to the **west** of the *He* [*river*] is called Yong province
4. Jing 荆	*Han* **nan** yue Jing zhou 漢南曰荆州	[The territory] to the **south** of *the Han* [*river*] is called Jing province
5. Yang 楊（揚）	*Jiang nan* yue Yang zhou 江南曰楊州4	[The territory] to the **south** of *the Jiang* [*river*] is called Yang province
6. Yan 兗	Ji He jian yue Yan zhou 濟河間曰兗州	[The territory] between the Ji and the He [rivers] is called Yan province
7. Xu 徐	*Ji* **dong** yue Xu zhou 濟東曰徐州	[The territory] to the e**ast** of *the Ji* [*river*] is called Xu province
8. <u>You 幽</u> (new with respect to the "Yugong" set)	***Yan*** yue Yu zhou 燕曰幽州	[The territory] of ***Yan*** [***principality***] is called You province
9. <u>Ying 營</u> (new with respect to the "Yugong" and "You shi lan")	***Qi*** yue Ying zhou 齊曰營州	[The territory] of ***Qi*** [***principality***] is called Ying province

* In the version of the "Bianwu" 辨物 chapter of the *Shuoyuan* by Liu Xiang 劉向 (79–8 BC), there is Qing 青 province instead of Ying 營.
Italics: rivers
Bold: cardinal directions
<u>Underlined</u>: new provinces
Bold italics: principalities/kingdoms

Table 4. Account of the Nine Provinces in the "Zhifang shi" (*Zhouli*).

Name	Given location	Translation
1. Yang 揚	**Dongnan** yue Yang zhou 東南曰揚州	[The territory in the] **southeast** is called Ji province
2. Jing 荊	**Zhengnan** yue Jing zhou 正南曰荊州	[The territory in the] **south** is called Yu province
3. Yu 豫	He **nan** yue Yu zhou 河南曰豫州	[The territory] to the **west** of the He [river] is called Yong province
4. Qing 青	**Zhengdong** yue Qing zhou 正東曰青州	[The territory] in the e**ast** is called Qing province
5. Yan 兗	5 *He* **dong** yue Yan zhou 河東曰兗州	[The territory] to the **east** of *the He* [*river*] is called Yan province
6. Yong 雍	**Zhengxi** yue Yong zhou 正西曰雍州	[The territory] in the **west** is called Yan province
7. You 幽 (new with respect to the "Yugong" set)	**Dongbei** yue You zhou 東卑曰幽州	[The territory] in the **northeast** is called You province
8. Ji 冀 (according to Ban Gu,You and Bing are derived from Ji)	*He nei* yue Ji zhou 河內曰冀州	[The territory] inside *the He* [*river*] is called Ji province
9. Bing 并 (new with respect to the "Yugong" and "You shi lan")	**Zhengbei** yue Bing zhou 正北曰并州	[The territory] in the **north** is called Bing province

Italics: rivers
Bold: cardinal directions
Underlined: new provinces

Table 2a. Cardinally-oriented provinces in the "Youshi lan".

North

[2. Ji 冀 (NW)]*	9. You 幽 (N)	(NE)
8. Yong 雍 (W) *Taiyi* position	(C)	**4. Qing 青 (E)** *Jiugong* position
(SW)	**7. Jing 荆 (S)** *Taiyi* position	**6. Yang 揚 (SE)** *Taiyi* position

South

Table 4a. Cardinally-oriented provinces in the "Zhifang shi".

North

[8. Ji 冀 (NW)]*	9. Bing 并(N)	7. You 幽 (NE)
6. Yong 雍(W) *Taiyi* position	(C)	**4. Qing 青(E)** *Jiugong* position
(SW)	**2. Jing 荆(S)** *Taiyi* position	**1. Yang 揚(SE)** *Taiyi* position

South

* Cardinally-oriented position of this province is reconstructed from the *Taiyi* arrangement of the "Yugong" provinces, see Table 1a.
Bold: same positions of provinces in the "Youshi lan" and the "Zhifang shi".
Underlined: shifted and new provinces in the "Zhifang shi", if compared to the "Youshi lan".

respectively).[46] Four of these provinces have the same cardinally-oriented positions in both accounts: Qing 青 to the east, Yang 揚 to the southeast, Jing 荆 to the south and Yong 雍 to the west. The fifth cardinally-oriented province found in both lists, but new with respect to the "Yugong" (You 幽), is located in the north in the "Youshi lan" and in the northeast in the "Zhifang shi."

Cardinally-oriented locations of provinces are applied consistently in the "Dixing xun" chapter of the *Huainanzi*. Here locations are given exclusively with respect to the eight cardinal directions and the center (see Table 5). However, the names of the provinces in this text have little in common with those found in the "Yugong" group of texts. Chinese scholars Gu Jiegang and Tong Shuye tried to find a compromise between the "Yugong" group and the "Dixing xun" sets of names by distinguishing the so-called small Nine Provinces (*xiao jiuzhou*), large Nine Continents (*da jiuzhou*) and middle Nine Continents (*zhong jiuzhou*) theories.[47] This allowed them to make the two radically different sets of names compatible by referring them to different hierarchical levels of territorial division, the "Dixing xun" set being of a division of a larger scale than those of the first group. Their argument has, however, certain inconsistencies, as showed by John S. Major who, nevertheless, does not completely exclude the hypothesis.[48] No satisfactory explanation of the radical difference between the sets of provinces has been found so far. Rather than looking for compromises, Major is more interested in the formal differences between the Nine Provinces in the "Dixing xun" and in the "Yugong" group, specifically, names and locations. His attention is, however, focused on the former text.[49]

Developing the formal approach outlined by Major, I have explored the differences in names, types of locations, and the structure of location formulas between the texts of the "Yugong" group. This allows one to trace interrelationships between the sets of provinces, including that of

[46] The "Shidi" "provinces" are cardinally-oriented with respect to rivers, with the exception of the two last "provinces"—new with respect to the "Yugong"—that are referred to as principalities/kingdoms.

[47] Gu Jiegang, Tong Shuye, "Handai yiqian Zhongguoren."

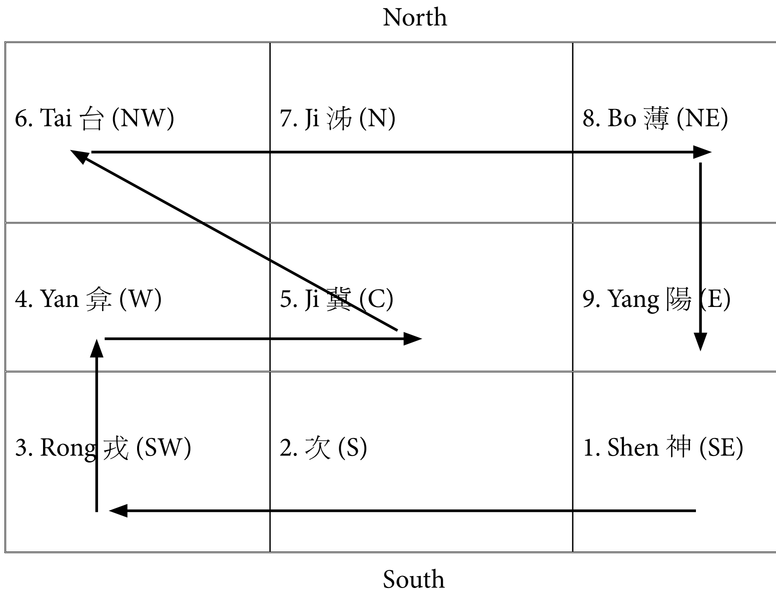
[48] Major, "The five phases," pp. 133–66, esp. pp. 161–62.

[49] A survey of the "Yugong" group of descriptions of the Nine Provinces was made by Gu Jiegang just prior to his study mentioned above, see Gu Jiegang, "Zhou yu yue de yanbian," pp. 11–29; cf. the summary of this study by Wang Yong, *Zhongguo dilixue shi* (1938; repr. Shanghai, 1998), pp. 11–16, esp. pp. 12–13. However, comparison of these descriptions occupies a rather modest place in his study and is mostly limited to differences in the names of provinces.

Table 5. Account of the Nine Provinces in the "Dixing xun" (*Huainanzi*).

Given location	Cardinal direction
1. 東南神州曰農土 **Dongnan** Shen zhou yue Nong tu	**southeast**
2. 正南次州曰沃土 **Zhengnan** Ci zhou yue Wu tu	**south**
3. 西南戎州曰滔土 **Xinan** Rong zhou yue Dao tu	**southwest**
4. 正西弇州曰并土 **Zhengxi** Yan zhou yue Bing tu	**west**
5. 正中冀州曰中土 **Zhengzhong** Ji zhou yue Zhong tu	**CENTER**
6. 西北台州曰肥土 **Xibei** Tai zhou yue Fei tu	**northwest**
7. 正北泲州曰成土 **Zhengbei** Ji zhou yue Cheng tu	**north**
8. 東北薄州曰隱土 **Dongbei** Bo zhou yue Yin tu	**northeast**
9. 正東陽州曰申土 **Zhengdong** Yang zhou yue Shen tu	**east**

Bold: cardinal directions



the "Dixing xun," that are of some help for their relative and absolute dating.[50] The derived relationships are summed up in Tables 6 and 7. Here I shall discuss another formal characteristic of the accounts: the sequence of provinces.

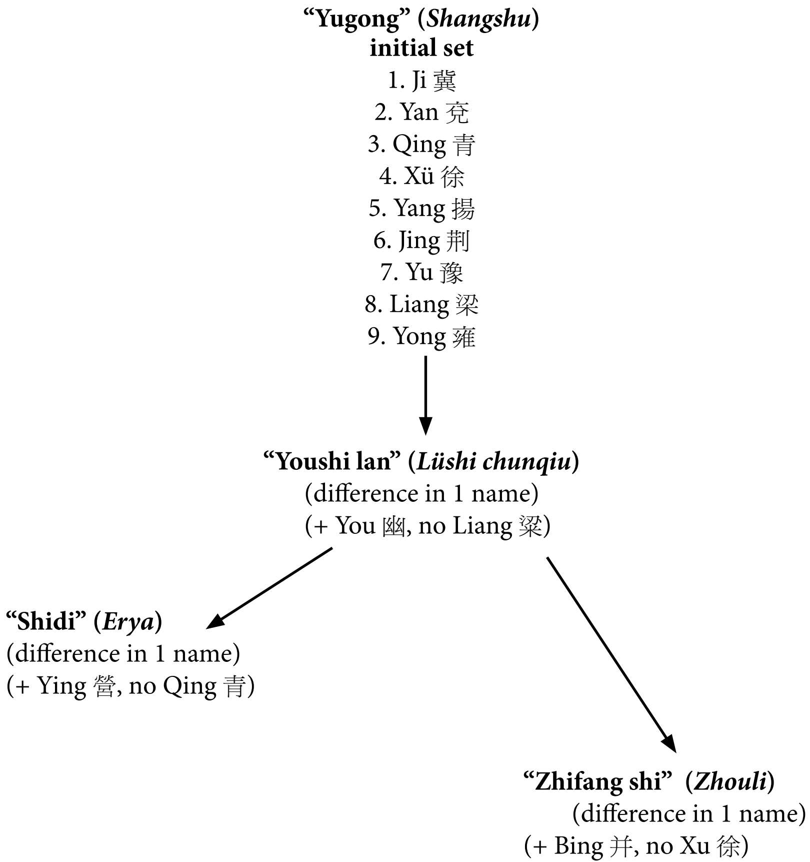
In the "Dixing xun," and also in the "Wangzhi" 王制 ("Royal regulations") chapter of the *Liji*, composed about the same time, there is another attribute of the 3 × 3 square grid, specifically, the 1000 *li* length of the sides of all squares, which means the Nine Provinces are 3000 × 3000 *li*. Whether the provinces listed in the "Dixing xun" refer to the small Nine Provinces, the large nine continents, or the middle nine continents, there is no doubt that the Nine Provinces referred to in the "Wangzhi" belong to the "Yugong" group. Although their names are not mentioned, since the "Wangzhi" describes Zhou royal regulations, its Nine Provinces are most likely identical with the set of the "Zhifang shi" representing the ideal territorial division of the Western Zhou dynasty.

Finally, the cardinally-oriented positions of each province in the "Yugong" are enumerated in the *Wuxing dayi* 五行大義 (*Compendium of the five agents*) by Xiao Ji 蕭吉 written in the early 6th century AD).[51] Two variants of their disposition are given in this text: according to the nine celestial palaces (*jiugong* 九宮) and the Great One (Taiyi 太一). The only difference between them is a shift in 45° within the 3 × 3 grid (see Table 1a, that graphically represents the positions given in the *Wuxing dayi*). According to the Taiyi arrangement, three provinces (Yang, Jing and Yong) have the same cardinally-oriented positions as those given in the "Youshi lan" and the "Zhifang shi" (southeast, south, and west, respectively), but Qing is placed in the northeast and not in the east. In the *jiugong* arrangement, Qing province is located in the east, as in the "Youshi lan" and the "Zhifang shi", but the positions of three other provinces are shifted 45°, Yang to the south, Jing to the southeast, and Yong to the northwest. The shifts demonstrate a certain liberty in the attribution of conventional positions to a province—a province located

[50] Vera Dorofeeva-Lichtmann, "Formation and evolution of the conception of the Nine Provinces (*Jiu zhou*): a critical evaluation of the early sources," in *Studies on ancient Chinese scientific and technical texts. Proceedings of the 3rd international symposium on ancient Chinese books and records of science and technology*, Tübingen, 31.03–04.04.2003), ed. Gao Xuan, Hans-Ulrich Vogel and Christine Moll-Murata (Tübingen, 2006), pp. 1–23.

[51] Kalinowski, trans., *Cosmologie et divination dans la Chine ancienne: Le Compendium des cinq agents (Wuxing dayi, VIe siècle)* (Paris, 1991), pp. 192 and 196.

Table 6. Names of the "provinces" in the texts of the "Yugong" group.



In total, there are **12 names of provinces** (associated with the 12 provinces established by Shun).

Table 7. Evolution of given locations of the Nine Provinces.

Source	**Precise dating** (if available)	**Type of locations given for the provinces**
"Yugong"		Landmarks as border-markers (rivers and sea, mountains)
"Youshi lan"	*Lüshi chunqiu* compiled by 239 BC	Orientation to the cardinal directions (type *nanfang* 南方) Rivers as border-markers Correspondence province = principality
"Shidi"		Rivers as objects of reference for orientation to the cardinal directions (orientation to the cardinal directions type *nanfang* 南方 present in other part of the text) Rivers as border-markers Principalities as locations of provinces
"Zhifang shi"		Orientation to the cardinal directions (type *zhengnan* 正南) Yellow River as the object of reference for cardinal orientation
"Dixing xun"	*Huainanzi* compiled by 139 BC	Orientation to the cardinal directions (type *zhengnan* 正南)

in the eastern area can be ascribed eastern, northeastern, or northwestern positions, even if this deviates slightly from its real location. This is a good example of the distortion of real topography in favor of cosmological harmony.

Henderson and Major regard the gradual emergence of schematic attributes of the Nine Provinces as a development from "naturalistic" (interpreted as realistic) description toward "geometrical" (Henderson) or "schematic cosmography" (Major). Both follow the interpretation of the Nine Provinces in the "Yugong" by Joseph Needham.[52] This point

[52] Joseph Needham and Wang Ling, *Science and civilization in China*, vol. III, *Mathematics and the sciences of the heavens and the earth* (Cambridge, 1959), pp. 500–03;

of view is also supported in the survey of ancient Chinese conceptions of space by Lewis.[53] I argue that the schematic attributes are already present in this description of the Nine Provinces, but are given in an implicit and more sophisticated way, whereas the straightforward references to schematic representation (cardinal directions, the length of the grid's square) are characteristic of later terrestrial descriptions composed under the impact of imperial ideology, which required they be explicit and direct in this respect.[54]

Let us now compare the representations of the Nine Provinces of the "Yugong" as a 3 × 3 grid, as given in the *Wuxing dayi*, with their representations as maps in the Song.[55] The earliest surviving maps of the Nine Provinces of the "Yugong" meticulously show landmarks mentioned in the text and sometimes also the itineraries by land (for good examples, see Maps 1 and 2). Beginning from this time, such maps become a serial production.[56] Map 1 is an especially interesting illustration of the borders delineating the provinces and of the conceptual domination implicit in the use of cosmograms. This map is, in effect, a compromise between a regular scheme and a topographical map, as one can see from its comparison with Map 3 showing locations of the provinces on a modern Western physical map of China. Due to

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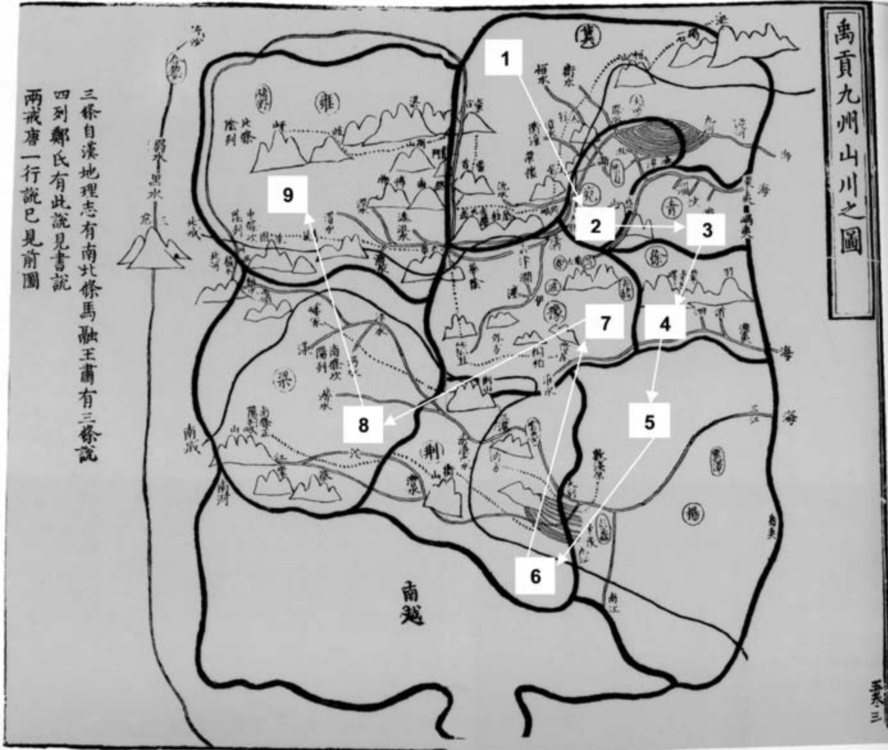
Henderson, *Development and decline of Chinese cosmology*, p. 66, "Chinese cosmographical thought," p. 207; Major, "Chinese cosmography," p. 143.

[53] Lewis, *Construction of space*, p. 249.

[54] Dorofeeva-Lichtmann, "Conception of terrestrial organization," pp. 60–63; see also Dorofeeva-Lichtmann, "Mapping a 'spiritual' landscape," pp. 43–46.

[55] The earliest surviving maps of landmarks enumerated in the "Yugong" date from the Southern Song dynasty (1127–1279). The maps are either engraved on stone steles or block-printed. No earlier maps related to the "Yugong" have been found so far. The so-called references to such maps in ancient texts, e.g., the *Yugong tu* 禹貢圖 (*Hou Hanshu* [Beijing, 1973], p. 2465), cannot be regarded as absolute proof of their existence, due to the ambiguity of the character *tu* that, apart from "map," stands for a wide range of "graphic representations"—schemes, drawings, pictures, tables, spatial textual layouts—in sum, "toutes les représentations graphiques quelles qu'elles soient"; see Edouard Chavannes, "Les deux plus anciens spécimens de la cartographie chinoise," *Bulletin de l'Ecole Française d'Extrême Orient* 3 (1903), p. 236. In other words, references of this kind do not allow one to determine what specific type of "graphic representation" is designated. For a recent comprehensive survey of *tu*-related studies, see Francesca Bray, "Introduction: the powers of *tu*," in *Graphics and text*, pp. 1–78.

[56] Although these maps are done about one and a half millennia later than the "Yugong," they are still the product of a continuous Chinese cartographic tradition. The latter differs markedly from modern Western cartography not only in the code of representation, but also in its goals and functions. I make some general observations on this issue, supplied with references to studies in the history of Chinese cartography, in Dorofeeva-Lichtmann, "Mapping a 'spiritual' landscape," pp. 38–43. For comparison, see a representation of the Nine Provinces as a modern Western physical map (Map 3).

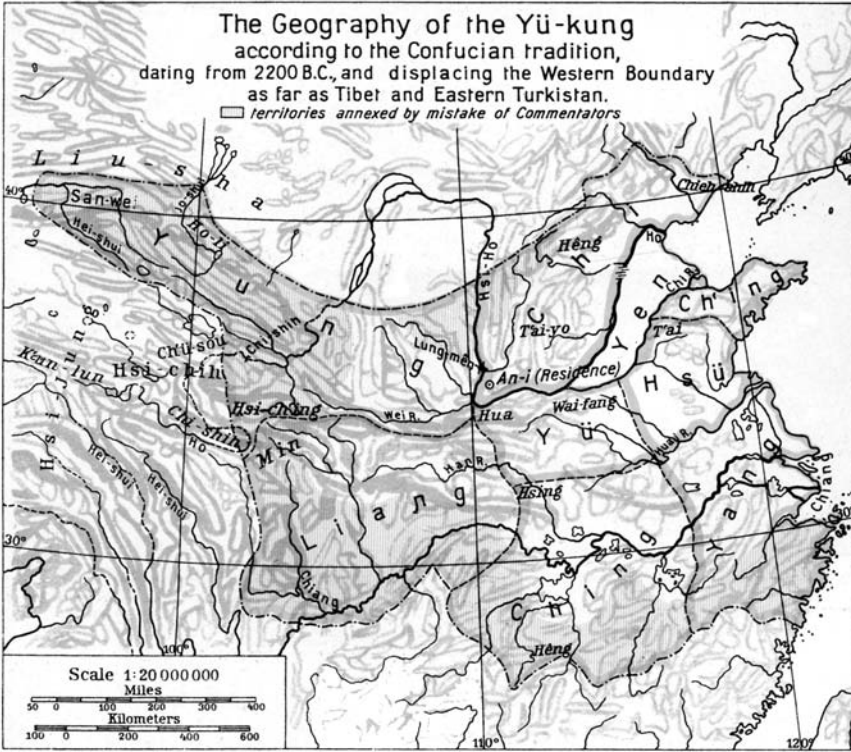


Map 1. *Yugong jiuzhou shanchuan zhi tu* 禹貢九州山川之圖 (Map of the Nine Provinces, the [nine itineraries marked by] mountains and the [nine] river [itineraries] of the "Tribute of Yu"); in *Diwang jingshi tupu* 帝王經世圖譜, 16 vols, by Tang Zhongyou 唐仲友 (1136–1188); reproduced from Yan Ping et al., *China in ancient and modern maps* (London, 1998), p. 84.

Note:
The itineraries marked by mountains are shown in the map by dotted lines.
The numbers of the provinces (added by V. D.-L.) correspond to their sequence in the text:
1—Ji 冀; 2—Yan 兗; 3—Qing 青; 4—Xu 徐; 5—Yang 揚; 6—Jing 荊; 7—Yu 豫; 8—Liang 梁; 9—Yong 雍.

Map 2. *Yugong suozai suishan junchuan zhi tu* 禹貢所載隨山濬川之圖 (Map of [Yu's] moving along the mountains [as orientation marks in order to blaze paths through highlands] and deepening rivers, as registered in the "Tribute of Yu"); in *Shu ji zhuan* 書集傳, 6 vols, by Cai Shen 蔡沈 (1167–1230), completed in 1209; reproduced from Yan Ping et al., *China in ancient and modern maps* (London, 1998), p. 65.

Note:
The itineraries marked by mountains are shown in the map by thin lines; the names of provinces (same as in Map 1) are given in dark circles.



Map 3. Representation of the Nine Provinces of the “Yu gong” as a modern Western map; Albert Herrmann, *Historical and commercial atlas of China* (repr. of Harvard-Yenching Institute, Monograph Series, Volume 1; Taipei, 1970), p. 10.

its pronounced schematic attributes, Map 1 is of considerable help for understanding the two schematic representations of the Nine Provinces of the "Yugong" given in the *Wuxing dayi*. In particular, one can see from this map that the major structural problem for "squeezing" the Nine Provinces as they are described in the "Yugong" into the rigid form of the 3 × 3 grid is that there are too many provinces in the east and too few in the west. In order to bring the provinces into conformity with the grid framework, some shifts in their topographical locations are necessary. Their arrangement according to the nine celestial palaces solves this problem by keeping to more or less real topographical locations of the provinces in the north and accepting distortions and shifts in the south. The arrangement according to the Great One does the exact opposite.

Both the purely schematic representations of the Nine Provinces and their representation as topographical maps show their relative disposition in space and how their arrangement constitutes the general framework of the civilized world. This in turn highlights the sequence of their foundation by Yu (see the ordinal numbers of the provinces in Table 1a). Yet this aspect is more often than not overlooked in the studies of the Nine Provinces in the "Yugong." Rather, either their topographical and historical background is discussed (Gu Jiegang), or it is evaluated with respect to so-called "geometrical" or "schematic cosmography" (studies by Henderson and Major, respectively). Studies of the latter variety have focused on the structural attributes of the Nine Provinces, exploring the formation of a survey scheme mapping the inhabited world in a regular and hierarchical way (in the shape of a 3 × 3 square grid). In other words, these studies regard the Nine Provinces as a static structure. Lewis having included the discussion of the Nine Provinces in the chapter entitled "Grids and magic squares," notes, however, that the "Yugong" is structured according to the movements of Yu and that this text provides a world model structured around the hierarchical movement of goods that converged on the ruler, but does not develop this point.[57] I propose to systematically explore the dynamic—process-oriented—aspects of the Nine Provinces.[58]

[57] Lewis, *Construction of space*, pp. 248–58.

[58] My analysis of the process-oriented aspects in the "Yugong" shows that, formally, tribute circulation is a secondary structural characteristic of the Nine Provinces according to this text.

The Nine Provinces in the "Yugong"

In order to have a better idea of how this aspect is expressed in the "Yugong," a brief survey of its nonary section is necessary. The description of each province in the "Yugong" is done according to the following plan:

1. location of a province (see Table 1);
2. description of the landscape "formatting" within the province;
3. list of characteristics of the province;
4. transportation of tribute from the province.

Landscape "formatting" comprises references to various features of the landscape (mountains, rivers, lakes, plains, marshes) that Yu passed through and regulated on his way. These features of the landscape provide additional indications for locating the provinces. Together with the features of the landscape mentioned in the other passages of the nonary part of the "Yugong," these are the main subjects of maps related to the "Yugong." The characteristics of the provinces give an impression of a filled out form. This form is, however, not quite settled. In particular, the order of characteristics varies, and some characteristics occur only for a few provinces.[59] The characteristics provided for six provinces and more can be considered major attributes of the description of a province. These are soil 土, fields 田, revenue 賦, general tribute 貢 and tribute-in-baskets 篚. Two of these characteristics—fields and revenue—are especially noteworthy for the purely formal way in which they are defined. They play the role of criteria which enable one to evaluate and compare the provinces according to a nonary scale. The scale consists of three main classes: upper 上, middle 中 and lower 下, each divided into three sub-classes, e.g., the superior class is *shangshang* 上上 (upper-upper class), one degree lower is *shangzhong* 上中 (middle-upper class), etc.[60] In this respect fields and revenue differ markedly from other characteristics of a more descriptive kind, e.g., "its soil is white and mouldy" 厥土惟白壤 (Ji 冀 province). The use of the nonary

[59] The imperfections in the form of the description are to a certain extent outweighed by the rhymes of the "Yugong." It may be that some shifts in the sequence of characteristics were made for their sake.

[60] There is no correlation between the evaluation of the provinces from the point of view of their "fields" and "revenue."

scale is a purely schematic attribute that provides an argument in favor of the implicitly schematic character of the representation of the Nine Provinces in the "Yugong." Description of each province is concluded by definitions of the routes of tribute transport, done mostly by river. In all cases the direction is from far-away regions toward more central ones. In sum, descriptions of the provinces are rather uniform, but the uniformity is not absolute.[61]

The orderly structure of the description corresponds perfectly to its content in that all described actions are part of Yu's establishment of order in terrestrial space. The provinces are regulated one by one and are thus assembled step-by-step into an orderly nonary set. Let us take a closer look at the ordering sequence of the provinces. The nature of this sequence can be clearly seen from the schematic representations of the Nine Provinces in the "Yugong" as shown in Table 1a. The regulation of the provinces begins in the north (according to the Jiugong arrangement) or in the northwest (according to the Taiyi arrangement) and goes clockwise with a turn to the center (the central province Yu 豫) at the seventh step. It may therefore be defined as a tour of the civilized world aimed at its regulation. If we now look at the sequence of provinces in maps of the "Yugong," in particular in Map 1, especially convenient for this purpose because of the borders drawn between the provinces, another important aspect of this tour appears. This map shows that Yu first regulated those provinces that are closest to the sea in the east. Pursuing his work of regulation, he first descended along the sea from the north to the south, then turned to the center, and finally put in order the two western provinces, the farthest from the sea (this order is accentuated by arrows I have added to the map). This order seems to be determined by the need to drain an excess of water in the basins of the Yellow and Yangzi rivers, which requires first clearing out the

[61] By comparison, the form of description of the provinces is absolutely perfect in the "Zhifang shi." The order of characteristics never changes, the phrases containing the same characteristics have the same grammatical structure and, in the majority of cases, even the same number of characters. The following characteristics of each province are provided: (1) key mountain 山鎮, (2) marshes and big marshes 澤藪, (3) rivers 川, (4) elements of the dam-based irrigation system 浸, (5) profit 利, analogous to tribute 貢 in the "Yugong," (6) demographic situation 民 (proportion of men/women), (7) animal husbandry 畜 and (8) grains 穀.

The accounts of the Nine Provinces in the "Youshi lan," "Shidi" and "Dixing xun" do not contain descriptions. In these texts the characteristics of terrestrial space are arranged not with respect to the provinces, but as separate lists, e.g., mountains and rivers.

territories close to the sea in the east and then moving west along the river courses. Therefore, Yu's regulation of the Nine Provinces, according to the "Yugong," combines the characteristics of the tour and draining the waters of the flood.

None of the other accounts of the Nine Provinces of the "Yugong" group is directly associated with Yu and no traditional maps of any of them have been discovered so far. Nor has their complete arrangement within the 3 × 3 grid (like the nine palaces or the Great One) been reported, although, as mentioned above, five of the "Youshi lan" provinces and six of the "Zhifang shi" provinces refer to the cardinally-oriented squares of the grid (see Tables 2a and 4a, respectively). This shows their marginal role with respect to the "Yugong" set of the Nine Provinces. But since they are all derived from it, the sequence of provinces in these sets provides some basis for comparison with that of the "Yugong" and enables us to better understand the meaning of the latter. However, only some of the provinces of the "Youshi lan" and "Zhifang shi" and none of the "Shidi" being provided with explicitly cardinally-oriented locations, they do not allow us to delineate the sequences with respect to cardinally-oriented locations. It is possible to try at least to distribute the provinces of the "Youshi lan" and the "Zhifang shi" among the empty squares of the 3 × 3 grid, respecting as much as possible their relative locations and trying to find more substantial arguments in their favor, but the resultant arrangements would still be reconstructions that cannot be used for the present study.

Yet the attempt to fill out the empty squares enables us to make an interesting observation. None of the accounts of the provinces apart from the "Yugong" contains the western province Liang 梁. This makes these accounts more unbalanced in the east-west distribution of provinces than the "Yugong" set that already has too many provinces in the east and too few in the west. These accounts are, therefore, more difficult to be arranged harmoniously within the 3 × 3 grid, and may be at least an important reason for the domination of the "Yugong" account. The major difficulty comes from the fact that Yu province is placed in the center both in the *jiugong* and the Taiyi arrangements of the "Yugong" provinces and is associated with the Zhou kingdom in the "Youshi lan." Yu's territory comprises the region around the Zhou capital Chengzhou/Luoyi 成周/洛邑, which became the major capital after the loss of the Zhou domain in the west around the Wei river in 771 BC and is firmly associated with the center in all extant sources up to the Former Han in which the foundation and location of the Zhou capital

is discussed.[62] It is, therefore, difficult to shift this province elsewhere to give more room for the extra provinces in the east without providing substantial grounds. In sum, the only possibility in this case is to compare the sequences of provinces in the "Youshi lan," "Shidi" and "Zhifang shi" sets with that of the "Yugong."[63]

The set of the "Youshi lan" (see Table 2), which is the most similar to the "Yugong" with respect to the names of the provinces (it differs in one name only), is also quite similar, though not completely identical, as regards sequence. The central province Yu 豫 is shifted here to the first place, and the new province You 幽 (located, according to this text, in the north) is added at the end of the list. This sequence is particularly interesting for its accentuation of the center, especially evident since Yu is associated here with Zhou. The emphasis on the center reflects the imperial ambitions of the *Lüshi chunqiu*, but also means that this sequence is not influenced by the idea of draining.

In the "Shidi" (see Table 3), the northern province Ji recovers the initial place it occupied in the "Yugong." The two provinces whose names differ from the "Yugong" set are placed at the end. Apart from this, the sequence of provinces in the "Shidi" account is considerably different and gives the impression the provinces were tossed up in the air: after Yu province comes Yong, the last in the "Yugong" and the eighth in the "Youshi lan," then Yang and Jing, both of which in the "Yugong" and the "Youshi lan" precede Yong, and then Yan 兗 and Xu 徐 that in the "Yugong" precede Yang and Jing. The fact that the central province Yu 豫 is here second on the list and first in the "Youshi lan" shows clearly

[62] The foundation of Chengzhou/Luoyi on the northern bank of the Luo 洛 river (precise location not yet determined) as the new (or restored) Center is focused on in the "Shao gao" (召誥 "Proclamation of Shao [gong]") and "Luo gao" (洛誥 "Proclamation in Luo") chapters of the *Shangshu*, see Karlgren, "The Book of documents," pp. 47–57. The emphasis here is laid on choosing the right place by means of divination. Both chapters are traditionally attributed to the reign of King Cheng 成王 (1042/35–1006 BC), but date from a considerably later time; see Kai Vogelsang, "Inscriptions and proclamations: on the authenticity of the 'gao' chapters in the *Book of documents*," *Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities* 74 (2002), 138–209. A simplified version of the foundation of Chengzhou/Luoyi is provided in the "Zhou benji" chapter of the *Shiji*, see *Shiji* (Beijing, 1972), p. 133; Nienhauser, *The Grand Scribe's Records*, vol. I, pp. 65–66 (§ 133)). Chengzhou/Luoyi is defined here as the "center of Underheaven" 天下之中. In the *Guoyu*, in the opening section of the "Zhengyu" 鄭語 chapter (not earlier than 314 BC), an account of Western Zhou principalities (*Guoyu* 16.1a3–11) which surround Chengzhou/Luoyi as the center is provided.

[63] The only province whose location can be reliably reconstructed in the two sets is Ji. The northwestern position it has in the Taiyi arrangement fits them both well.

that the "Shidi" account is posterior. In sum, this sequence looks a bit chaotic and certainly not related to draining.

The sequence of provinces in the "Zhifang shi" (see Table 4) representing the Western Zhou is even more different, but its general direction is quite clear: it starts from the southeastern and southern positions and ends in the north, which is quite unexpected in a representation of the Zhou administrative system. The only common feature with the preceding sets is that the names of provinces which differ from the "Yugong" set are at the end of the list. But here the two new provinces are both located north of the old northern province of Ji, from whose territory they have been carved.

In sum, none of the sequences is completely independent from that of the "Yugong," as can be seen from the fact the new provinces are placed at the end of the lists. The necessity of respecting this rule inevitably poses problems in working out the logic of the sequence of the provinces. By comparison, the sequence of provinces in the "Dixing xun," radically different in its names from the "Yugong" group, is remarkably regular. It also makes a smooth tour, starting in the south and moving counter-clockwise, that is, just the opposite of the "Yugong" sequence. It matches the perfect regularity of its structure (see Table 5). This observation concerning the sequences of provinces correlates with the conclusions derived from the analysis of their names, locations, and location formulas.[64]

The comparison of sequences of provinces shows that the tour that is derived from the "Yugong" is neither trivial nor accidental. It is a harmonious process-oriented scheme for ordering the world and assembling it step-by-step into a regular structure following the requirements of draining the excess waters.

The systems of itineraries in the "Yugong"

In the "Yugong" the nine land and nine river itineraries constitute a single whole with the description of the Nine Provinces both from the point of view of their nonary structure and of their content, which have

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[64] It is noteworthy that although the names of provinces in the "Dixing xun" and "Zhifang shi" are completely different, "Zhifang shi" is close to the "Dixing xun" in the high number of its cardinally-oriented locations, both start from the southeast and the south, and in both sets the four cardinal points are designated by means of the character *zheng* 正 "right, true, standard," e.g., *zhengnan* 正南, "true south."

many landscape features in common. The itineraries, as one can see from their representation on maps, cover the same area as the Nine Provinces. An itinerary by land is marked by two to four mountains, as a route from mountain to mountain. The nine land itineraries are marked by 27 mountains. All the itineraries are delineated from west to east, and the general sequence of the itineraries is from north to south. Among a total of nine itineraries, six marked by 20 mountains are situated in the Yellow river basin, while only three itineraries marked by seven mountains are in the Yangzi basin, a reflection of the marginal status of the Yangzi basin in the "Yugong." The itineraries of the Yellow river and the Yangzi basins are also demarcated on the formal level; each of these two groups of itineraries is introduced by the character "delineate" (*dao* 導), implying that it was Yu who founded them.[65]

The description of the river itineraries differs in some respects from that of the itineraries by land. Firstly, each river itinerary is introduced by the character *dao*, so that the itineraries are represented as a set of equal and separate constituent elements, not distributed in sub-groups. Secondly, the river itineraries are delineated in a more detailed way. Apart from their initial and final points, quite a number of details are provided along the way: confluences with other rivers or changing of the river's name; mountains and other geographical objects passed by; and, in many cases and on different parts of an itinerary, its direction with respect to the four cardinal directions. In the majority of cases the initial point of a river itinerary, like those of land itineraries, is also marked by a mountain, but the final point is marked by the place the river itinerary "enters" (*ru yu* 入于): five itineraries pour into the sea (which means the Eastern Sea), two into the Yellow river, one into the Southern Sea, and one into the Floating Sands in the west. In the major-

[65] *Shangshu*, 6.13a2–14a4, Karlgren, *The Book of documents*, pp. 16–17 (§§ 20–21). I have briefly discussed the nine land itineraries in relation to the itineraries of the *Shanhai jing*: see Dorofeeva-Lichtmann, "Conception of terrestrial organization," pp. 77–78 (Fig. 10 on p. 100 shows a schematic representation of the itineraries), also some remarks on it in Vera Dorofeeva-Lichtmann, "Text as a device for mapping a sacred space: a case of the *Wuzang shanjing* (Five treasuries: the itineraries of mountains)," in *Creating and representing sacred spaces*, eds Michael Dickhardt and Vera Dorofeeva-Lichtmann, *Göttinger Beiträge zur Asienforschung* 2–3 (2003), pp. 153–54. By comparison, the *Shanhai jing* provides a much more elaborate system of itineraries: 26 itineraries include a total of 447 mountains; the number of mountains in an itinerary varies from five to 48. K.E. Brashier explored the nine land itineraries in the context of interaction with mountain spirits; see Brashier, "The spirit lord of Baishi Mountain: feeding the deities or heeding the *yinyang*?" *Early China* 26–27 (2001–02), pp. 177–78.

ity of cases the river itineraries go east, which is the natural direction of most rivers in China. It is, however, less trivial that the majority of itineraries by land also go east, and are, therefore, also determined by the direction of the major river flows.[66]

The itineraries, apart from covering the same territory as the Nine Provinces and having a nonary structure, are also process-oriented systems whose dynamic attribute is clearly articulated, as an itinerary automatically implies moving within terrestrial space. The two nonary systems of itineraries serve, therefore, the same function as the Nine Provinces—each outlines in its own but necessarily orderly way the mapped territory—and thus consolidates the ordering effect on terrestrial space.

The new manuscript version of the Nine Provinces

The "Yugong" and its Nine Provinces are currently the focus of scholarly attention once again due to the discovery of two new sources: the *X gong xu* inscription on a bronze tureen and the *Rong Cheng shi*. The beginning of the inscription is very similar to the opening passage of the "Yugong" that precedes the description of the Nine Provinces. However, since the origins of the tureen are unknown (it was bought in an antiquarian shop), and since researchers disagree considerably in their estimation of its date, its use as a source is limited.[67] The inscription does not mention the Nine Provinces. The *Rong Cheng shi* manuscript, by contrast, contains an account of the Nine Provinces. Attributed to Yu, it lays special emphasis on waterways (slips 24–27) and is reliably dated. It is, therefore, of central interest to this study. The *Rong Cheng shi* is the largest among the so-called Shanghai Museum manuscripts on bamboo slips 上博藏簡, considered to be of Chu 楚 provenance[68] and

[66] *Shangshu*, 6.14a7–16b4; Karlgren, *The Book of documents*, pp. 16–17 (§§ 22–29).

[67] For the preliminary examination of this inscription, see articles by Li Xueqin 李學勤, Qiu Xigui 裘錫圭, Zhu Fenghan 朱鳳瀚, and Li Ling 李零 in the *Zhongguo lishi wenwu* 中國歷史文物 (2002.6); for its commented translations into English, see Sarah Allan, "Some preliminary comments on the *X Gong xu*," and Constance Cook, "Bin Gong xu and sage-king Yu: translation and commentary," both in *The X Gong xu. A report and papers from the Dartmouth workshop* (a special issue of *International Research on Bamboo and Silk Documents: Newsletter* [2003], ed. Xing Wen), pp. 16–22 and 23–28, respectively.

[68] For overviews of Chu culture, see Thomas Lawton, ed., *New perspectives on Chu culture during the Eastern Zhou period* (Washington, 1991); Cook and Major,

dated to the mid- to late- 4th century BC.[69] Since the slips were looted from a Chu tomb, precise place and date of the find are unknown. It is, however, commonly accepted that the manuscripts originate from a Chu aristocratic tomb closed shortly before the Chu court was obliged to leave the capital at Ying 郢 (Hubei area) in 278 BC.[70]

I have examined the *Rong Cheng shi* account of the Nine Provinces in more detail elsewhere.[71] Here I shall only point out the aspects of the *Rong Cheng shi* that throw new light on the transmitted versions of the Nine Provinces and the river itineraries delineated in the "Yugong."

First of all, the *Rong Cheng shi* version of the Nine Provinces is markedly different from all the transmitted versions: in the structure of its description, in the type of locations given, and most particularly in the names of provinces. Yet the majority of toponyms mentioned in relation to these provinces are rivers located in the basins of the Yellow and Yangzi rivers. Moreover, what makes the *Rong Cheng shi* version of central importance is that the Nine Provinces described here are attributed to Yu. Therefore, we are dealing with a version of Yu's prov-

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Defining Chu, reviewed by Alain Thote, "Review: Cook, Constance A., and John S. Major, eds, *Defining Chu: image and reality in ancient China,*" *Early China* 26–27 (2001–02), 257–84.

[69] The *Rong Cheng shi* manuscript is published in the second volume (2002) of *Shanghai bowuguan cang Zhanguo Chu zhushu*, ed. Ma Chengyuan. Large-scale colored photographs of numbered slips of the *Rong Cheng shi* are provided on pp. 91–146, a transcription and commentary by Li Ling on pp. 247–93. Li Ling's sequence of slips is reproduced and extensively commented on by Qiu Dexiu, *Shangbo Chujian Rong Cheng shi zhuyi kaozheng* (Taibei, 2003). Different transcriptions of some characters and also different sequences of some slips are proposed by other Chinese scholars, for instance, in a series of papers published in the framework of the "Bamboo and silk (Jianbo)" network http://www.jianbo.org/index0.html. For a rearranged sequence of slips that seems to be gaining scholarly support, see Chen Jian 陳劍 (http://www.jianbo.org/Wssf/2003/chenjian02.htm), reproduced in Chen Jian, "Shangbojian 'Rong Cheng shi' de zhujian pinhe yu bianlian wenti xiaoyi," in *Shangbo guan cang Zhanguo Chu zhushu yanjiu xubian*, eds Zhu Yuanqing and Liao Mingchun (Shanghai, 2004), pp. 327–34. For a brief survey of the proposed sequences of the *Rong Cheng shi* slips, see Yuri Pines, "Disputers of abdication: Zhanguo egalitarianism and the sovereign's power," *T'oung Pao* 91.4–5 (2005), p. 263, n. 50. The manuscripts were purchased by the Shanghai museum in 1994 in Hong Kong, probably shortly after they came to light.

[70] Ying 郢 was the Chu capital beginning ca. 690 BC, when it was occupied by Qin 秦. Its precise location is unknown. Two possible locations are proposed in relevant literature: the Jinancheng and the Chu Huangcheng; see Barry B. Blakely, "The geography of Chu," in *Defining Chu*, pp. 10–13.

[71] Paper presented at the 17th Conference of the Warring States Project (September 2003, Leiden, abstract: http://www.umass.edu/wsp/conferences/wswg/17/lichtmann.html).

inces parallel to that featured in the officially recognized and carefully transmitted "Yugong."

Table 8 provides a structured translation of this passage.[72] The description consists of six formulaic passages, with the beginning of each passage marked by the name of the mythical emperor Yu. The first passage is slightly different from the following five passages. Three of these passages are concerned with pairs of provinces (§§ 1, 2 and 4) and three with single provinces (§§ 3, 5 and 6), giving a total of nine. Such coupling of provinces is never found in the transmitted versions, where each province is treated separately. The passages from the second through the sixth have the following three-fold structure: In the first phrase the water landmarks "linked up" 通 by Yu are enumerated.[73] Pairs of water landmarks are given in §§ 2, 3, 4 and 6, and four of them are found in § 5. The second phrase indicates where their waters were directed afterwards: in §§ 2, 3 and 4 into the sea, and in §§ 5 and 6 into the Yellow river. Finally, the third phrase provides the names of the provinces that resulted from this procedure.

The first passage, like all the others, begins with word Yu. It is also similar to all the others in its last (fourth) phrase, where the names of provinces that resulted from Yu's regulating actions are given, but the preceding phrases are different. The first phrase is a sort of introduction to the entire description ("Yu personally held the scoop and the spade-shaped tool"). The second and third phrases, in contrast to the other passages, describe two different regulating actions by Yu: "diking" 波(= 陂) and "releasing [water flow]" 決.

Only two of the names of provinces enumerated in the *Rong Cheng shi* are found in transmitted versions, and the names occur in the manuscript together: Jing 荆 and Yang 陽 (§ 4). Jing is found in all the accounts of the first group of texts, Yang in the "Dixing xun." As far as the latter is concerned, a province name similar in its graphic form and reading to 陽 (the characters differ only as regards the

[72] The translation, the first into a Western language, is mine.

[73] I am grateful to Alexei Volkov for having called my attention to the usage of *tong* 通 as a mathematical term, in particular, in the *Jiuzhang suanshu* (九章算術 "Computational procedures in nine categories") and its commentaries by Liu Hui 劉徽 (ca. 3rd c. AD), with the meaning "to connect, communicate, link up; faire communiquer," and to Karine Chemla for having provided detailed elucidation on the usage of this term in this text, see Chemla, Karine and Guo Shuchun, trans., *Le classique mathématique de la Chine ancienne et ses commentaires* (Paris, 2004), pp. 994–98. This helped me to grasp the usage of *tong* in the *Rong Cheng shi*.

Table 8. Description of the Nine Provinces in the *Rong Cheng shi*.

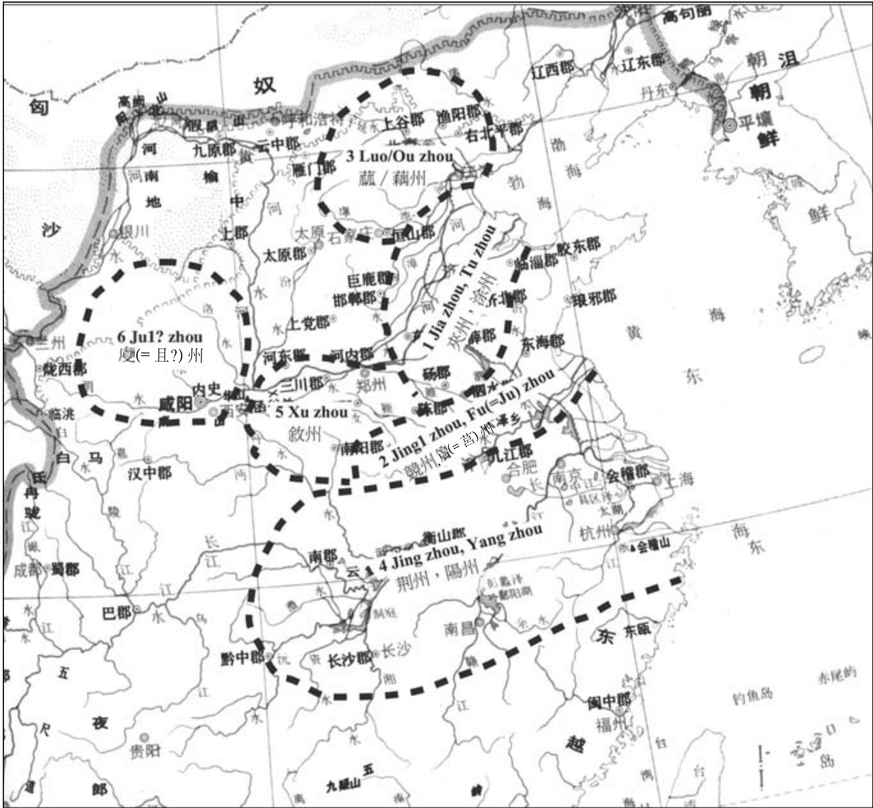
N° of §§	***Rong Cheng shi* description of the Nine Provinces (*zhou*) (represented according to its structural units)**	approximate locations
1.	禹親執枌(= 耒/ 畚) 耜; 以波(= 陂) 明者(= 都) 之澤; 決九河之阻／泄; 於是乎夾州, 涂州始可處。 Yu personally held the plough handle / bamboo or wicker scoop and the ploughshare; In order to dike the Mingdu marsh; [and] release the blockage of the Nine-fold He river; Thereupon Jia and Tu provinces first became habitable.	eastern/ northeastern area 2 *zhou*
2.	禹通淮與忻(= 沂); 東注之海; 於是乎競州, [illegible](= 莒) 州始可處也。 Yu linked up the Huai and the Yi rivers; Made them pour east into the sea; Thereupon Jing1 and Fu (=Ju) provinces first became habitable.	eastern area 2 *zhou*
3.	禹乃通蔞與易; 東注之海; 於是乎蓏／藕州始可處也。 Yu then linked up the Lou and the Yi1 rivers; Made them pour east into the sea; Thereupon Luo/Ou province first became habitable.	northern area 1 *zhou*
4.	禹乃通三江, 五湖; 東注之海; 於是乎荊州, 陽州始可處也。 Yu then linked up the Three-fold Jiang river and the Five-fold Lake; Made them pour east into the sea; Thereupon Jing and Yang provinces first became habitable.	southern area 2 *zhou*
5.	禹乃通伊, 洛, 并里(= 瀍), 干(= 澗); 東注之河; 於是於(= 乎) 敘州始可處也。 Yu then linked up the Yi2 [and] the Luo, attached [to them] the Chan [and] the Jian rivers; Made them pour east into the Yellow river; Thereupon Xu1 province first became habitable.	central area 1 *zhou*
6.	禹乃通經(= 涇) 與渭; 北注之河; 於是乎[illegible](= 且?) 州始可處也。 Yu then linked up the Jing and the Wei rivers; Made them pour east into the Yellow river; Thereupon Ju1? province first became habitable.	western area 1 *zhou*

radical) is found in the accounts of the first group—揚 in the "Yugong," the "Youshi lan" and the "Zhifang shi," and 楊 in the "Shidi." Jing and Yang provinces are defined in the *Rong Cheng shi* manuscript by the Three-fold Jiang river 三江 and Five-fold lake 五湖. The Three-fold Jiang river can be found in the "Yugong" among the landmarks of 揚 province, but the Five-fold lake is not mentioned in this text. Both the Three-fold Jiang river and the Five-fold lake refer to 揚 province in the "Zhifang shi." It seems, therefore, most likely that 陽 province of the *Rong Cheng shi* corresponds to 揚/楊 in the accounts of the first group of transmitted texts. It also seems likely that clear differentiation between these characters in transmitted versions was made in order to stress the difference between the sets of province names in the two groups of accounts. Taking into consideration the southern (Chu) provenance of the manuscript, it is noteworthy that both Jing and Yang of the *Rong Cheng shi* are southern provinces in the transmitted lists.

The provinces of the *Rong Cheng shi* are located exclusively by means of water landmarks. In the majority of cases these are rivers. Location by means of landmarks, also mostly rivers, is a characteristic of the first group of the transmitted accounts of provinces (see Tables 2–5). Here the landmarks either serve as border markers, e.g., 河濟惟兗 ([between] the He and the Ji rivers: Yan province ["Yugong"]), 河濟之閒爲兗州 (between the He and the Ji rivers there is Yan province ["Youshi lan"]), or as border markers combined with objects of reference for cardinal orientation, e.g., 河南曰豫州 ([the territory] to the south of the He (Yellow) River is called Yu province ["Shidi"; "Zhifang shi"]).

The role of landmarks in the *Rong Cheng shi* is quite different. These are the key waterways and reservoirs that are apparently found inside the territories of the provinces (like the system of blood vessels), and that have determined the shaping of these territories as a result of their regulation by Yu. The regulated landmarks, for instance a group of inter-connecting rivers, provide some guidelines within the provinces that enable one to demarcate some surrounding territory and thus approximate their location (see Map 4).

All the rivers and other water landmarks mentioned in the *Rong Cheng shi*, with the exception of one (the Lou 蔞 river), are found in descriptions of provinces following definitions of their locations in the "Yugong" and the "Zhifang shi," that is, are found inside the described provinces. In many cases, even the way these landmarks are mentioned strikingly resembles one or both of these texts (e.g., Xu 敘 province).



Map 4. Approximate locations of the Nine Provinces described in the *Rong Cheng shi* manuscript on a modern Western map.

Landmarks mentioned in the *Rong Cheng shi* in relation to the Nine Provinces allow one to approximate their real locations, and in some cases even to establish more or less plausible correspondences with the provinces of the "Yugong" group. In sum, the *Rong Cheng shi* version of the Nine Provinces has apparent similarities with the "Yugong" group, especially with the descriptions in the "Yugong" and the "Zhifang shi," but it differs markedly from both texts as regards the names of the provinces, the mode of their location and the structure of their description.

This enables us to draw the conclusion that the transmitted accounts of the Nine Provinces are, in effect, different versions of the same conception of the Nine Provinces established by Yu, and the association of these accounts in Chinese historiographical and commentarial tradition with different periods of Chinese history is a means to avoid the contradiction between the accounts. This conclusion is of special importance for the interpretation of the "Dixing xun" account. Now, after the discovery of the *Rong Cheng shi*, the differences of the "Dixing xun" account of the provinces as regards names and mode of location from the "Yugong" group cannot be regarded as a sufficient foundation for supposing that the "Dixing xun" refers to a higher level of territorial division. Indeed, the radically different *Rong Cheng shi* account of provinces apparently maps the same territory as the provinces of the "Yugong" group.

Many of the rivers occurring in the *Rong Cheng shi* (with the exception of the northern rivers Lou and Yi 1 易) are also found in the descriptions of the river routes in the "Yugong." The destination of the rivers is given in the *Rong Cheng shi* in a way quite similar to that of the "Yugong":

"Yugong": 東入于海 Goes east into the sea.
Rong Cheng shi: 東注之海 [Yu] made them pour east into the sea.

As mentioned above, the description of provinces and river itineraries in the "Yugong" share many landmarks, especially rivers. In other words, the same landmarks are engaged here in separate but closely related representations of terrestrial space: the Nine Provinces and the nine river itineraries. The *Rong Cheng shi* provides a compressed version of these two representations, as its description of provinces builds on the river itineraries.

Finally, in the *Rong Cheng shi* version of the Nine Provinces explicit emphasis is put on the sequence of their regulation. Beginning from the second passage, each begins with "Yu then" 禹乃. This means that the sequence of the regulation of the provinces is of central importance and

could in no way be altered, not only in the *Rong Cheng shi*, but also in the transmitted accounts. This sequence apparently corresponds to the order of draining lands: first the group of provinces that have access to the seacoast, then the province in the central area, and, finally, the westernmost province (see the ordinal numbers of provinces in Map 4). Since none of the provinces is explicitly linked to a cardinal point, there is no means to provide a reliable reconstruction of their distribution within the 3 × 3 grid, especially since the *Rong Cheng shi* set has the structural problem common to the accounts of the "Yugong" group: too few provinces in the west and too many in the east. Indeed, the imbalance is even more pronounced.

Let us now reconsider the "Yugong" set of provinces and their sequence. Seen in comparison with the transmitted accounts of the "Yugong" group and the *Rong Cheng shi* that has apparent affinities with it, it is the most balanced set in its choice of provinces for arrangement as a 3 × 3 grid while respecting their locations with respect to each other. It also proves to be the only one that combines a smooth tour of the provinces with the order of their draining. In sum, the "Yugong" provides an optimal algorithm for the establishment of order in terrestrial space by Yu, combining both his draining and structuring actions. Finally, the "Yugong" order of provinces, both in the *jiugong* and Taiyi arrangements, has one more interesting structural characteristic not found in any of the other descriptions: the tour of the provinces is "broken" at the seventh step (the turn to the center, Yu province, see Table 1a). This turn accentuates the southwest, which in the Chinese spatio-temporal system corresponds to the beginning of the year, and, therefore, hints at the temporal aspect of this set of provinces. These may be the reasons this particular version of the Nine Provinces came to be singled out.

The *Rong Cheng shi* manuscript highlights the fact that the transmitted accounts of the Nine Provinces are probably all different versions of Yu's Nine Provinces. This fact makes necessary their re-evaluation as regards their traditional diachronic interpretation.

Yu's regulation of terrestrial space: administration of space or spirit worship?

All the discussed differences between the *Rong Cheng shi*, the "Yugong," and the other descriptions of the Nine Provinces seem minor in com-

parison to their similarity in being purely administrative versions of Yu's actions. Indeed, "Yugong" and the *Rong Cheng shi* are completely devoid of any references or even allusions to spirits or sacrifices in relation to the emperor Yu.

By comparison, the local spirits occupy the central place in tailoring terrestrial space in such texts as the *Shanhai jing*, which also represent Yu's ordering work. The core part of the *Shanhai jing* describes itineraries by land marked by mountains, but they are more numerous (26) and include many more mountains (447) than the land itineraries in the "Yugong," and the system of the itineraries has a considerably more complex structure. I have extensively discussed this system elsewhere.[74] The major characteristic of the itineraries described in this text is that each comprises mountains that are governed by the same group of local spirits. The spirits and sacrifices to be addressed to them are specified in the summaries of the descriptions of each itinerary. This means that the system of itineraries of the *Shanhai jing* maps the deployment of sacred powers (groups of spirits) over terrestrial space, something I refer to as a spiritual landscape. Similarly to the "Yugong," the *Shanhai jing* describes a step-by-step tour by Yu aimed at creating an orderly terrestrial organization, with the difference that each step in the *Shanhai jing* is justified by sacrifices to the spirits responsible for each piece of land covered (= regulated). The *Shanhai jing* is the largest among the terrestrial descriptions that have survived from ancient China (ca. 30,000 characters).[75] Its aim is to provide a consistent, complete and detailed picture of the entire inhabited world. Yet, despite its pretension to comprehensiveness, it has never outweighed the much shorter and more concise "Yugong."

Beginning from the very outset of official imperial historiography in China, the "Yugong" was recognized as the most authoritative terrestrial description. The first step in this direction was made by Sima Qian 司馬遷 (ca. 145–ca. 87 BC), who reproduced the complete text of the "Yugong" in his description of Yu's life and labor in the "Basic annals of the Xia" 夏本紀.[76] The complete and unconditional recognition

[74] Dorofeeva-Lichtmann, "Conception of terrestrial space," "Mapping a 'spiritual' landscape," "Text as a device for mapping a sacred space."

[75] For counts of characters in the *Shanhai jing* and its parts, see Dorofeeva-Lichtmann, "Conception of terrestrial space," p. 59, n. 7.

[76] *Shiji* (Beijing, 1972), pp. 51–78; the text is reproduced with minor differences and is accompanied by an introduction by Sima Qian.

of the "Yugong" as the main reference text in representation of terrestrial space occurred when the "Yugong" was reproduced by Ban Gu (AD 32–92) in his "Treatise on terrestrial organization" 地理志.[77] This is the first treatise in which the imperial conception of terrestrial space—of "terrestrial organization" (*dili* 地理)—was formulated, as an orderly administrative territorial division established by the ruler and aimed at symbolizing world order.[78] The "Yugong" plays the role of its theoretical foundation.

The *Shanhai jing*, by contrast, was evaluated negatively in the first dynastic histories as a source of unreliable and doubtful locations.[79] The test location that served as a criterion of evaluation was the source of the Yellow river.[80] The most substantial point of difference between the "Yugong" and the *Shanhai jing* versions of Yu's deeds, although not formulated directly, are the spirits, completely absent in the former and the key element of the organization of space in the latter. This led me to the conclusion that the focus of the *Shanhai jing* on local spirits is at least one of the main reasons for its negative evaluation. But it is not as simple as it may seem at first glance, because the local spirits are not completely excluded from either imperial practice or from the officially recognized texts. On the contrary, sacrifices to mountains and rivers were the core constituent element of the so-called royal "tours of inspection" (*xunshou* 巡狩) that became an especially important ritual for rulership with the foundation of the empire, under the Qin and the

[77] *Hanshu* (Beijing, 1975), pp. 1523–38; the text is reproduced with minor differences and is accompanied by an introduction by Ban Gu.

[78] For the conception of *dili*, see Dorofeeva-Lichtmann, "I testi geografici ufficiali dalla dinastia Han alla dinastia Tang," in *Enciclopedia Italiana, Storia della Scienza*, ed. Sandro Petruccioli, vol.II, "La scienza in Cina", eds. Chemla, Karine, Francesca Bray, Fu Daiwie, Huang Yi-Long and Georges Métailié (Rome, 2001), pp. 190–97; "Geographical treatises in Chinese dynastic histories: 'no man's land' between sinology and history of science," Panel S 34 "Typological parallels in pre-modern geographical knowledge: non-geographical geographies," in *Science and cultural diversity, Proceedings of the XXIst International Congress of History of Science* (Mexico City, 8–14.07.2001), ed. Juan José Saldaña [CD-ROM, Sociedad Mexicana de Historia de la Ciencia y de la Tecnología-Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México] (Mexico, 2005), pp. 2262–76.

[79] This evaluation changed in later histories, but nevertheless the *Shanhai jing* was always considered inferior to the "Yugong". I discuss this issue and aspects of the differences between the *Shanhai jing* and the "Yugong" in my paper "Evaluation and classification of the *Shanhai jing* in Chinese official historiography," the 15th conference of the European Association of Chinese Studies, 25–29.08.2004, Heidelberg.

[80] I discuss the locations of the Yellow river source in my paper "Where is the Yellow river source? A controversial question in the early Chinese historiography," *Oriens Extremus* 45 (2005–06), 68–90.

Former Han dynasties.[81] Introduction of the royal "tours of inspection" is ascribed, according to the "Shundian" 舜典 chapter of the *Shangshu*, to Yu's predecessor, Emperor Shun 舜. First the four main types of sacrifices performed by Shun are enumerated there, among them the paired sacrifices *wang* 望 (lit. "observation from a distance, commensuration") to the mountains and rivers 望于山川 and *bian* 遍 (lit. "riding around") with respect to the multiplicity of [their] deities/spirits 遍于群神.[82] These and other rites performed by Shun during his "tour of inspection" are described in more detail further on in the text. The tour consisted in visiting the peripheral lands divided into the four cardinally-oriented sections. Each section is represented by a mountain that serves as the central place for performing sacrifices. The tour followed the clockwise sequence of the cardinal directions, with each direction visited in the appropriate season: the sacrifices were performed in the east in mid-spring, in the south in mid-summer, in the west in mid-autumn, and in the north in mid-winter. The sacrifices performed in each of the peripheral sections are the same. Having returned from the tour of the periphery to the center, Shun performed sacrifices to the ancestors.[83] The description of mountains in the *Shanhai jing* follows the same sequence, with the difference that it starts in the south, and no correspondences to the seasons are provided.

Shun's tour of inspection, that consisted in performing sacrifices to the local spirits inscribed in a cardinally-oriented spatial framework on the one hand and establishing the proper sites of landmarks and a regular administrative division of the civilized world by Yu on the other, are, in effect, typologically similar world-making practices, both aimed at ordering terrestrial space. Yet they are sharply distinguished in the *Shangshu*, and this distinction is also respected in the dynastic histories. For instance, in spite of the fact that according to the "Shundian" Shun establishes the twelve provinces,[84] his name is pointedly omitted in the

[81] Bilsky, *State religion*, vol. 2, pp. 248–50; see also vol. 1, pp. 46–48; Robert Ford Campany, *Strange writing: anomaly accounts in early medieval China* (Albany, 1996), pp. 106–16.

[82] *Shangshu*, 3.3a11; Karlgren, "The Book of documents" (here chapter "Yaodian 2"), pp. 2 and 4, § 17.

[83] *Shangshu*., 3.5b7–6a4; Karlgren, "The Book of documents" (here chap. "Yaodian 2"), pp. 2 and 4, § 19.

[84] The Nine Provinces founded by Yu, according to the *Shangshu* version, are preceded by the emperor Shun's division into 12 provinces, but no details or even names of these provinces are given (*Shangshu*, 3.8b1–3; Karlgren, "The Book of documents" (here chap. "Yaodian 2"), pp. 5–6, § 21), but the names deduced from the transmitted sets of the

reference to the twelve provinces in the opening section of the "Treatise of terrestrial organization" of the *Hanshu* 漢書 (*History of the Han*) that precedes the complete citation of the "Yugong" in this treatise. At the same time, the description of Shun's sacrifices in the *Shangshu* opens the treatise on various specific sacrifices of the *Shiji* 史記 (*Records of the historian*) and its counterpart treatise in the *Hanshu*.[85]

In sum, according to the *Shanhai jing*, Yu combines the functions that in the officially recognized textual tradition are distributed between Shun and Yu and sharply distinguished. One can clearly see this combination of functions from the summaries appended to the description of each itinerary in the *Shanhai jing* and specifying the local spirits of the itinerary and sacrifices to be performed to them. These sacrifices are quite similar to the description of Shun's sacrifices in the "Shundian," even in the way they are described, with the difference that the summaries of the *Shanhai jing* are related to Yu's activities.[86]

Yu is associated with spirits in some other texts outside the official textual tradition. In the *Mozi* 墨子 chapter "Elucidation of spirits" 明鬼 (4th-3rd centuries BC), spirits of mountains and rivers helped Yu regulate terrestrial space.[87] The support of Yu by local spirits is justified by citing a lost part of the *Shangshu*, a fact which suggests considerable editing of this text by Han scholars. According to the *Wu Yue chunqiu* 吳越春秋 (*Annals of Wu and Yue*) attributed to Zhao Ye 趙曄 (mid. 1st c. AD, but in its present form probably later),[88] Yu with his assistants made a "tour" (*xunxing* 巡行) and on his way asked 問 the spirits of landmarks about these landmarks. This makes the *Shanhai jing*, as a

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Nine Provinces are added in commentaries; see, for instance, sub-commentary by Kong Yingda 孔穎達 (574–648), *Shangshu*, 3.9a7–9b2 (in total, indeed, 12 names of provinces are found in the four transmitted sets: the "Yugong," the "Youshi lan," the "Shidi," the "Zhifang shi," see Table 6). Just one of these names (You 幽), however, occurs shortly after the reference to the 12 provinces, as the remote place of Gong Gong's 共工 exile (*Shangshu*, 3.8b7, Karlgren, "The Book of documents," pp. 5–6, § 23).

[85] *Shiji* (Beijing, 1972), pp. 1355–56; Edouard Chavannes, *Les Mémoires historiques de Se-ma Ts'ien*, vol. 3 (1899; repr. Paris, 1967), pp. 218–19; *Hanshu* (Beijing, 1975), pp. 1191–92.

[86] It is also noteworthy that the *Shanhai jing* is focused on specific types of sacrifice—sacrifices to the local spirits—whereas the description of Shun's sacrifices and the treatises on sacrifices in the two histories of the Former Han are concerned with different types of sacrifices.

[87] "Minggui xia," *Mozi* 8.6b10–12; Mei Yi-Pao, trans., *The ethical and political works of Motze* (London, 1929), p. 168.

[88] See John Lagerwey, "Wu Yüeh ch'un ch'iu," in *Early Chinese texts*, ed. Michael Loewe, pp. 474–75.

record of this information made by Yu's assistants, a transmission of knowledge received directly from local spirits.[89]

The association of Yu with spirits that can be traced in a series of transmitted texts has been strongly confirmed by the finds of Warring States/early Han manuscripts. These manuscripts show that Yu played an important role in magico-religious and occult traditions. As pointed out by Harper referring to these manuscripts, "Yu's legendary circumambulation and pacification of a world in chaos appear to have made Yu the archetypal pacifier of the spirit world that continued to exist alongside mankind." He further shows a relation between the magico-religious and occult traditions of the Warring States and early Han and the so-called Pace of Yu (*Yubu* 禹步), the magical dance step of Six Dynasties religious Daoism, and reminds us that this relation was already suggested by Granet.[90]

In sum, according to discovered manuscripts and such transmitted texts as the *Shanhai jing*, the *Mozi* and the *Wu Yue chunqiu*, it is the support of the local spirits that gave Yu power over the surface of the earth. The process of his ordering of terrestrial space consisted first and foremost in establishing contacts with the local spirits responsible for the regulated features of the landscape. The resultant structure of terrestrial space followed the distribution of divine powers over it. The officially recognized version of Yu's deeds, the "Yugong," represents his regulation of terrestrial space as a purely administrative tour, and the absence of references to spirits in the *Rong Cheng shi* manuscript allows one firmly to associate this text with the official line regarding Yu's work of regulation. The "administrative" version of Yu's deeds appears marginal when compared with a broad range of sources that represent the "spiritual" version. Yet, it is the administrative version that became recognized in the imperial histories conveying the official conception of space regulation.

One of the reasons for choosing the administrative version and banning spirits from the story of such a key figure of Chinese official ideology as Yu the Great is the cautious attitude to spirits in Confucianism.

[89] *Wu Yue chunqiu* 6.2a11–2b3; Campany, *Strange writing*, p. 137. Shun's "tour" is referred to in the *Wu Yue chunqiu* as *xunshou* (*Wu Yue chunqiu* 6.1b3–4.), so there is a slight formal difference between the designation of Shun's and Yu's "tour" in this text.

[90] Donald J. Harper, "Warring States natural philosophy and occult thought," in *The Cambridge history of ancient China: from the origins of civilization to 221 B.C.*, eds Michael Loewe and Edward L. Shaughnessy (Cambridge, 1998), pp. 872–73.

Spirits are, indeed, an issue that is rather avoided by Confucius who "respected demons and spirits, but kept them at a distance" (*Lunyu* 論語 11.6). Spirits (*shen*) are the fourth of the subjects that Confucius refused to discuss (*Lunyu* 13.7) At the same time, according to Confucius, Yu "showed filial piety to demons and spirits" (*Lunyu* 8.21).

The official imperial ideology put forward the first part of the ambiguous position of Confucius and demarcated itself from the second, but this happened gradually. Sima Qian still does not separate Yu from the spirits. In his introduction to the citation of the "Yugong" in the "Basic annals of the Xia," he quotes the *Lunyu* on Yu's "showing filial piety to demons and spirits." In the treatise on sacrifices, after the citation of Shun's "tour of inspection" from the "Shundian," he adds a short remark to the effect that Yu followed his example. Although Ban Gu reproduces this remark in his "Treatise on terrestrial organization," where the "Yugong" is reproduced not the slightest allusion to spirits is found. The already mentioned omission of Shun's name in Ban Gu's introduction to the "Yugong" seems to be done in order to avoid any possible association of the concept of "terrestrial organization" with the spirits.

Liu Xin 劉歆 (ca. 46 BC–AD 23), in the preface 表 to his edition of the *Shanhai jing*, never refers to spirits.[91] Spirits are, however, mentioned in the elucidation on the "Xingfa" 形法 ("Methods of forms") sub-section of the *Hanshu* bibliographical treatise that to a considerable extent reproduces the lost bibliography "Qilue" 七略 ("Seven outlines") by Liu Xiang 劉向 and Liu Xin.[92] Since the *Shanhai jing* is listed in the "Xingfa" sub-section, this shows that Liu Xin implicitly recognized both the importance of the role of spirits in this text and the relationship between Yu and the local spirits. But in the preface, meant for the emperor, he apparently preferred not to accentuate this delicate issue.

Finally, Ban Gu's contemporary, Wang Chong 王充 (AD 27–ca. 100), refers to the *Shanhai jing* in connection with Yu's deeds but avoids all reference to spirits, thus subscribing to the official point of view on

[91] *Shanhai jing jianshu*, ed. Hao Yixing (1757–1825), first published in 1809 and reproduced in the Sibu beiyao, "Xu lu" 敍錄, 1a2–1b11; Ernst Joseph Eitel, trans., "Prolegomena to the *Shan Hai King*," *China Review* 17 (1888–1889), 330–31; Campany, *Strange writing*, pp. 134–36.

[92] *Hanshu* (Beijing, 1975), pp. 1774–75. *Qilue* was composed by Liu Xiang, edited by Liu Xin and incorporated into the bibliographical treatise ("Yiwen zhi") of the *Hanshu.*

Yu's regulations.[93] In short, the definitive differentiation of Yu from the local spirits in the official version of his regulation of terrestrial space coincides with the formulation of the official conception of "terrestrial space" by Ban Gu, who left no place in it for the local spirits.

An interesting question to consider is whether spirits were originally present in the "Yugong," and whether their absence in the transmitted version of the text is a result of editing of the classics in accord with imperial ideology. A trace of such editing is perhaps to be seen in the famous passage on the nine tripods 九鼎 in the *Zuozhuan* 左傳 (*Zuo commentary*). According to the passage, the tripods were cast during the Xia dynasty out of metal provided as tribute 貢. These tripods graphically represented (*tu* 圖) the "things and beings" 物 of far-away lands. The representations enabled people to recognize and distinguish spirits related to the features of the landscape that ensured harmony in the world.[94] Although this passage is implicitly related to Yu as the founder of the Xia and through the term "tribute," neither his name nor the term Nine Provinces occur in it. However, the absence of spirits in the *Rong Cheng shi* account of the Nine Provinces manuscript dated to the mid- to late-4th century BC and, therefore, excluded from any editorial process tied to imperial ideology, provides an example of a "spirit-free" version of Yu's deeds well before the foundation of the empire in China. If we do not contest the dating of the manuscript, this means that the purely administrative view of Yu's regulation of terrestrial space was present prior to its gradual working out in the official imperial ideology.

Conclusion

Two basic versions of Yu's regulation of terrestrial space can be distinguished in the Chinese cultural tradition: the "spiritual" version, where

[93] "Tantian," *Lunheng* 11.3a13–3b4; Alfred Forke, trans., *Lun-Hêng, Part I: Philosophical essays of Wang Ch'ung* (1907; repr. New York, 1962), p. 254, and "Bietong," *Lunheng* 13.9b6–11, Alfred Forke, trans., *Lun-Hêng, Part II: Miscellaneous essays of Wang Ch'ung* (1911, repr. New York, 1962), p. 103.

[94] The passage, which has long attracted scholarly attention, is found in Year 3 of Duke Xuan (605 BC). For a list of relevant studies, see Vera Dorofeeva-Lichtmann, "Mapless mapping: did the maps of the *Shanhai jing* ever exist?" in *Graphics and text in the production of technical knowledge in China: the warp and the weft*, eds Francesca Bray, Vera Dorofeeva-Lichtmann and Georges Métailié (Leiden, 2007), p. 231, n. 43; see also Wu Hung, *Monumentality*, pp. 1–15.

Yu relies on the support of the local spirits that give him power over the terrestrial surface, and the "administrative" version adopted by imperial historiography, according to which Yu's ordering actions have nothing to do with local spirits or sacrifices. The newly found manuscripts confirm that both versions were current in the pre-imperial period. If we take into consideration both the transmitted texts and the newly discovered manuscripts, the spiritual version seems to dominate, while the administrative version looks rather marginal. Choosing the latter for the description of Yu's deeds in imperial historiography automatically meant its official recognition and, at the same time, rendered the spiritual version unofficial. Yet, even in the imperial historiography imbued with Confucian cautiousness with regard to spirits, complete separation of Yu from the spirits occurred only gradually, perhaps because the teaching of Confucius was not consistent in this respect.

THE RITE, THE NORM AND THE DAO: PHILOSOPHY OF SACRIFICE AND TRANSCENDENCE OF POWER IN ANCIENT CHINA*

Jean Levi

The archaic system: the politico-cosmic structuring of society by means of sacrifice

The meat-eaters

If we are to believe the rather impolite remark of one Cao Gui when speaking to the dignitaries of the state of Lu during their deliberations, in ancient times, high officials (*dafu* 大夫) were called "meat-eaters" (*roushizhe* 肉食者): "Meat-eaters are idiots."[1] In a highly ritualized society like that of the Zhou, characterized by a diffused religiosity, a meat diet was not only the mark of status, it had a religious significance. It must be understood in the context of blood sacrifice. According to his biographer, Sima Qian, Confucius resigned from his position as minister of justice not when the sovereign, occupied by the beauties sent him by the kingdom of Qi in order to separate him from the sage, neglected to attend the council of ministers, but when he forgot to give the dignitaries their share of meat after the great suburban sacrifice to Heaven.[2] It would seem that, for the statesman convinced of the centrality of rites, the distribution of sacrificial leftovers was more important than the deliberations of the council, because it touched on the very foundations of government.

The distribution of sacrificial meat was institutionalized; it was the duty of a specific officer. When Duke Wen of Lu, in order to enlarge

* Translated by John Lagerwey from an abridged version of "Le rite, la norme, le Tao: philosophie du sacrifice et transcendance du pouvoir en Chine ancienne," published by Editions Le Cerf in a book entitled *Religion et société en Chine ancienne et médiévale* (Paris, 2008).

[1] Yang Bojun, *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu*, 4 vols (Beijing, 1981), 1.182.

[2] *Shiji* (Beijing, 1972), 47.1918.

his palace, wanted to raze the house of the officer Hu Jingzi, the latter sought to dissuade him from so doing by recalling his functions:

> My ancestor received the order of the ward chief to occupy this site, and it is now many generations that it has been our job to distribute the sacrificial leftovers of our lords after the *chang* 嘗, *di* 禘, *zheng* 蒸, and *xiang* 享 sacrifices.[3]

The word *zuo* 胙, which refers especially to gifts of meat, is glossed by the word "good fortune" (*fu* 福). The distribution of sacrificial meat is sometimes referred to as "distributing good fortune" 致福 or "distributing beneficial meat" 致膳; the character which refers to the distributed parts, *shan* 膳, is composed of the meat radical 肉 and a character meaning "beneficial, good" 善. Not only does the ritualist refer to this practice, he codifies it. The rite of the distribution of shares is embedded in its own ceremonial sequence.[4] Used together with the word *lu* 禄 to refer to official positions in archaic Chinese, the character *fu* 福 represents a sacrificial vase. By metonymic derivation, it came to mean the portion of meat in the vessel given by the king to his courtiers and then, by extension, the material advantages that these gifts implied, as well as the benediction of the gods they brought. As for the word *zuo* 胙, it has the verbal sense of giving a territory or a fief.[5] All of these terms must be understood in the context of a system of gifts and counter-gifts made through the mediation of the gods or the ancestors. Thus the expression "meat-eaters" is not an idle one. It refers to a system of the distribution of symbolic goods and noble office whose key is the sacrificial practice that decides who belongs to the ruling circle.

It is the system of cultic affiliations which determines the sacrifices and their distribution of meat and thereby ensures the equivalence of political and sacrificial activities. The responsibilities incumbent on members of the aristocracy were determined by their place in the hierarchical cult of agnatic ancestors. The more individual ancestors to whom he had the right to sacrifice, the higher was his rank. Thus the king had seven rooms in his ancestor temple, in which he honored his father, grandfather, great-grandfather, great-great-grandfather, the kings

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[3] *Guoyu* (Shanghai, 1978), "Luyu 1," p. 173.

[4] *Liji*, "Shaoyi," tr. James Legge, *Li chi: Book of rites. Edited with introduction and study guide*, 2 vols, eds Ch'u Chai and Winberg Chai (New Hyde Park, New York, 1967), 2.80–81.

[5] Léon Vandermeersch, *La voie royale*, 2 vols (Paris, 1980), 2.196 n. 2, p. 231; Marcel Granet, *La pensée chinoise* (Paris, 1959), p. 92.

Wen and Wu, and the first ancestor, Houji 后稷, Lord Millet, founder of the Zhou people. A feudal prince had but five rooms, a great officer three, and a gentleman one. It was not just the number of ancestors to whom sacrifice could be made but also what could be sacrificed that was rigorously determined by the place occupied in the patrilineage.[6] Inversely, the right to make a sacrifice signifies that one occupies a place in the aristocratic hierarchy and fills, at least nominally, a hereditary function. This link between ranks and the cultic hierarchy may be seen in the word used to designate rank: *jue* 爵. The term originally designates a bird-shaped cup that served as a libation cup in sacrificial—primarily funeral—ceremonies. Aristocratic titles correspond to the hierarchy of the gods and are a function of the gods whom one has the right to honor. A doubly nested hierarchy is deployed in this manner: a vertical hierarchy of the gods to whom one sacrifices on the one hand and the geographic extent of the fief over which one has authority on the other. The hierarchy of the ancestor cult corresponds to that of the territorial gods. Religious organization embraces both space and time. Symbolically speaking, to go further back temporally means to extend farther spatially. The Son of Heaven is in charge of the entire empire because he belongs to the eldest lineage segment of all the feudal lords, who are members of junior lineage branches that at a given moment separated off from the trunk of the dynastic genealogical tree. The Zhou king made sacrifices to Heaven and Earth, to the tutelary spirits of earth and cereals, the famous mountains and primary rivers, and to the five domestic gods. Feudal princes who were in charge of a cardinal direction sacrificed to the gods of earth and cereals and the famous mountains and primary rivers of their principality, as well as to the domestic gods. High officials sacrificed to the domestic gods. The untitled commoners had neither rank nor pay and did not "eat" the land or make regular sacrifice to their ancestors. They had neither hall nor altar of their own for the worship of their ancestors, who after they died became *gui* 鬼, "phantoms" or "demons."[7]

Such is, broadly sketched, the organization of the Zhou royalty, at least as it reveals itself in sources which are not anterior to the Spring and Autumn period (770–482 BC). The picture is no doubt an idealized one, but it is not a figment of the imagination. In the perfectly regulated

[6] *Guoyu*, "Chuyu 2," pp. 564–65.
[7] *Liji*, "Jifa," Legge 2.204–06.

system of the Zhou depicted by our sources, the government is identical to the control of sacrifices and protocol-determined acts. A noble title is the equivalent of a priestly charge. One's place in the cultic hierarchy determines one's status, and as each noble rank confers a title which involves a function, to serve as a priest is an act of government. The *Guoyu* does not forget to recall this with respect to the sacrifice that a minister wished to create for an albatross who had alighted outside the eastern gate of the capital of Lu: "Sacrifices are among the most basic regulations of the state, and these regulations are what make government possible."[8] This makes it easier to understand why Confucius could state when asked about the ancestral sacrifice: "Anyone who knew the explanation could deal with all things under Heaven as easily as I lay this here; and he laid his finger upon the palm of his hand."[9] In the aristocratic and cultic context of archaic society, this was not just a flash of wit and even less the delusion of a ritualist.

The sacrifice to Heaven and the cascade of leftovers

Such was, in its basic form, the organization of the aristocratic class on which depended the sacrifices. Its uniqueness resided in the fact that it conferred a unity on the three hierarchical orders of the family, religion and government. But how did these ceremonies function so as to amount to acts of government? That is what we shall try to understand by studying one of the ceremonies that has a paradigmatic value.

There were thousands of modes of worship outside that of the ancestors, and even though they were subject in principle to strict regulation, as we saw in the anecdote of the albatross, anyone and anything could in fact receive a sacrifice. As my aim is not to describe the entire sacrificial system but only to reveal the links between this system and the exercise of authority, I shall limit myself to a ritual which is particularly significant in this regard. The rite in which the desire to create a total order by means of a sequence of perfectly ordered acts is most obvious is the great sacrifice to Heaven in the southern suburb.[10] Conjoining a

[8] *Guoyu*, "Luyu 1," pp. 169–70.

[9] *Lunyu* 3.11; tr. Arthur Waley, *The analects of Confucius* (1938; repr. New York, n.d.), p. 96.

[10] There are many descriptions of this ceremony, among them that by Henri Maspero, *La Chine antique* (Paris, 1965), pp. 187–223; Léon Vandermeersch, *La voie royale*, 2.355–71; Lester Bilsky (Taibei, 1975).

sacrifice to a divinity and one to the ancestors, it contains a complete gamut of ritual sequences. The antiquity of this ritual has recently been called into question, arguing it to be a Han-era fabrication.[11] But it does not seem to me possible to agree to the pure and simple rejection of the received sources. Even if it is difficult to trace back the origin and describe the changes this ritual underwent over the centuries, and even if the ritual specialists had contradictory views about how it was actually to be carried out, not only is the sacrifice to Heaven attested to by numerous ancient sources such as the *Chunqiu* (*Annals*) but, above all, it alone makes it possible to make sense of a certain number of the traits of the archaic society and of its ulterior evolution, just as the presence of invisible celestial bodies is deducted from the erratic movements of known celestial bodies or, to stay in the realm of anthropology, in the system of Rousseau, a fictitious state of nature must be posited in order to explain man as a social creature. In a word, it seems to me that neither the functioning of Zhou society nor the later development of the Chinese state can be made sense of without reference to the sacrifice to Heaven, be it as a hypothetically necessary event. I shall therefore concentrate my analysis on it.

Because of the singular character of the sacrifice to Heaven that he alone may accomplish, the sovereign distinguishes himself from the feudal lords not quantitatively but qualitatively. If the princes of Lu, exceptionally, may also perform this ritual, it is because of the special ties of their ancestor, the Duke of Zhou, to the dynastic house and because of the services he rendered, for not only was he the brother of the founding king, Wu, but he himself was virtually king when he served as regent of King Cheng, still a young child when his father died. Here, the exception confirms the rule. Moreover, it took a prodigious event for this privilege to be granted the Duke of Zhou's successors by his nephew, King Cheng. The great sacrifice to Heaven is charged with a special solemnity because it is the expression of Zhou sovereignty. The sacrifice to Earth is also a royal prerogative, but it is subordinated to the sacrifice to Heaven. The sacrifice to the supreme god, powerful illustration of the pre-eminence of the sovereign, concentrates within itself the entire meaning of the sacrificial system. Through it is revealed the regulatory and governing function of Heaven, of which royal power is but the human hypostasis.

[11] Marianne Bujard, *Le sacrifice au Ciel* (Paris, 2000).

The sacrifice to Heaven is a solemn sacrifice which in principle requires neither special apparatus nor pomp. It must at the same time strike the imagination by its atmosphere of dignity, an atmosphere derived not from the wealth or the number of the victims and the vessels, but from the gravity and the seriousness with which it is accomplished. Such as we can see it through later rituals, the sacrifice to Heaven was the occasion for a *mise en scène* whereby was rendered visible, by means of ritual language, the very principles which govern the natural and the social order.

It is a solar sacrifice that marks the victory of the principle of generation and life over the *yin* forces of decline and death. As such, it takes place either after the winter solstice or at the spring equinox. Commentators debate this point because the ritual texts say only, in ambiguous fashion, that it is done "when the days become longer," a phrase which could refer either to the time when days begin to become longer—the winter solstice—or when the days become longer than the nights, at the spring equinox. Be that as it may, in Lu, the ceremony was done at the equinox. It was associated with the renewal of nature and the resurgence of the luminous principle. It also marks the start of the agricultural season, whose labors it begins. It is thus an act of thanksgiving to the sun as the light of day that generates light and life and provides food. That is why it is done in the southern suburb and why the sacrificial victim is red.

It is also a sacrifice of commemoration that must take place on a *xin* 辛 day in the decade of days following the solstice or equinox so as to celebrate the victory of the Zhou over the Yin, for King Wu is said to have made the sacrifice to Heaven on a *xin* 辛 day immediately after defeating the Yin on the Muye plain. This makes of the Zhou a solar dynasty, *yang*, bearer of life and source of fecundity. Its ancestor is Houji, god of the harvest, and its solar and fiery nature are marked by the presages of the red bird and the appearance of flames when King Wen ascended the throne. The cycle of the seasons is indistinguishable from that of history. The Zhou victory, regardless of whether it occurred at the time of the solstice or of the equinox, appears as the social expression of the victory of light and the forces of life over darkness and the season of death. Thanks to this ritual, history is invested with a cosmic or, even better, calendrical charge.

The sacrifice in the southern suburb is not dedicated to Heaven alone but also to the dynastic ancestor Houji. It is thus clearly an ancestor

sacrifice, made to the most eminent of the ancestors, Lord Millet, founder of the clan.

The sacrifice to Heaven is at once simple and grandiose. Its solemnity derives from its great sobriety and its formal simplicity, which excludes neither pomp nor sophistication. Its simplicity resides in the care taken of the quality rather than the quantity of objects and victims: a single red bullock (in reality, two), but a perfect one. Innocent and pure, the victim must be very young: "Of the bullocks used in sacrificing to Heaven and Earth, the horns were (not larger than) a cocoon or a chestnut."[12] The animal, selected at birth and raised in a special corral, is chosen by divination and nourished in special fashion for at least three months. The culinary preparations, too, are very simple, at least as regards the part offered the gods: the burned, the raw and the boiled. The vessels used were also of the simplest: earthenware.

The simplicity of the sacrifice as such was in marked contrast with the precautions and decorum of the preliminary ceremonies. The main rite was surrounded by a whole preparatory apparatus. To begin with, there was the mysterious preliminary sacrifice "to the four distant ones" (*siwang* 四望), which consisted, it is thought, in the burning of a pile of wood for the gods of the mountains and rivers. Numerous divinations were also undertaken in order to ensure that the sacrifice would be agreeable to the gods, and the sovereign submitted to a ten-day fast of purification.

The young bullock for Heaven was killed by arrows shot by the king himself, and the blood was collected and presented as a first offering. Then the bullock was placed on a pyre lit by means of a mirror and committed to the flames. This was followed by a ritual pantomime which exalted the merits of Heaven and gave thanks to Houji for having invented agriculture and created the suburban sacrifice. Once the victim had been entirely consumed by the flames and all leftovers had disappeared, the ashes were swept and a second offering made according to the protocol of the great sacrifices to the royal ancestors. The second bullock was attached to a pole. The king cut off a clump of hair with a rattle knife and drew some blood in order by sound and smell to attract the attention of the souls of the ancestors. He handed these to the invocator, who deposited them in front of the tablet of the deceased

[12] *Liji*, "Wangzhi," tr. Legge, *Book of rites*, 1.227.

in order to show him the animal was perfect within and without. The bullock was then killed by arrow and cut up. His entrails were extracted, as well as his lungs, the heart, the tongue, and the liver. The fat of the intestines was burned with artemesia and millet so as to attract the spirits in heaven with the appetizing odor. The liver was prepared by the king and served with the heart and the tongue to the representative of the deceased, called a *shi* 尸, corpse. The head—the noble part—was presented before the tablet. The blood, seat of the vital energy, *qi* 氣 and the organs—lungs, heart and liver, likewise filled with vital energy—were the first to be tasted. These ritual traits and the interpretation given them are not unlike Greek notions relating to the *splanchna*, which played a fundamental role in the economy of the sacrifice, and also like the Dogon idea of *nyama*, even though the idea here was not to regenerate the sacrificer but to nourish the vital force of the ancestors. Next, the flesh of the victim was prepared by the cooks and presented in the first place to the representative of the ancestor in the form of raw meat not yet de-boned, of de-boned raw meat, of boiled meat (*yan* 爓), and of well-cooked meat (*ren* 腍 or *shu* 孰) because, according to the ritual specialists, "how could they know whether the spirit enjoyed it?"[13] Other specialists, more certain, say that raw meat is the portion meant for distant and prestigious ancestors, while the boiled meat is for more recent ancestors, those who are more "human." Between the various offerings of meat accompanied by different kinds of millet, there were a great number of libations of ale and liquors, and the cups circulated among the participants according to a strict protocol.

By means of fasting, purification, divination, proclamations to the living and the dead, processions, ritual throat-slitting, spilled blood, consummation on the pyre, sacrificial cooking, feasting, dynastic dances and hymns to the glory of the gods, the ceremony for Heaven brilliantly expresses the meaning of the sacrifice as it was understood by the Zhou. The ritual of oblation in the southern suburb forms a coherent whole, which made it possible to attribute to each his appropriate place by means of the food. As the rituals themselves underscore, "They (the ancient kings) sacrificed to God 帝[14] in the suburb (of the capital), and

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[13] *Liji*, "Jiao tesheng," tr. Legge, *Book of rites*, 1.446.

[14] The standard translation for Di in these volumes is Lord and, for Shangdi, who is the same supreme deity as Di, Lord on High (translator's note).

thus the place of heaven was established...By means of the ceremonies performed in the suburb, all the spirits receive their offices."[15]

The ritual performed in the southern suburb put into play a series of oppositions and associations between the various actors in the sacrificial drama: humans, ancestors, the supreme god and the victim. However, from the start, the victim is placed outside the interplay. It functions only as the natural raw material from which is extracted, by means of a series of culinary operations, the symbolic system which serves to distribute the other protagonists in different cultic categories. The ritual of sacrifice at once marks the communion between and the separation of humans and gods, by virtue of the special relationship between the sovereign and Heaven. It is a communion because, by means of the sacrifice, humans enter into contact with the world on high through the smoke of the holocaust; it is a separation because the food that is consumed betrays an antinomy between the two orders, just as at one and the same time the solidarity between the souls of the dead and the supreme god is asserted, as is the distance not only between humans and the gods but between humans of different stations as well. With respect to human beings, the souls of the dead are on the side of the gods by virtue of the non-human food accorded them: bloody, consumed, or raw. The blood, a hyperbolic form of the raw, is offered to the supreme god, and the victim offered this god is entirely consumed by the flames. The offerings to the distant ancestors include of necessity portions of raw meat.[16]

But at the same time the sacrifice introduces a radical separation between the supreme god on the one hand and humans and ancestors on the other. If the similarity of the victims seems to associate the Lord on High (Shangdi 上帝) and Lord Millet, a certain number of ritual traits as regards the treatment of the two animals in fact distinguishes them. Theoretically, only the victim to be sacrificed to Heaven, specially purified for three months, has the right to special straw. But as a measure of precaution, the same treatment is accorded the victim for Lord Millet. If the young bull for the supreme god is for some reason not

[15] *Liji*, "Liyun," tr. Legge, *Book of rites*, 1.385–86.

[16] These are the culinary categories involved in the sacrifice to the ancestors or to Heaven, for to them must be added the rotten: some victims are either immersed, for aquatic divinities, or buried, for gods of the underworld, when solemn vows are made. It may be, moreover, that these are sacrifices of substitution for ancient human sacrifices, as when a horse is drowned in honor of the Lord of the River, god of the Yellow River.

acceptable, or if some kind of accident intervenes, the ancestor's victim is used instead and is in turn replaced by another animal which has not been purified, for if the victim for Heaven must have undergone the fast of purification, it is sufficient that the victim for Lord Millet be whole and without defects. Thus the two victims are not interchangeable. This difference reveals the hierarchical difference between the two types of god, a difference which the ritual canons underline insistently.

In a certain sense, the living and the souls of the dead are but two aspects of the same procedure from which Heaven is excluded and which therefore qualifies it as the only truly divine factor. The ancestors are human beings who have lived, and the living are potential dead persons, that is, waiting to become gods if only they receive sacrifices. The dead, for their part, by virtue of the protection they provide their lineage, cause the family to multiply by watching over the fecundity over their descendants. The living thereby contribute to the survival of the dead, just as the ancestors guarantee that of the living who, when they are dead in turn, will have a numerous posterity. Celebrating the ancestors in fact confirms and justifies human mortality. The sacrifice reveals that the eternal nature of the souls has as its counterpart the ephemeral, perishable nature of humans. The divinity of the ancestors is the proof of the non-divinity of humans. In the end, this non-divine character of humans also affects the gods themselves. If the patriline disappears, they will disappear with it, and to say that a family has ceased to be it is said that the sacrifices have been stopped. Ancestors, however prestigious, have a divine career which is dependent on the fortunes of the family which continues to ensure their sacrifices. They are never but the spirits of a single clan. If it dies out, they vanish. Moreover, after a certain number of generations, they lose all individuality and are absorbed into the collective and anonymous mass of the distant ancestors. Ancestors are never more than intercessors with regard to the great gods of natural forces, especially Shangdi, the supreme god who reigns in heaven. They are prisoners of time. They are not removed from the great cycle of appearance and disappearance, of life and death. On the contrary, their worship aims to show the two aspects of life, *yin* and *yang*, as a single whole.

By contrast, things are wholly different as regards the Lord on High. If he requires sacrifices, if he feeds on the smoke of the sweet-smelling fat offered him by the Son of Heaven, he depends on the existence of no lineage. It is he who controls the mandate and distributes it to those families which reveal themselves most apt to embody his virtue. The Xia

were replaced by the Shang, who were in turn overthrown by the Zhou. It is only thanks to the magnanimity of the victors that the Shang were able to continue their sacrifices to their ancestors by retaining power over the small fief of Song. The worship of Heaven cannot stop, and it is therefore beyond the cycle of life and death. Families know glory and decline, and sacrifices to the ancestors begin and end, but he is forever master of the game. He is identical with destiny, the fixed pivot around which turns the wheel of time, with its phases of ascension and decline, life and death, without himself ever being caught in the cycle of becoming. Heaven is transcendent in that it is not affected by the here and now, by phenomenal movement which, on the contrary, it controls.

We may say, then, that to each level in the hierarchy of living beings there corresponds a kind of food which defines it. That which the sacrifice aims at creating, by means of a rigorous use of the vocabulary of cooking, is the proper distance between humans, gods, and ancestors. In establishing that disjunction by attributing to each a status corresponding to the food received, the sacrifice creates order in the world.

Having doubled itself in the great sacrifice to the supreme ancestor, the worship of Heaven ends with a general distribution of food that at once creates solidarity and marks distinctions, in such a manner as to furnish the model for both the cosmic order and the functioning of society. Even though it would seem to be but an appendix of the sacrificial ritual as such, the distribution of the leftovers is fundamental. The ritual canons affirm this vigorously:

> At sacrifices there are the provisions that are left. The dealing with these is the least important thing in sacrifices, but it is necessary to take knowledge of it. Hence there is the saying of antiquity, "The end must be attended to even as the beginning":—there is an illustration of it in these leavings.[17]

The sacrificial portions are distributed to ever-widening circles. The offerings are first tasted by the gods in the person of the "corpse," usually the grandson of the deceased into whom the ancestor has descended. Then the sovereign tastes the leftovers, followed by the three highest officials, who share them equally, and then it is the turn of the six dignitaries and 12 ministers. Thus, moving from one category to the next, the whole court and nobility by turns received portions of the

[17] *Liji*, "Jitong," tr. Legge, *Book of rites*, 2.242.

sacrifice. But let us allow the text to speak for itself, as it provides an exemplary description:

> Hence, when the personator (*shi* 尸) rose, the ruler and his three ministers partook of that he had left. When the ruler had risen, the six Great officers partook;—the officers partook of that the ruler had left. When the Great officers rose, the eight officers partook;—the lower in rank ate what the higher had left. When these officers rose, each one took what was before him and went out, and placed it (in the court) below the hall, when all the inferior attendants entered and removed it;—the inferior class ate that the superior had left.
>
> Every change in the disposal of these relics was marked by an increase in the number (of those who partook of them); and thus there was marked the distinction between the degrees of the noble and the mean, and a representation given of the dispensation of benefits (by the sovereign).[18]

The ritual procedure defines the status of each individual at the same time that it is conditioned by the hierarchical order whose function it is to validate. What is of defining importance is not so much the leftover but the trace it leaves in disappearing as leftover and which provides its reason for existing, or rather not existing. Its disappearance circumscribes a hierarchy of subordinations. By their descent along it, the leftovers precipitate the formation of layers of status whose levels are at once distinct and part of a whole, and which delimits a space whose only reality is formal and whose only function is to signify in exemplary manner the relationships between people, relations which can only be conceived in an asymmetrical form and which thereby create a difference, an imbalance entailing relationships of exchange and dependence that form the social tissue. The distribution of the leftovers in fact corresponds to the ordinary rules of precedence. The rituals which govern relationships in a family are formal: sons and their wives eat the leftovers of their parents and must in no case keep their own leftovers for their parents. If the father dies, the eldest son replaces him next to his mother and leaves his leftovers to his younger brothers and his wife.[19]

But at the same time it thus delimits relations between people, the sacrifice, by means of its distribution of leftovers, also defines an ontology. It is insofar as the different protagonists in the ritual have a different status that a relationship can come into being. There are two

[18] *Liji*, "Jitong," tr. Legge, *Book of rites*, 2.242–243.
[19] *Liji*, "Neize," tr. Legge, *Book of rites*, 1.453.

primary ways to be defined by the sacrificial field or, if one prefers, two primary and contrasting classes of person are made manifest in the sacrifice. There is, on the one hand, that which is taken up into the cycle of disappearances and rebirths and which is subject to the law of the leftovers. All leftovers that disappear reappear in the double form of the duty of recognition—the return gift, *bao* 報, a central notion that governs both filial piety and the heroic ideal of absolute devotion and the obligation of vengeance—and of hierarchical distinctions that create a law of duty. Both are vectors of subjection and submission. On the other hand, there is that which is not taken up into the transitory cycle of birth and death and which is, as a result, outside the law of the leftovers: Heaven receives no leftovers but also gives none. It is the source of all leftovers, but no leftovers return to Heaven nor emanate from it. The food Heaven receives involves no leftovers and is foreign to the law of leftovers because it is indivisible: the smoke is no more divided than is the stream of red blood that flows from the open wound of the cut throat of the bullock. Even if, during solemn oaths, the contracting parties smear their lips with the blood of the sacrificed victim collected in a cup, this involves reciprocal sharing and not the distribution from top to bottom that creates a hierarchy. This is also the case with the ceremony of the division of incense in modern popular religion, in which the burning of incense may be considered a distant reminiscence of the holocaust of the animal victim on the mound of the god of Heaven. This division creates an affiliation, not a subordination. Heaven, as it were, is on equal footing with the leftovers. Both belong to non-being: it is its disappearance that makes the leftover an active principle; it is its absence or evanescence which marks Heaven's transcendence. By virtue of being outside the common norm, Heaven determines the ontic specificity of each being or, to use more consensual terminology, Heaven's norm, *li* 理, is the cause or, if one prefers, the pretext of distribution without itself being involved, just as the leftovers in their cascading descent determine, in the sacrifice, the place and name of one and all. Thus Heaven is at once the absent and the central element of the ceremony. The relationship of Heaven to the leftovers is identical to that which, later on and in another context, will link the Dao 道 and the De 德, the Way and its efficacious manifestation or Virtue.

The Chinese system of leftovers is at once similar to and radically different from the Indian category of *uchista*. The ontological status of the leftover as inseparable from the notion of debt is primary in the Brahmanic religion. It is at the origin of the world and truly governs

the sacrifice because the human being, constituted as Debt, is always in the position of being "left behind" because he has something "left to pay." It is the remainder of the sum still owed after each act that sets in motion the process of actions without end, of which the sacrifice is at once the exemplary and exacerbated expression, a sequence of acts which determines the order of the world, the *dharma*.[20] It is in this sense that Jacques Derrida, theorizing the results of Charles Malamoud's study of the sacrifice, is right in creating the category of "remainder of the rest."[21] According to Derrida, there is something in the remainder that cannot be determined and that it is the function of the sacrifice to dispense with. Indian sacrificial culture is understood as aiming to control the divisions of the remainders—their cutting up and sharing—by subjecting them to an order which is at once sacrificial, hierarchical, and ontological. It aims at enclosing the remainder in its limits as "leftover" and transforming it into something identical to itself in spite of the fact that it is by nature something outside itself insofar as it only exists with respect to another outside itself from which it is inseparable. Not only is every remainder a leftover of something, it is the something of the remainder. Sacrifice in this context becomes nothing but the rationalization of the leftover, its ontological domestication as it were, founding an economy in which a hierarchy is created on the basis of the self-identity of the "master," whether he be the sacrificer, the god, or the Fathers (that is, the dead *djiva*).

In the sacrifice to Heaven and to the ancestors, there is a distribution of the remainders such that there is nothing left over. At the very least, the leftover is not theorized as such, on the contrary: it is diluted in the course of its descent from the summit of the hierarchy to the bottom where, at a given moment, it disappears. But if it disappears, it does not remain without a remainder, that is, an effect. It leaves a trace which is worth more than itself: the recognition of a debt and the creation of a duty linking the subordinate to his superior in gratitude for the gift received. It is thus not the leftover as such that is conceptualized by the exegetes in the Chinese representation of the sacrifice but its transformation into a moral imperative which abolishes it in its essence. This notion of the obligation of reciprocity, *bao*, becomes, in the discourse

[20] Charles Malamoud, *Cuire le Monde* (Paris, 1989).

[21] Jacques Derrida, "Reste—le maître ou le supplément d'infini," *Le Genre humain: Le disciple et ses maîtres* 37 (2002), pp. 25–62.

on the sacrifice built up by Confucian ritual specialists from the 5th–4th centuries BC on, the *raison d'être* of the sacrifice: one presents offerings in order to show his recognition of the superior beings who give life and the means to sustain it. Liang Qichao, the great literatus of the end of the 19th century, expresses in its most synthetic form this concept of sacrifice as dictated by the moral duty of recognition and described in a great variety of manners in the Classics. According to Liang, the sacrifice in China, unlike that of the West which seeks to obtain the blessings of the gods, aims only at recognizing the virtue and merit of—and showing one's gratitude to—everything in creation that has a beneficial influence. With the following phrase he concludes his list of the entities and beings which, beginning with Heaven and ending with cats, deserve to receive sacrifices: "This single conception of *pao* (*bao*) penetrates the whole (institution) of sacrificial offerings."[22] This is a reinterpretation in ethical terms of the more fundamental phenomenon of the conversion of the leftover into an obligation of such a nature that it is virtually a categorical imperative, but an imperative which expresses itself in purely ritual form. For the ritual essence of the human being is to repay the gifts which Heaven distributed, from the top to the bottom, in the cascade of leftovers that, in its descent, determined the classes of beings and provided the basis for the distribution of wealth not only but also brought order and organization and, thereby, delimited the ontological categories. In this sense, what matters is not so much the leftovers as the dynamics of their trajectory.

The process of the descent of the leftovers that generates an order which is at once hierarchical and ontological will serve as a model for abstract philosophical speculation. It will be given a metaphysical formulation by Daoist thinkers. Chapter 38 of the *Daode jing* (*Book of the Way and its power*), for example, projects the cosmic process of the fragmentation of the unconditioned whole giving birth to the multiplicity of reality on the human sphere. The cosmogonic formula of chapter 42 that "the Dao gives birth to the One, the One to the Two, the Two to the Three, and the Three to the ten thousand things" is echoed in the mechanism according to which, "After the loss of the Dao comes power, after the loss of power, charity, after the loss of charity, propriety, and

[22] Cited by Yang Lian-sheng, "The concept of Pao as a basis for social relations in China," *Chinese thought and institutions*, ed. John K. Fairbank (Chicago, 1957), pp. 302–03.

after the loss of propriety, rites." We have here, expressed in a few words, the very essence of the sacrifice generating its cascade of remainders.

The ritual has at once a cosmic and a social meaning. The ritualism of the literati impoverishes it by reducing it to the single dimension of the moral law, even if that law is inscribed within the ontological dynamism. The lower level necessarily comes into its own when the upper level disappears, while the latter justifies its existence in the order it has engendered and in which it eclipses itself. Thus the Dao is to Being what Heaven is to the sacrifice: its power is the result of the fact that it is absent from the process it engenders. The cult of Heaven creates a dynamics that is nothing other than the capacity of the cascade of remainders to generate a hierarchy without acting and without participating, just as the Dao, source of all beings but itself pure nothingness and transcendence, does not participate in phenomena as an immanent principle. The power of the Dao or of Heaven produces a distribution which is the source of blessings and can therefore be called good or charitable *ren* 仁, but this charity, by assigning to each a place which involves duties, leads to obligations *yi* 義 which reify it as a disinterested activity, and of which the rite is the expression. At the end of the process there remains only the pure transcendence of a form without content, that is, of stereotyped behavior determined by ceremonial protocol and subsumed under the universal Norm of social relationships.

The operation is activated by the De or Virtue, that power which emanates from the Dao and which is *de* 德, gifts offered, at the same time that it is power over the other and thereby acquisition, gain, the *de* 得 of authority and the *de* 德 of power, because it imposes the duty of gratitude *de* 德. The authors of this period are constantly playing with the notions of recompense, power, gratitude and duty, a word game facilitated by the vastness of the semantic field of the word *de* 德, Virtue in the sense of being efficacious and also, by homophony with the word *de* 得, meaning gift or gain, success, results. This, in my view, is what Han Feizi 韓非子 is saying when he concludes his comment on chapter 38 of the *Daode jing* with these words:

> The Dao, in accumulating, becomes efficacious power *de* 德: Virtue is the power of the Dao. Efficaciousness produces results. Goodness, *ren* 仁, is the halo of Virtue; the halo produces blessings; blessings engender activity. Propriety is the product of goodness, an activity which obeys norms, norms which have forms. The rite is the form taken by propriety. This is the origin of the idea that "after the loss of the Dao comes Virtue, after

> the loss of Virtue Goodness, after the loss of Goodness propriety, and after the loss of propriety the rites."[23]

In his analysis of the phenomenon of the distribution of gifts in the general context of the exchange of services in aristocratic society, Marcel Granet already noted as follows:

> But if the prince must not seize the wealth produced by heaven and earth but must cause it to circulate from on high below, like showers of blessing, the vassal must see to it that the goods received return to the lord (*gui* 歸 or *zhi* 致). It is by this movement of coming and going that the gods, humans, and things attain their perfect accomplishment.[24]

Indeed, the process does not come to an end with the end of the leftovers at the bottom of the social hierarchy. This sets off the inverse process which is at once invisible—on the ritual level, that is—and essential as regards the real production of a surplus that, fictitiously generated by the sacrifice, ascends from the bottom to the top and thus creates a perpetual cycle. The descent of blessings from on high down below also serves to hide the concrete process of the collection of wealth and its seizure, going from the bottom to the top, insofar as the sacrificial victims are the fruit of the labor of the humble, the first to produce and the last to receive.

That is why, in Chinese thought, there is no remainder of the rest left over to be reflected on as such (contrary, that is, to India). The words used to describe it are utterly neutral: as a verb, the word *jun* 餕 means "to eat the leftovers"; the leftovers themselves are called *yu* 餘. It is true that, in the dialectic of abundance and penury that calls for resolution by the equitable and harmonious redistribution of goods, the word *yu* plays a role in the antonymic phrases *youyu* 有餘 and *buzu* 不足, "those who have more than enough" and "those who do not have enough." It is precisely the sacrificial rites on which devolves the role of resolving this antinomy by bringing abundance to all, while at the same time marking differences by the graded distribution of goods.

[23] *Hanfeizi*, "Jielao," *Zhuzi jicheng* 5 (Beijing, 1986), p. 97.
[24] Granet, *Danses et légendes de la Chine ancienne*, 2 vols (Paris, 1959), 1.91.

The contradictions and factors of change in the organization of the sacrifice

At least in principle, the system of cults is a supremely harmonious system, with its politico-symbolic institutions like the great sacrifice of the suburb, its carefully codified funeral practices, its royal buildings with sacred connotations, and its solemn ceremonies of investiture and oath-taking. At a very low cost and with a small central state government, it manages to completely structure the society on all levels of reality. Politics, kinship and sacredness are all one thanks to the double articulation of the cults. By means of the sacrifice and the cascade of remainders, the ritual dissociates the various orders of which society is composed at the same time that it creates solidarity between the groups. It functions like a language which, because of the perfectly mastered manipulation of conventional signs, enables the creation of an illusion that the symbolic system is the exact replica of reality, that it can substitute for reality, and that it suffices to act on the symbolic system in order to have power over reality. Also, insofar as names are inseparable from things, they confer on society its transcendent justification. The aristocratic administration replicates the order of the world and is therefore at once natural and necessary.

Still, the Zhou organization, like any human creation, has its tensions and contradictions. Some are inherent in the system itself, others are the result of historical evolution. With the passing of time, royal power weakened and the fiefs of vassals gained a political weight and military superiority they did not have at the start. While the territories of the fiefs in the old center of the country remained small and fragmented, vast kingdoms grew up on the periphery. Under the cover of ensuring the defense of the Zhou sovereigns against barbarian incursions, these new entities imposed their will on other princes. The ancient and venerable fiefs that constituted, with the royal domain of the Zhou itself, the heartland of ancient China came under the sway of the dominant power of the moment. With the development of these large outlying states, struggle between the kingdoms was exacerbated. The changes in the nature of the relations between the principalities impacted relations between the noble families within the various states. The princely lines were displaced by collateral branches that took over the management of affairs. With the development of the economy and the administration, the great officers acquired considerable weight. Cults and fiefs disappeared as the number of takeovers multiplied. At the same time, the

proliferation of lineage bifurcations perverted the system and encouraged social mobility and transfer of power. The *shi* 士 class, the class of low-level nobility specializing in administrative management and the organization of the state, emerges. Already in an episode in the *Zuozhuan*, one of the commentaries on the annals of the principality of Lu, the negative exclamation of Cao Gui, simple gentleman, about the "meat-eaters" whom he calls "idiots incapable of making a plan,"[25] reveals the antagonism between the ancient noble class which still holds the reins of state because of its place in the cultic hierarchy and the new class which wants to play a role in the state on the basis of their personal qualities, be it competence or virtue.

These tensions, which appear inside the principalities and between the lords whose hierarchical positions determined by their place in the lineage no longer correspond to their real power and influence, are felt all the way to the summit of Zhou society. The king loses his authority to the powerful principalities who become virtual regents, with the result that the worship of Heaven is emptied of its coordinating and federating function. The system is undermined by an intrinsic lack: if the aristocratic society is perfectly harmonized and integrated in the nested hierarchy of cults, the people are excluded, for they have no ancestors. They are therefore left to "the wild supernatural" (*le surnaturel sauvage*), to use the term employed by L. Vandermeersch.[26] There is thus a duality in the social organization, insofar as the popular cults are not integrated into the political framework, and this will be a source of tension as the prestige surrounding the nobility weakened. In like manner, at the very top of the cultic hierarchy, the supreme god is the sole possession of the Zhou king. If at the beginning the king acts as the legitimate representative of the entire country and can play the role of mediator between the human community and the superior entities, once he has lost his power and prestige, the divinity and its worship lose all reason for existence. There is no longer any link between transcendence and society.

Nonetheless, in emptying itself of its substance, the cultic system leaves open for use the underlying conceptual framework on which it was built, and this framework, reworked as an abstract theory from

[25] Yang Bojun, *Zuozhuan zhu*, p. 182.

[26] Léon Vandermeersch, "Une tradition réfractaire à la théologie: la tradition confucianiste," *Extrême-Orient Extrême-Occident* 6 (1985), *La Chine: une civilisation sans théologie?*, p. 12.

which the most archaic religious components have been removed, will serve as the ideological justification of a new system of centralized and autocratic organization that slowly on takes form in the course of the Warring States period.

The religious and metaphysical foundations of absolute power

Territorial organization and cosmic structuring

The cultic organization of the aristocracy had as its corollary the qualitative and hierarchical structuring of space around centers of sacrifice. But from the moment the ancient regime of fiefs fell into disuse, the entire religious organization collapsed. In order to fill the void left by the disintegration of the cultic system, the departmentalization of territory will thus be accompanied by a new religious organization corresponding to a more abstract space and time. It is not, of course, the geometric space of the Greeks, defined by relationships of distance and position and deploying a perfectly homogenous substratum, but a space imagined on the model of the administrative organization of the principalities divided into nested territorial units. The notion of a universal order, of a deep structure (*li* 理) on which the metaphysical system of China was built, derived from this transformation of the religious space structured by the cults into bureaucratic entities. The principle of territorial structuring becomes central and, understood as the adequate form of the universal norm, becomes the source of the order that could take the place of the ancient Heaven of the Zhou. Two texts seem to us to be exemplary of this desire to found the new territorial organization marked by departmentalization of the principalities on a cosmic order, at the same time, of course, that the cosmic order was thought of in terms of the social organization departmentalization implied. The first text is found in the *Zhuangzi* (4th century BC) and takes the form of a dialogue between two allegorical persons, All-embracing Harmonization (Taigongdiao 太公調) and Analytic Intelligence (Shaozhi 少知). In the chapter "Zeyang," Analytic Intelligence asks a question which may seem incongruous in a work which treats of mysticism and philosophy but which makes perfect sense by virtue of the theoretical considerations it leads to: "What is the meaning of the administrative units?" he asks, referring to the *qiu* 丘, cantons, and *li* 里, hamlets. All-embracing Harmonization responds with an exposé concerning the functioning of the Dao, the ultimate

principle, going up in a spiral from the concrete and trivial question of the social organization of individuals in a territory to the functioning of the ineffable principle which, as purely unconditioned, serves as the substrate of being and allows it to exist, precisely because it is itself non being. In the first stage, the system of administrative units is compared to an organic whole:

> The administrative units consist, at the lowest level, in the regrouping of ten families or about one hundred persons so that they will be joined by common customs. That is what makes it possible to associate different elements in a single body politic and to distinguish the various elements of a common whole. For example, I can enumerate one or all the parts of a horse without you ever imagining the whole, but if I bring you a horse on a rope, seeing all its constitutive parts joined in a single whole, you will understand immediately it is a horse.[27]

The horse and its parts exist only when they are in functional interaction. This relationship between the whole and its parts enables the philosopher to shift gears and make a link between administration and language. Just as words can be organized into classes which are more or less extensive, so the different levels of the administration form a nested hierarchy. The question of classes of ever more inclusive sets of words leads to the Dao, insofar as the Dao is defined as the total absence of any limits which, in its absolute generality, can embrace all beings. This is what All-embracing Harmony says to Analytic Intelligence at the end of the first part of his discourse:

> The creation contains more than ten thousand beings, and yet we use the phrase "ten thousand beings" to refer to an infinity, in the same way we use the term "heaven and earth" to refer to what is most vast in the universe or "*yin* and *yang*" to refer to energies in general. The word Dao refers to absolute generality that is infinite extensiveness. If we remember that this expression is just a way of talking in order to give an idea of size, then it is perfectly legitimate to use it. But we cannot compare a heuristic term of this kind with categorizations that define an object. There is an abyss between the modes of referring to the Dao, which are always by default, and the taxonomy we use in ordinary discourse, where we refer to such names as "dog" or "horse."[28]

What is at stake in this amazing dialogue is the natural justification of social organization, where univocal and organic relations of subordination

[27] *Zhuangzi jishi*, p. 392.
[28] *Zhuangzi jishi*, pp. 393–94.

take the place of the triangular relation between the sacrificer, the living and the dead in the context of the sacrifice. We are, moreover, not all that far from the definition of Mencius, who compares *li* 理, the deep structure of things, with a concert in which the collaboration between the various participants produces harmony. Thus territorial rationality determining customs, by unifying that which is different without reducing particularities into a single commingled whole, leads to an organic rationality built around the dialectical relation between the whole and its parts. It is like the twin of the dynamic system of distribution of the sacrificial leftovers conditioned by the genealogical structuring of the ancestor cult. The material distribution of the leftovers is replaced by the chain of subordination going from top to bottom and creating the homologous ladder of hierarchies of nested territories. Order is assured by the proper qualification of each officer, qualifications that correspond to the administrative context of the nested circumscriptions. In this way, the functioning of the state is linked to the spontaneous course of the world:

> Even though each season has its own characteristics, Heaven favors none of them, so that the year may run its course. Each department has its own specific function, but the sovereign shows no preference for any of them. That is what brings order to a country. It is because he attaches equal importance to civil and military affairs that the action of the prince is well-rounded. Even though each of the ten thousand things obeys its own norm, the Dao shows no partiality. That is why it cannot be defined. Being without definition, it does nothing and, without doing anything, there is nothing that is not done. That is what is involved in the system of administrative circumscriptions.[29]

We here encounter, albeit inserted in the larger context of the relations between the organization of territorial space and the spontaneous movement of the first Principle which supplies the natural justification as well as the transcendent guarantee, the same problematic that underlies the developments of political thinkers on the orthopedic role of language. For the Confucians, the rectification of names is part of a grammar of the rules of ceremonial behavior that deals with the terms of address and respect between allies as well as of the clothing and times of mourning. Originally the metaphorical replica of the cosmos by virtue of its significant emblems and prime numbers, the formal Zhou bureaucracy

[29] *Zhuangzi jishi*, pp. 392–93.

was transformed during the Warring States period, in the 5th–4th centuries BC, into a copy of celestial movement.[30] A world in miniature and a miniaturization of the world, the state administration tended to apply to society the same abstract and objective laws, from which all human arbitrariness had been eliminated, as those which governed the motion of the planets and the alternation of the seasons. In this sense, the administration replaced language. Like language, the bureaucracy was a representation of the world. Just like words linked in propositions and discourse refer to the real world, the bureaucracy seeks to supply its own mimetic model. But by contrast with language, it is so efficacious and material a reproduction that it can take itself to be an absolute substitute. The laws and rules of its organization and function make of it a—or rather, the—veritable cosmic machinery. That is why for most thinkers of the period *ming* 名, names, can serve at once as the titles of officials and as words of the language, for the administrative machine presents itself as at once the world and its image, as language and reality. The immanent sacredness of the sacrificial groups has crystallized into cosmic transcendence by means of their conversion into an administrative space. The rectification of names performed by the ritual specialists took place within the context of a grammar of the rules of ceremonial behavior. It referred to the property of language as a system of classification of ritual conduct and, in the end, conformed to the grammar of the terms of kinship. The rectification of names—carried out in administrative practice itself aimed at ensuring that competence and function, title and results coincide by means of the accurate description and assessment of behavior—was surrounded by the prestige of the laws of nature by virtue of its impersonal, automatic and infallible character.

[30] On this transformation of the formal and ritual bureaucracy of the Zhou royalty into a system of state control and management, see Vandermeersch, *La voie royale*, 2.438–40, who suggests the crucial moment was the reign of Duke Jing of the Song (518–453), when we see emerge the preponderant role of the lord of the palace, *zai* 宰, who acquires the functions of a real prime minister. At the same time, one sees in the *Zhouli*, an idealized description of the institutions of the moribund dynasty, the superimposition on the ritual designations of the six administrative departments of their description in realistic terms as organs of governmental action, even if the latter is characterized by the seasonal flux. Before it was a system for the administration of people, the bureaucracy was a symbolic reproduction of the universe. But insofar as it created a classification of reality in the imagination, once the offices had ceased to coincide with the aristocratic titles and the sacrificial hierarchies, with just a few adaptations the bureaucracy could become an authentic executive organ.

The system of the nested hierarchy of territorial circumscriptions described by All-embracing Harmony refers in yet another way to the Chinese conception of names. The names chosen by Zhuangzi for the two protagonists in the dialogue are not idly chosen. They must be interpreted in the light of the famous chapter in the *Xunzi* on the "Rectification of names," written by Zhuangzi's contemporary, the Confucian Xunzi (ca. 350–240 BC) and in which he distinguishes various kinds of name:

> Even though the things which make up the universe are innumerable, we sometimes feel the need of referring to them as a whole. We then use the word "thing," *wu* 物. "Thing" is a "major common noun" (*da gongming* 大共名, to be compared with Dagongdiao, All-embracing Harmony). It is taken from a more restricted term that it includes (*gong* 共). By going from one inclusion to the next, we eventually arrive at a term that is so inclusive that nothing can include it, and we are forced to stop.[31]

To this process of the inclusion of ever larger classes of things referred to by terms, which modern linguistics calls hyperonymy, there corresponds the inverse process of hyponymy, in which things are divided into ever smaller categories included in the larger categories that precede them, producing "minor distinctions in reference" (*xiao bieming* 小别名, to be compared with Analytic Intelligence).

Thus does Xunzi construct a hierarchical organization of the paradigmatic double relationship of inclusions and distinctions that structure language and in which all names are taken up in the projection, by taxonomic order, of the pyramid of administrative ranks corresponding to the nested hierarchy of circumscriptions in the new state system that is in the process of creation.

The *Heguanzi* 鶡冠子 (*Master of the Pheasant's crest*), written at the end of the 3rd century BC, also provides a most significant witness to the sacralization of the administrative machine as principle of absolute order. The author explains that the primordial, legendary dynasty of the Chengjiu 成鳩 succeeded in being the equal of Heaven by accumulating all its virtues and, above all, in having known how to meld itself into the One of which Heaven is the absolute norm. Later on in the text it becomes clear that this One which gave preeminence

[31] *Xunzi*, Zhuzi jicheng 2, 27.278–79. On the question of naming in *Xunzi*, see Redouane Djamouri, "Théorie de la 'rectification des dénominations' et réflexion linguistique chez Xunzi," *Extrême-Orient Extrême-Occident* 15 (1993), *Le juste nom*, pp. 67–69.

to Chengjiu is nothing other than the double administrative technique of the administrative division of territory evoked by All-embracing Harmony and the periodic reports to the various hierarchical offices. Even more surprising, we discover that this miraculous system which links the sovereign to the course of the world itself comes down to the territorial organization which inspired the Legalist Shang Yang in order to regiment the people of Qin and impose on it the law of collective responsibility and mutual surveillance. All things considered, in the Master of the Pheasant's crest as in Han Fei, the theoretician of imperial absolutism, the One is nothing but the totalizing and totalitarian law hypostasized as cosmological principle.[32]

The convergence of the two passages, in the *Zhuangzi* and the *Heguanzi* is all the more remarkable in that an abyss separates the two authors both as regards philosophy and style. The *Zhuangzi* is characterized by a blinding dialectic virtuosity which uses words in a baroque manner that shakes up all categories of language. The *Heguanzi*, by contrast, is an indigent text. It reformulates in maladroitly cryptic language the most self-evident banalities and limits itself to the most narrow-minded cosmologism. Also, both authors make utterly contrasting use of the amalgamation of cosmic and territorial rationality. While the first makes it his task to get beyond the narrow universe of formal rationality characteristic of analytic intelligence—of which the administrative division of territory is the paradigm—and attain, under the aegis of All-embracing Harmony, that unconditioned absolute which is beyond all rules and norms and that neither language nor silence can apprehend, the second makes of that division the necessary context of all practice: the celestial norm is the exact replica of state organization and of its territorial mastery. But the fact that both make use of the system of the nested hierarchy of circumscriptions as the basis for a discourse on the order of the world witnesses to the fact of the decisive importance of the territorial principle, first of all in social organization and then in all the underlying schemes that condition all mental structures.

As for the lineage cults, they do not disappear, but they lose their political function, and the divorce between family, religious, and governmental structures makes the entire system obsolete. The nested hierarchies of the new centralized and absolutist states are modeled on the levels of distribution of feudal power. The six levels of territorial unit

[32] *Heguanzi* (Beijing, 2004), 9.167–201.

correspond rigorously to the six degrees of the hierarchical clans capped by the princely houses.[33] Notwithstanding the fact that, in appearance, nothing distinguishes the two types of organization, in reality the content of the relations has changed completely. Whereas, in the former system, relations were defined exclusively in terms of kinship, they are henceforth defined in the disincarnate form of an arithmetic relation. The heads of the various units no longer exercise power as a function of their place in the cultic hierarchy but in the context of the administrative system in which their title and rank are no longer necessarily linked to their position in the lineage.[34] By emptying itself of its substance, the cultic system freed the underlying conceptual framework on which it was built, and this framework, rid of its most archaic religious elements, will serve as the ideological justification of the new system of centralized and autocratic organization that gradually comes into being in the 5th–3rd centuries BC. This transformation of the concrete and personal hierarchical relations created by sacrificial practice in the cultic groups into the abstract relations of bureaucratic entities will become visible in three areas in particular: the functioning of the state, the nature of rites, and the concept of power.

The mythical expression of the transcendence of power: the Yellow Emperor and the Huang-Lao school

The *Heguanzi*, long considered an apocrypha, is a relatively late text written on the eve of the reunification of China in 221 BC by Qin Shihuangdi.[35] In it, the Taiyi 太一 (Great One) who will play a fundamental role in Han state religion appears as the paradigm of the unity and centrality which are indispensable for any ordering of the world.[36] But what is most remarkable are the connections it allows us to sketch between notions such as the Dao as paradigm of efficient action, of

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[33] Vandermeersch, *La voie royale*, 2.136–43.

[34] Vandermeersch, *La voie royale*, 2.138.

[35] The discovery of manuscripts from the early Han at Mawangdui has completely changed attitudes toward this text because the so-called "Huang-Lao appendices" of the *Laozi* use very similar terminology, and whole passages are identical in these texts—proof they derive from the same ideational context. On questions of date, ideological content, and authenticity, see Angus C. Graham, "A neglected pre-Han philosophical text: 'Ho-kuan Tzu,'" *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 52.3 (1989), pp. 497–532, and Carine Defoort, *The Pheasant Cap Master—a rhetorical reading* (New York, 1997).

[36] See the chapter by Marianne Bujard in Volume Two.

centrality as determinant of spatial structuring, and of the calendar as the model for human behavior, objective laws and ritual norms. These are themes which are developed in the myths and the collections of legendary accretions that surround the name of the Yellow Emperor, to whom we now turn.

The exaltation of the Whole, metaphysical projection of the unified and centralized empire under construction, is inextricably linked to the affirmation of the preeminence of the center over the periphery. That is why, in a whole series of politico-strategic works with a strong mystical flavor, the Yellow Emperor will emerge as at once god of war and master of space. However, these accounts were in no wise written in response to the rise of central states with the power of coercion, they present themselves as foundational myths of sovereignty conceived as the domination of the four directions from a strategic point which does not belong to ordinary space. They provide the symbolic expression of a strategic conception of domination whose paradigmatic form is armed combat. In this sense, they go together with and complete the kind of reflection of which the *Sunzi* is the most mature expression. It is, moreover, significant that the manuscript of the *Sunzi* found at Yinqueshan contains a section called "The Yellow Emperor attacks the Red Emperor."[37]

The Yellow Emperor achieved preeminence in myths and, as a result, came to serve as a federating symbol of all the diverse themes of sovereignty because he reigned over the center, and because that position is not a priori a part of the cycle of the seasons. If liturgical time coincides with the seasonal cycle, this also means that social and natural norms are replicas one of the other. For the laws decreed by Heaven have as a counterpart the laws promulgated by the sovereign. It is by means of the rites that the laws of nature receive their necessary translation into social action. But in becoming the model of human time, the cycle of seasons is subverted and spatialized. This spatialization is visible in the transition from the four natural to the five ritual seasons, obeying the law of classification by five for the elements. But there is no fifth season. There is no middle of the year. It is but the mark of the centrality of the royal figure par excellence, symbolized by the Yellow Emperor, who reigns from the center of the earth over a fictive season. Emperor of

[37] See "Linyi Yinqueshan Hanmu chutu 'Sunzi bingfa' cangjian shiwen," *Wenwu* 223 (1974.12), p. 12.

an abstract and supernumerary season, the Yellow Emperor, exemplary image of sovereignty, rules over time. Like the Dao, and like Heaven in the idealized Zhou liturgy, he is at once the vacant point and the motor on which the entire system depends and converges. That is why he has such an intimate link to Taiyi, of whom he is the terrestrial counterpart, but also to Heaven in his role as pivot and central point. In the imperial cult, the Yellow Emperor is constantly assimilated to Taiyi, expression of sovereign power and compass for human conduct, just as the sovereign carries out his civilizing work by circulating in the Mingtang 明堂 (Hall of Light). Conjoined in one and the same entity, Taiyi and the sovereign—the Saint—bring order to the human world by accompanying the imperturbable cycle of the seasons, thus ensuring that at the right moment the appropriate element will be dominant. This is how the *Heguanzi* describes the movement generated from the center by Taiyi:

> The east is the direction where all things begin and are planted. That is why its energy is harmonized with the note *zhi*. The south is the direction where all things proliferate and flourish; it is hence tuned with the note *yu*. The west is where things come to maturity and appear in all their splendor, whence the harmonization with the note *shang*. The north is where things go into terminal decline, which explains the tuning with the note *jiao*. The center is the seat of the supreme unity, Taiyi; it is the place where the multitude of spirits, submissive, looks up in adoration, whence the harmony with the note *gong*. The Dao presides. It impels and controls all transcendent entities and sets the cosmos in motion. All beginnings are marked by the vibration of the *huangzhong* 黃鍾 pipe. That is why spring supplies the beginning. At that moment, all beings are prosperous, and wood communicates its exuberance to all beings. That is why the entire universe is under the influence of the element wood and why it is meet to take up one's station in the east in order to preside over spring. When celestial movements use fire to light things, the entire universe is under the influence of the element fire and it is meet to take up one's station in the south in order to preside over summer. When that movement severs beings with metal, all the world is under the sign of metal and it is meet to stay in the west to preside over autumn. When it drowns things in water, the universe is under the sign of water and it is meet to stay in the north and preside over winter. When it makes of the earth its grand capital, the entire universe is under the sign of earth, and it is meet to stay in the center in order to keep the earth.[38]

[38] *Heguanzi* 10.72–73.

A chapter in the *Guanzi* entitled "The five phases" (*wuxing* 五行) assimilates spatial organization, the distribution of governmental tasks to the ministers, and the regulation of the calendar that makes it possible to govern the activities of the people. The Yellow Emperor is perfectly happy to make use of the knowledge of his six ministers, four of whom correspond to the directions and two to the above (Heaven) and the below (Earth), while he himself, in the center, distributes to each his task—and hence his department—as a function of his competence with regard to the space and seasonal time with which he is associated.[39]

The time cycle determines the rhythm of royal promulgations. They lead to the organization of space by means of a tour of the empire or its representation. The empire is viewed as a sacrificial arena on which are projected five seats, in the center and on the edge, with the Yellow Emperor, now the equal of Taiyi or Shangdi, in effect dissociated from the here below.

In the "Huang-Lao appendices" to the Mawangdui manuscript of the *Laozi*, the sovereign, who embodies the two modalities of space, to wit, the center and the periphery, is at once the Hall of Light, architectural crystallization of the cosmos on which he founds his sovereignty, and the person who circulates in the hall, ensuring by means of his movement the conversion of the celestial—or, rather, calendrical—norm into governmental decrees:

> In the past, because the Yellow Ancestor 黃祖 was the first to truly promote the use of contracts, he was chosen as model. He had four faces that protected the single center, in such a way that the four sides converged on the center. In front was divided into three, behind likewise, and so also the left and the right. It is because he held power by walking on the triads that he could be the Ancestor, the master of the empire: "I receive the mandate of Heaven, I solidify my position on earth and spread my renown among men. I alone, unique man, can second Heaven. It is I who establish the king, the three dukes, the princes, and the ministers. I calculate the days, count the moons, and determine the length of the year in order to match the movements of sun and moon. Vast and profuse like the earth, my light is in the image of Heaven. I fear Heaven, I love the earth, and I cherish the people…Removing those who have no mandate, I am worthy of trust for I hold on to vacuity. I fear Heaven, I love the earth, and I cherish the people. I establish those who have a mandate and, holding on to emptiness, I am worthy of trust."[40]

[39] *Guanzi jiaozheng, Zhuzi jicheng* 5, 41.242.
[40] *Mawangdui Hanmu boshu*, 5 vols (Beijing, 1980), 1.61.

By his very form—four faces at the center—the Yellow Emperor reveals his control over the four directions. The sacrificial arena is coterminous with the body of the sovereign, as may be seen in one section of the "Four scriptures of the Yellow Emperor" (*Huangdi sijing* 黃帝四經), which imagines a dialogue between the emperor and his counselor Yanren on the art of governing. After having recommended that his lord regulate his heart within in order to bring order without, Yanren adds:

> Anger is born of the blood and energy; aggressiveness expresses itself in the skin. If one does not allow anger to get out, it accumulates and forms an abscess. If you are ready to abandon the four emotions, like a dried up corpse, you will never allow yourself to get carried away. Thereupon, the Yellow Emperor abandoned the affairs of the empire and took refuge on Mount Bowang, where he stayed in meditation for three years in order to find himself.[41]

In order to reign, the emperor must empty himself of all feeling, he must "reduce himself," to use the expression of the *Laozi*.[42] Then, in this internal void, the vital forces of creative activity will gather, and the more indeterminate they are, the more powerful they will be.

It is from the center that equilibrium and harmony emanate—equilibrium of the vital organs which becomes harmony between the person and his environment. As sovereign of the center, the Yellow Emperor is the very image of the concentration of the self or, rather, the re-centering of the self. By taking charge of his own body, he becomes all-powerful. Control of the outside depends on self-control. The center is also the vital point in the microcosm by means of which the internal universe considered as an altar is created. The body is a universe, an alchemical stove, and above all a sacrificial arena, because it is a heraldic space. By going into himself, by visualizing the significant emblems and incorporating the prime numbers which structure the universe, the sage will gain access to the gates of Heaven, the unique point where communication between Heaven, Earth and Man can occur. The center marks the point of convergence and coincidence of within and without. It is the contraction of Chaos on the point which is equidistant from all directions. It is the place which is no place, where all creation is born and dies.

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[41] Ibid., 1.65.
[42] *Laozi* 48.

His function as emperor of the earth and the center predestined the Yellow Emperor to play the role of master of the arts of war, insofar as this activity is conceived as the mastery of positions and the science of spatial disposition. It is in this context that we must put a certain number of curious details attributed to the founder of civilization and sovereignty. He has four faces, or four eyes. The Yellow Emperor was four-faced because he sent four remarkable men to the four directions to organize the world, or else because, with his acolytes, he constituted a group of four remarkable men who pacified the four directions. It will have been noted that the Yellow Emperor and his ministers are now four, now five in number, depending on whether the center is counted as one of the directions. In either case, he is intimately linked to the structuring of a hierarchical space, an act which is identified with the founding of a dynasty.

But if the four faces of the Yellow Emperor refer, in figurative manner, to the symbolic organization of territory which is inherent in the function of the sovereign, they must also be taken literally. In that sense they show the relationship between the master of men and the Heavenly Master, between the emperor and the shaman who wore a metal mask with four eyes that enabled him to see demons on all sides at once. For the Yellow Emperor is very intimate with the exorcists, beginning with his wife Momu 嫫母, whose proverbial ugliness is said to be the basis of apotropaic practices insofar as her ugly face served as the model for the masks of sorcerers. But the Yellow Emperor himself has numerous traits which link him to the *fangxiangshi* 方相氏 exorcists who performed the rites for the creation of sacred arenas and for the renewal of space and time, rites which took the double form of a combat and of a measurement of space.[43]

The mythical cycle of the Yellow Emperor embraces in a single movement both cosmic and political preoccupations. The division of the whole and the organization of the world into a hierarchical, ordered system presuppose violence. The organization of space is an act of sovereignty, and like all acts of authority it implies domination and recourse to force. That is, the position of sovereign is inseparable from the absolute monopoly on violence, even if that violence is regulated

[43] On the relationship of the Yellow Emperor and his wife to exorcistic rituals, see Jean Levi, "Aspects du mythe du tigre dans la Chine ancienne," PhD thesis (University of Paris 7, 1978), pp. 140–60.

by self-control—self-control which is the equivalent of the territorial organization of the body and its correct positioning in the center of space.

The state transcendence of the Legalists

It is no doubt to Shang Yang (executed in 338 BC) that fell the ambiguous privilege of elaborating the first theory of the manipulation of the masses and of being the first to apply it concretely, while Han Fei was the one who gave this theory its definitive formulation. But they were in fact simply providing a conceptual articulation for a practice of power that was still diffuse. In reality, far from going against the flow, their vision of the state was the abstract expression of the forms of domination which were current at that time and which constituted the foundation of the institution of power as it had emerged from the collapse of aristocratic society.

Princely absolutism depended on the double postulate of the need for social organization to be in conformity with the natural order and of the equivalence between prince and principle.

Social and historical laws are the diffraction in the human community of the laws of nature, a fact which makes individual behavior completely predictable and controllable and makes possible a state system which has the same properties as the Heaven of the cosmologists: exactness, regularity, clarity, conformity and unity. Humans organize themselves in a society not by means of a contract between free and equal subjects but out of fear and cupidity. Thus the meanness of humans, cause of trouble and conflict, is also what enables the legislator to gain power over them and restrain them. It is by means of what would seem to be most antipathetic to nature—torture—that order is created naturally. Government is a kind of training. It imprints on people the unconscious behavior that takes the place of instincts or, rather, builds on them. Thus it is by means of punishment and reward that rulers channel the passions of men and get them to work for the benefit of the rulers. A ruler can therefore act with the same certainty with regard to the future as a hydraulic engineer: he need only act in conformity with the infallible laws that guide the course of rivers and passions. Institutions are rooted in that irreducible portion of human nature which defines the human being: thirst for pleasure and fear of danger. In this way, human venality, source of all disorder, is also the only way to ensure an order which is as absolute as that which governs the elements. In order to

become a law of nature, the laws governing humans must be interiorized and become second nature. Control of humans can be procured by being in the position to control punishments and the profit spigot. In order that society be harmonious and spontaneously regulated, it suffices that it have a leader who has absolute power, enabling him to control and manipulate the most bestial instincts and appetites. Total social servitude can thereby be transformed, at its paroxysm, into its opposite, natural spontaneity. In order to be efficacious, to function as it were naturally, or rather, in order to constrain people to act spontaneously without recourse to punishments, the law must be excessive, and it then abolishes itself in its own cruelty. By a dialectical inversion borrowed from Daoist metaphysics, the use of punishment aims at the suppression thereof. The Law must be interiorized. It must become custom or, even better, tropism. It then follows that the application of the decrees will be confided not to the highest ruling authorities but, on the contrary, delegated to the lowest level: by means of deliberations in the family, by collective responsibility and denunciation in the villages, it penetrates into every pore of social organization.

But this law which is diffuse in the body politic and, as it were, immanent in the territorial organization which makes its application possible, finds its source in the transcendence of the prince, who ensures the efficaciousness of the system precisely because he is an "outlaw." Just as the Dao is at once the aggregate and the source of all norms without coinciding with them, the prince will be the source of all laws and rules by being beyond all norms and rules. Like the principle, the sovereign is unique and refers to himself as *gu* 孤, "orphan, solitary one." He is the One and is often called "the one man" 一人; he is said to be *du* 獨, "singular," in his person—he can never be the equal of anyone—but also in his decisions, for he is always the only one who decides, *duduan* 獨斷. The singular unity of the prince, which corresponds to the new uniformity of territory and the centralization of power, is the human counterpart of the postulate of the unity of the Dao, called the One or the supreme One. The Dao in its singularity stands over against the diversity of phenomena marked by the seal of multiplicity insofar as even the two primary principles of *yin* and *yang* function as a pair of entities of the same nature. This makes it easy to understand why any infringement on royal prerogatives, however minor, must be punished severely. To be One and to control multiplicity, the prince must, in the face of multiplicity, fulfill his function as the One by never allowing himself to be caught up in multiplicity as a part of it, however eminent.

Just as the Dao is outside the round of the seasons which presides over the cycle of life and death and yet governs that round, the sovereign is also cut off from the world. Cloistered behind the high walls of his palace, he is hidden from the eyes of his subjects, whom he can neither encounter nor see. In no case can a monarch, if he wishes to keep his preeminence, rely on his five senses and plunge himself in the contemplation of objects. The sovereign must live in complete retirement, hidden deep within his palace, without ever taking any initiative. Already this theme is developed in the *Shenzi* 慎子:

> In the past, the Son of Heaven knew how to dress himself but allowed the attendant to do it for him. He knew how to walk, but he had a master of ceremonies go before him. He could speak, but a herald made his speeches. In this way he never said anything wrong and never made a mistake in etiquette.[44]

Like the Dao which governs all things by being outside them, the prince only exerts his sovereignty insofar as he is distinct from the apparatus he controls. The parallelism between the prince's activity of social regulation and the ontological dynamism of the transcendent principle which governs the universe is above all visible in the role of the state apparatus. Like the movement of the leftovers in the sacrifice, it derives its efficaciousness from its attribution of "names" to "forms," that is, from defining positions in terms of tasks and results. The role of the sovereign consists in making sure the designations are appropriate in order to achieve a one-to-one relationship between names and things that in turn ensures the just attribution of punishments and rewards. If there is a single thing signified by each signifier and it is correct from the social point of view, language, converted into a system of judicial assessments, can become an effective instrument of control. It can truly ensure that each name corresponds to an expected and classified type of behavior (*xing* 行). That is why designations (*ming* 名) can serve at once as titles of officials and common nouns. The administrative machine poses at once as the world and its image, as language and reality. The state apparatus produces a miniaturization of reality, and this does not in the least diminish its power but on the contrary confers on it a surplus of efficaciousness equal to that of the universe. The imperial system enables an unheard of extension of the field of action of the sovereign at the same time that it reduces his domain of activity. Thanks to it,

[44] *Shenzi* (Sibu beiyao), pp. 2b–3a.

by simply controlling several zealous servants, the monarch subjugates the whole society.

The Legalist rectification of names aims at the maintenance of a social order whose perfection alone can make it the counterpart of the celestial order. Reciprocally, it is the degree to which human society conforms to spontaneous nature that ensures the accurate correspondence between names and forms. The doctrine of *xingming* 形名 is thus not just a simple system of rewards and punishments. The punishment scale fits into a cosmic context. It poses the double question of the objectivity of the criteria for evaluation and of their appropriateness for establishing a strict convergence between functions and qualifications in the society and the inexorable and perfect order of Heaven. The Legalist sovereign does not create a tyrannical reign of the arbitrary but, on the contrary, that of an irrepressible necessity achieved by the absolute and unhindered application of the law and which cannot be confused with the will of the prince.

All texts of the Warring States devoted to the analysis of the foundation of judicial norms and institutional frameworks seek to root them in the laws of nature so as to give them a transcendent cover. The thinkers of the time constantly and willfully confuse social laws and the laws of nature. The social laws are efficacious and adequate to the task—to create a reign of pure necessity—only if and when they resemble instinct or custom. According to one of these politico-cosmological texts,

> The foundation of the human being is the earth, the foundation of the earth its proper use, and the foundation of proper use the cycle of seasons. Appropriate use of the seasons depends on the people, the efficaciousness of the people on their capacity for work, and this capacity on the regulation thereof. Whoever understands soil types and how to plant at the right time, who sees to it the people are used in such a way their strength is spared, will contribute to the increase in wealth. If, in addition, taxes and duties are moderate, the people will live well and, because they enjoy abundance, they will have a sense of shame. Having a sense of shame, the laws and edicts will become for them customary, with the result there will be no need to use punishments and prison terms.[45]

The law also derives its legitimacy from its link to the cycle of the seasons and to the power that dictates the regular trajectory of heavenly bodies. In the chapter "Shoudao" of Han Fei, punishments and rewards

[45] *Mawangdui*, 1.47.

are identified, respectively, with the autumn that brings death and the flourishing of spring. The metaphor is turned into a veritable system of correspondences in one of the sections of the appendices to the *Laozi* manuscript from Mawangdui:

> There are three seasons for maturing and bearing fruit, one for punishments and death: such is the way things function in the universe. Each of the four seasons arrives in its time, and their course knows neither difficulty nor deviance. They are ruled by an immutable law that requires emergence and then decline, birth and then death. So the seasons replace each other the one after the other in a regular cycle that, once accomplished, begins anew. The rational course of human affairs also requires that we know the difference between the natural slope of things and that which goes contrary to it.[46]

In the section "Daofa" ("Laws and principles") of the same manuscript we find an analogous theme:

> Heaven and earth have constant laws, the people have permanent activities, and patricians and plebeians immutable positions, just as there is a single way to treat one's subjects and a constant method for using one's people. These are the constant laws of heaven and earth: the four seasons, obscurity and light, life and death, the solid and the liquid state. These are the permanent activities of the people: the men work the earth, the women weave.[47]

Such a system has no place for rights. Rights are entirely useless because the law is but the automatic application of the cosmic law. In like manner, there can be no discussion or contesting of the decrees of the prince by the people. They are above—or prior to—praise. The laws of nature, by virtue of their apodictic nature, cannot be judged negatively or positively. That is why, moreover, in a society in which the law of nature creates a regime of pure necessity, there is no room for critical intelligence.

Like the Dao, the sovereign must be empty—pure nothingness: he is empty of all desire, all thought and all intentionality. It is because he is entirely opaque to his subjects—who, on the contrary, are transparent to him—that he can extend his domination over the world. However vast the intelligence of the prince, it could never be the equal of the combined faculties of all his subjects. One against all, the sovereign

[46] *Mawangdui*, 1.57.
[47] *Mawangdui*, 1.43.

would be defenseless if he had to rely on the sole light of his reason. Thanks to the Law, thanks also to the techniques of manipulation that free him from dependence on his own talents, the sovereign dominates his subjects. He knows everything of their least thought, their least act. The control of others comes to him from his clairvoyance. Even though he is the target of all eyes, he can manipulate others because he can see through them and control their every act thanks to his techniques of espionage, of anonymous accusation, and of police investigation. He knows everything that happens in the most distant corner of his territory, for the eyes of his subjects are his eyes, their ears his ears, their brain his brain. He overturns their relative strengths and is no longer an isolated individual subject to the pressure of the united masses but, over against the mass of individuals isolated and separated from each other, he is in charge of the faculties of the entire people. To each he opposes the strength of all. Centralizing all information, collecting all secrets, he enjoys a truly divine penetration. Gifted with absolute clairvoyance, everything is transparent for him. But this transparence is the result of systematic dissimulation. The subject is transparent. The master is impenetrable and hidden. Without outlines, undefined, he cannot be grasped, while the thousand eyes he has stolen from his servants leave nothing in the dark.

As much as his capacity to see, his invisibility is his strength. It is but the dark and negative side of the light he sheds. The sovereign who is the equal of the gods penetrates because he is obscure. This divine perspicacity (*shen* 神) makes him as mysterious as the souls of the dead, who act in the shadows, invisible, having an impact that is as terrifying as the origin is hidden to the view of mortals. Embracing all objects in the universe, catching even the most minor detail, seeing through everything in spite of the fact he is impenetrable to others, the prince holds the levers of power which are confounded with the cosmic principle whose omnipotence he possesses.

If the master of men allows his passions to be seen, he in turn exposes himself to manipulation. It would no longer be him who governs but the one who pierced the secret of his inclinations. Thus the prince, if he wishes to dominate, must be careful never to display to others anything but the polished mirror of the unconditioned, happy to reflect images without ever giving anything of himself, because he is nothing. This mirror, the prince can present it insofar as he has withdrawn from the world of forms. He then leaves the universe of the senses for the transcendence of being. He is self-effaced in non-being, vanishes into

an unfathomable void, fuses with the Principle which gives shape to all shapes. In a word, he achieves the transcendence of the Dao. Emanation of the cosmic law, he strips himself of all definition; like nothingness, he takes no initiative, does not act, and allows things to happen spontaneously. Being without desire, immobile and empty, he is one body with the law that he must apply. Indecipherable like the Dao, the norm of all norms, the master of men acts without anyone knowing it. Impenetrable, indeterminate, he is like chaos, the most accomplished form of the Dao, its first manifestation from which the cosmos emerged.

But the prince must have the technique which enables him to attain the void. He must know how to control his desires and his passions. The opposite of *shu* 術—the external arts of domination of others by way of their passions, basically, their thirst for profit and their cowardliness—is the esoteric art of self-control, which consists in controlling one's appetites or, rather, getting rid of them, becoming empty of all desire and all will. But the elimination of desire can be achieved only by Daoist self-culture. The politico-mystical texts from the tradition of the Yellow Emperor referred to above bring this aspect of Legalism especially to the fore. But it is also present in Han Fei, whose inspiration derives from the many earlier texts of self-cultivation. The source of this literature lies in the conceptions of the balance of the sovereign's humors and energies thanks to the cook, whose job it is to harmonize the five flavors. The "Neiye," "Inward training," one of the chapters of the *Guanzi* which is entirely devoted to self-cultivation, develops the idea that sovereign power is but the socialized—and therefore partial—expression of the global and universal energy, the *qi*, the "energy" which circulates between heaven and earth just as it irrigates the body.[48] In order to ensure his domination of his subjects, the sovereign must appropriate this energy and work on it by a series of spiritual and physiological exercises. Power then expresses itself in the radiant deployment of the "Force" gained by the regulation and concentration of the influx of vital energies.[49] Like later developments in the *yangsheng* 養生 tradition which take a political turn, Han Fei's essays conjoin the art of the manipulation of men to an asceticism whose

[48] See the chapter by Romain Graziani in this volume.

[49] Romain Graziani, "Energie vitale, puissance spirituelle et pouvoir politique: genèse de la souveraineté dans le discours philosophique de la Chine ancienne," *Cahiers du centre Marcel Granet* 1 (2002), pp. 25–48.

principles are taken from the *Laozi*. Certain verses describe the steps of the appropriation of the dynamic energies of the body by means of introspection, an inverted regard which detaches itself from the world so as to be plunged in contemplation of the inner universe. The perfect knowledge of external reality that opens the way to the subjection of beings and things can only be reached by the perfect mastery of the body's activity. The projection of the cosmic principle into the world of men requires a rigorous discipline of the self. The prince, in order to be prince, must be without desires, without individuality. He is rid of all definition, that is, all inclination. He must have all the virtues of the Daoist sage in order to possess the efficiency of the man of state. Or, to use the terms of an appendix to the Mawangdui Manuscript B of the *Laozi*, called "Laws and principles":

> Good and bad fortune follow the same path. No one knows where they come from. The only way to know them is to be empty, undefined. For in the emptiness of non possession, as soon as an atom forms, there are shapes and names. As soon as there are shapes and names, black and white are distinct. That is why he who holds the Dao looks at things without having an opinion, without being situated, without acting, and without egocentrism. When events occur, everything takes shape, gives itself, has its identity and its characteristics. Once there are shapes and names, characteristics and denominations, there is no place to hide one's tracks, no way to mask one's defects. The public good is luminous; perfect clarity is efficacious; extreme rectitude is serene. He who is infinitely serene is a sage; he who focuses on the public good is infinitely alert; he who is infinitely alert is the observer of the universe.[50]

Thus does the imperial figure correspond to an ontological necessity. Like the Dao, which deploys itself both on the numenal and phenomenal planes, this figure has a double aspect, at once biological and cosmological. It is biological because it involves adapting the levers of reward and punishment to human passions so as to control them; it is cosmological because, in order to achieve control of the body politic, the sovereign must go into eclipse, disappear as an individual, and dissolve in the unconditioned which is characteristic of Heaven or the elements.

[50] *Mawangdui*, 1.43.

The Confucian version of the link between the Dao and the prince: ritual order in the Hall of Light and the holistic synthesis of the Han

What most differentiates the Confucian system of regulation from the mode of state control advocated by the Legalists is no doubt its diffuse character. In this sense, it is truly totalitarian and achieves an "immanentization" of transcendence which makes the latter perhaps even more efficient. Education, under the cover of turning customs into a police and inspiring the populace with filial piety, respect of elders, and all the other virtues of justice, charity and obedience, achieves a veritable political indoctrination. Rites which can be spread among the lowest levels of society only by means of institutions like village and township schools and by ceremonies led by the authorities such as the banquets for elders or, later, under the Han, the worship of Confucius, go together with a strict management of the people, caught up in a network of surveillance that is all the more terrible in that it is interiorized and seems, because of its virtually choreographic character, almost debonair and avuncular.

Social relations, essentially of subordination and difference of rank, are inscribed in the family and even more in the cosmic order made manifest in rituals whose function is to express in the most flagrant manner the differences between individuals. Symmetrical with the father/son relationship, that between inferiors and superiors can be expressed by means of cosmic opposites: heaven and earth, sun and moon. These also provide a model for behavior, rooting society at once in the instincts and in nature. The spirit of Confucianism expresses itself in the Rite insofar as the rites embody the mission of preserving the link between the social norm and the natural propensity.

The most accomplished form of government in the world of the literati is pedagogy, a pedagogy which makes its impact by means of edifying acts. Confucian morality is spread by means of models: paragons of virtue, sages of antiquity, masters. But these various models which each must imitate are but the reproduction of the unique model incarnate in the emperor, for he is the mediator between Heaven and men, between nature and society or, rather, because he causes the rhythm of nature to circulate in the body politic.

This notion is crystallized in the basic notion of *wanghua* 王化, the civilizing influence of the prince, inscribed in the context of the vision of a kind of organization fashioned by natural influxes. As mediator, or rather agent, of the conversion of the celestial norm into human law, the

sovereign is the hearth from which civilization shines forth. Thanks to the rites, which subsume morality, government, and education under an aesthetic form and of which the prince is the model at the same time he is subject to its law, the celestial norm is converted into human law. This conversion is made possible by the system of symbolic correspondences and equivalences which allows for transfer from one order to the other by the simple game of substitutions. The place of this translation of the natural into the social is the Mingtang, or Hall of Light. The Mingtang is a building meant to be a replica of the cosmos, with its roof round like the heavens and its base square like the earth and containing four oriented facades for each of the directions around a central room. Each of the four sides was divided into three rooms. Thus did it represent the totality of the spatio-temporal universe, with its five directions and 12 months. The Son of Heaven circulated in this building according to the seasons and signified, by virtue of his position, the general configuration of the moment. From the appropriate room, dressed in a robe of the season's color and carrying its emblems, the Son of Heaven proclaimed the nature of government and the appropriate music, flavors, meats, sacrifices and rites. The circulation of the sovereign, by the mere fact of his route, wove a fabric of seasons converted into a liturgical norm. The regularity of the natural cycle was subordinated to the carrying out of a ceremony that revealed a social order identified with the structure of the cosmos because the cosmos had itself been hypostasized as liturgy by the royal act.[51] Thus the sovereign, by means of his peregrinations in the building which represents the universe, created a network of correspondences between realities of different orders. He instills in society the structuring configuration of nature. By so doing, he at once educates and governs. The Hall of Light is defined by the ritual specialists as the center from which regulations and teachings were made known. The word *ming* which, with the word *tang*, "hall, pavilion," forms the term Mingtang, means "bright, sacred," but also "make luminous, light up," and hence instruct by making clear what was hidden. Its mission is thus to unveil the deep meaning of things by means of the miracle of efficacious acts of protocol. The rite, *li* 禮, which can be defined by a play on words as *li* 履, to walk in the right way so as to reveal the

[51] Marcel Granet, *La pensée chinoise*, p. 90; Marc Kalinowski, "Cosmologie et gouvernement naturel dans le *Lüshi chunqiu*," *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient* 71 (1982), 187–92.

deep structure of things, *li* 理, is thus the socialized expression of the natural norm.

As a matter of fact, no one knows whether the Mingtang is an ancient institution, nor even whether such a building was ever built before the Han dynasty. Some specialists suspect that no Mingtang was ever built before the usurpation of Wang Mang, at the beginning of our era. Léon Vandermeersch, however, in his well-informed study of the institutions of the archaic royalty, believes he can trace back its creation to the very beginning of the Zhou, under the regency of the Duke of Zhou, to be precise, when it substituted for the ancestor temple which had itself always functioned as royal palace and hall of deliberations of the council, because the Duke, as regent, was not allowed to preside in the temple lest he transgress royal prerogatives.[52] But his proof for this hypothesis is slight. Such as it is described in the texts of the Warring States, the Hall of Light bears all the hallmarks of a ritual utopia. Nonetheless, what is important is less the reality of the institution as such or of the building containing it than the driving force of the ideological structuring revealed by the fantastic discourse concerning this dreamed-of architecture. Indeed, the rhetoric of the literati on the Mingtang draws the portrait of a conception of the rite as a totalizing expression of the natural law which brings it close to the notion of norm or law as developed by the Legalists in the wake of what we may call the Daoist school. The rite, Confucian counterpart of the Legalist law, or rather aesthetic sublimation of the principles of government, is at once an instrument of discrimination and unification which presupposes a single, authoritarian center of decision, in a word, the institution of the emperor. Thus the Confucians give the emperor a dimension which is at once cosmic and transcendent. Not only is he the organ of government, of economic and political control, but he possesses a pedagogical and religious value. The assimilation of governing with civilizing makes it possible to confound in a single entity the machinery of the state and the society as a whole. The emperor and his body of officers are at once the exemplary embodiment and the guarantor of the eternal nature of civilization itself.

In addition to their performative role, Confucian rituals supply a discourse on the non linguistic, bodily aspect of the rite. This becomes the pretext for a moralizing gloss which runs parallel to the meaning of the

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[52] Vandermeersch, *La voie royale*, 2.392–95.

act. In this regard they do not fail their mission since, as we have seen, it is to cause all remainders to disappear as remainder so as to leave in their place ethical or even esthetic values, that is, more precisely put, to transform the rite into an ethical norm. But in fulfilling their task, rites accomplish a "work of negativity." In undercutting the foundation of the sacrifice of which they are the byproduct, they self-destruct as remainder, destroyed or occulted by moral values. Confucianism consisted in turning the language of ritual—its immanence—into a theory of the rite dissociated from it.

This disintegration of the sacrificial system may be seen in what happens to the idea of the rite in the harangues transcribed in the *Zuozhuan*.[53] First of all, assimilated to the execution of ceremonial acts, in what we see of its ordering but as yet little theorized function before the 7th century BC, the notion of *li* becomes the object of theoretical reflection on the part of statesmen like Yanzi 晏子, who seek to preserve the old hierarchical order by making of the Rite the pillar of the social order. Then, with Confucius, rites take on a personal and ethical coloration before they become the subject of general skepticism in the Warring States period, until Xunzi restores to them their letters patent by making of them the cardinal principle of life in society and by raising them to the rank of cosmic norm. But it must be said that this apotheosis and this resurrection owe much to their contamination by the concept of law developed by the Legalists. This does not mean a return to Zhou rituality, but on the contrary confirms its definitive disappearance. The rites are reborn from the observation that a new order had to be founded since, with Xunzi, the rite is no longer anything but a pure instrument for the structuring of the cosmos, an instrument stripped of any charge of religious emotion, even if this emotion was very controlled during the Spring and Autumn period.[54] By asking that the question of the effective presence of the ancestors be left in suspense, Confucius had put the subject of the sacrifice itself in parentheses. People were supposed to do "as if" the gods were present, at their side, during the sacrifice. For one cannot sacrifice respectfully to entities that one considers fictitious. The rite would become a farce. It is, rather, a question of keeping the gods at a distance or, more precisely, at the right distance, neither

[53] See Yuri Pines, "Disputers of the *Li*: breakthroughs in the concept of ritual in pre-imperial China," *Asia Major* third series 13.1 (2000), 1–40.

[54] Pines, "Disputers," pp. 33–40.

too close nor too far, with neither familiarity nor indifference, certainly not to cause them to disappear. Even if Confucius had doubts about the anthropomorphic character of the Heaven of the Zhou, he remains convinced of the efficaciousness of the rite. We must take literally and seriously the answer he gives Zigong: "You are chary of the goat, but I am chary of the sacrifice."[55]

Xunzi is radically opposed to the very idea that Confucius cherished. Just as, in his theory of language, he separates the question of objects and that of names, so also does he complete in irremediable and definitive manner the divorce between Heaven and Man in the realm of ritual. True, he does give man a special place, insofar as he makes of him the third cosmic power, together with Heaven and Earth, but he draws between these two and man a very clear line, making interference out of the question.

The rite is thenceforth emptied of all religious and sacred content. It is transformed into an instrument of the secular structuring of society, by virtue of its power to dissociate and organize (*bian* 辨). The rite is nothing other than the human counterpart of the impersonal reason (*li* 理) which supplies the principle of rational order in the cosmos. Whereas Confucius had managed to treat language in the context of the rite, Xunzi commits this sacrilege: he subordinates the rite to language or, even better, he makes of it but one form of language. The ceremonial act is turned into a simple commemoration, an empty gesture with no function other than that of allowing society to represent itself to itself so as to ensure its hierarchy. Thus it is that, inveterate rationalist, he says:

> You pray for rain and it rains. Why? For no particular reason, I say. It is just as though you have not prayed for rain and it rained anyway. The sun and moon undergo an eclipse and you try to save them, a drought occurs and you pray for rain; you consult the arts of divination before making a decision on some important matter. But it is not as though you could hope to accomplish anything by such ceremonies. They are done merely for ornament. Hence the gentleman regards them as ornaments, but the common people regard them as supernatural. He who considers them ornaments is fortunate, he who considers them supernatural is unfortunate.[56]

[55] *Lunyu* 3.17.
[56] *Xunzi* 17, p. 211; trans. Burton Watson, *Basic Writings of Mo Tzu, Hsün Tzu, and Han Fei Tzu* (New York, 1967), p. 85.

But this classifying and structuring function of language is deployed at yet another level, as a means to determine the place and attributions of each person in the hierarchy of the state apparatus (and no longer to show the rank and hierarchical place in the cultic groups as in the aristocratic China of yore). The rite is consubstantial with a system of signs. The question of language leads us to that of the relation between rite and law, or rather, norm. The rite functions like a language, that is, it is *nomos*, norm. But Heaven is also rational; indeed, it is the source of all rationality. It is the norm which governs phenomena. Rites and language, a human product, can be efficacious only insofar as they are built on the same model as the heavenly norms. This at once dissociates them from the transcendent principle and gives them a performative power that confers on them a virtually divine status. That is precisely what Xunzi does when he attributes to the rite the power that Han Fei will give the law insofar as the law is the concrete expression of the celestial norm. Just as for the Legalists the law is the primary expression of the principle, the rite will be the incarnation of Heaven or of Taiyi for the ritual specialists of the Han and pre-Han periods. That is why, in a section devoted to the transcendent significance of ceremonies, the *Liji* affirms as follows:

> From all this it follows that rules of ceremony must be traced to their origin in the Grand Unity.[57] This separated and became heaven and earth. It revolved and became the dual force (in nature). It changed and became the four seasons. It was distributed and became the breathings (thrilling in the universal frame). Its (lessons) transmitted (to men) are called its orders; the law and authority of them is in Heaven.[58]

To this responds the discourse in the *Zuozhuan* of Zi Taishu 子大叔, who has been asked about the difference between etiquette and ritual:

> Ritual is the regularity (*jing* 經) of Heaven, the true meaning (*yi* 義) of Earth, and the conduct (*xing* 行) of the people. Because it is the regularity of Heaven and Earth and the people in fact pattern themselves on it 則之, they are patterning themselves on heaven's lights and adapting to earth's nature. [Heaven and Earth] produce the six energies (*liuqi* 六氣) and employ the five phases (*wuxing* 五行).[59]

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[57] Taiyi 太一, elsewhere translated "Great One" (translator's note).
[58] *Liji*, "Liyun," tr. Legge, *Book of rites*, 1.386–88.
[59] Yang Bojun, *Zuozhuan zhu*, p. 1457 (Zhao 25). For a discussion of this speech, and the idea that rituals are the source of life and are fundamental for human existence,

Heaven exists at once as transcendent power and as distant entity since no one but the emperor may truly, without usurpation, directly invoke it. Moreover, if Lord Millet is associated with Heaven, it is no doubt because his mediation is necessary. The cult of Heaven, is secret, and only the dignitaries know exactly the nature of the rites performed. Nonetheless, the sovereign must make the celestial symbols clear: the suburban sacrifice has a pedagogical value; it proposes an example, a model. Thus it is that a religion is going to develop which worships not a god but his manifestations. The Dao, to begin with, is the Way, the path of virtue and good order as manifested by Heaven in the trajectories or the movements, the revolutions *dao* 道 of the heavenly bodies. In explaining the reason for and the meaning of the emblems that accompany the sovereign during the procession which precedes the ceremony of the suburban sacrifice to Heaven, the *Liji* says this: "Heaven hangs out its brilliant figures, and the sages imitated them. The border sacrifice is the illustration of the way of Heaven."[60]

To this movement of Heaven weaving the cloth of calendrical time corresponds the royal way (*wang dao* 王道). The royal way is naturally the principle of good government, but no act of government is perfect unless it is done in symbolic manner thanks to the circulation in the building whose architecture aims at reproducing spatially the course of time. That is why the sovereign function is also visible in the codified inspections carried out by the Son of Heaven in the various regions of the empire, which reiterate the survey of the Great Yu, whose procession throughout the empire was the equivalent of an ordering of the world, just as the movements of the exorcist have symbolic efficaciousness because he is performing the Pace of Yu in the sacred arena.[61] Thus does the royal walk convert the calendrical cycle into ritual time, that is, human and social time. The Dao, a royal walk which makes visible the course of the cosmos, is symmetrical to the sequences of mutual conquest or mutual engenderment of the elements formed by the interaction of *yin* and *yang*, which by mingling in the melting pot of the Dao produce the ten thousand things.

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see Mark Edward Lewis, *The construction of space in early China* (Albany, 2006), pp. 30–36.

[60] *Liji*, "Jiao tesheng," tr. Legge, *Book of rites*, 1.430.

[61] Granet, *Danses et légendes*, pp. 482–579; John Lagerwey, *Taoist ritual in Chinese society and history* (New York, 1987), pp. 34, 151–52. See also, in these volumes, the chapters by Mark E. Lewis and Vera Dorofeeva-Lichtmann.

The concept of the Dao, the Way, which is very much like Heaven insofar as it is the expression of its creative power, would seem to be the result of a process of confiscation and occultation. Heaven is a distant entity whose contours are vague, and only the emperor can sacrifice to it in solemn and half-secret rites in which the highest officials at court do not participate, with the result that Heaven may be said to have been appropriated by the king. Moreover, Heaven never reveals itself except by its effects—the movement of the planets, the course of the seasons, abnormal weather, that is, secondary manifestations which are so many *dao* 道, ways or modalities of its action. Outside the processes of hierarchy and categorization, the Principle is without determination of any kind. This lack of specificity gives it a creative power and makes it the basis of all that is conditioned. It can be the Principle which gives form and existence to things and names only because it belongs to the world of neither, because it belongs on another plane. It makes sense that the new systems of state control depend on the postulate of the preeminence of non-being over being. The power relationship is reduced to the dialectical interplay between that which has shape (*xing* 形) and that which does not (*wuxing* 無形), between that which has attributes (*you* 有) and that which is unconditioned non being (*wu* 無), between opacity and transparence, with the invisible controlling the visible and the indeterminate the determinate. Like the Dao that rules things because it is outside them, the prince can exert his sovereignty only by being distinct from the society he controls. He is thus distinct insofar as he is unlike other humans and has no attributes, with the result no one can get a hold on him because he never shows anything but the polished mirror of nothingness. In this manner, he appears as an absolute singularity in the face of the multiplicity of manifest beings. He is the Unique Man who can have no counterpart if he wishes to keep power.

Conclusion

The way in which authority was at once thought and exercised in China during the Warring States thus depends on representations of the cosmic principle which governs the universe and which is called Dao, Heaven, or Great One (Taiyi). The characteristics of this principle molded both the concept of sovereignty and the practice of domination. Reciprocally, the absolutist and unified system that came gradually into existence at

the end of the period provided the model for the functioning of the principle, which projects this system on the cosmic plane. Like Heaven, the sovereign is defined as singular, the source of all law but himself outside the law, empty transcendence, and in possession of a power which is all the greater in that it is foreign to the processes it controls and does not itself act or intervene. As Dong Zhongshu, famous Confucian literatus of the Han, puts it in a way worthy of the greatest Legalists,

> Heaven, from its eminent position, spreads its influence, hides its visible shape and manifests its glory. Holding a high position, it is venerable; spreading below its influence, it is good; hiding its shape, it is divine; manifesting its glory, it is luminous. Such is the influence and action of Heaven. The master of men, in imitating Heaven, becomes divine by hiding his shape within and becomes light by spreading his glory without.[62]

We must avoid seeing in this omnipotence of the sovereign the mark of sacred royalty. The body of the emperor is invested with no magic power. Nor is it the seat of a mysterious force, nor yet does it participate in an Elsewhere haunted by powers who govern life and death. It simply shares in the charisma of a state apparatus which has a sacred dimension.

[62] Dong Zhongshu, *Chunqiu fanlu* (Shanghai, 1934), 18.49.

EARLY CHINESE RELIGION

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Part One: Shang through Han (1250 BC–220 AD)

Edited by

John Lagerwey and Marc Kalinowski

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Cover illustration: Detail of the inner coffin of Zeng Hou Yi discovered at Suizhou Leigudun (Hubei), painting and lacquer on wood, ca. 433 BC. Rights reserved. Provincial museum of Hubei (Wuhan).

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QIN AND HAN (221 BC–220 AD)

COMBINING THE GHOSTS AND SPIRITS, CENTERING THE REALM: MORTUARY RITUAL AND POLITICAL ORGANIZATION IN THE RITUAL COMPENDIA OF EARLY CHINA

Michael Puett

The *Liji* 禮記 (*Book of rites*), *Yili* 儀禮 (*Rites and ceremonies*) and *Zhouli* 周禮 (*Rites of Zhou*) would become, in later Chinese history, the three most significant classics from early China for defining ritual behavior. Each purports, albeit in different ways, to provide descriptions and explanations of proper ritual behavior. This chapter will analyze the notions of rituals that are presented in these texts, discuss why such notions were developed and analyze how and why the texts came to prominence over the course of the Han and subsequent periods. I will focus in particular on mortuary rituals and rituals of statecraft.

Recent trends in secondary scholarship

For lack of other evidence, earlier generations of scholars tended to mine the three ritual compendia to reconstruct early Chinese ritual practice. With the explosion of archaeological finds over the past several decades, however, we have now begun to gain a much better glimpse of at least certain elements of early practice. This has in turn opened up a new set of questions for texts like the *Liji, Yili*, and *Zhouli*. When and why were these ritual texts composed? In what ways were they building upon and appropriating ritual practice of earlier or contemporary times? How and why were the texts edited into the form they took in the Han? At what times and for what reasons did they become important? How were they read, utilized, and appropriated throughout Chinese and East Asian history? These and related questions have become the dominant ones in scholarship throughout the past 25 years.

The arguments of the three ritual texts

I will begin with a brief overview of the nature, structure, and arguments of the three texts.[1] Since the texts are so different from each other, I will begin by discussing them separately. Then, in order to provide a concrete example of the arguments of the texts, I will focus on one theme that appears in all three texts, namely, mortuary rituals, and compare how the different texts approach the topic.

The Liji 禮記

The *Liji* is, by far, the most disparate of the three ritual compendia. It consists of distinct texts, dating from the 4th through 2nd centuries BC, which were compiled in the Western Han as chapters of a single work.[2]

That many if not all of the chapters were originally separate texts has long been clear from the heterogeneous nature of the extant *Liji* itself, but recently the observation has received archaeological proof. The "Ziyi" 緇衣, one of the texts later made into a chapter of the *Liji*, was discovered in 1995 in a tomb at Guodian, sealed roughly in 300 BC.[3] It would certainly appear to be an independent text; there is nothing to imply that it was at the time part of a larger corpus of texts on ritual. In all likelihood, most if not all of the other chapters were similarly distinct texts later compiled into the *Liji*.[4]

Considering this disparate nature, generalizations about the themes of the text are difficult. Nonetheless, there are some arguments that recur throughout the work, so it certainly seems likely that the compiler had

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[1] The best overall discussion of the establishment of the ritual compendia as classics is Michael Nylan's chapter, "The three rites canons" in her *The five "Confucian" classics* (New Haven, 2001), pp. 168–201. The chapter also contains an overview of the arguments of the three ritual texts. See also Qian Xuan, *Sanli Tonglun* (Nanjing, 1996).

[2] For an overview of the dating of the text, see Jeffrey Riegel, "Li chi," *Early Chinese texts: a bibliographic guide*, ed. Michael Loewe (Berkeley, 1993), pp. 293–97.

[3] For a discussion of the Guodian find, see Hubeisheng Jingmenshi bowuguan, "Jingmen Guodian yi hao chumu," *Wenwu* 7 (1997), 35–48. For a study of how the "Ziyi" was transformed into a chapter of what would ultimately come to be seen as one of the classics, see Edward Shaughnessy, *Rewriting early Chinese texts* (Albany, 2006), pp. 63–130.

[4] Based in part on the Guodian discovery, Li Xueqin has argued that archaeological finds may demonstrate the *Liji* chapters to be of an earlier date than had recently been believed. See Li Xueqin, "Guodian jian yu *Li ji*," *Zhongguo zhexue shi* 4 (1998), 29–32.

a general vision in mind for at least some of the texts that were chosen and revised for inclusion in the volume.

The goal throughout the chapters of the *Liji* is to provide a theory of ritual: why rituals matter, how and why they were invented, and why they need to be continued. The chapters contain few prescriptions on how rituals should be performed, and, even where they do provide such prescriptions, they almost always do so as part of a larger argument. Although it is clear that the chapters are building on some of the practices of the day to make their arguments, it is also clear that these theoretical and normative discussions involved significant re-interpretations of what was actually practiced.[5]

Several of the chapters attribute the arguments being advanced to Confucius, and many are given in terms of dialogues between Confucius and his disciples. As we will see, the entire corpus of the *Liji* would ultimately come to be associated with Confucius.

The general view one finds in several of the chapters is of a constructionist vision of ritual. Rituals are presented as inventions of earlier human sages. Prior to these inventions, humans were selfish, supporting only themselves or at most only those members of their own immediate family, and they failed to see themselves as linked to other families or as linked to the larger cosmos. The sages, however, were able to recognize certain patterns within the cosmos and within human dispositions that could be used as models for patterning humanity in a more general way, constructing a world in which distinct families came to be linked together to create a larger community, and in which that community came to be linked to the larger cosmos.

The reasons why rituals work involve several different elements. One theme is that of refinement: through the practice of ritual, humans refine their dispositions and learn to respond to situations in ways that help those around them be better human beings.

A second recurring theme is one of extension. This involves taking certain patterns of behavior or particular dispositions and extending

[5] Gilles Boileau and Wu Hung have both done important work in trying to connect discussions of ritual in the ritual classics with what might have existed in contemporary (Warring States and Han) ritual practice. See Gilles Boileau, “Some ritual elaborations on cooking and sacrifice in late Zhou and Western Han Texts,” *Early China* 23–24 (1998–99), 89–123; and Wu Hung, “Art in a ritual context: rethinking Mawangdui,” *Early China* 17 (1992), 111–44. See also Lin Suying, *Gudai jili zhong zhi zhengjiao guan: yi Liji chengshu qian wei lun* (Taibei, 1997), and Lin Suying, *Gudai shengming liyi zhong de shengsiguan: yi Liji wei zhu de xiandai quanshi* (Taibei, 1997).

them into other domains. As I have discussed elsewhere, several of the chapters dealing with sacrifice argue that rituals allow one to take feelings one has for immediate kin and extend these to strangers and aspects of the natural world. Practitioners thus come to see ghosts as ancestors and see the ruler as both father and mother, as well as the Son of Heaven. Thus, in what was once a world of competing families, in a cosmos perceived to be at best indifferent to humanity and perhaps governed by capricious spirits, rituals create a world in which humans come to think of the entire cosmos as a family.[6]

Given this general view of the transformative nature of sacrifice, the "Liyun" 禮運, "Jiyi" 祭義, and "Jifa" 祭法 chapters provide lengthy discussions of the ways in which the sacrifices invented by the sages helped to transform humans in their relations to other humans, to the deceased, and to the natural world.

Similar themes can be seen in several of the other chapters, including those not concerned with sacrifice. An example would be the argument in the "Zhongyong" 中庸, translated into English by James Legge as "The doctrine of the mean." The "Zhongyong" is not concerned with sacrifice, but it has an argument in many ways comparable to the sacrifice texts.

Take the following sentences from the opening section of the text:

> When happiness, anger, sorrow, and joy have not yet emerged, this is called centrality. When they have emerged, and all are centered and modulated, this is called harmony.[7]

The center is defined as that which precedes humans being pulled in situations by different emotions. Once these emotions have emerged, they need to be modulated by a centering process equivalent to what existed prior to their emergence—a modulation that is then termed harmony. The implication of this argument is that the danger for humans is to be pulled by their emotions in different situations, and humans must

[6] Michael Puett, "The offering of food and the creation of order: the practice of sacrifice in early China," in *Of tripod and palate: food, politics, and religion in traditional China*, ed. Roel Sterckx (New York, 2005), pp. 75–95; Puett, "Human and divine kingship in early China: comparative reflections," in *Religion and power: divine kingship in the Ancient World and beyond*, ed. Nicole Brisch (Chicago, 2008), pp. 199–212.

[7] *Liji*, "Zhongyong," Chinese University of Hong Kong, Institute of Chinese Studies, Ancient Chinese Text Concordance Series (hereafter cited as ICS), 142/32.1/23. My translations from the *Liji* here and throughout have been aided greatly by those of James Legge, *Li Ki: Book of rites* (Oxford, 1885).

endlessly attempt to center and harmonize themselves. Since there is no pre-given set of rituals to define the actions of the practitioner, the goal here is clearly one of self-cultivation: through cultivation, one becomes able, in any given situation, to be centered and harmonized.

In this sense, the argument is in some ways similar to that seen in the "Xing zi ming chu" 性自命出.[8] But, unlike the "Xing zi ming chu," the "Zhongyong" takes the argument into cosmic claims as well:

> Centering is the great base of all under Heaven; harmony is the achieved path of all under Heaven. With the utmost centering and harmonizing, Heaven and Earth are positioned thereby and the myriad things are nurtured thereby.[9]

In any given situation, the gentleman is he who creates an order by forming the center: all the disparate phenomena thus come to be ordered by the center, which unifies them around a common activity. This would be true in everyday affairs, dealing with human emotions, and equally true of the larger activities of humanity.

An example of the latter would be agriculture: without agriculture, there is rain from the heavens, there is seasonal change, there are grasses in the soil, etc. And, between the heavens and earth, there are humans, who hunt for food, and whose activities therefore have nothing to do with the rains from the heavens and the grasses in the soil. With the invention of agriculture, however, these disparate phenomena become meaningful: the rains that fall at a certain time and the plants that grow from the earth become ordered by the centering activity of the invention of agriculture.

Other examples, of course, could include the ritual systems of centering that we see developed in the sacrifice chapters of the *Liji*, in which, through the ritual extension of familial emotions, the world comes to be ordered like a genealogical family, with the ruler as the center.

Finally, the "Daxue" 大學, or "Great learning," works along comparable lines as well. Here, too, one sees an attempt to build a continuous line, starting from the person properly cultivated to the family to the larger realm and back again. Only when such a line of continuity has

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[8] Michael Puett, "The ethics of responding properly: the notion of *qing* in early Chinese thought," in *Love and emotions in traditional Chinese literature*, ed. Halvor Eifring (Leiden, 2004), pp. 37–68.

[9] *Liji*, "Zhongyong," ICS, 142/32.1/23–24.

been created that runs from the individual to the entire realm can true order be achieved.

In all of these examples, ritual works by taking disparate phenomena, linking them together, and connecting them into chains of continuity. The position of power in these examples is always the person who stands in the center of these chains; the one who occupies the center in the "Zhongyong," or who stands as the focal point of the constructed genealogical chains in the sacrifice chapters.

The Zhouli 周禮

Unlike the concern in the *Liji* chapters with developing a theory of the invention and efficacy of ritual, the *Zhouli* purports to be a description of the political organization of the Western Zhou state. Zheng Xuan, a commentator in the Eastern Han, would later claim that the Duke of Zhou was its author. More recent studies would not support such an early date for the text; most scholars would now date the text to the Warring States period.[10] However, the officials listed in the text do appear on Zhou inscriptional material as well. So, even if the text itself was composed in the Warring States period, it may reflect earlier administrative practice.[11]

Despite its title, the text is not directly concerned with rituals.[12] The primary goal of the text is to present the hierarchy of officials in the Zhou and to delineate the proper duties of each official. Since some of these officials dealt with ritual, ritual does indeed appear throughout the text; but ritual is not the primary concern.

The *Zhouli* opens with the following claim:

> It is the king who establishes the state, distinguishes the quarters and rectifies the positions, structures the state and aligns the fields, sets up

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[10] Sven Broman, "Studies on the *Chou Li*," *Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities* 33 (1961), 1–88. For an overview of the proposed dates for the composition of the *Zhouli*, see William G. Boltz, "Chou li," *Early Chinese texts*, pp. 25–32.

[11] Lothar van Falkenhausen has done some of the best work in analyzing the degree to which the idealized portrait of the Zhou kingdom portrayed in the *Zhouli* might in fact contain elements that did accord with what really existed in the Zhou dynasty. See Lothar von Falkenhausen, "Reflections on the political role of spirit mediums in early China: the *wu* officials in the *Zhou li*," *Early China* 20 (1995), 279–300.

[12] For analyses of the arguments of the *Zhouli*, see Mark Edward Lewis, *Writing and authority in early China* (Albany, 1999), pp. 42–48; Jean Levi, Les fonctionnaires divins: politique, despotisme et mystique en Chine ancienne (Paris, 1989), pp. 229–34; Léon Vandermeersch, *Wang Dao ou la voie royale* (Paris, 1977–80), vol. 2, chapter 24.

> the offices and designates the functions. He thereby serves as the pivot for the populace.[13]

The text then goes on to define the official positions that the king establishes. The first is the minister of the state, called the "Official for the Heavens":

> He thereupon institutes the Official for the Heavens, the minister of the state, to employ and take charge of his subordinates, and to supervise the regulation of the territories, so as to assist the king in ruling the territories and states.[14]

We then get a listing of every official under the minister, along with a brief recounting of the duties.

This structure is repeated for each portion of the state hierarchy. The next set of ministers is the officials, associated with the earth, for educating and training the populace:

> It is the king who establishes the state, distinguishes the quarters and rectifies the positions, structures the state and aligns the fields, sets up the offices and designates the functions. He thereby serves as the pivot for the populace. He thereupon institutes the Official for the Earth, the minister of the multitude, to employ and take charge of his subordinates, and to supervise the teaching of the territories, so as to assist the king in pacifying and training the territories and states.[15]

After listing the duties of the officials under the minister of the multitude, the text goes on to describe the minister of cult (associated with spring) and the minister of justice (associated with autumn). The last section would have been the minister of public works (associated with winter), but, since the section is missing, it was replaced with a separate work, the "Kaogong ji" 考工記.

The text makes no normative claims as to what rituals should be performed, nor does it reveal any interest at all in the dispositions of the populace. The sole concern is simply to take any ritual specialist in the realm, clearly delineate his functions, and define his place in the hierarchy of the state. Do the rituals actually succeed in gaining the support of divine powers? Are they useful instead in terms of creating

[13] *Zhouli*, "Tianguan," ICS, 1.0. Here and throughout, my translations have greatly benefited from the translation by Édouard Biot, *Le Tcheou-li ou Rites des Tcheou*, 3 vols (Paris, 1851).
[14] *Zhouli*, "Tianguan," ICS, 1.0.
[15] *Zhouli*, "Diguan," ICS, 2.0.

lineages and dispositions that support the ruler? No concern for such questions is revealed at all. The only concern is that, if rituals are practiced, there need to be administrative positions to oversee them.

The Yili 儀禮

The *Yili* is the only text of the three that provides substantial, normative descriptions of how given rituals should be performed.[16] As we have seen, the *Liji* is mainly concerned with defining why rituals exist and what purpose they serve, and the *Zhouli* is concerned primarily with sketching a vision of how ritual and administrative practitioners were organized under an idealized bureaucratic state. Both, while making these arguments, at times provide details of ritual practice, but neither has as its goal a normative description of such practices. In contrast, the *Yili* is indeed concerned with laying out the normative ways that particular rituals should be performed.

The rituals described in the *Yili* are those intended for a *shi*, a lower officer. Several different types of ritual are presented, from a capping ceremony to an archery contest to mourning and mortuary rituals. For each of these, the text lays out precisely what one should do in each situation, and also lists possible variations for different scenarios.

Mourning rituals and political order in the three ritual texts

With this general introduction to the nature and arguments of the three texts, I will turn next to a concrete example dealt with by all three texts: views of mortuary rituals and political order in the texts. This will allow us to see the differences between the texts with far more clarity, and will also put us in a position to understand, in the final section of this chapter, how the texts were later appropriated.

The Yili

The section dealing with death in the *Yili* provides an excellent example of how the *Yili* makes its arguments. The text lays out a careful set

[16] For an overview of and scholarship about the text, see William G. Boltz, "I li," *Early Chinese texts*, pp. 234–43.

of ritual prescriptions, the goal of which is gradually to remove the deceased from the living, while yet at the same time helping the living to cultivate the proper feelings of respect toward the deceased and to continue the proper feelings of familial ties. The text takes the practitioners step by step through the process, as the deceased is slowly shifted from the world of the living, eventually buried in the tomb, and sacrifices are instituted at the tomb and temple. Although the section does not involve any of the political concerns that we discussed in the sacrifice chapters of the *Liji*, the overall concern of the ritual action is comparable: an attempt to utilize ritual to develop and refine the dispositions of the living.

I will give a synopsis of the description, both to provide a sense of the nature of the *Yili* and to set up the contrast with the *Liji* and *Zhouli*.

The first step that occurs after death is for the calling back (*fu* 復) of the lost souls. The caller takes a set of clothes and, facing north, calls out for the souls to return. He then returns with the clothes, which are afterwards used to clothe the corpse.

The chief mourner (*zhuren* 主人), usually the eldest son of the deceased, receives a message of condolence from the ruler. He uses the west steps, to demonstrate that the corpse is still the head of the household.

An inscription is made bearing the name of the corpse. This is hung on a stand on the west side of the house.

The corpse is then washed. The chief mourner puts rice and cowries into the mouth of the corpse, and the corpse is put into the clothing for the tomb.

A stand (*zhong* 重), made of wood, is then set up, facing north. The rice that was not placed in the corpse's mouth is boiled, put in cauldrons, and hung on either side of the stand. The inscription is also placed by the stand.

The corpse is dressed further, and a full set of offerings are given. The corpse is then placed in a coffin, and another set of offerings is provided.

Throughout, wailing occurs every morning and evening.

Divining is undertaken to determine both the site of the grave and the day of the burial.

The coffin is taken to the ancestral temple. Before leaving, the offerings are set up in two tripods exactly as in the coffining ceremony. The coffin is then carried into the ancestral temple. The stand is taken first, followed by the offerings, a torch, the body, another torch, and

the master. After the coffin is placed in the temple, the offerings are set out as they were at the coffining.

The coffin is set out in preparation of being moved to the grave. The spirit artifacts (*mingqi* 明器) are arrayed to the west of the coffin, along with millet and wines. Also arrayed are implements that the deceased used, including bows and arrows, ploughs and ploughshares. Musical implements that the deceased enjoyed can also be included, along with leisure implements. Sacrificial vessels are not included.

A final offering is given, after which the procession moves to the grave.

The interment then occurs. The coffin is laid into the grave, followed by the spirit artifacts, gifts, meats, and grains.

The mourning party then returns and wails.

The chief mourner wails morning and evening as he did before, but he does not set up any more offerings. He then makes three sacrifices of repose, and then stops wailing.

On the following day, they enshrine the tablet in the ancestral temple according to descent rank.

The text then describes the sacrifices of repose in detail. The liturgist (*zhu* 祝)[17] invites the spirit to eat (*xiang* 饗) and offers a sacrifice (*ji* 祭). This is the first time a sacrifice (*ji*) is given.

The liturgist then meets the "corpse" (*shi* 尸, hereafter translated "impersonator"), that is, the person who will henceforth represent the deceased person.

The impersonator enters the temple. The Master and liturgist bow to him. The impersonator eats millet, lungs, and the spine. The "great soup" is then brought in. The impersonator eats the grain, liver, hind leg, fish, and game.

The liturgist announces the event complete. The Master wails, and all in attendance then wail.

The chief mourner then sets the day for continued sacrifices to the deceased. Divinations are done to determine the proper day and the proper impersonator. The sacrifices are given to the impersonator, who tastes the great soup, wine, lung, spine, heart, tongue, and liver.

After the impersonator leaves, a meal occurs with the Master, the liturgist, and guests. Each is offered portions of the food that had been offered to the ancestor.

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[17] This term is translated "invocator" elsewhere in these volumes (Editors' note).

Even this detail, it must be emphasized, is a radical abbreviation of what actually appears in the *Yili*. The text itself provides precise prescriptions for every step in this process, with elaborate discussions of what to do if specific aspects of the prescribed ritual cannot be undertaken. As one sees in this abbreviation, however, there is no discussion of why any of these actions are to be taken, nor is there any elaboration of why mourning rituals in general are of significance.

The Liji

The contrast with the *Liji* on both of these points is rather extreme. Let us begin with one of the larger points that is hinted at in the prescriptions of the *Yili*, namely the distinction between worship at the tomb and the temple.

As we saw in the *Yili*, the corpse, prior to burial, was still considered (if he was the father) the head of the household, and the corpse was fed specialized servings of the sorts of meals one gives to the living. It is important to note that these were not even called sacrifices. When the corpse was buried, simulacra of the objects, utensils, and foods that the deceased enjoyed during life were included with it. The corpse, therefore, was clearly associated with the deceased person, including both his station in life and his personality.

The worship at the temple was radically different. There, the worship was explicitly deemed a sacrifice, and it was a sacrifice to an ancestor; a spirit given a ranking based upon descent. This rank was marked by the ancestral tablet, which was placed according to the generational position of the deceased in the lineage.

But the *Yili*, of course, gives no explanation as to the rationale behind this distinction between the corpse to be entombed and the ancestral sacrifices at the temple. The *Liji* does.

The "Jiyi" chapter of the *Liji* explains the different types of offerings one gives to the different portions of the deceased through a dialogue between Confucius and his disciple Zai Wo. The dialogue begins:

> Zai Wo said: "I have heard the names 'ghosts' and 'spirits', but I do not know what they mean."
>
> The Master said: "*Qi* is the flourishing of spirit; the earthly soul (*po*) is the flourishing of the ghost. Combining the ghost and the spirit is the highest teaching."[18]

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[18] *Liji*, "Jiyi," ICS, 126.25.24.

Confucius continues by defining in more detail what he means by ghosts and spirits:

> Everything that is born will die. When one dies, one returns to the ground. This was called the "ghost". The bones and flesh wither below; hidden, they become the earth of the fields. Their *qi* is sent out above; it becomes radiant brightness. According with the essence of things, instituting the pivot of action, [the sages] clearly named "ghosts" and "spirits", taking them as a pattern for the black-haired people. The populace was thereby awed, and the myriad people thereby submitted.[19]

Humans, like all other creatures, die. Their bones and flesh decompose in the soil; their *qi* ascends into the skies. The sages then named these things "ghost" and "spirit," respectively. As the final line makes clear, the goal of this action was to awe the populace into submission.

But the sages felt this naming to be inadequate, so they went on to create places of worship:

> The sages took this as still insufficient, so they constructed dwellings and houses, and set up temples and ancestral halls. They thereby differentiated closer and more distant kinship, and closer and farther removed in terms of descent. [The sages] taught the people to turn to the past and look back to the beginning, no longer forgetting where they came from. The populace submitted to this and therefore obeyed with greater urgency.[20]

This, too, brought the populace into submission.

The sages then created rituals for each of the parts of the deceased:

> When these two ends were established, they responded with two rituals. They set up the morning service, burning fat and manifesting it with the radiance of [burning] southernwood. They thereby responded to the *qi*. This taught the populace to return to the beginning. They offered millet and rice, and served liver, lungs, head, and heart, presenting them and separating them into two bowls, and supplementing them with sacrificial wine. They thereby responded to the earthly souls (*po*). This taught the people to love one another, and taught superiors and inferiors to utilize their dispositions. This was the utmost of ritual.[21]

The sacrifices to the *qi* are performed in order to teach the populace to focus on their ancestors—that from which they came. And the offerings to the earthly souls are undertaken to train their dispositions.

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[19] *Liji*, "Jiyi," ICS, 126/25/25–27.
[20] *Liji*, "Jiyi," ICS, 126/25/28.
[21] *Liji*, "Jiyi," ICS, 126/25/29.

Although the text does not specify, the sense would appear to be that the offerings to the earthly souls in the tomb are to be made to emphasize the feelings of love and familial hierarchy that one should normatively have held for the deceased, while those to the *qi* were done to inculcate a proper sense of the descent of the living from ancestors. Thus, the sages have taken the remains of deceased humans and, through rituals, have used them to instill proper dispositions among the living: what were once ghosts and spirits have now become the means by which to instill a sense of familial hierarchy and ancestral descent.

By linking themselves to the *po* and *qi* in this way through mortuary rites, human rituals designed by the sages do indeed "combine the ghost and the spirit"; the highest teaching of which Confucius spoke at the beginning of the dialogue.

This also means, of course, that the ghosts and spirits are linked by having humans in between, linked through ritual. And we see here one of the themes, mentioned earlier, that appears repeatedly in the *Liji* chapters: the ritual practitioner—in this case the sacrificer—takes the central position, linking the recipients of the sacrifice to himself.

Similar themes concerning mortuary ritual are provided in the "Tangong" 檀弓 chapter. The chapter is of particular interest to us, since the "Tangong" has a section that covers many of the same ritual acts prescribed in the *Yili*.

Like so many of the *Liji* chapters, the "Tangong" defends an affective theory of ritual, in which the concern is to train the dispositions of the practitioners:

> The rites of mourning are the extreme [expression] of grief and sadness. In modulating grief, one accords with changes; this is how the gentleman remembers from where he came.[22]

Immediately we see affective readings of ritual brought to the forefront. Rites serve to modulate the grief of the living and help them to understand from where they came.

The text then turns to the ritual of calling for a return of the souls:

> [Calling for] a return is the way of utmost love; it has the mind of praying in it. Looking for his return from the darkness is the way of seeking him among the ghosts and spirits. The reason that one faces north is that one is seeking for him in the darkness.[23]

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[22] *Liji*, "Tangong," ICS, 23/4.15/11.
[23] *Liji*, "Tangong," ICS, 23/4.15/11–12.

Wailing is equally discussed as a means of expressing extreme sadness—an important issue to keep in mind when we reach the point later in the chapter when the wailing is required to end:

> Bowing and hitting one's head on the floor is [expressing] the extreme pain of grief and sadness. Hitting one's head on the floor is the depth of [expressing] the pain.[24]

Placing food and shells in the mouth of the deceased is similarly explained in terms of the emotions of the ritual practitioners, in this case the living:

> Feeding with the uncooked rice and shells is because one cannot bear the emptiness; it is not in order to feed him, and this is why one uses beautiful things for it.[25]

As with the *Yili*, the key shift is from the mourning period to the sacrifices in the ancestral temple. During the mourning period, one is providing offerings to the corpse, who (if he is the father) is still considered the head of the household. After the burial, sacrifices are given to the tablet in the ancestral temple.

In the "Tangong" chapter, this shift is presented in terms of the dispositions of the living. Right after the burial, the survivor returns and wails at the most extreme, since this is the point at which the deceased has fully left the world of the living:

> Consoling when [the descendant] returns [from the tomb] wailing is because this is the extremity of grief. He returns and there is no one there; he has lost [the deceased]. Therefore it is the most intense.[26]

The sacrifices then begin, since the living cannot bear one day apart from the deceased. But at this stage the wailing must end. One is now not giving offerings to the deceased corpse as if alive; one is now giving sacrifices to the spirit. The former has now been buried with the things it enjoyed while alive. The spirit, now lacking the corpse, ascends to the heavens. From here on, it will be brought down to humans by sacrifices, and it will be represented by the ancestral tablet, which gives the spirit its ranked place in the lineage:

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[24] *Liji*, "Tangong," ICS, 23/4.15/12–13.
[25] *Liji*, "Tangong," ICS, 23/4.15/13.
[26] *Liji*, "Tangong," ICS, 23/4.15/20.

> He is buried to the north, with the head facing north. This was a prominent ritual from the three dynasties, because [the souls of the deceased] go to the darkness. After the internment, the officiating mourner presents gifts, and the invocator leads the impersonator for the sacrifice of repose. After he has returned and wailed, the officiating mourner and the officer inspect the victim for the sacrifice of repose. The officer sets up offerings with a bench and a mat to the left of the tomb. He then returns. At midday is the sacrifice of repose. On the day of the burial, they offer the sacrifice of repose. They cannot bear one day of separation. On this day, they replace the sacrifice of repose for the offerings. The end of wailing is called "completing the event". On this day, auspicious sacrifices replace sacrifices of mourning. The next day, [the tablet] is enshrined with the grandfather.[27]

This shift from mourning the deceased as he existed while alive to sacrificing to him as an ancestor in a lineage must occur quickly. The spirit now returns not to the corpse but rather to the ancestral tablet. The living cannot bear this transition to be long, since, during the transition, the spirit would have no place to which to return:

> Changing to auspicious sacrifices, and on the succeeding day to the enshrining of the tablet, must necessarily occur very close to this day. He [the survivor] cannot bear one day without a place [for the spirit] to return.[28]

An impersonator is then set up to receive the sacrifices. The crying is over, and the name of the deceased can be used no longer. From here on, the sacrifices are to the deceased according to his ancestral rank. One is no longer serving the deceased as if he were alive:

> One performs the sacrifice of repose and sets up the impersonator. There is a bench and a mat. One brings to an end the crying and avoids [the name of the deceased]. The services for him as living are stopped and the services for the ghost begin.[29]

Following the burial, the chief mourner takes the place as head of the household and, if he is the son of the king, as the new ruler. (Unlike the *Yili*, several chapters of the *Liji* focus on the ruler, rather than a *shi*.) He no longer feeds his father as if he were alive but rather sacrifices to him as an ancestor.

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[27] *Liji*, "Tangong," ICS, 23/4.15/21–24.
[28] *Liji*, "Tangong," ICS, 23/4.15/24–25.
[29] *Liji*, "Tangong," ICS, 28/4.52/6.

In the "Zaji" 雜記 chapter, this shift from mourning to sacrificing is discussed in terms of a shift from grieving for the deceased to paying proper filial respect to one's ancestor:

> In sacrificing, one is called "filial son" and "filial grandson." In mourning, one is called "grieving son" and "grieving grandson."[30]

This stage—the stage of sacrifice—is the focus of a great deal of attention in several of the *Liji* chapters. The "Jitong" 祭統 for example, emphasizes that, once one reaches the stage of sacrifice, it is the chief mourner—the sacrificer—who occupies the center, feeding the ancestors above and, in a different way, feeding those below. But, in both cases, the feeding occurs in a form that defines a hierarchy in which the sacrificer is the primary figure. (And, tellingly in this regard, the example emphasized in the "Jitong" is not a *shi* but rather the ruler.) Let us begin with the offerings above.

The chapter makes a great deal of the fact that the impersonator is normally the son of the chief mourner. If the sacrificer is properly filial and approaches his own son as if that son were the sacrificer's father, then the proper feelings of filiality are also inculcated into the sacrificer's son, as he serves the role of impersonating the sacrificer's father:

> Now, according to the way of sacrificing, the grandson acted as the impersonator of the king's father. He who was made to act as the impersonator was the son of him who made the sacrifice. The father faced north and served him. By means of this, he made clear the way of a son serving his father. This is the relation of father and son.[31]

Thus, through sacrifice, the sacrificer maintains proper feelings of filiality toward his deceased father, and he in turn helps to inculcate these feelings of filiality in his own son.

Then, when the impersonator rises, the ruler and his main ministers eat the leftovers. (It is important to note here that the impersonator only tastes the food, so the leftovers are in fact almost the entire meal given by the ruler.) After the rulers and his ministers eat the food that was initially given to the ancestors, the ruler leaves as well:

> Therefore, when the impersonator rises, the ruler together with the four ministers eat the leftovers. The ruler rises, and the six great nobles eat; the ministers eat the leftovers of the ruler. The great nobles rise, and the

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[30] *Liji*, "Za ji," ICS, 107/20.12/6.
[31] *Liji*, "Jitong," ICS, 131.26.14.

> eight officers eat. The officers eat the leftovers of the nobles. The officers rise, and each takes his portion and goes out; the [leftovers] are arrayed below the hall. The hundred officials enter and remove it. The inferiors eat the leftovers of the superiors. In general, the way of disposing [of the leftovers] is that with each shift there are more people; one thereby distinguishes the ranks of noble and mean. Thus arises the representations of bestowing and graciousness. Therefore, using these four millet vessels, one sees cultivation within the temple. Within the temple is a representation of the entire realm. Sacrifice is the height of grace.[32]

The ruler thus feeds the ancestors and the populace. Through the former, he inculcates proper feelings of filiality in his son; through the latter, he creates a world in which the populace is fed by the ruler. In both cases, a clear hierarchy is created in which the son gains filial feelings toward his father (now the head of the household), and the remainder of the realm—from his ministers down to the populace—are ranked in hierarchical order according to their distance from the ruler. The ruler's sacrifices to the deceased thus establish his own hierarchical position: the ruler occupies the center of these relationships, serving as the chief mourner of his deceased father and creating a hierarchy below. And, as the text states, the temple is but a representation of the larger realm: symbolically, the entire realm is fed by the ruler.

Thus, if the ruler sacrifices properly, it affects the dispositions of the entire realm: through the reverence of sacrifice, his son will come to obey him and, since he is feeding them as well, the populace will come to think of him as their father and mother:

> Therefore, if his power is flourishing, his intent will be deep. If his intent is deep, his propriety will be displayed. If his propriety is displayed, his sacrifices will be reverent. If his sacrifices are reverent, then none of the sons and grandsons within the borders will dare be irreverent…If his power is slight and his intent light, if he has doubts about his propriety, then, when seeking to sacrifice, he will not be able to be reverent when it is necessary to be so. If he is not reverent when sacrificing, how can he be taken as the father and mother of the people?[33]

The hierarchy of the realm is thus defined by sacrifice. As I have argued elsewhere, these sacrifices given by the ruler to Heaven as well are what allow the ruler to be thought of as the "Son of Heaven."[34] Thus, the ruler

[32] *Liji*, "Jitong," ICS, 131/26.9/7–10.
[33] *Liji*, "Jitong," ICS, 133.26.22.
[34] Michael Puett, "The offering of food and the creation of order."

becomes head of the household, the father and mother of the people, and the Son of Heaven—all positions defined by the dispositions inculcated through the acts of sacrifice. As the "Jiyi" argued:

> Only the sage is able to sacrifice to Di, and only the filial son is able to sacrifice to his parents. "Sacrifice" (*xiang*) is to face toward (*xiang*). One faces toward it, and only then can one sacrifice to it. Therefore, the filial son approaches the impersonator and does not blush.[35]

If one is truly filial to one's deceased father, and can approach one's son as if he were that deceased father, then one can truly sacrifice. And if the ruler can approach Di as one's father, then the ruler can truly sacrifice to Di as well.

In short, sacrifice, if done properly, affects the dispositions such that practitioners unite with the remains of the dead (combining the ghost and spirit, as the "Jiyi" states), inculcate filiality in the younger generation, and come to think of the ruler as both the father and mother of the people and the Son of Heaven. As the "Jitong" argues:

> Of all the ways of ordering humans, none are more urgent than the rites. The rites have five constants; none are more important than sacrifice. Sacrifice is not something that comes from outside; it emerges from inside, and is born in the heart. The heart is moved, and one expresses it with rites. Therefore, only the worthy is able to exhaust the meaning of sacrifice. The sacrifices of the worthy necessarily receive blessings. But this is not what the world means by blessings. Blessing means completeness. Completeness is the name of the myriad accordings. When there is nothing not accorded with, this is called completeness. This is to say that internally one exhausts oneself and externally one accords with the way. The loyal subject thereby serves his ruler; the filial son thereby serves his parents. Their basis is one. Above one accords with ghosts and spirits; externally one accords with rulers and elders; internally one is thereby filial to one's parents. As such, it is called completeness. It is only the worthy who is able to be complete. Only after one is able to be complete is one able to sacrifice. Therefore, the sacrifices of the worthy bring about his sincere good faith and his loyal reverence. He expresses these with offerings, puts them in practice with the rites, settles them with music, arranges them at the right time, and brightly offers them. And that is all. He does not seek for himself. This is the heart of a filial son.[36]

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[35] *Liji*, "Jiyi," ICS, 126/25.6/7.
[36] *Liji*, "Jitong," ICS, 129/26.1/25–130/26.2/1.

In short, with sacrifice, the sacrificer becomes the center, linking both ancestors and descendants. And, if he is the ruler, he links, by the exact same processes, both Heaven and the populace.

The Zhouli

In contrast to the detailed prescriptions of the *Yili*, and the theories of ritual found in the *Liji*, the sole concern of the *Zhouli* is to define state control over specialists, including ritual specialists. The section that is of interest to these issues is that of the official of the spring, who is put in charge of cults. The section opens with a characteristic claim about the king establishing the state:

> It is the king who establishes the state, distinguishes the quarters and rectifies the positions, structures the state and aligns the fields, sets up the offices and designates the functions. He thereby serves as the pivot for the populace. He thereupon institutes the Official for Spring, the minister of cult, to employ and take charge of his subordinates, and to supervise the rituals of the territories, so as to assist the king in bringing harmony to the territories and states.[37]

The text elaborates:

> The function of the main minister of cult is to supervise the rituals of the heavenly spirits, human ghosts, and the earthly shrines so as to assist the king in establishing and protecting the territories and states.[38]

The text then lists the officials who are under the jurisdiction of the minister of cult.

No interest is shown concerning the proper behavior of the practitioners, or in providing a theory as to why ritual should be performed and how it would lead to order in the political realm. The only concern for political order is through the creation, by the ruler, of a proper hierarchy of officials. If mortuary rituals are to be performed, the sole concern of the authors of the *Zhouli* is that the functions of the officials involved be properly delineated and properly defined within the hierarchy.

Despite this difference, however, there is a similarity between the *Zhouli* and the *Liji*: both are concerned, at the level of the ruler, with the process of centering, of defining everything in terms of how it

[37] *Zhouli*, "Chunguan," ICS, 3.0.
[38] *Zhouli*, "Chunguan," ICS, 3.0.

relates to the ruler at the center. In the case of the *Zhouli*, the concern is with the ruler defining himself as the pivot by organizing a hierarchical order around him, whereas in the case of the *Liji* chapters under consideration, the concern is with the ruler defining himself as the center by means of the dispositions instilled through ritual action. But a somewhat counter-intuitive similarity holds as well.

Appropriations of the ritual classics

These features of the texts allow us to see the very different ways each came to be appropriated later, as well as some of the ways they could at times be combined.

One of earliest significant utilizations of the *Liji* at court came about during the extraordinary court debates in the 30s BC. At issue was the imperial ritual system that had been instituted by the First Emperor of Qin and systematized during the reign of Han Wudi. In this system, the ruler would take direct control of ritual sites by personally circulating through the empire and performing sacrifices to the local spirits. It would culminate in the performance of the *feng* and *shan* sacrifices. With Wudi, the final result of the ritual system would be his own ascension to the heavens as an immortal. The system, not surprisingly, came to epitomize the extreme imperial centralization that characterized Han Wudi's reign, in which the ruler would (hopefully) maintain direct control over all land.

In these debates, figures such as Kuang Heng and Zhang Tan called for a repeal of the Wudi ritual system and a return to the practices of the Zhou. More explicitly, they called for a return to the system of ancestor worship of the Zhou as well as a return to the Zhou practices of sacrificing to Heaven and Earth on the southern and northern axes of the capital, instead of having the ruler personally circulating throughout the realm performing local sacrifices. The implication of such a ritual system is that the ruler would thus remain in the capital, and the state would not attempt to control the local cults. In other words, the imperial system in which the empire would directly control all land would be dissolved, and the state would return to the more restricted form of statecraft associated with the Zhou.

These arguments were drawn from texts like the *Shangshu* and the *Liji*. An example is the following memorial, which begins with a reference from the "Jifa" chapter of the *Liji*:

> "Burning victims on the great circular altar is to sacrifice to Heaven; burying victims at the square altar is to sacrifice to Earth." An offering in the southern suburb is the means of determining the position of Heaven. Sacrificing to Earth on the square altar, situated in the northern suburb, fixes the position of *yin*. The position for each of the suburban sacrifices is located to the south and north of where the sage king resides.[39]

The model given here was one concerned with centering, with the ruler establishing a center at the capital and thereby determining the position of everything else, as opposed to an imperial model whereby the ruler takes direct control over (and therefore physically travels to) all of the land within the realm.

The court went back and forth, but finally, in 31 BC, the ritual system of Wudi was abolished, and a new system, based upon a reading of *Liji* and *Shangshu*, was put in its place.[40]

The extensive proposals put forth during these debates give us a powerful snapshot of the very different ways that the *Liji* was being appropriated and utilized. It is clear that, by the end of the Western Han, the *Liji* had already become a significant text. As Timothy Baker has argued:

> Thus it appears highly likely that the term *liji* 禮記 had current usage by the latter part of the Western Han to indicate a text that corresponded, to some greater or lesser extent, with the received text of the *Liji*. That all of these instances in the *Hanshu* occur late in the dynasty, together with the observation that this term does not appear in the *Shiji*, indicates that it probably evolved in the late Western Han, subsequent to the editorial activities of Liu Xiang and Liu Xin. That all of the quoted text corresponds, generally quite closely, with the transmitted *Liji*, and all three of the chapter titles mentioned correspond to ones in the transmitted version, with the text following two of them corresponding to the current version, indicates that by this point in the Western Han the version(s) of the *Liji* that existed had a reasonable correspondence with the one which we

[39] *Hanshu* "Jiaosi zhi," 25B.1254.

[40] For the late Western Han ritual reform, see Michael Loewe, *Crisis and conflict in Han China: 104 BC to AD 9* (London, 1974); Martin Kern, "Ritual, text, and the formation of the canon: historical transitions of *wen* in early China," *T'oung Pao* 87.1–3 (2001), 43–91; Wang Baoxuan, *Xihan jingxue yuanliu* (Taibei, 1994); Marianne Bujard, *Le sacrifice au Ciel dans la Chine ancienne: théorie et pratique sous les Han occidentaux* (Paris, 2000); Timothy Baker, "The imperial ancestral temple in China's Western Han dynasty: institutional tradition and personal belief" (PhD dissertation, Harvard University, 2006). I have also discussed the debates in chapter eight of Puett, *To become a god: cosmology, sacrifice, and self-divinization in early China* (Cambridge, 2002).

> now have. While it may not have had all of the chapters contained in the transmitted version, there is no indication that it had other material that the current version does not. Furthermore, the frequency with which the passages from the *Liji* are quoted in support of an argument, rather than simply mentioning the text to indicate a line of scholarship, is striking—especially in contrast with the other two ritual classics. Although their titles appear, and we know that they were studied and posts created for their transmission, they are infrequently used in court debates.[41]

The *Yili* also appears (usually referred to as the *Lijing* 禮經) by the end of the Western Han, although not nearly as prominently as the *Liji*.[42] One of the reasons for this is presumably that the *Yili* did not deal with state rituals, and thus was not a helpful text for those concerned with altering the nature of the Han state.

The *Zhouli*, in contrast, did come into prominence in these court debates, but only in the next generation, with the rise of Wang Mang.[43] Following the usurpation of Wang Mang and his declaration of a new dynasty, Wang Mang sought to once again strengthen state authority. However, a return to the imperial system of Wudi was clearly not an option: by far the dominant position in the court culture was to reject the grandiose imperial systems of the Qin and Han Wudi and instead return to the Zhou. Part of the appeal of the *Zhouli* therefore probably came from the fact that it allowed Wang Mang to re-establish strong centralized authority while calling for a return to the Zhou. Thus, Wang Mang based his state offices and taxes on the *Zhouli*.[44] What was before a very minor text, rarely referred to, became a major work at the court of Wang Mang. To quote again from Timothy Baker's study:

> The large number of references to this text under the term *Zhouguan*, together with the quotations corresponding to the transmitted version and lack of non-corresponding quotations, clearly confirm that a text similar to the current version was in active circulation by the end of the Western Han. That these references to the *Zhouli* almost all occur very late in the dynasty, in the Wang Mang period or the two decades preceding that,

[41] Baker, "Imperial ancestral temple," pp. 164–65.
[42] Baker, "Imperial ancestral temple," pp. 163–68, 276–79.
[43] Peng Lin, *Zhouli zhuti sixiang yu chengshu niandai yanjiu* (Beijing, 1991); Jin Chunfeng, *Zhouguan zhi chengshu ji qi fanying de wenhua yu shidai xin kao* (Taibei, 1993), pp. 238–44; Loewe, *Crisis and Conflict*; Baker, "Imperial ancestral temple," pp. 163, 280–84.
[44] *Hanshu*, pp. 4136, 1180.

> and essentially all by or related to Liu Xin or Wang Mang clearly show that its popularity lay in that political camp.[45]

In short, both the *Liji* and *Zhouli* came into (relative) prominence at the end of the Western Han dynasty, with a shift in court culture aimed at restoring the ritual system of the Zhou dynasty. Both texts in question became associated, albeit in different ways, with that restoration.

It is, however, clear from these court debates that the texts could be read to argue in favor of quite different proposals as to precisely what rituals should be standardized at the court and how the realm should be organized. This is hardly surprising, considering the disparate nature of the texts and the fact that few actual ritual prescriptions are contained in any of the texts but the *Yili*, which is also the one text not concerned with state ritual.

Ban Gu makes much the same point in one of his own summaries of the debates. I will quote from Timothy Baker's translation:

> The *situyuan*, Ban Biao, says: "The Han followed upon the interruption of learning at the fall of the Qin, and the ancestral system was established in conformance with that time. Beginning with the (emperors) Yuan and Cheng, scholars were very numerous; Gong Yu (proposed) abolishing ancestral temples, Kuang Heng changed the rituals of the *jiao* sacrifices, He Wu established the *san gong*, and afterwards the number (of proposals) redoubled, (they were) multifarious and with no established (point of view). Why was this? The ritual texts were fragmentary, the systems of antiquity and the current times differed, (so) each (scholar) had his own school of interpretation, and it was not easy to decide for any one side. As one reviews the opinions of those Confucians, Liu Xin was (the most) widely read and sincere."[46]

After the restoration of the Han dynasty, the notion of returning to the Zhou continued to occupy a prominent place at court. The Eastern Han court was extremely weak, and returning to the imperial forms of governance associated with the Qin and Han Wudi was not a serious option. In this context, the ritual compendia continued to be utilized in court debates, as figures exploited the complexities of the visions of ritual and statecraft in these texts to construct their arguments. As a result, the ritual compendia, and particularly the *Liji* (now recognized as one of the Five Classics) became increasingly important at the court.

[45] Baker, "Imperial ancestral temple," p. 163.

[46] Translation by Baker, "Imperial ancestral temple," pp. 272–73. The quotation is from *Hanshu*, "Wei Xian zhuan," 43.3130–31.

Accordingly, commentaries to the three ritual texts also proliferated during the Eastern Han. One of the most audacious, and ultimately the most influential of these commentators was Zheng Xuan, who argued that the three ritual compendia were all accurate and were in fact describing a single ritual system that existed in antiquity. It is important to remember that at the time this was hardly an accepted view.

Zheng Xuan's operating assumption was that ritual practice in antiquity was unified. Thus any seeming contradiction in the surviving fragments is simply a result of poor transmission or inadequate knowledge on the part of the latter-born. A proper hermeneutic thus involved collating the ritual compendia and seeking an underlying unity.

Both the *Liji* and *Yili* also came to be appropriated over the course of the Eastern Han by elite families. Miranda Brown has demonstrated the extremely varied ways in which the texts were appropriated in the Eastern Han for mortuary ritual.[47] And Patricia Ebrey has done excellent work in tracing the different ways in which the ritual texts were utilized in organizing families from the Eastern Han onward.[48]

These debates over the nature, reliability, and unity (or lack thereof) of the ritual compendia continued after the Eastern Han, and would continue to play a significant role in the debates over the nature of the state and the proper ordering of society. Keith Knapp, for example, has provided a very helpful study of the employment of notions of filiality in the post-Han period, notions that figure prominently in the *Liji*.[49]

For late imperial China, Angela Zito has done an excellent analysis of the uses of the sacrifice chapters of the *Liji* at the Qing court, and Thomas Wilson has reconstructed aspects of late imperial sacrificial practice.[50]

The *Zhouli* would also continue to play a major role in later Chinese history, most notably by Wang Anshi.[51] For the Southern Song, Jaeyoon

[47] Miranda Brown, *The politics of mourning in early China* (Albany, 2007).

[48] Patricia Ebrey, *The aristocratic families in early imperial China: a case study of the Po-Ling Ts'ui family* (Cambridge, 1978) and Patricia Ebrey, *Confucianism and family rituals in imperial China: a social history of writing about rites* (Princeton, 1991). See also David Johnson, *Medieval Chinese oligarchy* (Boulder, 1977).

[49] Keith Knapp, *Selfless offspring: filial children and social order in medieval China* (Honolulu, 2005).

[50] Angela Zito, *Of body and brush: grand sacrifice as text/performance in eighteenth-century China* (Chicago, 1997); Thomas Wilson, "Sacrifice and the imperial cult of Confucius," *History of Religions* 41.3 (2002), 251–87.

[51] For a study of the uses of the *Zhouli*, see Jin Chunfeng, *Zhouguan zhi chengshu ji qi fanying de wenhua yu shidai xin kao* (Taibei, 1993).

Song has explored the ways that constitutional issues were debated through, among other things, the *Zhouli*.[52]

Although a full history of these debates and utilizations of the ritual compendia is beyond the bounds of the present essay, one final appropriation that should be mentioned is the Neo-Confucian utilization of the "Zhongyong" and "Daxue." Here the disparate nature of the *Liji* is not denied but rather embraced. Both texts were taken out of their position in the *Liji* and read separately as constituting the line of thought of Zisi, and formed with the *Analects* and *Mencius* the Four Books.

Future directions for scholarship

The increased work that has been done using archaeological materials to reconstruct early ritual practice should not lead to a neglect of the arguments of the ritual texts. On the contrary, the more we learn about the background against which these texts were written, the more we can understand the significance and implications of the arguments developed in the texts.

Much more work should also be done with the later appropriation of these materials: how and why the texts were read and utilized in different periods of Chinese history. More work therefore also needs to be devoted to the commentarial traditions, explaining how and why various commentators read the texts as they did and explaining how and why particular commentaries became significant at court.

Finally, it should be pointed out that China is one of the traditions in the world, like South Asia and the West, which has a long history of theoretical writings on ritual. On top of the historical work of tracing out how and why these theories have been utilized in Chinese history, more work should also be done in taking this body of theory seriously as theory, exploring how the material could be brought to bear on contemporary debates on theory, and exploring comparisons between theories that emerged in China with those that emerged in South Asia and the West.[53]

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[52] Jaeyoon Song, "Tensions and balance: changes of constitutional schemes in Southern Song (1127–1279) discourse on government" (PhD dissertation, Harvard University, 2007).

[53] For a preliminary attempt to take early Chinese ritual theory seriously as theory, see Michael Puett, "Innovation as ritualization: the fractured cosmology of early China,"

In short, the ritual compendia are a tremendously rich repository of material for historical, theoretical, and comparative work. We have only begun to explore them.

Cardozo Law Review 28.1 (October 2006), 23–36; and Robert Weller, Adam Seligman, Michael Puett and Bennett Simon, *Ritual and its consequences: an essay on the limits of sincerity* (Oxford, 2008), pp. 17–42 and 179–82.

CLASSICS WITHOUT CANONIZATION: LEARNING AND AUTHORITY IN QIN AND HAN

Michael Nylan

溫故而知新—*Zhongyong*

What authority was invested in a text reputed to be a *jing* 經? Did the type of authority claimed for a *jing* depend upon the nature of its contents? What assumptions did Qin and Han persuaders make about the authors of *jing*? Is a *jing* closer to a "classic," a "canon," or a "scripture" during Qin and Han, since these words carry different connotations?[1] How helpful or misleading are the modern analogies constructed between the Bible and the Five Classics traditionally associated with Confucius (551–479 BC) as editor or author?[2] And to what degree does the term "Confucian clerics" aptly describe Qin and Han classicists (Ru 儒) in office?[3] These are but a few of the questions that students of early China would like to see put to the Five Classics (*wujing* 五經)[4] corpus but also to all the texts labeled *jing*.

Two sets of resources, the excavated manuscripts and the electronic databases, confront modern students of classical learning with all that they do not yet know. The excavated materials have helped us stitch together exciting new narratives about early divination practices,

[1] All English definitions of the word "canon" entail a fixed and "relatively unchangeable" corpus, while "scripture"—suitable in some contexts, as when we speak of liturgies based on the Classics—is highly unsuitable in most Qin and Han contexts where the religious dimension of the Classics is not taken to be the reason for their elevation to *jing* status. I wish to express my thanks here to Christian de Pee and Griet Vankeerberghen for their comments on this essay.

[2] As the "Greeks did not write classics, canons, or memorials," as noted in Geoffrey Lloyd and Nathan Sivin, *The Way and the Word: science and medicine in early China and Greece* (New Haven, 2002) (hereafter *Way/Word*), p. 61, the Bible is the usual comparison invoked in relation to the Five Classics. See John B. Henderson, *Scripture, canon, and commentary: a comparison of Confucian and Western exegesis* (Princeton, 1991).

[3] "Confucian clerics" is the term promoted by Clart and Goossaert for Qing "officials of the state" following the classics, as explained in Vincent Goossaert, "1898: the beginning of the end for Chinese religion?," *Journal of Asian Studies* 65.2 (May, 2006), 307–35.

[4] NB: the term *wujing* refers also to the Five [Moral] Constants.

military strategies, the application of the laws and the administration of the empire and family, but when it comes to classical learning, they have done little more than to confirm the early existence and circulation of authoritative writings that ultimately became part of the Five Classics.[5] Setting aside the murky provenance of what many regard as the most exciting of the finds, the text labelled "Kongzi explains the *Songs*" ("Kongzi shi lun" 孔子詩論) and the over-hasty identification of the four so-called "Yellow Emperor classics,"[6] two intractable problems remain: first, that the finds to date are too few in number and too scattered in time and space to allow confident assertions to be made about a subject as complex as classical learning; and second, the mere presence of *jing* or partial proto-*jing* in tombs cannot reveal much about the early social practices of those texts or the perceived connections between the *jing* and non-*jing* found in the same tomb.[7] The electronic databases only

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[5] For a complete list of the excavated manuscripts, see the Websites bamboosilk.org and Enno Giele's *Database of early Chinese manuscripts* (www.lib.uchicago.edu/early china/res/databases/decm).

[6] See, e.g., Robin D.S. Yates, *Five lost classics: Tao, Huang-Lao and Yin-yang in Han China* (New York, 1997); Nathan Sivin, "The myth of the naturalists," in *Medicine, philosophy and religion in ancient China. Researches and reflections* (Aldershot, 1995), p. 20; Mark Csikszentmihalyi and Michael Nylan, "Constructing lineages and inventing traditions through exemplary figures in early China," *T'oung pao* 89 (2003), 1–41. Note the degree of interpretation required to produce today's critical editions, as evidenced by a single ten-strip manuscript from Mozuizi M18 that has generated no fewer than nine different solutions for the strip sequence. See Enno Giele, "Excavated manuscripts: context and methodology," forthcoming in *China's early empires: a supplement to* The Cambridge history of China, vol. 1. Scott Cook comments upon the illogicality in recent scholarship, both Chinese and Western, that privileges excavated writings above received texts, on the one hand, while insisting upon the "oldest continuous civilization of China" on the other, in *Guodian Chu jian xian Qin ru shu hong wei guan* (Taibei, 2006), Intro.

[7] Most scholars in the field are using as working hypotheses: (1) Texts circulated in much smaller units than today, something on the order of a chapter or an essay in today's books, presumably because of the sheer bulkiness and weight of the bamboo slips in use during Qin and Han. (2) In many cases, originally separate writings came together in larger compilations only in late Western or Eastern Han (the *Liji* is one example.) (3) Texts seem to have been edited repeatedly during the Han and post-Han periods, with the result that authoritative editions appeared only with the advent of mass printing, in the Song. (4) Moreover, early editors were expected to make far more substantive emendations to texts than would be acceptable in publishing circles today. (5) Variations in the orthography of the *jing*, including the Five Classics, continued long after the official "unification of script" in 221 BC, and some of these variants certainly affected the interpretation of individual passages in authoritative works. (6) Thus Qin and Han witnessed the proliferation of reference tools, as well as major changes in the formats of writing and in writing technologies, all of which would have affected the reception of the *jing*.

underscore the lack of standardized usage for such crucial terms as *jing* and Ru in the pre-Han and Han literature. Perforce, many scholars have taken to describing the changing fashions in interpretations of the *jing*,[8] while others have highlighted the polemical nature and inherent contradictions recorded in the short accounts in the received literature devoted to classical learning, the "Six forms of expertise" ("Liujia" 六家) attributed to Sima Tan 司馬談 in the *Shiji*, and the introductory remarks to the "Forest of classicists" ("Rulin" 儒林) chapters in the three standard histories: *Shiji* 史記, *Hanshu* 漢書, and *Hou Hanshu* 後漢書.[9]

This essay advances one view of classical learning that is consistent with the sources now at hand: that there was no canonization of *jing* (Classics or classics), if "canonization" mandates a stable text and a belief in the inerrancy of a particular *jing* or corpus of *jing*.[10] This view acknowledges that (a) the works designated as *jing* (including the Five Classics themselves) were not fixed in contents, format or orthography during the period under consideration;[11] (b) the proliferation of *jing*

On these issues, see, e.g., Marc Kalinowski, "La production des manuscrits dans la Chine ancienne," *Asiatische Studien/Études asiatiques* 59.1 (2005), 131–68; Tian Xiaofei, *Tao Yuanming and manuscript culture: the record of a dusty table* (Cambridge, 2005); Susan Cherniack, "Book culture and textual transmission in Sung China," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 54.1 (June, 1994), 5–108; Ronald Egan, "To count grains of sand on the ocean floor: changing perceptions of books and learning in the Song dynasty," unpublished conference paper for "First impressions: the cultural history of print in Imperial China," Harvard University, June 25–27, 2007; and Imre Galambos, *Orthography of early Chinese writing: evidence from early Chinese manuscripts* (Budapest, 2006).

[8] See Matsukawa Kenji, *Lunyu sixiang shi* (Taibei, 2006); John Makeham, *Transmitters and creators: Chinese commentators and commentaries on the* Analects (Cambridge, 2003); Wang E., *Liji chengshu kao* (Beijing, 2007); Robert Ashmore, "Word and gesture: on *xuan*-school hermeneutics of the *Analects*," *Philosophy East and West* 54 (Oct., 2004), 458–88; Michael Nylan, "The shifting center: the original 'Great Plan' and later readings," *Monumenta Serica Monograph Series* 24 (May, 1992). Less persuasive to this author are works that try to discern discrete strata within a single text, as those efforts tend to import many anachronistic assumptions into their analysis.

[9] See, e.g., Kidder Smith, "Sima Tan and the invention of Daoism, 'Legalism,' et cetera," *Journal of Asian Studies* 62.1 (Feb. 2003) 129–56; Michael Nylan, "The *chin wen/ku wen* (New Text/Old Text) controversy in Han," *T'oung pao* 80 (1994), 83–145; "The *ku wen Documents* in Han times," *T'oung pao* 81 (1995), 1–27. This essay is attributed to Sima Qian in Yang Xiong's *Fayan* 7/8, however. References hereafter are to Han Jing 韓敬, *Fayan zhu* 法言注 (Beijing, 1992).

[10] For three of many examples arguing that the *Documents* are not inerrant, see *Mencius* 7B/3; *Kongcongzi* 2.4.17–25; and *Fayan* 5/9.

[11] That the sequence and texts of the *Songs* was roughly "fixed" before Han may be ascribed to the *Songs*' function in diplomacy, as well as to its rhymes and meter. Presumably that is one reason why the *Songs* was listed first of the Five Classics in the so-called "Modern Script order." See Nylan, *Five Classics*, chap. 1. That the orthography of the Five Classics corpus was not entirely fixed, however, is attested in Martin Kern,

before and during Han meant that they competed for attention and authority in society; (c) the specific rubric of the "Five Classics" came into use relatively late, via the writings of Yang Xiong 揚雄 (53 BC–18 AD) and his contemporaries; and (d) while the *jing* were revered by some during Han, the sources of their authority were hardly uniform.[12] It suggests further that the function and status of the Five Classics changed over the course of Western and Eastern Han, such that a review of the history of reception for any individual *jing* within the Five Classics corpus indicates major shifts in interpretive focus over time.[13] As will become clear, the Five Classics corpus was hardly immune to challenges during Western or Eastern Han. Instead, the Classics were threatened, again and again, by charges that they were either irrelevant to the contemporary political and social world or that they did little to alter or divert the governing elites' primary concern with order, legitimacy and wealth. Needless to say, this catchphrase "classics without canonization" does not deny the existence or importance of many *jing* texts, including the Five Classics, during Qin and Han, though it does presume the likelihood that few, if any of the texts that we hold today in our hands are identical with the texts bearing the same titles in the classical era. Emendations such as Du Yu's to the *Zuozhuan* are entirely relevant here, as are a host of other changes in content, format, size, script, layout and medium,[14] and additions, deletions and emendations were being made to the Five Classics right up to the very end of Eastern Han (and after), as authoritative traditions came to be included with or separated from a given Classic.

"Methodological reflections on the analysis of textual variants and the modes of manuscript production in early China," *Journal of East Asian Archaeology* 4.1–4 (2002), 143–81. On the ubiquity of early orthographic variants, see Galambos, *Orthography*, and Robert Harrist, *The landscape of words* (Seattle, 2008), chap. 2, esp. p. 67, which talks of Han materials "bristling with nonstandard forms of characters and oddities of orthography"; and Lü Simian, *Liang Jin Nanbei chao shi* (Shanghai, 2006), pp. 1215–26, on *wenzi*.

[12] One might contrast also the types of authority invested in the apocryphal prediction texts and a mathematical classic.

[13] E.g., see Jeffrey Riegel, "Eros, introversion, and the beginnings of *Shijing* commentary," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 57.1 (June, 1997), 143–77.

[14] D.F. McKenzie and Roger Chartier have argued that the size, script, layout, medium and location of a writing—aspects independent of its basic graphic function of representing speech—determine how its content is received. Two major changes in format immediately come to mind: Du Yu's 杜預 (222–84) decision to cut and splice under the appropriate years the text of the *Zuozhuan*; the invention of the double-column format for commentaries, traditionally attributed to Ma Rong 馬融 (79–166).

To support this view of classical learning in Han, the essay first considers the terms *jing* and Ru during Qin and Han,[15] after which it turns to the contexts and expectations for classical learning in general and Five Classics learning in particular. A third section then focuses on the pronouncements made by Yang Xiong in his *Fayan* 法言 (*Model sayings*; ca. AD 4), not only because Yang's promotion of the Five Classics corpus shaped the Eastern Han and post-Han perceptions,[16] but also because revisionist historians agree in seeing his era as a watershed in the development of classical learning. (Ultimately, Yang's work is even responsible for the modern English convention that assigns upper- or lower-case letters to the *jing* as "classic" or "Classic.") Finally, the essay compares the revisionist and standard narratives about classical learning in Qin and Han, reiterating the unlikelihood, first, that the majority of classicists were "Confucians" (ethical followers of Kongzi) rather than professionals touting their stock-in-trade; and, second, that the classicists routinely sought to be guided by models of the distant past, rather than by recent events. Readers may then be better prepared to credit the significance of the expert testimony of the time, which generally posited no sharp break between the classical learning of Qin and Western Han until Eastern Han.[17]

Defining jing *and* Ru

In the earliest extant texts, such as the bronze inscriptions, the graph *xue* 學 generally means "to imitate superiors" (often royal or noble ancestors). Gradually, the graph acquires the related meanings of "learning" and

[15] Many ideas about classical learning during Qin and Han can be traced back to the Qing and Republican eras. The so-called "evidential research movement," a conservative backlash against those who questioned the historicity of the Classics, has shaped our notions of early China, as have early missionary constructions and the Republican-era scholarship on "national learning" (*guoxue* 國學). Studies include Q. Edward Wang, "Time, history, and Dao," *Notions of time in Chinese historical thinking*, Huang Chunchieh and John B. Henderson, eds (Hong Kong, 2006), pp. 131–53; Goossaert, "1898"; Norman Girardot, *The Victorian translation of China: James Legge's Oriental pilgrimage* (Berkeley, 2002); and Fukui Shigemasa, *Kandai Jukyō no shiteki kenkyū: Jukyō no kangakuka o meguru teisetsu no saikento* (Tokyo, 2005) (hereafter Fukui, *Kandai*).

[16] See Fukui, *Kandai*, pp. 151–52.

[17] Mark Edward Lewis, *The early Chinese empires: Qin and Han* (Cambridge, 2007), pp. 193, 199, remarks that the Eastern Han thinkers regarded many of the Western Han models as "in error," just like those of Qin.

"study." To understand Qin and Han developments in classical learning (*jingxue* 經學), students of those periods have to ask themselves how far their notions of "learning" diverged from the pre-Qin notions of "emulation." Earlier studies have suggested the persistence of performative and moralizing associations for *xue* long centuries after the early empires devised tests to measure levels of learning.[18] Building upon those studies, this section registers three simple but often overlooked points: the term *jing* does not invariably refer to the Five Classics nor does the term Ru invariably refer to "Confucians" preoccupied with Five Classics learning; furthermore, the precise relation of the *jing* to the Ru is hardly self-evident.[19]

In pre-Han and Han literature, *jing* conveys four main meanings besides that of "a classic text": (1) a "constant" (*chang* 常) that is regular and predictable; (2) the "main thread" or "warp" in a fabric, in contrast to "secondary threads" or "woof" (*wei* 緯; *ji* 紀); (3) "to manage," "to arrange" or "to rule"; and (4) "to pass through." Early writers kept all these meanings in mind when they theorized about authoritative texts. Supposedly, the *jing* represented reliable distillations of the "constant rules" and "main models" employed through the ages by recognized experts when they wielded specific arts or techniques (*yi* 藝, *shu* 術, or *dao* 道) in their areas of special competence. The broader and better the results that conceivably accrued from a given set of explications, the greater the likelihood that a text would be designated a *jing*, and that it would subsequently acquire traditions and commentaries that adapted its message to new functions and audiences. It seems to have mattered little during Qin and Han whether the *jing* was devoted to ritual practice, mathematical computation, political calculations, interpretation of the Classics or other sorts of subjects. What mattered was how effective the arts and techniques proved to be in practical application. As only the true expert really understands why and how his techniques work, only he is likely to garner consistently excellent results from his efforts, thereby elevating everyday experience to a fine art that achieves

[18] Michael Nylan, "Textual authority in pre-Han and Han," *Early China* 25 (2001), 1–54; Nylan, "Calligraphy: the sacred test and text of culture," *Calligraphy and context*, eds, Cary Liu and Dora Ching (Princeton, 1999), 1–42; and Martin Kern, "Methodological reflections."

[19] The term *jingxue* 經學 may be an Eastern Han neologism, while Ruxue 儒學 dates to early Western Han at least. See the ICS Ancient Chinese Concordance Series (CHANT) database for pre-Han and Han sources.

a higher rate of success than that available to less-skilled persons who happen to be lucky.[20]

What is most striking about early definitions for the *jing* is that they hardly vary whether the *jing* in question is a technical manual or a part of what would later be dubbed a "Confucian Classic."[21] Not coincidentally, the word *shu* 術 was applied to all arts and skills, including the "arts of the professional classicists" (*rushu* 儒術), which aimed to discern and implement governing of the self and the body politic. Perhaps the greatest obstacle to clear-headed analysis is, then, the propensity of modern scholars, when considering the place of *jing* ("classics") during Qin and Han, to focus almost exclusively on the so-called "Confucian Classics," without realizing that such conflation is anachronistic for the period.[22] A comparison of two studies on two *jing*, the first an early mathematical classic and the second an appended tradition to the *Changes* classic (*Yijing* 易經), underscores the point that the *jing* appellation need not imply an ethical orientation or a dedication to restore a classical past. Karine Chemla, in describing a mathematical classic from the 3rd century AD, has noted that "virtually all" types of textual learning spawned the production of *jing*.[23] According to Chemla, the standard ways of looking at *jing* entailed perceptions that any given classic encompasses the whole of a particular discipline, somehow "exhausting" or encapsulating the entire range of possibilities for perspicacious insight and effective action; also that such perfection invariably results from strict editorial oversight, through which one or more older versions of the *jing* transmitted through the ages has been *substantially* altered through excisions and expansions.[24] The *jing* have all been revised, if not enlarged, the early sources tell us. A *jing*'s specific claims to authority rest on its

[20] *Lüshi chunqiu xin jiaoshi* (Shanghai, 2002), 9.4, pp. 504–13. The *Han Feizi* and *Zhuangzi* point to this, with their metaphor of the "stump-watcher." This is the main argument of *Fayan*, chap. 1.

[21] Han texts do not agree upon which texts were burnt by Qin. See, e.g., Wang Chong, *Lunheng* 7/21a–b, *Lunheng* 28/17b.

[22] Perhaps the fact that the Five Classics corpus is still extant accounts for much. The Classics became the "Confucian Classics" only in the Republican era. See Fukui, *Kandai*, chap. 1.

[23] Karine Chemla, "Canon and commentary: an outlook based on mathematical sources," Preprint 344 in the collection of the Max Planck Institut für Wissenschaftsgeschichte, 2008, http://www.mpiwg-berlin.mpg.de/Preprints/P344.PDF.

[24] See Kalinowski, "La production," on the massive editing of Liu Xiang, ca. 26 BC. Cf. *Shiji* 47.1936, for Kongzi's excision of 9/10 of the *Songs*; *Lunheng* 13/3a; and *Hou Hanshu* (Beijing, 1965), 35.1213, which has Zheng Xuan removing excessive and erroneous materials from the Classics.

purported capacity to identify and explain the "root," "source," "main principles," "key points" or "fundamental operations" that the authors of the *jing* have studied, mastered, wielded and honed via insights gained from their personal experiences. And since a *jing* represents the sum total of knowledge on a particular subject, readers of a *jing*, in seeking to acquire a mastery comparable to that ascribed to the *jing*'s author, imaginatively participate in the original authorial intent said to underlie and inform the text, thereby reiterating and re-affirming the lessons that they perceive to be transcribed.

Thinkers in the classical era[25] mentioned the same points in relation to the authority of parts of the Five Classics corpus, as Willard J. Peterson has demonstrated for the "Xici" 繫辭 or Great Commentary to the *Changes*.[26] On behalf of the *Yijing* and itself, the Commentary claims to constitute a whole world-unto-itself, a world capable not only of elucidating, symbolizing and duplicating cosmic change, but also of participating in it, so that no aspects of phenomenal existence are left outside its domain. The final state of perfection of the *Yijing* is due to the strict editorial oversight of successive sages in and out of office (e.g., Fu Xi, the Duke of Zhou, Confucius). These sages selected and arranged the Classic's visual imagery and literary metaphors in such a way as to insure that the collective traditions duplicated the component parts of the universe and their underlying processes. Thus the sequential structure and major pronouncements of the *jing* evoke the triadic realms of heaven-human-earth (the respective spheres of divinities, people and ghosts), and the processes whereby configured energy or *qi* coheres and disperses.[27] Through study of the formal strategies employed within the *jing*, readers can apprehend both the sagely inspiration for the Classic and the brilliance and clarity of its axioms. And since the "Xici" tradition promises to teach readers to adjust their conduct on the basis of intelligible cosmic principles identified by its sage-authors, avid readers may hope to actualize its "most potent way" of conducting themselves in the world and confirm the correctness of its particular vision.

[25] Defined here as the late 4th century BC to the early 4th century AD (323 BC–316 AD). By 323 BC all the Central States powers had decided to style themselves kings, signaling their intention to unify the known world. The year 316 AD marks the fall of North China to nomadic groups.

[26] Willard J. Peterson, "Making connections: 'Commentary on the attached verbalizations' of the *Book of change*," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 42.1 (June, 1982), 67–116.

[27] See Peterson, "Making connections," A4.4 (trans., p. 100); B6.2 (trans., p. 83).

The similarity of the claims made for these two very different sorts of *jing* argues against the absolute subordination of a classic to a Classic, of the instrumental to the moral, or of present to past models.[28] (As seen below, Yang Xiong's *Fayan* tries to build the case for such subordination, but his views encountered stiff resistance.) That a classic—any classic—must function as a world-unto-itself, weaving seemingly unrelated observations and activities into a satisfying and coherent whole that is at once "simple" and "easy to know,"[29] that formulation we evidently owe to Xunzi 荀子 (d. 238 BC?), the late 3rd century BC thinker. Xunzi's elegant ruminations on the "complete Way" listed the benefits to be gained from identifying certain societal "constants," mastery over which would improve human existence far more than attempts to anticipate myriad exigencies and irregularities. Xunzi's relentless focus on the "constants" meant that the *jing*, as texts whose lessons had stood the test of time, would be consulted as useful summaries of recent experience and observation, as well as repositories of antique wisdom.[30] Small wonder that Han Feizi explicitly stated his goal was to compose a "*jing* for the worthy rulers" of his day 賢主之經.[31]

Certain ideas follow naturally from these shared notions about all *jing*. For example, the attribution of many *jing* (not just the Five Classics) to past sage-rulers and sage-ministers reflects the belief that governing elites will find such texts supremely useful when ordering the body and the body politic. Retranslations and elaborations become necessary over time to shore up an authoritative work's implicit and explicit claims to

[28] A chapter "Encouraging learning" 勸學 appears in the *Shangjun shu* 商君書.

[29] For the phrase "easy to know" 易知, see Peterson, "Making connections," pp. 92–93; and *Fayan* 5/10. In the pre-Qin period, a classic identified with Mozi and his followers was entitled *Mojing* (Mohist Classic), and the classic ascribed to Laozi was dubbed the *Daode jing*.

[30] Geoffrey Lloyd's contrast between appeals to past authority and demonstrations of practical experience is doubtless overdrawn. Still, the efforts by Mao Chang (2nd c. BC) and Zheng Xuan (127–200), among others, to identify the occasion and context prompting the composition of each piece in each of the Classic(s) on which they commented reflects the belief that the original authorial intent can be ascertained through study of the Classic.

[31] *Han Feizi* 1/15b (*Siku quanshu* ed.). The goal of writing a classic was shared by many Qin and Han authors, as the *Lüshi chunqiu*, *Huainanzi*, and "Xici" commentaries attest. For the *Lüshi chunqiu*, see "Yuan xu" (Postface), 654–661; for the *Huainanzi*, see "Yao lue." Cf. Wang Baoxuan, *Gujin jianzong: Liang Han jingxue* (Taibei, 2001) (hereafter *Gujin*), 2–6.

comprehend all the techniques defining a given field of expertise.[32] By mid-Han, if not before, so many conflicting sayings were in circulation that ordinary people with no more than a smattering of classical learning would have looked to career professionals to sort competing traditions and impose a semblance of order, rendering them once again "simple" and "easy to know."[33] Such views of the *jing* invariably inflate the advantages to be gained through faithful adherence to the excellent methods proposed in the *jing*, whose reward will be well-earned "ease," financial, psychic, physical or all of the above. At the same time, they made it hard to imagine two or more *jing* in competition in the exact field of expertise, insofar as all the authoritative texts agree that there exists only one most efficacious way of operating in a particular arena. That may explain why each of the Five Classics supposedly revealed a single set of methods derived from a single origin and suited to a single realm of operations. While commentaries to a single classic hardly shy away from celebrating it, no extant *jing* makes the hyper-claim to contain all the wisdom needed over the course of a lifetime. Quite to the contrary; characteristic flaws and biases arise, we are told, when one *jing* is studied to the exclusion of others. Over-preoccupation with the *Songs*, they say, leads to a stupid (i.e., artless) simplicity.[34]

In Qin and Han views, the *jing* fulfilled disparate functions, including (1) outlining distinct concepts of personhood and methods for "becoming a person" 成人; (2) insuring that the living and the dead "each achieves his proper place" in this life, in cultural memory, or in the afterlife; (3) facilitating the dynamic interrogation of the person, his motives and his presumptions; (4) building communities grounded in shared perceptions and ideals; (5) reconciling personal passions with the demands

[32] For transmission as translation, see Scott L. Montgomery, *Science in translation: movements of knowledge through cultures and time* (Chicago, 2000), chap. 1.

[33] Even before Qin and Han, there is the sense that "students are drowning" in what they have heard of the past (see *Shiji* 68.2229 and *Shiji* 130.3288). As Yang Xiong writes, "Those prone to exaggeration pile it on until one tale is better than the last" (*Fayan* 6/20). *Fayan* 7/7 meanwhile attributes complaints to Sima Qian (not Sima Tan) that "the Five Classics are not as concise as Laozi": "In a lifetime of study, one could not deal thoroughly with all their changes; to the end of one's life, one could not get to the bottom of the tasks." The perceived surfeit of traditions was considered both a blessing (as disparate traditions could be checked against one another) and a curse (as ever more information had to be sifted through).

[34] See *Liji*, "Jingjie" (Legge, II, 255). Even too much *Chunqiu* can lead to insubordination, presumably because Confucius criticized the Lu rulers in that text. (The *Liji* is cited according to James Legge, *The texts of Confucianism, part III: the Li Ki 1-X* [Oxford, 1885].)

of public life; (6) dispelling diseases; (7) providing the textual basis for divining about the future; and (8) supplying the talismans, charts and revelations needed to protect or support a family line. But since many thinkers reckoned the highest form of intellectual endeavor to be the sorting of the myriad things of phenomenal existence into discrete and manageable *lei* 類 ("categories") for the purpose at hand, many *jing* concern themselves with definitions and distinctions even as they frame theories designed to guide conduct. Ergo the typical comparison made between the *jing* and the carpenter's square or compass; the *jing*, like these simple yet effective tools, provided an objective standard by which to gauge a person's proximity to perfection.[35]

In the pre-Qin period, the authoritative texts or *jing* seem to have been the teachings ascribed to recognized masters or *zi* 子, one of whom was Kongzi. This conflation of *jing* and *zi* ("masterworks") should hardly surprise us, for both aimed to provide the governing elite with reliably excellent standards or rules for behavior.[36] The *Zhuangzi* provides one illustration, for while the *Zhuangzi* was not officially dubbed a state-sponsored *jing* until the Tang period, its early proponents and opponents agreed that the compilation represented a masterful vision of the world that mandated the use of certain techniques, as is evident from the *Xunzi* onward.[37] During Qin and Han, debates erupted over the inclusion of certain texts in the *jing* category, presumably because it was much harder to decide what qualified by contemporaries and near-contemporaries. But since all the *jing* were to be employed in roughly similar ways to similarly practical ends, this essay adopts the translation of "classic" for all *jing*, even as it retains the conventional

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[35] As Hui-chieh Loy, "The moral philosophy of the *Mozi* 'core chapters' " (PhD thesis, University of California at Berkeley, 2006), chap. 4, puts it, *confidence* in the former claim (that a carpenter's square is a fit criterion for judging squareness) becomes the *basis* for confidence in the latter claim: that empirical tests can be found for and applied to any problem requiring good judgment.

[36] See, e.g., Yang's remarks on the *Gongsun longzi* in *Fayan* 2/7. NB: No Qin or Han passages allege that a person was elevated to the rank of master purely on the basis of the transcription of his teachings. For example, because Yang Xiong didn't have a high official rank, "therefore they disparaged his writings" 故輕其書, according to *Hanshu* (Beijing, 1962), 87B.3585.

[37] *Xunzi yinde* (Harvard-Yenching sinological index series), supplement no. 22 (Taibei, 1966), 92/25/11 criticizes masterworks that rival the *jing*, including the works of Shen (Dao? Buhai? or both), Mozi, Hui Shi, and the "sayings of the hundred experts" 百家之說.

use of "Classic" (capital "C") for texts in the Five Classics corpus.[38] Incidentally, modern readers confident of their ability to rattle off the list of the Five Classics will be astonished to find variation within the lists of the *jing* included within the sets of Four, Five, Six and Seven Classics, even in late Eastern Han.[39]

When we think of the word *jing* in connection with classical learning, we would probably profit from the adoption of a more capacious view of that term. Nearly all the authoritative texts known from Qin and Han fall into one of four categories: texts with *jing* in the title (e.g., *Taixuan jing* 太玄經, *Huangdi neijing* 黃帝內經; *Xiaojing* 孝經; *Shanhai jing* 山海經; the Mawangdui *Xiangma jing* 相馬經);[40] prose texts whose titles include the authorial honorifics *zi, shi* 氏 or *gong* 公, betokening great respect for the purported author (e.g., *Huainanzi* 淮南子; *Lüshi chunqiu* 呂氏春秋, *Hanshi waizhuan* 韓氏外傳; the *Taishigong shu* 太史公書); the few prose texts that do not fall into these two categories but are attributed to the same experts (e.g., *Fayan* 法言, *Lunyu* 論語); and those few texts usually cited during Qin and Han not by their modern titles but by those of the *jing* (e.g., the *Gongyang zhuan* 公羊傳, which is often cited simply as the *Chunqiu* 春秋).[41] Future research may consider whether the Eastern Han texts with *tong* 通 in the title enjoyed quasi-

[38] By convention, the higher status of the authors conferred a measure of extra authority. The designation of "master" is employed frequently in the *Shiji*, but it is not applied to all individuals said to have authored, edited or compiled texts.

[39] The component parts of the Four, Five and Seven Classics differ from text to text. Seven Classics, for example, are mentioned in three major texts, *Hou Hanshu*, *Sanguo zhi*, and *Huayang guozhi*, but scholars do not agree whether the two "extra" classics are (a) the *Lunyu* and *Music Classic*; (b) the *Lunyu* and *Xiaojing*; or (c) the *Zhouli* and *Liji*. See Wang Baoxuan, *Jin gu wen jingxue xin lun* (Beijing, 2004) (hereafter, Wang, *Jin gu*), p. 45; and Fukui, *Kandai*, pp. 244–49. The designation of "Six Arts" (*liu yi* 六藝) for the "Six Classics" seems to be the earliest set for *jing*. The process by which the Six [Polite] Arts of noblemen became conflated with the Five Classics + a music classic in Western Han is well known; see Nylan, *Five "Confucian" Classics*, chap. 1. The "Yucong 1" and "Liude" texts from Guodian speak of the Six Arts (=? Six Classics) several times; in addition, there is a somewhat ambiguous reference in "Cheng zhi wen zhi." See Jiang Guanghui, *Zhongguo jingxue sixiang shi* (Beijing, 2003), vol. 1, p. 171. The *Bohu tong* pairs each of the Five Classics with one of the Five Constant Virtues.

[40] See *Wenwu* 1977.8. Cf. the *Xianggou jing* 相狗經 (*Physiognomizing dogs classic*) from Yinqueshan.

[41] At present, no consensus exists on the question of how carefully the *jing* were separated from the *zhuan* (traditions and commentaries) and the *shuo* (explications) in Han times. Contrast the conclusions of Wang, *Gujin*, pp. 17, 35, with Fukui, *Kandai*, pp. 202–28. Wang Lingyue, *Weixue tanyuan* (Taibei, 1984), p. 6, points out, that Zheng Xuan does not distinguish the *shuo* from the apocrypha and prognostication texts.

classical authority as comprehensive accounts dealing with a range of subjects vital to the governing elite.

This capacious view of the *jing* may omit some authoritative texts,[42] but it has five distinct virtues in this author's view. First, it does not directly contravene early usage,[43] by asserting the superiority of the Classics over the "classics" or "masterworks" or ignoring the sorts of texts cited as authorities. The extant sources for Qin and Han show that those well-versed in the "sayings of the many experts" continued to be admired.[44] Second, it puts the emphasis where it belongs, on the masters and their efficacious practices, rather than on texts. Third, it requires scholars to define the objects of their inquiry while drawing attention to title changes (as when the *Taishigong shu* becomes the *Shiji*) and to the many missing *jing* (e.g., the pre-Qin *Changes* traditions by Five Masters 五子).[45] Fourth, it stresses that several texts that eventually assumed the status of *jing* did not enjoy it for most of the period under discussion (e.g., *Liji* 禮記, *Zhouli* 周禮). Fifth, it highlights early practices that seldom append the title of *jing* to parts of the Five Classics corpus. Of course, the vast majority of texts in Qin or Han were never candidates for the prestigious title of *jing*, even if their origins were traced to early eras. Whole categories of texts that typically did not acquire the name of *jing* include administrative manuals or records, daily almanacs; legal casebooks, remonstrances, or memorials; and treatises on individual

[42] The definition would exclude, for example, Liu Xiang's *Shuoyuan* and *Lienü zhuan*, though the first work repeats more or less verbatim a very high percentage of the *Hanshi waizhuan* passages, and the second spawned a popular series of tracts by late Eastern Han. The working definition moreover assumes that only two works of poetry (*shi* or *fu*)—the *Shijing* and the *Chuci*—qualify as *jing*, though some *jing* base themselves on these poetic collections (e.g., *Hanshi waizhuan*). The terms *shi* and *fu* were often interchanged in Han texts, as in *Fayan* 2/2–3, 2/6. For standard sectioning for *Hanshi waizhuan*, see James Robert Hightower, *Han shih wai chuan: Han Ying's ilustrations of the didactic application of the* Classic of songs (Cambridge, Mass., 1952).

[43] These four types of texts are clearly regarded as especially authoritative texts in the *Fayan*, but also in Eastern Han compendia. See the *Fengsu tongyi zhuzi suoyin* (Hong Kong, 1996), Preface (1A/1/4), where the interpretive traditions attached to the Classics are said to be mixed up with the sayings of the Hundred Experts. Cf. *Hanshu* 30.1742 on the masterworks' derivation from the Classics.

[44] As late as late Eastern Han, classical masters such as Ma Rong (79–166) were admired equally for their expertise in the Classics and in texts like the *Laozi, Huainanzi* and *Chuci*. See *Hou Hanshu* 60A.1965. For "all the Ru" admiring men of vast erudition, see, e.g., *Hanshu* 64A.2798; *Dongguan Hanji zhuzi suoyin* (Hong Kong, 1994), 16.2/102/13–14.

[45] The fragments of many interpretive traditions are collected in Ma Guohan, *Yuhan shan fang ji yishu* (Taibei, 1967), six vols. NB: Many excavated texts have no titles, and so they have been given titles by their modern editors.

subjects, *lun* 論.[46] Presumably such works were too narrow in scope or limited in time to qualify as *jing*.

If modern historians will agree, in the absence of clear evidence to the contrary, to think expansively about the *jing*, fewer obstacles impede historical analysis. This essay has already alluded to the dangers of conflating the "classics" in Qin and Han with the so-called "Confucian" Classics, since most authoritative texts are ascribed to masters (*zi* 子) other than Kongzi (e.g., Laozi, Zhuangzi, or Guan Zhong),[47] and new candidates for inclusion within this prestigious category were continually generated during Qin and Han, such as the *Lüshi chunqiu*, the *Huainanzi*, the text now known as the *Shiji* and the *Taixuan jing*. The modern equation of "classicism" (looking to past models for present guidance) with "Confucianism" is belied by the routine coupling of the name of Kongzi with that of other culture heroes;[48] also by the fact that not all of the Four, Five, Six, or Seven Classics are associated with Kongzi as author, editor or commentator, a notable exception being the *Yili*, the single *Rites classic* (*Lijing* 禮經) for most of Han.[49] During Qin and Han Kongzi was hardly the Supreme Sage celebrated in later dynasties. He first becomes the object of a state-sponsored cult very late in Western Han, in 1 AD. He is granted *regular* offerings on the local level only in 59 AD, and he is not securely situated within the pantheon of ennobled worthies until 241 AD, that is, after Han.[50]

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[46] For the need for historians to refine terms and define questions, see David Hackett Fischer, *Historians' fallacies: toward a logic of historical thought* (New York, 1970). Many historians of science have assumed that the excavated medical treatises from Mawangdui and other sites must have been "classics" if they were important enough for burial in tombs; that only begs the question of why they were buried in tombs. That no strict genre categories existed prior to the Six Dynasties is the point elegantly made by Paul Kroll, "Literary criticsm and personal character in poetry, ca. 100–300 CE" (forthcoming). NB: There is no *jing* for cooking, presumably because the outcomes in that arena depend no more upon a discipline than upon the ingredients to hand. By the Sui treatises, however, between 20 and 30 titles relate to "nutritional classics" (*shijing* 食經).

[47] See, e.g., *Lunheng* 3/19b for Kongzi as another master.

[48] One common expression is "Kong-Mo" [i.e., Kongzi-Mozi], for which the *Siku quanshu* electronic database gives 360 instances (many from Qin and Han sources, e.g., the *Lüshi chunqiu* and *Huainanzi*); cf. Benjamin Wallacker, "Han Confucianism and Confucius in Han," *Ancient China: studies in early civilization*, David T. Roy and Tsuen-hsuin Tsien, eds (Hong Kong, 1978), 215–28.

[49] The *Yili* was the single *Rites* classic for most of Han, until Zheng Xuan around 200 AD constructed the three *Rites* classics as a single unit. The *Zhouli* received state sponsorship only for brief periods of time during Han. See Nylan, *Five Classics*, chap. 4.

[50] Kongzi does not achieve the rank of king in the Chinese pantheon until 739, despite the Han designation for him as "uncrowned king." See Michael Nylan and Thomas Wilson, *Lives of Confucius* (forthcoming), chaps. 3–5; Michael Loewe, *The men who*

Turning to the Ru 儒, we must ask ourselves whether the Ru who are so closely associated with learning (*xue*) are simply masters of the *jing* in both senses, "constants" and "classics/Classics." A diligent search for all pre-Han and Han instances of the word Ru unfortunately leaves us little wiser. Everybody knows that the Ru once wore funny hats and special clothes and that they used a distinct pronunciation and tone when chanting the *Songs*.[51] One Eastern Han source asserts that "the Ru are the product of learning" 儒者學之所爲也, and that Ru masters "took erudition to be strength" 以學問爲力.[52] Nonetheless, fundamental questions about the Ru identities and aspirations remain unanswered, beginning with the origin of the word Ru ("weakling"?) itself. Early traditions make the initial connotations of Ru derogatory, but the sources cannot agree whether Ru originally signified those who refused to fight in a warrior aristocracy (because they were talkers?), the remnants of the defeated Shang clans in the east or something else entirely.[53] Nor can we know for certain whether anybody went by the appellation Ru before Kongzi,[54] what percentage of the Ru saw themselves as committed to "Confucian" moral teachings,[55] and whether Ru looked to Kongzi mainly as a professional model or as an ethical paragon. Since Ru banked on the utility of classical learning in office-holding, it seems best to settle for the translation of "classicist."[56]

governed China (Leiden, 2005), chap. 10; Henri Maspero, *Daoism and Chinese religion* (Amherst, 1981), p. 136.

[51] *Shiji* 37/2692; *Hanshi waizhuan* 5/5; *Fayan* 13/8. Cf. Robert Eno, *The Confucian creation of Heaven: philosophy and the defense of ritual mastery* (Albany, 1990); Nicolas Zufferey, *To the origins of Confucianism: the Ru in pre-Qin times and during the early Han dynasty* (Bern, 2003).

[52] See *Lunheng* 27/10b; *Lunheng* 13/1a.

[53] Another tradition makes "weakling" a synonym for "bookworm." The word Ru also relates to *zhuru* 侏儒 ("dwarves"), ill-omened creatures. Over time, the connotations attached to Ru improve. See, e.g., *Fengsu tongyi* 11.22/162/1.

[54] *Qian Hanji* 2/25/4b, suggests that the Ru are one group of experts among the "many masters" (nine sorts of experts altogether) who wrote treatises after Kongzi died. *Han Feizi* 19/13a–13b makes Kongzi the model for the Ru arts. *Huainanzi zhuzi suoyin* (Hong Kong, 1992), 11/97/8, associates the rituals of the Lu Ru with Kongzi's arts. A late chapter in the *Zhuangzi*, however, makes Kongzi one of five important masters, separating Kongzi from the Ru. See *Zhuangzi yinde*, Harvard-Yenching sinological index series), supplement no. 20 (Taibei, 1956) 66/24/45.

[55] Contra Lewis, *Early empires*, p. 62. *Fayan* 12/17 distinguishes ordinary Ru from "true followers of Kongzi."

[56] Michael Nylan, "A problematic model: the Han 'orthodox synthesis,' then and now," *Imagining boundaries: changing Confucian doctrines, texts, and hermeneutics*, eds, Kai-wing Chow, On-cho Ng, and John B. Henderson (Albany, 1999), 17–56.

So far as we know, Mencius (tradit. 390–305 BC) was the first person to use the word Ru to describe a subset of the *shi* 士 (men in service) to which he belonged.[57] But after Mencius, the record is muddy, perhaps because the *Songs* and the *Documents* functioned as the cultural coin of the realm. The early Ru hailed mostly from Qi, Lu and Zou (the last being Mencius' home state), but by late Zhanguo, the Ru appear in two camps, that of Qin and Qi versus that of Chu and Lu, following the prevailing political alliances,[58] which may explain some affinities between Chu and Lu writings. The pre-Qin Ru mimicked the nobility in their disciplined study of the Six Polite Arts (*liu yi* 六藝) and their disdain for moneymaking.[59] They arranged local archery contexts, community banquets, and mourning rites,[60] when they were not engaged in disputation.[61] But unification in 221 BC surely presented new challenges to Ru seeking advisoral posts at court, not the least being a need to balance the court's desire to enforce professional standards with the Ru belief that they, "as gentlemen," should not be slaves to convention. Shusun Tong 叔孫通 (d. ca. 188) negotiated this sort of challenge so successfully that Han texts describe him as an "ancestor of the Ru" (the founder of their fortunes). Shusun's method of operation is pertinent here: far from researching and restoring the ancient rites of Zhou, Shusun at the behest of the Han founder undertook to devise Han court rituals on the basis of those of the recently defunct Qin.[62] Afterwards, some Ru managed to parlay their skills in rhetoric and law to some success at the Western Han courts of Wendi, Jingdi and Wudi. In particular, the "Gongyang" reading of the *Chunqiu*, proved fertile ground for judges seeking legal precedents in treason trials and both the *Songs* and *Documents* supplied drafters of documents with literary tropes, figures, and flourishes.

[57] *Mencius* 3A/5; 7B/26; cf. Lloyd and Sivin, *Way/Word*, p. 23. The *Mozi* accuses the Ru of making money from funeral rites, but the relevant passage is not easily dated.

[58] See Wang, *Jin gu*, pp. 19–25, 65–81, 190.

[59] *Hanshu* 83.3388; *Kong congzi zhuzi suoyin* (Hong Kong, 1995), 7.2/75/25, "One ought not to study for the sake of salary" 不爲祿學故也. *Shiji* 124.3181 remarks upon the pretensions of the Ru to be quasi-nobility.

[60] See *Xunzi*, chap. 16 ("Lilun"); *Analects* 3/11. Wang Yinglin, *Han yiwen zhi kaozheng* 2/12a (*Siku quanshu* ed.), notes that the original *Rites* canon, known today as the *Yili*, included no imperial rites. *Hanshu* "Liyue zhi" notes that when the Ru came to devise rites for the emperor, they "extended" those for the *shi* 士. Wang, *Jin gu*, p. 35, asserts that no Ru prior to unification claimed expertise in royal rites, but his argument is circular. One would expect those in Lu to know something about kingly rites because Zhougong, the founder of the Lu state, was treated ritually as king.

[61] *Zhanguo ce zhuzi suoyin* (Hong Kong, 1992), 221/117/18.

[62] *Shiji* 99.2722.

In mid-Western Han, ca. 124 BC, the chancellor Gongsun Hong gave the *minimum* Ru qualification as the ability to explicate a single *jing*.[63] But to reduce the "Ru arts" to book learning or the Ru to scholar-specialists in one or more specific textual traditions obscures far more than it illuminates.[64] One Han passage, for example, has them convivially passing wine around and participating in the "throwing pot" games.[65] Around then, some Ru claimed the authority to advise the emperor on important matters of state, the institution of three state ritual centers (the Biyong 辟雍, the Mingtang 明堂, and the Lingtai 靈臺), and the conduct of the imperial sacrifices and tours of inspection.[66] Others dabbled in portent interpretation, despite the hazards.[67] But during Wudi's reign, few Ru made a success in office aside from Gongsun Hong himself.[68] The reason so many self-described Ru in the reigns after Wudi reached high office remains a mystery, but it may stem from their strategic calls for economic and military retrenchment.[69] Even the most lavish ritual spectacles were far cheaper to launch than costly border wars, and the dynasty that lacked the funds to execute its will by more usual means relished the cultural capital to be gained from dazzling displays of power and authority. In any case, by mid- to late Western and Eastern Han,

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[63] Gongsun Hong, in Wang Chong, *Lunheng* 13/18a. Cf. *Hanshu* 88.3594.

[64] The *Analects* is representative of many *jing* in its preoccupation with practical wisdom and consequent disinterest in book learning as an end unto itself. See Henry Rosemont, "On knowing (*zhi*): praxis-guiding discourse in the Confucian *Analects*," unpublished paper. Xunzi, the most adept promoter of Ru values prior to Qin and Han, cast the recitation of the classical texts as but the first step on a path to social and personal cultivation that ideally ended with ritual mastery. Only gradually do text-based skills—specifically the ability to recite, read, cite, explicate and compare and correlate the *jing*—assume a larger part in defining the Ru classicist, perhaps because so many trained in the Ru arts found themselves excluded from advisoral roles at court during the last century of Eastern Han. On this, see Nylan, "Calligraphy," "Problematic."

[65] *Dongguan Hanji* 9.7/59/17. Cf. *Fengsu tongyi* 11.22/162/1, which says clearly that the Ru are to put into practice the early texts, so that they "establish policies for the present time." The old Ru pre-occupation with ritual practice never abated in Han. As late as 51 BC, by Fukui Shigemasa's count, at least 11 people at court specialized in the *Rites* canons or practices, while only one was assigned to teach the *Yijing*. See Fukui, *Kandai*, p. 225.

[66] The "Wangzhi" 王制 chapter of the *Liji*, which discusses imperial rites, was supposedly composed during the reign of Han Wendi (r. 180–157 BC). Fukui, *Kandai*, p. 64, notes that the Ru failed to make much headway with Wudi because, when consulted, they proved to have nothing useful to contribute.

[67] Yang Xiong and Huan Tan, for example.

[68] *Lü Simian dushi zhaji* (Shanghai, 1982), p. 651.

[69] Guangwu could not easily get a cadastral survey of taxable lands completed, so powerful were the local interests opposing the survey, and his main consorts were all drawn from the ranks of his gentry allies.

a "great classicist" by definition held high office.[70] Hence the rarity of references to Qin or Han Ru famed for their teaching, though large numbers of clients styled themselves "disciples" seeking "guidance" from officials.[71]

A survey of the early sources might be expected to yield a sense of the Ru as a well-defined group, given their purported prominence. But the Ru designation continually shifts, as the one set of Ru is compared, contrasted and conflated with rivals for patronage, such as the Huang-Lao adherents and *fangshi*, the assassin-retainers and legal specialists, the monopolists and money-makers, the prayer-masters and dream diviners and the authors and promoters of apocrypha.[72] The use of the epithet "Man of the Dao" (Daoren 道人) for some Ru suggests the intriguing possibility that the term Ru, like *fangshi*, may be an epithet, rather than a name for a distinct social group or political faction.[73] Ru who gained access to the highest offices had to endure a steady stream of accusations by rivals that they pandered to their superiors' whims and follies, and the Ru were hardly averse to muddying distinctions between groups, so as to tout their more "comprehensive learning."[74] And since even the most fervent proponents of classical learning assumed that "past and present were one,"[75] outmoded models could be jettisoned as

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[70] See *Hanshi waizhuan* 5/5, 5/14. In Eastern Han, candidates for a vacant *Documents boshi* post were tested on their knowledge of (1) political events and policy; (2) heaven's patterns (astronomy and astrology); and (3) *daoshu* 道術 (broad knowledge that facilitated artful action in a range of practical endeavors).

[71] See *Dongguan Hanji* 19.5/3–5, for an official who continued teaching. See *Lü Simian dushi zhaji* (Shanghai; rpt, 1982), pp. 675–78.

[72] See, e.g., *Lunheng* 12/1a–13b, esp. 12/6b on; for Ru vs. legal experts (*wenli* 文吏), *Jinshu* (Beijing, 1974), 30.922–23; *Shiji* 124.3181–82, for "scholars" (*xueshi* 學士) and Ru vs. assassin retainers; *Shiji* 6.263, for the Ru versus *fangshi; Hou Hanshu* 15.573, for Ru versus the apocryphal writers. Sometimes Ru seem to be equated with officeholders, as in *Yantie lun zhuzi suoyin* (Hong Kong, 1994), 4.4/26/20. There is even talk of "immortality Ru" 列仙之儒. Cf. Gu Jiegang, *Handai xueshu shilue* (Shanghai, 1935); Anne Cheng, "What did it mean to be a *ru* in Han times?" *Asia Major* 14.2 (2001), 101–18; Hoshina Sueko, "Kandai ni okeru [Daoshu 道術] no tenkai," *Shirin* 83.5 (Sept., 2000), 33–65, esp. part 1; Wang, *Jin gu*, p. 214; and Fukui, p. 510.

[73] For the term "Daoren," see *Lunheng* 7/12b. The *Lunheng* describes many Ru writings 儒書 that do not appear in the Five Classics corpus.

[74] Both officials and ruler could rally around vague phrases like *zhiyi tongzhong* 執一統眾 ("grasping the one to unify the masses"); the Han texts emphasize "looking for the one thread" 一貫 and "allegiance unified" 歸一, as Matsukawa, *Lunyu sixiang shi* shows.

[75] See, e.g., *Xunzi* 14/5/36; 79/21/29; *Fayan* 5/12. Cf. Griet Vankeerberghen, "Choosing balance: weighing (*quan* 權) as a metaphor for action in early Chinese texts," *Early China* 30 (2005–06), 47–89.

new ones were selected from a range of models inherited from the past. Meanwhile, the Ru continually engaged in attacks on their fellow Ru, castigating them as "petty," as "rotten" or as "debased Ru who disorder the Way and mislead the people."[76]

Ru masters well-versed in multiple *jing* had no trouble integrating disparate traditions in their own teachings,[77] but the evidence for inter-Ru disputes appears early and often. If we consult the sources at roughly hundred-year intervals, we find ca. 136 BC Dong Zhongshu's assessment of the state of classical learning in a memorial to Wudi: "At present teachers propagate strange principles. Our fellow human beings hold to unusual practices. The many experts have idiosyncratic methods, and the conclusions to which they point are not identical."[78] A hundred years later, Yang Xiong described a cacophonous marketplace of ideas prevailing in a world that lacked a truly balanced teacher to weigh contrary claims.[79] A century after Yang, Xu Shen 許慎 (d. 120?), compiler of the *Shuowen* 說文, wrote, "Men all use their private judgment, right and wrong has no standard, while clever opinions and slanted pronouncements have caused considerable confusion among scholars."[80] And a hundred years after Xu, the classical master Ying Shao 應劭 lodged the by-now familiar complaint: "Each and every person has his own mind, and none achieves the proper balance."[81] The more emphasis was put on

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[76] *Analects* 6/13; *Xunzi*, e.g., 14/5/44; 16/6/14; 23–24/8/89–90, for *fu Ru* 腐儒; *Qian Hanji* 27/7a. Cf. "refined Ru" 雅儒 versus "vulgar Ru" 俗儒.

[77] Most of the Ru mentioned in the "Rulin zhuan" specialized in more than one text; others not mentioned there, such as Yan Junping (aka Zhuang Zhun), taught several *jing* texts as well, including, in Yan's case, the *Changes*, the *Laozi*, and the *Zhuangzi*. See *Fayan* 6/19; *Huayang guozhi bu tuzhu*, annot. Ren Naichang (Shanghai, 1987), 10/532–33.

[78] Wang Xianqian, *Hanshu buzhu* (Beijing, 1983), 56/19a (trans. after Michael Loewe, *Divination, mythology and monarchy in Han China* [London, 1994], p. 16, with minor modifications. Cf. Liu Xin's talk, recorded in *Hanshu* 36.1969, about divergent traditions for the *Songs*, *Documents*, and *Chunqiu* in Zou, Lu, Liang and Zhao, with many divergent opinions fueled by the lack of orthographic unity; cf. Galambos, *Orthography*.

[79] *Fayan* 1/12.

[80] SW 15a.4a (postface), as trans. K.L. Thern, *Postface of the Shuo wen chieh tzu, the first comprehensive Chinese dictionary* (Madison, 1956). Cf. Xu Fang's 徐防 famous contemporary statement, from a memorial of 103 AD, which insists that even the "Academicians and students in the Academy…all speak from their own minds, with none following the authority of a school's teaching" (*Hou Hanshu* 44.1500). For similar comments, see *Hou Hanshu* 35.1213, the appraisal of Zheng Xuan; and *Hou Hanshu* 79A.2547, giving a general overview of Eastern Han Ru studies.

[81] *Fengsu tongyi* 4.6/30/6. For other attacks, see Wang, *Jin gu*, chap. 5; cf. *Zhonglun* 1, p. 13, which disparages the "stupid Ru's 'broad learning' which works hard at the names of things or a detailed knowledge of utensils"; ibid., 16, p. 231, which disparages

old learning, the more heated such debates became, with critics charging each other with "subverting the great Way" by "losing the old meaning." Debates erupted over the transmission of all manner of authoritative texts, including the commentaries, neoclassics and classics,[82] no closure resulted from the numerous court conferences convened from 51 BC onward to resolve "differences and similarities" 異同 among the classics and traditions.[83]

The failures of the Ru to convince the emperors of the coherence of their vision or the viability of their plans are well-worn themes in the *Shiji* and *Hanshu*.[84] Convention attributes the inability of the Ru to agree on policy or theory to the dynasty's failure to enforce ideological unity, since unity was an explicit goal of so many influential Han texts, from the *Lüshi chunqiu* and Dong's memorials to Yang Xiong's *Taixuan* and Ying Shao's *Fengsu tongyi* 風俗通義 (comp. ca. 203 AD). More likely, the court saw little advantage in trying to impose ideological conformity upon its potential and actual advisors, for it could more easily control office-holders if they attacked one another. Certainly, one wonders why a court intent upon enforcing an orthodoxy would have chosen to sponsor up to 14 competing interpretive traditions, rather than the works of a single authoritative master (as was done later with the Classics commentaries of Wang Anshi and Zhu Xi).[85] Given the court's disinclination to impose an ideological orthodoxy on its men

"the Ru who practice *xungu*" 訓詁; cf. *Lunheng* 28/1a. *Zhonglun* citations refer to John Makeham, *Balanced discourses* (New Haven, 2002).

[82] For instance, one prominent adherent of a single neo-classic, Yang Xiong's *Taixuan jing*, accused another in the 3rd century of "losing the old meaning" of Mystery Learning. See Lu Ji 陸幾 (261–303), "Shuxuan" 述玄 essay, which accuses Song Zhong 宋衷 (fl. 192–208 AD) of having "subverted the Great Way" in transmitting Mystery Learning.

[83] See, e.g., *Shiji* 12.472.

[84] Wang, *Jin gu*, pp. 90–100, acknowledges this, yet Wang, pp. 176–83, dates the cataloguing of such differences and similarities mainly to Eastern Han, beginning with Jia Kui (30–101 AD) and continuing with the debates between He Xiu 何休 (129–82) and Zheng Xuan (127–200).

[85] Under Wang Anshi, and then from 1313–1904, we may say that the imperial courts sponsored something like an orthodoxy; significantly, no scholars were persecuted for lack of adherence to the prevailing orthodoxy, the Chinese version of orthodoxy being quite unlike that known from medieval, Renaissance and Reformation Christianity. For while the court demanded of its bureaucrats adherence to the orthodoxy, it did not prevent unorthodox views from being circulated via books or taught at private academies. Perhaps the best introduction to the late imperial orthodoxy is Thomas A. Wilson, *Genealogy of the Way: the construction and uses of the Confucian tradition in late imperial China* (Stanford, 1995).

of learning, "classics without canonization" is an apt characterization for Qin and Han.

The context for classical learning during Qin and Han

Sivin and Lloyd in *The Way and the Word: science and medicine in early China and Greece* have set out to write a sociology of knowledge for two early societies of great sophistication. Their analysis posits three main contrasts between the two societies: that the early thinkers writing in Chinese, unlike those writing in Greece, did not believe the major constituents of matter to be hidden to the senses; that they granted more prestige to ritual and moral concerns than to literacy;[86] and that their search for imperial patronage after unification in 221 BC affected both the tone of debate and the number of opportunities for it. Those in the early China field need not agree with every generalization in *The Way and the Word* to welcome Sivin's call to consider the "cultural manifold"—the cultural and institutional settings for the construction of knowledge and learning. Sivin believes that the Qin and Han sources support the following generalizations about collectivities and membership for early China:

1. whereas membership in a lineage of masters and disciples was fundamental, the role played by schools or academies in any modern sense of the word was relatively inconsequential;
2. pupils took on a commitment to transmit a *jing*;
3. deference was due from the student to the teacher, but there was no compulsion for the pupil to express sole allegiance to a given teacher, so that pupils could move from master to master, and from classic to classic;
4. the main instrument of "control" was "the highly ritualized character of teacher-pupil relations," for deviation was not deemed to be a major problem.

[86] Many authors have made this point, including Nylan and Kern, as cited above. For the precedence of ritual institutions over "schools," see *Fayan* 13/33. Cf. the "Kongzi shilun" (cited above), which equates "good rule" (i.e., acting as "father and mother to the people") with "understanding the origin 原 of rites and music." See *Shanghai bowuguan cang Zhanguo Chu zhushu*, vol. 1, pp. 13–41, 121–68.

Sivin deserves high praise for raising a new set of questions about classical learning in the early empires and for using precise language in his descriptions of the classical era, as when he writes of "students," "teachers" and "thinkers" instead of "academics" and "intellectuals."[87] But these generalizations can be refined. For example, the second point might be rephrased as, "pupils were expected to transmit either a particular reading of a *jing* or a powerful way of interacting in the world encapsulated in a *jing*." If only to correct the common wisdom, the frequency with which pupils traveled to different masters in the course of acquiring their technical arts and skills deserves greater emphasis as well. Han legends, after all, depict Kongzi traveling to many masters to train himself.[88] Then, too, the tone of the inter-Ru debates was less irenic than Sivin's narrative would have it.[89] Indeed, the Han court served as a "field" in which agents vied for symbolic, cultural and political capital, and the local administrative seats would have mimicked it, we may presume.[90]

Probably the influence of imperial patronage after 221 BC is somewhat overstated, given the difficulties of communication between the far-flung regions of the empire, and the very different sorts of power wielded by, say, the highly centralized court of Jingdi after 154 BC, and the more consortial power-sharing arrangements that prevailed in the courts of Guangwu or Shundi in Eastern Han.[91] Certainly, Yang Xiong bemoaned the loss of competing courts in the empire, since it meant that learned men such as he had fewer opportunities to find a patron to their liking.[92] But imperial support for the Classics and their teachers notoriously waxed and waned during the four centuries of Han, and if fashions at court influenced fashions below, as thinkers of the time averred, trends in reading, writing and theorizing among the Ru prob-

[87] Equally bizarre is the tendency to imagine the Taixue 太學 (Imperial Academy) as a pre-modern think-tank, or to see potential and actual office-holders as "public intellectuals" of some sort.

[88] *Analects* 19/22. Kongzi also reputedly studied with Laozi (the "old master"), who was keeper of the Zhou archives. See *Shiji* 47.1909.

[89] *Fengsu tongyi* 1.3/4/8 refers to the "vulgar Ru" whose debates "reach the point of litigation and pitched battles" 至於訟鬥.

[90] We know almost nothing, for example, about state schools or private academies located in the commanderies and counties, though some, such as Jingzhou, were clearly of great importance. For one struggle, see *Hanshu* 36.1967–71.

[91] For the latter, see Enno Giele, *Imperial decision-making and communication in early China: a study of Cai Yong's* Duduan (Wiesbaden, 2006).

[92] Yang Xiong, cited in David R. Knechtges, *The* Han shu *Biography of Yang Xiong (53 BC–AD 18)* (Tempe, 1982), p. 49.

ably diverged more than the often idealized extant sources would suggest; naturally enough, the degree to which members of the governing elites felt themselves bound to classical precedents depended upon complex calculations that factored in the court's propensity to patronize classical learning.[93] Nor should one neglect the immense role the *waiqi* played as patrons of classical learning,[94] or that of less powerful women.[95]

But the historian who would go beyond Sivin's points soon finds how often the Qin and Han sources fail to supply information about key features of the cultural manifold. Presumably early writers felt no compunction to explain the systems that they took for granted when writing for a small group of men already "in the know."[96] With so much unknown about the cultural and institutional settings for classical learning in Qin and Han, this section can only aim to clear up misunderstandings about the Qin and Han sources, excavated or received. One persistent misunderstanding (mis)characterizes Qin and Han as two "states that consolidated their power through the process of merit-based promotion" and the implementation of a "formally codified legal structure applicable to all levels of society."[97]

During Qin and Han, the primary determinants of a person's status and occupation seem always to have been birth, gender and wealth.[98]

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[93] Michael Nylan, "'Empire' in the classical era in China (323 BC–AD 316)," *Oriens Extremus* 46 (2007), 1–36; "Textual authority in pre-Han and Han," *Early China* 25 (2001), 1–54.

[94] Certain *waiqi* 外戚 families counted ardent Ru proponents among their numbers, beginning with Tian Feng (d. 131 BC) and Dou Ying (d. 131 BC), at the time of Han Wudi, and continuing under the regencies of the Wangs and later, with Ban Zhao (49–120) and the dowager empresses Deng Sui (d. 121 AD) and Liang Na (116–50). Wang, *Jin gu*, pp. 200–01, gives examples linking women to the Ru arts. As elite educated women were typically barred from taking office, their families did not often urge them to study the most difficult texts. Statements decrying female education date to much later in Chinese history, in the Ming, as Mark Elvin, "Female virtue and the state in China," *Past and Present* 104 (1984), 111–53, notes.

[95] The survival of no fewer than three Classics depended upon transmission through females. Fu Sheng's 伏勝 (fl. 2nd c. BC) *Documents* were transmitted via his daughter's interpretation. The transmission of the *Zhouli* depended upon Mother Song, according to *Jinshu* 96.2521–22, who was provided with "a lecture hall and 28 students." The text of the *gu wen Changes* was found by a "woman of Henei" and submitted to the court at the time of Xuandi, according to *Suishu* (Beijing, 1973), 32/15a.

[96] For "those in the know," see Eric Henry, "The motif of recognition in early China," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 47.1 (June, 1987), 5–30.

[97] Scott Cook, "The use and abuse of history in early China from *Xunzi* to *Lüshi chunqiu*," *Asia Major* 18.1 (2005), p. 46 (said of Qin).

[98] Cf. Cherniack, "Book culture," p. 27, which asserts that in Song times, official rank, age and personal erudition (in that order) determined authority in relation to text culture. In addition, in Han, at least, visible marks of dignity and breeding (beautiful

The ability to recite and write one or more *jing* (rather than the Five Classics corpus), which was certainly a precondition for certain posts in the bureaucracy, allowed a person to claim expertise in a specific art (*yi* 藝) or technique (*shu* 術). Obviously, an expertise was valuable to the extent that it helped the expert secure or improve his professional standing. Still, recruitment, appointment and promotion to government offices were not merit-based in any modern sense, meaning candidates were not ranked entirely according to the results of "objective" tests used to measure preparation or performance.[99] The Han bureaucracy had three tracks for entry, with the highest reserved for the prestigious candidates from good families who tended to be appointed immediately to advisory positions after their nomination by local recommendors as "filial and incorrupt," "flourishing talent" (*maocai* 茂才) and so on; a second reserved for the middle-ranking functionaries qualified through birth and an aptitude for test-taking (perhaps Academy qualifications were most important here?); and the lowest for low-level functionaries needing only a modicum of cultural literacy.[100] Official tests, so far as we know, allowed candidates already qualified *by their father's occupation and rank* to demonstrate their ability to read and write.[101] Thus the sons of scribes were eligible to be trained as scribes, just as sons of diviners were expected to continue in the family profession.[102]

In general, promising candidates for office were to "take up their studies in the study hall" (*xueshi* 學室), beginning their apprenticeships

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beards and strong voices) were required for envoys, according to *Han jiuyi*, "Buyi," comp. Wei Hong (Taibei, 1965 rpt), A/3b. For more on display, see below, as well as Nylan, "Toward an archaeology of writing: text, ritual, and the culture of public display in the classical period (475 BCE–220 CE)," in Martin Kern, ed., *Text and ritual in early China* (Seattle, 2005), pp. 3–49; and "Beliefs about seeing: the moral technology of optics in early China," *Asia Major* 21.1 (2008), 89–132; "Empire," *Oriens Extremus* 46 (2007), 1–36.

[99] Rafe de Crespigny, "The recruitment system of the imperial bureaucracy in Later Han," *Ch'ung chi Journal* 6 (1966), 67–71.

[100] Bielenstein, *Bureaucracy of Han times* (Cambridge, 1980), pp. 140–41.

[101] Both Fukui, *Kandai*, and Wang, *Jin gu* and *Gujin*, passim, note that other texts besides the Five Classics were used to test candidates.

[102] See *Shuihudi Qin mu zhujian* (Beijing, 1990), strip 191; *Zhangjiashan Han mu zhujian (247 hao mu)* (Beijing, 2001), strip 474. It is possible that other senior family members, including uncles on the distaff side, could provide surety for an applicant. Even in the spirit bureaucracy, the father-deity's rank determined the potential for the son-deity to be assigned an office. See Lai Guolong, p. 14, on the Jiudian incantation. NB: In the set phrase "invocators and scribes," the second term (*shi* 史) may refer only or mainly to religious experts, as in *Zuozhuan*, Duke Zhao 20.6, rather than generally to all "scribes."

at the age of 17 *sui*, with a requirement for annual testing of skills after that. Once they had gained the attention of members of the imperial bureaucracy, candidates with demonstrated expertise then faced additional tests, both formal and informal, relating to particular areas of competence.[103] Many of the post-entry level tests were not regularly scheduled, but rather held in connection with extraordinary events, including court conferences devoted to interpretation of the Classics, and not all candidates faced the same sorts of tests. How little book-learning counted in this selection process can be seen from the Han court's belated acknowledgement, in 132 AD, that nominees for the prestigious title of "filial and incorrupt" (*xiaolian* 孝廉) ought to demonstrate, via a written examination, knowledge of classical texts and an ability to draft documents.[104] As the dynasties had no meritocratic civil service examination system based on the Classics, the conflation of the Han bureaucratic qualifying exams with the examination system after 1313 AD is very odd—but no odder than talk of "equality before the law" as a bedrock principle or even a vague desideratum. The laws worked in tandem with a system of honors, and status and rank distinctions were thought to be so rooted in the natural order that they persisted into the afterlife.[105]

The question is, then, to what degree did advanced cultural literacy beyond such "elementary education" classics as the *Xiaojing, Cang Jie* or *Lunyu* increase social standing or political authority?[106] A few families—the Kongs, the Xiahous and Ouyangs immediately come to mind—made classical learning the "family business" (*jiaye* 家業), as they managed to produce high-ranking officials who were recognized experts generation after generation. But can we then conclude that most men of learning, by virtue of their erudition rather than another factor, qualified for consideration as "men of worth?" Historians of Europe routinely observe that before the 17th century the only persons deemed "worthy"

[103] Objections were also duly registered to such tests on the grounds that they were not antique in origin. See, e.g., *Hanshu* 2.1071 ("Liyue zhi") on the test of a recommended candidate by Academicians and counsellors. For tests at a higher level designed to stump the aspiring official candidate, see *Dongguan Hanji* 16.9/105/18–19.

[104] Bielenstein, *Bureaucracy*, p. 136.

[105] See *Zuozhuan* (Duke Zhao 7); Yang Bojun, pp. 1291–92.

[106] Elementary education was probably enough to qualify applicants for low-ranking posts in the bureaucracy. On the *Cang Jie*, see Françoise Bottéro, Les 'Manuels de caractères' à l'époque des Han Occidentaux, *Éducation et instruction en Chine*, vol. 1, *L'éducation élémentaire*, eds, Christine Nguyen Tri, Catherine Despeux (Paris, 2003), vol. 1, pp. 99–120.

to serve as expert witnesses were gentlemen of breeding who enjoyed high status.[107] Much the same valence clings to the term *xian* 賢 in the pre-Song era, though the term is apt to be (mis)translated in ways that cast virtuous conduct and classical erudition as the two most important criteria for inclusion within the ranks.[108] Almost always "worth" in Qin and Han was measured by office-holding,[109] and "sage" was so synonymous with "ruler" or "minister" that Kongzi himself had to be crowned as king and defended against charges of *lèse majesté* because he had dared to judge his superiors. "Dignity" also was firmly associated with display.[110] While our sources seldom allow us to glimpse changes in the way worth was fashioned, they do point to such continuities. Thus it speaks volumes that men of classical learning were analogized, on the one hand, to skilled craftsmen and to aristocrats (i.e., *junzi*), on the other, depending upon their rank.

It stands to reason that knowledge of a classic or a Classic added little to a person's status at court, since advanced cultural literacy was relatively common among members of the political elite. At the same time, it may well have conferred an extra measure of unofficial authority in the society at large, in part because so few people in a pre-printing

[107] Long before Qin and Han, Mozi outlined three tests by which to judge events, the first of which was to "seek the origin and investigate the realities seen and heard by the hundred clans," i.e., the most prominent clans of his time. See *Mozi zhuzi suoyin* (Hong Kong, 2001), 9.3/58/21–29. Hui-chieh Loy (personal communication) agrees that the hundred clans at the time of Mozi cannot be the masses or commoners, since Mozi lists those people separately. Mozi's third test is to "observe the benefits of the ruling house, the hundred clans and the masses."

[108] For Ru as men whose testimony and texts can generally be believed, see *Lunheng* 3/6b.

[109] For instance, many discussions assert that self-rule is the best way to rule others. Similarly, the *jing*'s frequent talk of prioritizing pleasures and choosing among options had little or no relevance to the 90+ percent of Han subjects who were farmers living close to the margin of subsistence. Objections were raised against the pat assumption that adult males from the governing elite had superior reasoning powers over the young, the female or the lowborn in a few literary and visual works (see the *Zhuangzi;* the *Lienü zhuan* 列女傳, and the depictions of the child prodigy Xiang Tuo 相橐), but these contradicted the prevailing discourse about dignity and worth.

[110] Before the Zhanguo period (475–222 BC), nobles were supposedly revered because they exemplified the laws and standards of their locales and displayed themselves as exemplars to those below. See *Zuozhuan*, Duke Zhao 6; Yang Bojun, pp. 1274–75. In the Zhanguo period, "ritual archaism was consciously used to set off the highest ranks in society as an especially privileged stratum"; see Lothar von Falkenhausen, *Chinese society in the age of Confucius (1000–250 BC): the archaeological evidence* (Los Angeles, 2006), p. 369. And during the Qin and Han dynasties, the imperial authority was predicated on the emperor's command of an array of display items, including the luxury editions of the Classics.

era could read, let alone interpret difficult texts, and mastery of a *jing* implied a surplus of wealth and leisure.[111] Knowledge of a particular *jing* could most readily be parlayed into cultural capital when it proved of value to the court in its deliberations and, secondarily, when that knowledge attracted paid students or clients.[112] Beyond that, since the very idea of charisma connoted having "powers in reserve," rather than reliance on a single type of technical training and expertise,[113] classical learning ideally imparted as "added value" to men of consequence a socially recognized way of exemplifying authority in the world that often proved more versatile than other skill sets.[114]

Most accounts of classical learning in Qin and Han presuppose greater upward mobility and rising literacy rates for the period, especially after Han Wudi.[115] There is some evidence that bright young things *already marked out for success* in some way could use classical learning to advance.[116] Using scattered bits of anecdotal evidence, discussions linking upward mobility and rising literacy to classical learning typically dredge up three phenomena that are, in fact, irrelevant: (1) the dramatic increase in the numbers of students registered at the Taixue 太學 (Imperial Academy) in the capital;[117] (2) the publication of a catalogue for the

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[111] See the following section on Yang Xiong, whose relative poverty caused others to disparage his learning. Some (e.g., Liu Xin) might speak of a past golden era when devoted students of classical learning supposedly mastered a single classic every three years, but even such speakers acknowledged that advanced cultural literacy, as opposed to "elementary education," required long years of training.

[112] While Jing Fang 京房 could not have won favor at court if he had not mastered the text of the *Changes*, the court rewarded Jing Fang not for his ability to memorize and transcribe that text, but for demonstrating to the court's satisfaction that calculations based on his reading of the Classic allowed him to make accurate predictions about ominous events. See Guo Yu, *Jingshi* Yi *yuan liu* (Beijing, 2007), pp. 1–7.

[113] *Xunzi*, 59/16/23–24.

[114] Cf. *Way/Word*, chap. 2.

[115] Most scholars assume something like 5–10 percent of the population, based on roughly comparable figures given by William V. Harris, *Ancient literacy* (Cambridge, 1989), but extrapolating from conditions in Rome (themselves rough estimates at best) is a very tricky business.

[116] *Qian Hanji* 28/3b–4a.

[117] The numbers recorded in the standard histories are as follows: the Academician "disciples" enrolled at the Academy grew steadily from the original 50 under Wudi to 200 under Xuandi; 1,000 under Yuandi; 3,000 under Chengdi; 10,800 disciples under Wang Mang; and as many as 30,000 in 125 AD, in mid-Eastern Han. Lewis, *Early empires*, pp. 67–69, mistakenly gives a figure of more than 30,000 by late Western Han (off by a factor of ten). However, this apparently steady pattern of increase is deceptive. An edict of 44 BC ordered that no appointments be made, but a quota of 1,000 was supposedly restored in 41. In Chengdi's reign the quota was raised to 3,000 for about a year only. See *Hou Hanshu* 67.2186; 79A.2547; *Hanshu* 9.285, 291; 88.3594–96; Bielenstein,

imperial library; and (3) the decision to cut the Stone Classics in 175 AD. All three phenomena indicate irregular attempts by those at court in late Western or in Eastern Han to control networks of patrons and clients, allies and friends, who were either working for the government or aspiring to office. But the figures for registration at the Taixue, to take the first example, cannot mean that greater numbers of students were receiving daily, weekly or even monthly instruction from Academicians (with consequent ripple effects in literacy and mobility rates), since the dramatic increases in the numbers of "students" enrolled there brought no comparable increases in the numbers of buildings erected at that location or in the number of Academicians overseeing the Taixue, so far as we know.[118] It beggars belief that ten-odd Academicians could teach thousands of students, not to mention tens of thousands. Hence the suggestion that the Taixue had no teaching function at all, and that the Academicians were never all that important.[119] Rather than being a sure indicator of the growing influence of classical learning during Han, then, these inflated numbers reflect the throne's inability to curtail the growth in the number of *shi* 士 released from corvée service and attached to powerful patrons through the registration process.[120] And while the libraries of emperors and princes brought scholars together to work on books, to relieve them of further worries about financial support, and to "consume their heroic minds and contrary ambitions," the evidence is lacking for the growth of major libraries, as it is for the libraries' role in fostering mobility or literacy. Those lucky few who were

"Lo-yang in Later Han times," *Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquites* 48 (1946), 70–71. Precisely how the Taixue functioned in relation to the "nobles' school" 學校 set up in the Eastern Palace is unclear; clearly the latter was more exclusive. See Wang, *Gujin*, p. 35.

[118] Under Shundi, new rooms were built after the Academy had fallen into disrepair.

[119] Wang, *Gujin*, p. 35; *Lü Simian dushi zhaji* (Shanghai, 1982), p. 651. Those who take the trouble to consult the standard histories soon see (a) how few men are known to have passed through the Taixue (a total of 67 in all the thousands of names mentioned); and (b) the lack of evidence for a coherent orthodoxy promoted via the Taixue curriculum. See Fukui Shigemasa, "Rikukei, rikugei to gokei: Kandai ni okeru gokei no seiritsu," *Chûgoku shigaku* (1994), 139–64; "Shin Kan jidai ni okeru hakase seido no tenkai: Gokei hakase no secchi no meguru gigi sairon," *Tôyôshi kenkyû* 53 (1995), 1–31.

[120] Cf. Lü Simian, *Liang Jin Nanbei chao shi* (Shanghai, 2005), vol. 2, p. 1193, speaking of the Taixue in the immediate post-Han period. That explains the accusation that the Ru "put down the plough" (*shi lei* 釋耒). See *Yantie lun* 5.1/27/20.

finally allowed to enter the Imperial Library were the rarest of talents and men qualified by long years of government service to boot.[121]

The same three phenomena magically reappear as "proof" in related arguments about the "intellectual dominance" of "Confucian classicism," where again they do not pass muster. Almost nothing is known about the curriculum at the Taixue, except that it was a ritual center.[122] The various imperial catalogues include many types of books, and while it is true that the texts of the Five Classics and their main interpretations appear first in those catalogues, they are hardly the only *jing* to be included; apparently, they were given precedence because they were believed to draw upon more venerable traditions.[123] Finally, the court's decision in 175 AD to have a set of Stone Classics carved and displayed in a public place came in the wake of reports that factions had bribed the palace eunuchs to alter the texts of the Classics stored in the imperial libraries, in order to manipulate the court's deliberations on policy matters and selection criteria. In an era prior to mass printing, the "publication" of the Stone Classics—whose list is not identical to today's Five Classics corpus, by the way—announced the court's desire to reduce factionalism, which went unheeded according to contemporary accounts.[124]

Approximately 130,000 civil servants administered the realm of some 60 million people.[125] The proportion of Han bureaucrats to subjects was thus at least ten times larger than the ratios for late imperial China. But modern scholarship, despite such new sources as the Yinwan documents, portrays quite different Qin and Han empires: one where a rather loose control of the general population co-existed with extremely tight

[121] Aside from the massive editorial enterprise undertaken by Liu Xiang, we do not know much about the tasks set the men who worked in the imperial libraries. See *Hanshu* 30.1701; 36.1967; 87B.3580; *Hou Hanshu* 23.822; 60A.1954. The imperial libraries contained secret texts of strategic advantage to the dynastic line: hence their closure.

[122] *Hou Hanshu* 79A.2545–46; cf. *Hou Hanshu* 48.1606; 79A.2557. The curriculum at the Jingzhou Academy in mid- to late Eastern Han centered on the writings of Yang Xiong. Cf. Yan Shigu on ritual centers, cited in *Hanshu* 22.1032.

[123] *Qian Hanji* 25/4b talks of the Ru originating in the *situ*'s office; the experts on the Dao, in the office of the archivist; the *yinyang* experts, in the astronomical offices; etc. Similar statements are found in the both the *Shiji* and *Han shu*.

[124] A list of later Stone Classics appears in Nylan, *Five Classics*, chap. 1. This first set of Stone Classics engraved the *Analects* but omitted the *Songs*.

[125] See Bielenstein, *Bureaucracy*, p. 156; Loewe uses this figure as well, which gives a ratio of 2.2–2.6 bureaucrats/1000 subjects. By the 18th century, there were only three bureaucrats/10,000 men or so. See Brian McKnight, *Village and bureaucracy in Southern Sung China* (Princeton, 1972), pp. 7–9; Ho Ping-ti, *The ladder of success in late imperial China: aspects of social mobility, 1368–1911* (New York, 1962).

controls over skilled craftspeople working in specialized workshops and a second that sees a dynasty intent upon exerting control at every turn upon every occasion.[126] It stands to reason that men boasting classical learning, as skilled technicians working in specialized settings, would have been closely supervised to the best of the court's ability when they displayed themselves in impressive settings, since learned men could command a measure of extra-governmental authority, even if they could scarcely challenge the court's dominance.[127]

On Yang Xiong, promoter of Five Classics learning

During the whole of Eastern Han, Yang Xiong was regarded as the most authoritative advocate for the Five Classics in particular and classical learning in general.[128] Indeed, before Yang's time, the binome *wujing* was not commonly in use.[129] Yang carefully crafted the dialogues recorded in one of his masterworks, the *Fayan*, so as to give readers of his time, as well as later generations, a finer appreciation of contemporary discourse on classical learning in general and Five Classics learning in particular,[130] even as he labored to alter that discourse. (Yang's second masterwork, the *Taixuan*, not to mention Yang's many prose-poems [*fu* 賦], leave readers in little doubt that the same ideas thread through all of Yang's work, even if only the *Fayan* dialogues lend themselves to a lucid exposition of Yang's views on the topic.) As revisionist historians agree in seeing Yang's era as a watershed in the development of classical learning, it will be useful to review what the *Fayan* (*Model sayings*)

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[126] For the first, see Wang Haicheng, "Writing and the state in early China in comparative perspective," PhD thesis (Princeton, 2007); for the second, Anthony Barbieri-Low, "The organization of imperial workshops during the Han Dynasty," PhD thesis (Princeton, 2001).

[127] For example, the so-called "Four Greybeards" were recluses whose authority the court tried to co-opt. See Audrey Spiro, *Contemplating the ancients: aesthetic and social issues in early Chinese portraiture* (Berkeley, 1990), p. 35.

[128] Contra usage in late imperial China, as reviewed in Wilson, *Genealogy*. Yang is perhaps the best known Han scholar (aside from Sima Qian) who was not himself related somehow to the imperial clan. Wang Chong was much less famous than Yang in the pre-Tang period.

[129] Fukui, *Kandai*, pp. 149–52, shows that the term Five Classics was popularized via Yang Xiong's neoclassics, the *Fayan* and the *Taixuan jing*.

[130] "Classical learning" is my translation for *jingxue* 經學 (study of the *jing*). Yang specifically mentions later readers.

has to say about the allied topics of classical learning and the Classics associated with Kongzi as author and editor.

In one of his most startling statements in the *Fayan*, Yang asserts that people in his own era are not inclined to seek for guidance from past models: "I have seldom seen people prefer what is distant in space or time and long-lasting."[131] Accepting the "common wisdom" that early people were peculiarly in thrall to tradition (unlike more "progressive" moderns), some modern readers may be tempted to read Yang's remark as a simple complaint that Yang's peers do not care as much as he about past models, since they do not care about them in exactly the same way or to the same degree. However, such an interpretation would be hard to square with many *Fayan* passages that seek to defend classical learning, and especially the Five Classics associated with Kongzi himself, against strong objections lodged by various interlocutors. For example, one interlocutor early in the *Fayan* says to Yang, "Learning is of no possible use!" to which Yang replies curtly, "You certainly have not yet thought it through!"[132] Later in the *Fayan*, an interlocutor refines this blanket rejection of learning, arguing that the value of classical learning—in modern lingo, its cultural capital—fluctuates according to the ruler's interest in it: "If you live under Qin, of what use is it to carry the writings of Zhou under your arms?"[133] Yang's quick retort: "When the whole world is cold, don't fine furs keep you warm?" Yet a third interlocutor makes the trenchant observation that up to Yang's time, the writings ascribed to Kongzi or his followers have not competed particularly well in the marketplace of ideas: "All this noisy wrangling means the realm is filled with competing theories and explications, so how can you possibly say that he, Kongzi, is alive [today]?"[134]

At other times, interlocutors ask whether classical learning is not simply one technique among many with the potential to bring fame and wealth to a professional. Perhaps Kongzi, Yan Hui, King Wen and the Duke of Zhou are no better than renowned archers, cooks, charioteers, carpenters or even makers of leather balls for sport.[135] Readers may wonder just how many of Yang's peers would have put making

[131] *Fayan* 7/1.
[132] *Fayan* 1/4.
[133] *Fayan* 7/23.
[134] *Fayan* 7/6.
[135] See, e.g., *Fayan* 1/7, 1/19. Cf. Wang Chong, who compares the Ru to weight-lifters in *Lunheng* 13/1b.

fine leather balls on a par with mastering the polite arts, but Yang's painstaking formulation of a complex five-part response to such comparisons leaves us with the sense that the objection is taken seriously. Yang's response argues that (a) it cannot be true that all arts or skills are equally valuable, in that each mandates a standard "way" or skill, for the importance of the goal or product of each profession determines its value to mankind;[136] (b) the arts wielded by men like Kongzi are manifestly superior to those of other professionals because they can improve the dispositions of the persons wielding them, while archers, cooks, charioteers and carpenters exert mastery over the externals;[137] (c) the goals of classical learning—and most especially Five Classics learning—are thus both broader and more ambitious in scope than other techniques governing other fields of endeavor; (d) moreover, classical learning properly wielded is more likely to attain its goal than other techniques; and thus (e) the value of classical learning does not lie primarily in its potential to win men tangible gains (high office, salary and rank; greater longevity and such), since it offers intangible benefits like security and cultivation.[138]

The steady stream of objections continues, these arguments notwithstanding. Some interlocutors concede the utility of classical learning in some few circumstances, even if its utility is severely circumscribed. The interlocutors keep circling around the idea that the chief, if not the sole use of classical learning is to prepare men for the wretched examinations for entry into the bureaucracy,[139] and each time Yang howls in protest. Twice he dismisses outright the linkage between classical learning and the examinations, going so far as to suggest that the dynasty would fare better if it abolished the qualifying examinations.[140] Elsewhere, Yang insists that the examinations fail to locate men with true devotion to learning, and even select the wrong people.[141] But more follows: several interlocutors press Yang to answer whether history does not prove

[136] *Fayan* 2/8.

[137] See, e.g., *Fayan* 5/15, 1/21–24.

[138] *Fayan* 1/8.

[139] Both Fukui, *Kandai*, and Wang, *Jin gu* and *Gujin*, passim, note that testing candidates on their ability to recognize and write characters in the classics is not the same as promoting them for their moral learning or practical wisdom. Cf. Nylan, "Problematic model."

[140] *Fayan* 7/8.

[141] Knechtges, *Han shu*, p. 50, citing *Hanshu* 87A.3570.

that classical learning is of no particular advantage to the state.[142] Yang blames many famous professional classicists (Ru 儒) of Qin and Han for the ways they wielded their learning while in office. Preoccupied with career advancement, they cynically imitated the trappings of Kongzi or the other sages, without conceiving or promoting a larger ethical message.[143] As they had "not thought things through" (a favorite phrase of Yang's), they were responsible for gross failures in policy-making in office, not to mention lapses outside. So bad had things gotten by Yang's time that Yang opined, "In quite a few cases, of course, the [Ru] model is no model, and the standard no standard at all."[144] Still, a succession of sages including Kongzi is responsible for the final perfection of the tools that elites have at their disposal to achieve security and prosperity for themselves and others.[145] While no one can force a powerful person to adopt a particular tool, let alone guarantee that it be wielded in the most effective way, this in no way detracts from the high quality of the tool available to the worthy.[146]

A final set of objections concerns the difficulties involved in mastering the Five Classics in particular. Can they not be made simpler? Need the demands made upon the individual learner be so very great? Meeting the objection that learning the Five Classics is too time-consuming,[147] Yang answers, "Were it [the Way] to be made smaller, then it would defeat the sages. How would *that* be?" According to Yang, the sages arranged their lives and their writings so that they might serve as adequate models for their own times and for succeeding ages. Despite the desire to make them as easy to understand as humanly possible, the Classics' incredible versatility constrained the Classic's form and language.[148] Furthermore, true learning meant "determining what is right in every given situation" and practicing the models until one gets them right.[149] Obviously, this sort of experiential learning is harder to master than the mere memorization, recitation or drafting of texts. And since

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[142] E.g., *Fayan* 7/16, where Yang is asked why Lu declined in power during and after the time of Kongzi, if Lu is one center for classical learning under the influence of the Master. Cf. *Fayan* 8/6.

[143] *Fayan* 1/14, 1/15, 2/12–2.13.

[144] *Fayan* 1/9.

[145] *Fayan* 8/6.

[146] *Fayan* 8/6, 8/15–16.

[147] *Fayan* 2/10, 2/15, 5/7.

[148] *Fayan* 5/10, 5/11, 8/11.

[149] *Fayan* 1/10, 1/18. *Fayan* 1/16, 1.4. Learning for Yang is an essential step in bringing out the basic best qualities of humans. As he points out, all expect to grind their

true love of learning entails putting that learning to the test everyday, it behooves the avid learner to seek a good teacher, "for the teacher is the very model for the person."[150]

After rebutting his peers' negative views of classical learning, Yang's *Fayan* proceeds to frame a positive view of classical learning in general and Five Classics learning in particular. Borrowing insights from the *Xunzi*, Yang begins with the notion that learning to identify the moral Way is the only kind of learning where single-minded efforts are invariably repaid by the realization of that goal.[151] No natural impediment exists to any human becoming a sage through cumulative efforts, since humans do not differ substantially in their capacities, but rather in the ways they evaluate, prioritize and employ what they have learnt[152]—and these attitudes are amenable to good training. Even more importantly, a person's persistence in pursuing ethical solutions to life's dilemmas fosters in the person an admirable state of independence that, being impervious to external threat and internal decay,[153] elevates the person above his peers.[154] Having broken free of ordinary travails, the person reaches a refined state of grace and power that Yang likens to divinity (*shen* 神) and to "light" (*ming* 明).[155] By stark contrast, the pursuit of tangible gains in life (e.g., career advancement or long life) seldom attains the desired goal, either because the goal is unrealistic, as with the desire to avoid death, or because its realization depends upon factors beyond the person's control, as when the goal is career advancement. What is worse, the pursuit of conventional goods so consumes a person's time and energy that it undermines the person's moral sense, not to mention his or her awareness of human needs and drives.[156] So while Five Classics learning may certainly facilitate career advancement, to employ learning for such ends is to get side-tracked, possibly on a treacherous byway, rather than to take the high road.[157] Classical learning will blossom into ethical learning, as the fruit follows from the

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knives and polish their jades, because such actions enhance the beauty and utility of the objects without destroying the essential character of the material.

[150] *Fayan* 1/9, 1/17–18, 1/1, 1/7.

[151] *Fayan* 1/19, 1/24, 3/14.

[152] *Fayan* 1/18, 6/7–8.

[153] *Fayan* 3/21, 4/7, 4/16.

[154] *Fayan* 6/3.

[155] For the divine, see *Fayan* chap. 5; for "opening the light," see *Fayan* 4/7. Cf. *Fayan* 1/11, 2/9, 2/14.

[156] *Fayan* 1/2, 1/19.

[157] *Fayan* 4/1, 4/24.

flower, so long as the person has the intention to perfect and refine the moral self.[158] But only when classical learning serves ethical cultivation, as the sages intended, will the Way reveal itself as perfect, inexhaustible and of infinite utility.

If learning assiduously applied to practical and moral dilemmas has the potential to endow the learner with an enviable self-mastery that brings a sense of ease and grace, Five Classics learning is especially helpful in moving the person from intention to realization, it being just as much a precondition for enlightenment and humane conduct as light is for sight.[159] Through self-mastery, the noble man manages to "preserve his own person," so that his innate capacities do not weaken even when there is the necessity to "hide his talents."[160] Kongzi is an apt symbol for such triumph in adversity, and the Hundred Experts (*baijia* 百家) are defined by their distance from him in knowledge and understanding.[161] Eventually, advances in understanding lead a person to care less about mastery over others (the natural correlate of self-mastery) than the satisfactions associated with the wholeness and intactness produced by self-mastery. Such pleasures immature, uncultivated or lazy persons can never hope to experience, regardless of rank or wealth.[162] This potential for pleasure through serious devotion to classical learning, and especially Five Classics learning, Yang emphasizes again and again, sometimes in memorable ways. For example, Yang tells an unnamed interlocutor that the Classics are as sexy as women.[163] He also portrays the sages as "taking pleasure in being sages."[164]

As if an assurance of self-mastery and an enhanced capacity for serene pleasure-taking were not enough, Five Classics learning conduces to good governance. A disciplined understanding of the human condition ingrained through ethical learning inevitably precedes political mastery,

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[158] *Fayan* 6/4.

[159] *Fayan* 8/10–11. Note Yang's inflated—and hardly academic—metaphors comparing the Five Classics to the sun and moon, the great mountains and rivers in their magnitude, balances in the marketplace or other measuring tools (e.g., *Fayan* 5/26), and the finest of furs in warming the soul (*Fayan* 7/24), etc.

[160] *Fayan* 6/18–19.

[161] *Fayan* 12/4. Both "knowledge" and "understanding" being translations of *zhi* 知. Significantly, Yang does not say that the writings of the Hundred Masters are inferior; it is their Ways of acting in the world.

[162] *Fayan* 4/3, 5/14, 5/23, 6/15.

[163] *Fayan* 2/5.

[164] *Fayan* 6/5; cf. 1/23–24, 3/3, 3/17, 9/18; etc.

since "the basis of good rule lies in the person" ruling.[165] At a minimum, the instrumental use put to learning the Classics checks humans' worst impulses and excesses. At best, it transforms humans, allowing them to identify a common project. Besides, the masses of the people will never support a ruler who treats them unethically.[166] And subjects who witness ethical conduct in their superiors are far more easily ruled themselves, whether they submit naturally or not.[167] In addition, the Classics as repositories of past records indicate what forms good rule took in the past and is likely to take in future.[168] Without the Classics, then, elites would have no good way to judge the efficacy of policy proposals and initiatives.[169] Success or failure in the execution of those proposals usually depends upon a range of factors, including timing, physical circumstances and the quality of human input, many of which elude human control; still, character formation and knowledge of the past lie well within human capacities, given study of the Five Classics.[170] Because ethical learning—the very sort of learning preserved in the Five Classics—facilitates the achievement of commendable political, social and personal goals, insures the safety of the throne and the security of its subjects, and improves the quality of life for the erudite in or out of office, it is demonstrably the best sort of learning, and that would be true even if each Classic did not represent a marvel of perfection geared to a field of expertise.[171] Thus all men of good judgment, in Yang's view, should rate classical learning much more highly than other forms of learning.

Through such arguments, Yang makes the case that to embody and apply the *jing* is more important than to teach or rattle off "small bits of knowledge"; book learning is vital to Yang's project only insofar as writings prove to be the next best way, after personal contact, to familiarize a person with exemplary figures.[172] Book learning *per se*

[165] *Fayan* 9/3; cf. 6/16, 8/23, 8/25; *Analects* 13/13.

[166] *Fayan* 8/18, 9/4.

[167] *Fayan* 8/19, 8/26.

[168] *Fayan* 8/20. Notably *Fayan* chaps. 10–11 discusses historical precedents to apply in decision-making.

[169] *Fayan* 8/27.

[170] *Fayan* 10/6–7.

[171] *Fayan* 7/5: "For explicating heaven, there is no finer disputation than the *Changes*. For explicating affairs of state, there is no finer disputation than the *Documents*."

[172] *Fayan* 2/20: "If he [the sage] is alive, then one takes the person [as model], but if he is dead, one takes his writings. The principle is one and the same." Cf. *Fayan* 7/6,

remains a secondary avenue to insight. Given these notions of study and learning, Yang refuses to confer the respected title of model or teacher (the character *shi* 師 means both) upon mere assemblers of facts.[173] For Yang, a person qualifies for the title of master only if he is master of something incomparably great. To be a "master" of minutiae is an oxymoron.[174] Yang is plainly not talking about "academic excellence" when he discusses the *jing* and the Ru, though this is easy to forget since Yang himself was a model of erudition who inspired other Eastern Han thinkers (e.g., Huan Tan, Hou Ba, Zhang Heng, Wang Chong, etc.) whose present claims to fame rest on their theoretical pronouncements on subjects now subsumed under academic disciplines (logic, astronomy and so forth).[175]

Yang insists that objective criteria exist to measure the efficacy of various human endeavors.[176] While no *jing* can satisfy the most immediate animal needs for food, clothing, sex and shelter,[177] the Five Classics corpus is the best guide to the proper operation of that quintessentially human set of faculties called the *xin*, with its immense powers of discrimination.[178] As seat of the intellectual and emotional capacities that receives and interprets the senses, the heart-mind (*xin* 心) functions well so long as it does not pre-occupy itself with matters outside human control, but rather pursues the Good, defined as activities conducive to constructive connections between humans.[179] To follow the Five Classics' injunctions, in addition, conserves precious time and energy, for no emotion is diverted to fruitless tasks and no devotion wasted on unworthy projects or persons (even bad rulers).[180] Since the *wujing* corpus transmits workable and efficient solutions on every important

8/7; *Mozi* 12.1/105/16–17. However, writing was not inherently better than speech in all types of communication. As Yang put it, "Nothing is as good as speech in face-to face meetings . . . and nothing compares with writing when one would describe the affairs of the realm, record what happened long ago or far away, so as to clarify . . ." (*Fayan* 5/13).

[173] *Fayan* 6/3. Cf. *Analects* 13/5.

[174] *Fayan* 6/3, 8/15.

[175] Hou Ba's devotion is recounted in *Hanshu* 87B.3585, as is Huan Tan's.

[176] *Fayan* 2/20.

[177] *Fayan* 8/12.

[178] Discrimination improves with the consistent use of the full range of human senses in the most discerning ways possible (*Fayan* 4/16), and the *xin* has a special role to play in such processes.

[179] *Fayan* 8/13–14, 5/4.

[180] *Fayan* 3/3, 3/17. *Fayan* 3/1, 7/15: "When I use the word 'contemplate,' I am talking only about 'contemplating virtue' [as the single proper object of contemplation]."

subject,[181] the Five Classics by objective criteria should be rated high above most other classics (the exception being Yang's own work, which extends Five Classics learning). The rival *jing* are objectively inferior, being less versatile in application and less suited to the all-important tasks of ruling the self and others. Nonetheless, some valuable lessons may be learnt from the other *jing*, even if the more "mixed" among them lead unwary humans astray.[182]

Yang has interesting things to say about the relation of "learning" to "learning the past," since his proposed course of learning weighs the relative worth and significance of famous figures known from legend and history.[183] (Recall that other authoritative writings of the time proceed quite differently; the *Zhuangzi* and *Huainanzi*, for example, more often employ parables, allegories and dialogues in which the main characters are animals or fictional human beings sporting outrageous names and attributes.) The *Fayan* itself devotes no fewer than three out of thirteen chapters to historical assessments while laying out for readers its criteria for judgment. For good reasons, then, Yang is often called a historian by pre-Tang and Tang thinkers, even if that label seems strange today.[184] For Yang, like Xunzi before him, insisted that the "constant patterns" in human existence must be elicited by reference to current and recent events as well as to the Five Classics.

Also like Xunzi before him, Yang was mindful that the texts of the *jing*, and specifically the Five Classics, represent the products of multiple excisions and additions, some the work of conscious interpolation or editing and some due to scribal errors or other failures in transmission.[185] Parts of the texts of the Five Classics corpus are defective[186] also because the transmitted writings are in every sense the product of successive human endeavors that mirror the ages in which the texts were composed. Flaws are inevitable, since the Classics are not "spontaneously created" or

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Time—and the impossibility of recovering it once it is wasted—is rather an obsession with Yang, as can be seen from many passages in both the *Fayan* and the *Taixuan*.

[181] *Fayan* 8/18.

[182] *Fayan* 4/6–7.

[183] *Fayan* 1/8.

[184] Beatrice L'Haridon, "La recherche du modèle dans les dialogues du *Fayan* de Yang Xiong (53 av. J.-C.–18 apr. J.C.): écriture, éthique, et réflexion historique à la fin des Han occidentaux," PhD thesis (University of Paris, 2006), discusses Yang as a historian.

[185] *Fayan* 5/6.

[186] E.g., *Fayan* 5/9, which calls parts of the *Documents* "glib and superficial." *Fayan* 5/6 says specifically that additions may be made to the texts of the Five Classics.

"infallible."[187] Specific readings of certain passages in those writings can be corrected by human efforts, and Yang's study of ancient inscriptions and dialect words would prove the basis for suitable emendations. At the same time, the sages' moral message is one and the same, and the Five Classics were "completed and perfected" during the time of Kongzi.[188] Thus not all pasts are created equal, and the Zhou system of rites and music (NB: not the Zhou texts) is best: "Now, the rites and music of Zhou were close to perfect in every detail, so much so that anyone could use them in every circumstance to obviate difficulties."[189]

For Yang, both speech and writing throw into "high relief" many phenomena that would otherwise go unnoticed since a person can only hear, see and touch so much.[190] Writing for Yang is transcribed speech intended to convey more wide-ranging techniques for more long-lasting circulation. As each Classic in the *wujing* corpus represents a virtual world-in-itself,[191] those who would ascertain its underlying moral message must realize that, absent adequate preparation to receive the subtle truths imbedded in a Classic, the Classic will appear a formidable barrier to progress rather than what it actually is: the only possible vehicle by which to arrive at the destination intended for humankind.[192] One who would master the Classics must train his ears and eyes to receive mighty sensations.[193] And even though it is only the sages who immediately "apprehend the true meaning in words," even non-sages can find ways to gauge their progress in and through a Classic.[194]

Certain passages in the *Fayan* make arguments that modern readers have come to expect. One example is Yang's bald assertion that humans who live in the Central States (i.e., the North China Plain) have a civilization that gives them an incalculable advantage, where ethics is concerned, over the unfortunate who make their homes elsewhere.[195] This assertion, possibly prompted by Yang's steadfast opposition to wars of expansion, may also point to his cultural chauvinism, as a native of

[187] *Fayan* 5/6, where Yang follows Xunzi; *Fayan* 5/9.
[188] *Fayan* 5/6.
[189] *Fayan* 5/22.
[190] *Fayan* 5/14. This means that each person has a limited quantity of memory and experience.
[191] *Fayan* 5/10.
[192] *Fayan* 1/9–10, 5/11.
[193] *Fayan* 5/14.
[194] *Fayan* 5/12–13.
[195] *Fayan* 4/11–12. Such passages provide yet another reason to believe that Yang is not talking about universal truths that are accessible through book learning.

Sichuan who had mastered classical learning beyond all others. But the *Fayan* offers several surprises. It, for instance, is fairly contemptuous of the earthly powers invested in the ruler of men; no other masterwork from the pre-Han or Han so overtly ignores the ruler.[196] It is easy to guess why Yang felt that the powers-that-be might like to "redden his clan" (i.e., exterminate his line).[197] Still more striking is Yang's claim to parity with Kongzi himself. By Yang's account, he and Kongzi represent equally valid doors to an authentic past that can enrich the lives of the members of the community.

Given Yang's influence on all the major Eastern Han thinkers, it may well be that his insistent turn away from more fanciful rhetorical displays in prose and in *fu* prose-poems[198] helped to shape the tone and arguments of "serious literature" after him. Certainly, one sees a great deal of Yang in the writings of Eastern Han and Wei-Jin. For instance, his dictum that it is wiser to look at a man's character or at human history than to consult the stars confirmed the skeptical tradition.[199] But to provide a context for Yang's observations, it helps to see how many points stressed by Yang had been enunciated long before:

1. there have been multiple pasts;[200]
2. some pasts are inaccessible, due to the passage of time and the fragmentary nature of the evidence transmitted to Qin and Han;[201]
3. the past itself presupposes processes of accretion and deletion;[202]
4. some pasts have been invented outright because persuaders felt that in rhetoric "the more ancient the phenomenon, the better [the proof]," since rulers and commoners alike found comfort in talk of ancient traditions;[203] but
5. there is a "unity of past and present" 古今一度,[204] insofar as the main features of human nature remain essentially the same over time,

[196] *Fayan* 4/ 9.
[197] Knechtges, *Hanshu*, p. 47, citing *Hanshu* 87A.3567.
[198] *Fayan* 2/1.
[199] *Fayan* 8/13–14.
[200] *Lüshi chunqiu* 15.8, p. 944.
[201] *Lüshi chunqiu* 15.8, p. 945. Writings by Yang Xiong and Xu Shen on archaic scripts might have been intended to remedy this. Cf. *Analects* 3/9 but contrast *Analects* 3/14.
[202] *Lüshi chunqiu* 15.8, p. 944.
[203] For example, *Mozi* 12/2/107/23, where Mozi berates Gong Mengzi, saying, "You model yourself after the Zhou, not the Xia; your 'antiquity/past' is not 'antique/past' at all!"
[204] *Xunzi* 14/5/36. Cf. *Lüshi chunqiu*, 11.5, p. 611.

despite institutional change, so the key to successful governance is to discern and implement policies that would suit these human "constants." Thus "one may know the distant by means of the near" 以近知遠 (and the past by means of the recent).[205] Locating the most suitable model for the present always involved, some "emulation of the past."

6. on that basis, a sage can scrutinize the present and predict the future, even if he commands no special magical powers.[206]

If none of the foregoing ideas was new to Yang, all were woven by him into his powerful vision.

When we stand back to ask ourselves what more can be learnt from Yang Xiong's biography and writings about the relation of learning and authority in mid-Han times, we once again confront our ignorance about how extra-official authority was created in Han for anyone not to the manor born. Yang seems to have done about as well as was possible for an adult male lacking high birth and official connections, but he nonetheless complains bitterly of the throne's condescension, which reduced him, one of the most learned classicists of the day, to the role of mere entertainer. All of Yang's posts, so far as we can tell, resulted from his phenomenal facility with composing long epideictic poems.[207] However, Yang constructs an "unusually precise genealogy" for himself, by which he descends from Zhou nobility[208] and is related to a governor of a commandery four generations back, even if his family had come down in the world since the reign of Han Wudi. This genealogy was presumably needed to verify Yang's good breeding, as this was the most basic qualification for office-holding. Yang's genealogy does not gloss over the fact that Yang himself was poor. Yang's poverty was too obvious to ignore, so his sympathetic peers likened him to Yan Hui, the favorite disciple of Kongzi.[209] Still, it is likely that his poverty was only relative, since Yang underwent many long years of study with some of the most famous teachers of his day.

[205] *Xunzi* 13/5/32.

[206] *Lüshi chunqiu*, 11.5, p. 611.

[207] Yang attained the post of libationer-lecturer for music 樂講學祭酒 because of his facility in the *fu*, a poetic form of great difficulty.

[208] *Hanshu* 97A.3513.

[209] *Huayang guozhi* 10, pp. 533–34. A Tao Yuanming poem dedicated to Yang as a wine-drinker mentions his poverty as well.

It would be surprising if Yang as a youth had not attended the Chengdu academy of Wen Weng 文翁, where government scholarships supported promising students. He later studied under at least three renowned masters, the most famous being Yan Junping 嚴君平, who made his living telling fortunes in the marketplace when he was not constructing synthesizing texts that we now anachronistically dub "Daoist" and "Confucian."[210] These factors taken together—ancestral office-holding, relative poverty and "broad learning" in the Classics and in the other *jing* from which Yang borrows—won Yang such extraordinary respect that he was hailed by some contemporaries as a "Confucius from the western parts."[211] But even though Yang was an acknowledged expert in all three of the queens of the Western Han liberal arts (poetry, astronomy and moral philosophy), he failed to climb higher in the bureaucracy than 600 bushels out of a possible 2,000, and he never joined the ranks of the court advisors. Unless Yang's pretensions to sagehood irritated people, since he was neither a minister nor a ruler,[212] it is hard to see why the court continued to cast him as an "outsider" in Chang'an,[213] subject to taunting on account of his perceived failures.[214] Only the devotion of Yang's friends and disciples comforted him in his

[210] *Fayan* 6/19 compares Yan, who would "not act improperly for the sake of celebrity, nor be an administrator merely for gain," to a rare jade. Yan is the author of a "Guide" 指歸 to the *Daode jing*; he was also known as an expert in the *Laozi*, the *Zhuangzi*, and the *Changes*. Cf. *Hanshu* 72.3056. Li Hong of Shu was known for his "determination to be inflexible when it came to the public interest and remonstrances." He was serving as *gongcao* in the prefecture when his own son Zhui killed a person in revenge. Li Hong chased after him—against the governor's express wish, which was to drop the case involving the son of a sage—and then took the punishment for his son's actions upon his own head. See *Fayan* 11/23. The philologist Linlü Wengru 林閭翁儒 also taught Yang.

[211] Huan Tan, *Hsin lun (New treatise) and other writings by Huan Tan (43 BC–28 AD)*, trans. Timotheus Pokora (Ann Arbor, 1975), #164E (p. 171).

[212] *Hanshu* 87B.3585 reports that "all the Ru" 諸儒—an exaggeration?—criticized Yang for writing Classics, regarding this as an act of usurpation (the same act, ironically enough, that Kongzi himself was accused of). Yang's assessment of his own situation: "a single slip could incarnadine [i.e., result in the slaughter of] my whole clan." Knechtges, *Hanshu*, p. 47, citing *Hanshu* 57B.3567.

[213] Yang had arrived at the court in middle age, and it is quite possible that Yang never learned to speak the language of the court, either in the literal or figurative sense. Reports of his stutter may indicate a failure to master the capital dialect.

[214] If the Liu Xin/Yang Xiong correspondence is genuine (Paul Serruys thought it was), that correspondence gives a sense of what it must have been like for Yang to be taunted; Yang's *fu* also personify these snide critics.

old age.[215] That, and the thought of a future readership among men of taste and erudition.

Believing that good books do good long after the teacher is gone, Yang fervently hoped that his writings would shape the way that later generations viewed the "constant" problems confronting human societies. Yang would have been gratified by the warm reception that his writings received in Eastern Han. In Wang Chong's writings in mid-Eastern Han, for example, Yang Xiong appears as the only accomplished master of the Ru arts (Rushu 儒術) to escape blame for the misuse of those arts; even Kongzi and Mencius are excoriated. Wang apparently appreciates the clarity and coherence of Yang's stance on many issues. Notably, however, this reverence for Yang's writing does not lead Wang Chong to accept the central tenets of Yang's vision. For instance, Wang thinks the error-ridden Five Classics are anything but models of perfection (literally, they have "all lost the truth" 五經並失其實).[216] Furthermore, Wang does not see any reason to hail the glories of the Zhou institutions; indeed, two chapters of the *Lunheng* "denounce the tendency to celebrate the ancient Zhou as the greatest dynasty,"[217] arguing that the Han is greater than the Zhou. Wang also ignores many of Yang's historical dicta, with the result that Wang, who styles himself Yang's humble and devoted follower, openly diverges from Yang's *Model sayings*. Such departures merit our attention—and not only because the early China field has located a submissive strain in Chinese rhetoric. Clearly, sincere admiration for an earlier thinker did not entail wholesale adoption of the earlier thinker's views. Perhaps more than the ancients themselves, modern historians have labored under the powerful tropes from Mencius that equate immersion in the mind of antique authors (Mencius called it 以意逆志)[218] with the embrace of the authors' orientations and commitments. Such moralizing or even metaphysical constructs exact a heavy price, if they preclude posing historical questions about the occasions and motives for visions of authority.

Yang's life and writings underscore an earlier point: the authority accorded advanced learning was generally established through "contests"

[215] After his death, Hou Ba mourned for him in the same way that Kongzi's most devoted disciples mourned for him; see *Lunheng* 29/11a. Huan Tan cast Yang as a formative influence in his own *Xinlun* 新論, judging from the extant fragments.

[216] *Lunheng* 28/1b.

[217] See Lewis, *Early empires*, p. 153.

[218] *Mencius* 5A/4.

and “debates” between competitors for imperial or local powers. Classical learning enhanced the prospects of a potential or actual officeholder, since it implied rigor, discipline and a reliable measure of the “performative virtuosity” demanded in public and semi-public occasions.[219] Surely the desire to display command of a set of technical skills accounts for the form of the *Fayan* and Yang’s “philosophical” poems as much as Yang’s desire to imitate the *Analects*, for in each work Yang artfully arranged dialogues masquerading as battles of wit like those that marked the Shiqu 石渠 court conference in 51 BC[220] or the high-level bureaucratic examinations. But the stiff requirements for performative virtuosity meant that even Yang, who privileged moral learning derived from Five Classics above other types of technical expertise, showed a willingness to borrow freely from authoritative works outside the Five Classics corpus, in a pattern we see repeated over and over again in other writings attributed to famous classicists.[221] In fact, Yang’s reputation as classical master *par excellence* rested on his wide-ranging explorations of numerous theories ascribed to the Hundred Experts (*baijia* 百家).[222] And since no sectarian spirit excluded categories of authoritative texts from consideration as *jing*, it is only with highly self-conscious writers like Yang that readers are even made to feel a difference between the Classics and the classics.

Yang Xiong’s 楊雄 dialogues in the *Fayan* 法言 (comp. 4 AD), like Wang Chong’s *Lunheng* compiled a century later, convey the strong impression that most of Yang’s peers and followers regarded the Five Classics as a body of literature whose command imparted a kind of technical expertise akin to other sorts of technical expertise,[223] though for Yang and his followers the very word for “learning” (*xue* 學) implied

[219] Cf. Anya Peterson Royce, *Anthropology of the performing arts: artistry, virtuosity, and interpretation in a cross-cultural perspective* (Walnut Creek, 2004).

[220] No fewer than 43 conferences are recorded in the standard histories for Western and Eastern Han, according to *Way/Word*, p. 66. Judging from extant sources, all court conference participants would have cited classics and Classics, as well as other relevant precedents (historical and legal) to resolve difficulties. For dialogues, see Nylan, “Han classicists writing in dialogue about their own tradition,” *Philosophy East and West* 47.2 (1996), 133–88.

[221] See, e.g., Ying Shao 應劭 (fl. 203), whose *Fengsu tongyi* 8.9/62/19; 11.5/92/18 quotes a *Classic of nourishing life* (*Yang sheng jing* 養性經) and the *Classic of mountains and seas* (*Shanhai jing* 山海經) as readily as the Five Classics.

[222] Cf. *Dongguan Hanji* 16.2/102/13–14 for a later classical master, Ban Gu.

[223] See *Fayan, juan* 1.

a moral more than an intellectual enterprise.[224] Mastery of a *jing* text, as a repository of specialized knowledge, promised methods to manage, arrange and control situations. A good classical education meanwhile constituted one of several markers separating gentlemen from peasants, artisans and merchants, but there is no sign that it overtook good breeding or good connections in usefulness to ambitious men. However, the forceful arguments, pithy sketches and memorable turns of phrase found in Master Yang's *Fayan* became touchstones in Eastern Han and post-Han rhetoric about authoritative texts and exemplary men. Insofar as Yang's description of the ideal Ru redirected the project of classical learning from the acquisition of political power to the attainment of sagehood and cultivation, it paved the way for Wei-Jin discussions and it continues to influence modern thinking about the distant past.

A revised narrative for classical learning in Qin and Han

The foregoing arguments about "classics without canonization" in Qin and Han provide a context for assessing the revisionist narratives for classical learning advanced in the last decade or so by a group of scholars including Wang Baoxuan 王葆玹, Fukui Shigemasa 福井重雅 and several publishing in Western languages.[225] This revisionist narrative is premised on the belief that Qin and early Western Han were more alike in their policies and institutions than hitherto recognized by all but a handful of truly original minds.[226] To take some examples, at the Qin court many Academicians played important advisoral roles; the Qin did not burn books simply to "render the people stupid"; nor did it persecute "Confucian" scholars on account of their beliefs.[227] Moreover,

[224] See *Yantie lun* 5.7/36/3: "To wear Ru clothes and to wear Ru caps, but not to be able to carry out the Ru Way—that is not what we mean by Ru. You are not card-carrying (canon-carrying) Ru who keep to the Way." Michael Loewe puts the date of the *Yantie lun* several decades after the debates it purportedly records (personal communication).

[225] Significantly, as Zufferey, *Origins*, p. 21, points out, "Before the twentieth century, there was no real history of the *ru*."

[226] For one exception arguing that "the Qin did not cut off Ru learning," see Zheng Qiao's 鄭樵 (1104–60) essay entitled "Qin bujue Ruxue lun" 秦不絕儒學論 in *Tongzhi* (Siku quanshu), 71/1a-2a. See footnote 21.

[227] For the "stupefying" and persecution, see *Fengsu tongyi* 1.5/10/5. Cf. Fukui, *Kandai*, passim; Wang, *Jin gu* and *Gujin*, passim; Martin Kern, *Stele inscriptions of Ch'in Shih-huang: text and ritual in early Chinese imperial representation* (New Haven, 2000); Nylan, "Empire."

there are striking similarities in the Qin and Han laws and rituals, contrary to the common wisdom.[228] The overt demonization of the Qin dynasty—really a covert critique of mid-Western Han excesses and superstitions—took off rather late in Western Han with Yang Xiong and his contemporary, Liu Xin, and escalated during Eastern Han, because this demonization killed two birds with one stone, allowing officials to remonstrate indirectly and safely against the throne while providing the throne with a justification for its "restoration of the Han." Of course, even early Western Han thinkers asked why the Qin dynasty was so short-lived, in an effort to understand how to prolong the ruling line of Han (e.g., in Jia Yi's 賈誼 "Guo Qin lun" 過秦論 and in the *Shiji*). For around a century after the founding of the Han, however, disapproval of Qin policies was more nuanced, and few if any calls urged an absolute break with Qin policies and institutions.[229]

Court rhetoric in early to mid-Western Han had a single object: to foster centralization of powers under the Han scion—in other words, to carry on with the enterprise most identified with the Qin dynastic house. Han Wudi inherited the throne in 141 BC with unprecedented powers, given that the last of the major noble houses threatening imperial rule had been defeated a decade earlier, in 154 BC, and the imperial coffers were full to overflowing.[230] Wudi's reign showed just how dangerous highly centralized rule could be, however, as the economy soon registered the shocks from the foreign wars in far-flung regions funded by inflated currency and government monopolies over the basic commodities. In an attempt to diminish the influence of the senior ministers and an overbearing dowager empress, the young Wudi shortly after coming to power may well have reserved one or more Academician posts for

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[228] *Shiji* 23.1159 says that "In the main, [the Han rites] all continued the old Qin precedents" 大抵皆袭秦故. Many have commented upon the similarities between the Shuihudi and Zhangjiashan laws.

[229] Contrast Jia Yi 賈誼, "Guo Qin lun" 過秦論 (*Shiji* 6.276–84), with Ban Gu's *Hanshu* accounts. Dong Zhongshu would be an exception to this statement, if his *Hanshu* biography may be trusted. Many have suggested that Dong was not so important in Western Han as in Eastern Han. Michael Loewe is currently working on a revisionist history of Dong. Certainly we know that the *Chunqiu fanlu* is not a genuine Western Han work; recent critical scholarship tends to assign it a post-Han date.

[230] *Shiji* 30.1420: "The granaries in the cities and countryside were full and the government treasures were running over with wealth." Wudi, as Michael Loewe has repeatedly pointed out, may not have been independent enough to articulate his own policy vision. He is therefore taken as a "marker" for his administration, which was largely ruled by various *waiqi* ministers.

the Ru, especially since one famous classicist—Gongsun Hong—was a strong advocate of strict laws administered harshly and a participant in court factions challenging the dowager empress.

But it is far from clear that the Academicians were very influential at the time. One early account puts the Academicians' rank at the start of Wudi's reign at only 100 bushels, not 600, a figure corresponding to clerks at the very lowest rung of the Han bureaucracy, while modern scholars have noted that the Academicians do not resurface in the Han histories for some 80–odd years after the start of Wudi's reign, when they debated the merits of the interpretive traditions for the Classics at the Shiqu conference.[231] By contrast, other advisory posts are mentioned hundred of times. Quite possibly, the numbers of Academicians may have been *reduced* (not increased) from "as many as several tens" 員多至數十人 or 70, to 13 (under Chengdi) or 14 (under most of Eastern Han),[232] a possibility not acknowledged in the standard accounts. Then, too, Wudi invited experts with all types of skills 端之學, 通一技之士 to his court, and there is no sign that policy arguments against centralization justified by reference to the Five Classics made any headway under him.[233] Wudi seems to have valued the *jing* as repositories of literary flourishes and the *Chunqiu* and *Documents* specifically for their legal language.[234]

A more accurate picture of the Han would portray Wudi's reign not as a "golden age" when Confucianism "triumphed" but as a time of considerable social unrest and economic exploitation.[235] When the

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[231] See Wang, *Jin gu*, p. 52; Fukui, p. 225; Bielenstein, *Bureaucracy*. The rank, originally set at either 100 or 400 bushels, was raised, apparently under Xuandi, to 600 bushels, which change elevated the Academicians to the lowest rank in the upper levels of the bureaucracy. Fukui, *Kandai*, pp. 24–25, further notes that the earliest extant Song editions of three key sources for Han—the *Hou Hanshu*, Wang Yinglin's compendium *Kunxue jiwen* 困學紀聞, and *Dai Dong Yuanji* 戴東原集—speak of Wudi's institution of a One Classic Academician instead of Five Classics Academicians (*wujing boshi*). Fukui therefore believes that the received versions reflect later editorial emendations.

[232] Wang, *Jin gu*, pp. 51–52, 207–11; Fukui, *Kandai*, chap. 2, notes talk of 70 or 70-odd *boshi* in some early Western Han reigns and the appointment of *boshi* under Wendi for the *Lunyu, Xiaojing, Mencius*, and *Erya*. Cf. Bielenstein, *Bureaucracy*, p. 138.

[233] Wang, *Jin gu*, pp. 191–92, citing *Shiji*.

[234] *Hanshu* 23 shows how intertwined classical learning had become with legal theory; the link between Gongsun Hong 公孫弘 and invitations to Ru at the time of Wudi is attested in *Hanshu* 88.3593. See Sun Xiao, *Liang Han jingxue yu shehui* (Beijing, 2002), pp. 114–36.

[235] See Michael Loewe, *Crisis and conflict in Han China* (London, 1974), chap. 1–3.

full effect of Wudi's disastrous initiatives became obvious to all but the most devoted hawks and monopolists at court, the tide began to turn in favor of retrenchment on simultaneous fronts—religious, military and economic—so that by the closing days of Xuandi's reign (73–48 BC) the advocates of frugality were well on their way to becoming the majority of the ministers at court.[236] Accordingly, the "Basic Annals" for Xuandi articulate, for the first time, the throne's will that high officials consult with *shi* 士 with classical training.[237] Around this time also some erudite Ru took it upon themselves to employ the *Documents* and *Changes* to interpret ominous events. Somewhat later in Western Han, highly articulate thinkers, especially Liu Xiang, Yang Xiong and Liu Xin, began to articulate a powerful political vision in which the Han court, embracing the model of Zhou institutions, tempers its longstanding ambitions for expansion, centralization and profit. Concerned for the good of the localities and the poor farmers, the ideal government of their vision then seeks to return to the commanderies and counties a measure of independence from central government supervision. Many separate pieces of research seem to identify late Western Han, instead of Wudi's reign, as a watershed in the development of classical learning, even if they tend to overstate the degree to which the Ru in this period "can be reckoned to have completely unified."[238]

Certainly, Wang Mang, if only to parade his virtue, appeared "on the outside to admire the old sense of duty" 外慕古義, and he employed many classicists in his administration.[239] Wang Mang's Xin dynasty (9–23) then tried to institute a number of new policies that would have dramatically altered the economic basis of the empire and undercut the *heqin* 和親 alliances with the semi-nomadic and nomadic frontier peoples. Within a very short time, groups all over the empire rose in revolt against Wang Mang, making the Xin dynasty as short-lived as the Qin. Under the "restored" branch line of the Liu ruling clan in

[236] Ma Biao, "Handai Ruzong diju," *Zhongguo shi yanjiu* 1996.4, 64–74, calculates that prior to Xuandi, less than 10 percent of the ministers could conceivably be called "Ru"; but after Yuandi, of the remaining 18 ministers, 14 were Ru. Cf. Fukui, *Kandai*, p. 52, which estimates that during the last 37 years of Wudi's reign, only 1.9 percent of ministers could conceivably have been called Ru, while the figures for Xuandi and Yuandi are much higher (18.2 and 26.7 percent respectively).

[237] *Hanshu* 8.255.

[238] Liu Rulin, *Han Jin xueshu biannian* (Shanghai, 1992), vol. 1, p. 159. The Academicians' salary was increased to 600 bushels only under Xuandi.

[239] *Zhonglun* 18, pp. 255–57.

Eastern Han (25–220), most officials who had served Wang Mang continued at their posts.[240] Of equal importance, since the emperors of the "restored" Han had difficulty in carrying out the types of cadastral surveys needed for taxation, the Eastern Han court continued the late Western Han policies of retrenchment, making a virtue of necessity. Lacking the wherewithal to put on the sorts of lavish displays associated with the Western Han courts in their heyday, the Eastern Han throne relied upon a new rhetoric articulated in the apocryphal texts, which elevated the scions of the Liu house to virtually suprahuman status. That new rhetoric justified the continuation of the Liu clan rule by a tortuous logic that has become "naturalized" in today's sources: the Liu clan was predestined to rule in the name of the "uncrowned king," Kongzi. This legitimation supposedly offered by Kongzi, among other deities in the state-sponsored pantheon, had the Eastern Han justify its line by a sharp break with Qin traditions and the Ru's rise to power under Wudi (141–87 BC). Accordingly, Dong Zhongshu (tradit. 176–104 BC) was credited with far greater influence over political events than was warranted,[241] and Yang Xiong accorded a respect in death that he had never fully enjoyed in life.

Despite this rhetoric of legitimation, the inter-Ru disputes about the nature of Eastern Han authority continued, with some Ru objecting to the inflated dynastic claims to semi-divine status as much as to the professionalization of Ru learning, as reflected in the production of *zhangju*.[242] Other classicists, taking up earlier concerns, sought to explore how much relative weight ought to be given classical learning, native ability and bureaucratic experience in filling bureaucratic posts.

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[240] See Hans Bielenstein, "The restoration of the Han dynasty, with prolegomena on the historiography of the *Hou Han shu*," *Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities* 21 (1954), 1–209.

[241] Wang, *Jin gu*, pp. 192–94.

[242] There is no question that some Han scholars denounced specific *zhangju* commentaries on two grounds, that they (1) were too lengthy to serve their ostensible purpose as introductions to a single classic; and (2) fostered a view of the classic that is so narrow and pettifogging that the student tended to lose the "main ideas" 大義 of the classic. At the same time, many Eastern Han scholars won fame and fortune for writing *zhangju*. One of the most influential scholars of late Eastern Han, Song Zhong, composed *zhangju* for each of the Five Classics, which he presumably used in teaching at the Jingzhou Academy; see also Ma Guohan, *Yuhan shan fang yishu*, vol. 2, 1236–38, for fragments of Jia Kui's 賈逵 *Chunqiu Zuoshi zhang jing zhangju* 春秋左氏長經章句. Moreover, "revised and fixed" *zhangju* were issued, many of relatively modest length, including Zhao Qi's *Mengzi zhangju*. See *Hou Hanshu* 79B.2570–71, for additional examples. Cf. Fukui, *Kandai*, p. 169.

Manipulation of the *jing* for self-interested motives never ceased, but as soon as the interpretive traditions piled up there were attempts to forge compromises among them and to facilitate the use of the Five Classics for bureaucratic ends. Hence the popularity of the polemical literature. By this revisionist narrative, interest in the *jing* continued unabated after the downfall of the Han dynasty, as did particular esteem for Yang Xiong's teachings,[243] though fashions in classical learning changed and interpretive traditions multiplied.[244] Rather more attention went to the Archaic Script (*guwen* 古文) versions of some *jing* than in Western Han, presumably because new wordlists and chance finds of old bronzes and pre-Qin texts[245] stimulated thinking about a more distant past. Still, there was no marked swing *away from* the Modern Script Classics and *toward* the Archaic Script Classics. Conscientious scholars of Han classical learning, like good scholars today, took all new sources into account as they became available, and the most admired thinkers and teachers referred to new and old materials.

An imbricated narrative for Qin and Han history dating to the beginning of the last century cherry-picks discrete Eastern Han and post-Han statements and weaves them into an early Republican-era (1912–49) device.[246] By splicing together facts and factoids, it has created an altogether different picture for Qin and Han that informs not

[243] Yan Lingfeng, *Zhou Qin Han Wei zhuzi zhijian shumu* (Beijing, 1993), vol. 5, pp. 321–90, catalogues the numerous commentaries written on Yang's two masterworks. It appears to have been the fall of Luoyang in 311 and of Chang'an in 316 AD that ushered in a host of political, social, and intellectual changes. Wang, *Jin gu*, pp. 54–55, comments on the lack of evidence for classical learning languishing in Wei-Jin. Xuanxue 玄學 (Mystery studies), which elaborates the Jingzhou curriculum focused on Yang Xiong's writings while incorporating newer ideas, is conventionally dated from ca. 439 AD.

[244] Our sources, for example, detail spikes in the court's interest in certain kinds of texts, for instance, the apocrypha under Wang Mang (r. 9–23 AD) and Guangwu di (r. 25–57), and then again in late Eastern Han, in the wake of the division of the Han empire into separate satrapies ruled over by warring factions.

[245] Some bronzes and texts submitted to the throne were clearly forgeries, but there also seem to have been genuine finds (often at building sites, or after earthquakes and floods). See Wang, *Gujin*, p. 61. Tomb robbers were also active, as we know from Wang Zijin, *Zhongguo daomu shi* (Beijing, 2007). Briefly, at the courts of Aidi and Pingdi (r. 7–1 BC, 1 BC–5 AD respectively) the list of Academicians included experts in the Archaic Script versions of the Classics, including the *guwen Documents*, the Mao readings of the *Songs*, the *Zuo*, and the *Yili* 逸禮, to which Wang Mang added the *Zhouguan* (presumably the *Zhouli*?).

[246] Fukui, *Kandai*, chap. 1. For constructions associated with the Ru, see Wilson, *Genealogy*; and *On sacred grounds: culture, society, politics, and the formation of the cult of Confucius* (Cambridge, 2000).

a few recent works of scholarship in Asian and Western languages.[247] According to the conventional view, Kongzi or those in his immediate circle produced the entire Five Classics corpus, but the original unity of vision promoted by Kongzi, not to mention the "subtle words" that he invested in the *Chunqiu*, was lost to the world after his disciples began to wrangle over interpretations of those readings. The Qin dynasty (221–206 BC), in favoring Legalist methods over the ethical teachings embodied in the Confucian Classics, burned the Five Classics and buried the "Confucian scholars." By contrast, the early Han rulers, beginning with Gaozu (r. 206–195 BC), believed it to be in their interests to make "Confucian teachings" the state ideology or "national religion" of Han, on the grounds that the throne's sponsorship of a unified set of doctrines would greatly enhance political unity.[248] Supposedly, that explains why Gaozu, early in his reign, had sacrifices offered to Kongzi in his home town of Qufu, though he was too pre-occupied with pressing matters of state to ever offer other sacrifices to the "uncrowned king."

Around 136 BC Han Wudi then supposedly put in place a system that allowed a total of five Academicians (one for each Classic) to serve as imperial advisors at the relatively high rank of 600 bushels; more importantly, Wudi is said to have excluded from the Academician posts the proponents of rival teachings, especially Huang-Lao and the Legalists.[249] By this narrative, Wudi refused to listen to advice from any but experts in "Confucian learning" (Ruxue 儒學).[250] Twelve years later, in 124 BC, Wudi underscored his adherence to Confucian learning by two additional acts: the organization of the imperial library and the appointment of a set quota of "disciples" to study under each Academician, thereby indicating his intention to make Ru teachings the primary curriculum for his subordinates[251] and "moral education" the basis of his rule over the land. In the standard narrative, then, a series of intentional acts by Wudi set in motion events that would propel the establishment

[247] For example, Wu Xiaoru and Wu Tongbin, *Zhongguo wenshi gongju ziliao juyao* (Beijing, 1985), pp. 4–7.

[248] *Hanshu* 30.1701.

[249] See note 119. There is no sign that "Legalists" or "harsh officials" did not flourish under Wudi. The *Shiji* talks of getting rid of Huang-Lao adherents (not all other sorts of thinkers).

[250] The term Ruxue 儒學 (classical learning) was in use by Western Han, although Rushu 儒術 (the arts of the classicists) was far more common. Curiously, the term Rujia 儒家 (experts on classical learning) may be an Eastern Han neologism.

[251] The role of the *Xiaojing* needs to be mentioned in this connection.

of "Confucianism" as a sort of "Chinese essence."[252] Thereafter the Han court allegedly followed Wudi's lead as "precedent," favoring Confucian teachings to the exclusion of all others, with the later Han rulers only increasing the number of Academicians from five to thirteen and fourteen. Local officials who claimed expertise in the Five Classics were appointed at the commandery and kingdom levels under Yuandi;[253] and interest in the Old Text (*gu wen*) Classics steadily mounted during Eastern Han, defeating the Modern Text versions in the process. However, the downfall of the Han in 220 AD, by this improbable fiction, forced many thinkers to reject Confucian teachings since the Han and Kongzi were so closely associated. Hence, the growing preference for Daoist (and later Buddhist) teachings in the post-Han period.

The "common wisdom" summarized in the second narrative ignores the many explicit assertions in the Han sources that all learning and cultivation—and not just Ru learning—drew upon the canonical sources we now dub "Confucian,"[254] just as it overlooks the strong associations of classical learning with professional training in the rhetoric of history. When we ask how such two different narratives of classical learning in Qin and Han could co-exist within recent scholarly literature, revisionist historians point to three misguided modern impulses: (1) the search for "equivalences" between cultures, "East" and "West," that seeks within China a cultural counterpart to state-sponsored sectarian Christianity; (2) the propensity to characterize each age as guided by a special Zeitgeist, with the Zhanguo supposedly ruled by the spirit of the philosophical masters; the Han, by Confucianism; and the post-Han period, by Daoism and Buddhism;[255] and (3) the stereotypical portrait

[252] This phrase recalls the title of Hu Shi's 胡適 (1891–1962) influential article, "The establishment of Confucianism as a state religion during the Han dynasty," *Journal of the North China Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 60 (1929), 20–41. Generally, the "common wisdom" also classifies Ru thought into five periods: (1) Han; (2) Sanguo-Sui-Tang; (3) Song-Ming; (4) Qing; and (5) 20th and 21st centuries. See, e.g., Bai Shouyi, *An outline history of China* (Beijing, 1982), p. 138; ibid., pp. 143–44, discusses the supposed influence of Dong Zhongshu on the policies of Han Wudi and Wudi's reign as a "golden age." There is no need to go into the arguments here over whether Daoism or Confucianism has the stronger claim to shaping the "Chinese essence."

[253] *Hanshu* 88.3596. The *mingjing* 明經 ("brilliant students of the classics"?) also had 100 bushel posts in the provinces, according to *Qianfu lun zhuzi suoyin* (Hong Kong, 1995), 24/47/27.

[254] E.g. Sima Tan's "Liujia lun" 六家論 relates all of his six bibliographic categories to the canonical texts 竟全部與經書有關.

[255] See Kroll, "Literary criticism." A recent example claiming that Han classicism gave way to Six Dynasties literary studies is Yu Yingchun, *Handai wenren yu wenxue guannian de yanjin* (Beijing, 1997).

of China as a hyper-stable country boasting the "longest continuous civilization" uniquely resistant to historical rupture,[256] all of which predisposes scholars to view the two Han dynasties or even the entire classical era as one continuum. A curious certainty about the distant past reminiscent of the Song, coupled with a pronounced modern taste for moralizing past historical events, have played significant roles in propping up the conventional account as well.[257]

As noted above, not every feature of the metaphysical reading originated in modern times. Part of that narrative may be traced to late Western Han explorations of archaic models, to Eastern Han propaganda, and to the post-Han Period of Disunion.[258] To counter the standard views, most revisionist historians draw attention to the wide gulf separating early Western and Eastern Han views. Western Han scholars, to take but one noteworthy example, tended to describe the *jing* as coming into existence when Kongzi and many other masters compiled and edited them. Such descriptions are at odds with later attempts to elevate the Five Classics far above the other classics and to stress the antique origins of the Five Classics corpus, despite the inclusion in the *jing* of traditions dating to Qin or Western Han.[259] As our earliest reliable evidence about the *jing* dates to ca. 300 BC, resolution of many issues must await the discovery of new and better evidence. But at this point there can be little doubt that our picture of the distant past has been overly credulous and simplistic.

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[256] This is hardly a new phenomenon, as noted by Luo Genze, "Weituo guren yi jian ren zhi xin," *Gushi bian* (Beijing, 1935), vol. 4, pp. 67–68: "Thus the more we approach later ages, the more 'ancient' the discourse becomes . . . for no other purpose than to make one's 'antiquity/past' all the more ancient, so as to overwhelm the competing schools." Contra this vision, see Giele, *Imperial decision-making*.

[257] See Christian de Pee, "Material ambiguity and the hermetic text: cities, tombs, and middle-period history," *Journal of Song-Yuan Studies* 34 (2004), 81–94, for the Song thinkers' assertions that they could channel Confucius, which stands in stark contrast to Tang views. See Gloria Davies, *Worrying about China* (Cambridge, 2007), for moralizing strains.

[258] The pseudo-Kong Anguo preface to the *Documents* contains many elements of this narrative. Other aspects can be traced back to the Song neo-Confucian characterizations of Han scholarship, which suggested that the transmission of the Dao was lost during the Han and Six Dynasties period.

[259] For the Western Han view that the Classics were specifically "fixed" by "later sages," see, e.g., *Xinyu* 1/2/12. Cf. *Xu Fuanguan lun jingxue shi, er zhong* (Shanghai, 2002), pp. 6–8. Zheng Xuan's commentaries assign nearly all the Classics to early Western Zhou.

Conclusion

The term "classical learning" can refer to conformity to the spirit of antiquity, attempts to draw upon the lessons of history, the resurrection of specific institutions from antiquity (e.g., the re-imposition of the well-field institutions under Wang Mang), or the self-conscious adoption of age-old literary and visual tropes to embellish present works. Laws inevitably cite precedents, impressive liturgies seldom stray far from past formulae and respectable theories of legitimacy typically hearken back to a useable past. Whenever the sources allow for the logical separation of these diverse strands of classicism, the utility of doing so should be evident.[260] Probably classical learning in Qin and Han was in a continual uproar, if only because sporadic discoveries of older artifacts, many bearing texts on silk, bamboo and bronze, would often have disrupted settled perceptions of the antique, just as they do today. As our sources occasionally reveal the confusion, it behooves us to frame our generalizations as carefully as possible.

One striking feature of nearly all the early *jing* is their pronounced intertextuality, but the types of texts that contended for *jing* status during Qin and Han fall into three categories, based on their formal distinctions: there are texts made up of short passages that end with one or more quotations from a *jing*, texts that employ quotations or historical anecdotes or both to make their points, and texts such as the "Ziyi/Black Robe" chapter that are stitched together almost entirely from citations to other works. Did these differences in format strike Han readers as significant, because one format seemed to Han readers more authoritative than others? Other questions cluster around the correlation of changing fashions in learning to the spikes in interest and support that the Han courts expressed in classical learning in general and Five Classics learning in particular. Judging from the extant sources, study of the *Songs* was the one constant and virtual requirement for office-holding throughout the period. But over-frequent resort to the "*Gongyang*" by the odious "cruel officials" conducting treason trials under Jingdi and Wudi may have sullied the reputation of that *jing*, for thereafter comes a shift to portent interpretation, cosmology and ontology, mainly through

[260] Two exemplary histories of classicism are Viccy Coltman, *Fabricating the antique: neoclassicism in Britain, 1760–1800* (Chicago, 2006); Francis Haskell and Nicholas Penny, *Taste and the antique: the lure of classical sculpture, 1500–1900* (New Haven, 1981).

new traditions attached to the *Documents* and the *Changes*.[261] In the Eastern Han, judging from the extant sources, attempts to synthesize Five Classics learning dominated many court-sponsored activities and private initiatives, producing court conferences, polemical works and ever more massive compilations.

Additional questions great and small trouble modern historians. For example, (1) Do the terms *shifa* 師法 (literally, "the way of the teacher") and *jiafa* 家法 (literally, "the way of the school/expert/family") refer to significantly different realities?[262] (2) Why does Wang Fu's 王符 *Qianfu lun* 潛夫論 (*Discourses of the hermit*) mention Five Classics in connection with Zuo Qiuming 左丘明, the legendary contemporary of Kongzi?[263] (3) How closely monitored were "private" academies, including Jingzhou, and to what degree did these non-official teachings address areas of concern outside the central court's preoccupations?[264] (4) How much did technological changes (e.g., improvements in writing implements and in the quality of paper) speed the circulation of manuscripts during Eastern Han?[265] (5) Did Zheng Xuan's interpretations of the Classics become so popular so quickly in the immediate post-Han period because they synthesized and historicized the content of the Five Classics, or because so many other classical readings had been lost in the downfall of Eastern Han?[266] (6) How much did the prescriptions of classical learning, as opposed to hoary custom, mandate the specific forms taken by the *zongfa* 宗法 (imperial ancestral cult) during Qin and Han?[267] And, (7) how quickly were the outlying areas in the south and northwest brought into the cultural sphere of the capital, and by what range of methods?

As pre-Qin, Qin, and Han sources continue to be excavated and published, many puzzles may become clear. But historians will face ongoing problems in interpreting the historical significance to be attached to the

[261] Wang, *Jin gu*, p. 158ff.; *Gujin*, pp. 13–14.
[262] Sun Xiao, *Liang Han jingxue yu shehui* (Beijing, 2002), pp. 191–99, gives a brief synopsis of current debates.
[263] *Qianfu lun* 36/85/11.
[264] Historians of late imperial China have noted that, despite occasional literary inquisitions, few efforts were made to monitor or control "private" instruction. One would like to know much more about censorship in the pre-printing era.
[265] Ying Shao, *Fengsu tong yi* 11.4/84/22, describes the laborious "killing the green" process for seasoning bamboo strips for writing.
[266] Lü Simian, *Liang Jin Nanbei chao shi* (Shanghai, 2006), p. 1994.
[267] Certainly, *Shiji* 12.452 talks of the Ru being brought into discussions about changing the old sacrificial system.

anecdotes that pepper the histories. For instance, a charming story tells of He Wu 何武, a late Eastern Han leader who, upon arriving at a certain locale, announced that he would inspect the *xueguan* 學官 (academy?) before going on to the relay station to rest from his journey. Does this anecdote constitute proof that Eastern Han officials generally took the propagation of classical learning to be their first duty, or that He wanted to advertise his commitment to gentlemanly pursuits, or is the incident mentioned in the He's biography precisely because this sort of attitude toward classical learning was so unusual and revealing? One of the most salutary results of the recent discoveries of excavated manuscripts has been to pull historians back to such quandaries, with the result that those working in early China may yet become better readers of the received texts. That there is much work to be done—ça va sans dire.

STATE AND LOCAL CULTS IN HAN RELIGION*

Marianne Bujard

Around the middle of the 1st century BC, two distinct models of imperial religion came into conflict. The "Treatise on sacrifices" (*jiaosi zhi* 郊祀志) of the *Hanshu* (*History of the Han*)—particularly the second part—is a chronicle of the continuous shifts that affected the imperial cult. While the literati and ritual specialists demanded the geographic centralization of imperial rites and the elimination of deities they judged heterodox, the *fangshi* 方士 (masters of recipes), supported by their allies at court—the best known of which was the erudite thinker and bibliographer Liu Xiang 劉向 (76–7 BC)—promoted ancient cults whose ultimate aim was immortality.

The literati had devised a religious system that centered on the worship of Heaven, the paternal and moral power regulating the universe. The ruler, as Son of Heaven, was to honor this divine father by conforming to the ancestral rituals inherited from the Zhou dynasty. Basing themselves on citations from the Classics, the literati insisted the value and efficacy of the sacrifices derived not from the quantity or sophistication of the offerings—a notion they denounced as a perversion of the rite—but from the sincerity and purity of the one who conducted the sacrifices. In this conception of sacrifice, the ruler was the only possible intermediary between Heaven and man. Indeed, the literati believed in the existence of a common essence (*qi*) shared between Heaven and the ruler, who were conceived of as beings of the same nature (*tonglei* 同類).[1] Thus, from a physio-cosmological point of view, the ruler alone possessed the necessary qualities to communicate with Heaven and obtain its favors. In addition, the rules of the ancestral cult authorized sacrifice only to one's own ancestor, and therefore the Son of Heaven alone could

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[1] Gan Huaizhen, *Huangquan, liyi yu jingdian xuanshi: Zhongguo gudai zhengzhi shi yanjiu* (Taibei, 2003), pp. 64–65.

offer sacrifices to his celestial father. Sacrifices addressed to Heaven by anyone else amounted to *lèse majesté*. In the eyes of the literati, the ruler's unique position justified the creation of a sacrifice that could be made only by the emperor himself if it was to be efficacious from both a cosmological and a moral point of view. Henceforth, the literati applied themselves to the establishment, in the capital and in the nearby suburbs, of a series of altars dedicated to the deities they deemed worthy of membership in the imperial pantheon and that also merited the exclusive sacrifices of the emperor and his officers of rites. They insisted on the centralization of imperial religion and participated in an overall trend that pushed for the progressive centralization of political power in the hands of the ruler and his bureaucracy.

Of course imperial religion thus conceived reserved a special place for the literati. Based on ancient texts which only they were qualified to interpret, the correct form of the sacrifices had been reconstructed by them. Dong Zhongshu 董仲舒 (ca. 198–115) was one of the first scholars to promote—without success—the imperial sacrifice to Heaven. According to him, "sages" alone were capable of interpreting the messages sent by Heaven when sacrifices were carried out because they knew how to link them to the Classics. The proper conduct and efficacy of the sacrifices depended on the knowledge of these literati, and their presence was therefore indispensible. As the literati increasingly modeled imperial religion on the heritage of the Classics, the value of these books was magnified, and mastery of the Classics gradually became the foundation of social ambition. Thus the development of the new imperial religion contributed greatly to the movement that made of the ancient texts the orthodox corpus that was firmly in place by the end of the Western Han.

Opposed to these literati were the *fangshi*. In response to the centralizing drive of the literati, they promoted older religious traditions. In the words of Gan Huaizhen, they represented the "ancient ritual system," that is, the system the Han had inherited from their predecessors. This was above all an inclusive system. It tended to embrace within imperial religion all efficacious cults throughout the country, in particular those of kingdoms the Han had subjugated in gaining power. This movement toward systematic inclusion of ancient cults finds its parallel in other domains. Thus Sima Qian notes of the First Emperor that "each time he defeated a lord, he copied the plan of his palace and rebuilt it in Xianyang," but also that "Qin Shihuang took everything from the lords—the beautiful women, the bells, the drums, filling his palaces

with them."[2] The *fangshi*, by making sacrifices on the cultic sites of the ancient kingdoms—some of which were highly venerated by local populations—perpetuated the religious traditions, albeit not without proposing novel interpretations. The *fangshi* were not content with just encouraging the celebration of ancient cults; they integrated them in a religious system that placed at the top legendary divinities such as the Yellow Emperor (Huangdi) and Taiyi (the Great One) and were centered on the quest for immortality. In short, the great sacrifices of the past were invested with new meaning in the vision of the *fangshi*. According to them, Huangdi, whom the emperors were to imitate, had sacrificed in Yong 雍, the ancient holy place of the Zhou. He had climbed Taishan and venerated Taiyi at Ganquan 甘泉. These were all sites of worship that the Han emperors honored later with the aim of obtaining immortality.

While the majority of holy sites, dispersed throughout the country, received as much popular favor as imperial patronage—Sima Qian tells us, for example, that the famous Treasure of Chen (Chenbao 陳寶) celebrated by the emperors also "moved the common people"[3]—the reformist scholars, by creating cults reserved to the ruler, introduced a double break in imperial worship patterns: the interruption of places and forms of worship or sacrifice inherited from the Qin and the first rulers of the Han, and the rejection of forms that could be qualified as "shared." The establishment of the sacrifice to Heaven and associated cults was intended to isolate imperial religion from all other religious practices. The emperor himself was somewhat separated from the rest of the population by his position as half-man, half-god. As Son of Heaven, he possessed a divine nature and indeed physical marks that attested to these origins, such as the eight-colored eyebrows of Yao and the four breasts of King Wen of Zhou or the hair that covered the feet of Emperor Xuan of the Han.[4] But the ruler was also the first among men and their spokesman to Heaven. In this position, the sacrifices he addressed to Heaven were designed to insure for the multitude of his fellow human beings peace, happiness and abundant harvests. The isolation, not to mention solitude, of the ruler—ideally confined to circulating in the Mingtang (Hall of Light) rather than traveling throughout the

[2] *Shiji*, by Sima Qian (Beijing, 1982), 6.239.
[3] *Shiji*, 28.1376; tr. Burton Watson, *Records of the grand historian of China*, 2 vols (New York, 1961), vol. 2, p. 29.
[4] See *Baihu tongyi* (Taibei, 1986), "Shengren"; *Hanshu*, by Ban Gu (Beijing, 1983), 8.237.

empire sacrificing to the various local gods of his vast territory—were in accord with the exclusive and limited character of the imperial cult that the literati promoted.

The installation of altars in the suburbs was also intended to fix divinities in a set place where the ruler was sure to meet them if he acted in conformity with the ritual prescriptions of the literati. Gan Huaizhen notes that in the "ancient ritual," men went to the gods: they came to the places of their epiphany and tempted them with offerings to make them appear and to gain their good will. Roel Sterckx has shown in very convincing fashion that "sacrificial rituals in early China were organized on a principle of probability" and that "the entire procedure could fail to achieve its most essential aim: establishing contact with the spirits."[5] In this context, communication with the gods and the possibility of the fulfillment of wishes had an unpredictable, uncertain character. On the contrary, in the reformist religion of the Han, the literati insisted that "Heaven receive the offerings where the kings had established their capital."[6] Later, another scholar, Du Ye 杜業, emphasized that "in times past, the placement of the altars was permanent, the offerings burnt or buried were always the same, and the invocation and reception of spirits were made according to immutable rituals."[7] If the emperor had to base his authority on the power of Heaven, it was necessary that Heaven be found where the ruler came to find it. An absolute power could not be built on the favor of erratic divinities. For fear of losing the favor of the gods or of undermining the authority of the ruler, this new system demanded the elimination of all risk of a failure of communication with the gods due to the mere fact of their absence. In other words, the establishment of an absolute power could not rely on chance. If the ancient model was suitable for those in search of immortality, it did not meet the requirements of an established ruler. Thanks to the altars fixed in the suburbs of the capital, to regular sacrifices and to the personal presence of the emperor, the contact with Heaven and other gods that accompanied it—Earth, the Five Emperors, the stars—was made constant. Imperial religion as an institution could be built on a solid and permanent base. But there was still some risk, as Heaven could express its disfavor or reject the offerings, as when the sacrificial ox suddenly

[5] Roel Sterckx, "Searching for spirit: *shen* and sacrifice in Warring States and Han philosophy and ritual," *Extrême-Orient, Extrême-Occident* 29 (2007), 23–54, p. 31.

[6] *Hanshu*, 25b.1254.

[7] *Hanshu*, 25b.1262.

died or the oracles were not favorable. It was at this moment that the literati intervened. Because of their aptitude in deciphering the messages from Heaven, imbued as they were with classical exegesis, they were capable of reestablishing communication. The sacrifices were like an ordeal in which the ruler submitted his virtue to the judgment of Heaven, and this judgment was then duly interpreted by the literati. The suburban sacrifices allowed for the religious creation of an absolute central power while giving the literati an essential role: to control the ruler through the conduct of the great state rituals.

If the ancient model left too much to the whims of the gods—how could a state religion be founded on deities that did not always respond to appeals?—the reformed model ignored both the ambitions of the ruler and popular devotion, and it risked the wrath of the forsaken gods whose devotees informed the emperor of their unhappiness. For these reasons, not long after their abolition, Liu Xiang demanded the reestablishment of the ancient sacrifices of Ganquan, arguing that their suppression had caused a fire. Moreover, no matter how solemn and grandiose the suburban sacrifices to Heaven, Earth and all the secondary deities that shared these offerings, they did not exhaust the religious aspirations of the rulers. Rulers continued to patronize divinities that inspired popular fervor and to introduce their worship at court. For instance, the sacrifices celebrated by Emperor Huan (r. 147–167) for Laozi, associated with Huangdi, or to Wangzi Qiao, whom I will discuss below, were all inspired in part by popular devotion. In the ancient model two systems had co-existed: either the emperor did as Gaozu and gathered at court the local cults and their officials, or he conducted ritual in person or by delegation at the site of the sacrifice, as Emperor Wen did when he built a shrine at Weiyang 渭陽, where the Five Emperors had manifested themselves. In the same way, the new state religion established by the literati never managed completely to abolish the celebrations on holy sites around the country or immortality cults. Denounced by the literati, who called for and sometimes obtained the abolition of local cults, the sacrifices to the many local gods that followers managed to promote at court constantly disturbed the bookish sacrificial model designed by the literati. The emperors no doubt found in these cults—whose efficacy was proven by the sheer numbers of their devotees—not only the satisfaction of personal religious aspirations, but also an alternative source of spiritual power.

The cults of the Qin

After his ascension to the throne, Qin Shihuangdi, the First Emperor of Qin, demanded that his officials in charge of rites (*ciguan* 祠官) complete a census of all sacrifices that had been performed hitherto in the empire so as to revive their celebration. This survey found hundreds of deities—including sacred mountains, great rivers, civilizing heroes and ancient rulers—who received regular sacrifices. Offerings varied according to the deity but most often consisted of animal victims, dried meat, wine and pieces of silk or tablets of jade. Of these, Sima Qian has provided us with a list of ceremonies.[8] The general meaning of the religious politics of the Qin was that they appropriated the ancient sacred sites of the country, imprinting upon them the mark of the new dynasty. In this spirit, the First Emperor reestablished the sacrifices to the Eight Gods 八神 of the state of Qi (the lords of Heaven, land, arms, *yin, yang*, moon, sun and the four seasons), all situated on the Shandong peninsula. He visited many of them and made an inscription to mark his passage through these recently conquered territories to celebrate the glory of his reign.[9] The celebration of the Eight Gods of the powerful state of Qi finally subdued by Qin Shihuang in 221 BC, had a very precise significance: it sealed the conquest of the tutelary powers of the vanquished. But the emperor also undertook "tours of inspection" toward the eastern borders of his land in order to obtain eternal life. In these regions, the specialists in techniques of immortality, the *fangshi*, are said to have numbered in the tens of thousands.[10] It was upon his return from one such expedition to the coast of Shandong in the hope of an encounter with the immortals thought to dwell on islands in the sea that the First Emperor died. Martin Kern has demonstrated that the tours of inspection of the First Emperor, including the erection of imperial stelae on mountain peaks, share common features with the legendary

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[8] *Shiji*, 28.1371–77; for the French translation, see Edouard Chavannes, *Les mémoires historiques de Se Ma Ts'ien*, vol. 2 (Paris, 1893), pp. 440–48; for English, see Watson, *Records*, pp. 27–30.

[9] See Chavannes, *Les Mémoires*, pp. 432–35; Edouard Chavannes, "Les inscriptions de Ts'in," *Journal Asiatique* 1 (1893), 473–521, and Martin Kern, *The stele inscriptions of Ch'in Shih-huang: text and ritual in early Chinese imperial representation* (New Haven, 2000), pp. 106–18.

[10] *Hanshu*, 25b.1260; for a French translation, see Marianne Bujard, *Le sacrifice au ciel dans la Chine ancienne: théorie et pratique sous les Han Occidentaux* (Paris, 2000), p. 203.

journey of the Zhou king Mu (r. 956–918 BC) through mythological lands in the west. "In both cases," Kern writes, "the act of inscribing the local stone is a performance both of defining and appropriating cosmic position, and of imprinting the mark of conquest." Moreover, according to Kern, this Qin imperial ritual setting, with the announcements of the achievements of the ruler engraved on several stones, was deeply rooted in the Zhou ritual tradition of bronze inscriptions. Later imperial rituals were to follow the same tradition, with the composition of the sacrificial hymns of the Han dynasty.[11]

Every third year, in the suburbs of Xianyang, the capital of Qin situated to the north of the modern city of Xi'an, the emperor carried out, to the light of torches, a sacrifice to a power whose name is not revealed by the historians. This ceremony, conducted by the emperor in person at the beginning of the year (which then began in the tenth month), is not unlike the sacrifices the Han emperors later reserved for the god Taiyi and Heaven in the suburbs of their own capital.

In 219 BC, the First Emperor also carried out the sacrifices *feng* 封 and *shan* 禪 on Taishan 太山, the sacred mountain situated at the center of Shandong province. In order to understand the protocol, he gathered at the foot of the mountain 70 scholars from the ancient kingdoms of Qi and Lu. But when they were incapable of agreeing on how to perform these ceremonies, the emperor sent them away and celebrated the sacrifices in secret, following the model of the rites carried out in Yong, the ancient capital of the Qin.[12] In this sacred site of the house of Qin, the emperor sacrificed to the "Emperors on High" (Shangdi 上帝), and the victims—horses, oxen and rams—were buried alive. Later, when the rulers of the Han adopted as their own the cults of Yong, one of the officials complained of the lack of "appropriate receptacles for cooking the animals."[13] Between the Qin and the Han, the method of offering had changed and animal offerings were from this time on "cooked."[14]

[11] *The stele inscriptions of Ch'in Shih-huang*, p. 57; see also Martin Kern, *Die Hymnen der chinesischen Staatopfer: Literatur and Ritual in der politischen Repräsentation von der Han-Zeit bis zu den Sechs Dynastien* (Stuttgart, 1997).

[12] Near the modern city of Baoji in Shaanxi.

[13] *Hanshu*, 25b.1246; Bujard, *Le sacrifice au ciel*, p. 177.

[14] On this subject, see Gilles Boileau, "Some ritual elaborations on cooking and sacrifice in late Zhou and Western Han texts," *Early China* 23–24 (1998–99), 89–123.

The sacrifices of the Western Han

The religious practices of the first Han emperors were not fundamentally different from those of the Qin. We can separate them into three groups: the sacrifices of Yong, of Ganquan and Fenyin 汾陰, and of Taishan. To these three major groups we could add the various sacrifices around the country that the emperor honored with his occasional presence during tours of inspection. In addition, deceased rulers received regular sacrifices near their tombs and in commemorative temples built in the commanderies and the states of the empire.

The sacrifices at Yong

According to Sima Qian, the sacred site of Yong was very ancient indeed. Huangdi, the mythical Yellow Emperor, had sacrificed there himself, and the Zhou at a later time had probably carried out the *jiao* or "suburban sacrifices" at this site. In the year 677 BC, the Qin made Yong their capital. In 253 BC, the great grandfather of Qin Shihuang concentrated there the altars of the four Emperors on High—the White, Green, Yellow and Red Emperors—whose cults had been celebrated separately in different parts of the territory controlled by the dukes of Qin. Originally, the sacrifice to the White Emperor (Shao Hao 少皞) had been carried out in 769 by Duke Xiang 秦襄公 (r. 778–766 BC) in Xi 西, near Lanzhou in Gansu. Then in 753, they were carried out by Duke Wen 秦文公 (r. 765–716) in Fu 鄜, in north-eastern Shaanxi. In 671, Duke Xuan 秦宣公 (r. 675–664) sacrificed to the Green Emperor in Mi 密, south of the Wei river; then Duke Ling 秦靈公 (r. ?–384) instituted the sacred sites of the Shang 上 (Above) and Xia 下 (Below) in Wuyang 吳陽, near Yong, for the Yellow (Huangdi) and Red (Yandi) Emperors.[15] The future ruling house of Qin, by establishing these cults to the great mythic ancestors, assembled its own pantheon in order to proclaim its divine ancestry. In the words of Marcel Granet, the princes of Qin built "a collection of sacred sites worthy of the Son of Heaven."[16]

Under the influence of cosmological theories founded on the interaction between the five agents (*wuxing* 五行), this portion of the imperial

[15] *Shiji*, 28.1364; for an identification of the sites of the cults, see Ling Chunsheng, "Qin Han shidai zhi zhi," *Bulletin of the Institute of Ethnology* 18, Academia Sinica (1964), p. 117; Li Ling, *Zongguo fangshu xukao* (Beijing, 2006), pp. 107–09.

[16] Marcel Granet, *Danses et légendes de la Chine ancienne* (Paris, 1926), vol. 2, p. 572.

pantheon was completed with the addition of a fifth Emperor when Gaozu, or Liu Bang (r. 206–195), the first emperor of the Han dynasty, added the cult of the Black Emperor. In this new five-part arrangement, the altars of four of the Emperors were placed each in its respective direction and that of the Yellow Emperor in the center. Outside Yong, two other temples consecrated to the Five Emperors were constructed during the reign of Emperor Wen (r. 180–157), one at Weiyang, north-east of Chang'an, and the other at Chengji 成紀, near the modern city of Tongwei 通渭 in Gansu province. The sacrifices at Yong for the Five Emperors held a central position in the imperial religion of the Western Han, taking place once every three years in the presence of the ruler. The dynastic histories indicate that after Emperor Wen, who sacrificed for the first time in 165 BC, Emperor Wu (r. 141–87) went ten times to Yong to offer sacrifices in person. It is indeed probable he went even more often. In his absence, the sacrifices were done by the officers of rites, who performed them at various times throughout the year based on the ritual calendar of the Qin. As regards liturgy, sacrificial protocol and architectural layout, the sacrifices in Yong to the Five Emperors served as models for all of the great imperial rituals of the Han. The sacrifices in Ganquan for Taiyi, as well as those for Taishan, in fact imitated those of Yong—at least that is what the historians tell us.

The sacrifices in Ganquan and Fenyin

The greatest innovation in the imperial cults of the Western Han was without doubt the celebration by Emperor Wu of the cult to Taiyi in 113 BC. With this sacrifice, the emperor associated that to Houtu 后土, god of the earth, which never became the subject of the kind of intense debate that accompanied the establishment of the sacrifice to the Great One. Subsequently, the shrines of Houtu followed the relocation of those of Taiyi, first to Fenyin (to the east of the Yellow River and 200 km north of the capital) and then to the suburbs of Chang'an, close to modern-day Xi'an. In 135 BC, the *fangshi* Miu Ji 謬忌, a native of Bo 亳 in modern Shandong, insisted that the god Taiyi should have pride of place in the imperial pantheon, arguing that this deity was the master of the Five Emperors who until then had occupied the highest position. Miu Ji affirmed that the Great One had been honored by rulers since antiquity and that it was to him they had offered the great *tailao* 太牢 sacrifice composed of three victims, an ox, a pig and a goat. The rite

lasted seven days and took place on an altar with "eight entrances for the spirits" 八通之鬼道 built in the southeastern suburbs of the capital. In conformity with the instructions of Miu Ji, the emperor had an altar built in the outskirts of Chang'an and appointed the great invocator (*taizhu* 太祝) to conduct the sacrifices. Twenty years passed before the emperor—following the advice of another famous *fangshi*, Gongsun Qing 公孫卿, who was in charge of the search for immortals at court—actually sacrificed personally to Taiyi. In 113 BC, an altar was built in Ganquan, an imperial residence situated more than 70 km northeast of Chang'an. The ruler sacrificed to Taiyi in the center, the place originally occupied by the Yellow Emperor, who was now relegated to the southeast of the altar of three stories and eight entrances.[17] Along with the Great One and the Five Emperors, a multitude of gods were honored, including the Sun, the Moon and the Big Dipper.

The sacrifices to Taiyi (and Houtu) became the central ritual of the imperial religion. For the *fangshi*, it was at the heart of a religious system organized around the figure of the legendary Yellow Emperor, a system in which all of the imperial cults, including those of Yong, converged on the ultimate aim of obtaining immortality. In this respect, the circumstances which preceded the establishment of the cult of Taiyi in 113 BC are revealing. In that year, a cauldron of exceptional size was discovered at Fengyin. Soon, the literati and the *fangshi* were at odds as to the manner in which it should be stored. The former maintained the cauldron was one of the nine cauldrons forged by Yu the Great. Its discovery was a sign that the House of Han had received the mandate of Heaven. According to the literati, the precious tripod should be placed in the ancestral temple. The *fangshi* Gongsun Qing, by contrast, insisted the discovery of the cauldron meant that Emperor Wu was going to attain immortality since Huangdi, before becoming immortal, had also discovered a cauldron in the year in which the solstice coincided with the new moon, thus inaugurating a new lunar cycle. Because in the year 113 the new moon coincided perfectly with the solstice, the emperor decided to sacrifice in person to Taiyi. Sima Qian notes that Gongsun Qing claimed he had drawn his prediction from a book that transmitted the teachings of the Yellow Emperor through a lineage of masters of the state of Qi. This may be one of the first examples of the "prophetic

[17] See the schema for this altar proposed by Li Ling, "An archeological study of Taiyi (Grand One) worship," *Early Medieval China* 2 (1995–96), 1–39, p. 29.

literature and esoteric interpretation (of the Classics)" (*chenwei* 讖緯) which flourished especially during the Eastern Han.[18]

From then on, in autumn and in the last month of the year, regular sacrifices were offered to Taiyi by the great invocator. The emperor offered sacrifices there in person once every three years. After the year 111 BC, dance, music and songs were added to the ritual. As in Yong, the offerings for the Emperors on High included wine and animals: a white bull with a long tail, a deer and a pig, but also dishes which were destined more especially for the immortals: dates and dried meats.

The sacrifices on Taishan

Emperor Wu celebrated the Feng and Shan sacrifices for the first time on Taishan in 110 BC. He was to return there several times. These solemn sacrifices announced, according to Sima Qian, the zenith of a dynasty and should only be carried out one time for each dynasty whose legitimacy they consecrated. They inaugurated an era of peace following the victory that eliminated all enemies and marked the definitive consolidation of power. But according to the *fangshi*, the great rites of Taishan had a very different meaning. The ascension of the mountain and the completion of the Feng and Shan sacrifices constituted a decisive step on the road to immortality. In fact Emperor Wu celebrated them to this end and performed them several times. The allure of immortality is prominent in the speech the *fangshi* Li Shaojun 李少君 made to Emperor Wu:

> If you sacrifice to the fire-place you can call the spirits to you, and if the spirits come you can transform cinnabar into gold. Using this gold, you may make drinking and eating vessels which will prolong the years of your life. With prolonged life you may visit the immortals who live on the island of P'eng-lai in the middle of the sea. If you visit them and perform the Feng and Shan sacrifices, you will never die. This is what the Yellow Emperor did.[19]

Again Emperor Wu was eager to imitate the conduct of the Yellow Emperor and celebrated the sacrifices on Taishan with the hope of acquiring immortality as Huangdi had before him. The sacrifices of

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[18] *Shiji*, 28.1394–95, Chavannes, *Les Mémoires*, pp. 485–90, Watson, *Records*, pp. 50–52; Bujard, *Le sacrifice au Ciel*, pp. 157–60; on the *chenwei* see Lü Zongli, *Power of the words*: chen *prophecy in Chinese politics, AD 265–518* (Oxford, 2003).

[19] Watson, *Records*, p. 39; *Shiji*, 28.1385.

Taishan done in 110 BC were carried out in three steps: first, Emperor Wu performed in front of the literati a "public" Feng sacrifice at the foot of the mountain in accord with the rites normally observed for Taiyi. He then climbed to the top of the mountain in the company of Huo Shan 霍嬗, son of the famous general Huo Qubing 霍去病, and repeated the Feng sacrifice, but secretly. Other than Huo Shan, who died soon after, no one else attended. Finally, he offered the Shan sacrifice on the peak of Suran at the foot of Taishan, following the ritual for Houtu.[20]

Together with these three groups of sacrifices—Yong, Ganquan and Fenyin, and Taishan—imperial sacrifices also included another series of cults celebrated more or less regularly either by the emperor in person or by the officers of rites of the local or central imperial administration. We can get a general picture of these rites by reading the passage of the "Treatise of sacrifices" of the *Hanshu* that enumerates the ceremonies reestablished by Emperor Xuan (r. 74–49) in 61 BC, a year in which he for the first time went to Ganquan to offer the sacrifice to Taiyi. Throughout the empire, sacrifices were addressed to the sacred mountains (the five peaks), the great rivers, the sun and the moon, the stars and constellations, legendary heroes like Chiyou 蚩尤, the Eight Gods of the state of Qi, extraordinary animals like the pheasant of the Treasure of Chen, the Golden Horse 金馬, the Blue Jade Cock 碧雞 of Yizhou 益州 in Yunnan, to marvelous springs and wells, to sacred objects like the Pearl of the Marquis of Sui 隨侯珠, the Priceless Sword 劍寶, and the Precious Disc 玉寶璧, to immortals and the Jade Maidens (Yunü 玉女), even to Xiongnu gods such as the god of Routes and Roads 徑路神 and the King Xiutu 休屠.[21]

The first five chapters of the *Shanhai jing* 山海經 (*Classic of mountains and seas*), parts of which can be dated to the end of the Warring States, describe sacrifices that are very similar to those outlined above. In these chapters, descriptions of each group of mountains and associated deities are followed by a succinct account of the ritual and sacrificial prescriptions that correspond to it. The nature of these offerings—jade discs, bulls, goats, pigs, fish, chickens—and their quantity, as well as the

[20] On Taishan in general, see the magisterial study of Edouard Chavannes, *Le T'ai Chan: Essai de monographie d'un culte chinois* (Paris, 1910) et sur les sacrifices Feng et Shan, Mark Edward Lewis, "The *feng* and *shan* sacrifices of the emperor Wu of the Han," *State and court ritual in China*, Joseph P. McDermott, ed., (Cambridge, 1999), pp. 50–80.

[21] *Hanshu*, 28b.1249–1250; Bujard, *Le sacrifice au Ciel*, pp. 182–85.

length of the rituals, suggest that they could never have been private or individual cults. They are reminiscent, rather, of the great sacrifices that the feudal lords of the ancient kingdoms addressed to the mountains situated on the borders of their land: the *wang* 望 sacrifices or the "sacrifices performed from afar." In fact, Sima Qian informs us that at the beginning of the reign of Emperor Wen, in the sacrifices to "illustrious mountains and great water courses that were found in the lands of the lords, it was their invocators who carried out the sacrifices due the various divinities." When some of these kingdoms were conquered, the great invocator of the emperor "received orders to perform all the customary rites in their appropriate season."[22]

We have every reason to believe that, following the Qin, the House of Han when it rose to power took over the ancient sacrifices and celebrated them in its own name. In fact, before the reform of the prime minister Kuang Heng 匡衡 and of the grand censor Zhang Tan 張譚 in 31 BC, all of the imperial sacrifices of the new dynasty were inherited from the past. Even Taiyi was considered a divinity revered in the ancient kingdoms of Qi and Chu. Rather than creating their own sacrifices, the new rulers tried to appropriate the efficacious cults of the entire land, either by celebrating them in the capital with invocators from the four corners of the empire—this was Emperor Gaozu's choice—or by worshiping them locally, either offering sacrifices to them in person or by the intermediary of local ritual officials.

According to Li Ling, the sacrifices in Ganquan were related to the wars of conquest against the Xiongnu.[23] The palaces of Emperor Wu had now replaced the ancient palace of Qin, the Linguang Gong 林光宮, located in the territory of a Xiongnu tribe that had been defeated by the general Meng Tian 蒙恬 (d. 220 BC). In fact, Ganquan was the site of two sets of sacrifices: those already mentioned, to the Five Emperors and later to Taiyi, and those taken over from the Xiongnu. In 121 BC, Huo Qubing stole from the Xiongnu king Xiutu a "golden man to sacrifice to heaven" 祭天金人, which Emperor Wu placed in Ganquan. Yang Xiong 楊雄 (53–18 AD) affirms that the statue represented Taiyi, but other authors interpreted it as the first Buddhist icon in China.[24] Subsequently, the sacrifices to King Xiutu and to the Xiongnu god of

[22] *Shiji*, 28.1380; Chavannes, *Les Mémoires*, p. 454; Watson, *Records*, p. 33.

[23] Li Ling, *Zhongguo fangshu*, pp. 111–12.

[24] Yang Xiong, "Ganquan fu" 甘泉賦, in *Wenxuan* (Zhengzhou, 1990), 7.94–98; *Hanshu*, 55.2480, n. 9.

Routes and Roads were continued and remained an integral part of the official cults celebrated regularly during the reign of Emperor Xuan (r. 74–49). Just as the Qin had appropriated the Eight Gods of the state of Qi, the Han manifested its power as the victor by worshipping the gods of the vanquished in the conquered territory.

In the same spirit, in 61 BC, the counselor Wang Bao 王褒 was charged with going to Mt. Yutong 禹同 in distant Yunnan[25] in order to sacrifice to the Golden Horse and the Rooster of the Blue Jade. Was his mission not in fact to rally divine powers on the margins of the empire so as to ensure complete possession of both gods and men?[26] The short inscription written most likely by Wang Bao before setting off—he never arrived—expresses this aim unambiguously, namely, to invite to the court of Chang'an the gods who had strayed to the lands of the barbarians of the southwest:

> The emissary Wang Bao, with imperial tablets, arrives full of respect at the cliffs of the south where the Divine Golden Horse and the Blue Azure Rooster [reside]. This distant southern frontier, this deep river at the heart of a tortuous valley are not for you a chosen land. Come to us! Come to us! The might of the Han is without limits; it is greater than that of Yao and Shun and as benevolent as that of the Three August Ones. The yellow Dragon is made manifest, the white Tiger surges; everything is in order [in the empire]. Come! Fly! Why would you want to serve the uncultured south![27]

The proliferation of local cults in the absence of a central cult strictly reserved for the emperor provoked a reaction from the reformist literati, who launched the reform of imperial sacrifices in 31 BC.

Reforms of the sacrifice to heaven and their justification

The offensive carried out by Kuang Heng and Zhang Tan, among others, sought, on the one hand, to establish a central imperial ritual dedicated to Heaven and, on the other, to suppress the hundreds of local cults on which the central administration expended enormous resources and for which the state employed officials throughout the empire. The strategy of the literati concentrated on the transfer of sacrifices reserved

[25] To the northwest of the modern city of Kunming.
[26] *Hanshu*, 25b.1250; Bujard, *Le sacrifice au Ciel*, p. 184.
[27] Yang Sheng'an, *Yang Sheng'an congshu* (Chengdu, 2002), 14.182.

for Taiyi from Ganquan to the capital, with those for Houtu following the relocation. But in order to understand the transformation of the cult of Taiyi into the cult to Heaven, we need to summarize what is known of Taiyi.

Who is Taiyi?

There are three authoritative studies of unequal length on this subject: that of Qian Baocong in 1932, revised in 1936; that of Gu Jiegang and Yang Xiangkui in 1936; and, much more recently, that of Li Ling.[28] These scholars have shown that Taiyi corresponded to several entities. The first of these was the celestial deity "Great One Sovereign of the East" (Donghuang Taiyi 東皇太一), whom the poet Qu Yuan 屈原 (342–278) celebrated as the chief of the pantheon of the ancient kingdom of Chu. But in other early texts, Taiyi is compared to the Dao. It designates both the undifferentiated unity which precedes the individuation of beings, the separation of *yin* and *yang*, of Heaven and Earth, and the origin of creation, Chaos (*hundun* 混沌). This is also the meaning that is apparently given to Taiyi in the late-4th century BC manuscript on bamboo slips, the "Taiyi shengshui" 太一生水 ("Taiyi produces water"), discovered at Guodian in modern Hubei in 1993.[29] Elsewhere, Taiyi represents an ideal state in which one can become "the true man" (*zhenren* 真人). There was certainly a link between the Taiyi conceived of as the great original unity and the prayers that were addressed to Taiyi in order to obtain immortality. There were in fact shrines to Taiyi.[30] It is said of Xianmen 羨門, the immortal Qin Shihuang searched for, that he worshipped Taiyi and, in the "Treatise on the Feng and Shan sacrifices," that Xianmen and other immortals "followed the way of the immortals, discarding their mortal form and changing into spiritual beings by means of supernatural aid."[31]

[28] Qian Baocong, "Taiyi kao," *Qian Baocong kexueshi lunwen xuanji* (Beijing, 1983), pp. 207–234; Gu Jiegang et Yang Xiangkui, "Sanhuang kao," *Gushibian* 7. 2 (1936), pp. 20–282; Li Ling, "An archeological study of Taiyi (Grand One) worship," *Early Medieval China* 2 (1995–96), 1–39.

[29] See Kalinowski, Marc, "Fonctionnalité calendaire dans les cosmogonies anciennes de la Chine," *Etudes chinoises* 23 (2004), 87–122.

[30] See Seidel, Anna, *La divinisation de Lao tseu dans le taoïsme des Han* (Paris, 1969), pp. 54–59.

[31] *Shiji*, 28.1368–69; Chavannes, *Les Mémoires*, p. 436; Watson, *Records*, p. 25.

Taiyi was also a constellation of five stars that formed an inverted "Y." This shape is represented on the paintings of Mawangdui in Hunan (tomb no. 3, dated 168 BC), which Li Ling interprets as a representation of Taiyi. Placed on the point of a triangle formed by three dragons, Taiyi is surrounded by the duke of thunder and master of rain gods and by four officers that were incarnations of the four seasons. Li Ling has also identified Taiyi in a dagger-ax of Hubei, discovered in 1960.[32] If the figure represented in this dagger-ax is Taiyi, we would have to admit that at the end of the Warring States, Taiyi was also a divinity in Sichuan, as this dagger-ax comes from Shu. It is as a warrior god that Taiyi was invoked in the military expedition against the Nan Yue in 112 BC. On this occasion, a spirit-banner *lingqi* 靈旗 symbolizing Taiyi was made, "with representations of the sun, the moon, the Big Dipper, and an ascending dragon." The Grand Historian took it in his hand and pointed it at the country that was about to be attacked.[33] This description, as noted by Li Ling, corresponds also to the painting in Mawangdui and to the dagger-ax discovered in Hubei.

None of these is, properly speaking, the identity of the Taiyi that was introduced at the court of Emperor Wu. There he was presented as the master of the Five Emperors, the deities that until then had been at the head of the imperial pantheon. Thereafter, literati who wanted to introduce a supreme sacrifice dedicated to Heaven instead of Taiyi concentrated their efforts on transforming three aspects of the cult of Taiyi: the name of the divinity, the place of sacrifice and the ritual procedures.

The name of the divinity

As we saw above, it was to Taiyi that the sacrifices at Ganquan were addressed. While Heaven, in the eyes of the literati, possessed a series of moral and cosmological attributes, Taiyi was a patron of immortality cults which were primarily a personal affair. That is why Emperor Wu had carried out the sacrifices on Taishan in secret, and Qin Shihuang before him had proceeded in the same manner. In the eyes of the literati, Heaven, father of the sovereign, was a moral power, and his worship was modeled on that of the ancestors. Guardian of the moral

[32] See Li Ling, "Hubei Jingmen 'bibing Taisui' ge," *Wenwu tiandi* 3 (1992), 22–25.
[33] See *Shiji*, 28.1395; Chavannes, *Les Mémoires*, p. 493; Watson, *Records*, p. 54.

rectitude of the sovereign, he punished deviation by sending natural catastrophes. He was a guide to whom the emperor had to subordinate himself in the conduct of the empire and its population. By sacrificing to him, the sovereign was not seeking his own personal well-being but the peace of the empire, general harmony and abundant harvests. In reality, in the decades that preceded the establishment of the sacrifice to Heaven, a "discourse" was created by means of clever manipulation so as to assimilate the Great One and Heaven. We read in an extract of the memorial presented by Prime Minister Kuang Heng in 32 BC an example of this assimilation, for in it Kuang Heng simply substitutes the one for the other:

> In the past, the august emperor Wu dwelt in the Ganquan Palace. He also established at Yunyang the sanctuary of Taiyi to sacrifice south of the palace. Today, Your Majesty resides most of the time in Chang'an. In order to carry out the *jiao* sacrifice to August Heaven, you go north to great *yin* and, in order to sacrifice to Houtu, you go east to little *yang*. By doing this, you deviate from ancient rules.[34]

The place of sacrifice

Once it was accepted that the Ganquan sacrifices for Taiyi (and those for Houtu at Fenyin) were in fact sacrifices dedicated to Heaven and Earth, literati were able to demand the transfer of the sacrifices to the outskirts of Chang'an on historical and cosmological grounds. From the cosmological point of view, Heaven, the *yang* principle par excellence, should be located in the southern suburbs, and the ruler approaching the altar should be facing great *yang*. Placed in the north in Ganquan, it was instead at the heart of great *yin*. The altar of Houtu that should have been placed in great *yin* in the northern suburbs was now found at Fenyin in little *yang*. For the ritualists, the current layout that ignored the recognized cosmological order could only bring disaster; sacrifices that defied good cosmological sense could not end well. The literati also drew on the tradition to justify the displacement of altars: past rulers had also sacrificed to Heaven in the suburbs of the capital. Or, to restate the formula of Kuang Heng and Zhang Tan cited above, "Heaven receives the offerings at the place where the kings established their capital."

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[34] *Hanshu*, 25b.1254; Bujard, *Le sacrifice au Ciel*, p. 191.

Ritual procedures

Once the Taiyi altar had been moved, it was necessary to eliminate from the ritual all innovations and extravagances that had been introduced by the *fangshi*. Kuang Heng denounced these practices, saying:

> In antiquity, one does not find purple altars, colored inscriptions, embroidered robes and other ornaments, not to mention the choirs of jade maidens, stone altars, the cults to the immortals, bell chariots, red foals and effigies of buried horse-dragons.[35]

It was essential, they argued, to reestablish the simplicity and sincerity of the ritual, to attend to the simplification of utensils—made of clay or in the shape of gourds—and to sacrifice only one victim. Kuang Heng cites extensively from the *Book of rites* (*Liji*), in particular the long passage from the chapter "One single victim for the *jiao* sacrifice" ("Jiao tesheng" 郊特牲). It is almost a "Protestant" discourse. Indeed, Michael Loewe employs the term "Puritans" to describe the attempt to curb the increasing sumptuousness of the imperial sacrifices.[36] Other arguments go in the same direction when they denounce the senseless expenses involved in carrying out the sacrifices, including the transportation of the imperial cortege to the places of worship.

In 31 BC, Kuang Heng and Zhang Tan were allowed to move the cults of Taiyi from Ganquan and of Houtu from Fenyin to the southern and northern suburbs of Chang'an respectively. The sacrifice offered by the emperor Cheng (r. 32–7) for the first time in the suburbs was not yet called a sacrifice to Heaven and Earth, implying it was still the numerous gods represented at Ganquan, including the Five Emperors, that benefitted from the imperial offerings. It is only during Wang Mang's reign that the suburban sacrifices were addressed to Heaven, called Huangtian Shangdi Taiyi 皇天上帝太一, an appellation uniting all the possible recipients of the sacrifice: August Heaven, Lord on High and Great One. Thereafter, the habit of offering the supreme sacrifice in the suburbs was firmly established and was to be perpetuated until 1914.

At the same time that the altars of Ganquan and Fenyin were moved, hundreds of cults were suppressed: sacrifices in the capital established by Emperor Gaozu and, in the states and commanderies, many sacri-

[35] *Hanshu*, 25b.1256; Bujard, *Le sacrifice au Ciel*, p. 194.

[36] Michael Loewe, "K'uang Heng and the reform of religious practices—31 BC," in *Crisis and conflict in Han China* (London, 1982), pp. 154–92.

fices for which officers had been placed in the service of "the *fangshi* in charge of keeping a lookout for the gods." More than two-thirds of these sacrifices were eliminated, with their number going from 683 to 208. In Yong, only 15 of 203 sacrifices were preserved. We can see from the list of abolished cults that some of those targeted were from the Qin and the first emperors of the Han and others were cults administered by *fangshi*. But the reforms came to an abrupt halt a year later when its main architect, Kuang Heng, was demoted from his position as prime minister. The hope of hastening the birth of a successor to the throne, which had without doubt encouraged Emperor Cheng to accept the reforms, had not been realized. Frustrated, the emperor looked to others for a solution. Liu Xiang pleaded with great success for the restoration of the abolished cults, and the altars to Taiyi and Houtu were transferred back to Ganquan and Fenyin. Toward the end of the reign of Emperor Cheng, celebrations directed by the *fangshi* proliferated, and it seems the sovereign became entirely preoccupied with the quest for immortality. The adviser Gu Yong 谷永 responded to the setback by addressing to the emperor a virulent diatribe against the *fangshi*, whom he described as "perverts who lead the masses astray and embrace heterodox doctrines and pernicious ideas in order to deceive the people and trick sovereigns." He obtained the reestablishment of the suburban sacrifices in 7 BC, but these were moved back once again three years later during the reign of Emperor Ai (r. 7–1 BC). Emperor Ai, who was ill when he acceded to the throne, sought for a cure among the specialists of magical arts (*fangshu* 方術) and multiplied ceremonies to all kinds of gods. As a result, during his reign there were more than 700 sites of worship and 37,000 sacrifices were made each year.[37] All the ancient cults were re-established and the officials of rites were restored to their functions.

The cult dedicated to the Great One and its progressive transformation into a cult addressed to Heaven was without doubt a first attempt to place in the imperial pantheon a supreme divinity dominating all others, a kind of alter ego of the emperor in the divine world. In the words of Marcel Gauchet,[38] "the dispersion of the gods ran counter to political unity," and the literati, by raising Heaven to the rank of cosmological principle and moral model for the sovereign, tried to

[37] *Hanshu*, 28b.1264; Bujard, *Le sacrifice au Ciel*, p. 205.
[38] Marcel Gauchet, *La condition historique* (Paris, 2005), p. 112.

establish a perfect correlation between pantheon and state. But this ideal plan, so vigorously defended by generations of scholars, was never translated into fact. Imperial religion continued to oscillate between the adoption of religious plans developed by literati on the basis of ingenious interpretations of the Classics and the surreptitious reintroduction in the imperial rites of particular cults maintained at court by their followers. The fact that the cult of Houtu was in spite of everything always associated with that of Taiyi—and later the cult of Earth with that to Heaven—is an indication that the idea of a single supreme god was never completely realized. Key here is the influence of the cosmological conceptions of the time that were largely founded on the creative and regulatory alternation of the forces of *yin* and *yang*. The universal acceptance of this cosmology ensured a kind of "resistance" to the appearance of a single sovereign god. Either a subaltern deity (Houtu) was permanently associated with the high god or a multitude of divinities shared the offerings of the high god, as was the case in the first sacrifices to Heaven of the Eastern Han.

The cults to deceased emperors

The rulers of the Han afforded their ancestors most sumptuous treatment. The founder, Gaozu, originally a post-station chief 亭長, did not come from an aristocratic line. On the death of his father in 197 BC, he increased the prestige of his house by granting him the title of Most High Sovereign 太上皇 and ordering all feudal lords to construct funerary temples dedicated to his memory. When Gaozu died, his successor in turn ordered the construction of temples for him. Emperor Wen and then Emperor Wu enjoyed the same treatment. Funerary temples were thus multiplied throughout the empire, in both the capital and close to the imperial tombs. Ban Gu informs us that at the beginning of the reign of Emperor Yuan (r. 49–33), there were 176 temples dedicated to his predecessors, of which 167 were found in 68 states and commanderies. There were also 30 temples dedicated to empresses, and no fewer than 24,455 offerings were carried out annually by 12,147 priests, musicians and cooks, in addition to 45,129 caretakers and not counting the officers assigned to raise the animals for sacrifice.[39] The temples situated close to

[39] *Hanshu*, 73.3115–3116; Michael Loewe, "The imperial tombs of the Former Han dynasty and their shrines," *T'oung Pao* 78 (1992), 302–40.

the imperial tombs included the temple proper (*miao* 廟), the chamber of repose (*qin* 寢) situated at the back of the temple, and lateral rooms (*biandian* 便殿). Ceremonies and offerings were carried out every day in the chamber of repose, every month in the temple, and in each of the four seasons in the lateral chambers.[40] Every month, the robe and hat of the deceased emperor were carried in parade 遊衣冠 from the chamber of repose to the temple in order to receive the sacrifices.[41]

From the first years of the reign of Emperor Yuan, the literati began to insist that the maintenance of such a large number of funerary temples was contrary to the ancient rites. After five or seven generations, depending on the school of thought, the temples dedicated to a given emperor had to be destroyed and his tablets placed in the temple of the founder of the dynasty, Gaozu, or interred. Hence only the temples of Gaozu and his father, of the emperors Wen, Wu and Zhao, and of Emperor Xuan and his father should be kept. In spite of the distance in time separating the current emperor from Gaozu and Wen, they enjoyed a privileged status that allowed them to keep their temples, the first because he was the founder of the dynasty and the second because of his exceptional merit. In all cases, temples built in the states and commanderies were not justified and should be abandoned. Other voices soon arose calling for the destruction of the temple of the father of Gaozu, who had never reigned as emperor. According to the literati, not only was the current system incorrect, it also entailed considerable expense. At various times, the reformists were successful, leading to the destruction of dozens of temples. But as soon as the emperor was sick or lacked an heir, their opponents invoked the wrath of the abandoned ancestors, the temples were reestablished and their sacrifices reinstated. The reforms of the funerary temples in fact experienced the same setbacks as the reforms that relocated the cults of Taiyi and Houtu to the suburbs. Indeed, they were often debated by the same scholars divided into two camps: on the one side, those who pleaded in favor of the relocation of the altars of Taiyi and Houtu and for the drastic reduction of funerary temples and, on the other, those who wanted to maintain the cults as they were.

[40] For more detail, see *Hanshu* 73.3115–16 and Michael Loewe, "The imperial tombs," pp. 282–84.

[41] According to the interpretation of Yan Shigu 顏師古 (581–645), see Michael Loewe, "The imperial tombs," p. 283.

The New and Eastern Han dynasties

Starting with the reign of Wang Mang, the sole ruler of the New dynasty (r. 9–23 AD) wedged between the two Han dynasties, and with the arrival of the Eastern Han (25–220 AD), the religious concepts of the literati left their indelible mark on imperial rites. Wang Mang had greatly reformed the imperial rites even before his ascension to the throne and continued to do so throughout his reign. These changes were all moving in the direction the exegetes of the Classics wanted. Extensively citing ancient texts, the *Zhouli* and the *Liji* in particular, Wang Mang re-established shrines to Heaven and Earth in the northern and southern suburbs of Chang'an, and ordered the association of Gaozu with the sacrifices for Heaven and the empress Lü, the wife of Gaozu, with the sacrifices for Earth. He ordered the relocation of the sacrifices to the Five Emperors from Yong to the suburbs of the capital, where he also built a public altar for the god of cereals (*guanji* 官稷) located behind the public altar of the god of earth (*guanshe* 官社). In 4 BC, he constructed a Hall of Light (Mingtang 明堂) that was inaugurated with great pomp the following year. After his ascension to the throne, he installed his own ancestors in the Mingtang. Then he in turn entered on the quest for immortality and the cultivation of cereals from which he hoped to extract gold. He even promulgated several edicts in which he presented himself as an immortal. According to the historian Ban Gu,

> At the end of his reign, from the cults dedicated to Heaven, Earth, and the six principles to the cults for the mass of minor gods, a total of 1700 cults were celebrated. The burnt victims—oxen, goats, pigs, birds, and wild animals—involved more than 3000 species. Subsequently, certain animals became extinct, with the result that domestic cocks replaced wild ducks, and dogs took the place of deer.[42]

The rulers of the Eastern Han inherited the cults established by Wang Mang, whom official sources label a usurper. Nor did the *fangshi* disappear from the religious scene. According to Max Kaltenmark, they were much involved in the writing of the prophetic texts and esoteric interpretations of the Classics, the *chenwei*, that developed prodigiously in the first centuries of our era.[43] It is significant that the first emperor of the Eastern Han, Liu Xiu or Guangwu (r. 25–57), drew upon the

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[42] *Hanshu*, 25b.1270; Bujard, *Le sacrifice au Ciel*, p. 215.

[43] Max Kaltenmark, "Les Tch'an wei," *Han Hieu* 2.4 (1949), 364–73.

contents of a revealed text to announce to Heaven and Earth his decision to accede to the throne of the Han:

> Liu Xiu will mobilize his troops to stop the one who is without principle. The barbarians of the four quarters will assemble like clouds; the dragon will defeat [them] in battle. At the end of four and seven, fire will prevail.[44]

This last phrase means that (2)28 years (4 × 7 = 28) had passed since the ascension to the throne of the first emperor of the Western Han and that a new emperor was about to re-establish the House of Han. He would reign by virtue of fire and adopt the color red as the emblematic color of the dynasty (Wang Mang had adopted yellow).

The altars upon which the emperor offered the first sacrifices to the Lord on High of August Heaven (Huangtian Shangdi) and the Sacred Spirit of the Earth (Houtu Shenqi 后土神祇) were constructed south of the city of Hao 鄗 in what is now Hebei province, where Emperor Guangwu had stationed his army. It is only in the second year of his reign that he built an altar to Heaven in the suburbs of Luoyang. The Great One was no longer in the ranks of the honored deities: on the round altar divided into eight stories and on the surrounding altars, the sacrifices to Heaven and Earth were shared by no less than 1514 deities.[45] At the end of his reign in 56 AD, Emperor Guangwu performed in turn the sacrifices Feng and Shan on Taishan. On this occasion, he ordered the engraving of a stele that reproduced the principal prophetic writings he had received.[46] South of the capital, like Wang Mang, Guangwu built a Hall of Light, a Terrace for the Spirits (Lingtai 靈臺), and a Circular Pond (Biyong 辟雍). These buildings, the origins of which the literati traced to the ancient kings, or at the very least to the Zhou dynasty, symbolized good government.[47] In the Hall of Light, the king had to model his conduct on Heaven, "changing lodging, costume, and

[44] Ngo Van Xuyet, *Divination, magie et politique dans la Chine ancienne* (Paris, 1976), p. 35.

[45] *Hou Hanshu*, 8.3160.

[46] See the description of the ceremonies by a subaltern official which has been translated by Stephen Bokenkamp, "Record of the Feng and Shan Sacrifices," in *Religions of China in practice*, ed., Donald S. Lopez (Princeton, 1996), pp. 251–60.

[47] On the remains of these buildings, see Institute of Archaelogy of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, ed., *Xi Han lizhi jianzhu yizhi* (Beijing, 2003).

food according to the seasons."[48] He sacrificed to Heaven by associating with it his dynastic ancestors.

In the year 59 AD, the successor to Guangwu, the emperor Ming (r. 57–75) sacrificed in the Hall of Light, associating his deceased father not with Heaven but with the Five Emperors. When the sacrifice was completed, he went to scrutinize the clouds 雲物 from the Terrace of the Spirits.[49] This was without doubt a way to read the acceptance or rejection of sacrifices. The sacrifices in the Hall of Light were subsequently carried out by every emperor of the Eastern Han until the destruction of the building in a fire in 219. Emperor Zhang (r. 76–87), who returned in the year 85 to Taishan to offer the Feng and Shan sacrifices, stopped off in the Hall of Light that Emperor Wu of the Western Han had built on the banks of the river Wen. He made offerings to the Five Emperors, whom he also associated with Guangwu, the founding emperor of the Eastern Han. The following day, he renewed the sacrifices in honor of the four great emperors of the Western Han and the two deceased emperors of the new dynasty, Guangwu and Ming. While the Hall of Light had contained the altar reserved for Heaven, the altar of Luoyang, like that on the banks of the river Wen, housed in reality the altars of the Five Emperors, whom the emperors associated with the dynastic ancestors of the House of Han. Later, in 266 AD, religious reforms sought to reestablish the purity of the ancient rites and bring about the abolition of the rites to the Five Emperors, but the latter were re-established a few decades later. As was the case for the altar of the sacrifice to Heaven, the speculations of the literati modified unceasingly the configuration and ritual function of the Hall of Light and the buildings with which they were associated.

In the outskirts of Luoyang, from the reign of Emperor Ming on, the state installed altars to celebrate with great pomp the arrival of the seasons. The arrival of autumn was carried out twice so that each of the Five Emperors could preside over one of the annual periods. The colors of chariots, banners, robes and decorations were changed according to the season: green for the arrival of spring in the eastern suburb; red for the arrival of summer in the southern suburb; yellow for the arrival of mid-autumn in the southwestern suburb; white for

[48] Maspero, Henri, "Le Ming-Tang et la crise religieuse chinoise avant les Han," *Mélanges chinois et bouddhiques* 9 (1948–51), 1–71.

[49] *Hou Hanshu*, 8.3181.

the arrival of autumn in the western suburb; and black for the arrival of winter in the northern suburb.[50] These rituals were inspired by the *Book of rites*, and by similar ceremonies carried out by Wang Mang in the year 5 AD.

At the end of the year, a ritual of exorcism called Danuo 大儺 was held at the court and in the major centers of the empire. It took place on the eve of the *la* 臘 festival, the day on which one offered sacrifices in the hearth to the household gods and the ancestors; the emperor sacrificed to his dynastic ancestors and at the altar of the god of earth. The *la* day was an occasion for celebration and banquets. These celebrations took place after the great Nuo exorcism in which 12 guards, dressed as animals and under the orders of a *fangxiangshi* 方相氏, expelled pestilence in the presence of the emperor and his officials. A troupe of 120 young boys beat the great drums and formed a chorus directed by the chief of eunuchs. Addressing each of the ten maleficent spirits, and threatening them with terrible sufferings, they told them to leave, or they would be carved into pieces and devoured by the 12 animals. The *fangxiangshi*, who had four metal eyes and was clad in a bear skin, led a shouting, dancing troupe that went through the rooms in every direction. After having completed the tour three times and brandishing torches, the dancers chased the spirits of pestilence out the southern gate. There the first squadron of cavalry took the torches before placing them beyond the confines of the palace, where a second squadron was charged with throwing them into the river Luo. When the rite was finished, apotropaic figurines in peach wood were installed while staffs of peach wood and rush spears were distributed to dignitaries.[51]

Throughout the two Han dynasties, ritual specialists and literati applied themselves to reforming the state cults so that official recognition of deities, the performance of ceremonies, offerings and liturgies would conform in every respect to the Classics. Because the information they presented on all of these matters was incomplete and often contradictory, the debates went on endlessly, and the rituals were constantly modified. Still, from the Eastern Han on, the principal celebrations of the imperial religion were in place. The literati had finally succeeded in implementing the knowledge of the religious institutions that they had

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[50] *Hou Hanshu*, 8.3181–82.

[51] *Hou Hanshu*, 5.3127–3128; Derk Bodde, *Festivals in classical China: New Year and other annual observances during the Han dynasty 206 BC–AD 220* (Princeton, 1975), pp. 81–82; Granet, *Danses et légendes*, pp. 298–302.

extracted from the Classics. One of the consequences of this was that the political legitimacy of the ruler was closely intertwined with written texts, whether in the form of transmitted or revealed texts. Indeed, the proliferation of revealed texts in the Eastern Han may be seen as a reaction of the *fangshi* and "unorthodox" scholars to the constant recourse of the literati to the Classics. Those who did not accept the authorized interpretations produced divergent commentaries of the Classics, the *weishu* 緯書, while others collected and interpreted literature of a prophetic nature. A number of those who attempted to ascend the throne took care to stake the legitimacy of their claim on a text. It is in this spirit that Wang Mang, but also the "legitimate" successor of the Han, Emperor Guangwu, produced as proof of their legitimacy the prophetic texts that announced their reign and even had these texts inscribed in stone. At the end of the dynasty, the attempts of the Yellow Turbans and the Celestial Masters to re-organize the empire on a utopian model were also based on texts, namely, the *Taiping jing* 太平經 (*Scripture of Great Peace*) and the *Daode jing* 道德經 (*Classic of the Way and its power*).[52]

Local cults

Alongside the great state rituals for which the literati attempted to fix the protocols, Han religion was composed of multiple local sacrifices. Sometimes the emperor took part, and sometimes local officials were in charge of the ceremonies. Several hundred cults were also under the administration of the *fangshi*, with officials in their service. In the majority of cases, however, the population itself was in charge of the ceremonies.[53] It is probable that local cults that had the support of the court were listed in a register of sacrifices, the *sidian* 祀典. They benefitted from regular offerings of pieces of jade, wine, dried meats and animal victims, with offerings made monthly or seasonally, often in spring or autumn. One such register certainly existed in the time of Qin Shihuang who, at the beginning of his reign, ordered a census of all the sacrifices in the empire. Later, very precise and detailed accounts of

[52] See the article by Grégoire Espesset in this volume.

[53] Watson, *Records*, p. 30; Chavannes, *Les Mémoires*, p. 448; *Shiji*, 28.1377; *Hanshu*, 25b.1248.

authorized and forbidden sacrifices, from the reign of Emperor Cheng, further suggest the existence of such a list.

For the period of the Western Han, it is principally through the standard histories that we learn of local practices. But with the exception of the place names, the mention of consecrated offerings and perhaps a name here and there used to evoke a deity, historiographers were for the most part content with enumerations that teach us little about the nature of the celebrations. For the Eastern Han, the "Biographies of magicians" ("Fangshu liezhuan" 方術列傳), a chapter in the *Hou Hanshu* (*History of the Latter Han*) compiled by Fan Ye (398–445),[54] furnishes semi-historic, semi-legendary portraits of some 50 specialists in the esoteric arts who lived between the 1st and 3rd centuries AD. The majority were famous for their skills in the arts of divination based on the calendar, the observation of the wind and clouds, milfoil or numbers, but also based on the interpretation of the *Yijing* 易經 (*Book of changes*) or prophetic texts that may or may not have derived from the Classics. Others exercised their talents as doctors or exorcists, and others still were Daoists cultivating the arts of long life. A few among them occupied positions at court, some against their wishes. The "Biographies" were inspired by various previous works dedicated to the immortals or to extraordinary figures many of whom were worshipped either during their lifetime or after their deaths. Such is the case with the *Liexian zhuan* 列仙專 (*Biographies of arrayed immortals*), attributed to Liu Xiang. It includes texts written between the 1st and 2nd centuries BC, a total of 70 short accounts which, according to Max Kaltenmark, form "a sort of aide-mémoire written in an era when the study of immortality had become fashionable among all segments of society."[55] From the beginning of the 2nd century, epigraphy compliments this often excessively literary documentation marked at times by the disapproval of the author for the practices he describes. In this regard, epigraphical sources offer particularly valuable testimony, for the inscriptions were composed by participants in the religious celebrations. Thus we have, frequently in the form of transcriptions made during the Song, a collection of inscriptions dating to the Han, and some steles which have

[54] See the French translation by Ngo Van Xuyet, *Divination, magie et politique.*
[55] Max Kaltenmark, *Le Lie-sien tchouan* (Paris, 1987), p. 5.

miraculously survived.[56] These enable us to gain some insight into the nature and function of certain local cults.

Cults to mountains

From ancient times, mountains were the sites of sacrifice. The "Shundian" 舜典 ("Canon of Shun") chapter in the *Shujing* 書經 (*Book of documents*), written around the 4th century BC, describes the tour of inspection that brought the legendary emperor Shun to the four mountains in the east, south, west and north of his land in order to fix the boundaries and organize space. On top of the Eastern Peak, Taishan, he built a fire (in order to offer a sacrifice). According to tradition, the lords of the kingdoms were in the habit of offering sacrifices to the mountains located on the borders of their domains. When the First Emperor of Qin compiled a list of famous mountains and great water courses at which he planned to carry out sacrifices, it contained 12 mountains and six rivers. It is only from the Han dynasty on that the group of the most renowned five peaks and four rivers (*wuyue sidu* 五嶽四瀆) of the empire was fixed, though not without variations, especially with regard to the peaks of the north and south.[57] Emperor Wu traveled on various occasions to Taishan, but also to the central peak, Songshan 嵩山, and the western peak, Huashan 華山. These mountains were inhabited by immortals, in whose honor temples were erected. During the Eastern Han, the prestige of Songshan was especially high because it was located at the center of the empire, close to the capital at Luoyang. Apart from the occasions when the emperor went in person to celebrate these sacrifices, we cannot be certain that sacrifices to the five peaks and four rivers were carried out systematically throughout the Han dynasty. It was during moments of persistent drought that the court ordered the governors of commanderies and administrators of states to offer sacrifices to the mountains and rivers in order to solicit rain. But epigraphy shows us that local initiatives stemming from local officials were often behind the sacrifices and the restoration of temples constructed on mountains or on riverbanks. These ceremonies did not

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[56] For an overview of inscriptions in the Eastern Han, see Patricia Ebrey, "Later Han inscriptions," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 40.2 (1980), 325–53.

[57] On the mountain cults, see Terry F. Kleeman, "Mountain deities in China," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 114.2 (1994), 226–38.

necessarily depend on an order proceeding from the court, nor were they always recorded in the dynastic histories.

If the sacrifices addressed to the five peaks and to other famous mountains of the empire are frequently mentioned by historians, there is nothing regarding the many less prominent mountains scattered throughout the country. A collection of inscriptions allows us to follow the stages of development of one of the more ordinary cults. To the north of Shijiazhuang in Hebei six steles were erected in a period of less than a century to commemorate the sacrifices to various neighboring mountains located in the district of Yuanshi 元氏. Between the first stele erected in 117 AD to mark the reconstruction of a temple managed by the surrounding population and the last stele dated 183 and registering the assignment of regular sacrifices conducted by the imperial administration of the capital, the celebrations carried out by the local population became official cults, celebrated by officials and financed by the state. This transformation was the product of various strata of society and of a procedure that can be observed in other cases.

The basis of all local cults was the devotees: local people—peasants, artisans, merchants—who maintained the shrines and perpetuated the celebrations, whether or not they were official. Depending on the circumstances, literati who had retired to their native place or officials of the district would join in the ceremonies. It was these local officials who most often wrote stele inscriptions composed on the occasion of the reconstruction or repair of the temples. The faithful might for instance organize themselves in order better to ensure the perennity of the sacred site. At Yuanshi, according to the stele to the deity Lord of the White Stone (Baishi shenjun 白石神君) erected in 183, it would seem we are dealing with a group of libationers attached, according to the hypothesis of Rolf Stein, to related deities or their medium.[58] The names of those involved appear on the verso side of the stele as donors, accompanied by a record of the considerable sums of money given for the upkeep of the sacrifices. Most cults no doubt functioned in this manner, at a purely local level, and were reliant on devotees living in the immediate environs of the holy site. But it could also happen that an official desire to promote a given cult of proven efficacy in his jurisdiction. He would then set in motion a procedure aimed at gaining

[58] See Rolf Stein, "Remarques sur les mouvements politico-religieux au IIe siècle ap. J.-C.," *T'oung Pao* 50 (1963), 1–78.

official recognition of the god's power and, hence, its worship. The official thereby became an actor in the cult. As a first step in its promotion, he wrote a report (something we know of because it is sometimes partially included in the steles). In it he related the origins of the cult, the identity of the deity, its miraculous manifestations, the devotion of the faithful and the advantages—fertility of land and humans, regular rain and wind, recovery from illness—it procured neighboring populations. This report was sent to the office of imperial sacrifices (*taichang si* 太常寺), that is, in the case of the Yuanshi inscriptions, to Luoyang, the capital of the Eastern Han. The court ordered an inspection to verify the information provided and to collect proof of the efficacy of the deity. This inspection could be entrusted to the district administrator, or to competent officials from the central administration, or it could be conducted by an inspector sent directly to the locality by the office of imperial sacrifices. A process of verification was initiated and a new report sent, upon which the office addressed a request to the Imperial Secretariat (Shangshu 尙書), which in turn transmitted it to the imperial palace. Once this request had been accepted, it went back down through the successive administrative levels to the administrator or the district official in charge. The latter authorized the reconstruction or expansion of the temple, adding to the revenues of the district the sums necessary for regular offerings, and eventually named an official to take charge of the sacrifices. If we may lend credence to one of the steles of Yuanshi (that of Mt. Wuji 無極), between the initiation of the request and the decree conferring the requested status, the procedure lasted less than six months and took place in three phases: request, inspection and decree.

If we ask why the devotees of local cults would be so interested in gaining official support, the answer is most probably that the material advantages they could expect to obtain were significant. But it is not, in the final analysis, a lack of financial means that motivated the faithful: it was, more importantly, the simple fact of gaining recognition of their god and its corollary, the right to sacrifice to it legally. Moreover, imperial patronage verified and increased, in the eyes of the faithful, the efficacy of the deity.

At times, the inscription that commemorates the place of worship exalted at once the benevolence of the deity and the personal fame of the magistrate who recognized the sacrifices. The stele dedicated to the sacrifices at the river Huai, at Tongbo 桐柏, near Nanyang (modern

Henan), celebrated in 163 AD by the governor of the commandery, Sire Zhang, is a veritable eulogy of the magistrate.[59] In this matter, the inscription says, the conduct of the governor was worthy of Confucius, and when he placed himself at the head of the cortege of officials, "he supported the aged and helped the young, and the local people surged behind him, forgetting to eat"—an allusion to the exodus of the people of Bin to the foot of Mount Qi behind Gugong Danfu 古公亶父, ancestor of the Zhou.[60] The beginning of the inscription explains that the sacrifices to the river Huai had not been celebrated in person by magistrates in office for 20 years,[61] and that great calamities had followed. It was then that Sire Zhang had arrived in Tongbo, climbed the precipitous path that led to the temple, constructed a portico at the entrance, erected pillars at the four cardinal points, expanded the sacred site, decorated the roof, raised the height of the room, laid out lodging for visitors, and made 14 stone tortoises arrayed on both sides of the central pathway. When the sacrifices were celebrated two times a year, he would throw the animal victims and pieces of jade in the river and would pray for the prosperity and well-being of the people. Even if, as K.E. Brashier has shown, the recourse to the commonplace and to rhetorical exaggeration were part of the epigraphic style of the time—one of whose functions could be mnemonic—such panegyric still underlines what was at stake in local cults for local officials.[62] As soon as they were approved by the emperor, whether they were inscribed in the official registers as in this case, or promoted like those of Yuanshi, such rites provided the magistrate with an opportunity to devote himself to gods recognized for their public utility. Having admitted that the gods sent the rain needed for harvest, cured sickness and brought happiness by celebrating their cult, the magistrate associated himself with their merit and participated in the general well-being of the people under his administration. Indeed, the celebration of the cults under his jurisdiction was as much a part of his duties as the government of the people. But the successes he enjoyed in such celebrations no doubt added to his prestige and legitimacy.

[59] *Lishi* 隸釋 (Taipei, 1982), 2.12–14.

[60] *Shiji*, 4.114.

[61] Emperor Xuan of the Han celebrated them in person in 61 BC (*Hanshu*, 25b.1249).

[62] K.E. Brashier, "Text and ritual in early Chinese stelea," in Martin Kern, ed., *Text and ritual in early China* (Seattle and London, 2005), pp. 249–84, especially pp. 254–60.

The cults to the immortals

While sacrifices in the suburbs were reserved for the emperor and officials in charge of rites, the worship celebrated in the states and commanderies brought together various segments of the population. This phenomenon is observed not only in the case of sacrifices addressed to mountains such as Yuanshi but also in the worship of immortals or the *fangshi*. These celebrations drew on what Robert Campany terms "the ideas and practices thought to contribute to the quest for long life and transcendence." Before Ge Hong 葛洪 (283–343), this group "had no overall name, as it had no unity and no known unifier."[63] However, three of these cults, tied to the quest for immortality and related psychological and physiological practices, are well known to us through epigraphy and illustrate the mentality of the devotees and the diversity of the social milieu they came from: the cults of the immortal Wangzi Qiao 王子喬 and of two figures classed as *fangshi*, Tang Gongfang 唐公房 and Fei Zhi 肥致.

In the case of Wangzi Qiao, worshipped in the area around Shangqiu 商丘 in Henan, the miraculous appearance of the immortal in 136 AD prompted the magistrate of the district to construct a temple. The temple soon became the meeting place of Daoist followers. Masses of devotees would gather in search of healing or to practice meditation. The inscription notes that prayers that came from sincere hearts would be fulfilled, while hypocrites would suffer the opposite. "Good faith" *qiancheng* 虔誠 was always a prerequisite for those who wanted to be understood by the deity. The cult was so popular that in 165, the emperor Huan (r. 147–67) sent an envoy to offer sacrifices on his behalf. The fame of the shrine inspired the chancellor of the kingdom to erect a stele in which the memory of these events has been preserved. In this same year, the emperor twice sent eunuchs to offer sacrifices to Laozi at Huxian (to the south of Shangqiu), where he had previously built a shrine. The following year, the emperor in one of his palaces offered in person a sacrifice to Laozi in association with the Yellow Emperor. As Anna Seidel has written, the support of the emperor for this popular cult is explained both in terms of its popularity among the population and of the disarray of the imperial family owing to the rebellions that were shaking the empire.[64] A similar interpretation may be applied to the

[63] Campany, Robert Ford, *To live as long as Heaven and Earth* (Berkeley, 2002), p. 6.
[64] See Seidel, *La divinisation de Lao tseu*, pp. 36–43; *Hou Hanshu*, 7.313–14 and 317.

worship of Wangzi Qiao, celebrated in several localities throughout the country and whose popularity has survived to the present.[65]

The stele in honor of the scribe Tang Gongfang was erected in Chenggu 城固 by the governor of the Hanzhong 漢中 commandery (southeastern Shaanxi) and 15 other individuals of some repute from the region. Tang Gongfang had received from a Perfected (*zhenren* 真人) an elixir of immortality that allowed him to carry with him to the paradise of the immortals his wife, house and domestic animals. His legend suggests that he was revered as a hunter of rats. According to Kristofer Schipper, his cult lasted till the end of the Eastern Han, and even later in the center of Hanzhong, where it inspired the construction of many shrines. He received the prayers of all in need of protection from rodents, and also enjoyed the support of the local elite. According to the inscription, this cult with Daoist overtones was supported by the devotees in order to pay homage to the "spiritual beauty of Lord Tang...and to spread his excellent teachings."[66]

Worship of the magician Fei Zhi[67] is known thanks to a stele discovered in 1991 east of Luoyang. The stele was found in a large tomb that served as a sepulcher for several persons. The *daoren* 道人 Fei Zhi was twice called to court during the reigns of emperors Zhang (r. 76–87) and He (r. 88–105). He normally lived in a date palm but could transport himself in an instant across tens of thousands of miles to reach the abode of the immortals. Alerted by the red vapors that hung over the capital, the emperor asked Fei Zhi to come to court, where he used his arts to avert calamities of various kinds. Fei Zhi was named Official in waiting in the service bureau for the ladies of the palace 掖庭待詔. On another occasion, he procured for the ruler medicinal plants that he had fetched in the blink of an eye from a state far away from the capital. When he was alive, Fei Zhi attracted many adepts and lived in the house of one of them, a meritorious official named Xu You 許幼. With his five disciples, Xu You in time obtained immortality. The stele was erected by his son, who perpetuated the worship of Fei Zhi, now an immortal, and who narrated his story in an inscription dated to 169 AD.

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[65] See Marianne Bujard, "Le culte de Wangzi Qiao ou la longue carrière d'un immortel," *Etudes chinoises* 17 (1999), 115–58.

[66] See Kristofer Schipper, "Le culte de l'immortel Tang Gongfang," *Cultes populaires et sociétés asiatiques* (Paris, 1991), pp. 59–72.

[67] See Kristofer Schipper, "Une stèle taoïste des Han récemment découverte," *En suivant la voie royale* (Paris, 1997), pp. 231–47; Hsing I-tien, "Dong Han de fangshi yu qiuxian fengqi—Fei Zhi bei duji," *Dalu zazhi* 94.2 (1997), 1–13.

It is possible, as Schipper has argued, that the cult of the immortal did not develop beyond the family circle of the descendants of Xu You and that the stele followed the son of Xu You to his final resting place.[68] The cult of Fei Zhi is also a good example of the numerous local cults that, lacking the support of local officials or due to unfavorable political and economic circumstances, were shared only by a restricted community of devotees. In this sense, the stele provides precious insight into religious practices current at that time. The followers of Fei Zhi would seem to have been engaged in the quest for immortality in very determined fashion, consuming siliceous paste (*shizhi* 石脂), a drug known among the aspirants for eternal life. This route to salvation could certainly not have been chosen by a majority of the faithful, let alone of the population. At the same time, this aspect of their practice does not radically distinguish the worship of the "man of the Way" (*daoren*) Fei Zhi from other local cults. Wangzi Qiao, who elicited more ordinary devotion, also attracted devotees who gathered at his temple to sing hymns to the Great One and to meditate on the organs of their bodies, a practice linked, like the ingestion of drugs, to the quest for immortality.

One of the fundamental characteristics of local cults in the 2nd century AD was the mixing of different categories of the population. Another was the simultaneous propagation of moral values traditionally associated with the teachings of Confucius and religious practices usually ascribed to the adepts of Laozi. In this century where the representatives of the great estates, the clans of the empress and the eunuchs struggled for power, some scholar-officials retreated from public life, or in some cases were forced from it by proscription. The "uncorrupted, retired, magician-scholar" became, according to Rolf Stein, one of the principle actors in the "bureaucratized" popular religion.[69] The epigraphy of the period perfectly reflects this commingling of traditions China's historians—and after them, modern sinologists—have worked hard at contrasting. On the one hand, techniques inherited from the *fangshi* who presided over the celebrations in holy sites during the Eastern Han were adopted by local devotees. Meditation on the organs of the body, veneration of Taiyi and ingestion of drugs were all classified as recipes for long life. Furthermore, just like the figures in the "Biographies of magicians," the heroes of the cults often had the gift of ubiquity and were

[68] For other similar cases, see Campany, *To live as long as Heaven*, pp. 92–94.
[69] Stein, "Remarques sur les mouvements politico-religieux," p. 41.

capable of moving through the air like birds, but with the rapidity of lightning. On the other hand, the revered immortals were also imbued with filial piety—Wangzi Qiao returned to earth to care for the tombs of his ancestors—and are honest and committed to the well-being of the people. This double allegiance, Confucian and Daoist, can be observed not only in divinized figures, but also in those who promoted their worship. Honesty and rectitude governed the behavior of the good official, who in turn favored the celebration of those who had obtained the Dao.

In addition, the practices of meditation, self-cultivation and breath control in order to prolong life were not exclusively linked to the worship of the immortals or the *fangshi*. One of the steles devoted to the cult of the mountains of Yuanshi (181 AD) evoked the presence of "hermits who had renounced speech, adepts immersed in meditation to cultivate their primordial breath, and others who controlled their breathing and prayed to obtain immortality." Although the passage is fragmented, it is sufficient to show that the practices aimed at obtaining immortality were not observed exclusively at the sacred sites devoted to the immortals. In fact, in this period, one observes the multivalent character of the deities and their cults. In the same place and to the same deity, adepts from different backgrounds prayed for rain or for promotion to higher rank, for good harvests or to cure sickness; they even came to meditate and to regulate their breathing in order to hasten their ascension to immortality. If a "common" or "popular" religion may be said to have begun to take shape in the course of the Han dynasty, it is no doubt to be found in these local religious practices that united various social categories, from the common people to the official, and commingled on one site religious practices that sought well-being of all sorts.

LANGUAGE OF HEAVEN, EXEGETICAL SKEPTICISM AND THE RE-INSERTION OF RELIGIOUS CONCEPTS IN THE *GONGYANG* TRADITION[1]

Joachim Gentz

The *Chunqiu* 春秋 (*Annals*) is one of the main if not the most important canonical works of early Han times after Wudi.[2] Being a rather dry annalistic chronicle of the state of Lu, it was only able to achieve such exceptionally high status through the exegesis of the *Gongyang zhuan* 公羊傳 (*Gongyang traditions*), which was the most important commentary in early Han. Against the commonly held view of it being a highly speculative commentary, I will argue that the *Gongyang zhuan* in its strict exegetical methodology follows the highly skeptical Confucian attitude towards speculation in the historiographical as well as in the religious realm. And yet the exegesis was built on a series of clearly religious assumptions which seem to reflect the general framework of skeptical secular thinking in the late Warring States period. In the early Han two movements within the *Gongyang* tradition can be discerned, both of which are associated with the person of Dong Zhongshu 董仲舒 (ca. 195–115): on the one hand, a step towards further secularization of *Annals* exegesis in the juridical realm, following and responding to Qin legal practices, and a re-insertion of religious concepts in the realm of political theory on the other. The religiosity of these further developments in relation to the earlier religious context of the *Annals* will be the focus of the second part of this chapter.

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[1] I wish to thank John Lagerwey for his detailed editing of my paper and the anonymous reviewer for her substantial, extremely valuable and tremendously helpful critical comments.

[2] Hiraoka Takeo, *Keisho no seiritsu: tenkateki sekaikan* (orig. Osaka, 1946; repr. Tôkyô, 1983), p. 23.

Basic premises of Gongyang *exegesis*

The importance of both the *Annals* and the *Gongyang zhuan* in Han times was based on several exegetical premises of the *Gongyang zhuan* which elevated the *Annals* from a simple historical record to a canonical work of sagely wisdom and at the same time made the exegetical reading of the *Gongyang zhuan* indispensable to any true understanding of the hidden message conveyed by the *Annals*. The basic premises of *Gongyang* exegesis were as follows:

- the wisdom of the sages was transmitted in the *Annals* through its assumed author Confucius, who was himself considered to be a sage;
- the message was not obvious but hidden in obscure language which had to be decoded;
- in order to decode the subtle language of the sage one needed to know the specific rules of history writing which only some exegetical specialists trained in the reading of such texts could master;
- the *Gongyang zhuan* was a commentary written by such specialists who were able to decode the message of the *Annals*.

The first premise implied further aspects regarding the content and form of the text which applied to most canonical texts:[3]

- the text was considered to be closed, containing all information needed;
- the wording of the text was formally perfect, and not a single word could be changed;
- the text's validity transcended time and space.

Religious origins of the basic exegetical premises of the Gongyang zhuan

Reflections of the development process of these premises can be found in the early literature. In the *Mozi* 墨子, annals are cited as works from which judgments on historical cases can be deduced. These judgments

[3] Cf. John B. Henderson, *Scripture, canon and commentary: a comparison of Confucian and Western exegesis* (Princeton, 1991), pp. 89–138.

are transmitted as apodictic judgments which have the character of authoritative precedents.[4] The *Guoyu* 國語 (*Discourses of the states*) accordingly reports that historical works called "Chunqiu" served as collections of exempla by which crown princes were taught to distinguish good and bad.[5] The authorities who decide what is good or bad in the *Mozi* are the ghosts of ancestors. Likewise, in the "historical records of bright spirits" (*mingshen zhi zhi* 明神之志) mentioned in the *Guoyu*, spirits and other anomalies appear as direct reflections of the good or bad behavior of the ruler. Just two paragraphs earlier in the same chapter, "Zhouyu shang" 周語上, the model of the power of *yin* and *yang* is used to explain calamities as yet other signs of dynastic decline.[6] In the later *Annals* tradition Confucius takes the position of this authority which judges historical cases and sets precedents. Behavior is not judged anymore by ghosts directly, nor on the basis of a divinatory reading of ominous signs, but on the basis of a set of (ritual) rules of proper behavior defined by experts trained in a tradition of ancient rituals of former wise kings. While the *Annals* is considered a part of the Confucian canonical texts in the "Liu de" 六德 and "Yu cong" 語叢 texts excavated from Guodian tomb no. 1, the *Mengzi* 孟子 is the first text which ascribes the authorship of the *Annals* to Confucius, thus connecting it to the realm of human sagely wisdom.[7] The general shift in "Chunqiu" judgments from ghostly through divinatory authority to that of a human sage (which did not occur in such a neat progression) leads to a shift also in the agency for the punishment of misconduct. Whereas in the *Mozi* ghosts punish people in a very direct and concrete way, in the later tradition the historical judgment of praise and blame, which defines the historical reputation of an actor, replaces the earlier punishment. The following passage from the *Zuozhuan* 左傳 suggests that some forms of judgment might still have been connected in some way with the realm of spirits and ghosts:

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[4] Cf. *Mozi*, "Ming gui xia", Wu Shujiang, *Mozi jiaozhu* (Chengdu, 1992), pp. 290, 294, 296, 298. In the *Guoyu* one of these historical narratives (about Earl Du, *Du bo* 杜伯) is also mentioned among others and related to the genre of "historical records of bright spirits" (*mingshen zhi zhi* 明神之志); see *Guoyu*, (Shanghai, 1988), "Zhouyu shang" 1.12.1, pp. 29–30.

[5] *Guoyu*, op. cit., "Chuyu shang 1" and "Jinyu, 7" pp. 445 and 527–28.

[6] Cf. *Guoyu*, op. cit., 1.10, pp. 26–27.

[7] Cf. *Mengzi* 3B9 and 4B21, in Jiao Xun, *Mengzi zhengyi*, 2nd ed. (Taibei, 1991).

> The priests[8] and scribes 祝史 [of a bad ruler], in setting forth the truth, must speak of his offences 言罪. If they cover his errors and speak of excellences, they are bearing false testimony; when they would advance or retire, they have nothing which they can rightly say, and so they may vainly seek to flatter. Therefore the deities and spirits 鬼神 will not accept the offerings, and the State is made to suffer misery, in which the priests and scribes share. Short lives, premature deaths, bereavements and sicknesses, are caused by the oppression of the ruler; the words [of the priests and scribes] are false, and an insult to the spirits 鬼神.[9]

Yet, this passage shows that although the idea of the deities' influence on human affairs is still accepted, the main responsibility for the response to human misconduct is clearly on the human side of priests and scribes. This shift of authority transfers the whole weight of historical justice to the realm of human interpretation of the historical facts and thus to (*Annals*) exegesis. The text of the *Annals* thus becomes a special object of reflection since it is regarded as one of the few reliable sources from which judgments on empirical human behavior can be made. The *Xunzi* reflects an important step in a systematic exegetical approach towards the *Annals* in two respects. First, the assumption that everything is contained in the canon of which the *Annals* is a part is made explicit for the first time.[10] Second, the language is for the first time described as being subtle 微 and concise 約.[11]

These two assumptions complement one another. Since the surface meaning of the text of this annalistic chronicle of Lu in the first view appears rather straightforward and does not seem to contain a deep

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[8] This term is translated "invocator" elsewhere in these volumes (Editors' note).

[9] Cf. *Zuozhuan* Zhao 20.*fu*4, translation according to James Legge, *The Ch'un Ts'ew with the Tso Chuen*, in *The Chinese Classics* vol. 5 (repr. Taibei, 1991), p. 683. *Annals* records are quoted according to William Hung, *Chunqiu jingzhuan yinde* (repr. Shanghai [1]1983, [3]1988).

[10] Cf. Wang Xianqian, *Xunzi jijie*, Beijing, 1988, p. 12.

[11] Cf. *Xunzi jijie*, op. cit., pp. 12, 14, 137. The *Zuozhuan* contains two passages which also elaborate (much more than the *Xunzi*) on the subtle language of the *Annals*. Cf. *Zuo*, Cheng 14.5 and Zhao 31.6. However, these passages, both of which start with the *junzi yue* formula, are spurious and have been called into doubt by several scholars. See Kamata Tadashi, *Sa den no seiritsu to sono tenkai*, Tōkyō, 1963, pp. 66–84. For the *junzi*-formulas see Pu Weizhong, "Lun *Zuo zhuan* 'junzi yue' de sixiang," *Zhongguo shi yanjiu* 46.2 (1990), 63–71. See also Erik Henry, "'Junzi yue' versus 'Zhongni yue' in *Zuozhuan*," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 59.1 (1999), 125–61, pp. 126–30, and David Schaberg, "Platitude and persona: *junzi* comments in *Zuozhuan* and beyond," Helwig Schmidt-Glintzer, Achim Mittag, Jörn Rüsen, eds, *Historical truth, historical criticism, and ideology: Chinese historiography and historical culture from a new comparative perspective* (Leiden, 2005), pp. 177–96.

message of wisdom, it follows that the message must be somehow hidden in the text and the text has to be read in a different way. Moreover, since the *Annals* is a text written by a sage, the compositional form and language of the text must be perfect.

The *Gongyang zhuan* approaches this problem through the further assumption that a perfect text is a formulaic text, which is written according to specific rules. This assumption is plausible in regard to text production in ancient China in which, especially for genres dealing with official matters such as historical records of state, an observation of specific writing rules was mandatory for any professional writer. As part of the highly ritualistic state institutions, history writing also moved within a defined frame of wording and sequence. Any deviation from this order would either have to be taken as imperfect knowledge of the ritual rules or as a conscious act of expression. Since the *Annals* is written according to a clearly defined pattern of historiographical rules[12] and also clearly shows deviations from that pattern, these deviations have to be understood as conscious acts in the eyes of a reader who follows the above-mentioned assumptions, because the *Annals*, written by Confucius, must in his view be perfect.

In order to detect the meaningful passages in the *Annals* the *Gongyang zhuan* defines a historiographical pattern of the *Annals* records and against this backdrop explores the deviations in the text. These deviations are then explained in relation to the contents of the entry, which had been recorded in deviant form. The mere discovery of a formal deviation is thus not sufficient for an understanding of the hidden message. A correct interpretation of the historical event in relation to the specific deviation is necessary to reveal the meaning of the sage's presentation of the historical event.

This sort of perfect language of pattern and deviation is well known from the realm of divination. In astrology and omenology those events are meaningful which are deviations from a well-defined pattern of

[12] Ann van Auken in her PhD dissertation tries to discern these rules and comes to the conclusion that certain clear rules must have existed. Cf. also Artemij M. Karapet'iants, "Chun' Tsiu I Drevnekitajskij Istoriograficheskij Ritual," in L.S. Vasil'ev et al. (eds), *Etika I Ritual v Traditsionnom Kitae* (Moscow, 1988, pp. 85–154). I owe these two references to my anonymous reviewer. Cf. also D.V. Deopik, "Tendentsii sotsial'noi i politicheskoi istorii Vostochnoi Azii v VIII–V v.v. do n.e.," in L.P. Delyusin (ed.), *Kitai: Traditsii i sovremennost'* (Mosow, 1976, pp. 83–128), who distinguishes seven types of records in the *Annals* and finds more subtypes and a greater formal consistency in the military records then in other types of records (p. 84).

heavenly seasonal rules. Among the transmitted early Chinese literature we find texts which formulate seasonal rules and consequences of their deviation. They belong to the genre of seasonal orders (*shiling* 時令) and give detailed rules for the patterns of Heaven and explain what happens if specific deviations from these patterns occur.[13] Against this background it would be possible, following the *Gongyang zhuan*, to write a text on the historiographical orders (*shiling* 史令) of the *Annals*.[14] The exegetical method of the *Gongyang zhuan* can be regarded as analogous to the basic methodology of divinatory hermeneutics.[15]

Thus several of the basic assumptions of *Gongyang* exegesis derive from the religious realm. First, the *Annals* is regarded as a book containing apodictic judgments of an absolute (divine) authority. This assumption is probably taken from an earlier religious connotation of *Annals* records as reflected in the *Zuozhuan*, *Mozi* and *Guoyu*. Second, the reading strategy of taking deviations from an ideal pattern as expressions of meaning follow well-established divinatory traditions of astrological and omenological hermeneutics used in the interpretation of "heavenly texts" which we find in the seasonal ordinance genre. Third, the assumptions of the canonicity of the *Annals*, that the text is complete and perfect in content and form, can be defined as religious assumptions if we take references to an absolute authority as "religious" in the sense of Seiwert.[16]

Certainly, different definitions of "religion" or "religious" can and have been adduced to prove the religiousness of quite different things.

[13] See *Guanzi* 官子, "You guan" 幼官, "Si shi" 四時, "Wu xing" 五行, and "Qingzhong ji" 輕重己 chapters; *Lüshi Chunqiu* 吕氏春秋, "Shi ji" 時紀 and "Yueling" 月令; *Yi Zhoushu* 逸周書, "Shixun jie" 時訓解; and *Huainanzi* 淮南子, "Tianwen" 天文 and "Shi ze" 時則. As my anonymous reviewer pointed out, such warnings are also included in so-called *yin-yang* texts such as those unearthed in 1972 from Yinqueshan (see R. Yates, "The yin yang texts," in: *Early China* 19 [1994], 94–133), or the recently published "Yan shi wu sheng 閻氏五勝" text from Huxishan 虎溪山, Hunan (cf. Liu Lexian, Huxishan Han jian 'Yan shi wu sheng' ji xiangguan wenti," in *Wenwu* 7 [2003], 66–70, p. 67).

[14] For a reconstruction see my "Ritual meaning of textual form: evidence from early commentaries of the historiographical and ritual traditions," Martin Kern, ed., *Text and ritual in early China* (Seattle/London, 2005), pp. 124–48, pp. 139–40.

[15] For a further analysis of that analogy see Joachim Gentz, *Das* Gongyang zhuan. *Auslegung und Kanonisierung der* Frühlings- und Herbstannalen (Chunqiu) (Wiesbaden, 2001), pp. 157–240.

[16] Cf. Hubert Seiwert, "'Religiöse Bedeutung' als wissenschaftliche Kategorie," *The Annual Review of the Social Sciences of Religion* 5 (1981), 57–99.

And since the listing of 48 different definitions of the term "religion" by James Leuba in 1912,[17] all of which have been refuted with good reasons,[18] there is no definition which has not been severely criticized by the scholarly community. Despite all attempts to classify different approaches,[19] no consensus as to how define this concept has been achieved. This same problem also applies to "Chinese religion," the concept of which has been discussed time and again.[20] Whether or not Confucianism is a religion has been disputed since the rites controversy in the 17th century, and the same question has been debated in regard to Buddhism and Daoism.[21] I will therefore avoid the term "religion" in connection with the *Gongyang* tradition and use the term "religious" in the sense of Seiwert as an orientation in the world which derives its validity from a reference to an absolute authority.[22]

In that sense, in the exegesis of the *Gongyang zhuan*, Confucius and the *Annals* occupy the same position as an absolute religious authority like Heaven, ghosts or the ancestors, and their expressions absorb earlier religious exegetical traditions. The entire structure of the exegetical reading of the *Gongyang zhuan* is built on earlier religious models of divinatory interpretation.

Skeptical exegetical attitude

In addition to the religious origins of the basic exegetical assumptions of the *Gongyang zhuan*, it also contains some further religious concepts, which are indispensable elements of *Annals* historiography. Records of calamities and anomalies (*zaiyi* 災異) form an integral part of the *Annals* text, and the *Gongyang zhuan* accepts them as regular historiographical

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[17] Cf. J. Leuba, *A Psychological Study of Religion* (New York, 1912), Appendix.

[18] Cf. Heinrich von Stietencron, "Der Begriff der Religion in der Religionswissenschaft," in Walter Kerber (ed.), *Der Begriff der Religion* (Munich, 1993), pp. 111–58, p. 116.

[19] Cf. Brian C. Wilson, "From the lexical to the polythetic: a brief history of the definition of religion," in A.T. Idinopulos (ed.), *What is religion? Origins, definitions, and explanations* (Leiden, 1998), pp. 141–62. Also Detlef Pollack, "Was ist Religion? Probleme der Definition," in *Zeitschrift für Religionswissenschaft* 3 (1995.2), 163–90.

[20] Cf. Jordan Paper, *The spirits are drunk. Comparative approaches to Chinese religion* (Albany, 1995), p. 13.

[21] William Herbrechtsmeier, "Buddhism and the definition of religion: one more time," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 32.1 (1993), 1–18.

[22] Cf. Seiwert, "'Religiöse Bedeutung' als wissenschaftliche Kategorie," p. 85.

categories. Yet it tries not to further elaborate on these religious elements. On the contrary, it seems to avoid these matters, displaying an attitude which is similar to that ascribed to Confucius in the *Lunyu*.[23] Among the approximately 140 entries concerning calamities or anomalies, only two refer to a cause.[24] In both cases, Heaven is said to respond to certain human actions, or to send a warning. These two statements show that a relationship between natural deviations and human conduct is assumed in the *Gongyang zhuan*. Despite this assumption, however, there is no attempt to formulate any more specific theory, nor is this point elaborated on. Instead, most of the entries about natural calamities or anomalies are not commented on at all. At most, the *Gongyang zhuan* explains that this is an entry concerning a natural calamity or an anomaly. In my view one can take this silence as a practice of not talking about supernatural phenomena which reflects an attitude ascribed to Confucius in the *Lunyu* 論語 (*Analects*) and also by Sima Qian 司馬遷, who writes in his "Tian guan" chapter: "Confucius expounded upon the Six Classics, he recorded anomalies but did not write down any interpretations" 孔子論六經，紀異而說不書.[25] In contrast to the *Zuozhuan*, which sometimes treats supernatural phenomena as truly "ominous" and sometimes, on the contrary, dismisses their importance,[26] the *Gongyang zhuan* on this point seems to follow the "rational attitude" also ascribed to Confucius in other works like the *Guoyu* and the *Lunyu*.[27] Throughout the two most often quoted texts in early Confucian literature, the *Shangshu* 商書 (*Book of documents*) and the *Shijing* 詩經 (*Book of songs*), we likewise find almost no theoretical explanations of supernatural events.[28] The *Gongyang zhuan* seems to uphold the same

[23] Cf. Joachim Gentz, "Constructing Confucius: analogies between the *Lunyu* and the *Gongyang zhuan*," unpubl. paper presented at the *International Convention of Asia Scholars* (ICAS) in Noordwijkerhout, 1998, partly also quoted in Joachim Gentz, "The past as a messianic vision: historical thought and strategies of sacralization in the early *Gongyang* tradition," Schmidt-Glintzer et al., eds, *Historical truth*, pp. 227–54.

[24] *Gongyang zhuan* Xi 15.11, Xuan 15.9 (probably also Ai 14.1).

[25] Cf. Sima Qian, *Shiji* (Beijing, [1]1959, [9]1985), p. 1343.

[26] I owe this information to my anonymous reviewer.

[27] Cf. *Lunyu* 2.17, 2.18, 5.13, 7.21, 10.17, 13.3, 13.12 etc., as well as *Guoyu*, "Lu Yu xia," 201, 213, 214, etc.

[28] The calamities sent down by Heaven that are reported in the *Shangshu* are always man-made: invasions, rebellions, usurpations, etc. We never find any natural calamity or anomaly described as being sent down by Heaven as a response to human conduct, in order to punish or to warn, such as we often find in later texts (the violent storm in the "Jin teng 金縢" chapter might be the only exception). In the *Shijing* there is one eclipse of the sun which results from bad human conduct (*Shijng,* Shi yue zhi jiao

basic attitude of keeping silent about things unknown and thereby shows a striking proximity to what is generally known as the skepticism of the *Lunyu* Confucius, who not only did not talk about what he did not know[29] but also praised ancient scribes for leaving blank spaces in their texts when they did not know the facts.[30] Throughout the *Lunyu* we find many statements which express in detail an attitude of Confucius which is full of doubts, uncertainties, and not-knowing.[31] We find many sayings in which Confucius is filled with sorrow or despair,[32] in which he admits that he does not know an answer and has no solution for certain fundamental questions.[33] Moreover, there are many clear statements of what Confucius did not talk about and did not teach.[34] In the same way the *Gongyang zhuan* often admits that the meaning of a certain *Annals* passage is not clear any more, or is even unknown,[35] or it gives two alternative options without deciding which one is right or wrong.[36] Sometimes different opinions concerning a certain affair are given, again without deciding between them.[37] On occasion it even gives two different accounts.[38] This basic attitude is also reflected in the way the *Gongyang*

十月之交, Mao no. 193). Apart from this instance we only find good harvests as an unspecific indicator of good government and regular sacrifice.

[29] Cf. *Lunyu* 3.11, 5.8, 5.19, 13.4, 15.1 (with *Lunyu*-internal unintentional verification in 16.1), etc., also cf. 2.17, 2.18, 11.12, 13.3.

[30] Cf. *Lunyu* 15.26. For a similar attitude of Confucius in other texts than the *Lunyu* cf. David Schaberg, "Confucius as body and text: on the generation of knowledge in Warring States and Han anecdotal literature," unpubl. manuscript of a paper presented at the conference "Text and ritual in early China" (Princeton University, 2000), pp. 19–21.

[31] *Lunyu* 2.17, 3.11, 5.8, 5.19, 13.3, 13.4, 15.1.

[32] *Lunyu* 5.10, 5.11, 5.27, 7.3, 7.5, 7.25, 9.9, 11.2, 13.21, 15.13.

[33] *Lunyu* 2.17, 3.11, 5.8, 5.19, 13.3, 13.4, 14.41, 15.1.

[34] *Lunyu* 2.18, 7.27, 3.21, 5.13, 7.1, 7.21, 7.23, 7.24, 9.1, 9.7, 11.12, 13.3, 14.6.

[35] The *Gongyang zhuan* in these passages uses the formula *wu wen* 無聞 (I have not heard anything about), cf. *Gongyang zhuan* Yin 2.7, Huan 14.3, Wen 14.11.

[36] It then uses the formula: *wei zhi qi wei* x *yu*? *wei* y *yu*? 未知其爲 x 與? 爲 y 與? (we cannot know whether x or y is the case), cf. *Gongyang zhuan*, Huan 9.4, Wen 11.6, Xiang 2.7, Zhao 31.6, Ai 14.1.

[37] In these cases it uses the formula *huo yue* x (*huo yue* y) 或曰 x (或曰 y) (one opinion states x, [another opinion states y]), cf. *Gongyang zhuan*, Min 2.6, Xi 33.3, Cheng 1.6, Xiang 19.2.

[38] In Huan 5.1 the *Gongyang zhuan* comments: "The gentleman was in doubt and therefore recorded two dates for the death." The *Guliang* commentary adds the following exegetic rule in its commentary to this passage: "The righteous rule of the *Annals* is that if something is trustworthy it is transmitted as trustworthy and if there is something doubtful it is transmitted as doubtful." "Trustworthiness" (*xin* 信) is thus taken in this reflection of the *Guliang zhuan* as the moral value underlying the skeptical attitude. For that term see also next footnote.

zhuan imagines Confucius' compilation of the *Annals*. According to the *Gongyang zhuan*, Confucius compiled the *Annals* by not altering the original text. In the same way as the invisible realm of the spirits and ghosts is not spoken about, the invisible realm of the past is also not penetrated through Confucius' own statements or speculations. Again, we know this attitude from various *Lunyu* passages.[39] We thus find that the attitude, praised throughout the *Lunyu*, whereby explicit admissions of missing knowledge are made, and an accordingly skeptical attitude towards the Unknown—sometimes with reference to the principle of "trustworthiness" (*xin* 信)—is also reflected in the exegetical practice of the *Gongyang zhuan*: it does not interpret records which report anomalies or calamities, it expresses a lack of certainty and admits that it does not know of any explanation, or else gives alternative explanations. The most important effect of skepticism and historical criticism on the exegetical technique of the *Gongyang zhuan* is, however, that it tries to prove the reliability of its own interpretations by founding them on defined rules. The *Gongyang zhuan* establishes a system of exegetical rules according to which its own interpretations are made plausible to the reader. These rules on which the exegesis is founded are convincing by reason of the fact that they themselves are depicted as historical rules, which are clearly shown to be deduced from the *Annals* text itself. As a first step, the *Gongyang zhuan* deduces a historiographical formula from the routine of the *Annals* records and thus produces a second, fictional and formally ideal text. Then it compares this fictional text pattern with the actual text and determines the divergences. Finally, it explains the divergences as deviations, which purport to convey the hidden message of Confucius.[40] In that way it may be determined, on the basis of formal rules deduced from the composition of the *Annals*, where the message of Confucius is hidden in the text. Moreover, the emotions of the sage are used as an exegetical technique for the interpretation of the text, thus leading to an empathetic exegesis of the text, which is interpreted as if read through the eyes of Confucius.[41] The interpretation is thus not only intersubjectively verifiable through a set of exegetical rules, it

[39] The most prominent passage describing this attitude is *Lunyu* 7.1: 述而不作, 信而好古 "in transmitting and not myself creating, I am trustworthy and love antiquity."

[40] For a more detailed account of this exegetical technique, see Gentz, *Das* Gongyang zhuan, pp. 71–156, Gentz, "Ritual meaning of textual form," pp. 128–133.

[41] Cf. Joachim Gentz, "Reading through the eyes of Confucius: empathetic readings of the *Annals* in the *Gongyang zhuan*," unpubl. paper presented at the European Association of Asian Studies (EACS) Conference (Barcelona, 4–7 September 1996).

is also historical in the sense that reasons in terms of historical context are given. This "scientific" attitude, which gives the impression of an historical and objective text interpretation in a quite modern philological sense,[42] responds to its own request for highly elaborated historical criticism. This criticism does not, however, not explore Chunqiu history in terms of what happened, it only interprets the *Chunqiu-Annals* in terms of what should have happened.[43]

We thus see in the *Gongyang zhuan* an intellectual tension between religious concepts and assumptions on the one hand and a highly elaborate, skeptical methodology which tries to deal with these concepts on the other. This tension is also representative of the Confucian tradition as a whole. We find it very clearly displayed even in the *Lunheng* of the great skeptic Wang Chong,[44] and it is this tension that causes the endless debate on the question of whether or not Confucianism should be regarded as a religion. This opposition between a strict, skeptical exegetical methodology and religious concepts increases in the later *Gongyang* tradition in the early Han. On the one hand the exegetical methodology is further developed in the direction of a system of abstract and intersubjectively provable rules of interpretation. On the other, religious concepts such as Heaven, resonance (*ganying* 感應), *wuxing* correlations and omenology are introduced step by step into *Annals* exegesis and also lead to new methodologies, which only then start to deviate from the earlier skeptical exegetical basis and become increasingly speculative.

The exegesis of chapters 1–17 of the Chunqiu fanlu

The *Chunqiu fanlu* 春秋繁露 (Luxuriant dew of the Annals) may be taken as the document which reflects the earliest transmitted developments of

[42] August Boeckh, a 19th-century philologist whose *Encyklopädie und Methodologie der philologischen Wissenschaften* still defines the basic methodology for classical philology today, requires for the correct understanding of a text a fourfold text interpretation which should be carried out with regard to grammatical functions, historical context, text genesis, and the individual features of the author. See Ernst Bratuschek, ed., August Boeckh, *Encyklopädie und Methodologie der philologischen Wissenschaften* (Leipzig, 1877), p. 83. All four aspects of text interpretation may be found in the *Gongyang zhuan*.

[43] Cf. Joachim Gentz, "The Past as a Messianic Vision."

[44] Cf. Joachim Gentz, "Wang Chongs (27–ca. 100) Divinationskritik," *Cahiers Glotz* 16 (2005), 259–74.

the *Gongyang* tradition after the compilation of the *Gongyang zhuan*. The assumption that the book was authored by Dong Zhongshu has been called into question time and again since the first doubts expressed in the *Chongwen zongmu* 崇文總目 edited by Wang Yaochen 王堯臣 and others in 1034.[45] Most scholars nowadays regard the book as a compilation of different layers of very heterogeneous material from the early Han and probably even post-Han *Gongyang* scholarship.[46] Among the many attempts at analyzing different strata within the *Chunqiu fanlu* most authors agree that the first 17 chapters, which end with a postface (Yu xu 俞序), represent the earliest and most probably authentic part of the whole compilation. In opposition to the rest of the text, these chapters are strict *Annals* exegesis and constitute a further step in the development of *Annals* scholarship that was decisive for the canonization of the *Annals* in the early Han.[47] The extraordinary status of the *Annals* was only possible on the ground of this further exegetical development, which can be ascribed to Huwu sheng 胡毋生,[48] Dong Zhongshu, or their disciples, all of whom may be the authors of these chapters.[49] Yet

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[45] For the history of the debate about the authenticity of the *Chunqiu fanlu* and their own arguments on authenticity and dating see Gary Arbuckle, "Restoring Dong Zhongshu (BCE 195–115): an experiment in historical and philosophical reconstruction," Ph.D. thesis, University of British Columbia (Vancouver, 1991; UMI 1993), p. 316 ff., cf. also his paper "The works of Dong Zhongshu and the text traditionally and incorrectly titled Luxuriant Dew of the Annals (Chunqiu fanlu). With particular attention to Section A (Chapters 1–17) of the Luxuriant Dew of the Annals" (last revised September 2004) online at: http://www.sagesource.net/dong/works_part_A.html (22.2.08) and Sarah Queen, *From chronicle to canon: The hermeneutics of the* Spring and Autumn*, according to Tung Chung-shu* (New York, 1996), pp. 45–49. See also my *Das* Gongyang zhuan, pp. 406–408.

[46] Cf. Arbuckle and Queen. Göran Malmqvist told me on the 2 May 2005 in Uppsala that on the basis of linguistic evidence he is convinced the *Chunqiu fanlu* is a compilation, which has to be dated to Wei/Jin times. Michael Nylan told me on the same day that she also was convinced of such late dating.

[47] The exegetical stage of these chapters basically corresponds to the exegetical stage of the *Guliang* tradition which we find in 13 passages quoting *Guliang* in the *Xinyu* of Lu Jia dated around 196 BC; see Joachim Gentz, "From casuistic exegesis to discursive guidelines. Early Han *Chunqiu*-exegesis of Lu Jia (*Guliang*) and Dong Zhongshu (*Gongyang*)," unpubl. paper presented at the Second International Convention of Asian Studies (ICAS) in Berlin, 9 August 2001.

[48] Huwu sheng (also Humu sheng 胡母生 or Huwu Zidu 胡毋子都, fl. 2nd cent. BC) was a *Gongyang* scholar appointed at the same time as Dong Zhongshu under the emperors Jing and Wu and who was at the time perhaps more influential than Dong: his interpretation was followed in the states of Qi and Lu whereas Dong's was only followed in Zhao. Cf. his biography in *Shiji* 121, op. cit., p. 3118, right after that of Dong.

[49] Arbuckle speculates that the material might come from the school of Huwu sheng; see Arbuckle, "Restoring Dong Zhongshu," pp. 457–59 and "The works of Dong Zhongshu…"

even within these chapters different stages of *Annals* exegesis can be discerned. If we focus on *Annals* theory, we discover that at least three main stages of *Annals* exegesis can be distinguished in these chapters, which also reflect different attitudes towards religious concepts.[50]

In chapters 1–9, we find an exegesis which tries to supplement shortcomings of the *Gongyang* commentary and tries to solve contradictions in it by differentiating certain exegetical rules and by adding new ones. Yet with regard to the contents, political topics absent from the *Gongyang zhuan* discourse are introduced, such as kingly teachings (*jiao/hua* 教/化), change of institutions (*gaizhi* 改制), the cultivated (*wen* 文) versus the simple (*zhi* 質), the people (*min* 民), punishment (*xing* 刑), talented men (*xian* 賢) and virtue (*de* 德) and, especially in chapter six, also new religious concepts such as Heaven (*tian* 天) as utmost authority and model of orientation. Original *qi*, as well as cosmological theories of correspondence—all of which had been conspicuously absent in the *Gongyang zhuan*—are now introduced into *Gongyang* exegesis. Important to note here is that in all these early chapters no use is made of the correlative theories of *yin* and *yang* or *wuxing*. Moreover, the exegetical language used in these chapters differs strongly from the language of the *Gongyang zhuan*. A theoretical language is used in which we find new technical concepts stemming from the context of speculative-logical discourse. Abstract principles of exegesis are formulated on an exegetical meta-level which is based more on an interest in analytical topics than on a specific exegetical interest in single text passages. For the first time we find explicit instructions which tell the readers how to read the text of the *Annals*. General reading principles are given and illustrated by examples, which demonstrate step by step which principles have to be applied in what way to certain passages in the text. These demonstrations exhibit a highly sophisticated argumentative exegesis operating with proofs that are articulated into as many as six steps. The exegesis is thus much less based on exegetical authority than in the *Gongyang zhuan* and is much more "democratic" in the sense that exegetical operation rules are made transparent and thereby available to the readers themselves. Whereas the exegesis in the first five chapters focuses on this sort of highly developed hermeneutics applied to individual passages,

[50] For a detailed analysis of these chapters, see Joachim Gentz, "Vom Fall zum Sinn: Die *Chunqiu*-Exegese in den ersten 17 Kapiteln des *Chunqiu fanluI*," unpubl. MA thesis, Heidelberg, 1995, reworked into part three of my *Das* Gongyang zhuan, pp. 406–539.

it becomes much more oriented toward specific themes in chapters 6–9, which lead to the purely theme-oriented chapters 10–12. The first nine chapters of the *Chunqiu fanlu* thus show an *Annals* exegesis that technically operates on a much more abstract and explicit level and is even more rigorous in its methodological skepticism than the *Gongyang zhuan*. At the same time, it introduces political and religious concepts not found in the *Gongyang zhuan*.

We find a very different *Annals* exegesis in the exegetical unit of chapters 10–12, the most consequential form of which is found in chapter 12, where ten guiding principles (*shi zhi* 十指) for the reading of the *Annals* are given. In contrast to the first nine chapters, which try to supplement and differentiate the *Gongyang* exegesis, these chapters try to define the central principles of the *Annals* and to reduce them to a certain number of main principles. These guiding principles are not based anymore on the exegesis of specific text passages. Independent from the casuistic exegetical work, they are detached from the concrete text and may thus be read as a set of basic statements which can be employed as political guidelines. This is less an attempt to define a theory of *Annals* exegesis than a theory of the *Annals* itself. The new and central question here is not whether these guiding lines may be found in the *Annals*, as in the previous chapters, where this had to be proved case by case by concrete exegesis. Now the central question is rather whether *these* are the central and most important guiding lines or not. The basis of this question is a fixed arsenal of consensual exegetical principles of the *Annals*. Chapters 10–12 thus reflect a further step in exegetical questioning based on a foundation built by the basic work of exegesis in chapters 1–9. They reflect something like the formal dogmatization of *Annals* exegesis and at the same time introduce metaphysical concepts such as *yin* and *yang*, *wuxing*, four seasons and omenology, and connect these to the concept of Heaven.

Chapters 13–16 contain mixed material which shows no exegetical innovation and looks like a heterogeneous collection of fragmentary material, a type of text we often find at the end of compilations like the *Chunqiu fanlu*. However, they do contain some passages with *wuxing* correlative thought (chapter 14) and omenological reflections (chapters 15 and 16).

As its title "Yu xu" (俞序) indicates, chapter 17 seems to be the postface of the *Annals* exegetical part of the *Chunqiu fanlu* written by someone with the family name Yu. The following chapters 18–22 of

the *Chunqiu fanlu* deal with entirely different topics which might be subsumed, as Sarah Queen does,[51] under the category of Huang-Lao and which contain religious concepts in no way connected to the chapters on *Annals* interpretation. Chapter 23 is obviously a later chapter which is not at all in the same vein as the first 17 chapters. Thus the unity of the first 17 chapters of the *Chunqiu fanlu* as *Annals* exegetical chapters is quite obvious, and the last chapter may thus be taken as their postface. This postface reflects a further step of *Annals* exegesis which seems to respond to what we found in chapters 10–12. Like a counter-blast against the concept of the *Annals* as a book containing political guiding principles for technical use in government practice, chapter 17 focuses on traditional Confucian virtues like humanity (*ren* 仁), love (*ai* 愛) and forbearance (*shu* 恕). According to the author of this postface the central concern of the *Annals* lies in the transmission of these virtues, which are taken to be the virtues of Yao and Shun and not of principles for the pragmatic elimination of harm (*chu huo* 出禍) in a political sphere as we find it in chapters 10–12. The exegetical question thus has taken a further step. The question posed here is not which guiding principles are most important in the *Annals* (chapters 10–12) but whether in the *Annals* guiding principles are important at all. It is the fundamental question of the value and the benefit of the *Annals* which is asked in this chapter. It is answered with a clear "reformist"[52] voice in favor of traditional Confucian virtues and against any utilitarian or pragmatic and technical appropriation of the *Annals*. Religious concepts are not touched upon at all in this postface.

In chapters 1–9 of the *Chunqiu fanlu* we find an emphasis on the technical perfection of the exegetical method. The *Annals* is perceived as a book which teaches the ability to judge legal cases in accordance with the subtle righteousness of Heaven. The *Annals* is thus considered as a textbook of correct judgment oriented to Heavenly order. In contrast, the *Annals* is perceived in chapters 10–12 as a book which contains instructions for correct government in the form of guiding principles which should be employed in the political realm. Some of these principles are

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[51] Cf. Queen, *From chronicle to canon*, pp. 85–93.

[52] See for the analytic differentiation between "modernists" and "reformists" in early Han, Michael Loewe, "The Former Han Dynasty," Denis Twitchett, John K. Fairbank, eds, *The Cambridge history of China, Vol. 1: "The Ch'in and Han empires, 221* BC–AD *220*" (Cambridge, 1986), pp. 104–10.

taken from the cosmological and omenological realm. In opposition to this interpretation we finally find a position in chapter 17 which takes the *Annals* as a book which transmits inner human values the appropriation of which leads to the virtues of Yao and Shun, without any reference to any religious concepts. We thus have three entirely different exegetical positions within the first 17 chapters of the *Chunqiu fanlu*, which as a collection of early *Annals* exegetical material seem to reflect different stages of *Annals* exegesis and which also reflect entirely different approaches to the religious realm. These approaches have in common that they do not adduce demonological concepts of gods, ghosts and ancestors but rather concentrate on religious concepts which belong to abstract systems of cosmological or Heavenly rules that work according to principles of correspondence and/or cyclical movements. They are never depicted in any sort of personified entities. Even Heaven is not regarded as an anthropomorphic being but rather as an institution of order based on discernible rules. We will come back to this different sort of religiosity in the conclusion.

Juridical exegesis

Fragments are transmitted of a second early *Annals* exegetical text of the *Gongyang* tradition called *Chunqiu jueyu* 春秋訣獄 (*Deciding cases by the Annals*) and also ascribed to Dong Zhongshu.[53] This text sets forth the exegetical concept of the first nine chapters of the *Chunqiu fanlu* in applying historical cases of the *Annals* within the sphere of jurisdiction. However, the application is far more technical. The *Chunqiu jueyu* is a handbook of lawsuits of which, in spite of its influence until the Tang

[53] Dong Zhongshu, *Chunqiu jueyu* or (according to Qi lu) *Chunqiu duanyu* or (according to *Hanshu* "Yiwenzhi") *Gongyang Dong Zhongshu zhiyu* also in Li Fang (925–996) et al., eds, *Taiping Yulan* (Beijing, 1985), juan 640, "Xingfabu" 6, "Jueyu", p. 8a, vol. 3, p. 2868, or (according to *Suishu jingjizhi* and also Ma Guohan) *Chunqiu jueshi* or (according to *Chongwen zongmu*) *Chunqiu jueshi bibing* in Ma Guohan, *Yuhan shanfang jiyi shu* (Yangzhou, 1990), pp. 246–47, and most detailed in Cheng Shude, *Hanlü kao* (orig. 1919, repr. Beijing, 1988), chapter six. Translations may be found in Benjamin E. Wallacker, "The *Spring and Autumn annals* as a source of law in Han China," *Journal of Chinese Studies* 2.1 (April 1985), 59–72; Gary Arbuckle, "Former Han legal philosophy and the *Gongyang zhuan*," *BC Asian Review* 1 (1987), 1–25, and Queen, *From chronicle to canon*, pp. 127–81.

dynasty,[54] only fragments have survived. Using the technical terminology of the Qin legal and administrative rules (for example, those found in Shuihudi, Baoshan, or Zhangjiashan), legal cases are formulated in an abstract and generalized way in order to function as general precedents. Principles of the *Annals* are then referred to as basic guidelines for the judgment of a case. Among these principles not a single reference to religious concepts can be found. Legalist rules are quoted in order to contrast them with the jurisdiction of the *Annals*. I will paraphrase an example to demonstrate how these cases are constructed: A's father B had a quarrel with C. When C was about to hit B with his sword, A took a stick and attacked C in order to protect his father B. Mistakenly he thereby injured his father B. How is the case to be judged? Someone (this is the Legalist position) said: A has beaten his father. According to law he has to be decapitated. Then follows the opinion of Dong Zhongshu, who cites a famous *Annals* case where Xu Zhi gave medicine to his father, who died as a consequence. In the exegesis of the *Gongyang zhuan* Confucius criticized the son for not having tasted the medicine himself before, but he did not condemn him for murder because it was not his intention to murder his father (Zhao 19.5). According to the judgment of Dong Zhongshu, the case of A beating his father is analogous. Because it was not his intention to beat his father, he should not be condemned. This is one of the few cases transmitted from the *Chunqiu jueyu*, which is said to have contained hundreds of such cases. These text fragments show how the *Annals* was applied in the pragmatic context of jurisprudence. The *Chunqiu jueyu* seems to be an attempt to combine and reconcile the strict form of the tradition of Qin legal statutes with the moral contents of the *Annals* exegetical guidelines. In the *Hanshu* we have the record of a series of historical cases in which the *Annals* was taken, in a very similar way, as the basis for legal decisions. In these cases reference is always made to the righteousness of the *Annals* (*Chunqiu zhi yi* 春秋之義). This position is often contrasted with a Legalist position, which is polemically depicted as rigid and obviously unjust.[55] The possibility of handling various situations by the method of "weighing" (*quan* 權) certain cases following the guiding principles given in the *Annals* qualifies the *Annals* jurisprudence as a form of legal exegesis which is open

[54] Cf. Hua Yougen, "Xi Han *Chunqiu jueyu* jiqi lishi diwei," *Zhengzhi yu falü* 5 (1994).

[55] Cf. Tanaka Masami, "Kansho no Shunjū no gi ni tsuite," *Tōhōgaku* 88 (1994), 54–68. Benjamin E. Wallacker, op. cit.

to interpretation and not bound by fixed rules. We do not find, however, references to religious concepts which could serve as an authoritative or normative basis for jurisprudence. The methodology of the *Gongyang* tradition is transmitted in its most secularized form in its application within the realm of jurisprudence.

It is all the more interesting to find this secularized juridical *Annals* practice in the religious realm of the Buddhist underworld in Ming times in a text in which a judge is praised by the king of hell for the application of a *Gongyang* precedent against an unfilial son and is therefore allowed to journey through the underworld.[56] And we may upon this evidence have to rethink our own separation of a secular bureaucratic practice from a religious realm for Chinese religion.

Omenological exegesis

Another line of transmission of the *Gongyang* tradition can be found in Han omenology. Here Dong Zhongshu is again declared to be representative of *Annals* scholarship, which, in this case on the basis of *yin* and *yang* correspondences, interprets the *Annals* records of calamities and anomalies. The "Wuxing zhi" ("Treatise on the five phases") chapter of the *Hanshu* is the most prominent example of a text in which this kind of interpretation is cited. We find 41 citations of Dong's interpretations of calamities and anomalies. They employ an exegetical strategy entirely different from anything in the *Annals* chapters of the *Chunqiu fanlu* or the juridical cases of the *Chunqiu jueyu*.[57] The records are taken out of their original context and are assigned to the systematic order of the five phases on which the composition of the chapter is based.[58] The interpretation of these records is thus based on cosmological laws into which Han experts can have an insight themselves and do not require any explanation from Confucius or the *Gongyang zhuan*.

[56] Cf. Hui Shan, "*Zhu Gang hun you mingfu lun qianshi panshi*," *Xianguo suilu*, *Xu zang jing* (*Zoku zōkyō*) (Taibei, 1976), vol. 149, p. 495.

[57] Cf. *Hanshu*, pp. 1315–1522. In the *Dongzi wenji* 董子文集 these passages are collected in Wang Yunwu, ed., *Congshu jicheng* no. 0523 (Shanghai, 1937), pp. 20–30.

[58] Cf. some translations in Wolfram Eberhard, *Beiträge zur kosmologischen Spekulation Chinas in der Han-Zeit* (Berlin, 1933), pp. 13–40. Repr. in: id., *Sternkunde und Weltbild im Alten China* (Taipei, 1970), pp. 11–110.

As in the *Chunqiu fanlu*, where reading rules are given in a way that enables the reader to decode the message of the text himself, the explanations of the *Annals* records on calamities and anomalies which are not commented by the *Gongyang zhuan* are also emancipated from the authority of the exegetical tradition and set in a realm of exegetical independence and freedom from the dictates of the school tradition. This shift away from the institution of the exegetical line reflects and legitimizes exegetical innovations and the insertion of new concepts into textual interpretation. It leads to an exegetical focus on the new institution of correct methodology, which requires a stricter control over methodological procedures and at the same time allows for more freedom of content change. It also reflects and legitimizes a new Han self-confidence based on the cosmological foundation of the dynasty,[59] a break with the institutional inheritance of Warring States and Qin times derived from the rebuilding of scholarly and state institutions in the early Han[60] and a concurrent social change to the greater independence of the innovative "modernist" expertise by opposition with the traditional "reformist" orthodoxy, which exegetes no longer needed to fear. It is striking that the only passage in the early exegetical chapters 1–9 in the *Chunqiu fanlu* which actually operates with the categories of *yin* and *yang* (as a response to someone expressing doubt in regard to the religious approach manifested in the *Gongyang* commentary to Huan 5.7 and Zhuang 25.5)[61] ends with an interpretation of the *yin* subverting the *yang* in terms of righteous (*yi* 義) behavior in regard to correct social positions. The passage concludes:, "This also shows that the *Annals* is not afraid of power and authority" 此亦春秋之不畏強禦也, referring to a *Gongyang* commentary[62] which quotes the formulation

[59] Cf. Michael Loewe, "The authority of the emperors of Ch'in and Han," in *State and law in East Asia: Festschrift Karl Bünger* (Wiesbaden, 1981), pp. 80–111; repr. in Loewe, *Divination, mythology and monarchy in Han China* (Cambridge, 1994, repr. Taipei, 1996), pp. 85–111.

[60] Cf. Mark E. Lewis, *Writing and authority in early China* (New York, 1999), p. 338.

[61] It is noteworthy that in this passage reference is not made to the neighboring record in Zhuang 25.3 where the same formulation is used by the *Gongyang zhuan* in regard to a solar eclipse. The religious ritual referred to in the *Chunqiu* text is at that place explained in the *Gongyang zhuan* in terms of *yin yang* theory, the only passage referring to *yin zhi dao* 陰之道. However, in the same commentary again doubt is expressed about the correct explanation of the practical use of another detail of the ritual.

[62] In the *Gongyang* commentary on Zhuang 12.3/4 Qiu Mu is praised for his bravery in confronting and criticizing the weaponed Song Wan for his regicide, for which, as a consequence, he was also murdered by Wan.

"bu wei qiang yu" 不畏強禦 of the *Shijing* song "Zheng min" 烝民 (Mao 260) and thereby ascribes an even broader canonical principle to the *Annals*. It then adduces records in which acts that disregard the authority of social positions are nevertheless praised as acts of legitimate righteousness (*yi*) in the *Gongyang zhuan*.[63]

Most of the interpretations of Dong Zhongshu are based on a correspondence scheme of *yin* and *yang* according to which specific phenomena are correlated with and connected to certain historical human actions.[64] There is no evidence of Dong using *wuxing* theory either in the "Wuxing zhi" chapter of the *Hanshu*[65] or in any other text which might have some authentic connection to him.[66] His work thus might represent a transitional stage in Ru scholarship from orthodox positions like those of Lu Jia 陸賈 (d. 178 BC), who judges disparagingly the people of his age who interpret calamities and anomalies,[67]

[63] Cf. the beginning of chapter five "Jing hua," Su Yu, ed., *Chunqiu fanlu yizheng* (Beijing, 1992), pp. 85–87. Since parts of this *yin yang* passage including the conclusion 是亦春秋之不畏強禦也 appear verbatim also in chapter 18 "Bian wu 辨物" of the *Shuoyuan* 說苑, we might doubt whether this passage might have been taken over into the text from a third source. Cf. Xiang Zonglu, *Shuoyuan jiaozheng* (Beijing, [1]1987, [2]1991), pp. 450–51.

[64] See for an analysis of these interpretations Wolfram Eberhard, "The political function of astronomy and astronomers in Han China," J.K. Fairbank, ed., *Chinese thought and institutions* (Chicago, 1957), pp. 33–70, p. 47. Also in German, "Die politische Funktion der Astronomie und der Astronomen in der Hanzeit," *Sternkunde und Weltbild im alten China* (Taibei, 1970), pp. 249–274, p. 254.

[65] Cf. Sakamoto Tomotsugu, "*Kansho* gogyōshi no sai'i setsu: Tō Chūjo setsu to Ryū Kō setsu no shiryō bunseki," *Nippon Chūgoku gakkai-hō* 40 (1988), 47–60, pp. 51 and 56.

[66] Cf. Keimatsu Mitsuo, "*Shunjū hanro* gogyō shohen gisaku kō," *Kanazawa Daigaku hōbun gakubu ronshū* (*tetsugaku bungaku*) 6 (1959), 25–46. Also Dai Junren, "Dong Zhongshu bu shuo wuxing kao," *Guoli zhongyang tushuguan guankan* 2/2, (1968.10), 9–19; repr. in *Meiyuan lunxueji* (Taibei, 1970) pp. 319–334, and Gary Arbuckle, "A note on the authenticity of the *Chunqiu fanlu*: the date of *Chunqiu fanlu* chapter 73 'Shan Chuan song' ('Praise-ode to mountains and rivers')," in *T'oung Pao* 75 (1989), 226–34. Arbuckle points out that Cheng Tingzuo 程廷祚 (mid-18th century) was probably the first to discover the absence of *wuxing* thought in Dong Zhongshu's work. Cf. "A neglected pioneer of Dong Zhongshu studies, Cheng Tingzuo (mid-18th century), on the *Chunqiu fanlu* and Dong's use of Five Forces theories" (paper from May 24th 2004) online at: http://www.sagesource.net/dong/something.html (22.2.08).

[67] Cf. Wang Liqi (ed.), *Xinyu jiaozhu*, (Beijing, 1986), p. 137. Compare also Lu Jia's polemics against the search for immortality in *Xinyu*, op. cit., p. 93. See a similar position also in the response to the *ru* scholars against the provocation of Sang Hongyang 桑弘羊 at the beginning of chapter 53 "Lun Zou" of the *Yantie lun* 鹽鐵論. They praise the wise kings Yao and Shun against Zou Yan, who is held responsible for the disarray and confusion that led to the fall of the Qin. Cf. Ma Feibai, *Yantie lun jianzhu* (Beijing, 1984), pp. 379–80. Don Harper notes that the branches of natural philosophy did not have the same social status as Confucian ethics or Daoist ontology; see his "Warring States, Qin, and Han manuscripts related to natural philosophy and the occult," in Edward

and later Ru scholars who only a few generations later start to connect *Annals* exegesis, like that of other classics, to the realm of *yinyang* and *wuxing* and to the sphere of omenology and use it as a political tool of anti-Wang Mang propaganda.[68] The new correlative exegesis becomes increasingly prominent in the works of omen experts like Sui Hong 眭弘 (d. 78 BC), Xiahou Sheng 夏侯勝 (fl. 70 BC), Jing Fang 京房 (77–37 BC), Yi Feng 翼奉 (fl. 48 BC), Gu Yong 谷永 (d. 8 BC), Liu Xiang 劉向 (ca. 77–6 BC), Li Xun 李尋 (fl. 5 BC), and Liu Xin 劉歆 (d. 23 AD),[69] and it reaches its peak with the apocryphal *chenwei* 讖緯 exegesis which was particularly developed in the context of the *Annals*[70] and consisted in a highly complex texture of different cosmological and divinatory theories applied to the texts of the classics.[71] In the apocryphal *Chunqiu wei* 春秋緯, as we observed for the later *Annals* exegesis, concrete precedent cases no longer play a role. Instead, we find a concentration on numerological-astronomical correlations in connection with *wuxing* theory, neither of which shows any relation to *Annals* exegesis. In its methodology this work rather resembles the more fully transmitted *Yiwei* 易緯 which, however, relates the trigrams or hexagrams to *yin* and *yang* and in which—apart from general statements—the *wuxing* theory does not play any role.[72] The commentary to the *Gongyang zhuan*, the *Gongyang Chunqiu jiegu* 公羊春秋解詁 written by He Xiu 何休 (129–182 AD), which is the most important source for all later *Gongyang* scholarship, as well as Xu Yan's 徐彥 (Northern Wei or Tang) subcommentary *Chunqiu Gongyang zhuan shu* 春秋公羊傳疏, still include passages which

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Shaughnessy, ed., *New sources of early Chinese history: an introduction to the reading of inscriptions and manuscripts* (Berkeley, 1997), pp. 223–52, p. 229.

[68] Cf. Gary Arbuckle, "The *Gongyang* school and Wang Mang," *Monumenta Serica* 42 (1994), 127–50.

[69] Cf. Martin Kern, "Religious anxiety and political interest in Western Han omen interpretation: the case of the Han Wudi Period (141–87 BC)," in *Chūgoku Shigaku* 10 (2000), 1–31. See also Anne Cheng, *Étude sur le confucianisme Han: l'élaboration d'une tradition exégétique sur les classiques* (Paris, 1985), pp. 94–95.

[70] Cf. Yasui Kōsan and Nakamura Shōhachi, *Isho no seiritsu to sono tenkai* (Tōkyō, [1]1979, [2]1984), p. 221, and Yasui and Nakamura, *Isho no kiso teki kenkyū* (Tōkyō, [1]1966, [3]1986), p. 80. A collection of the *Chunqiu wei* 春秋緯 fragments may be found in Yasui and Nakamura, eds, *Chōshū Isho shūsei* (Tōkyō, 1971–1988), vol. 4a, b; Ma Guohan, op. cit., vol. 3, pp. 2158–2261. For a historical analysis see Jack Dull, "A historical introduction to the apocryphical (*ch'an-wei*) texts of the Han dynasty," (Seattle, 1966, UMI), pp. 186, 481.

[71] Cf. Yasui, "Isho no temmon kishō zassen no seiritsu to tenkai," in Yasui and Nakamura, *Shin'i shisō no sōgōteki kenkyū* (Tōkyō, 1984), pp. 21–54 and Xu Xingwu, *Chenwei wenxian yu Handai wenhua goujian* (Beijing, 2003), ch. 3.

[72] Cf. for example Yasui and Nakamura, *Chōshū Isho shūsei*, vol. 1b.38.

operate in the way the apocryphal texts did.[73] The apocryphal *weishu* 緯書 quote from the *Annals* mostly in historical contexts which contain no religious elements.[74] The further sacralization of the *Annals*' text in the apocryphal tradition follows entirely the exegetical tradition which in the line of the *Gongyang zhuan* finds its expression in the *Chunqiu fanlu*, especially in the later chapters of which we find many quotes through all the apocryphal texts, not only in the apocryphal *Chunqiu wei* 春秋緯.[75] Xu Xingwu distinguishes five topics from the *Chunqiu fanlu* which are further developed in the apocryphal books into more religious concepts on the basis of cosmological and correlative theories.[76] One example should suffice to illustrate the way *Chunqiu fanlu* concepts were further sacralized in these texts. The term "beginning" (*yuan* 元), the first character in the *Annals*, is in the *Chunqiu fanlu* interpreted as a concept of the unified and correlated origin of different realms.[77] In the apocryphal texts it is then further developed into a cosmological concept in a theory of a mythological origin of the world, human culture and the morality of filial piety. Filial piety had been associated with the working of the five phases in the *Chunqiu fanlu* already, but in the apocryphal texts it is further connected to the beginning and to the process of creation of the world.[78]

The religious outlook on which the basic premises of this new form of exegesis are founded does not differ fundamentally from that on which the author(s) of the *Gongyang zhuan* built their commentary. Both believed in the interdependence of correct human behavior and adequate responses to that behavior in the historical realm of human events as well as through calamities and anomalies caused through the mediation of some response institution in the indiscernible realm, be it some kind of numinous personnel or mechanism of impersonal cosmological forces such as *yinyang* and/or *wuxing*.

[73] Cf. Ruan Yuan (ed.), *Shisanjing zhushu* (Beijing, [1]1980, [4]1987), pp. 2190–2354. For an analysis of their exegetical practice, cf. Joachim Gentz, *Das* Gongyang zhuan, pp. 556–60.

[74] Cf. Zheng Jun, *Chenwei kaoshu*, (Taipei, 2000), p. 138.

[75] Cf. Zheng Jun, op. cit., p. 149.

[76] Cf. Xu Xingwu, op. cit., pp. 249–61.

[77] See the beginning of chapter four "Yu ying," Su Yu, ed., *Chunqiu fanlu yizheng*, pp. 68–70, which has a verbatim parallel in chapter 13, "Zhong zheng," Su Yu, p. 147, and also the beginning of chapter six "Wang dao," Su Yu, pp. 100–101, which has a verbatim parallel in chapter 15 "Er duan," Su Yu, p. 155.

[78] Cf. Xu Xingwu, op. cit., pp. 249–52.

The new exegesis differs greatly, however, in its epistemological assumptions. Han commentators who apply cosmological patterns to their textual interpretations have a much greater self-confidence with regard to their ability to gain insight into the relevant meaning of the texts. Since the language of Heaven is discovered as a further source to prove right and wrong, the textual sources can be explained in the light of and in accordance with that further conceivable voice of truth. The business of governance, patterns of behavior and even dynastic legitimation around the beginning of the Christian era became increasingly grounded in cosmological patterns rather than in the transmitted rules of the wise kings of the past. Accordingly, patterns of exegetical reasoning also changed. Instead of explanations grounded in the structure of the text, in the context of the author, in transmitted glosses, sayings or narratives or in parallel expressions or passages of other classical texts, the canonical texts are now analyzed according to cosmological patterns detected in them. Their meaning is gained mainly through correlative operations within established systems of correspondences—they make use of the same correspondence systems and operate methodologically in the very same way as the chronomantic texts of the *rishu* 日書 genre.[79]

With the apocryphal exegesis the cosmological systems of correspondences become so complicated and diverse that the intersubjective insight into text interpretation gained through explicit exegetic rules now again gives way to a highly specialized and esoteric kind of text interpretation. The cause of this further shift is unknown mainly because the authors of the apocryphal texts are not known. The apocryphal exegesis of the classics is often explained as a further development within the Confucian school and thus connected to Confucian scholars.[80] It might then be assumed that the development of text interpretation in the direction of cosmology and religion might be explained as an attempt to render canonical exegesis more complicated and esoteric in order to gain a stronger position and better control *vis-à-vis* the emperor, in relation to whom Confucian scholars as masters of Heavenly structured texts were able to retain their ultimate voice of unquestionable authority.

[79] Cf. Joachim Gentz, "Elf Thesen zur Eigenart und Systematik früher chinesischer Chronomantik," *Oriens Extremus* 44 (2003–2004), 101–110. Cf. also Mark Kalinowski, "Les traités de Shuihudi et l'hémérologie chinoise à la fin des Royaumes-Combattants," *T'oung Pao* 72 (1986), 175–228.

[80] Cf. Zhong Zhaopeng, *Chenwei lunlüe* (Shenyang, [1]1991, [3]1995). Xu Xingwu, "Daode, zhengzhi, yishu: chenwei wenxian zhong de rujia zhiqi yangsheng zhi shu," *Zhonghua wenshi luncong* 87 (2007.3), 45–95.

Often the apocryphal texts are also connected to the *yinyang* school of Zou Yan or the *fangshi* experts[81] and could thus be interpreted more as a competitive project to the powerful Ruist textual exegesis. Several authors have also shown the connection between apocryphal religious concepts and Daoist religion.[82] The religious shift might therefore also reflect an influx of popular beliefs into canon exegesis for which different reasons could be sought.

Conclusion

An analysis of the development of *Gongyang Annals* exegesis with regard to its use of religious concepts reveals that, although basic exegetical premises are taken over from the original religious context of early *Annals* interpretation, there is a clear movement towards an agnostic and skeptical attitude regarding religious interpretations in the commentary of the *Gongyang zhuan*. This attitude accords with the skepticism which is well known in the context of the *Lunyu* tradition of early Confucianism. It is reflected in the interpretation of contents as well as in the exegetical methodology of the *Gongyang zhuan*. In early Han times a shift towards a new religiosity seems to evolve in the *Gongyang* tradition through the introduction of new religious concepts such as Heaven, original *qi* and systems of cosmological correspondences. We do not find, however, a reversion to those religious concepts on which the skeptical exegesis of the *Gongyang zhuan* had earlier turned its back. The new concept of Heaven and the new interpretations of anomalies and calamities do not reflect the same religious beliefs and practices as those which the *Annals* refers to. They are, rather, re-inventions of the old religious concepts within the frame of systematic thinking itself highly informed by the technical, analytical language which had been developed on the basis of methodological skepticism, a skepticism which emerged through its systematically turning against the earlier religious interpretations of past events and human behavior. The new religious concepts which from the late Warring States period on start to become

[81] Cf. Chen Pan, *Gu chenwei yantao jiqi shulu jieti* (Taipei, 1991), pp. 99–140, 161–64.

[82] Cf. Anna Seidel, "Taoist Sacraments," *Mémoirs Chinois et Bouddhiques* 21 (1983), 291–373; cf. also the 715-page book by Xiao Dengfu, *Chenwei yu daojiao* (Taipei, 2000).

established as a further plausible basis of exegetical evidence and argument have nothing in common with the earlier personified concepts of Heaven, ghosts and ancestors who dominated human affairs through their personal will. They have rather to be understood as elements and parts or even representations of a closed system which dominates its parts through unchanging rules of action and response. There is not much space for movements of authoritative personal will. In the institutionalized Han state the realm of Heaven becomes itself an institutionalized and governable system. The secular juridical appropriation of the *Annals* in the legal realm is in fact not very different from its political appropriation in the alleged religious realm of cosmological laws. Both applications are accomplished in contexts in which experts of textual interpretation, employing a highly specific technical language, use all their highly trained skill to base far-reaching decisions on the text of the *Annals*. In contrast to earlier *Annals* readings, however, they have recourse to clearly defined sets of rules which are not based on personal wisdom or power but on transparent and explicit laws that gain their authority through their argumentative force in public debate. If the *Gongyang zhuan* thus represents a first step away from a religiously conceptualized, personified interpretation of the *Annals* towards an interpretation based on abstract exegetical rules (yet still bound to the wisdom of a sage), then the later reinsertion of religious concepts in early Han *Annals* exegesis must be understood not as a step back but as a further step away from such a religiously conceived, personified interpretation. This new interpretation further abandons the leftover bondage to an interpretation which needs the authoritative (religious) institution of a sage. In that sense the new religious concepts can be understood as a further reaction to the older religious concepts of institutions of personal authority and may be taken as expressions of an even more radical skepticism towards non-transparent institutions of authority. The apocryphal texts further split the religious and the human realm. With the introduction and differentiation of non-personal, rule-based systematic religious concepts, any superhuman power is further subverted and the exegesis and with it the exegetes themselves turn into the main and dominant (and quasi divine) institution of authority, which can hardly be matched by any other human beings. As a result, the religious institution of Heaven becomes stronger. The power, however, does not lie in its personal, incalculable and unpredictable will which has been transformed intellectually into a system of nearly inscrutable rules. It now lies in the hands of the new interpreters who, with their

expertise, have replaced the ruler, the priests and diviners in their role as intermediary between Heaven and earth.

Turning back to the question of religion, then, we have to consider the possibility that the category religion in its application to early Chinese contexts might jeopardize our analysis of intellectual moves because it easily identifies features which are often thought of as opposites. The concept of religion as belief in superhuman beings as well as in cosmological correspondences may obscure the difference and as a matter of fact the possibly fundamental contradiction between these two types of belief. What appears to Western eyes as a return from skepticism back to religion appears to be in fact a further step away from anthropomorphic religion by means of the further development of other more non-personal and systematic religious premises, which even in the skeptical phase had never ceased to exist.

THE ECONOMICS OF RELIGION IN WARRING STATES AND EARLY IMPERIAL CHINA

Roel Sterckx*

It is late autumn. The fields have been cleared of crops, the harvests stored in granaries, and among the herds that were carefully nourished and pastured over the spring and summer months the best animals have been set apart as victims for sacrificial ceremonies that mark the coming ritual calendar. The Son of Heaven, so the "Yueling" 月令 ("Monthly ordinances") prescribe, assembles his feudal lords, issues the calendar for the coming year and sets out the rules and quota for the taxes to be extracted from his people. The amount of goods to be levied as tribute is calculated and determined according to the geographical distance of his vassals to the court, the quality of their lands, and their obligatory contributions to state and ancestral sacrifices. In all of this, the ruler is to levy no more than the required amount from his people and should neglect his private needs 無有所私.[1]

The scenario described here and variants of it across early Chinese texts unveil a world in which religious obligation and economic duty are deeply intertwined, a society where goods used in the service of the spirits are levied together with taxes to support the mundane organisation of everyday life. It is a world where economics and religious obligation meet and do so, ideally, for the public good. The latter is achievable when a balance is maintained between ritual expenditure and economic welfare:

> Therefore one must take the established revenues of a state as the main guideline for its ritual expenditure. An important principle for determining ritual expenditure is the size of its territory. Its amount should also depend on the good or bad nature of the annual harvest. In this way, though the harvest of a year may be very defective, the masses will not

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[1] Chen Qiyou, ed., *Lüshi chunqiu jiaoshi* (Shanghai, 1995), 9.468 ("Jiqiu ji"); Sun Xidan, *Liji jijie* (Beijing, 1995), 17.479 ("Yueling"); Liu Wendian, ed., *Huainanzi honglie jijie* (Taibei, 1992), 5.178 ("Shize xun").

> suffer anxiety, and the rituals instructed by superiors will be kept in pace (with economic circumstances).[2]

Sacrificial rituals were the cornerstone of everyday religious life in early China. The social, religious and political significance of sacrifice pervades its textual and archaeological landscape. Obligations related to the sacrificial economy punctuated, in various ways, the public and private existence of people across most segments of society. Goods were levied depending on social station, the diktats of ritual time, the geographic distribution of human and material resources, and their relationship to the ruler, the capital and the court. The presentation of offerings, raw or cooked, animal or vegetable, was an activity that extended from the household to the local community, state, empire and the cosmos at large. Likewise sacrificial cults were at the heart of the ritualization of political authority as China transformed from a feudal constituency of contending states into the unified empire of Qin and Han.[3]

Organizing the logistics to support a religious culture that revolved around the exchange and offering up of goods was a significant part of the socio-economic fabric of Warring States and early imperial society. Sacrifice, more than any other ritual, imposed itself on the everyday economy. The material requirements of religious practice and the ways in which these resources could be extracted pre-occupied most statesmen, philosophers and policy makers of the period in one way or another. In the ritual canon, which, by Han times, had accreted into the *san li* 三禮 (the three classic ritual texts: *Liji* 禮記, *Yili* 儀禮, and *Zhouli* 周禮), a religious culture is unveiled in which sacrificial goods are quantified in terms of tribute or conscript labor, a society where status was defined

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[2] *Liji jijie*, 23.627 ("Liqi").

[3] For an overview of official cults and the spirit world addressed therein see Michael Loewe, "The religious and intellectual background," *The Cambridge history of China*, vol. 1, *The Ch'in and Han empires 221 B.C.–A.D. 220* (Cambridge, 1986), pp. 661–68. The best study of state-sanctioned rituals and festivals in the Han remains Derk Bodde, *Festivals in classical China: New Year and other annual observances during the Han dynasty, 206 B.C.–A.D. 220* (Princeton, 1975). On the suburban sacrifice to Heaven, ritual music and liturgies associated with state sacrifices see Marianne Bujard, *Le sacrifice au ciel dans la Chine ancienne* (Paris, 2000), and Martin Kern, *Die Hymnen der chinesischen Staatsopfer: Literatur und Ritual in der politischen Repräsentation von der Han-Zeit bis zu den Sechs Dynastien* (Stuttgart, 1997). On imperial tours of the empire and their accompanying sacrificial rituals see He Pingli, *Xunshou yu feng shan* (Jinan, 2003), pp. 118–254; Martin Kern, *The stele inscriptions of Ch'in Shih-huang* (New Haven, 2000); and Mark Edward Lewis, "The Feng and Shan sacrifices of Emperor Wu of the Han," in *State and court ritual in China,* ed., Joseph McDermott (Cambridge, Eng., 1999), pp. 50–80.

in terms of ritual expenditure and where piety to the spirit world was translated into a detailed complex of material symbolism ranging from the measurement and value of ritual jades to the color and flavor associated with the cuisine offered up to the spirit world and shared in ritual banquets.

Economic transactions sometimes drew, either symbolically or in real terms, on notions of religious obligation. Since the prerogative of gaining access to the spirit world and its efficacy was tied to a world of goods and hinged on the capacity to draw on material resources, edifying moral discourse in early China was regularly paired with astute economic thought. Proportions of agricultural produce and human labor were siphoned off for cultic purposes while these ceremonies in turn gave rise to a religious economy. Markets, workshops and towns sprung up near centers of worship, and sacrificial goods were traded and subjected to quality control. Not infrequently, rulers and local magnates extracted income under the pretext that such revenues were a ritual duty. Sacrificial obligation could ensure a minimal guarantee for the exchange of material and human resources, one that at times suffered less from the unpredictability of return than commercial exchange. The sacrificial economy was, in principle, controllable and finite, largely public and visible in nature, and involved mostly groups rather than individuals. As such sacrificial religion served as an expedient template for ordering the world. As most other rituals, it ensured a sense of regularity, it was coded in time through calendrical cycles, and often fixed in space in the form of cults executed at predetermined locations or rituals dedicated to local spirits or natural landmarks.[4]

Sacrificial levies

While there is no shortage of reference to the material dimensions of religious life, it remains difficult to gain a statistical sense of the scale of the sacrificial economy in Warring States and early imperial China. There are various reasons for this. Transmitted textual and archaeological

[4] Parallels with the Greeks come to mind, as Richard Seaford observes: "In general traditional ritual provides stability, creating a consensual expectation of when, how, and by whom the ritual will be performed. It may represent control, predictability, and cohesion in an otherwise uncontrollable, unpredictable, and conflictual world." See *Money and the early Greek mind: Homer, philosophy, tragedy* (Cambridge, 2004), p. 45.

sources remain of necessity patchy. Likewise numerical values associated with transactions in the religious economy vary depending on occasion, the social status of the parties involved and location. It is also not unlikely that some, especially when standing accused of opulence in ceremonial expenditure, would wish to omit or misrepresent factual information. Another complication is that administrative records, while detailed in their calibration of taxable revenue, do not always specify the purpose for which taxes in kind and currency were used. Furthermore, keeping detailed records of sacrificial supplies was a task that may have carried little prestige and was handled by lesser officials and minor clerks. If we are to believe Sima Qian 司馬遷 (?145–?86 BC), such bookkeeping did not figure highly on the agenda of official scribes or indeed the historiographer himself. In the conclusion to his chapter on the *feng* 封 and *shan* 禪 sacrifices Sima Qian states that he had accompanied and assisted Han Wudi 漢武帝 on many sacrificial tours, giving him the opportunity to carefully observe the activities of the masters of recipes (*fangshi* 方士) and the sacrificial officials (*ciguan* 祠官) involved. What inspired him to write the chapter was to record for posterity the "ins and outs" 表裏 of how the spirits were served since antiquity. Yet, in the end he concedes, "the details 詳 of the sacrificial dishes and platters, the types of jades and silks offered, or the precise ritual to be followed in presenting them, these matters I have left to be handled and preserved (by others)."[5] So whereas a partial picture of the logistics behind official or state-sanctioned cults is transmitted in our sources, the religious economy away from the court, capital and official sacred sites is far less circumscribed. Our analysis has to sail between idealized models portrayed in prescriptive texts and anecdotal evidence of local practices or particular incidents.

Concerns relating to the sacrificial economy were part of several areas of daily life. Not only was the levying of sacrificial goods and services subsumed under various forms of regular taxation and corvée labor, it also formed the subject of administrative law. The ritual canon sanctions the use and requisition of nearly every type of household or agricultural commodity for sacrificial purposes including grains, silks, pottery, baskets, plants, woods, vessels, jades, pearls and animal victims. For those who did not enjoy noble station, ritual agency (that is, the right to participate in cults) was linked to the possession of land or

[5] *Shiji* (Beijing, 1959), 28.1404.

economic productivity in general. In the model of the idealized royal state described in the *Zhouli* this is stated explicitly:

> Generally in the case of commoners 庶民, those who do not raise domestic animals should not be sacrificing animal victims; those who do not plow should not be using grains in sacrifice; those who do not plant trees should not have coffins; those who do not tend silkworms should not be dressed in silk; those who do not spin should not be wearing mourning garments.[6]

By emphasizing the primacy of agricultural productivity over other occupations, as so many texts of the period do, this passage insists that the production of goods for the spirits is an integral part of human economic activity. To be sure exceptions to the rule prove that such idealized models were not necessarily a reflection of reality. Yet the link between human labor, agricultural productivity and sacrificial duty runs as a thread through most models proposed in Warring States and Han texts.

According to the *Mengzi* 孟子 all officials in the feudal state, from ministers downwards, were to be granted 50 *mu* 畝 of land (ca. five acres) that was exempted from regular taxation and solely destined for sacrificial purposes.[7] The possession of land here is again identified as the core asset for participation in rites that forge political authority. The "Wangzhi" 王制 ("Royal regulations") chapter preserved in the *Liji* gives an almost mathematically balanced description of the royal state, stipulating that one tenth of the state's annual expenditure should be set aside to be used for sacrifices. Although different theories exist on the exact dating of the "Royal regulations," it is clear that sacrificial levies were seen as a normal part of the economic fabric of society.[8] Ritual precept is uncompromising in its insistence on this basic idea. For the landed gentry, including those who were hard-up, the maintenance of sacrificial provisions should supersede all other aspects of material subsistence:

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[6] Sun Yirang, ed., *Zhouli zhengyi* (Beijing, 1987), 25.978 ("Lüshi"). For a similar idea see Chen Li (1809–1869), ed., *Baihutong shu zheng* (Beijing, 1997), 3.83 ("Sheji").

[7] Jiao Xun, ed., *Mengzi zhengyi* (Beijing, 1996), 10.354 (3A.3). These sacrificial lands were also known as *guitian* 圭田 ("pure lands").

[8] *Liji jijie*, 13.337–38 ("Wangzhi"). Some scholars and commentators associate the "Royal regulations" with the court of Han Wendi 文帝, others situate it in the late Warring States roughly contemporaneous with a chapter carrying the same title in the received *Xunzi* 荀子; some place it even earlier. See Pi Xirui (1850–1908), *Jingxue tonglun* (Beijing, 1982), 3.65–70; and Liu Feng, *Xian-Qin lixue sixiang yu shehui de zhenghe* (Beijing, 2003), pp. 202–03.

> When a gentleman is about to engage in construction work, the ancestral temple should have priority, the stables and armory should come next, and the residential quarters last. Generally when a head of a household prepares things, the vessels of sacrifice should have priority, levies in the form of sacrificial animals should follow, and implements for normal meals come last. Those who have no revenue from land should not provide vessels for sacrifice. Those who have such revenue should make it a priority to prepare sacrificial robes. A gentleman, though impoverished, will not sell his sacrificial vessels; though suffering from cold, he will not wear his sacrificial robes; in building a house, he will not cut down the trees on grave-mounds.[9]

Sacrificial income was drawn from public lands and parks managed directly by the feudal lord or, later on, the imperial court. These public lands (*gongtian* 公田) included both arable land and natural landscapes such as forests, mountains and rivers.[10] Domestic and wild animals associated with these lands were managed by special officials. The *Zhouli* for instance mentions the office of the cowherd 牛人 in charge of public oxen 公牛 that grazed on public pastures 牛田.[11] One special category of land was the so-called "sacred fields" (*jitian* 藉田) set aside for ritual purposes and plowed symbolically by the ruler to start the agricultural year. The ritual was replicated by feudal lords, princes and high officials away from the capital.[12] The plowing ritual symbolized not only the procurement of grains to be offered up in sacrifice but also served as a public reminder to officials of their duty to promote agricultural production. At the same time it was a symbolic reaffirmation of their sense of duty to the ruler:

> The Son of Heaven personally plows the ground for the grains with which to fill the vessels, and the black millet from which to distill the fragrant sacrificial wine for the services to Shangdi 上帝. For the same reason the feudal lords are diligent in order to discharge their services to the Son of Heaven.[13]

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[9] *Liji jijie*, 5.116–117 ("Quli").

[10] See Zhang Rongfang, "Lun liang Han de 'gongtian,'" in Zhang Rongfang, *Qin Han shi lunji*, vol. 3 (Guangzhou, 1995), pp. 28–40; Ma Xin, *Liang Han xiangcun shehui shi* (Jinan, 1997), pp. 50–58; Fu Zhufu and Wang Yuhu, eds, *Zhongguo jingji shi ziliao: Qin Han Sanguo bian* (Beijing, 1982), pp. 203–08.

[11] *Zhouli zhengyi*, 23.923 ("Niuren"), 24.938 ("Zaishi").

[12] *Liji jijie*, 46.1222 ("Jiyi").

[13] *Liji jijie*, 51.1306 ("Biaoji").

Commentators have given various interpretations to the ritual. Some rely on a homophonic pun—glossing the graph *ji/*tsjiagh* 耤 and its variants with a near homophone *jie/*dzjiak* 借 "to borrow"—to suggest that by plowing the sacred field the ruler literally "borrows" human labor and land from his subjects to supply his ancestral temples. Others link the ritual to the Mencian well-field model (*jingtian* 井田) in which one communal plot is maintained by borrowing labor from eight surrounding households.[14] Underlying these explanations is the idea of shared duties in the service of the spirit world and by implication loyalty to one's superiors. By the time of the Western Han the plowing ceremony was firmly adopted onto the official ritual calendar.[15] Imperial sacred fields were set aside south of the capital Chang'an at the Gucheng 顧城 temple. Sacred fields were also located in the Shanglin 上林 park south of the river Wei 渭. They were overseen by an official known as the prefect of the sacred field (*jitian ling* 耤田令) and his assistants.[16]

Monthly ordinances

The "Monthly ordinances" offers a detailed blueprint of the organization of the sacrificial economy over the course of the annual cycle. To be sure it presents an idealized picture, as is corroborated by Cai Yong 蔡邕 (133–92 AD), who is reported to have associated authorship of the "Yueling" with the Duke of Zhou.[17] References to different types of seasonal "rules" (*ling* 令) in received and excavated texts suggest that a variety of calendars were in circulation. Some were implemented only partially, others were adapted to local circumstances.[18] A recent example

[14] See Wang Liqi, ed., *Fengsu tongyi jiaozhu* (Taibei, 1988), 8.353 ("Sidian"); and Zheng Xuan (127–200 AD) and Kong Yingda's (574–648 AD) commentaries to *Liji jijie*, 13.355 ("Wangzhi"). See also Li Zeming, *Xian-Qin Qin Han jingji wenhua shilüe* (Wuhan, 2004), pp. 168–69; and Qian Xuan, *Sanli tonglun* (Nanjing, 1996), pp. 363–77.

[15] See Homer Dubs, *The history of the Former Han dynasty* (Baltimore, 1938), vol. 1, pp. 281–83; Bodde discusses the ritual and its sources from Han through Tang times in *Festivals in classical China*, pp. 223–41.

[16] *Hanshu* (Beijing, 1962), 65.2853; Xu Tianlin (fl. ca. 1205 AD), *Xi Han huiyao* (Shanghai, 1977), 11.107.

[17] For Cai Yong's attribution see *Bowuzhi* (*Sibu beiyao* ed.), 3.3b.

[18] See Xing Yitian, "Yueling yu Xi Han zhengzhi—cong Yinwan jibu zhong de 'yi chun ling cheng hu' shuoqi," *Xinshi xue* 9.1 (1998), 1–54; and Yang Zhenhong, "Yueling yu Qin Han zhengzhi zai tantao," *Lishi yanjiu* 3 (2004), 17–38.

is a calendar issued by Wang Mang 王莽 in 5 AD recovered in the early 1990s on the remains of a wall in a courier station near Dunhuang 敦煌. It leaves out some of the more abstract and cosmological parts found in the received "Yueling," and omits some important imperial rituals (e.g., the welcoming of spring in the eastern suburb). The fact that its prescriptions are unevenly distributed from month to month suggests that calendars were adapted or abridged to serve different purposes or recipients.[19]

If we take as our guide the almanac in the first 12 chapters of the *Lüshi chunqiu* and its variant preserved in the *Liji*, the following scenario of activities emerges. The ritual year starts in the first month of spring when the ruler conducts prayers for a munificent harvest and plows the sacred field together with his chief officials. Sacrificial codes (*jidian* 祭典) are drawn up that prohibit the use of female animals as victims in sacrifice because they are central to the growth of the flocks. In the second month the use of live animals in sacrifice continues to be tabooed in favor of jades, skins and silks. In late spring the women are spurred on to tend to the production of silk to be used for sacrificial robes. Calves and foals marked for sacrifice are selected and their numbers are written down. In the first month of summer the tax on silk needed for ritual purposes is set.[20] The ritual canon presents the production of silk as the natural complement to the agricultural production of sacrificial grains. Thus the sacred field plowed by the ruler was complemented by the silkworm house 蠶室 reserved for silks used in sacrificial rituals and run by the women at the court:

> Anciently, the Son of Heaven and the feudal lords had their public mulberry trees 公桑 and silkworm houses. The latter was built in the form of a dwelling near a river, one *ren* and three Chinese feet in height, with surrounding walls covered with thorns and gates closed at the outside. In the early morning of a bright first day of the month the ruler, wearing a leather skin cap and plain skirt, divined to select the most auspicious palace ladies from inside the three palaces of his wife. They were made to take the silkworms into the silkworm house. They received the (mulberry) seeds and washed them in the river, picked the leaves from the public mulberry trees, dried them in the wind and fed them to the silkworms.[21]

[19] See Zhongguo wenwu yanjiusuo and Gansu sheng wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo, eds, *Dunhuang Xuanquan yueling zhaotiao* (Beijing, 2001); and Zhang Defang and Hu Pingsheng, eds, *Dunhuang Xuanquan Han jian shizui* (Shanghai, 2001).

[20] *Liji jijie*, 16.446 ("Yueling").

[21] *Liji jijie*, 46.1223 ("Jiyi").

Midsummer sees a flurry of activity: musical instruments used in ceremonies are tuned and repaired, prayers are conducted to mountains, streams and springs and the ruler conducts the annual rain sacrifice to pray for a bountiful harvest. In late summer in all districts hay and fodder (sometimes known as *chugao* 芻藁, "sacrificial hay tax") is levied by the court to feed the victims needed in state and ancestral sacrifices. Silks dyed and decorated for ceremonial robes and flags are inspected.[22]

Midautumn is the time for the annual inspection of the sacrificial victims, also regularly referred to as "grass and grain-fed animals" (*chuhuan* 芻豢).[23] Officers of slaughter and priests do the round among the victims, "inspecting that they are whole and complete, examining their fodder and grain, and assessing their condition as fat or thin; they examine the coloration of their coats to ensure that the animals match the characteristics of their kind, measure their size, and inspect their height so that everything fits the correct standards."[24] In the *Liji* these inspections of animal victims are identified as a way in which a ruler demonstrates his strength and utmost sense of filial piety.[25] Granaries are repaired in anticipation of the arrival of the grain levies. By late autumn all supplies of grain and animal victims for sacrifices should be matured and, as described above, ready for collection together with regular tax and tribute duties. Grains for the spirits harvested from the sacred fields are stored in the state's "spirit granaries" (*shencang* 神藏/倉).[26] These then sustain the winter sacrifices to the altar of the soil, the gates of cities and towns, as well as sacrifices to ancestors and the household spirits.[27] Just as a virtuous ruler was expected to store up in times of prosperity and distribute in the hour of need, so is he to economize on sacrificial

[22] *Lüshi chunqiu jiaoshi*, 1.2, 2.64, 3.122, 4.186, 5.241, 6.311.

[23] *Guoyu* (Shanghai, 1978), 18.567 ("Chu yu, xia"); Wang Pinzhen, ed., *Da Dai liji jiegu* (Beijing, 1998), 5.102 ("Zengzi tian yuan"). On the raising of animal victims see also Okamura Hidenori, "Sen Shin jidai no kyōgi," *Tōhō gakuhō* 75 (2003), 1–80, esp. pp. 3–17.

[24] *Lüshi chunqiu jiaoshi*, 8.422 ("Zhongqiu ji"); *Liji jijie*, 17.473 ("Yueling"); *Huainanzi*, 5.176 ("Shize xun"). For a statement that the ancients only offered sufficiently fattened animals, see Sun Yirang, ed., *Mozi jiangu* (Beijing, 2001), 3.82 ("Shangtong, zhong").

[25] *Liji jijie*, 46.1223 ("Jiyi").

[26] *Liji jijie*, 17.478 ("Yueling"); *Huainanzi*, 5.178 ("Shize xun"); *Zhouli zhengyi*, 31.1227 ("Linren"). Zheng Xuan comments that grain for occasions other than the most important sacrifices is not stored in these spirit depots. The *Chunqiu* 春秋 gives another term (*yulin* 御廩), unattested elsewhere, for such spirit granaries and reports a spirit depot going up in flames in the year corresponding to 697 BC. See Yang Bojun, *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu* (Beijing, 1995), p. 139 (Lord Huan, year 14).

[27] *Lüshi chunqiu jiaoshi*, 10.516 ("Mengdong ji").

expenditure in times of hardship and stock up the granaries with excess grain and silk for the spirits in times of plenty.

In the last month of the year the ruler orders his clerks to rank the feudal lords and sacrificial animals required of them for the sacrifices to Heaven, Shangdi and the altars of soil and grain. States sharing his surname supply the fodder for the animals to be slaughtered for the lineage ancestors. The final month in winter is also the time when wood is collected for the suburban sacrifices, those in the ancestral temple and all others.[28] Wood was important not only as fuel for sacrifices, but also as raw material for ritual implements (baskets, trays, etc.). Certain species of wood and grasses—such as white wooly grass, mulberry, cypress or peach—were believed to be especially potent for ritual purposes. For instance the *Liji* prescribes that to prepare sacrificial wine fermented with fragrant herbs "the mortar should be made of cypress wood, the pestle of dryandra, and the ladle (for lifting the offerings out of the vessels) of mulberry wood."[29] Wood was also needed to encoffin those who could afford a proper burial. In a final logistic act in the year the important link between the possession of land and sacrificial duty is reinforced again when

> the ruler orders the steward to run through the numbers of all those who possess land from ministers and grandees down to the common people so that animal victims can be levied from them to supply the sacrifices to mountains, forests, and famous streams. Generally all people who inhabit the nine provinces under Heaven must, without exception, do their utmost to offer the necessary supplies required for sacrifices to August Heaven, Shangdi, the altars to soil and grain, ancestral temples, mountains, forests, and famous rivers.[30]

In sum, the picture derived from the "Monthly ordinances" is one of a highly organized religious economy, an enterprise that combines the exaction of sacrificial goods and taxes from landholding individuals with corvée labor delivered by tenant and subsistence farmers, and the management of public lands and parks to deliver those services. In antiquity, Ban Gu 班固 (32–92 AD) remarks in his "Treatise on food and goods" ("Shihuo zhi" 食貨志), sacrificial levies were an integral part of the regular taxes on products 稅 used to cover government

[28] *Liji jijie*, 17.502 ("Yueling"). Wood and horns to be used in funerary rites were supplied by the chief forester. See *Liji jijie*, 43.1144 ("Sang daji").

[29] *Liji jijie*, 40.1065 ("Zaji").

[30] *Lüshi chunqiu jiaoshi*, 12.616 ("Jidong ji"); *Liji jijie*, 17.504 ("Yueling").

expenses and as such complemented military taxes 賦 as the two main revenues of state.[31]

Sacrificial logistics could be enforced by law. One common punishment falling under the general category of hard labor in Qin and Han law was "(gathering) firewood for the spirits" (*guixin* 鬼薪), which in essence meant collecting fuel for sacrifices. According to the Qin statutes this was a punishment reserved for male convicts. The corresponding punishment for females was known as "(sifting) white rice" 白粲, which meant selecting and cleansing pure white rice for offerings in ancestral temples. Convicts had to wear clothes dyed red and wear manacles while on the job. Allowing these convicts to escape was subject to punishment.[32] These forms of convict labor, according to commentators, could last up to three years in Qin times.[33] Likewise, for the landowning gentry, failure to meet a prescribed quantity of sacrificial levies could result in being demoted in official rank or stripped of hereditary status.[34]

The detailed organization of sacrificial logistics described above suggests that considerable amounts of animal victims, grains, silks and other implements could be requisitioned for ritual purposes. While sources no doubt inflate figures for rhetorical purposes or on occasion simply use set expressions, it is worthwhile pausing briefly with a few selected examples to illustrate the potential scale of these logistic demands. In an exchange in the *Zuozhuan* 左傳 between Duke Ai 哀 of Lu 魯 (r. 494–477 BC) and messengers from the state of Wu 吳 the issue of victim numbers is brought up. At the heart of the dispute lies what the *Zhouli* would later refer to as the "method of the ritual bestowing of victim animals" 牢禮之灋, essentially linking proportionately the number of victims and the timing of their presentation.[35] When Wu requests one hundred *lao* 牢 sets (each consisting of an ox, a pig, and a sheep),

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[31] *Hanshu*, 24A.1120.

[32] Shuihudi Qin mu zhujian zhengli xiaozu, ed., *Shuihudi Qin mu zhujian* (Beijing, 1991; rpt. 2001), p. 51 (strip 134); A.F.P. Hulsewé, *Remnants of Ch'in law* (Leiden, 1985), p. 68 (A86). Elsewhere in the Shuihudi legal corpus these firewood gatherers are referred to as "collectors" 集人. See *Shuihudi Qin mu zhujian*, p. 139 (strip 193); Hulsewé, *Remnants of Ch'in law*, p. 176 (D172).

[33] Cf. Ying Shao's 應劭 (140–ca. 204 AD) commentary to *Hanshu*, 2.85 (note 13), and *Hanshu*, 12.351 (note 1); and Ru Shun's 如淳 (fl. 189–265 AD) commentary to *Shiji*, 6.227 (note 17). See further *Hanshu*, 23.1099, 77.3254, 97A.3964; *Hou Hanshu* (Beijing, 1965), 3.143, 3.147, 3.158, 79A.2564, "zhi" 2.3040.

[34] *Hanshu*, 24B.1173.

[35] *Zhouli zhengyi*, 6.201 ("Zaifu"). For *laoli* see also *Zhouli zhengyi*, 23.927 ("Niuren"), 31.1239 ("Chongren"), 73.3063 ("Zhangke").

it is accused of excess (*yin* 淫). Ritual propriety, the Lu official argues, requires that a set number 數 of sacrificial victims be agreed on, and he refers to the kings of Zhou who allegedly never exceeded the number twelve. Despite the edifying example of Zhou, Wu insists and in the end receives its one hundred sets.[36]

Communal banquets and drinking ceremonies regularly accompanied sacrificial rituals, and so the logistics of goods required for the treatment of guests or as gifts for official visitors could impose a significant addition to the economic burden of ceremony.[37] A passage from a chapter on the hosting of guests in the *Liji* suggests that they were given not only food and lodgings but also animals for sacrifice and animal fodder:

> Both when guests came to court and when they left, they were supplied from three stores of provisions. With a gift of living animals they were hosted in their lodgings. The provisions of five *lao*-sets of animals were laid out inside. Outside, thirty cartloads of rice and thirty cartloads of grain were provided and twice as much straw for fodder and firewood. Five pairs of birds of the species that went in flocks were given every day, and all attendants were supplied with cattle for food. There was one meal (a day in the court) and two sacrificial entertainments (in the temple). The amount of banquets and occasional gifts was without definite number. This was how one gave an expression of generosity to the importance of ritual precept.[38]

Purported figures of sacrificial expenditure however could far exceed the gift of a few hundred animals. One account describing the conquest of the Shang records that the campaign was sealed with the slaughter of over 500 oxen to Heaven and Houji 后稷 and offerings of nearly 3,000 sheep and boar to other spirits.[39] Duke De 德 of Qin 秦 (r. 677–76 BC) used 300 *lao*-sets of animals to sacrifice at the Altar of Fu 鄜.[40] In imperial times sacrificial expenditure grew along with the perceived grandeur of those initiating the rituals. By the late Western Han lavish spending on the cult of imperial ancestors had proliferated. For instance, during the reign of Yuandi 元帝 (r. 49–33 BC) over 12,000 specialists were mustered

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[36] *Zuozhuan zhu*, pp. 1640–1641 (Lord Ai, year 7).

[37] On the culinary aspects and social conventions of banquets see Roel Sterckx, "Sages, cooks, and flavors in Warring States and Han China," *Monumenta Serica* 54 (2006), 1–46, esp. 40–45.

[38] *Liji jijie*, 61.1463 ("Pinyi").

[39] Huang Huaixin, Zhang Maorong, and Tian Xudong, eds, *Yi Zhoushu huijiao jizhu* (Shanghai, 1995), 4.470 ("Shifu").

[40] *Shiji*, 5.184.

to oversee the preparation of more than 24,000 offerings at well over 300 shrines in the capital and the provinces. Each shrine was staffed with a sacrificial crew that included cooks, priests and musicians. Those in charge of breeding and feeding animal victims are not included in Ban Gu's figures.[41] Shortly after Aidi 哀帝 (r. 7–1 BC) came to the throne, no fewer than 37,000 shrines were constructed in one year spread over more than 700 locations.[42] By the end of the reign of Wang Mang still over 1,700 sites were places of worship dedicated to all types of deities requiring animal sacrifices of over 3,000 kinds.[43]

At the level of the household we may get some idea of the relative share of household income devoted to sacrificial duties from Ban Gu's "Treatise on food and goods." He suggests that around 400 BC the total average farming income of a family of five members was reduced by one-tenth through taxes in kind (a share similar to what the "Royal regulations" prescribed for the state). Three hundred coins 錢 were to be set aside for offerings at local shrines and for spring and autumn sacrifices at village altars. The latter corresponded to more than half the annual budget for food for one member of a family.[44]

Maintenance towns and personnel

To supplement income for cultic purposes obtained though regular taxation and tribute, sacrificial revenue was also drawn from ambulant sources, that is, human or natural resources that were located near a site of worship or along the route followed by ritual processions to sacred sites. The court could issue orders to local authorities to perform sacrifices at local expense. For instance in 197 BC Gaozu 高祖 approved a request from his officials that all districts be ordered to offer a sheep and a pig to the local altars of the soil and grain in spring and at the New Year. Communities were expected to raise the expenses for these sacrifices themselves.[45]

[41] *Hanshu*, 73.3116. For the debates on such expenditure see also Michael Loewe, *Crisis and conflict in Han China* (London, 1974), pp. 179–82.
[42] *Hanshu*, 25B.1264.
[43] *Hanshu*, 25B.1270.
[44] *Hanshu*, 24A.1125; figures are tabulated in Nancy Lee Swann, *Food and money in ancient China* (Princeton, 1950), pp. 140–41.
[45] *Shiji*, 28.1380.

A prominent institutional mechanism to maintain cults at local sites, tombs and cemeteries was the so-called *shouyi* 守邑 "maintenance/guardian town." These were household communities, consisting in anywhere from a few to several hundred households settled near tombs, shrines or sacred peaks, and charged with the maintenance of their sacrifices and monuments. Imperial tombs required the most elaborate human resources to service the ancestral cult. Large communities consisting of thousands of inhabitants were resettled in special towns near imperial tombs. Resident communities at the tombs of the Western Han emperors near Chang'an drew significant wealth and manpower to the capital region and provided a recruitment pool for officials serving at the court.

Establishing entire resident communities charged with the upkeep of a cult center or gravesite was a costly enterprise mostly reserved for relatives of the imperial family. Yet on occasion political motivations inspired such expenditure. For instance in 180 BC Han Wendi assigned one town in the district of Zhending 真定 to take charge of sacrifices to the ancestral graves of Zhao Tuo 趙佗 in an attempt to gain his support for the Han court.[46] Setting up these communities could be lengthy and elaborate enterprises, as is illustrated by the run-up to Han Wudi's *feng* and *shan* sacrifices in 110 BC. Twelve years in advance of the actual performance of the sacrifices on Mount Tai 泰山 all towns surrounding the mountain and the mountain itself were presented to the throne by the king of Jibei 濟北, who received a district elsewhere as compensation.[47] On his way to Mount Tai in the early spring of 110 BC Han Wudi ordered sacrifices to another sacred peak, Mount Songgao 嵩高山, in response to a series of auspicious omens (including mountain spirits shouting out "long life" during his climb). Orders were given to increase sacrifices, ensuring that trees and plants on the mountain not be cut. To maintain the sacrifices, 300 households at the foot of the mountain were made an estate, called Songgao town 邑. They were to provide only for the sacrifices and were exempted from any other taxes.[48] With the average Western Han household consisting of five members, this

[46] *Shiji*, 113.2970; *Hanshu*, 95.3849.
[47] *Shiji*, 28.1387.
[48] *Shiji*, 12.474, 28.1397; *Hanshu*, 6.190.

would amount to around 1,500 people in charge of sacrifices to this particular mountain alone.[49]

Figures in the range of several hundred households occur again later at the court of Xuandi 宣帝 in 73 BC during discussions on the assignment of posthumous titles and the establishment of a funerary park and town for Liu Ju 劉據 (heir apparent to Wudi, driven to suicide in 91 BC), his favorite concubine, and Xuandi's father. It was recommended that the graves of the emperor's parents be allocated a funerary town of 300 households, the late crown prince's tomb 200 households, and 30 households to guard his late concubine's tomb. Special officials were to be appointed to supervise, guard and maintain the parks, all of this according to the customary norms (*ru fa* 如法).[50] Eight years later, the allotment for Xuandi's father was increased to 1,600 households, on a par with sacrifices one would normally provide for deceased emperors. The late crown prince's concubine now received a park and town with 300 households and the crown prince's maintenance town was enlarged with another 300 households.[51] Huo Guang 霍光, who served as marshal of state at the time of his death in 68 BC and was treated to a burial equivalent to that of an emperor, was treated to a funerary town of 300 households. All his descendants were exempted from tax.[52] By the time of Chengdi 成帝 (r. 33–7 BC), another 100 resident households were added to Huo Guang's necropolis, with designated officials and guards to tend to the sacrifices.[53] Emperor Zhao 昭 (r. 87–74 BC) honored his mother with a grave mound tended by no fewer than 3,000 households and his maternal grandfather with a funerary park and town of 200 households.[54] Old grave sites could be repaired posthumously and granted maintenance towns or special guards as happened in the case of the tomb of Xuandi's maternal grandfather.[55] In short, those of status and in positions of power could demonstrate their political and religious

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[49] On a typical Western Han household consisting of five members see Zhao Pei, *Liang Han zongzu yanjiu* (Jinan, 2002), pp. 71–83.

[50] *Hanshu*, 63.2748.

[51] *Hanshu*, 63.2749.

[52] *Hanshu*, 68.2948–2950. On Huo Guang's funeral see Michael Loewe, "State funerals of the Han empire," *Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities* 71 (1999), 7–10.

[53] *Hanshu*, 68.2959.

[54] *Hanshu*, 97.3957.

[55] *Hanshu*, 97.3963–64.

authority or change personal allegiance by reducing, augmenting, or reviving expenditure on certain cults and cultic sites.

As is clear from the above, the organization and management of the religious economy was a task handled by an elaborate system of bureaucrats and government offices specially dedicated to the task. Yet no clearly articulated divisions existed between ritual tasks and other labor in early China. References to dedicated professions in the religious economy may go back as far as Shang times. The "Jiu gao" 酒告 ("Pronouncement on alcohol") refers to a group of Shang artisan-officials as *zonggong* 宗工 "temple craftsmen." This term might be no more than an honorific title, but it is also possible that it designated artisans active in temple complexes or other ritual centers.[56]

The *Zhouguan* 周官, "Offices of Zhou," or *Zhouli* is by far the richest source of information on the officialdom connected to the sacrificial economy. Despite its over-idealized depiction of the bureaucracy of the royal state, the factual and technical detail contained in it suggests that much of its information draws on actual practice. Many task descriptions and techniques are known from other texts.[57] Chores related to sacrificial obligation figure prominently among the descriptions of most offices throughout the first five sections of the book describing the departments of the royal household (the offices of Heaven), the people (offices of Earth), cults (offices of spring), war (offices of summer) and justice (offices of autumn). The centrality of the sacrificial economy emerges in the task descriptions of the main office in the department of Heaven, the grand steward (*dazai* 大宰). Sacrifices rank first among the statutes he implements in towns and dependencies assigned to dukes, ministers and grandees. Furthermore sacrifices are the first among measurements used to determine the state's expenses, and sacrificial provisions rank first among nine types of tributary goods to be collected by the feudal state.[58] Core personnel for cultic service in the department of spring is supervised by the minister of rites (*da zongbo* 大宗伯), who oversees all sacrificial and ritual matters ranging from setting up altars for various

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[56] Sun Xingyan, *Shangshu jingu wen zhushu* (Beijing, 2004), 16.382 ("Jiugao").

[57] Sven Broman identifies 133 (38 percent) of the 347 *Zhouli* officers in other pre-Han texts. See "Studies on the Chou Li," *Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities* 33 (1961), 1–88. For *Zhouli* parallels with offices attested in Western Zhou bronze inscriptions see Zhang Yachu and Liu Yu, *Xi Zhou jinwen guanzhi yanjiu* (Beijing, 1986).

[58] *Zhouli zhengyi*, 2.67, 3.100, 3.103 ("Dazai"). Sacrificial tribute is specified by Zheng Sinong 鄭司農 (Eastern Han) as animal victims and fodder on this occasion.

sacrifices to distinguishing names and quantities of sacrificial grains and ritual vessels.[59]

In Han times personnel concerned with ceremonial logistics at state level were concentrated in offices under the supervision of the grand master of ceremonies (*taichang* 太常), whose elaborate network of sub-departments and officials included prayer-masters, butchers, musicians, tax collectors, tomb supervisors, diviners and libationers. Similar officials were deployed in the territories immediately outside the capital and near important cult centers. They included officials such as a prefect of the office of sacrificial oblations and victims 廩犧令, a prefect in charge of domestic animal victims 掌畜令 or a chief of the kitchen in charge of supplying the altars at Yong (*Yong chuzhang* 雍廚長). With the exception of staff for imperial funerary parks, for ancestral temples located in commanderies away from the capital, and priests in the service of the kingdoms, far less information survives on officially employed religious personnel serving in the local administration in the provinces.[60]

Spirit commerce

To be sure, dedicating entire villages to the maintenance of sacrificial facilities near tombs and important ritual sites is an example at the top end of ritual occasion. Yet, as the prescriptive model of the monthly ordinances already indicated, the sacrificial economy was part and parcel of community life at all levels of society. Those of lesser means could seek loans to fulfill their sacrificial obligation. As early as the *Zuozhuan* the transfer, following a change in allegiance, of sacrificial fields and towns for the performance of particular sacrifices is expressed in terms of "exchanging" 易 and "borrowing" 假 ownership over such fields.[61] The *Zhouli* notes that goods for sacrifices and funerals could be purchased on

[59] *Zhouli zhengyi*, 35.1408 ("Da zongbo"), 36.1421–1463 ("Xiao zongbo").

[60] See Hans Bielenstein, *The bureaucracy of Han times* (Cambridge, 1980), pp. 17–23, 88, 98, and 107.

[61] In the year corresponding to 715 BC, Zheng suspends sacrifices to Mount Tai and proposes to Lu to exchange the nearby town established to service the sacrifices to Mount Tai for another sacrificial field closer by where they would instead offer sacrifices to the Duke of Zhou. Lu only reciprocated four years later when Zheng was requested to add a jade scepter to the transaction (to make up for the difference in value between both sacrificial territories). Thus, the text states, Zheng could "borrow" 假 the fields from Lu. See *Zuozhuan zhu*, p. 58 (Lord Yin, year 8), p. 82 (Lord Huan, year 1); and *Shiji*, 14.552.

credit.[62] Han government authorities would on occasion issue interest-free loans out of the taxes levied from craftsmen and merchants to assist in covering the costs for sacrifices, funerals and mourning ceremonies. According to one account credit for sacrificial expenses was allowed for up to ten days and for funerals up to three months.[63]

Markets also functioned as venues for the trading of sacrificial offerings and other commodities used for ritual purposes. Religious activity sparked commerce as far as the western border regions of Han. Wooden documents from the military settlements in Juyan 居延 mention a market held on the day before the sacrifices to the altar of the soil and contain records of monetary expenses required for the "altar goods" (*shehuo* 社貨) used at the festival. These include a reference to the purchase of bundles of dried vegetables to be used as wicks at the altar of the soil, a receipt of cash paid by officers for the use of the shrine (*sheqian* 社錢) and an inventory of goods for the festival (including chicken, millet, sorghum, wine and salt).[64]

Away from the market, similar emphasis was laid on accountability in the transaction of goods for the spirits. This is evident in several types of funerary texts uncovered in tombs. Some were drafted in formats similar to administrative documents. Others shared features resembling that of bookkeeping, or indeed adopted the format of a contract. Tomb inventories (variously referred to as *qiance* 遣策 or *fengshu* 賵書 by archaeologists) were lists of burial goods interred with the deceased. Some recorded items displayed during the funeral intended for burial, others listed gifts received from relatives and guests and named the donors. The lists were read aloud and verified by ritualists before the actual funerary procession and entombment of the goods. This served as an announcement (*gao* 告) to both the spirits and the living.

The practice of burying detailed lists with names and quantities of goods emerged during the Warring States period, the best recently studied example being the inventories recovered from the tomb of a high-ranking Chu official buried in 316 BC at Baoshan 包山 (tomb no.2; Jiangling county, Hubei). The Baoshan inventories list bronze and

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[62] *Zhouli zhengyi*, 28.1097 ("Quan fu").

[63] *Hanshu*, 24B.1181.

[64] See Li Zhenhong, *Juyan Han jian yu Han dai shehui* (Beijing, 2003), pp. 123–131 (especially strips 10.39, 63.34, E.P.T59:173, E.P.T52:185, E.P.T51:424); Shen Songjin, *Ershi shiji jianbo xue yanjiu* (Beijing, 2003), pp. 269–73; and Michael Loewe, *Records of Han administration*, 2 vols (Cambridge, 1967), 1.114; 2.99.

wooden sacrificial vessels, metal items and foodstuffs, and chariots and everyday items used for travelling (towels, combs, fans, etc.) to assist the deceased on his afterlife journey.[65] Most inventories list the date of burial and some give titles for the categories of goods. There appears to be a correspondence between the ways in which the goods were distributed in the tomb, in terms of space and function, and the structure of the inventory, although more evidence is required to corroborate the exact relationship between text and tomb. That the inventories do not always match the actual objects buried in the tomb suggests that the lists themselves may partly have served as symbolic substitutes for the goods.[66] Another funerary document common from the Eastern Han onwards were land contracts, commonly referred to as *diquan* 地券. Their purpose was to establish ownership for the deceased over the plot of land used as burial site. Modelled on contracts used in the real world these documents record the purchase of land and name the buyer (usually the deceased), the seller (who could be a divine figure), the location, boundaries and surface area of the plot, the price of the transaction as well as witnesses or guarantors.[67] At the heart of these documents is the notion that economic transactions such as completing a purchase or bestowing a gift were done both *with* and *in* the spirit world and that those transactions needed to be sealed by proper account keeping.

One type of funerary object that sparked a real industry around major towns from Warring States times onwards were so-called *mingqi* 明器 "spirit artifacts." These were miniature ceramic or metal replicas of objects as varied as ritual vessels, animals, houses, granaries, daily utensils (e.g., cooking stoves, a well), and indeed human figurines. Xunzi (ca. 335–238 BC) distinguishes them from objects used by the living (*shengqi* 生器) and notes that they "have the appearance (of real objects) but cannot be put to use" 貌而不用.[68] The practice of sending the dead to their graves with prototypes of objects and buildings that imitated the way they lived was part of a conscious effort to break the

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[65] See Hubei sheng Jing-Sha tielu kaogudui, ed., *Baoshan Chu jian* (Hubei, 1991), pp. 37–39 (plates 110–121); translated in Constance Cook, *Death in ancient China: the tale of one man's journey* (Leiden, 2006), pp. 211–47.

[66] See Lai Guolong, "The Baoshan tomb: religious transitions in art, ritual, and text during the Warring States period (480–221 BC)," PhD dissertation (UCLA, 2002), chap. 2.

[67] Terry F. Kleeman, "Land contracts and related documents," in *Chūgoku no shūkyō, shisō to kagaku: Makio Ryōkai hakushi shōju ki'nen ronshū* (Tokyo, 1984), pp. 1–34.

[68] Wang Xianqian (1842–1918), ed., *Xunzi jijie* (Beijing, 1997), 13.369 ("Lilun").

ties between living and dead kin and separate both worlds categorically.[69] While commonly found in tombs of most social strata, the use of pottery substitutes proliferated among the nobility. One unparalleled find of painted pottery animal figurines was recovered in the early 1990s from the mausoleum of Han emperor Jingdi 景帝 (r. 157–141 BC) at Yangling 陽陵 (Shaanxi). The terracotta figurines—mostly domestic animals such as chickens, roosters, dogs, pigs, goats, sheep, horses and oxen—were lined up in rows and flocks by species. The same tomb also contained a large number of human statuettes including nude figurines showing genitals originally dressed in silks.[70]

Demand for such objects sparked economic activity in manufacturing workshops and markets near capitals, major burial grounds, cemeteries and other cultic sites. Several workshops and factories were established in the capital areas of Qin that mass-produced luxury items and funerary articles destined for the imperial tombs. The remains of a tomb figurine workshop and its kilns, capable of firing over 8,000 figurines at one time, have been found in the market area in the northwestern corner of Han Chang'an.[71] A department known as the Artisans of the Eastern Park 東園匠 was charged exclusively with the production of portable spirit articles for the imperial tombs.[72] Inside the Weiyang 未央 palace in Chang'an several departments dealt with logistics for sacrificial rituals. These included an Ice Room 淩室 where ice was stored to keep fresh the foodstuffs used in sacrifices and banquets or corpses cool prior to burial, and the Weaving Shop 織室 that produced the garments used by the court in temple sacrifices.[73]

While the religious economy was flourishing on markets near cultic sites or in the run-up to certain festivals, markets also appear as a public space where anybody claiming to have expertise in the business of serving the spirits (astrologers, diviners, shamans, physiognomists, doctors) could advertise their wares. The market was a venue where

[69] Lothar von Falkenhausen, *Chinese society in the age of Confucius (1000–250 BC): the archaeological evidence* (Los Angeles, 2006), pp. 302–06, 382–91, 395; and Lai, "The Baoshan tomb," chapter 3.

[70] Shaanxi sheng kaogu yanjiusuo, ed., *Han Yangling* (Chongqing, 2001), pp. 10–12, 24–25, 51–59, 154.

[71] Zhou Suping and Wang Zijin, "Han Chang'an cheng xibeiqu taoyong zuofang yizhi," *Wenbo* 3 (1985), 1–4.

[72] *Hou Hanshu*, "zhi" 6.3141. See further Anthony Barbieri-Low, "The organization of imperial workshops during the Han dynasty," PhD dissertation (Princeton University, 2001), pp. 35–36, 56, 71–73.

[73] He Qinggu, *Sanfu huangtu jiaozhu* (Xi'an, 1998, 2nd ed.), pp. 159, 160.

people could express sentiments, emotions and aspirations outside the regulated confines of the household.[74] Like the folksong, products traded on the markets reflected the mood of the people. By observing the market, the "Royal regulations" note, a ruler could take stock of the likes and dislikes of his people and understand their frame of mind.[75] The market was also the place for commerce of the soul. Not infrequently the profession of diviner-priest was branded an opportune career path to wealth. Such was the appeal to seek fortune by offering religious services, critics at the Han court remarked, that the streets and alleyways were packed with shamans, and villages and hamlets were teeming with priests.[76] The flourishing state of these professions may explain a statement in the "Royal regulations" that those who report false spirit sightings or divinations that delude the people should be executed.[77] The income some religious specialists drew and their widespread activity was enough for Wang Mang to force them to register their trade like normal craftsmen and merchants and pay taxes:

> All those who gathered products of any kind, birds and beasts, fish and turtles, or the hundreds of other types of creatures from mountains and woods, streams and marshes, as well as those who reared and pastured animals, concubines and wives (who cultivated) mulberry trees or tended silkworms…, craftsmen and carpenters, physicians, sorcerers, diviners and invocators, as well as practitioners of other methods and techniques, travelling traders or residential merchants, whether in their booths and stalls, in villages, at home, or at travellers' inns, all of these were required to declare on their own initiative their activities to the district official in their place of residence. They were to subtract their base capital, calculate their profits, take one tenth of it, and pay it as tribute.[78]

Others argued that offering so-called religious expertise was a drain on the household economy. Wang Fu 王符 (90–165 AD) singles out the particularly negative influence of these professions on women. The lure

[74] The idea that the market is a place where one externalizes pent-up feelings may be reflected in the saying that "in the household one is angry, on the market-place one shows off one's shame/anger" 室於怒市於色. See *Zuozhuan zhu*, p. 1405 (Lord Zhao, year 19); and *Zhanguo ce* (Shanghai, 1995), 27.981. On the market and its occupations as an order antagonistic to court and government, see Mark Edward Lewis, *The construction of space in early China* (Albany, 2006), pp. 164–67.

[75] *Liji jijie*, 12.328 ("Wangzhi"). See also *Shangshu dazhuan* (*Congshu jicheng* ed., Beijing, 1991), 1.8.

[76] Wang Liqi, ed., *Yantie lun jiaozhu* (Beijing, 1996), 6.352 ("San buzu").

[77] *Liji jijie*, 14.374 ("Wangzhi").

[78] *Hanshu*, 24B.1180–81.

of quick profits to be made by selling religious services, Wang argues, drew women away from their primary occupation:

> The *Songs* reprimand women who "do not spin their hemp yet dance in the marketplace." Today many do not "tend to the food at home" but "take leave of silkworms and weaving." Instead they embark upon the study of shamanic incantations and drumming and dancing to serve the spirits, thereby deceiving the weak and deluding the common people. With wives and daughters so weak and feeble, disease descends upon the households, and, full of worry and confusion, they easily fall victim to fear, even to the point that some are forced to flee from their seasonal labor and abandon their legitimate homes.[79]

In essence Wang's comment sums up the basic tensions that run through most discussions on the economics of religion in the Warring States and Han period. First there is the danger that energy and expenditure devoted to ritual obligation reduce the labor force for the primary occupations of agriculture and sericulture. One intrinsic tension behind the performance of sacrificial rituals was that their logistic requirements could undermine the purpose they were meant to serve in the first place. For instance elaborate sacrificial rituals to seek a bountiful harvest might pull human and material resources away from the fields. Hence the *Lüshi chunqiu* insists that during the height of the farming season, one should not only avoid public works or mobilizing armies, but "commoners should not be permitted to perform the capping ceremony, betrothal, marriage, and sacrificial offerings."[80] The second tension follows from the fact that sacrificial activities tended to be mostly public in nature or were often shared by groups that transcended the household. To be mobilized to contribute or participate in public religious festivals or official ceremonies could drain resources away needed to support one's private subsistence, just as public corvée labor, taxes and tribute impinged on the household economy.

Regulating sacrifice

It is clear that economic obligations related to sacrificial religion were first and foremost the preserve of sumptuary ritual codes and taxation

[79] *Qianfu lun* (Shanghai, 1978), 12.143 ("Fuchi"); the references are to Mao 137 and 264, and to hexagram no. 37 in the *Zhouyi* 周易.

[80] *Lüshi chunqiu jiaoshi*, 26.1711 ("Shangnong").

systems overseen and enforced by ritual officials and bureaucrats. Yet, as is illustrated by the aforementioned hard labor punishments in the Qin legal code, regulations related to the religious economy or rules that indirectly influenced the management of resources for ritual usage were also incorporated in administrative statutes and ordinances and sanctioned by criminal codes. There is no clear evidence to suggest a gradual shift from ritual normativity to legal enforcement with the advent of empire and its expanding bureaucratic organization. Administrative law and ritual precept co-existed and indeed could complement each other. The diverse vocabulary used to describe the ways in which sacrificial activities were monitored suggests that different models of enforcement were at play.

Ritual texts speak of implementing sacrificial rules in terms of "tabooing, prohibiting" 禁 or "directing, overseeing" 督 activity.[81] Frequent reference is made to a shared code of sumptuary rules known as sacrificial statutes (*sidian* 祀典, *jidian* 祭典) or the need to "regulate/canonize" (*dian* 典) existing practices (one official in the *Zhouli* is known as the "manager of sacrifices" [*diansi* 典祀]).[82] An official can be charged with changing or remedying disregard for "sacrificial orders" 祀命.[83] In several of the passages on the maintenance towns discussed above, it is insisted that these are allocated and staffed "according to the rules" (*ru fa* 如法) and the same term is used to mean the "norm" against which over one hundred marquises were stripped of their rank by Han Wudi in 112 BC for not supplying the ancestral temples with sufficient goods.[84] Reference to clerks "reading out the methods of ritual" 讀禮法 or "writings on ritual" (*lishu* 禮書) suggest that some understood the correct execution of sacrificial rituals to mean following the guidelines in a specific text.[85] And although little evidence survives today, the mention of "Han ordinances on sacrifice" 漢祀令 and "Han ordinances on

[81] E.g., *Zhouli zhengyi*, 49.2030 ("Dazhu"); and Zheng Xuan's commentary to *Zhouli zhengyi*, 53.2225 ("Du zongren"); 67.2800 ("Xiangshi"), speaks of *jinling* 禁令 "prohibitory rules."

[82] *Guoyu*, 4.166, 170 ("Lu yu, shang"); *Lüshi chunqiu jiaoshi*, 1.2 ("Mengchun ji"); *Zhouli zhengyi*, 41.1674–75 ("Diansi"); *Hanshu*, 21B.1012, 25B.1268; *Hou Hanshu*, 4.196, 60B.1992.

[83] *Zuozhuan zhu*, p. 487 (Duke Xi, year 31); *Zhouli zhengyi*, 49.2030 ("Dazhu").

[84] *Hanshu*, 6.187.

[85] *Zhouli zhengyi*, 51.2090 ("Dashi"), 51.2100 ("Xiaoshi").

shrine offerings" 漢祠令 by early medieval commentators suggests that detailed regulations may have circulated at the time.[86]

We are fortunate to possess fragments of the Qin legal code that enable us to gain an insight into the nature of some of those rules and regulations. The legal codes not only contain detailed rules on animal husbandry and agriculture but also comment on the supply of sacrificial goods. The articles in the Qin code, at least those currently transmitted, do not elaborate much on the ideology behind the performance of certain rituals, yet they demonstrate in considerable detail that the law applied to sacrificial culture. For instance if stealing sacrificial offerings was sufficient to provoke the wrath of avenging spirits, the legal code adds a more worldly punishment to this, as is illustrated in the following judicial case evaluation:

> [*quote from the original statutes; now lost*]
> "When an official sacrifice is not yet over, stealing the prepared items (*ju* 具) warrants a fine…, having the beard shaved off and being made a bond servant."
>
> [*case in question*]
> Now somebody steals; he steals a kidney, and the illegal profit of one kidney is not fully one cash; how is he to be sentenced?
>
> [*answer*]
> In sacrifices one uses, as a rule, hearts and kidneys as well as other items; each of these is one prepared item. When the illegal profit of one prepared item is not fully one cash, stealing it warrants shaving off the beard. It may have a value of twenty cash, but it is only partly stolen, and so it is not completely one prepared item; (for such a theft) as well as stealing "incorrect" ones, one is condemned according to the statutes.[87]

It appears that legal liability in this case only applies to stealing those sacrificial offerings that were approved as "prepared items," i.e., set aside as a sanctioned set of offerings. Another article describes a crime known as "thievishly digging in a pit," that is, digging up offerings buried in the soil in so-called interment sacrifices.[88] Even the duration during

[86] *Hanshu*, 4.109, in a commentary by Ru Shun 如淳 (3rd c. AD); and *Hanshu*, 25B.1269, in a commentary by Chen Zan 臣瓚 (fl. ca. 270 AD).
[87] *Shuihudi Qin mu zhujian*, p. 99 (strips 25–26); Hulsewé, *Remnants of Ch'in law*, p. 127 (D21), with modifications.
[88] *Shuihudi Qin mu zhujian*, p. 100 (strip 28); Hulsewé, *Remnants of Ch'in law*, p. 128 (D23).

which an offering can be legally defined as a "sacrifice" is explained in the Qin code:

> [*Question*]
> What is the meaning of [the sentence] "the sacrifice is not yet over?"
>
> [*Answer*]
> When the beakers and stands that have been placed before the spirits have not yet been removed—that is [the meaning of the sentence] "(the sacrifice) is not yet over." (Sacrifices) not yet placed (before the spirits) as well as those that are "incorrect" do not constitute a prepared item (*ju*); they must already have been placed (before the spirits) and only then are they "prepared items."[89]

Another legal statute seeks to define what constitutes the performance of unauthorized or irregular sacrifices (*qici* 奇祠). The latter likely refers to the type of rituals classified as *yin* 淫, "excessive, illicit," in other writings of the period:

> [*Original statute*] "To perform irregular sacrifices without authority is fined two suits of armor."
>
> [*Question*] What constitutes "irregular" (*qi* 奇)?
>
> [*Answer*] There exist, of course, sacrifices which the royal clan is warranted to perform. (But what we mean is) that possessing altars for spirits (*guiwei* 鬼位) without authority is "irregular"; others are not.[90]

We have yet to recover evidence that legal precepts such as these were widespread. Indeed the fact that all of the examples quoted above appear as requests for judicial clarification may indicate that officials had difficulty deciding whether sacrificial culture should be adjudicated under the rule of law or whether infringements should be treated following ritual precept. No doubt more regulations related to the conduct of sacrifices will be uncovered in legal codes in the years ahead. The fact that a text such as the *Shuowen jiezi* 說文解字 quotes the Han statutes (*Han lü* 漢律) as its source for the explanation of a rare graph denoting sacrifice of a suckling pig to the director of destiny (Siming 司命) indicates that the codes may have contained more information.[91]

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[89] *Shuihudi Qin mu zhujian*, p. 99 (strip 27); Hulsewé, *Remnants of Ch'in law*, p. 128 (D22), with modifications.

[90] *Shuihudi Qin mu zhujian*, p. 131 (strip 161); Hulsewé, *Remnants of Ch'in law*, p. 166 (D141).

[91] *Shuowen jiezi zhu* (Shanghai, 1983), 1A.9b, in the explanation of the graph *bi* 祉.

Furthermore, anecdotal evidence suggests that in Han times non-conformity to sacrificial regulations continued to be a potential cause for indicting one's enemies. For instance, as part of their conspiracy against Chancellor Wei Xiang 魏相 (d. 59 BC), the Huo 霍 clan suggested he should be charged with the crime of having, on his own authority, eliminated the offerings of lambs, rabbits and frogs in the ancestral temple. The commentator Ru Shun 如淳, writing in the 3rd century AD, refers to a regulation issued in the early days of the Han according to which anybody who, of his or her own accord, made up (and presumably changed) plans related to ancestral temples would be executed and exposed in the market square.[92]

That administrative and penal law is invoked in this area suggests that, unlike what the ritual canon wishes us to believe, to many, sacrificial cults were not necessarily occasions of supreme reverence but rather celebratory occasions where the boundaries between piety and pleasure were often not far apart. For all the investment that went into pleasing the spirits it is clear that sacrificial performances also served to entertain or amuse the participating audience. An interchange between Zigong 子貢 and Confucius in the *Liji* is telling in that respect. Having returned from observing the New Year festival, Confucius asks Zigong whether he had derived any pleasure (*le* 樂) from the event. He replies: "The people of the entire state behaved as if they were mad, I don't know yet wherein I should find pleasure." To which Confucius rebuts: "For the labor of an agricultural cycle lasting a hundred days, they enjoy one day of plenty: this is what you do not understand."[93]

Another report among the Qin legal documents found at Shuihudi confirms that drinking and conviviality were seen as a standard feature of sacrificial occasions. The case in question deals with a villager who is denounced for uttering "poisonous words," a form of witchcraft described by Wang Chong 王充 (27–ca. 100 AD) in which one harms others by emitting poisonous saliva, sometimes simply through speech.[94] The accusers report their refusal to share food and drink with the person in question out of fear of being contaminated. It is clear that the setting is that of the village sacrifice:

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[92] *Hanshu*, 86.2956.
[93] *Liji jijie*, 42.1115 ("Zaji").
[94] Liu Pansui, ed., *Lunheng jiaoshi* (Beijing, 1990), 23.949–950 ("Yandu").

> When in my [the accused's] household there are sacrifices (*ci* 祠), we invite [the plaintiff] and the others, but [the plaintiff] and the others are unwilling to come; they also never invite me [the accused] to drink. When there are sacrifices in the village, I [the accused] together with the villagers as well as [the plaintiff] meet to drink and eat, but nobody is willing to share a cup or dish (with me).[95]

Confucius was probably mistaken in believing that people indulged in one day's feasting for a hundred days' work. For some, sacrificial rituals and, indeed, funerals, were an opportunity to indulge in a free flow of food and alcohol. Mozi 墨子 castigates the vulgar Ru 儒 as beggars who "stuff food away like hamsters," dragging themselves along to large funerals with their extended family to fill up on drink and food:

> They depend on other households for their wealth, and the dignity they enjoy depends on the fields of others. When there is a funeral in a rich family, they are overwhelmed with great joy, saying: "This is our opportunity for clothing and food!"[96]

Similar criticisms reverberate elsewhere. During the polemical economic debates of 81 BC preserved in the *Yantie lun* 鹽鐵論 (*Discourses on salt and iron*), a text that no doubt suffers from some degree of rhetorical exaggeration, Confucius's frugality in the presence of mourners was invoked to condemn people's use of funerals as an occasion to stock up on meat and wine. The ancients are described as duty-bound members of an ideal society where wine and meat would only be consumed in the context of sacrificial gatherings.[97] Yet the sumptuous consumption of food and drink was but one of many elements that contributed to the economic cost of sacrificial religion.

Gifts and goods

Given the significant demands posed by religious obligation on the economic organization of society, sacrificial religion and ritual in general also offered an avenue that enabled one to detach oneself from the conventional economy. By Warring States times increased tensions

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[95] *Shuihudi Qin mu zhujian*, pp. 162–163 (strips 92–93); Hulsewé, *Remnants of Ch'in law*, p. 206 (E24).
[96] *Mozi jiangu*, 9.291–92 ("Fei Ru, xia").
[97] *Yantie lun jiaozhu*, 6.351, 6.353 ("San buzu").

emerged between a religious gift economy and the workings of a new and more complex conventional economy. The economic landscape was undergoing a far-reaching transformation. From the late Eastern Zhou into the early Warring States period land ownership gradually shifted from hereditary aristocrats and landowners to individual peasant households in exchange for taxes. This, together with the rise of markets, private property, the increased use of money, the expansion of trade and handicraft industries and the rise of an ever expanding merchant class created a new social reality. At the same time religious orientations changed. The ancestral cult declined in relative importance and sacrifices to nature spirits and the cosmos at large as well as local and state-led cults gained in prominence.

The nobility no longer co-owned all human and material resources through their traditional right to transfer property to themselves. As our discussion above has shown, extracting labor and natural resources to support the religious economy, a practice mainly enforced through ritual obligation by the Spring and Autumn nobility, could now only be achieved through more sophisticated mechanisms of taxation. Ritual agency during the Warring States transition was no longer solely defined by the religious privileges of ranked elites. Property obtained by other means than noble station became much more significant as a means to exert authority. In material culture, as Lothar von Falkenhausen has shown, the symbolic value of ritual vessels and implements was increasingly neglected in favor of quantitative factors, i.e., the size and number of goods: "Economic wealth superseded ritual and descent-based rank as the principal criterion for drawing social distinctions."[98] Style, Martin Powers writes, was gradually overtaken by new criteria of worth:

> In feudal times, grain paid to a lord was abstracted in ceremony, which is to say, "style", so that its transfer from producer to nobility could be justified in terms of a nobleman's virtue/*de* [德]. By the third century [BC], "style" had been dissociated from material, yielding raw grain. At this basic level it could be treated as a universal measure of value, transformed into an impersonal state and thus transferable to anyone who "deserved" it under the new criteria of worth. This transfer from farmer to official was not justified on the basis of the monarch's charisma, but on the pragmatic argument that a good official is of benefit to the people. In place of style, we have numeric assignments keyed to individual performance.[99]

[98] *Chinese society in the age of Confucius*, p. 391.

[99] Powers, *Pattern and person: ornament, society, and self in classical China* (Cambridge, Mass., 2006), p. 206.

Against the background of a changing economic landscape in which a religious gift economy and market perceptions of commodities challenged each other, new ideas arose on the relationship between material wealth and the exercise of virtue. The question how to morally justify the use of material goods for the procurement of spiritual ends became prominent on the agenda of most Warring States and Han thinkers. In a world where property had become more inalienable than before, the extraction of goods and services for religious and ritual purposes needed a more cogent justification.

Some proposed resourceful ways to marry economic imperatives to religion and argued that a ruler could draw on religious obligation as a way to remedy shortcomings in the state's economy. Such methods, at least in theory, offered the possibility to escape the potentially corrupt effects associated with taxation in kind or, as critics would argue, the possibility to cover up government incompetence in managing the state's resources. The *Guanzi* 管子—a composite text dating, most optimistically, to no later than the middle of the 2nd century BC—describes several such schemes. In its economic chapters an eponymous Guan Zhong 管仲 (d. 645 BC) sets out his views on taxation to his patron Duke Huan 桓 of Qi 齊 (fl. 685–643 BC). The bulk of these chapters deal with common themes such as the relationship between agriculture and trade, the use of natural and human resources and the circulation of goods and agricultural produce. But scattered among these seemingly straightforward expositions on the economic sustenance of the state are passages in which fiscal policy is intricately tied to religious obligation. In one exchange Guan Zhong suggests that sacrificial ritual can be exploited to stimulate economic activity:

> "To maintain what is proper and take advantage of the situation is the way to gain advantage in one's affairs; to make careful plans and utilize one's political power is the way to expedite and enhance affairs. A king takes advantage of the circumstances 乘勢; a sage takes advantage of the realm of the mysterious 乘幼.[100] They are both in accord with things."
>
> "How then does one carry this out?" asked Duke Huan.
>
> Guanzi replied: "Since ancient times, Yao's 堯 five ministerial officials have had no one to provide them with sacrificial offerings. I suggest that you establish sacrifices to appease their malicious spirits. When sacrificing to Yao's five ministerial officials, in the spring, present them

[100] I follow Ding Shihan 丁士涵 and other commentators who propose the gloss *you* 幽 (or indeed *xuan* 玄 or *yao* 窈) for 幼 and take it to refer to the invisible realm of ghosts and spirits.

> with orchids; in the autumn present them with chrysanthemums. Use large fish for the dried offerings and small fish for the mixed dishes. If you do this, the taxes derived from fish in the marshes will increase a hundredfold from one day to the next. That way you may avoid having to impose a tax on the non-production of grain, or a household tax. This is called 'establishing [self-sufficiency] by means of sacrificial prayers and promoting it with ritual and ceremony' 設之以祈祥, 推之以禮義. If you do this you will become self-sufficient. What else would you need to seek from the people?"[101]

Guanzi suggests that tax evasion can be remedied by transforming the goods one fails to levy through normal channels into a sacrificial duty. He speaks of "availing oneself of ghosts and spirits" 籍於鬼神. This would ensure that people do not falsify numbers to be reported for poll tax, kill off domestic livestock or harm or hoard other natural resources. For instance, when fields are unsuitable for agriculture they can be put to economic use by establishing a government monopoly on the purchase and sale of sacrificial victims and products that hail from these pastures. In practice, Guanzi argues, people would refuse to have their own sheep and cattle mate with wild herds. So the government could stimulate demand and increase revenue by allowing only those animals that have been cross-bred with cattle and sheep from infertile neighboring lands to be used in spring and autumn sacrifices. That way the people's sense for ritual and ceremony could be made to prevail over their initial mistrust of mating local breeds with imported herds.[102] Sacrificial obligation in this logic would cause everyone to spontaneously pay their due to the government and, we must assume, failure to oblige would result in the vengeance of ghosts and spirits.

Thus the clever ruler can coerce the extraction of goods under the guise of sacrificial duty. Indeed the search for material wealth and attempts to grasp the fluctuating nature of profit can be compared to a quest for benefits derived from the spirit world: "Profits cannot be taken as constant, so people chase after them. Spirits cannot be taken as constant, so people make offerings to them" 利不可法故民流, 神不可法故事之.[103] Given that cults at local sites and natural landmarks such

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[101] Li Xiangfeng, *Guanzi jiaozhu* (Beijing, 2004), 32.1412–13 ("Qingzhong, jia"); Ma Feibai, *Guanzi qingzhong pian xin quan* (Beijing, 2004), p. 517; translation modified from W. Allyn Rickett, *Guanzi: political, economic, and philosophical essays from early China*, vol. 2 (Princeton, 1998), pp. 453–54.

[102] *Guanzi jiaozhu*, 22.1346 ("Shanzhi shu"); Rickett, *Guanzi*, vol. 2, pp. 417–18.

[103] *Guanzi jiaozhu*, 12.725 ("Chimi"); tr. Rickett, *Guanzi*, vol. 2, p. 328.

as mountains and rivers were often controlled by local elites, economic interests could be served by such events. Guanzi proposes several other schemes. They follow a general pattern in which certain segments of society are to be excluded from access to natural resources such as parks, mountains and marshlands. For instance he speaks of "fencing off sacred mountains to offer sacrifice to them" 樊神山祭之[104] or "establishing sacrifices to restrict entrance to mountains and marshes" 立祈祥以固山澤.[105] The latter consists of turning mountains rich in ores and wood into sacred sites and so tabooing access to them for ordinary people. Guanzi mentions the scheme together in one breath with determining the size of the well-fields for taxation purposes.[106] Another ploy to stimulate economic activity is to have the rich spend lavishly on funerals and rituals:

> Have the rich build grandiose tombs to employ the poor, construct highly elaborate grave sites to employ engravers and sculptors, use large coffins to provide work for carpenters, and prepare numerous sets of funerary clothing and coverlets to provide work for seamstresses. Since this is still not enough, there should be bundles containing different gradations of sacrificial meat, containers holding different types of grain, and funerary objects of metal, pottery and jade. Doing this provides a source of living from which, thereafter, all people benefit, and it is appropriate even when the country is preparing for war.[107]

The most detailed sacrificial revenue scheme Guan Zhong proposes is the so-called "*jing* reed scheme" 菁茅謀. These *jing* reeds, said to have "a stalk with three ribs running all the way down to its root," grew in the south and are associated with the southern state of Chu in several sources. In sacrificial ritual they were highly valued because, among other things, they were used to strain sacrificial ale.[108] The "*jing* reed

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[104] *Guanzi jiaozhu*, 12.637 ("Chimi"). Guo Moruo 郭沫若 situates the composition of this chapter in the early Western Han. I concur with recent scholarship that dates it back to Warring States times. See Hu Jiacong, *Guanzi xintan* (Beijing, 2003), pp. 298–306.

[105] *Guanzi jiaozhu*, 23.1394 ("Guozhun"); Rickett, *Guanzi*, vol. 2, p. 444.

[106] *Guanzi jiaozhu*, 12.689 ("Chimi"); Rickett, *Guanzi*, vol. 2, pp. 319–20.

[107] *Guanzi jiaozhu*, 12.688 ("Chimi"); tr. Rickett, *Guanzi*, vol. 2, p. 319. As Rickett notes, elsewhere (*Guanzi jiaozhu*, 22.1337) Guan Zhong contradicts this argument and points out that the construction of elaborate tombs draws away labor force from markets and farms. Such discrepancies illustrate the composite nature of these chapters, which are unlikely to come from the same hand.

[108] *Jingmao* are mentioned in the "Yu gong" 禹貢 where Zheng Xuan notes they are used for straining ale. See *Shangshu jingu wen zhushu*, 3.167. See further *Zuozhuan zhu*, p. 290 (Lord Xi, year 4); *Fengsu tongyi jiaozhu*, 1.19 ("Huangba"); *Hou Hanshu*, 73.2360 (mentioning an attack on Chu to obtain these reeds). For the expectation that

scheme" was aimed at gaining hard cash through one's feudatories' moral obligation to contribute sacrificial taxes in the form of these reeds. The scheme, Guan Zhong argues, would ensure that feudal lords would not break away when extra taxes had to be levied on them. Duke Huan is advised to do the following:

> I suggest that you have civil functionaries of the Son of Heaven surround and protect these reeds. The Son of Heaven should then perform the *feng* sacrifice on Mount Tai and the *shan* sacrifice on Mount Liangfu 梁父 and issue orders to the feudal lords of the empire stating that all those who wish to follow him in performing the *feng* sacrifice on Mount Tai and the *shan* sacrifice on Mount Liangfu must bring a bundle of *jing* reeds in order to make mats to be used in these sacrifices. Those who do not conform to this order will not be allowed to participate.

The text continues by stating that, in the golden age of Zhou, feudal lords vied with each other in their rush to be the first in line to deliver their *jing* reeds. "Without the Son of Heaven doing anything the price of *jing* reeds from the Yangzi and Huai rose tenfold, amounting to one hundred catties per bundle" and, in the end, "the empire's gold was flowing into Zhou like a rushing stream."[109]

While it remains difficult to determine to what extent religious imperatives were adduced to exact revenue for other purposes, the fact that proposals such as the above survive reflects an acute awareness of the conflict between ritual obligation and economic expenditure. Guanzi's tax on sacrificial reeds may appear to be a trivial excursion in an otherwise well-versed treatise on economic policy. But what operates at the heart of these debates is a tension between the workings of a market economy and the private or corporate nature of the gift economy embodied in ritual and sacrificial exchange. The market requires people to enter into a relationship for the sake of a commodity while in the gift economy commodities are exchanged to forge or reaffirm social relationships.[110] Not infrequently, gift exchange is singled out as morally superior, whereas conventional market exchange could

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Chu tributes should include such reeds see Chen Qiyou, ed., *Han Feizi jishi* (Gaoxiong, 1991), 11.641 ("Waichu shuo zuo shang"); Shi Guangying, ed., *Xinxu jiaoshi* (Beijing, 2001), 4.499 ("Zashi").

[109] *Guanzi jiaozhu*, 24.1473 ("Qingzhong, ding"); tr. Rickett, *Guanzi*, vol. 2, pp. 481–82.

[110] For a discussion of these principles in the context of the economy of ancient Greece, see David W. Tandy, *Warriors into traders: the power of the market in early Greece* (Berkeley, 1997), chap. 4 and 5.

threaten or undermine networks created through social and ritual obligation. The feudal prerogative of being assigned as revenue the income of *she* altars—Master Guan himself was the beneficiary of 300 altars in return for his services according to Xunzi[111]—was naturally at odds with developing notions of monetary and mercantile exchange. The policies set out by Guanzi all revolve around the question of how and in what circumstances accepted economic and material criteria of value can be rightfully replaced with moral criteria derived from a ritual system of exchange and vice versa.

The rhetoric of plenty

The continuum between the human economy and piety to the spirit world was a topic of considerable debate in Warring States and Han times. Arguments on the pros and cons of spending significant resources on the spirit world varied. A much-heard criticism was that the demands of the religious economy undermined the conventional economy. The paradox of needing to be seen as generous in entreating spirits and ancestors on the one hand while avoiding excess expenditure on the other pre-occupied the minds of most thinkers. Some argued that one could be rich in spirit without having to be rich in means. Others suggested that expenditure on the spirit world ultimately would benefit society as a whole.

While changing perceptions of the role of commodities, ownership, wealth and its moral justification inspired discussions among philosophers on the relationship between concepts such as profit (*li* 利) and righteousness (*yi* 義),[112] one topic of debate that was central to the economics of religion was the issue of moderate versus opulent ritual expenditure. The debate is most articulate in discussions on funerary rituals and state sacrifices and pitches Mozi (late 5th, early 4th century BC)

[111] *Xunzi jijie*, 7.107 ("Zhong Ni"). For another example of a transfer of land, human and material resources measured in *she* see *Zuozhuan* (Lord Zhao, year 25), p. 1465, where Qi intends to give up 1,000 *she* to Duke Zhao of Lu. See also *Shiji*, 32.1503–04. Jia Kui 賈逵 (30–101 AD) comments that one *she* corresponds to 25 households.

[112] The debate runs through parts of the *Zuozhuan*, *Guoyu*, and *Lunyu* (4.12, 4.16, 7.12, 7.16, 9.1, 9.13, 14.1, 14.12) to culminate, most famously, in the opening passages of the Mencius (1A.1). See also Yuri Pines, *Foundations of Confucian thought* (Honolulu, 2002), pp. 199–203; and Jörg Schumacher, *Über den Begriff des Nützlichen bei Mengzi* (Bern, 1993).

against Xunzi (mid 4th to late 3rd century BC) to culminate in the *Lüshi chunqiu* (ca. 239 BC). The issue continues to preoccupy critics throughout the Han period: from memorials on the establishment of court ritual under Liu Bang to critical evaluations of local cult expenditure in the work of Eastern Han writers such as Wang Chong and Ying Shao, who wrote against the background of ever more ostentatious spending on burials.

Mozi, who was a strong supporter of the belief in a spirit world that could sanction human behaviour, argued that the ancients' detailed attention to sacrificial logistics proved that they firmly believed in the existence of ghosts and spirits:

> Therefore it was said that, when the government offices provide the implements, they must first ensure that the proper sacrificial vessels and robes are fully stocked in the warehouses, that the invocators of the ancestral temple and all other officials in charge [of sacrifices] have all been appointed in the court, and that the animals to be used as sacrificial victims are no longer grouped together with the common herds. Since the sage kings of antiquity conducted their government in this fashion, it must be the case [that they believed in the existence of ghosts and spirits].[113]

Mozi's justifications for the need for frugality in ritual expenditure are often practical and utilitarian in nature, and form part of his overall condemnation of Ru practices. Yet, in one passage he claims that sumptuous funerary expenditure also has a so-called theological effect since it might deplete resources that could otherwise be used to uphold regular sacrifices:

> Now if one follows those who support elaborate funerals and lengthy mourning to conduct government, then the state will necessarily become poor, the people few, and the government will necessarily be in chaos. If the state is poor, then the sacrificial grains and wine will not be of the required purity. If the people are few, there will be few to serve Shangdi and the spirits. And if the government is in chaos, then sacrifices will not be conducted at the appropriate times or in the appropriate measure. If now one conducts government in such a way that one effectively prevents the proper services to Shangdi and the spirits, they will be the first to look down from above and, considering how to soothe the people, might say: "What is better for us, to have these people exist or have them not exist?" Or: "Whether they exist or not does not make any difference to us!" Consequently Shangdi and the spirits will send down cruel punishments

[113] *Mozi jiangu*, 31.237 ("Minggui, xia").

> for the people's misdemeanours and abandon them. And if they do so, wouldn't that just be the appropriate thing to do![114]

By arguing that lavish expenditure does not only deplete the state's resources but incites discontent in the spirit world itself, Mozi indirectly extols the spirits as ultimate moral arbiters of ritual expenditure. Mozi also relies on the notion of religious obligation in order to promote his views of an egalitarian society: social harmony and the impartial division of wealth will ensure that the state will always have the necessary resources to provide offerings to the spirit world.[115] At one point Mozi refers to the image of graded sacrificial levies in defence of the idea that people of humble social station are potential sources for great ideas: "Now the peasant pays his taxes to his superior, who (uses these to) make sacrificial wine and grain offerings and, with these, sacrifices to Shangdi, ghosts and spirits. Can you claim that (the spirits) would refuse these offerings because they come from people of low standing?"[116] Thus at the core of the argument is the idea that the division of wealth would lead to an equally shared burden of religious obligation which, in turn, prevents ritual expenditure from undermining conventional economic productivity.

Xunzi takes issue with the notion that ostentatious display of wealth in funerary and ritual paraphernalia necessarily leads to moral decay. Ritual expediency for Xunzi is partly conditioned by material factors. He speaks of "objects of value 財物 to be used (in rituals), distinctions between noble and base to create patterns, and the use of larger and smaller quantities to mark distinctions in station."[117] Ritual display therefore is essential and effective as a marker of social status and division provided that government is conducted well:

> [In ancient times] although the body was covered with pearls and jades, the inner coffin filled with elegant embroideries, the outer coffin filled with yellow gold and decorated with cinnabar with added layers of laminar verdite; and although [in the outer tomb chamber there was] rhinoceros and elephant ivory fashioned into trees, with precious rubies, magnetite loadstones, and flowering aconite for their fruit, despite all this, people still did not violate them. Why is that? It is because people discovered

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114 *Mozi jiangu*, 25.179–180 ("Jiezang, xia").
115 *Mozi jiangu*, 27.199 ("Tianzhi, zhong").
116 *Mozi jiangu*, 47.441 ("Guiyi").
117 *Xunzi jijie*, 19.498 ("Dalüe"); cf. John Knoblock, *Xunzi: a translation and study of the complete works*, 3 vols (Stanford, 1988–94), 3.218.

> that tricks in the pursuit of profit were ineffective and that the shame of offending against one's social station was great.[118]

The ancient model invoked then is that of a center occupied by a virtuous ruler and supplied with sacrificial goods and tribute by concentrically graded zones surrounding it (the so-called *wufu* 五服 "five dependencies" model):

> Those serving in the royal domain provide offerings for the sacrifices of thanks (*ji* 祭); those serving in the feudal domain provide offerings for the cult sacrifices (*si* 祀); those who serve as guests provide for the drinking ceremonies (*xiang* 享); those who serve according to treaty obligations present tribute offerings (*gong* 貢); and those who do irregular service come to pay respect at the succession of a new king. Each day offerings of thanks must be provided, each month cult offerings, each season there is a drinking ceremony, and each year tribute is offered.[119]

The graded tribute obligations imposed upon feudatories in the *Zhouli* concur with the notion that the delivery of sacrificial goods acts as the primary bond that links feudatories to the center. Hence the zone immediately beyond the royal domain is required to donate sacrificial goods (*siwu* 祀物) annually, whereas the frequency of tribute visits to the center diminishes as one moves further away geographically from the center. The nature of the required tribute goods likewise changes for each zone: silk, utensils, garments, raw materials, tortoise and cowrie shells.[120] Sacrificial obligation and contributions to the sacrificial economy diminish in frequency as the distance to the royal domain increases.

With Mozi taking the spirit world as moral arbiter and Xunzi insisting that ritual expenditure justifiably follows from the need to instill social hierarchies, a third step in the philosophical debate on ritual expenditure occurs in the *Lüshi chunqiu*, where frugal burial is advocated on equally materialistic grounds. The argument put forth here is that moderation in tomb furnishings detracts grave robbers and hence allows the dead to rest in undisturbed peace.[121] Debates on funerary expenditure would

[118] *Xunzi jijie*, 12.338–39 ("Zhenglun"); tr. Knoblock, *Xunzi*, 3.44 (modified).

[119] *Xunzi jijie*, 12.330 ("Zhenglun"); tr. Knoblock, *Xunzi*, 3.39 (modified). Xunzi's model is based on a similar passage in *Guoyu*, 1.4 ("Zhouyu, shang").

[120] *Zhouli zhengyi*, 71.2974–75 ("Da xingren").

[121] For a detailed review of the arguments see Jeffrey Riegel, "Do not serve the dead as you serve the living: the *Lüshi chunqiu* treatises on moderation in burial," *Early China* 20 (1995), 301–30.

continue into the imperial period at the court and elsewhere. The topic figures prominently in the court debates of 81 BC preserved in the *Yantie lun*, and only a few decades later Emperor Yuandi (r. 49–33 BC) was urged to drastically reduce the number of women residing at the imperial mausolea.[122] Wang Chong takes issue with lavish expenditures to purchase funerary objects:

> People produce dummies to serve the corpses in their coffins and they stuff the latter with edibles to please the spirits. The practice has become so persistent and widespread that some will ruin their families and exhaust their property to fill the coffins of the dead.[123]

Throughout the *Lunheng* 論衡, Wang Chong portrays the issue of ritual expenditure in essence as a scholastic or intellectual problem by arguing that such practices derive from a misunderstanding of the nature of the spirit world and the impact of the dead on the living:

> When Su Qin 蘇秦 acted as envoy on behalf of Yan, this caused the people of Qi to construct huge tumuli and fill them with large quantities of valuables. Su Qin personally did nothing to encourage them. When all their wealth was exhausted, the people impoverished, the treasury empty, and the army weak, the Yan troops suddenly arrived. Qi did not have the means to defend itself: the state was ruined, the cities lost, the ruler left his country, and the people dispersed. Now if people are not clear about the fact that the dead are not conscious, they will drain themselves in order to organize a sumptuous burial for a relative and they will be ruined in the same way as Qi was by the cunning plan of Su Qin.[124]

Whatever the merit of such examples as representative reflections of historical reality, the protracted debates on funerary expenditure suggest that such demands, although rarely the sole cause of political decay, could significantly precipitate the economic ruin of the state and local communities.

Funerary customs are only one example of the problems that could result from the competing demands of economic production and religious duty. Such tensions applied to sacrificial culture in general. Hence, for instance, similar to comments on moderation in funerary expenses, one finds suggestions that sacrifices generally ought to be adapted to the outcome of the harvest, or that in times of disaster or famine, sacrifices

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[122] *Hanshu*, 72.3072.
[123] *Lunheng jiaoshi*, 23.961 ("Bozang").
[124] *Lunheng jiaoshi*, 23.966 ("Bozang").

should be substituted with less costly prayers.[125] Pace Guanzi, for the virtuous ruler charged with filling the state's granaries, the diktats of sacrificial obligation could provide a useful tool to extract goods from one's subjects. One of the benefits of sacrifice, as Walter Burkert once observed, is that the principle of reciprocal giving is not verifiable in relationship to the spirit world or the realm of the dead.[126] And so extorting income from one's subjects under the pretext that it was destined for the spirits was a practice that ranked among the defining features of what Warring States and Han texts refer to as illicit or "excessive" (*yin* 淫) cultic practices. Other characteristics associated with *yin* cults were excessive expenditure (such as the extravagant use of animals in sacrifice) leading to the depletion of household resources, the involvement of spirit mediums as opposed to authorized ritual officers, a reliance on uncodified prayers, songs and dance, the worship of local and minor spirits, or other unauthorized rituals such as expiation procedures to heal disease.[127] A typical example of the latter is preserved in a story in the *Han Feizi*, in which villagers started buying and sacrificing cattle without authorization in order to propitiate the spirit causing the illness of King Zhao 昭 of Qin. The king, once he had recovered, fined those responsible for organizing the events two armored suits. The underlying message is that a good Legalist ruler does not fall for expressions of personal compassion but sticks to the rules and regulations. The latter, in this particular case, only permitted the slaughter of cattle at the earth altar on the people's own initiative during the New Year festival.[128]

A world in perfect order, the "Royal regulations" recall, was one in which good years did not lead to extravagance in sacrifices while bad years would not lead to an overly drastic scaling-down in servicing the spirits.[129] Continuous condemnations of excessive cults throughout the Han however suggest that reality was often far removed from such ideals. The frugal past, according to some, stood in shrill contrast with the decadence of the present when personally acquired wealth enabled the rich to buy piety from the spirits beyond the normal charge:

[125] *Yi Zhoushu huijiao jizhu*, 1.84 ("Dikuang"), 2.171 ("Dakuang jie"). See also *Chunqiu Guliang zhuan zhushu*, annotated by Yang Shixun (Tang) (*Shisanjing zhushu* ed.), 16.7a (Lord Xiang, year 24); *Liji jijie*, 23.627 ("Liqi").

[126] *Creation of the sacred: tracks of biology in early religions* (Cambridge, Mass., 1996), pp. 140–41.

[127] *Yi Zhoushu huijiao jizhu*, 1.32, 1.35, 1.38. 1.40 ("Ming xun").

[128] *Han Feizi jishi*, 14.768–769 ("Waichu shuo you, xia").

[129] *Liji jijie*, 13.339 ("Wangzhi").

> In ancient times commoners offered sacrifices of fish and vegetables and cultivated their ancestral shrines in spring and autumn. Officers maintained one temple hall and grandees three. According to the appropriate times services were offered to the five household deities for indeed no sacrifices were made outdoors. Now however the rich pray to famous mountains, offer vista sacrifices (*wang* 望) to mountains and streams, knock cattle over the head and beat drums, and stage singers and pantomime actors. Those of average means have (sacrifices dedicated to) the Southern Lord 南君 and Roadblock Spirit 當路, build cloud-reaching pavilions on the water, and butcher sheep and slaughter dogs while drumming their zithers and playing the pipes. The poor have chickens, pigs, and the five fragrances, and the provisions that sustain their well-being are wasted on the New Year festivities as they loiter around the altar space.[130]

Objections against opulent spending on matters of ceremony repeated an age-old argument, namely, that such spending undermines the general welfare of people and distracts them from their primary occupation of tilling the land. "Funerals and sacrifices that know no measure," one Han critic remarked, "are a plague that harms the living." Ritual expenditure drains away labor resources and stimulates craftsmen and merchants to engage in commerce at the peril of agricultural work.[131] Others claimed that, over and above the material expenditure they required, "illicit sacrifices" were an inefficient means to influence the spirits and should be remedied by reverting to canonical or orthodox ritual practices (*dianli* 典禮).[132] However the conflicting interests between the religious economy and the material welfare of society would continue to spark debate. So when Xun Yue 荀悅 (148–209 AD), writing at the end of the Eastern Han, advocated an economy of scale in sacrificial expenditure he essentially rehearsed a sentiment that had traversed the agenda of ritual scholars and court critics for centuries:

> If the affairs of the people are not yet settled and consequently the sacrificial services in the commanderies are deficient, that should not be an occasion for blame. If we must perform [our services to the spirits], we should give preference to the important ones, and offer sacrifices accordingly. As for the vista sacrifices to the five sacred peaks and four sacred streams, the offerings to these spirits in certain districts have become established and permanent. If now commanderies wish to perform these sacrifices, then the offerings should be economical. Ceremonial rites are

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[130] *Yantie lun jiaozhu*, 6.351–352 ("San buzu"); emending 居 to 君 following Yang Shuda 楊樹達.

[131] *Yantie lun jiaozhu*, 6.356 ("San buzu").

[132] See e.g., *Hou Hanshu*, 10A.422.

> meant to uphold what is fundamental and show the people that nothing is transgressed. Moreover they serve to exemplify what is established 昭典物. Preparations for such offerings should be made in years of good harvest. As for the calamities sent down by sun and moon, these are different and not part of the established tradition.[133]

Indeed those in early medieval times in need of rhetorical ammunition to condemn practices such as blood sacrifice could look back on plenty of documentary evidence to do so. Ge Hong 葛洪 (284–364 AD), to quote one example, condemns Qin and Han religious practices and the resources invested in them in unmistakable terms:

> Formerly during the Qin and Han dynasties, there was widespread use of supplications and prayers for blessing. In the sacrifices to deities such as Taiyi 太乙[一] and the five spirits and Chen Bao 陳寶 and the eight spirits there was constant use of oxen, sheep, grain, and silk. The cost ran into millions but in the end the benefits amounted to nothing. How much more so in the case of those ordinary folk who, lacking in virtue and with bodies not nurtured, sought to prolong their years by means of sacrificial animals, libations and imprecations directed to ghosts and spirits. It was utter delusion.[134]

Conlusion

In his treatise on ritual, Xunzi defines ritual (*li* 禮) as "nourishment" (*yang* 養) and suggests that in essence the performance of ritual is a process in which one materially stimulates the human senses and, by extension, the spirit world:[135]

> Thus ritual means "to nourish". The meat of pastured and grain-fed animals, rice and millet, and fragrant blends of the five flavors are the means by which one nourished the mouth. The fragrances of peppercorns and orchids are the means whereby one nourished the nose. Carved and polished [jade], incised and inlaid [metals] and [fabrics] embroidered with the white and black axe emblem, the azure and black notched-stripe, the

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[133] *Shen jian* (*Sibu beiyao* ed.), 2.4b.

[134] Wang Ming, ed., *Baopuzi neipian jiaoshi* (Beijing, 1985), 14.256 ("Qinqiu").

[135] For a more detailed treatment see Roel Sterckx, "Le pouvoir des sens: sagesse et perception sensorielle en Chine ancienne," in Rainier Lanselle, ed., *Du pouvoir. Cahiers du Centre Marcel Granet* 1 (Paris, 2003), 71–92; and Sterckx, "Searching for spirit: *shen* and sacrifice in Warring States and Han philosophy and ritual," *Extrême-orient, Extrême-occident* 29 (2007), 23–54.

> azure and crimson stripe, the white and crimson blazon, are what nurture the eye. Bells and drums, flutes and chime-stones, lutes and zithers, reed pipes and reed organs are what nurture the ear. Spacious rooms, secluded chambers, mats of plaited rushes, couches and bed mats, armrests and cushions are what nurture the body.[136]

Xunzi refers here to the impact of ritual paraphernalia on the human body but his statement could be taken as a reflection on a central feature of religious practice in early China, namely, the idea that gaining influence over the spirit world consisted first and foremost in the negotiation of ceremony and the material goods needed to sustain it. To worship the spirits meant spending material resources on them, whether in the form of a lavishly constructed tomb or lush sacrificial offerings. The need to provide for goods, objects and human resources in the service of the spirits firmly placed religious culture within the province of human economic endeavour. Indeed one might argue that, in Warring States and Han texts, discussions on how to legitimate ritual expenditure far outweigh theoretical debate on the moral, theological or philosophical values ritual was meant to embody. In a society where sacrifice lay at the heart of religious practice, devotional expression required an economic base. Moral piety in early China was therefore intricately linked to the material world.

The challenges posed by the tension between material and moral welfare are perhaps best summed up by Sima Qian in his chapter with biographies on "money-makers" 貨殖列傳. Sima Qian emphasizes that wealth is a necessary condition for morality to prevail: "Rites are born of plenty and abandoned in times of want" 禮生於有而廢於無.[137] His chapter starts off with a condemnation of the Laozian utopia of a world consisting of self-sustained communities that have no need for the exchange of goods. Sima Qian then argues that people, from the age of Shennong and before, had always strived to satisfy their material desires. A ruler with moral integrity, therefore, should accept the nature of his people and facilitate people's striving for material comfort. The virtuous, Sima argues, will be even more willing to display their virtues when they are rich, whereas petty people will desist from exerting their influence once they have gained wealth. In other words, material wealth facilitates the exercise of virtue. This then is the red thread that

[136] *Xunzi jijie*, 13.346–347 ("Lilun"); tr. Knoblock, *Xunzi*, 3.55.
[137] *Shiji*, 129.3255.

runs through the biographies of the moneymakers, who each accumulate fortunes yet are seen to be virtuous because they redistribute it or engage in social charity of some kind.

It is this same paradoxical requirement of needing to demonstrate material generosity toward the spirit world on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the knowledge that the desire to please the spirits through a sumptuous display of goods can undermine that virtue, that runs as a thread through debates on sacrifice in Warring States and early imperial China. And so this brief excursion into the economics of religious expression might help us pose a larger question: how does a society which throughout most of its philosophical, political and religious discourse valued ideals such as frugality, eremitism, abstention and material altruism as the hallmark of sagehood and human accomplishment at the same time present itself as a community in which virtually every social, political and religious transaction involved the exchange of goods, whether it be sacrificial bronzes in early China, merit money in late imperial China, or Buddhist prayers purchased by credit card on the worldwide web? While it may be a truism that the Chinese tradition makes no rigid distinction between the sacred and the profane, the underlying reasons for this divorce that never took place, as well as the ways in which it manifests itself in religious, economic and social practice have yet to be fully examined.

TABOOS: AN ASPECT OF BELIEF IN THE QIN AND HAN*

Liu Tseng-kuei

Introduction

Taboos come from a fear of disaster that leads to avoiding behavior and phenomena that it is thought might bring calamity. While they are a phenomenon common to all societies, the reasons for and context of their production, the forms they take and the explanations given all reflect the beliefs and feelings of the times, and so they have a very different coloring in different cultures and historical phases.

In Qin and Han times, the word here translated as "taboo" (*jinji* 禁忌) is very close to the word *jihui* 忌諱. If we look at the explanations of the etymological dictionary *Shuowen* 說文, the three characters, *jin, ji* and *hui*, do not differ all that much. All mean "being careful about good and bad fortune." Wang Yi 王逸, in his commentary on the "Seven remonstrances" ("Qijian" 七諫) in the *Songs of the South* (*Chuci* 楚辭), says: "*Ji* refers to that which is feared, *hui* to that which is hidden."[1] Even though there is a small difference between *ji* and *hui*, the feared and the hidden both refer to that which is avoided out of fear. The idea that breaking taboos can lead to serious calamity is what really distinguishes taboos from ethical norms. In the view of the Eastern Han scholar Wang Chong 王充, the two are different: "taboo" refers to "avoidance of the inauspicious" (*jixiong zhi ji* 吉凶之忌), whereas ethics refers to "principle-based interdictions" (*yili zhi jin* 義理之禁).[2] Wang Chong suggests that many taboos are in fact principle-based interdictions, but in order to get people to follow them, they are presented

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[1] Duan Yucai, *Duanshi shuowen jiezi zhu* (Taibei, 1976), pp. 9, 104; Liu Xiang, ed., *Chuci zhangju buzhu* (Taibei, 1972), p. 154.

[2] Wang Chong, *Lunheng jiaoshi*, ed. Huang Hui (Taibei, 1968), "Sihui," 23.970.

as having to do with good and bad fortune, and only warnings about divine punishment and the danger of death convince people to believe, fear and avoid.[3] In Wang's view, then, belief is what underpins taboos, because that is what gets people to obey them.

Thus the distinction between principle-based interdictions and avoidance of the inauspicious would appear to be virtually a class distinction. The *Zuo commentary* (*Zuozhuan* 左傳, Duke Zhao 3) quotes Yanzi 晏子 as saying that "the gentleman does nothing that is not in accord with ritual 非禮, while the little person does nothing that would be inauspicious 不祥." But does this mean that taboo-related beliefs are limited to the people? Wang Chong opposes this view. He says that his contemporaries, regardless of whether they are educated or not, from the lowest wearer of hemp right up to the sovereign, all attribute good or bad fortune to the selection of good days and the non-infringement of taboos.[4]

Nor do taboos influence only individual lives; they can also have an impact on government. The "Monthly ordinances" ("Yueling" 月令) section on "taboos of the four seasons" (*sishi zhi jin* 四時之禁) became an important part of government practice in the Han. Taboos related to comets and eclipses could even lead to unrest, and the respecting of taboos could influence the course of history. For example, one concept current among people in Qin and Han times had to do with "the last day of the sexagenary cycle" (*liujia qiongri* 六甲窮日), that is, the day *guihai* 癸亥, which symbolized everything coming to an end. Hence on that day, people should stay home and not go out. In the year 25 AD, the future emperor Guangwu's general Deng Yu 鄧禹 and the opposing general Wang Kuang 王匡 were engaged in battle near Anyi in Hedong. As night drew near, Deng Yu was losing, and his subordinates urged him to flee under cover of night, but he adamantly refused to withdraw. The morrow being a *guihai* day, it was inauspicious, so the army of Wang Kuang kept to its camp, giving Deng Yu a whole day to regroup. The next day, he joined battle and won forthwith, pacifying the Hedong region. After this victory, in the same month, Guangwu ascended the throne in Hao 鄗, promoted Deng Yu to commander in chief and founded the Eastern Han.[5] That a critical battle which opened a new historical

[3] Ibid., 23.980.
[4] Ibid., "Biansui," 24.1008–09.
[5] Fan Ye, *Hou Hanshu*, "Deng Yu zhuan," 16.601–02.

period could be thus influenced by the *guihai* day taboo,[6] shows just how important taboos could be.

Historically, taboos of the Qin/Han period have been little studied. In recent years, specialists of customs and ritual culture such as Zhao Jianwei, Lin Mingyu, Ren Ping, Jin Ze and Wan Jianzhong have begun to pay attention to taboos.[7] But these are for the most part general studies focused primarily on contemporary popular customs. Only Zhao Jianwei touches a bit more on taboos in antiquity. His material is rich and his insights keen, and many subsequent authors have used the material and insights of this pioneer work. Unfortunately, this book is not rigorous enough in its historical explanations and is characterized by forced comparisons. Nor does it use any of the extremely important archaeological materials such as the daybooks (*rishu* 日書).

Material on taboos from this period was scattered and scarce until the recent archaeological discoveries. Starting with the Chu silk manuscript (*Chu boshu* 楚帛書) in 1942, quite a number of documents about calendrical taboos have come to light: in 1959, the Han daybook bamboo slips from Mozuizi 磨嘴子 and, in 1979, the Qin daybook slips from Shuihudi 睡虎地 provided the most detailed material about taboos related to selection of days. There is also similar material in the Chu slips from Jiangling Jiudian 江陵九店 (excavated in 1981); the Han daybook slips from Bajiaolang 八角廊 (1973), Fuyang 阜陽 (1977), Zhangjiashan 張家山 (1983), Huxishan 虎溪山 (1999) and Kongjiapo 孔家坡 (2000); and in the Qin slips from Tianshui Fangmatan 天水放馬灘 (1986), Yueshan 岳山 (1986), Wangjiatai 王家台 (1993) and Zhoujiatai 周家台 (1999). We may also mention the Han daybook slips from Xuanquan 懸泉, as well as the Han fragments from Dunhuang 敦煌, Juyan 居延 and Duling 杜陵. Many of these documents have not yet been published. Among those which have, that of Shuihudi (Daybook A and Daybook B) are the most

[6] In the *Hou Hanshu*, the day is simply referred to using the cyclical term *guihai*, but already at the beginning of the Western Han, the last two days in the cycle, *renxu* 壬戌 and *guihai*, were referred to as "last days" 窮日 and were days for not going out. A silk manuscript from Mawangdui Tomb 3 contains a "divination concerning going out" 出行占 which says: "At the end of the six decades, the days *renxu* and *guihai* are the last in the cycle. One should not go out nor enter an office." See Liu Lexian, "'Chuxing zhan' zheshi," *Jianbo shushu wenxian tanlun* (Wuhan, 2003), p. 117.

[7] Zhao Jianwei, *Renshi de "Jinqu"—Zhongguo gudai jinji fengsu* (Xi'an, 1988); Lin Mingyu, *Taiwan minjian jinji* (Taibei, 1989); Ren Ping, *Zhongguo minjian jinji* (Beijing, 1991); Jin Ze, *Jinji tanmi* (Hong Kong, 1994) and *Zongjiao jinji* (Beijing, 1998); Wan Jianzhong, *Jinji yu Zhongguo wenhua* (Beijing, 2001), and *Zhongguo minjian jinji fengsu* (Beijing, 2005).

detailed.[8] While this set of slips has been much studied, there are few studies which focus on taboos.[9] The only fairly complete study of this aspect is that published by Zhang Yincheng, called "Taboos in ancient China."[10] By analyzing the Shuihudi daybook taboos and their principles, he gives us a relatively systematic understanding of ancient taboos. But his book is inadequate in its study of non-calendrical taboos and, because of the time of publication, could not use the many daybooks like those of Kongjiapo and Xuanquan that had not yet been published. The just-published daybook of Kongjiapo is especially rich, on a par with that of Shuihudi, but because it has just come out, it has not yet been fully used by scholars.[11]

People of the Qin and Han distinguished between passive and active taboos: the first we may called "taboos related to events and things" (*shiwu jinji* 事物禁忌), the second "behavioral taboos" (*xingwei jinji* 行爲禁忌). Catastrophes of the first type were not caused by infringing taboos but by the tabooed thing or event in itself. Hence to meet with such an event or see such a thing could have unfortunate consequences. For example, a person who saw a two-headed snake might die. To see a comet or an owl was also unlucky, and to meet a menstruating or pregnant woman could cause pollution. Most of the taboos to be treated in this chapter are of the second kind, the result of behavior which infringed a taboo.

The origins and content of the taboos, how contemporaries explained them, and the ritual techniques associated with them all enable us to see the relationship between belief and taboos. The range of such beliefs was vast. In the *Scripture of Great Peace* (*Taiping jing* 太平經), heaven and earth, the sun, the moon, and the stars, the five agents and four seasons, the six *jia* stems and *yin* and *yang*, all creatures, ghosts, and spirits, the wind, rain, thunder, and lightning all have gods, and people, out of fear of these gods, dare not misbehave.[12] This shows us too that

[8] For the transcription of this text, I have relied mainly on the work of the editorial team from Shuihudi, *Shuihudi Qin mu zhujian* (Beijing, 1990). I have also consulted Liu Lexian, *Shuihudi Qin jian rishu yanjiu* (Taibei, 1994), Wang Zijin, *Shuihudi Qin jian rishu jiazhong shuzheng* (Wuhan, 2003). I will hereafter refer to this text as the "Shui Slip Daybook" and note directly in the text the slip number and whether it comes from Daybook A or Daybook B.

[9] On the whole range of daybooks, their excavation and studies, see Liu Lexian's *Jianbo shushu*, pp. 27–38.

[10] Zhang Yincheng, *Zhongguo gudai jinji* (Taibei, 2000).

[11] Suizhou archaeological team, *Suizhou Kongjiapo Han mu jiandu* (Beijing, 2006).

[12] Wang Ming ed., *Taiping jing hejiao* (Beijing, 1960), j.154–70, pp. 724–25.

Qin/Han taboos reflected contemporary cosmologies and a sense of fear and reverence toward nature, all creatures, demons and gods. The cosmology of the taboos is congruent with that of the divining boards (*shipan* 式盤), which reveal a world composed of heaven, earth, humans and ghosts.[13] The four corners on the boards represent four gates: that in the northwest is the Gate of heaven (*tianmen* 天門), that in the southeast the Door of earth (*dihu* 地戶), that in the southwest the Gate of man (*renmen* 人門) and that in the northeast the Gate of ghosts (*guimen* 鬼門). The world did not just involve the four quarters, above and below, but also heaven, earth, humans and ghosts. In what follows, taking these basic facts as our guide, we will try to discuss taboos.

Humans and the universe: taboos related to the natural order

In Sima Qian's preface to his *Records of the historian* (*Shiji* 史記), we read this: "When I consider the arts of *yin* and *yang* and all the taboos related to the greatly auspicious, these trap people into multifarious fears. But the great and orderly course of the four seasons must not be ignored."[14] Even though Sima Qian does not approve of the taboos, he still feels the natural order behind the taboos—birth in spring, growth in summer, harvest in fall, rest in winter—cannot be gone against. If we look at the taboos related to the four seasons in the "Monthly ordinances," we see that taboos have always been related to the seasons of the year. The insistence on the natural order, the theories of *yin, yang* and the five agents, and the idea that heaven and humans are in correspondence constitute the particularities of Han customs and what distinguishes them from the taboos of other cultures.

Taboos related to the nodal energies and annual times

The ancient theory of the correspondence between heaven and humans insists on the harmony of humans and nature. The four seasons and twelve months of the year constitute a cycle of alternating *yin* and *yang* and of the succession of the five agents. Human behavior had to accommodate itself to this cycle, so any behavior which was at odds

[13] See Li Ling, *Zhongguo fangshu kao*, rev. ed. (Beijing, 2001), ch. 2, pp. 89–176.
[14] *Shiji*, "Taishigong zixu," 130.3288–90.

with this order was tabooed. The "Monthly ordinances" have been sufficiently studied, so we need not go into them in detail here. But it is worth noting that these were not just the invention of the literati. They were the customs of the entire ancient society that had long sought to follow nature, and Han government decrees required total adherence to these customs.[15] An interesting example is provided by the Han wall inscription ("monthly ordinance decrees of the four seasons" 四時月令詔條, dated 5 AD), discovered in 1990–92 at Xuanquan near Dunhuang. Its detailed content is as follows:

> In the first month of spring, it is forbidden to cut down trees and harvest nests, to kill harmless young insects, birds, and animals or pregnant birds or animals, to gather eggs, assemble a crowd or build a wall. In the second month of spring it begins to thunder. Three days before the first thunder, solemnly inform the people that, in the season of thunder, they must not engage in sex lest they give birth to handicapped offspring. Troops may not be raised nor military campaigns undertaken, rivers and marshes may not be drained nor nets and dams be used in ponds; the hills and forests must not be burned. In the third month, no arrows may be shot nor nets set out to trap flying birds. In the first month of summer, no ground should be broken, no troops sent into battle, no big tree cut down and no hunting done in large fields. In the second month, lavender for dyeing must not be cut nor wood be burned to ashes; ward gates must not be shut nor custom duties levied, and no fires may be set in the south. In the third month, there should be no earthen construction. During the three months of autumn, there are days for activity, and all manner of building, storing of cereals and husbandry may be undertaken. But in the last month of autumn, there is a taboo on gathering gold, precious stones, silver, brass or iron. In the first month of winter, care must be taken of matters involving covering and storing, and the defenses of the border entries and of gates must be increased. But canals cannot be cleaned out, nor may waters and springs be stopped up. In the middle month, all matters involving the earth must stop, nor may rooms containing sealed things be opened nor a great host be mobilized for construction. In the third month, the cold energies must be escorted.[16]
>
> 孟春 (一月) 禁止伐木, 不可摘巢, 不可殺無害的幼蟲、幼鳥、幼獸, 不可殺懷胎禽獸, 不可取卵, 不可聚眾、築城。仲春 (二月) 開始打雷, 雷前三日, 警告民眾打雷期間不可有性行爲, 否則會生下殘障兒 。不可興兵征伐, 不可竭川澤、

[15] Hsing I-t'ien, "Yueling he Xi Han zhengzhi—cong Yiwan jibo zhong de 'yi chun ling cheng hu' shuo qi," *Xin shixue* 9.1 (1998), 1–54.

[16] Zhongguo wenwu yanjiu suo and Gansu sheng wenwu kaogu yanjiu suo, eds, *Dunhuang Xuanquan yueling zhaotiao* (Beijing, 2001), pp. 4–37.

> 網陂池, 不可焚山林。季春 (三月) 不可彈射及張羅捕飛鳥。孟夏 (四月) 不可起土功、發大眾、伐大樹、大田獵。仲夏 (五月), 不可刈藍草以染, 不可燒灰, 不可閉門閭、索關稅, 不可用火於南方。季夏 (六月) 不可興土功。秋季 (七月至九月) 三個月是可以有爲的日子, 可以從事各種建築及糧食積蓄收斂等, 但季秋 (九月) 有不可采金石銀銅鐵之忌。孟冬 (十月) 小心蓋藏之事及增強門戶關塞之閉防, 但不可以治溝渠、決行水泉。仲冬 (十一月) 不可作土事, 不可開發掩蓋之物室屋, 不可起大眾爲繕治事。季冬 (十二月) 則送寒氣。

Although the above decrees date to the time when Wang Mang was regent and so have a rather particular historical background, they are by and large based on the "Twelve Annals" 十二紀 chapters of the *Annals of Sire Lü* (*Lüshi chunqiu* 呂氏春秋) and the "Monthly ordinances" of the *Book of rites* (*Liji* 禮記). From the excavated bamboo slips and the received literature, we can see that at least some of these items were respected as early as the beginning of the Han and right down through the Eastern Han.[17] They enable us to understand the following points: first, taboos were given legal form, and even if many of them were meant to be respected by the government itself, like not assembling a host, not building walls or sending forth troops, most were also taboos shared by the people, e.g., the interdiction of sexual relations during the period of spring thunder. What such laws reflect are the people's taboos regarding birth and rearing, as well as beliefs regarding the god of thunder. Second, these taboos insist on following the natural energies. Thus in the spring, when the *yang* energy flowers and the myriad things are born, these vital energies must not be disturbed, so tree-cutting, nest-harvesting, killing the young, burning forests and catching birds are forbidden. In the summer, the *yang* energies are at their height, and all things are growing, so there is the interdiction of cutting down big trees or hunting in large fields. The other items are also related to *yang* at its height, like not harvesting lavender. *Yang* is fire, and to burn to ashes would destroy *yang*, while not closing up the gates and doors is designed to ensure the circulation of *yang* energy. For the rest—autumn harvesting and winter storing—the taboos are also in response to the energies. Third, taboos relating to the cycle of the four seasons and the rotating five agents reflects contemporary belief in the five agents and positions: spring corresponds to east and wood, therefore trees may not be cut; summer belongs to fire and the south, so fires may not be lit in the south; autumn is the west and metal, so metals may not be gathered;

[17] See Hsing I-t'ien, "Yueling"; also Hu Pingsheng, "Dunhuang Xuanquan zhi chutu 'Sishi yueling zhaotiao' yanjiu," in *Dunhuang Xuanquan yueling zhaotiao*, pp. 38–48.

winter is the north and water, so canals may not be dug nor rivers or springs blocked. The five agents and positions play an important part in the taboos of the four seasons.

In the cycle of the four seasons, there are 24 nodal energies (*jieqi* 節氣), of which the "eight nodes" (*bajie* 八節) are of special importance: the beginnings of the four seasons, the two equinoxes, and the two solstices. The Han emphasized in particular the solstices and equinoxes, in addition to which there was the beginning of the year and the *fu* 伏 and *la* 臘 days. Together these made up the Qin/Han festival calendar (*suishi li* 歲時曆).[18] Festival days are critical times in the annual cycle: they reflect humans harmonizing with nature and even participating energetically in nature's cycles.[19] Because the relationship between festival days and taboos is a close one, festival day taboos are more important than taboos in ordinary time. Unfortunately, there is very little information on such taboos. Even for so important a festival as the *la* days, although there is fairly detailed material about the Nuo exorcistic rituals, there is no record concerning taboos. In what follows, therefore, we can only comment on those festivals for which there is some material.

In the first place, people believed that the nature of the coming year, whether it would be good or bad, could be seen from various signs at the beginning of the year. There were four such beginnings in Han times: the first was the winter solstice, when vital energies first appeared; the second was the day after *la*, when food and drink were displayed in order to expand *yang* energies; the third was New Year's Day itself; the fourth was the first day of spring, the start of the four seasons. Among these "four beginnings," the omens on New Year's Day—the new moon of the first month—were the most important. People believed that whether that day was good or bad could influence the entire year, so any bad omen was tabooed on that day. When an eclipse occurred on New Year's Day in the seventh year of Huidi's reign (188 BC), Gu Yong 谷永 said that the first day of the year, the first month and the day of the new moon constituted "three dawns" (*sanchao* 三朝), and that sovereigns hated to have an eclipse on the day of three dawns. When an eclipse occurred

[18] Yang Hui wrote in a letter to Sun Huizong as follows: "Farmers work hard, but at festival time and the *fu* and *la* days, they cook goat and boil kid meat, and they fill flagons of ale to compensate for their hard work." See *Hanshu*, "Yang Hui zhuan," 66.2895–96.

[19] Derk Bodde, *Festivals in classical China: New Year and other annual observances during the Han dynasty, 206 B.C.–A.D. 220* (Princeton, 1975), p. 1.

on New Year's Day in the first year of Aidi's reign (6 BC), Aidi issued a decree taking the blame, saying, "The crime is not far off" 其咎不遠.[20] Bao Xuan 鮑宣, a chief minister, memorialized, saying: "An eclipse on a day of the three beginnings is something most to be feared."[21]

Among the people there was a taboo against destroying anything on New Year's Day,[22] also because they feared it could bring bad luck. There is a report that, in Chengdi's time (r. 32–7 BC), there was an order forbidding the killing of chickens or sparrows on New Year's Day.[23] It may be this had to do with the Qin/Han belief in the "seventh day": the wind on New Year's Day was used to divine and, according to the Qin Daybook B from Fangmatan,

> If there is wind on the first day of the first month, that is bad for chickens; if on the second day, it is bad for dogs; if on the third, pigs; the fourth, goats; the fifth, oxen; the sixth, horses; and the seventh, people.[24]
>
> 入正月一日而風, 不利雞; 二日風, 不利犬; 三日風, 不利豕; 四日風, 不利羊; 五日風, 不利牛; 六日風, 不利馬; 七日風, 不利人。

Thus this idea goes back to the Qin, and later developed into the idea of a "chicken day" and a "human day." If New Year's Day has to do with chickens, this may explain the taboo on killing chickens and sparrows.

If there were taboos regarding eclipses and destroying instruments on New Year's Day, the actual content of the taboo had to do with belief in omens. People believed that omens appearing at important times, especially on New Year's, predicted the good or bad fortune of the days to come. The daybooks have many divination methods for the day of

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[20] *Hanshu*, "Wuxing zhi B," 27B.1500, and "Aidi ji," 11.343.

[21] *Hanshu*, "Bao Xuan zhuan," 72.3091–92.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Li Fang, ed., *Taiping yulan* (Taibei, 1975), "Yuandan," 29.267, quoting the *Wansui li*.

[24] Most studies of the seventh day cite the *Wen lisu* 問禮俗 of Dong Xun 董勛 (Wei-Jin era): "It is commonly said that, on the first day of the first month, chickens were made; on the second, dogs; on the third, pigs; on the fourth, goats; on the fifth, oxen; on the sixth, horses; and on the seventh, humans." They then link this to the Biblical creation in seven days. But Hu Wenhui has pointed out that this has to do with divining whether a given day is lucky or unlucky for the seven animals; see Hu Wenhui, "Renri kaobian," *Zhongguo zaoqi fangshu yu wenxian congkao* (Guangzhou, 2000), pp. 339–48. He is definitely right but unfortunately had not seen the Fangmatan material and therefore did not know the custom existed already in the Qin. Daybook B from Fangmatan has yet to be published. This item has been published in Ma Jianhua, ed., *Hexi jiandu* (Chongqing, 2003), p. 9. It may be that the idea of the seventh day has to do with that of "coming full cycle in seven days" 七日來復 in the *Yijing* 易經.

the new moon in the first month, as in Shuihudi's Daybook A section "Jichen" 稷辰 and Daybook B section "Qin" 秦, which divide days into eight kinds and state what it implies for the coming year—whether there will be rain or war—when the New Year's Day new moon falls on one or the other of these eight types of day. The Kongjiapo daybook, in addition to "Jichen," contains "Shuozhan" 朔占, "Zhusui" 主歲, "Sisui" 司歲 and "Zhan" 占 sections, all of which have to do with divination concerning the day of the new moon in the first month. These divinations, too, have to do with the harvest and war.[25] The chapter on astronomy in the *Records of the historian* refers to the practice of divining on the basis of the direction and time of the wind on the first day of the year. This sounds much like the divination concerning the "seventh day" wind described above, but what is of concern is the rainfall and wars for the entire year, not the fate of humans and domestic animals. Others divine on the basis of clouds and rain or the position of the year star (Taisui 太歲).[26] Divination using the wind, rain, or clouds on other days in the first month also occurs, as on *dingsi* 丁巳 days in the first, second and third decades of the month, or the fourth or eighth days of the month, or on *wuji* 戊己, *yisi* 乙巳 and *yihai* 乙亥 days.[27] Yang Quan 楊泉 of the Wei-Jin era, by contrast, refers to setting up a gnomon on the night of the full moon in the first month to measure the length of the moon's shadow and so divine regarding floods and drought.[28]

In the Han dynasty, the first day of spring was also considered the start of the year. In order to aid the energies of spring, an amnesty was decreed on that day for all but crimes involving capital punishment: after that day, for all other crimes, no one could be judged or punished.[29] This decree clearly corresponds to the seasonal injunction, in the middle month of spring, "to stop imprisonment, remove cangues, and halt lawsuits" 省囹圄, 去桎梏, 止獄訟. Another important spring festival was the Shangsi 上巳 (first *si* day in the third month). On that day, by washing by the waterside, all that was inauspicious was eliminated (*fuchu* 祓除). Lao Gan has pointed out that, according to the specialists of "establishing and eliminating" (*jianchu jia* 建除家), the *si* day of the third month

[25] *Shuihudi*, pp. 184–85, 233–34; *Kongjiapo*, pp. 179–83.
[26] *Shiji*, "Tianguan shu," 27.1340–41.
[27] *Kongjiapo*, pp. 179–80.
[28] Jia Sixie, *Qi min yaoshu jiaoshi*, ed. Miu Qiyu (Beijing, 1982), pp. 169–70, citing the *Wuli lun*.
[29] *Hanshu*, "Wang Wenshu zhuan," 90.3656; *Hou Hanshu*, "Zhangdi ji," 3.152–53.

is a *chu* 除 ("elimination") day, so it was a logical day to "eliminate."[30] According to the Shuihudi Daybook A article "Qin eliminations" 秦除, in the third month "*chen* is established, *si* eliminated" 建辰, 除巳. Thus the first *si* day was one of elimination, and this exorcistic activity was a calendar-determined custom. On that day, staying home was tabooed, and people were supposed to go to an east-flowing river's edge to pray and "eliminate."[31] The reason for not staying home was that exorcism involves removal. By leaving home and washing by the riverside, all illness and everything inauspicious was removed to the outside. Only after the "great lustration" (*dajie* 大絜) did people go home.

In antiquity, the fifth month was well-known to be bad, and taboos in that month were numerous. For example, children born in this month—especially on the fifth day of the month—were considered inauspicious. A roof could not be put on a house in this month, and it was even more taboo to go take up a post, for if one did, one would never be promoted. These taboos will be discussed in more detail below, but I wish here to note that they also have to do with the energies of heaven and earth. The fifth is the month in which *yang* energies are at their height, and it corresponds to *wu* 午. According to the five agent *sanheju* 三合局 theory, fire rises in *yin* 寅, culminates in *wu* and decays in *xu* 戌.[32] Thus in the *wu* month, *yang* energies are at full strength, which the ancients considered most poisonous. Wang Chong defines "poison" as "the hot energies of the sun,"[33] and the taboos of the fifth month are designed to avoid the negative impact of these "bad energies." In the Eastern Han, the fifth day of the fifth month was already an important festival day, when Nuo exorcisms were performed to stop these bad energies. People would suspend a five-colored peachwood seal

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[30] Lao Gan, "Shangsi kao," *Minzuxue yanjiusuo jikan* 29 (1970), 248.

[31] In his commentary on Sima Biao's *Xu Han zhi*, "Liyi zhi A," Liu Zhao mentions one theory of the origin of the Shangsi festival: "In the Eastern Han, Guo Yu 郭虞 had two daughters born on the Shangsi 上巳 day of the third month. Because both died within two days, it was considered a major taboo, and it was thought unlucky to stay at home on that day. All went to the bank of an east-flowing river to pray and purify themselves. This was called lustration prayers 禊祠." Although the commentator is critical, it is clear there was a belief that it was unlucky to stay at home.

[32] The *sanhe ju* theory is already found in the daybooks of Shuihudi and Fangmatan: see *Shuihudi* B, p. 239. See also He Shuangquan, "Tianshui Fangmatan Qinjian zongshu," *Wenwu* 1989.2, p. 28. The Kongjiapo daybook also lists the birth, full strength and aged positions of the five agents: see *Kongjiapo*, p. 139.

[33] *Lunheng*, "Yandu," 23.949–60. According to Wang Chong, virtually all poison is *yang* energies: ghosts are perverse spirits of Great Yang; all living creatures are born with energies of Great Yang, so all contain poison; bees are *yang* creatures.

on their doors with red rope.[34] They also wrapped five-colored thread around their upper arm (*bi* 臂) so as to keep ghosts at a distance (*bigui* 辟鬼) and also prevent illness and war.[35]

Another fifth month festival is the summer solstice. As it is the longest day and days thereafter grow shorter, it is a day when "*yin* and *yang* fight, and death and life are separated" 陰陽爭, 死生分. According to the ritual books, people should stay quietly at home, not uncover the body, avoid stimulation, reduce desire in order to stabilize *yin* and *yang*, and not engage in sex.[36] Han officials did not go to the office on that day.[37] It was forbidden to make a big fire, to make charcoal or to work the bellows and smelt metal, so as to avoid disturbing the *yin* and *yang*, and these taboos remained in effect until the start of autumn. Why was fire forbidden? One reason is that the fifth month is the height of fire. Another is that there was often drought in summer, and then prayers for rain: to forbid fires was to suppress *yang* and encourage *yin*. Once under Zhaodi (r. 86–74 BC) rain dances were performed to pray for rain during a drought, and a decree was issued forbidding fires. Because the summer solstice is the apogee of *yang* and the birth of *yin*, it was also a day for cleaning the wells and changing the water,[38] as a way of showing that *yin* energies were reborn.

The winter solstice, in the eleventh month of the lunar calendar, is also a time of *yin*/*yang* alternation. After the longest night, days begin to get longer; after *yin* reaches its apogee, *yang* is born anew. Taboos are similar to those of the summer solstice, also requiring rest and quiet and the closing of government offices. Troops may not be dispatched, and husbands and wives must sleep separately for five days before and five days after the winter solstice in order to avoid disturbing *yin* and *yang*.[39] Because it is the day *yang* is born, it is also considered the start of the year: "Energies start on the winter solstice and, when they

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[34] *Hou Hanshu*, "Liyi zhi B," p. 3122.

[35] Ying Shao, *Fengsu tongyi jiaozhu*, ed. Wang Liqi (Beijing, 1981), pp. 605–06, "Yiwen, bianhuo": "On the fifth day of the fifth month, five-colored silk string is wrapped around the upper arm. This is called 'long life thread' 續命縷, but also 'weapon-avoiding silk' 辟兵繒, 'five-colored thread' 五色縷 or 'red rope' 朱索. It keeps soldiers and ghosts at a distance and preserves people from epidemics."

[36] *Liji*, "Yueling." A commentary reads: "Since stimulation is avoided, one stays away from the bedroom, and does not approach a woman to serve one during the night 不得進御侍夕."

[37] *Hanshu*, "Xue Xuan zhuan," 83.3385.

[38] *Hou Hanshu*, "Liyi zhi B," p. 3122.

[39] Ibid., p. 3125; Cui Shi, *Simin yueling jiaozhu*, ed. Shi Hansheng (Beijing, 1965), p. 71.

have come full cycle, start again" 氣始於冬至, 周而復生.[40] On that day, drills should be used to produce new fire,[41] symbolizing the rebirth of *yang* energies. The idea that, with the birth of a single *yang* line, the myriad things are renewed is expressed clearly in calendrology. In the year 104 BC, the emperor Wudi promulgated the Calendar of the Great Beginning (*Taichu li* 太初曆) because in the 11th month—the *zi* 子 month—that year the winter solstice and the day of the new moon both fell on the first day of the cycle, a *jiazi* 甲子 day. He thus made it the start of renewal.[42]

Other than the two solstices, two other complementary festivals were the *fu* 伏 and *la* 臘 days. These two days are always mentioned together and great importance is attached to them. Notes on the *la* day are numerous, but none concern taboos. As for the *fu* days, in Han times there were three, the *sanfu* 三伏: the third *geng* 庚 day after the sixth month was the first *fu*; the fourth *geng* day was the middle *fu*; and the first *geng* day after the start of autumn was the last *fu*. On *fu* days, public affairs could not be handled, and travel had to be avoided. Those not at home should come home quickly.[43] Customs stations were closed.[44] Why were there such taboos? One explanation is that *fu* means "to hide from and avoid the height of summer" 隱伏避盛暑. But the *Liji shi* 曆忌釋 (*Explanation of calendrical taboos*) says that *fu* refers to "a day in which metal energies hide" 金氣伏藏之日. The main problem is that, in the cycle of the four seasons, all but the transition from summer to autumn involve one agent giving birth to the next: at the start of winter, water replaces metal, which gives birth to water; at the start of spring, wood replaces water, which gives birth to wood; and at the start of summer, fire replaces wood, which gives birth to fire. But when summer turns into autumn, metal replaces fire, but fire not only does not give birth to metal, it conquers it. That is why, at the height of fire in summer, metal must hide. The *fu* day is a *geng* day in the sixth month, and *geng* belongs to metal. Thus the belief in the five agents is the background for these taboos.[45] Looked at from the point

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[40] *Shiji*, "Lüshu," 25.1251.

[41] *Hou Hanshu*, "Liyi zhi B," p. 3122.

[42] *Shiji*, "Lishu," 26.1260–61.

[43] In the *Hanshu*, "Dongfang Shuo zhuan," 65.2846, Dongfang tells Tong Qi, "It is meet to return home quickly on a *fu* day."

[44] *Hou Han ji jiaozhu*, "Hedi ji A," 13.388: "On the first *fu* day, the passes are closed."

[45] *Shiji*, "Qin benji," 5.184, citing the *Liji shi*.

of view of the seasonal procession of *yin* and *yang*, *fu* refers to the fact "*yin* energies hide" 陰氣藏伏. In the sixth month, *yin* energies are just beginning to rise, but because they are pressed by the remaining *yang*, they must not come forth and must hide.[46] But there is still another explanation: the *Hanguan jiuyi* 漢官舊儀 (*Old protocols of Han officials*) says that, "on the *fu* day, the myriad ghosts are roaming around, so it is meet to shut the doors all the day long and do nothing."[47] On that day, it was the custom to eat soup with cakes, called "avoiding evil cakes" (*bi'e bing* 辟惡餅).[48]

Finally, let us look at the taboos related to the Cold Food festival (*hanshi jie* 寒食節). It was not found throughout China at that time, but primarily along the northern border, in Taiyuan 太原, Shangdang 上黨, Xihe 西河 and Yanmen 雁門. According to late Han material, the date for this festival was 105 days after the winter solstice, at the end of the second month.[49] The most important taboo of this festival was on the use of fire, implying no cooked food. As to the reason why, there are many differing explanations.[50] Most contemporaries believed that it had to do with Jiezi Tui's 介子推 being burned to death, which gave rise to this "dragon taboo" (*longji* 龍忌). Be that as it may, the interdiction of fire in mid-spring is referred to in the *Zhouli* 周禮 (*Rites of Zhou*): "In the middle spring month, use the wooden clapper 木鐸 to announce the fire interdiction in the city-state." Zheng Xuan 鄭玄 and Jia Gongyan 賈公彥 gloss this with reference to the imminent appearance of the

[46] *Hanshu*, "Jiaosi zhi A," 25.1196, commentary of Yan Shigu.

[47] Citation in *Hou Hanshu*, "Hedi ji," 4.179.

[48] Zong Lin, tr., *Jing Chu suishi ji* (Tokyo, 1978), p. 365. From the story of He Yan 何晏 eating cakes on a *fu* day, we can see that this custom existed already at the end of the Han.

[49] In Taiyuan, according to the citation of Huan Tan's *Xinlun* in *Yiwen leiju* j. 3 and the *Hou Hanshu*, "Zhou Ju zhuan," this festival took place in mid-winter. But Zhou Pei 周斐 of the Wei, in his *Runan xianxian zhuan* 汝南先賢傳, cites Zhou Ju's "Yishu Jiezi Tui miao" as follows: "In mid-spring, to do without fire and eat cold food for a month was more than the old and the young could stand. Thus to harm people's lives was not the aim of the former worthies, and so now it lasts just three days." See Yan Kejun, ed., *Quan shanggu Sandai Qin Han Sanguo Liuchao wen* (Beijing, 1958), "Quan Hou Hanwen," 59.798. Thus in Zhou Ju's time, the Cold Food period was already in the spring. That is why Cao Cao's 曹操 "Mingfa ling" 明罰令 (Decree of enlightened punishments), as quoted in the *Yiwen leiju*, j. 4, says "105 days after the winter solstice." Cao Cao lived at the end of the Han, not far from Zhou Ju's time, and as the same area's customs are in question, this statement must be credible.

[50] On these debates, see Qiu Xigui, "Hanshi yu gaihuo—Jiezi Tui fensi chuanshuo yanjiu," *Zhongguo wenhua* 1990.2, 66–77; Li Daohe, "Qianren dui hanshi xisu de jieshuo jiqi neizai maodun," *Minzu yishu yanjiu* 2002.5, 39–44.

Great Fire star (*dahuo* 大火, Antares) in the last month of spring. So before it appears, in the preceding month, fire is forbidden in order to avoid an excess of fire. The so-called "dragon taboo" refers to the fact that, among the 28 stellar mansions (*xiu* 宿) the mansions Jiao 角 and Kang 亢 are dragon constellations that belong to the east, spring and wood. Because wood gives rise to fire, the latter is forbidden. Thus the interdiction of fire during the Cold Food festival has to do with the cycle of nodal energies.

It would seem, then, that, contrary to the popular image, Han festivals were not at all about carnival-like joy for a good year. Seen through the lens of the taboos, it was about being careful to the outmost, lest one commit a fault. Festivals were, rather, times of crisis, and the taboos were rules for getting through the narrows. Not only did people worship the gods with sacrifices at this time, they often avoided disaster by not going outdoors and did their best not to disturb the *yin*, *yang* and five agent energies. This is reminiscent of the way the Han handled natural catastrophes. For example, on the two solstices, officials did not handle public work and military movements were halted—very much like the methods employed by Xiandi (r. 189–220 AD) in response to back-to-back earthquakes and an eclipse of the sun: "He avoided the central hall and barracked the troops; for five days he did not hear affairs of government."[51]

Time taboos

Taboos for ordinary time also constitute an important feature of Qin/Han taboos. They involve the belief that years, months, days and hours can all be auspicious or inauspicious. Whatever the activity, an appropriate hour and day had to be selected, and if this rule was not obeyed, or if an inauspicious day was chosen, this could lead to misfortune. The *Lunheng* 論衡 (*Balanced assessments*) chapter "Biansui" 辨祟 ("Analysis of haunting") says that contemporaries commonly thought that all catastrophes were "the result of infraction of taboos 忌諱." For all important activities like ground-breaking and moving house, sacrifice, burial, travel, taking up office and marriage, if one "did not chose a lucky day and did not avoid the year and the month (taboos), one might, having "offended ghosts or gods, be harmed by the tabooed

[51] *Hou Hanshu*, "Xiandi ji," 9.376.

time" and encounter misfortune like illness or prison which could lead to death or even to the destruction of one's entire clan.[52]

What was the content of time taboos? Wang Chong says that he has composed his hemerological chapters by relying on evidence provided by the popular contemporary "books of daily taboos" (*rijin zhi shu* 日禁之書),[53] about which we can learn from the daybooks excavated in recent years. We will discuss the content of the daybook taboos in detail below. Here we will just examine the psychology reflected in the forms, nature and principles of the taboos.

We may note to begin with that one of the characteristics of time taboos is the classification and naming of times. These signal the auspicious or inauspicious nature of times and enable people to avoid the latter and choose the former. Thus the Shuihudi daybooks' theories of *jichen* 稷辰 and *jianchu* 建除 (establishing and removing) both divide the days of the month into various types, each of which includes both auspicious and inauspicious days. "Qinchu" 秦除 ("Qin removals"), for example, was the system for "establishing and removing" current in the state of Qin. It divided the days into 12 separate categories: establish (*jian* 建), remove (*chu* 除), fill (*ying* 盈), pacify (*ping* 平), stabilize (*ding* 定), hold (*zhi* 摯[執]), destroy (*po* 柀[破]), endanger (*wei* 危), mature (*cheng* 成), gather (*shou* 收), open (*kai* 開) and close (*bi* 閉). The 12 types of day occurred in each monthly cycle, with the result that the quality of each day in the year constituted a regular cycle. Each of the 12 types had its own nature, and whether it was auspicious or inauspicious could be seen from its name. Days for "establishing," for example, were good for founding something; days for "removing" were appropriate for getting rid of things; days of "destroyal" were good for activities of destruction like cutting down trees, tearing down walls or destroying things, but any undertaking should be avoided; days for "filling" were good for making cow or goat pens that would then fill up, but if one fell ill on that day, it would be hard to get well.[54] Such taboos reflect a belief in the regularity of the auspicious and inauspicious in the time

[52] *Lunheng*, "Biansui," 24.1008.

[53] *Lunheng*, "Jiri," 24.1008: "It is habitual to believe in years and hours 世俗既信歲時, but also days. For all matters like illness, death and disaster, if it is major, it is called offending 犯觸 the year and the month; if it is minor, then it is called not avoiding day taboos 日禁. People follow both the traditions regarding years and months and the books on day taboos 日禁之書."

[54] The "establishing and removing" section of the Kongjiapo daybook is essentially the same. For example, on "days of destruction," see *Kongjiapo*, p. 129.

cycle, as well as beliefs and taboos related to the names of the days. That these beliefs and taboos are long-lasting may be seen from the fact that the categories of the "Qin removals" are still used in modern almanacs and have thus survived for over 2,000 years.

The fact that days were given names is a phenomenon worth paying attention to. People of the period believed that there was a mysterious connection between names and activities, and whether an activity would be auspicious or the contrary could be extrapolated on the basis of the day's name. For example, Shuihudi Daybook A, in its section on heavenly bodies 星, discusses taboos in terms of the names of the 28 mansions. When it is a Fang 房 (Room) day, "houses may be built" 可為室屋; on a Qianniu 牽牛 (Cowherd) day, one "must not kill an ox" 不可殺牛; on *xu* 虛 (Emptiness) and *wei* 危 (Rooftop) days, "all affairs are inauspicious" 百事凶. In each case, the name of the day gives an idea of its nature. Wei 胃 (Stomach) days are good for bringing in grain and building granaries. Here the name depends on an analogy between the function of the granary and the stomach. The same manuscript contains a diagram of *genshan* 艮山 (*gen* mountain), also called "days on which Yu departed" 禹之離日. The first name is identical to that of the *gen* trigram in the *Book of changes* (*Yijing* 易經), where it is also associated with the image of the mountain. The trigram refers to tranquility and being unmovable, turning the back on and not facing. Because there is back-turning, there is departure; because there is tranquility, it is not good to travel.[55] The meaning of *genshan* is rather obscure, but "day of departure" is crystal clear. Such a day is good for division and not for marrying if one wishes to avoid separation before old age; nor is it good for traveling, lest one not come back. There are also the names of the heavenly stems and earthly branches (*ganzhi* 干支) which have a good or bad implication. For example, when Shuihudi Daybook B, in its section on "fire" (*shihuo* 失火), says "if a fire occurs on a *zi* day, a child will die" 子失火, 有子死, it is clearly using the earthly branch *zi* to refer to a human *zi* (child). In all these cases, there is a link between an activity's being auspicious or not and the name of the day.

The taboos just discussed have nothing to do with relations of engendering or conquest between the five agents, but the agents to which months and days belong is important in most time taboos. As is well

[55] Li Xueqin, "Shuihudi Qinjian zhong de 'genshan tu,'" *Wenwu tiandi* 1991.4, 30–32.

known, the heavenly stems and earthly branches are used to note years, months and days, and as each stem and branch belongs to one of the five agents, so do the years, seasons, months and days. In an earlier study of customs and beliefs about traveling in the Shuihudi daybooks, I discovered that the days preferred for traveling all belonged to metal or water, while days belonging to earth were taboo for travel. This is primarily because, when traveling, one must tread on the earth, and plenitude of earth energy symbolizes much danger and many obstacles, so there is a taboo on traveling on *wuji* days, which belong to earth. Because metal gives birth to water, and because in the ancient system of five sacrifices (*wusi* 五祀) the god of travel (*xingshen* 行神) belonged to water, metal and water days were good for travel. But travel on land and travel on water were not the same: for the first, plenitude of earth meant many obstacles and hence a taboo on travel on earth days; but for the second, plenitude of water meant much wind and waves and hence a taboo on water days.[56] A recent study of earth taboos in the Shuihudi daybooks reveals that taboos on ground-breaking and house-building are like those regarding travel: days that are not good for travel are usually not good for breaking ground either, as on *wuji* days.[57]

Another important time taboo is that on *shensha* 神煞 (calendrical spirits) days. Although taboo days include days derived from just the earthly branch, as in the later *One hundred taboos of Pengzu* (*Pengzu baiji* 彭祖百忌),[58] most belong to groups formed by a single taboo with rules such that there is a regular cycle, in imitation of the revolution of the stars and the time-space of nature. Such groups were later on called *shensha*. An important *shensha*-group was based on the cycle of the 28 stellar mansions, with each mansion-day being auspicious or the contrary. The cycle starts with the mansion in charge of each month's day of the new moon (Encampment 營室 mansion for the first month, Stride 奎 for the second, Stomach 胃 for the third, etc.) and then dis-

[56] Liu Tseng-kuei, "Qinjian 'rishu' zhong de chuxing lisu yu xinyang," *Zhongyang yanjiuyuan lishi yuyan yanjiusuo jikan* 72.3 (2001), 503–41.

[57] Liu Tseng-kuei, "Shuihudi Qinjian 'rishu' 'tuji' pian shushu kaoshi," *Zhongyang yanjiuyuan lishi yuyan yanjiusuo jikan* 78.4 (2007), 671–704.

[58] For example, Daybook A contains a section scholars refer to as the "section of the taboos of the 12 earthly branches" 十二支避忌篇: "Do not perform turtle and milfoil divination on a *zi* day because that would harm the Lord on High; do not exorcise the doors on a *chou* day because that would harm the Proud Mother 驕母;...do not bury on a *chen* day because then there will be a second burial 重喪"; and so on. The form here is like that of the 100 taboos of Pengzu.

tributes the other mansions to the remaining days of each month.[59] The same book has "heavenly halberd" (*xuange* 玄戈), "celestial plum" (*tianli* 天李) and "Zhaoyao" 招榣 days, while Daybook B has Tianyan 天閻 days. All of these are names of stars, and each has its cyclical rules for auspiciousness. These *shensha* named after stars are not descriptions of the actual heavenly bodies but just use the mansions to designate the days and express auspiciousness or the contrary.[60]

Among the *shensha*, that which concerned the ancients most was the "year" (*sui* 歲). Studies have shown that the "year" of the time taboos is neither the "year-star" 歲星 (Jupiter) nor its opposite, Taisui 太歲, both of which occupy one of the earthly branches in every year of the 12–year cycle. Since the "year" in the daybooks has an annual cycle, it is clearly not the same. In the daybooks there are in fact two "years": one is the Big Year, whose name is thus the same as the Taisui, but not its reality; it is also called "big time" (*dashi* 大時) and Xianchi 咸池. It is of two kinds, one that moves clockwise—the one in the daybooks—the other counter-clockwise, mentioned in the chapter on astronomy ("Tianwen xun" 天文訓) in the *Huainanzi* 淮南子. That in the daybooks goes through four branches—*mao*, *wu*, *you* and *zi*—representing the four directions in the course of the first to fourth months, and then begins again with *mao* (east) in the fifth month. It thus completes three cycles in a year, by contrast with the "little year" (*xiaosui* 小歲), the "little time" (*xiaoshi* 小時), and the "monthly establishment" (*yuejian* 月建), all of which go through an annual cycle indicated by the Dipper's bowl: it begins with *yin* in the first month, *mao* in the second, and so on, in each season going through the three branches of that season. Regardless of whether it is the "big" or the "little year," to "welcome" (*ying* 迎), that is, "face" (*xiang* 向), is inauspicious, whereas to "turn the back on" (*bei* 背) is auspicious; left is inauspicious, right auspicious.[61] For example, Daybook A says no east-facing houses may be built in the three months of spring, no south-facing houses in the summer, and so on (Shui A 96–99a, 114b). The fact that in each season

[59] See Marc Kalinowski, "The use of the twenty-eight Xiu as day-count in early China," *Chinese science* 13 (1996); Liu Lexian, "Jianbo shushu," pp. 70–84.

[60] Liu Lexian, *Jianbo shushu*, pp. 82–84.

[61] See Hu Wenhui, "Shi 'sui'—yi Shuihudi 'rishu' wei zhongxin," *Zhongguo zaoqi fangshu* (above, n. 24), pp. 88–134. Hu points out that "big year" originally referred to "big time," but by the late Western Han, it had gradually come to indicate the anti-Jupiter, an imaginary star used to designate the year and which made a 12-year cycle. "Big year" thus changed in meaning, not "big time."

one cannot build a house facing in that season's direction corresponds to the "small time" "welcoming" taboo. By contrast, that in Daybook A sections "year" and "moving" and in the Daybook B section "marriage penalties" (*jiazi xing* 嫁子刑), the east is most inauspicious in months one, five and nine, the south in months two, six and ten, the west in months three, seven and eleven, and the north in months four, eight and twelve—these are examples of the inauspiciousness of "welcoming" in the context of "big time."

Other than the stellar mansions, there are quite a number of *shensha* with names and regular cycles, usually organized on a seasonal basis or according to the stems and branches of the year, month, day and hour. Among "earth taboos," for example, when it is not auspicious to disturb the earth, there are *shensha* called "earth cycle" 土徼, "ladle day" 臽日, "earth spirit" 土神, "earth confrontation" 地衝, "male day" 牝日 and "earth spoon" 地杓. Also, apart from the "establishing and removing" and "various chronograms" 叢辰 systems, the daybooks also contain "lost days" 往亡, "return taboo" 歸忌, "returning branches" 反支, "sun confrontation" 日衝, "murderous days" 殺日 and yet other systems. The Juyan and Dunhuang Han bamboo slips contain still others such as "blood taboo" 血忌, "monthly murder" 月殺 and "return to death" 歸死.[62] Names of this kind are also to be found in the received literature. For example, the *Balanced assessments* refers to contemporary belief in "blood taboos," "nine spaces" 九空, "earth ladle" 地臽, "monthly murder," "lost days" and "return taboo."[63] On all "earth taboo" as well as "nine spaces" and "earth ladle" days, breaking ground and building should be avoided. On days of "returning branches" and "lost days," one should not leave home. On "return taboo" and "return to death" days, one should not return home. On "murderous days" and "blood taboo" days, animals may not be killed nor blood seen. All of these are important Qin/Han taboos. According to Zhang Peiyu, many *shensha* already appear in the "annotated calendars" 曆注 on excavated Han slips and silk manuscripts.[64] When Wang Chong states that "the gods on the calendars 曆上諸神 are various, but the sages do not mention

[62] See Hu Wenhui, "Juyan xinjian zhong de 'rishu' canwen," *Wenwu* 1994.4, 56–57; Liu Zhaorui, "Juyan xinchu Hanjian suojian fangshu kaoshi," *Wenshi* 43 (1997), 49–59; Wei Desheng, "Juyan xinjian, Dunhuang Hanjian zhong de 'rishu' canjian," *Zhongguo wenhua yanjiu* 27 (2000), 65–70.

[63] *Lunheng*, j. 23 "Sihui" and j. 24 "Biansui" and "Jiri."

[64] Zhang Peiyu, "Chutu Hanjian boshu shang de lizhu," *Chutu wenxian yanjiu xuji* (Beijing, 1989), pp. 135–47.

them nor do the thinkers transmit them," he is referring to *shensha*.[65] From all this we can see that taboos related to the seasonal cycle played an important role in daily activities.

A final characteristic of time taboos is directional position. Time and space are conjoined in time taboos—a reflection of ancient Chinese beliefs regarding the directions. The form often taken by time taboos is to say that, at a given time, in a given direction, a given action may not be undertaken. Examples were given above involving marriage, building and moving house. In my study of travel taboos, I discovered that direction played an important part, as when a day for travel and the direction involved five agent conflict and, hence, a taboo. In the Fangmatan daybook item "Yu's promptuary on travel days" 禹須臾行日,[66] on the 30 days of a month, different directions for travel are auspicious depending on whether travel takes place at dawn, midday, twilight or midnight. This gives an idea of how important direction was with regard to time taboos.

Time taboos were later divided into two categories: "harmonizing with the mainstays" (*xieji* 協紀) and "analyzing the direction" (*bianfang* 辨方). "Mainstays" refers to the heavenly cycle and the course of time, "direction" to the earthly five agents and their positions, and the two categories refer to "harmonizing with the five mainstays and distinguishing the five directions so as to follow the nature of heaven and earth."[67] Thus time taboos also reflect the idea of human harmonizing with heaven and earth. We may say that *shensha* are imaginary constellations which imitate the cycles of nature. According to the *Jiaoshi Yilin* 焦氏易林 (*Forest of changes of Sire Jiao*), "He who follows the Dipper as it turns around the Pivot 樞 will be following heaven and will meet no trouble."[68] "Following heaven" is the critical notion in time taboos, as in the "great and orderly course of the four seasons" described above.

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[65] *Lunheng*, "Jiri," 24.996–97.

[66] Qinjian team, ed., "Tianshui Fangmatan Qinjian jiazhong 'rishu' shiwen," pp. 4–6.

[67] See the imperial preface to the Qianlong-era book, *Qinding Xieji bianfang shu*, "Yuzhi Xiejie bianfang shu xu."

[68] Jiao Yanshou, *Jiaoshi Yilin*, in *Congshu jicheng xinbian* vol. 24, 1.1. Wang Mang provides an example of "following the Dipper": as his end approached, "an astrologer placed the divining board in front of him, with the day and hour indicated. Mang turned his mat in accord with the handle of the Dipper and sat down, saying, 'Heaven gave birth to the virtue in me, what can the Han soldiers do to me?'" See *Hanshu*, "Wang Mang zhuan B," 99B.4190. Thus Wang Mang took his cue from the Dipper Handle and the time in order to decide on the right direction to sit down and face.

Taboos related to heavenly bodies, plants and animals

In the chapter on astronomy ("Tianguan shu" 天官書) in the *Records of the historian*, Sima Qian says this:

> In heaven there is the sun and the moon, on earth the *yin* and the *yang*. Heaven has the five planets, earth the five agents. Heaven has its constellations, earth its regions.

Having looked at time taboos, let us now discuss taboos with regard to "heavenly images" (*tianxiang* 天象), plants and animals.

In the chapter "Essentials" ("Yaolue" 要略) of the *Huainanzi*, the notion of "heavenly patterns" (*tianwen* 天文) is defined as "harmonizing the energies of *yin* and *yang* and regulating the light of sun and moon…in order to avoid taboo disaster 避忌諱之殃."[69] Thus heavenly patterns and taboos are intimately related. The idea of resonance (*ganying* 感應) between heaven and humans was very common at the time, as can be seen in the *Shuowen* entry on 曐 (*xing*, = 星): "The essence (*jing* 精) of the myriad things lies in the stars on high." This is also true of humans. The *Book of songs* (*Shijing* 詩經) poem "Xiaobian" 小弁 says: "Heaven gave birth to me, where are my chronograms?" Thus the idea that humans corresponded to stars existed well before the Qin. Zheng Xuan glosses *chen* 辰 (chronogram), as referring to the "six things that determine auspiciousness," namely, the year, the hour, the day, the month, stars and the chronograms. People in early imperial China believed that national and individual destiny alike were linked to the stars, as Wang Chong says:

> National destiny 國命 is linked to the stars. Depending on the auspiciousness or lack thereof of the mansions, the state has good or bad fortune. As the stars move, humans encounter flourishing and decline.[70]

The *Taiping jing* also says that "registers are kept in the stars; fate depends on the heavenly offices 天曹."[71]

Strange heavenly phenomena, like anomalies in Mars, Venus, Jupiter, comets, the sun and the moon were taboo because they brought bad luck. People paid particular attention to comets and eclipses of the sun and moon. To see a comet—even to dream about it—was unlucky.[72]

[69] *Huainan honglie jijie* (Beijing, 1989), 21.701–02.
[70] *Lunheng*, "Mingyi," 2.46–47.
[71] *Taiping jing hejiao*, 110.548–49.
[72] *Lunheng*, "Siwei," 21.901–02.

In the *Yanzi chunqiu* 晏子春秋 (*Annals of Master Yan*), Duke Jing of Qi dreams of a comet and says to Yanzi: "When a comet appears, a state disappears."[73] Gu Yong of the late Western Han says that comets are the most unlucky anomaly (*bianyi* 變異). It was a sign predicting civil disorder and war.[74] Depending on the direction in which a comet appeared, the disaster it brought was different. In a situation of extreme anomaly, the right response was a revolutionary strategy for "eliminating the old and spreading the new" 除舊佈新. The early Eastern Han "Discussing the capital rhapsody" ("Lundu fu" 論都賦) by Du Du 杜篤 refers to the Han founder, at the end of the Qin, "rising on the light of the comet and sweeping aside Xiang [Yu]'s army" 奮彗光, 埽項軍. In his commentary, Li Xian 李賢 explains: "A comet is that by which the old is eliminated and the new spread, whence the word 'sweep.'" When the old is beyond repair, it can only be replaced by the new, and the comet is the broom.[75] In the second month of the year 5 BC, a comet appeared in Cowherd for over 70 days. In order to get rid of this unlucky sign, Emperor Ai had recourse to "quelling" (*yansheng* 厭勝) procedures: on a *jiazi* day in the sixth month, on the advice of Xia Heliang 夏賀良 and others, he changed the name of the reign era to Great Beginning 太初 and that of his own appellation to "Liu, saint from Chen and emperor of Great Peace" 陳聖劉太平皇帝, and he increased the number of clepsydra measures to 120.[76] Thus a comet meant both something inauspicious and getting rid of the inauspicious.[77] Nor was a comet unlucky just for rulers: Gao You 高誘 of the Eastern Han, in his commentary on the *Huainanzi*, says, "A comet is an anomaly that harms people."[78] In later times it was a curse to call someone a "broom star," meaning they were someone inauspicious who brought bad luck. We see here why.

Eclipses of the sun and moon were also taboo. If a good half of the sun went into eclipse on a day of the new or old moon, as on these days the moon was already invisible, for the sun also to go into eclipse was

[73] Wu Zeyu, ed., *Yanzi chunqiu jishi* (Taibei, 1977), "Waipian," 7.440.

[74] *Hanshu*, "Huainan," 44.2146. See also *Xu Han zhi*, "Tianwen," 12.3259.

[75] *Hou Hanshu*, "Du Du zhuan," 80A.2598–99. The broom originally referred to getting rid of what was inauspicious.

[76] *Hanshu*, "Tianwen zhi," 26.1312. See also *Yanzi chunqiu*, 1.66.

[77] When Han gate officials welcomed guests by holding a broom and walking backwards, this meant getting rid of the inauspicious and receiving the guest according to the rites. I thank Hsing I-t'ien for this insight.

[78] *Huainanzi*, "Minglan xun," 6.195.

considered most dangerous. Worst of all was for an eclipse of the sun to occur on New Year's Day. We saw above that, on the occasion of such an eclipse in the year 188 BC, Gu Yong said it was something "sovereigns hate."[79] Any eclipse of the sun on a day of the new moon was treated with utmost seriousness: two days before and after, ale and a goat were offered to the sun at the altar of the earth god; at the moment of the eclipse, the goat was slain on the altar in order to succor the sun.[80] As for lunar eclipses, someone born on such a day would not live long. Thus Guan Lu 管輅 of the Three Kingdoms era, who was born on a night of the new moon, once sighed that his life would not be long.[81]

The waxing and waning of the moon was also an important celestial sign. The first and last days of the moon's cycle both had their taboos. Because the moon is invisible on the last day, *yin* energies are at their apogee, and taboos are most severe. Among the many taboos, already in the Spring and Autumn era, soldiers should not go into battle on the last day of the moon.[82] On the day of the new moon, people should not weep, nor sing on the last day of the moon. The *Baopuzi* 抱朴子says that doing so is to offend heaven, and the divine director of destiny (Siming 司命) will remove longevity ciphers; when the ciphers are exhausted, death ensues.[83] In the Qin Daybook A section on "returning branches," it is said that one may tear down walls or houses on the last day of the moon but should not sing; it is good to enter a house on the day of the new moon, but not to weep; on the day of the full moon, one may build a granary (Shui A, 155b). Why are there these taboos on singing and weeping? From the daybooks we can see that the new moon is a new beginning, so it is good for entering a new house, while the old moon is an ending, good only for acts of destruction. Thus that which is auspicious or inauspicious on these two days is inverted. Because the new moon is a lucky day, when *yang* begins, while the old moon is an unlucky day when *yin* ends. To weep on a lucky or sing on an unlucky

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[79] *Hanshu*, "Wuxing zhi," 27B.1500.
[80] *Hou Hanshu*, "Liyi A," 4.3101–02.
[81] *Sanguo zhi*, "Guan Luo zhuan," 29.826.
[82] *Zuozhuan*, Duke Cheng 16: "When deploying [an army], do not conflict with the last day of the moon" 陳不違晦. Du Yu comments: "The last day of the moon is the end of the month and the exhaustion of *yin*. That is why there is a taboo saying soldiers should not be deployed."
[83] Ge Hong, *Baopuzi neipian jiaoshi*, ed. Wang Ming (Beijing, 1985), "Weizhi," 6.115–16. The *Yanshi jiaxun* cites a "Daoist book" to much the same effect; see Yan Zhitui, *Yanshi jiaxun jiaozhu*, ed. Wang Liqi (Shanghai, 1980), p. 102.

day would be out of harmony with heaven and is therefore tabooed behavior. The reason a granary may be built on the day of the full moon is because of the fullness: building a granary symbolizes storing up and fullness, like the Stomach mansion day discussed above.

Climatic phenomena such as a rainbow also elicit taboos. The *Huainanzi* considers it to be a "heavenly taboo," while the *Book of songs* poem "Rainbow" ("Didong" 蝃蝀) says, "There is a rainbow in the east, And no one dares to point to it."[84] Zheng Xuan says that the rainbow is a symbol of intercourse. Overindulging in intercourse could lead to a plethora of rainbow energies. The Tang commentator Kong Yingda 孔穎達 points out that rainbows always appear in couples, one male, one female. The rainbow has two heads, and two-headed dragons in Han paintings would seem to represent two dragons or snakes engaged in intercourse.[85] Zhao Jianhua thinks that the shape of the rainbow and the ancient taboo on two-headed snakes are related (seeing such a snake meant someone was going to die). A two-headed snake in fact also refers to two snakes engaged in intercourse, as in the many Han paintings of Fuxi 伏羲 and Nüwa 女媧, who are human-headed and snake-bodied and have intertwined tails.[86]

There are also taboos involving plants and animals. Apart from not nonchalantly cutting down trees, texts concerning plants are not abundant. Shuihudi Daybook B has good and tabooed days for cutting down trees, and different trees have different days: *jiayi* for elms, *bingding* for jujube trees, *wuji* for the mulberry, *gengxin* for the plum and *rengui* for the lacquer tree (Shui B, 66–67). The Kongjiapo daybook is even more precise, saying that cutting down an elm on a *jiazi* or an *yichou* day leads to the death of one's father, of a mulberry tree on a *gengxin* day to the death of one's wife, and of a jujube tree on a *bingyin* or *dingmao* day, to the death of one's mother. Infringing the taboos regarding the cutting down of trees always leads to the death of a family member, so it is most serious. By contrast, on "days of destruction," although there are things one may not do, one may cut down trees because that is in accord with destruction.[87] According to the "Monthly ordinances" from Xuanquan in Dunhuang, trees may not be cut down from the first to the

[84] Tr. James Legge, *The She king or The Book of poetry* (Taibei, 1971 reprint), p. 83.
[85] See the ceiling of the lateral rooms in the Wu family hall: see Zhuang Yingju and Wu Wenqi, *Handai Wushi muqun shike yanjiu* (Shandong, 1995), p. 80.
[86] Zhao Jianwei, *Jinji fengsu*, pp. 46–52.
[87] See *Kongjiapo*, pp. 129–31.

eight month, an unusually long time,[88] while in the *Monthly ordinances of the four peoples* (*Simin yueling* 四民月令), the prohibition stops when summer comes, and cutting would cause proliferation of insects.[89] Some taboos concern planting, as against planting trees on "month murder" days because the trees will die (Shui A.105a). There are also good and taboo days for the five cereals which we will not discuss here.[90]

There is somewhat more material on animal-related taboos. In particular, abnormal phenomena were considered taboo. A normal snake has but one head, so a two-headed snake is inauspicious, and the person who saw one might die.[91] The rat was the most commonly seen animal in houses, and the ancients used them to divine. Daybook A has a section called "rats in engraved doors" (*shu xianghu* 鼠襄戶), which says for every day of the month whether it is auspicious or inauspicious to see a rat enter the door (A.28a2, 29a2). In general, for every two auspicious days there is one that is inauspicious. Rats as a sign of bad luck often have to do with the fates of family members. In the year 80 BC, a yellow rat with its tail in its mouth danced in the main gate of the palace of the king of Yan. When someone was sent to observe, the rat danced on for a whole day and night before it died. Contemporaries thought this was a bad omen meaning the king of Yan would die in a rebellion.[92] In the time of Emperor Xuan (r. 73–49), when the Huo clan was about to be eradicated, the number of rats in their mansion soared—a very bad omen.[93] If a rat damaged something belonging to someone, this would influence that person: at the end of the Han, Cao Chong 曹沖 mentioned that his contemporaries believed that if a rat gnawed someone's clothes, this was inauspicious for the owner.[94]

The owl was also a taboo animal. He hides during the day and comes out at night and was considered a "bird of ill sound" 惡聲之鳥. The *Annals of Master Yan* tells the tale of Duke Jing of Qi building a roadside terrace and not using it. When Bo Changqian 柏常騫 asked why, he said it was because an owl never stopped calling, and that made him detest the place. Bo suggested using exorcism to get rid of

[88] *Dunhuang Xuanquan*, p. 17.
[89] Cui Shi, *Simin yueling*, p. 17.
[90] See He Runkun, "Cong Yunmeng Qinjian 'rishu' de liang- jiri kan 'Sisheng zhi shu' de wugu jiri," *Wenwu* 1995.10, 65–68, 74.
[91] Jia Yi, *Xinshu* (Taibei, 1978), "Chunqiu," 6.132.
[92] *Hanshu*, "Wuxing zhi B," 27B.1374.
[93] *Hanshu*, "Huo Guang zhuan," 68.2955–56.
[94] *Sanguo zhi*, "Deng Ai, Wang Chong," 20.580–81.

it. The method consisted in building a new house and covering it with white reeds. When it was done, Bo went at night to do magic, and in the end the owl fell to earth and died. That the duke was ready to use exorcism to get rid of the owl gives some idea of how seriously the taboo was regarded.[95] Guan Zhong 管仲 prevented Duke Huan of Qi from doing the Feng and Shan 封禪 sacrifices of legitimacy primarily because the auspicious signs of a phoenix and a unicorn were lacking, but "owls had come several times."[96] Jia Yi 賈誼 had been instructing the king of Changsha for three years, when an owl—the people of Chu call it *fu* 服—flew into the room. Knowing he would not live long, he consulted a book to divine his fortune. The book said, "If a wild bird 野鳥 flies into a room, its owner is about to leave."[97] When the Huo clan was exterminated, an owl "in the tree in front of the hall cried repeatedly."[98] In short, the owl was seen as a presage of death, perhaps because they are active in dark places and at night. The poem "Grave gate" ("Mumen" 墓門) in the *Book of songs* says: "At the gate to the tombs there are plum trees, and there are owls collecting on them."[99] Indeed, owls appear often on Han tomb paintings, frequently on the ceiling of the sacrificial hall. It is a symbol of the grave.

The crow is a filial, not an evil bird. In antiquity he was viewed as the essence of the sun, and when King Wu of the Zhou attacked the Shang king Zhou, the crow was even seen as a good sign."[100] This positive image also occurs in the Han, but under certain circumstances the crow was considered inauspicious. The *Jiaoshi Yilin* mentions a crow cawing in the courtyard as a warning of disaster, that a heaven-sent fire was about to break out.[101] These are the first instances of the later taboo on crows.

Uneasy chickens or dogs at home were considered a bad sign, as can be seen from the *Yilin*: "When the cock crows at the wrong time, his

[95] *Yanzi chunqiu*, "Zaxia," 6.375–76.

[96] *Shiji*, "Fengshan shu," 28.1361.

[97] *Shiji*, "Qu Yuan, Jia Sheng liezhuan," 84.2496–97. Cf. the mid-Western Han *Jiaoshi Yilin*, 1.13, which reads: "Birds came flying and gathered on the old tree. Their cry was ugly, the lord is about to leave."

[98] *Hanshu*, "Huo Guang zhuan," 68.2955–56.

[99] Tr. Legge, *Book of poetry*, p. 210.

[100] *Lunheng*, "Chubing," 3.131.

[101] Jiao Yanshou, *Jiaoshi yilin*, 1.13 and 4.261,263. The first reads: "A crow cawed, a heaven-sent fire is about to break out." This may be based on the *Zuozhuan*, Xianggong 13, where a great disaster occurred shortly after a bird cawed in the Song ancestral temple. The bird becomes a crow in Jiao's book, proof the crow is tabooed.

master will soon have trouble; when the dog barks without ceasing, the traveler should tarry."[102]

In sum, in the context of the idea of mutual resonance between heaven and humans, people often viewed changes in the heavens or their immediate environment as having to do with their own fate, from big matters like changes in the sun and the moon to small, like dogs barking or cocks crowing. Unusual phenomena were tabooed. Behind people's excessive attachment to the *yin-yang* theory and the fact they are "led along like oxen by taboos and are obsessed with little ciphers 小數, with the result they take no store in human activity but rely on ghosts and gods,"[103] we can see the ideas of following nature and harmonizing with heaven and earth.

Between humans and humans: taboos and customs of life and living

The taboos discussed hitherto concern humans in space-time, in a relationship of compliance or conflict, acceptance or avoidance of the natural order. But the human being is also the subject of taboos, as pregnant women or women who have just given birth. Humans are social creatures, living in close relationship with other humans. Even more important, the acts and words of one person may influence not just his own fate, but also the life and fate of others. This is the source of many taboos. For example, the behavior of a pregnant woman may influence the fate of her children; marriage and funerals impact the whole family's fate; clothing, eating, dwelling and traveling all relate to social congregation and exchange. Taboos in this area therefore reflect the norms of human relationships, as well as the ideals of good and bad fortune pursued for self and the group. Hence this section will not just focus on subjects of taboo but on taboos affecting human relations more widely, looked at in terms of life customs and social life.

Birth taboos

According to the Han idea of resonance, heaven and man are made of the same energy. Humans are born by receiving the energies of

[102] *Jiaoshi*, 3.199.
[103] *Hanshu*, "Yiwen zhi," 30.1734–35.

heaven and earth and, depending on whether these energies are "thick" or "thin" 厚薄, they will be fortunate or unfortunate. This is already decided at the moment of conception. Wang Chong states that, "The auspicious or inauspicious nature of the life received by each person is decided at the moment the parents emit their energies 施氣."[104] Hence the circumstances of conception—the time and day, the heavens, the environment—all require attention and give rise to many taboos.

First, when there are anomalies in the heavens or in the seasonal cycles, it is not good to have intercourse, lest evil energies be elicited and an abnormal child be born. The interdiction of intercourse during the period of spring thunder mentioned above is one example. Wang Chong says that children conceived under these circumstances, when "energies harm the fetus," may be born "mute, deaf, cripple, or blind" and "have a rebellious nature."[105] This clearly takes the fact thunder and lightning cause temporary deafness or blindness and the idea thunder expresses heaven's anger and, on the assumption "energies have an impact," links this to the circumstances of conception and its implications for the future child. The *Classic of birth* (*Chanjing* 產經), which dates to the Six Dynasties but carries on many Han taboos, says that, "when conjoining *yin* and *yang*," "nine calamities" 九殃 must be avoided:[106] midday, midnight, an eclipse of the sun, thunder and lightning, an eclipse of the moon, a rainbow, the winter and summer solstices, full and quarter moons, being drunk or full. Apart from the last, all nine dangers have to do with heavenly phenomena and time. At midnight, for example, heaven and earth are shut, so the energies received by a child conceived at that time will either be dark or make him deaf or blind. The child of an eclipse of the sun will have a body which is damaged (eclipsed). An eclipse of the moon is an unlucky sign for a woman. The *Book of rites*, in its section on marriage rites, says that heaven will send an eclipse of the moon to warn "a woman who does not apply herself to obedience." A child conceived during an eclipse of the moon, "together with her mother, will be inauspicious."

An inappropriate environment for or place of conception was also tabooed. Certain directions were tabooed for dwelling because it would be difficult to have a child. For example, the "section on inspecting

[104] *Lunheng*, "Mingyi," 2.50–51.
[105] Ibid., p. 53. See also *Taiping jing*, 112.572–73.
[106] TanbaYasuyori, *Yixin fang* (Shenyang, 1996), "Fangnei," 28.1150–51, citation of the *Chanjing*.

houses" 相宅篇 in Shuihudi Daybook A says that, if a small internal room is made when marrying a wife, and if that room is located on the northwest edge of the house, the couple may go childless. To build such a room by a path or a road is also "not good for children" 不宜子. To conceive during a period of mourning for a parent was seen as "infringing the rites and harming filial piety" 犯禮傷孝: even if the child was born, he would not grow to adulthood.[107]

There were many taboos during pregnancy. The Mawangdui silk manuscript *Taichan shu* 胎產書 (*Book of the fetus and birth*) describes fetal development and related taboos.[108] A fetus of one month is still fluid, while at two months it is like a lump of fat. During these two months the pregnant woman must not eat anything that is strong-flavored or stimulates, and she must stay quiet. In the third month the fetus looks like lard but still does not have a fixed form. Encounter with things can produce change, so taboos in this month are particularly important: the pregnant woman must not deal with dwarfs or see monkeys washing, lest the fetus be affected and become deformed; she must not eat leeks or rabbit stew, lest the fetus have fingers like leeks or a hare's lip.[109] In sum, there were taboos for both eating and seeing. From the fourth month on, eating, drinking and living quarters were an ongoing preoccupation. The ancients spoke of fetal education (*taijiao* 胎教), by which they meant that all forms of abnormal behavior and thoughts should be avoided.[110] The fact the fetus could be changed in response to things outside has to do with the idea the fetus takes form from energies received, and that the myriad things affect each other through the intermediary of energies.

Taboos related to birth were also numerous, starting with birth itself. Wang Chong says that his contemporaries avoided women who had just given birth as inauspicious. Anyone who was about to be involved in an auspicious ritual, to enter the hills and forests, or to go on a distant voyage across rivers and lakes should avoid contact with a new mother. Even the family of the newborn had a strong dislike for childbirth and would often go to live elsewhere until the child was a month old.[111] Why were

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[107] *Fengsu tongyi*, "Zhengshi," 2.128–29.

[108] *Mawangdui Hanmu boshu* 4, *Taichan shu* (Beijing, 1985), p. 136.

[109] Zhang Ji, *Jinkui yaolue* (Taibei, 1990), p. 686, says: "If a pregnant woman eats leeks, the child will have an extra finger." The *Huainanzi*, "Shuoshan xun," and *Lunheng*, "Mingyi," both mention getting a hare's lip from seeing or eating rabbit.

[110] *Da Dai liji*, "Baofu"; cf. Jia Yi, *Xinshu*, "Taijiao," 10.202–05.

[111] *Lunheng*, "Siwei," 23.977.

these taboos so strong? This must have to do with the taboos regarding menstrual and childbirth blood. The *Shuowen* says: "*Ban* 姅 refers to female pollution...The Han law code says: 'When a woman is *ban*, she must not participate in the ancestor sacrifices 侍祠.'" According to Duan Yuzai's 段玉載 gloss, *ban* pollution includes menstrual blood and the blood of childbirth or a miscarriage. The Han law code rule on this must derive from the *Liji* chapter "Neize" 內則:

> When a wife is about to give birth, or during menstruation (*yuechen* 月辰), she must live in a side room...If the husband is purifying himself for a sacrifice, he should not enter this room.

Female blood was considered impure and was therefore tabooed in the context of purifications for a sacrifice. Indeed, at that time, women should not even be seen. In the Eastern Han, when Zhou Ze 周澤 was minister of rites and his wife came to see him when he lay ill in the purification palace, he had her sent to prison for having broken the rules of purification.[112]

The placenta was also considered unlucky and was also another reason for avoiding women giving birth.[113] Because the placenta was inauspicious, it had to be buried in order to avoid it polluting other people. In addition, because it was of one body with the fetus, the direction in which it was buried could influence the fate of the child. The *Taichan shu* and the *Zaliao fang* 雜療方 (*Various methods of healing*) from Mawangdui contain the "diagram of Yu burying the placenta" 禹藏埋胞圖, together with explanations. The diagram is composed of 12 squares, one for each month, of which two are marked "death" 死 and the rest are designated with numbers. When burying the placenta, the "big hour" and "little hour" directions, marked "death," should be avoided. The direction corresponding to the largest number in a given month was where the placenta should be buried. The numbers represent the life expectancy of the newborn.[114]

The Qin law code ruled that "if a newborn was abnormal or his body was incomplete, killing him was not a crime" 其子新生而有怪物, 其身及不全而殺之, 勿罪.[115] In the year 179 AD, a woman gave birth to Siamese

[112] *Hou Hanshu*, "Zhou Ze zhuan," 79B.2579.
[113] *Lunheng*, "Siwei," 23.975–76.
[114] Li Jianmin, "Mawangdui Hanmu boshu 'Yu zangmai baotu' zhanzheng," *Zhongyang yanjiuyuan lishi yuyan yanjiusuo jikan* 65.4 (1994), 725–832.
[115] *Shuihudi Qinmu zhujian*, "Falü dawen," p. 109.

twins, thought them inauspicious, and discarded them.[116] Ying Shao 應劭 mentions that at the end of the Eastern Han an infant born with a beard was not raised lest it "harm its parents." People considered triplets inauspicious and did not raise them. The fact they were numerous made them resemble animals and was not good for the parents. An infant whose eyes were wide open at birth was called "born awake" (*wusheng* 寤生) and was also seen as harmful to its parents. A child born in the same month as its father was considered a danger to the father. All such children were not raised.[117] According to a bamboo slip found at Dunhuang, divination could be done on the basis of the head's direction at birth: "A child whose head faces east will be wealthy, if south noble, if west poor, and if north not long-lived. When a child is born, it sees heaven."[118] By "sees heaven" is meant the head's direction at the moment of birth. Shuihudi Daybook B contains a similar text (Shui B 74.2–79.1, 248).

Particular importance was attached to the time of birth. It was thought a whole life could be seen in this time. The daybooks contain quite a number of ways to divine whether the day of birth was auspicious or not, as in the "removal" (*chu* 除) and "Jichen" 稷辰 sections of Shuihudi Daybook A, which give lists of days. The section "Jenzi" 人字 and the Mawangdui *Taichan shu* images show human forms on which the earthly branches have been written in order to express the nature of the birth day. The section "stars" (*xing* 星) in Daybook A and "officials" (*guan* 官) in Daybook B show which stellar mansion is in charge of each day and whether it is auspicious or not. "Giving birth" 生子 in A and "birth" 生 in B give the same information for each day in the 60–day cycle. The Kongjiapo daybook section "giving birth" not only says for each of the 12 branches whether or not they are auspicious but also adds how long a child born on that day is likely to live and on what day it will die.[119] Because the day of birth could not be controlled or chosen, what was the point of knowing whether it would be auspicious and what the child's fate would be? This is worth investigating further.

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[116] *Hou Hanshu*, "Wuxing 5," 17.3347.

[117] *Fengsu tongyi*, "Zhengshi," 2.128–29; "Yiwen, shiji," pp. 560–62. Zhang Huan of the Eastern Han was prefect of Wuwei, whose people had many taboos: they killed any child born in the second or fifth month, or in the same month as its parents. Huan made every effort to correct this evil custom; see *Hou Hanshu*, "Zhang Huan zhuan."

[118] Gansu sheng wenwu kaogu yanjiu suo, ed., *Dunhuang Hanjian* (Beijing, 1991), slip 2057.

[119] *Kongjiapo*, p. 177.

According to Sima Jizhu 司馬季主, a Western Han specialist of selecting days and divining, "when a child was born, his parents would always first divine whether it was auspicious and only then accept it." Although he was referring to the kings of old, from what we have seen above about not raising children who were harmful to their parents, this had not changed. The Daybook A section "giving birth" says, "A child born on a *jiazi* day will be orphaned young; its clothes will be polluted" 甲子生子, 少孤, 衣污 (Shui A 140a6). To have no mother or be orphaned young is bad for the parents, and it may be that such a prognosis was linked to taboos on raising the child. Indeed Daybook B "birth" clearly states such a taboo: "A child born on a *jisi* day should not be raised: he is harmful to his parents" 凡己巳生, 勿舉, 不利父母 (Shui B 247). The function of these prognoses was thus not to choose a day of birth but to help decide whether or not to raise the child.

Be that as it may, the above materials show that people in Han times believed a child's fate could be known from its day of birth. These predictions reflected the hopes people had for their children, and also the fates they wished to avoid.[120] In addition to those already mentioned, raising children born in the first, second and fifth months was also tabooed.[121] One of Wang Chong's "four taboos" (*sihui* 四諱) was that children born in the first and fifth months should not be raised. If one insisted on raising them, the parents would be guilty of death-causing disaster.[122] The most tabooed of all was a child born on the fifth day of the fifth month. The *Fengsu tongyi* 風俗通義 (*Comprehensive meaning of customs*) mentions a "common saying" which held that a child born on that day, "if a boy, will bring harm to his father and, if a girl, to his mother." For example, when the lord of Mengchang, Tian Wen 孟嘗君田文, was born on that day, his father Tian Ying 田嬰 did not want his mother to raise him, thinking that, if he grew to be as tall as the door, he would bring harm to his parents. Wang Chong explains as follows:

> The first month is the start of the year, and the fifth month is when *yang* is at its height. A child born in these months will be of fiery nature and

[120] This has been well analyzed by Poo Mu-chou in "Shuihudi Qinjian 'rishu' de shijie," *Zhongyang yanjiuyuan lishi yuyan yanjiusuo jikan* 62.4 (1993), 635–38.

[121] For the taboo on the second month, see the article cited in n. 114. For the fifth month, see the citations below of Wang Chong and Ying Shao; also Li Zhende, "Han Sui zhijian de shengzi buju wenti," *Zhongyang yanjiuyuan lishi yuyan yanjiusuo jikan* 66.3 (1996), 752–55.

[122] *Lunheng*, "Sihui," 23.977–78.

> will overwhelm his parents. His parents will not be able to bear it and will suffer harm.[123]

This may be compared with our discussion of taboo times, where we saw that the fifth month corresponded to the branch *wu*, which is the time when fire is most fierce and poisonous. The taboo of a birth on the fifth day of the fifth month continued right into the Song period (960–1279).[124]

Marriage taboos

Marriage is the start of human relations. In order to preserve and protect these relations, a whole series of taboos came into existence. First, as regards the choice of a partner, already from before the Qin it was tabooed to marry someone of the same surname, and this was insisted on even more in the Han. Although marriage between people of the same surname but a different ancestor was not forbidden in the Han, it was promoted as a strict taboo, as we can see from the example of Wang Mang. He took the daughter of Wang Xian 王咸 as empress and at the same time forbade the Wangs of Yuancheng 元城 to marry anyone of the surnames Yao 姚, Gui 嬀, Chen 陳 or Tian 田 because they had the same ancestor as the Wangs.[125] To marry during mourning was contrary to the norms of human relationships and was therefore an important taboo which was enforced by the law.

As the start of a new phase in human life, the marriage process itself involved many taboos. For example, the custom of asking the name 問名 when discussing marriage showed the importance the ancients attached to names. Because the name could only be learned by way of the go-between, this also reflected the taboo on contact between the two sides prior to marriage. Unfortunately, we do not have sufficient evidence on these taboos in the received sources to be able to discuss them. Most available data concern marriage decisions.[126] Like the day of birth, the auspiciousness of the day of marriage was considered vital to its success or failure, and it was chosen with utmost care.

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[123] See *Fengsu tongyi*, "Yiwen, shiji," p. 561, and *Lunheng*, "Sihui," 23.979.

[124] Shang Binghe, *Lidai shehui fengsu shiwu kao*.

[125] *Hanshu*, "Wang Mang zhuan," 99B.4106. See also, *Hanshu*, "Yuanhou zhuan," 98.4028; *Hou Hanshu*, "Zhao Xiaowang Liang zhuan," 14.559.

[126] See, for example, the story about Emperor Wu asking diviners about the day he could marry; *Shiji*, "Rizhe liezhuan," 127.3221–22.

Material of the daybook kind contains many taboos concerning wedding dates. One estimate says more than half of the days in a year were not good.[127] Taboos of “establishing and removing” and “various chronograms” days were spread throughout the year, with inauspicious days occupying a large percentage. Also spread throughout the year were the taboo days of the 28-mansion cycle. For example, the section “stars” of Daybook A says that a wife taken on a Horn 角 day might be jealous, one on a Heart 心 day violent, and one on a Winnowing-Basket 箕 day talkative. Matters are also looked at from the point of view of the woman. For example, a section on mansion-controlled days for marrying out one’s daughter says:

> The house of him who marries his daughter on an Alignment day will come to an end. If the marriage takes place on an Encampment day, the parents will go live with their daughter; if on a Cowherd or a Serving-Maid day, the parents will have blame. A daughter married on an Alignment, Wings, or Chariot-Platform day, or on a *dingsi* day, will be abandoned. (Shui A 2, 4–6b2)
>
> 直參以出女，室必盡。直營室以出女，父母必從女居。直牽牛、須女出女，父母有咎。凡參、翼、軫以出女，丁巳以出女，皆棄之。

Thus infringing a taboo for the day on which a daughter was to be married could lead to her being abandoned, or could influence her own parents. Apart from the mansions, the moon also had influence: marriage was out of the question on the 14th and 15th days of the month, as well as on the new moons of the first and seventh months (Shui A 8–9b2; B 117–18).

Marriage is the conjoining of male and female, that is, of *yin* and *yang*. The daybooks take the sun to represent *yang* and the moon *yin* and use the 12 branches to distinguish six *yang* (*zi, yin, mao, si, you, xu*) and six *yin* (*chou, chen, wu, wei, shen, hai*) days and six *yang* (1, 2, 6–8, 12) and six *yin* (3–5, 9–11) months.[128] It is auspicious to take a wife in a female month and on a male day (Shui A 12) because this fits the principle of the conjoining of *yin* and *yang*. But if both month and day are male or female, they are tabooed.

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[127] Lin Sujuan, *Chunqiu zhi liang Han hunyin lisu yu zhidu yanjiu* (Xinzhu, 2003), p. 287.

[128] The original slips are incomplete; the list here is based on Liu Lexian, *Shuihudi Qinjian*, pp. 69–72.

Marriage is meant to last, but some days are linked to separation and destruction and are therefore inauspicious. Among these are days of "great defeat" 大敗日, "separation" 分離日 and "*gen* mountain" 艮山日. The days of great defeat occur in the third month of each season: on *geng* and *xin* days in spring, *ren* and *gui* in summer, *jia* and *yi* in fall and *bing* and *ding* in winter. These are "conflict days" 日衝, when the month and day conflict. For example, the spring is wood, while *geng* and *xin* are metal, which conquers wood. Conflict means a lack of harmony, and the marriage "will not go to the end" 不終 (Shui A 1b). *Xu* and *hai* days, the last two in the 12–day cycle, are "days of separation." This may be why they symbolize a marriage which is finished before it begins and may end in death or divorce (Shui A 10b). However, the Wuwei slips insist only on *hai* days, the last in the cycle, and say that taking a wife on that day is "not good for the grandparents" 不利姑公 (公婆).[129] This interdiction came later to be one of the most important marriage taboos.[130] As for *gen*-mountain days, this comes from the *Book of changes*, in which the *gen* trigram means being back-to-back, hence favoring separation and difference, not marriage.

In addition, *guichou*, *wuwu* and *jiwei* days were considered to be the days on which Yu married the daughter of Tushan 塗山. Because his marriage had much separation and little togetherness, to marry on such a day would lead either to abandonment or the loss of son. *Wushen* and *jiyou* are the days on which the Cowherd married the Weaving Girl: marriage on those days meant that, within three years, there would be death or separation. *Renshen* and *guiyou* are days when heaven shakes high mountains: a marriage on those days will not last. These taboos (Shui A 2b1) all use ancient myths as their basis.

There are also directional taboos. In the section "marriage" 家 (嫁) 子 of Daybook B (Shui B 197–201), Taisui is in the east in months one, five and nine, in the south in months two, six and ten, in the west in three, seven and 11, and in the north in four, eight and 12. What counts here is the direction in which the bride will leave her home when going to marry.[131] For example, when, in the first month, Taisui is in the east, this direction and its conflicting opposite west are most inauspicious,

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[129] *Wuwei Hanjian*, ed. Zhongguo kexueyuan kaogu yanjiusuo and Gansu sheng bowuguan (Beijing, 1964), p. 136.

[130] Huang Yinong, "Jiaqu yi ji—xuanze shu zhong de 'hai bu jiaqu' yu 'yinyang bu jiang' kaobian," *Fazhi yu lisu*, ed. Liu Tseng-kuei (Taibei, 2002), pp. 285–308.

[131] The passage has been partially reconstituted by Liu Lexian, *Shuihudi*, p. 90.

while the north is very auspicious. We saw above that, by the end of the Western Han, Taisui was already a powerful *shensha*. Thus Wang Chong says:

> If Taisui is in *zi*, people should not go south or north. This should be avoided both for building a house and marrying…One must not be in contact with Taisui, nor must one conflict with its opposite.[132]

Thus the direction where Taisui is found and the opposite direction are not propitious for marriage. Even though "Taisui" has a different meaning in Wang Chong and the daybooks, the principles of auspiciousness are the same.

The *guxu* 孤虛 section of the recently published Kongjiapo daybook also treats of directional taboos for marriage. *Guxu* refers to the two "orphan" (*gu*) branches (when the ten stems combine with the 12 branches, two branches are left over) and their opposite, "empty" (*xu*) branches in each of the six decades of the 60-count cycle. For example, the first decade begins with *jiazi* and contains neither *xu* nor *hai*; as these two are "orphan," their spatial opposites *chen* and *si* are "empty," meaning that in the *jiazi* decade the southeast (*chensi*) is "empty" and the northwest (*xuhai*) "orphan." The "orphan and empty" section states:

> When taking a wife or marrying a daughter, do not go from the orphan to the empty: going out is inauspicious. Do not go from the empty to the orphan: the husband will be murdered.[133]
>
> 凡取妻嫁女，毋從孤之虛，出不吉。從虛之孤，殺夫。

Marriage is a major life event, and on the day of marriage not only must the bride be fetched, a banquet must be served for guests. As a result, days tabooed for going out and banqueting guests are also tabooed for marriage. For example, "returned branch days" were the worst days for going out in the Han, and "days on which the Red Emperor descends" were most inauspicious both for going out and banqueting guests.[134] On "killer days" and "blood taboo" days, it was not permitted to kill animals or see blood, so marriage was impossible.

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[132] *Lunheng*, "Nan sui."

[133] *Kongjiapo*, p. 143.

[134] The Red Emperor was the god in charge of punishments in heaven's jail; see Liu Tseng-kuei, "Qinjian 'rishu' zhong de chuxing lisu yu xinyang," *Zhongyang yanjiuyuan lishi yuyan yanjiusuo jikan* 72.3 (2001), 503–41.

In sum, if the first group of marriage-related taboos had to do with human relationships, this set expresses the harmony of *yin* and *yang* and the desire that marriage be stable and long-lasting.

Mourning and funeral taboos

Death is the end of life, and funeral rituals are the last rite of passage. For them, too, there are many taboos. To begin with, death and funerals are intrinsically inauspicious, and everything having to do with death or anything reminiscent of funerals is tabooed. In daily life, for example, the word "death" is avoided. The *Book of rites* chapter "Quli" 曲禮 says that, while the parents are alive, white-bordered caps and clothes may not be worn by sons because these are like funeral clothing. Nor should one sleep on one's back because the disposition of the arms and legs resemble those of a dead person.[135]

It was believed that the days of death and burial could influence the fate of the living. Daybook information of this kind is quite abundant. The "heavenly bodies" section of Daybook A, for example, associates each of the 28 mansions with a day: death on a Net 畢 day means a second person will die (Shui A 85a1). Death on an Eastern Well 東井 day is even more frightening, because four other persons will die (Shui A 89a1). If a person dies on a *zi* day, there will be another death on that day (Shui A 83b1). A death on a *hai* day means two others will die; if on a *jiachen* or *jiayin* day, another person will die; if on a *jiazi* day a boy dies, within the year an adult woman will die (Shui A 94–96b1). These are similar to Wang Chong's statement that, "if someone dies on a *wu* or a *ji* day, another corpse 復尸 will follow."[136] These taboos show how much death was feared. They were afraid one inauspicious event would lead to another and that the shadow of death would never be dissipated.

Other taboos show a belief that deaths on different days could influence people living in different directions. The section "death" in the recently excavated Xuanquan Han slips says, for example, that death on a *chen* day will lead to the death of someone in a house to the southwest; death on a *mao* day implies deaths in three houses to the southwest.[137]

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[135] *Lunheng*, "Sihui," 23.980.

[136] *Lunheng*, "Biansui," 24.1013–14.

[137] Hu Pingsheng, Zhang Defang, *Dunhuang Xuanquan Hanjian shisui* (Shanghai, 2001), pp. 178–79.

Daybook B has a section on the impact on the living in each direction of deaths on the various stem days in each season (Shui B 202–23):

> In the third month of spring, if a death occurs on a *jia* or *yi* day, thereafter there will be joy; due east stands to gain. If someone dies on a *bing* or *ding* day, there will be joy in the east, while the west hates it…If there is a death on a *wu* or a *ji* day, leave the house and go north lest there be another death.
>
> 春三月,甲乙死者,其後有憙,正東有得。丙丁死者,其東有熹,其西惡之…戊已死,去室北,不去有死。

Here the influence is not invariably bad, there are also auspicious directions. The Kongjiapo daybook section on "death and loss" (*sishi* 死失) says that death on a given day means loss for several homes in a given direction.[138]

Many taboos obtained for those in mourning: they could not bathe nor clip their nails, drink ale, eat meat, approach women, make music, betroth a wife or visit a friend.[139] These taboos have to do with feelings and respect toward the deceased and would seem to have nothing to do with auspices. What is worth discussing are the taboos concerning weeping. Wang Chong says there must be "no weeping on a *chen* day, lest there be another funeral 重喪."[140] A similar taboo is found in the daybooks: "There must be no weeping or digging of graves on a *chen* day or there will be a second funeral" 辰不可以哭, 穿肄 (肂), 且有二喪 (Shui A 191.2). This is also found in the Wuwei slips.[141] The section "death" in the Xuanquan slips say that weeping on a *chen* day will lead to "weeping again within three months" 不出三月復哭. The same section forbids weeping on *wu* days and on *yin* days in the third month of summer. Apparently, the ancients did not limit the taboo to *chen* days, but by the time of Wang Chong, *chen* days received the most attention. Why should one not weep on a *chen* day? According to a quotation from "Yin Yang shuo" 陰陽說 (the Yin/Yang theory) in the *Yanshi jiaxun* 顏氏家訓 (*Family instructions of Sire Yan*), "*Chen* represents the position of both water 水墓 and earth 土墓 graves. That is why one should not weep."[142] Because there are two graves, the fear is that there will be

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[138] *Kongjiapo*, pp. 168-70.
[139] Yang Shuda, *Handai hunsang lisu kao*.
[140] *Lunheng*, "Biansui," 24.1013–14.
[141] *Wuwei*, p. 137.
[142] For a discussion on the "life and death" cycle of the five agents, and the reason why *chen* combines the graves of water and earth, see Xiao Ji, *Wuxing dayi* (Shanghai, 2001), ed. Qian Hang, "Lun shengsi suo," 2.32–34.

weeping for two funerals. Zhao Jianwei thinks that the *chen* position corresponds to the dragon and, since prayers for rain were done by shamans tearfully addressing the dragon star, weeping on a *chen* day is like praying for rain; but rain causes graves to collapse—whence the taboo.[143] This is innovative, but does not deal with the "double funeral," so the "double grave" explanation seems more apt.

To dig the grave requires disturbing the earth, for which there are day taboos. We just saw that it was also not good to dig graves on *chen* days. Shuihudi A has a line which reads: "Do not bury on *chen* lest there be a second funeral" (Shui A 105a2). From the Xuanquan section on death we can see that digging a grave on a *chen* day is even worse than weeping: "Within three months there will be five funerals." Digging graves on *hai*, *mao* and *wei* days is also forbidden.

Burial days are even more important. According to the "Calendar for burials" 葬曆 quoted by Wang Chong, it is said that:

> For burials, avoid the nine spaces 九空 and earth ladle 地臽, as well as hard and soft days and odd and even months. If the day is auspicious, there will be no harm. Hard and soft complement each other, odd and even correspond with each other, so these are auspicious times. If not in accord with this calendrical principle, it becomes inauspicious.

"nine spaces" and "earth ladle" are the names of *shensha*. What "earth ladle" refers to is not clear. According to "calendar examples" 曆例, cited in the *Xingli kaoyuan* 星曆考原 (*Investigation of the origins of calendrical astrology*), "nine spaces" refers to *chen* days in the first, fifth and ninth, *si* in the second, sixth and tenth, *xu* in the third, seventh and 11th, and *wei* days in the fourth, eighth and 12th months.[144] Not only must these days be avoided, accommodation must be made with the hard and soft, odd and even. The section on "burial days" 葬日 in Daybook A divides such days into two kinds, with six "male days" and six "female." If a person dies on a female day and is then buried on a female day, there will be a second death. Male and female days may be understood as *yang* and *yin* days, and even though this is not identical to the hard and soft days of the ritual books, the principle of pairing *yin* and *yang* days is the same.[145] As regards the soft and hard and odd

[143] Zhao Jianhua, pp. 154–55.
[144] Li Guangdi, *Yuding xingli kaoyuan* (Siku quanshu ed.), 4.11.
[145] See Liu Lexian, *Shuihudi*, pp. 69–72. But Liu is wrong to say it is better for men to die and be buried on female days and vice versa: the slips say clearly that death and burial should take place on differently gendered days.

and even matching of death and burial days, Zhang Yincheng's analysis of the days of death and burial of Han emperors and empresses found that there was in fact no rule that applied to the emperors. But in the Eastern Han, with one exception, the empresses' days of death and burial fit Wang Chong's description of the matching of hard and soft and odd and even. Thus even the imperial house followed these taboos.[146]

There must also have been many taboos concerning place of burial, but no materials have survived. We can get some idea from the burial incident involving Wu Xiong 吳雄 of the Eastern Han. His family was poor when he was young, so when his mother died, a place no one else wanted was chosen for burial. Nor was the time of burial chosen, and the shamans all said it would lead to the eradication of his entire clan. But Wu Xiong paid no heed and, after three generations, a family member became chamberlain for law enforcement.[147] Thus most people at that time would have believed in the taboos concerning burial sites.

There were also taboos for going to the graveside. Wang Chong mentions that people who had suffered a punishment of mutilation could not go to the grave to sacrifice. Strict observance of the taboo meant mutilated criminals could not even engage in mourning and should not see the caskets of others. Wang Chong thinks this is because their bodies were mutilated, so they should not appear before their ancestors. But Ying Shao says that his contemporaries thought that if a criminal went to the grave site, he would cause others to die.[148] A Xuanquan bamboo slip says that knives may not be carried when going to a grave site, because "the dead will not dare approach" 死人不敢近. Nor was crying allowed, lest "the deceased dare not eat" 死人不敢食.[149] Here it is the dead who are taken into account.

Body taboos

In the course of a life, apart from rites of passage, the body itself is also a focus of taboos. Among them, those relating to blood are of particular interest. Blood represents life, and regardless of whether it is human or animal blood, it is closely tied up with beliefs. In antiquity, a sacrifice

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[146] Zhang Yincheng, *Gudai jinji*, pp. 35–39.

[147] *Hou Hanshu*, "Guo Gong zhuan," 36.1546.

[148] *Lunheng*, "Sihui," 23.970; *Fengsu tongyi*, "Yiwen, Shiji," p. 566.

[149] *Dunhuang Xuanquan*, p. 183. A note refers to a Fangmatan tale which also says, "When sacrificing on the tomb, do not weep" 祠墓者毋敢㱿 (哭).

using the blood of a victim was called *xin* 釁. Blood was also used in sworn alliances, and to drive out the nefarious. In the first month, dog blood was smeared on the gate in order to get rid of the inauspicious.[150] But if blood was sacred, it was also impure. Before making sacrifice in antiquity, the sacrificer had to purify himself, a process which involved not eating meat because to be in contact with blood made one impure. Once Emperor Yuan (r. 48–33 BC) was about to get in a boat to go sacrifice in the ancestral temple when the censor Xue Guangde 薛廣德 took off his hat, kowtowed and remonstrated: "If Your Majesty does not listen to his servant, his servant will kill himself. If blood soils your carriage, Your Majesty may not enter the temple!"[151] Thus to come in contact with blood before a sacrifice was taboo. This also explains why women who had just given birth had to be avoided.

Most worthy of our attention are the blood taboo days (*xueji* 血忌) that could not be infringed when sacrificing. Wang Chong says:

> In the context of sacrifice people speak of the taboo of being in contact with blood, and in the context of burial they speak of not conflicting with the hard and the soft. These are all taboos relating to the ghosts, gods, and the inauspicious. If people do not avoid breaking these taboos, there will be illness and disaster.[152]

What is meant by "blood taboo?" The *Lunheng* says: "When sacrificing an animal or being in contact with blood, the blood taboo and month murders 月殺 must be avoided."[153] While the precise content here of the blood taboo day is not clear, a calendar slip from Juyan may be related. It is divided into two horizontal columns. The month is not clear in the upper column, which bears five lines of this kind: "Day 3: do not kill domestic animals and see blood" 三日不可以殺六畜見血. In the lower column are listed the days on which, from the ninth to the 12th month, one must not kill domestic animals and see blood.[154] Thus "blood taboos" were important enough to appear in such notes on the calendar. Among the Juyan slips there is another which lists days of "establishing and removal" in the upper column. Under the day of the full moon, "blood taboo" and "lost" day taboos are written. Separate Dunhuang calendar slips read, "11th day, *jiawu*: destruction,

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[150] *Fengsu tongyi*, "Cidian," 8.378.
[151] *Hanshu*, "Xue Guangde zhuan," 71.3047.
[152] *Lunheng*, "Sihui," 23.969.
[153] *Lunheng*, "Jiri," 24.993.
[154] *Juyan xinjian* (Beijing, 1990), p. 350, no.EPT58.21.

blood taboo, and heavenly plum" 十一日甲午, 破, 血忌、天李.[155] The daybooks contain a number of taboos on killing sacrificial victims, as on *jia* and *yi* days in the third month of spring, because it is "a time when heaven expands life" 天所以張生時. The same is true of *bing* and *ding* days in summer, *geng* and *xin* in fall, and *ren* and *gui* in winter (Shui A 102b–106b). In sum, in each season the stem days of that season were seen as days when heaven promoted the energies of life, and it was not meet to kill.[156]

Regardless of whether it is animal or human blood, seeing blood is usually a bad sign. An example is blood on the gate, as in the famous tale about the worthy old woman in the town of Liyang 歷陽. One day someone told her that if on the threshold of the city's east gate she saw blood, this was a sign the city was about to sink into a lake and she should rush to the hills without looking back. Every day she went to the gate, and one day the gate official asked her why. That night he killed a chicken and purposely smeared its blood on the gate. The next day, when the old lady saw the blood on the gate, she ran to the hills, and the city did indeed sink into a lake.[157] A similar tale is told of the time when Wang Mang was regent. His eldest son, Wang Yu 王宇, did not approve of what Wang Mang was doing and, plotting together with the erudite Wu Zhang 吳章 and his wife's elder brother Lü Kuan 呂寬, smeared blood on the family gate during the night so as to scare his father with a warning from the spirit world. But their acts became known, and they were executed.[158]

Hair and nails should not be thrown away, and in certain cases, cutting them had to be done on a selected day. When a person died, the hair and nails were trimmed and buried with the corpse, as others have shown.[159] As for washing the body, there were even books on the subject. The *Lunheng* cites a *Mushu* 沐書 (*Book on bathing*): "Bathing on a *zi* day makes people like you; bathing on a *mao* day makes your hair turn white." Wang Chong thinks the taboo concerns washing the head, not the body.[160] His contemporaries did think the head more important than the body, but the daybooks say "not to wash on a *mao*

[155] *Juyan*, no. EPT65.425B; *Dunhuang Hanjian*, no. 1968B.
[156] For blood taboos in relation to the 28 stellar mansions, see *Kongjiapo*, p. 179.
[157] *Huainanzi*, "Chuzhen xun," 2.75–78.
[158] *Hanshu*, "Yun Chang zhuan," 67.2927–28, and "Lou Hu zhuan," 92.3707–08.
[159] Jiang Shaoyuan, *Fa, xu, zhua: guanyu tamen de mixin* (Taibei, 1971 reprint of Shanghai, 1928).
[160] *Lunheng*, "Jiri," 24.993–95.

day" 毋以卯沐浴 (Shui A 104a2). This taboo would seem to concern the entire body, not just the head. At the same time, it is true that the parts of the body did not have equal value, and different towels had to be used for the head and for the upper and lower body.[161]

It was thought that both the hands and spittle had magic power. It was forbidden to point at a rainbow because pointing is a kind of magic, and pointing at the stellar mansions was used in rituals.[162] A Han-era proverb said, "If a thousand people point at someone, he dies without being ill." The *Mozi* chapter "Elucidation of spirits" 明鬼 says that "pointing 指 and drawing 畫 kill people." Spitting at someone was more than just impolite: it was a form of cursing. When Princess Chang 長公主 was speaking ill of Lady Li 栗姬 to Emperor Jing, she said that, when Lady Li and other courtiers and ladies of the court got together, they would have their attendants curse and spit behind his back.[163] When, in the time of Emperor Zhao, the minister of agriculture Tian Yannian 田延年 was being accused, he did not want to go to prison: "Then people will point at me and laugh, and guards will spit 唾 at my back."[164] The *Lunheng* says that people in Chu and Yue, if when speaking with people they spit at them, the belly of that person will swell and burst. They need only curse a tree and the tree withers, spit at a bird and the bird falls.[165]

There were also taboos concerning certain bodily signs: humming in the ears, twitching of the eyes and sneezing all meant something was about to happen and one had to be prepared. Sometimes it was necessary to have recourse to "sealing talismans and quelling documents" 封符鎮書 in order to avoid the catastrophe.[166] The shadow was viewed as an extension of the body. During the Wei, someone asked Dong Xun 董勛: "It is said that it is the custom not to climb on top of a house in the fifth month because, were one to do so and see one's shadow, his soul would leave him."[167] This must have to do with the length of

[161] Liu Tseng-kuei, "Zhongguo gudai de muyu lisu," *Dalu zazhi* 89.4 (1999), 15.
[162] *Hanshu*, "Xuanyuan liuwang zhuan," 80.3325.
[163] *Shiji*, "Waiji shijia," 49.1976.
[164] *Hanshu*, "Tian Yannian," 90.3665–66.
[165] *Lunheng*, "Yandu," 23.949–50.
[166] See Chen Pan, "Han Jin yijian oushu," *Han Jin yijian shixia qizhong* (Taibei, 1975), p. 10.
[167] *Taiping yulan*, "Shixu bu," 22.237, citation in a note. This must be a piece of Dong Xun's *Wen lisu*. According to Xun, from the Qin down to the Wei, this custom never changed.

the shadow. Whenever there is sun, the body has a shadow, but in the fifth month, near the time of the summer solstice, the shadow is at its shortest and it becomes a sign that life is ebbing—whence the taboo.[168] There was also the custom of not stepping on the shadow: "People going and coming do not tread on the shadow 不履影."[169] While this is a way of expressing respect, it also has to do with the belief the shadow is a part of the body.

Taboos regarding food and drink

There is little material on this subject. There are, for example, no taboos on days, for people must eat daily. In the daybooks, eating and drinking is referred to only in the context of inviting guests. For this the worst days are "when the Red Emperor descends," that is, a given day in each month's first decade: *wu* in the first, *hai* in the second, then *shen, chou, xu, mao, zi, si, yin, wei, chen* and *you*. On these days the Red Emperor sends down misfortune and not only should guests not be invited, nothing should be undertaken. Infringing this taboo leads to a whole year of misfortune. For example, if on such a day one goes out and encounters rain, then within three months there will be a death (Shui B 127–30).

Banquets are auspicious events, so fighting at them is a major taboo. Guests should not be invited on a Shangshuo 上朔 day because fighting could break out.[170] For example, in a *jia* year, the year's strength lay in *jia*, and the energies of that stem were exhausted in *hai*. Another taboo forbade "moving ale beakers 樽 when sitting": to do so could cause fighting.[171]

There were also seasonal taboos on banqueting. We have already discussed the Cold Food festival and the sacrifice for changing the fire. The *Jingui yaolue* 金匱要略 (*Essential prescriptions of the golden coffer*) says that, "in spring, one should not eat liver, in summer heart,

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[168] Zhao Jianwei, pp. 72–73.

[169] Dai De, *Da Dai liji*, com. Gao Ming (Taibei, 1989), "Wei jiangjun wenzi," 60.239–40.

[170] *Fengsu tongyi*, "Yiwen, shiji," 10.562, citing a *Kanyu shu* 堪輿書. *Lunheng*, "Biansui," 24.1013–14, also says "not to gather people on a Shangshuo day." According to *Yuding xingli kaoyuan* 御定星曆考原 and *Xieji bianfang shu* 協紀辨方書, the Shangshuo days are a *guihai* day in a *jia* year, a *jisi* day in an *yi* year, *yihai* in *bing*, *xinsi* in *ding*, *dinghai* in *wu*, *guisi* in *ji*, *jihai* in *geng*, *yisi* in *xin*, *xinhai* in *ren*, and *dingsi* in *gui*.

[171] *Fengshu tongyi*, "Yiwen, shiji," 10.563–64.

in fall lungs, in winter kidneys, or in the last month of each season spleen."[172] Thus in each season the corresponding organ should not be eaten. Recommending insipid food in the fifth month, when "*yin* and *yang* are in battle," is another example of linking food to the seasons. Ying Shao says his contemporaries believed that "drinking during a partial eclipse of the sun or moon could cause the loss of part of the lip 令人蝕口." There was also a taboo on making soy sauce when it was thundering because eating such sauce could cause "thunder to sound in the belly."[173] Eating scaly 鱗甲 creatures on the six *jia* days was also tabooed.[174] These last three taboos—"eclipse" of the lip, thunder in the belly, *jia*-scaly—are in fact all examples of sympathetic magic.

Clothing taboos

Clothing is an extension of the body and represents both the body and the individual. In the Spring and Autumn era, Yurang 豫讓 sought to take vengeance for Zhibo 智伯. After he had stabbed Xiangzi 襄子 several times without success, Xiangzi told someone to fetch his clothes. Having stabbed the clothes three times with his sword to symbolize taking vengeance, Yurang then committed suicide.[175] In the Han, every month after an emperor died his robe and cap were taken out of his private room in the tomb and driven by carriage to the ancestral temple. This was called "parading the robe and cap" 遊衣冠.[176] In antiquity, there were also "tombs with cap and robe" 衣冠冢. It was said, for example, that the tomb of the Yellow Emperor on Mount Qiao 橋山 contained only his cap and robe.[177] The *Liji* section "Quli" also contains a taboo against stepping on another person's shoes 毋踐履.

Wang Chong mentions taboos concerning tailoring: "There are books on tailoring which explain good and bad days. If clothes are cut on an inauspicious day, there will be disaster and, if on an auspicious day,

[172] *Jinkui yaolue*, pp. 648–49.

[173] *Fengsu tongyi*, "Shiji," 563–64.

[174] *Jinkui yaolue*, p. 668. This is because the word for "scale" in Chinese contains the word *jia*.

[175] *Shiji*, "Ceke liezhuan," 86.2521.

[176] *Shiji*, "Shusun Tong zhuan," 99.2726, quotation of Ying Shao in the commentary; also *Hanshu*, "Wei Xuancheng zhuan," 73.3115–16.

[177] *Shiji*, "Xiaowu benji," 21.472–73.

good fortune."[178] There are no Han books of this kind extant, but in the daybooks we can find information: on a Xiu 秀 day, "cutting clothes, robes, and belts is auspicious" 折 (製) 衣常 (裳)、服帶, 吉 (Shui A 13a2, 32a). Clearly stated taboos for tailoring may be found in sections on "clothing" 衣 (Shui A 26a2), "good days for clothing" 衣良日 (Shui A 113b–114b) and "clothing taboos" 衣忌 (Shui A 115–17b). For example, wearing clothes made on a *dingchou* day could make a person happy, and clothes made on a *dinghai* day meant good fortune; *dingsi* clothes were comfortable; thanks to *guiyou* clothing, one would have many clothes to wear (Shui A 26a2). If one wore clothing cut on a *dingyou* day in the 11th month, one would wear beautiful silk clothes his whole life long, and if *dingyou* clothing of the tenth month one would wear silk for a year (Shui A 114b). It would seem *dingyou* days were the best for cutting clothing.

By contrast, making clothes on inauspicious days was not beneficial. According to the section on "clothing taboos," new clothes should not be made on a *jiwei* day in the sixth month because they would bring death. Clothes made on *ji, wu, ren, gui, bingshen* and *dinghai* days will be worn by the dead. Nor could linings be inserted in clothes in the fifth and sixth months. The fifth day before the end of every month was also tabooed.

People had likewise to be careful about the day on which they wore new clothes. On Chariot-Platform days, for example, one could "ride a horse-drawn carriage and wear a [new] robe" 乘車馬、衣常 (裳) (Shui A 95a1). Fangmatan Daybook A has sections on "good days for beneficial clothing" 利衣良日 and "good days for wearing new clothes" 衣新衣良日.[179]

Taboos related to houses

Information on the subject of living quarters is relatively abundant, and we will divide our discussion into taboos on building, moving into a house, the land on which a house is built, and taboos on behavior in a house.

There are many days on which it is inauspicious to build: on Xiu days, everything else is auspicious, but not "putting a roof on a house"

[178] *Lunheng*, "Jiri," 24.994.
[179] "Tianshui Fangmatan Qinjian jiazhong 'rishu' shiwen," p. 6.

復 (覆) 室蓋屋 (Shui A 32a, 33a), nor can one do so on Horn and Encampment-controlled days (Shui A 68a1, 80a1). There are also many *shensha*-related taboos (Shui A 96a1–101a1, 104–09a1). First, digging is a fairly direct offense against nature. The severest case is cutting through an earth artery 地脈,[180] which directly disturbs natural energies. That is why earth taboos are a part of time taboos and are closely linked to the "Monthly ordinances," as in the taboo on piling up earth in the fifth, sixth, 11th and 12th months, or that digging in winter "wakes out of hibernation" 發蟄 (Shui A 106a1,142b). Infringing earth taboos has a different impact on people living in different parts of a house. If one builds a house on a day "when the Lord builds houses" 帝爲室日,

> if it is the main bedroom which is built, then the head of household will die; if the right side, the wife of the eldest son will die; if the left side, the wife of the middle son; if the outer wall, a grandson; if the northern wall, oxen and goats will die. (Shui A 100a)
>
> 筑（築）大內, 大人死。筑（築）右[土阝], 長子婦死。筑（築）左[土阝], 中子婦死。筑（築）外垣, 孫子死。筑（築）北垣, 牛羊死。

Apart from the general taboo on building, there are specific taboos on building houses, putting on roofs, opening doors and gates, putting gates in place, wells, walls, granaries, ox and goat pens, ditches and outhouses. These taboos extend not just to building but also to destroying houses, gates and walls. Directional taboos are also of utmost importance: in spring one must not build an east-facing house, and there are comparable taboos for the other seasons (Shui A 9612–99a1). This taboo is in conflict with the direction of the "monthly establishment" 月建 (i.e., the "little year"). Wang Chong says the most tabooed direction was that of Taisui:

> According to custom, when breaking ground or building a house, there are what the year and month "eat" 食, and on the location they are eating, someone will die. When Taisui is in *zi*, the year eats in *you*, and in the first month of the year, a *yin* 寅 month, the month eats in *si*. This means that undertaking work in a *zi* or *yin* location will cause families related to *you* and *si* to be eaten.[181]

Thus the direction in which ground-breaking is done influences not only the family itself, but above all the neighbors. Direction is also important

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[180] Meng Tian says he was guilty of this crime against heaven when building the Long Wall; see *Shiji*, "Meng Tian zhuan," 88.2569–70.
[181] *Lunheng*, "Yan menri shi," 23.981.

in internal arrangements. Wang Chong says that "westward extended houses" 西益宅 were the most tabooed, that is, houses on which the roof was put on facing west were thought to offend inauspicious spirits. Another explanation says the west is the most honorable direction, so that breaking earth toward the west is harmful for the head of household.[182] Such taboos have not just to do with auspiciousness, but also with human relationships.

Moving into a house also involved taboos. For example, one could move in on "gathering days" 收日 (Shui A 23a2), because the action fit the idea of gathering.[183] On Encampment days, moving in was tabooed.

Notions of geomancy had already formed in the Qin-Han era. The section of the *Shiming* 釋名 (*Explanation of names*) called "explaining palaces and houses" 釋宮室, says: "The word 'dwelling' 宅 means 'to choose' 擇: one selects an auspicious site and builds on it." Shuihudi Daybook A (114a1–123a3) has a section on "setting up house gates" 直 (置) 室門 which gives the auspiciousness and names of 22 oriented gates.[184] Although the names are different from those in use later, the gates have much in common with the 24 oriented gates of the *Huangdi zhaijing* 黃帝宅經 (*Book of dwellings of the Yellow Emperor*). These materials show two things: first, the orientation of a gate could determine the fate of a family. A "south-facing gate is the gate of a general, where low class people dare not live" 南門, 將軍門, 賤人弗敢居; "a fault-eating gate is most inauspicious and, if the owner does not change it within five years, he will become feeble" 食過門, 大凶, 五歲弗更, 其主 (癃). Second, the qualities of the house change. There are years for rebuilding or re-orienting the gates of virtually every house. Every so many years the gates must be rebuilt or changed, meaning the quality of a house's orientation is not eternal.

Han people believed in acting in accord with heaven, but in some cases heaven had defects, so people, when building a house, sometimes

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[182] *Lunheng*, "Sihui," 23.968–70; *Fengsu tongyi*, "Yiwen, Shiji," p. 562.

[183] Most scholars have understood "to enter the house" 入室 as referring to marriage. Chen Hui interprets it as coming home after a long voyage; see "Jiudian rishu jiaodu jiqi xiangguan wenti," *Renwen luncong* (Wuhan, 1988), p. 99. That these are both inaccurate may be seen from Fangmatan Daybook A21 where, instead of "enter the house", the text reads 'live in the house" 可以居處.

[184] Fangmatan has a similar diagram, as yet unpublished. The recently published Kongjiapo daybook, pp. 164–66, has a section with the same name and much the same content as Shuihudi A.

purposely left something unfinished. In the *Shiji* we read: "How can things be perfect? Heaven itself is not perfect, so people, when building a house, leave three tiles unlaid in order to correspond to heaven."[185] Thus if heaven itself was not perfect, it is not hard to understand that houses could flourish and decline, as Wang Chong says: "Houses flourish and decline... When a house flourishes, people stay in it; when it declines, they avoid it."[186]

Another practice current in the Han was to divide the surnames into five notes corresponding to the five agents. These had then to be fitted to the direction of the house gate. The *Lunheng* refers to it in "techniques for designing dwellings" 圖宅術: "The houses of people of the *shang* 商 note should not face south nor those of the *zhi* 徵 note face north." This is because *shang* belongs to metal, which fire—the south—conquers, and *zhi* belongs to fire, which water—the north—conquers.[187]

The auspiciousness of a house has not only to do with direction, but also with its shape and general organization. Shuihudi A contains a section which scholars refer to as "scrutinizing dwellings" 相宅.[188] In it, the shape of a house is of utmost importance: if a house is the tallest in a town, its owner will be noble but poor; if it is the lowest, he will be wealthy but in poor health. If a house is high on all four sides and low in the middle, its owner will be wealthy and, if the contrary, poor. The implications of the relative height of the four sides and length of the left and right sides, the direction of protruding sections and the height of the walls are all described in detail. Starting from the inner courtyard, the corridors, bedrooms, palace (central hall), sacrificial hall, ponds, drainage system, enclosures, granaries, wells, outhouses, screen-walls, gates, paths and the wood used in the sacrificial hall all can be auspicious or not.[189] Each of these elements has a different impact on different members of the family. For example, building a pond due north is harmful to the mother; a well on the northwest corner may lead to an end of the lineage; if on the paths around the house small inner quarters are built, it will be hard to have sons; if the outhouse is

[185] *Shiji*, "Gui Ce liezhuan," 128.3237–38, text and commentary.
[186] *Lunheng*, "Biansui," 24.1014–15.
[187] *Lunheng*, "Jieshu," 25.1038.
[188] See Liu Lexian, *Shuihudi*, pp. 218–25. Similar texts are found at Jiudian: see Hubei sheng wenwu kaogu yanjiu suo, Beijing daxue zhongwenxi, eds, *Jiudian Chujian* (Beijing, 2000), pp. 45–59.
[189] Yan Guichang and Mei Li, "Chu Qin 'rishu' suojian de juzhu xisu," *Minsu yanjiu* 2002.2, p. 125.

to the northeast, the wife may be constantly sick. Relative size of the gates and the house are also important: a "big gate for a small palace" or the contrary are both inauspicious, as is living to the right of the ward gate.[190]

Information on taboos on behavior in houses is not abundant. Some have simply become part of daily life and are hard to distinguish. For example, the taboo on sitting splay-legged 坐毋箕 mentioned in the *Liji* may be explained by the fact that the ancients did not use underwear, so this is a body-related taboo. The taboo on bathing in the same water basin was because it was believed this could lead to fighting.[191] We saw above that, when sleeping, one should not "lie on one's back." When sweeping, one should not sweep half the floor and then turn the broom over to someone else, because burial also involved the action of sweeping and it was strongly tabooed to hand over the broom. It was also forbidden to sharpen a knife on a well: adding the character for "knife" to that for "well" produced the character for "punishment" 刑.[192] The *Huainanzi* mentions the belief that, if one placed one's pillow on the threshold to sleep, ghosts would walk on your head.[193] Ying Shao notes people thought ghosts would walk on the head of someone lying on the steps outside the gate and cause him to go mad.[194] All of these have to do with behavior in or near the house.

Travel taboos

Because of the limits on transportation and security, traveling was a major undertaking. Going far off, one would encounter unforeseeable dangers. Many Han seals express the desire for safe travel and reveal the purpose of travel taboos: "auspicious travels" 行吉, "auspicious arrival" 到吉, "auspicious travel on the roads" 行道吉, "travel without danger"

[190] The original reads, "entering the right gate of the ward is inauspicious" 入里門之右, 不吉, and clearly assumes one is on the outside of the gate and that the right side is inauspicious. But the primary gate in antiquity was on the south, facing south from the perspective of those inside. Thus "entering the right gate of the ward refers to the left side of the house gate 閭左. In Qin and Han times, the left side of the house gate was a bit lower, and this may be the reason "entering the right gate of the ward" was inauspicious.

[191] *Fengsu tongyi*, "Yiwen, Shiji," p. 564.

[192] *Lunheng*, "Sihui," 23.980.

[193] *Huainanzi*, "Fanlun xun," 13.460.

[194] *Fengsu tongyi*, "Shiji," p. 564.

行毋咎, "today is good for travel" 今日利行, "good for travel" 利行, "good to go out" 利出, "good for coming and going" 出入利.[195]

Basically, there are time and directional taboos for traveling. The time taboos are related to the "establishing and removing" and "various chronograms" methods, as well as to the 28 mansions day-count. Usually, more days are good for travel than the contrary.[196] In the Chu "establishing and removing" system, on certain days one could not go into the countryside lest one meet with thieves or soldiers (Shui A 9a2); on other days one "could not travel far lest one not come back" (Shui B 22–1). In the Qin system, if one went out on a given day, he might be retained by someone (Shui A 19a1), or "his trip would not succeed" (Shui A 36a). In all cases, traveling had dire consequences.

There were many *shensha* harmful to travel, such as "*gen*-mountain," "Red Emperor descends" and "return taboo" (*guiji*) days. Of these, the most frequently mentioned is "returning branch" (*fanzhi*) days, found in the notes on excavated calendars. Such days were calculated from each new moon. In the Han, on these days, one could not handle public affairs nor go outside. In Wang Mang's time, because Zhang Song 張竦 kept the taboo and did not leave home on a returning branch day, he was killed by bandits.[197] Because the Red Emperor brought misfortune down into the human world, nothing could be done on his days (Shui A 127–30a).[198] From the names "lost days" and "return taboo" it can be seen there were taboos not just on traveling but also on returning. Wang Chong is skeptical that, "if there is an exposed corpse on the road, it is not because one broke the 'lost day' taboo, and if there is a casket in one's house, it is not because he returned home on a 'return taboo' day."[199] But his statement reflects the beliefs of his contemporaries. In the time of Emperor Huan (r. 147–67 AD), one Chen Bojing 陳伯敬, "when he heard that to travel was inauspicious, untied his horses from the carriage and lingered; when returning conflicted with the 'return taboo,' he stayed overnight in a country inn."[200] It is worth noting that taboos for water and land travel differed.[201]

[195] Luo Fuyi, *Han yin wenzi zheng* (Beijing, 1978), 2.7, 15; 4.15.
[196] Liu Tseng-kuei, "Qinjian 'rishu' zhong de chuxing lisu yu xinyang," pp. 505–07, 509.
[197] *Hanshu*, "Chen Zun zhuan," 92.3714, citation of Li Qi 李奇 in the notes.
[198] Liu Tseng-kuei, "Qinjian 'rishu.'"
[199] *Lunheng*, "Biansui," 24.1013–14.
[200] *Hou Hanshu*, "Guo Gong zhuan," 46.1546.
[201] Liu Tseng-kuei, "Qinjian 'rishu,'" pp. 516–17.

Many of the directional taboos have to do with matching time and direction and very clearly illustrate the notion of the five agents. In general, if the direction of travel and the direction of the season were the same, it was inauspicious. If they were opposite, it was also not auspicious. "Year taboos" 歲忌 are an example of the first, "four gate days" 四門日 and "travel taboos" 行忌 of the second. Year taboos are very inauspicious days: on *jichou* days in the third month of spring, one should not go east, nor south on *wuchen* days in the third month of summer, nor west on *jiwei* days in the third month of fall, nor north on *wuxu* days in the third month of winter. To go 100 *li* in this direction was already most inauspicious, but if one went 200 *li*, one would die (Shui A 131a). The heavenly stems *wu* and *ji* both belong to earth, while the earthly branches *chou, chen, wei* and *xu* correspond to the earth of each of the four directions. When the two of these are combined, they make plenitude of earth days: as going out is to walk on the earth and that is dangerous on such days, they are not a time for travel. There are also the "four gate days": one must not go southeast on *xin* and *ren* days because they are "the gate of the sun" 日之門; southwest on *gui* and *jia* days because they are "the gate of the moon" 月之門; northwest on *yi* and *bing* days, which are "the gate of the stars" 星之門; and northeast on *ding* and *geng* days, which are "the gate of the chronograms" 辰之門 (Shui A 132a). In each case, the problem is opposite directions: for example, *xin* and *ren* are northwestern directions, opposite the southeast.

Language taboos

Language taboos in daily life were also numerous. First of all, when engaged in a given activity, inauspicious words regarding that activity were taboo. The *Huainanzi* gives several examples: "On a day of sacrifice, to speak of dogs being born, or of hemp on the eve of taking a wife; of going to a tomb on a banquet day, or of Lord Yang's waves 陽侯之波 when crossing a river."[202] It is not meet to speak of dogs being born when sacrificial victims are required, nor to speak of hemp clothing that symbolizes mourning when about to marry, as that would be a sign the couple would not live together till old age. In the context of a banquet, to refer to going to the grave to sacrifice to the dead is like cursing one's guests and, when crossing a river, to mention the huge

[202] *Huainanzi*, "Shuoshan xun," 16.549–52.

waves of the river god is to induce fear of capsizing. These are obviously all major taboos. These examples show that people feared inauspicious words could lead to inauspicious results, because language had a magic efficaciousness.

Words having to do with death were tabooed. Because the word "death" should not be uttered, when the First Emperor arrived at the Pingyuan ford 平原津 and was on the verge of death, because the word could not be spoken, his officials dared not broach the subject of what would happen afterwards.[203] When Wang Feng 王鳳 was about to die, Emperor Cheng asked him, "Should the unspeakable happen," how should we handle it? That the word "unspeakable" replace the word "death" gives an idea of the importance of the taboo.[204] Chen Bojing 陳伯敬 was a most careful person who observed taboos rigorously. Even when cursing a horse or a dog, he would "never say the word 'death.' "[205] Since the word "death" was tabooed, other words were used in its stead. One of the most common of the many such words was "the thing is past" 物故 (*wugu*), which meant "a thing has gone rotten," or else that the word *wu*-"thing" 物 stood for *wu*-"nothing" 無 and *gu* 故 meant *shi* 事, "event," that is, the person could no longer go about his affairs.[206] Another explanation is that, rather than saying someone has died, one says the things he used are "already past" 已故.[207] The first of these three explanations is reminiscent of the *Zhuangzi*: "His birth is the action of heaven, his death the transformation of things" 其生也天行, 其死也物化.[208] The second explanation is by association of ideas, and the third directly reflects the taboo on saying the word "death." Words like, "disappeared" 亡 or "went off" 徂逝, refer to death as leaving, while "conclude" 卒 and "end" 终 refer to it as winding up. Auspicious words were also used to replace references to death, as in "after 100 years," where 100 evokes radical longevity, or "ten thousand autumns, ten thousand years,"

[203] *Shiji*, "Qin Shihuang benji," 6.264.

[204] *Hanshu*, "Yuanhou zhuan," 98.4024.

[205] *Hou Hanshu*, "Guo Gong zhuan," 46.1547–48.

[206] *Shiji*, "Zhang chengxiang liezhuan," 96.2689, *Jijie* commentary citing Gao Tanglong 高堂隆 of the end of the Han; see also "Xiongnu liezhuan," 110.2911, *Suoyin* commentary.

[207] *Hanshu*, "Su Wu zhuan," 54.2467. Yan Shigu comments as follows: "One version is that, not wishing to speak directly, one just says the clothes he wore are all dilapidated 已故." Wang Niansun thinks that in the term *wugu*, *wu*-"thing" 物 is borrowed for *wu*-"to die" 歾; see *Dushu zazhi* (Taibei, 1963), p. 316. While this is possible, it is not the way such as Gao Tanglong understood it.

[208] *Zhuangzi*, "Tiandao," 4.114–15.

which symbolizes another, eternal world after death. Han people called the grave house a "home for ten thousand years," hoping it would be forever. Replacing the inauspicious with the auspicious was a common approach to taboos, which here not only demonstrates the taboo but also reflects ideas about death.

Words were even more circuitous when it was a superior who had died. This expressed more than just the taboo, it expressed respect. The *Liji* says that, "When the Son of Heaven dies, it is called *beng* 崩, when a feudal lord *hong* 薨, when a grand officer *zu* 卒, and when an officer *bulu* 不祿." All four words replace "to die." In the Han, the word *zu* 卒 was already used for ordinary people. The emperor's death was referred to as *beng* or as "the collapse of a mountain" 山陵崩, "the palace carriage goes out late" 宮車晚出 or "the palace carriage drives to a banquet" 宮車晏駕, all ways of expressing respect. The emperor's person was sacred. People referred to him as "emperor" and dared not use his name, whence the use of "carriage" to replace it. Talking of serious illness was also avoided by some, who spoke instead of "the unexpected" 不豫.

Among language taboos, those related to names deserve—and have received—special attention. We will here focus on the link between name taboos and concepts of death. Such taboos do not just express respect. The taboo name in fact already existed before death, but the taboo on its use became more severe after death. The *Liji* "Quli" says: "When mourning is done, the name taboo starts" 卒哭乃諱. Zheng Xuan, in his commentary on "Spring officials" 春官 in the *Zhouli*, writes: "The day of death of the former kings was taboo (*ji* 忌), while his name was hidden (*hui* 諱)." In the Han, this custom was not limited to the former kings but had become common to all. The Han stele "Han sanlao huizi jiri ji" 漢三老諱字忌日記 ("The Han Three-Elder record of taboo days and hidden names") is precisely such a record of the taboo death dates and hidden names of this official and his family. The inscription begins in this way: "The Three Elder's hidden name is Tong, alias Xiaofu, and *gengwu* is his taboo day" 三老諱通, 字小父, 庚午忌日.[209] What is the relationship between death and the taboos? The *Zuozhuan* (Duke Huan 6) states: "The people of Zhou serve the gods with hidden names" 周人以諱事神.[210] According to this, the reason the name of the dead had to be hidden was because he was viewed as a god, and a god's name could

[209] Gao Wen, ed., *Hanbei jishi* (Henan, 1985), pp. 1–2.
[210] *Zuozhuan*, Duke Yin 8, 4.73, Kong Yingda commentary.

not be uttered at will but only when inviting the god to come down. Another possibility is the fear of the dead. While funeral rituals are an expression of filial piety, they are also meant to separate the living from the dead and lead the latter to dwell peacefully in their grave home and not disturb the living. Many of the Han "grave-quelling" inscriptions include phrases like, "the living belong to *yang*, the dead to *yin*," "the living belong to Chang'an 長安, the dead to Taishan 太山," or "the living and the dead dwell in different places and must not interfere with each other." Calling the dead person's name would be like summoning him and, hence, interfering with the living. This taboo clearly hides a fear the dead will harm the living.

Humans and gods: taboos, techniques and rituals

Taboos concerning gods

Taboos seek to avoid actions it is believed will lead to harm. The entire process from the origin of the belief to the result of infringement and then to the methods adopted to avoid harm once an infringement has occurred is intimately linked to belief in the gods and other supernatural forces. If we follow James Frazer in saying that taboos are "negative magic"[211] whose function is to tell people what not to do so as to avoid harm, then it is using "positive magic" to prescribe rites and techniques to avoid the potential harm of an infringement. What exactly is the relationship between taboos and the gods? What do taboos reflect of the ritual relationship between humans and gods?

The taboos discussed to this point concern the relationships between humans and between humans and heaven. They emphasize harmonizing the energies of *yin* and *yang*, the cycle of the five agents, the stellar mansions, the years and the months and the *shensha*, all of which seem to have to do with the regular course of nature. But for the ordinary person, the many taboos related to time are not just a matter of relations between the five agents, because the year and the months have their gods, and the taboos concern attitudes of humans toward the gods. Wang Chong questioned the idea that "the year and the month have

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[211] Foleize (James George Frazer), *Jinzhi jingyao* (abbreviated version of *The Golden Bough*), ed. Liu Kuili (Shanghai, 2001), pp. 22–23.

gods," but his very questioning proves his contemporaries believed in these gods, and that the phases of the moon were divine.[212]

As a matter of fact, the whole question of the occult arts (*shushu* 數術) is a complex one, and for the ordinary person it was easier to understand an explanation involving the gods than one based on the five agents. If we take, for example, the "buried days" (*furi*) discussed above, the fact one could not go out had to do with *yin, yang* and the five agents, but the people understood that "on buried days, the spirits are wandering around" 伏日萬鬼行. Taboos in the daybooks, although they incorporated the principles of the five agents and their cyclical norms, attributed the causes to the gods, just as we saw Wang Chong saying: "They invariably attribute things to the gods. Once a death has occurred, people trust fear and avoidance." With regard to plowing, for example, a daybook item says, "The lord of the cultivated lands died on an *yisi* day, the lord of dikes on *yiyou*, the master of rain on *xinwei*, and the great man of the fields on *guihai*" 田亳主以乙巳死, 杜主以乙酉死, 雨帀 (師) 以辛未死, 田大人以癸亥死 (Shui A 149b). Here the death dates of gods become planting taboos. Likewise, on the five *chou* 丑 days of the sexagenary cycle, shamans may not bring down the gods because the Lord of Heaven 天帝 killed Shaman Xian 巫咸 on a *chou* day (Shui A 27–2a). Again, a death date becomes a taboo date. Events having to do with the heavenly gods are often tabooed. Even more frequent are things people cannot do because the Lord of Heaven does them. For example, because "the gods build houses" 神以治室 in the first month, people may not build houses or walls then (Shui A 148b). On the contrary, on "earth spoon" *shensha* days, "the gods destroy palaces" 神以毀宮, so no earth-related work may be done (Shui A 138b). The sorties of the heavenly gods also have an impact on humans. For example, the most inauspicious of all days is when "the Red Emperor descends": he being the god in charge of punishments in the celestial jail 天獄, virtually nothing can be done on such days (Shui A 127–130a).[213] Taboos are attributed to other gods as well, like the marriage taboos we saw linked to the Great Yu and the Cowherd.

Two texts in the Kongjiapo daybook help explain the function of the gods in time. The "Control of the year" 主歲 section says that the

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[212] *Lunheng*, "Jianshi," 23.983–84, "Biansui," 24.1008, and "Sihui," 23.969. See also, *Taiping yulan*, "Juchu bu," citing the "Xu Miao biezhuan," 180.1007.

[213] Liu Tseng-kuei, "Lisu yu xinyang" (above, n. 134). See also, *Kongjiapo*, pp. 163, 179.

Blue Emperor is in charge of the year on *jia* and *yi* new moon days, the Red Emperor on *bing* and *ding*, the Yellow Emperor of *wu* and *ji*, the White Emperor of *geng* and *xin* and the Flame Emperor 炎帝 of *ren* and *gui* new moon days. Under the year-controlling god, there are other gods in charge of various matters: the stove 人炊, the high one 高者, the lord of the city 邑主, the count of the wind 風伯 and the group of shamans 群巫. Linked to their control are the auspicious and inauspicious times of the year. The section "death" contains the gods responsible for sickness on the 12 earth branch days: illness on a *zi* day is caused by heavenly earth 天土 (the lord of earth 后土) and on an *yin* day, principally by the lord of the north 北君. On a *wu* day, one should pray to the ghosts of the road 道鬼, on a *xu* day, to the gates 門 and streets 街, and on a *hai* day, to the stove 人炊 and the elders 老人.[214] Thus illness on any given day is related to offending the god in charge.

All these taboos have to do with the gods because, as we already saw the *Taiping jing* say, people in the Qin and Han believed that everything—heaven and earth, the sun, the moon, and the stars, the five agents and four seasons, *yin, yang* and the six decades, the 10,000 creatures, spirits of things, wind, rain, thunder and lightning—"has its god and master" who influences human affairs. Wang Chong mentions a current saying: "Ghosts are the gods of *jia* and *yi; jia* and *yi* are distinct energies of heaven 天之別氣 whose appearance is human."[215] Thus in the eyes of the people the stems and branches, like the five agents, were all gods of some sort.

The above taboos had to do with activities or events involving the gods. There are also taboos relating to the gods themselves, and these are expressed in sacrifices. Daybook A contains quite a number of days on which sacrifice is tabooed, as on "concluding days" 結日, "penetrating days" 徹日 and various chronogram days. Different gods have different sacrifice taboos: each of the five sacrifices of the house has its taboo days, and one does not sacrifice on the earth days *wu* and *ji* to the god of travel, but rather on *gengshen* water days, because the god of travel is the god of northern waters.[216] The first sacrifice taboo is that on pol-

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[214] *Kongjiapo*, pp. 182, 172.

[215] *Lunheng*, "Dinggui," 22.936.

[216] On travel gods, see Liu Tseng-kuei, "Lisun yu xinyang," pp. 526–31, where I show that Kudô Motô's theory that Yu was the god of travel is unfounded and point out that the god of travel in the daybooks is the same as that of the five sacrifices.

lution: purity is required in the worship of the gods, so all sacrifices are preceded by fasting, observing rules and bathing. For example, the *Monthly ordinances of the four peoples* says that, in the eighth month, a good day after the white frost day should be selected to sacrifice to all the gods worshiped in the course of the year. Seven days before this sacrifice, no family member may go to a house in mourning or where a child has just been born; the entire family, old and young, must fast, observe rules and sweep out filth before they can participate in the sacrifice.[217] Han government sacrifices required fasting and observance of rules for seven days prior to a sacrifice to heaven or earth, five days for the ancestors and the gods of hills and rivers, and three days for small sacrifices. If pollution occurred during the fasting period, the person involved had to withdraw and be replaced by his stand-in.[218]

Thus all the gods sacrificed to—the ancestors, ordinary gods, the five domestic cults, former sovereigns, travel gods—all had their tabooed days.[219] Because the days of sacrifice were different, so were the taboos in ritual context. For example, when praying for rain during a spring drought, one could not cut down trees. Dong Zhongshu says that for such a ritual one must pray on the altars of earth and cereals on a day belonging to water.[220] When praying for rain in the summer, one must not disturb the earth, in autumn not light a fire, and in winter not collect water:

> In all four seasons, on a *gengzi* day, have the clerks and the people, husbands and wives, gather together. In the group of those praying for rain, the husbands must hide, while the women must harmonize and make music.[221]

The *Hanshu* chapter on Zhaodi says, "when doing the rain dance during a summer drought, do not light torches." The minister Zan 瓚 explains: "This was done in order to suppress the *yang* and help the *yin*." This shows that Dong Zhongshu's theory was practiced for at least some of the Western Han. In the Eastern Han, it became a ritual rule.

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217 *Simin yueling*, p. 60.
218 *Hou Hanshu*, "Liyi A," p. 3104.
219 Liu Lexian, *Shuihudi Qinjian*, pp. 440–45.
220 *Hou Hanshu*, "Liyi B," pp. 3118–19, commentary.
221 Su Yu, *Chunqiu fanlu yizheng*, ed. Zhong Zhe (Beijing, 1992), "Qiuyu," 16.426–37.

Methods and rituals for taboos of removal

There are many methods and rituals for getting rid of disasters linked to taboos, as well as strategies for saving the day when one has no choice but to infringe a taboo. The most detailed elements of this kind in the daybooks concern travel rituals.[222]

According to Daybook A on travel, when one goes out one's gate, one must not look back, nor may one stop walking, and one should walk in the middle or on the right of the road, because the left is harmful. As for not looking back, a quick glance back is a short stop, and is somewhat harmful, while a long look back is a big stop and very harmful. Both symbolize a voyage which will not be smooth and will be full of dangers (Shui A 130a). In the myths and magic of antiquity, "looking back" could bring disaster.[223] When one had walked straight to the gate of a city, one had to do the following ritual:

> Go out the city gate. Using Yu talismans, walk to the left and place them on the right axle of the carriage, saying: "Travel to the city…Good travel." Then throw the talisman on the ground, do three Paces of Yu, and utter this incantation; "Gao, I venture to announce the talismans." Then get into the carriage and, without looking back, depart. (Shui B 103–07.2)[224]
>
> 走出邦門, 用禹符, 左行後置於車右轅, 說:「行邦 …令行」。投符於地, 禹步三, 唸祝詞:「皋, 敢告〼符」, 然後上車, 不顧而行。
>
> Select a day to exit the city gate. Do three Paces of Yu and trace lines on the ground while looking at the Big Dipper. While looking, say: "Yu has five straight horizontal lines, today is good for travel, travel is without blame, I have imitated Yu by exorcising in front and it has worked." (Fangmatan Daybook 66, 67)
>
> 擇日出邑門, 禹步三, 向著北斗畫地, 看著說: 「禹有直五橫, 今利行, 行毋咎, 爲禹前除, 得。」

Each of these items is different, but they also have elements in common. First, it was clearly the traveler himself who did both the Pace of Yu and the incantations, playing the role of Yu in order to put the gods to work to clear the path in front of him of all dangers. In the

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[222] Liu Tseng-kuei, "Qinjian 'rishu,'" pp. 521–26.

[223] The tale is told of Yi Yin's mother dreaming a god told her this: "'When water appears in the crucible, walk east without looking back.' The next day, she saw water in the crucible, told her neighbors, and then walked 10 *li* east before looking back: where the city had been, there was water, and she turned into a hollow mulberry tree." See *Lüshi chunqiu*, "Benwei," 14.739–40.

[224] For the Daybook A version, see Shui A 111b–112b.

second incantation, the traveler using the method even called himself Yu. The idea of imitating the gods to symbolize smooth travel can also be found in the "incantation for the ancestors" 祖餞祝 of Cai Yong 蔡邕: "Count of the wind, master of rain: sprinkle the road in the middle. Yangsui 陽遂 seeks good fortune, Chiyou 蚩尤 averts weapons."[225] Clearly, the person doing the incanting hopes that he may be like the Yellow Emperor described in *Han Feizi*, "Ten Faults" 十過: when he traveled, all the gods protected him.

The Pace of Yu and the five lines drawn on the ground have already been much discussed.[226] Also worth noting is the rite involving the talisman of Yu.[227] Scholars have seen this item as describing a rite performed upon arriving home at the gate of one's city, but a close reading of the original suggests it refers, rather, to a rite performed when leaving. Such rites sought to eliminate the dire results of potential taboo infractions while traveling. When a traveler could not choose a good day for travel, there were also rites he could perform, as seen in the bamboo slips from Zhoujiatai:

> If one must travel in an emergency, there is no need to select a good day. Step over wood to the east, fire to the south, metal to the west, and water to the north. There is no need for a good day.[228]
>
> 有行而急，不得須良日，東行越木，南行越火，西行越金，北行越水，毋須良日可也。

That is, depending on the direction of travel, an object belonging to that direction's agent should be set out and stepped over before departure. A Han slip from Ejina says something quite similar: "The south is fire: when traveling in an emergency, cross such an object and traveling will be auspicious" 南方火，即急行者，越此物，行吉.[229] There are other procedures of a like kind:

> When you wish to travel in an emergency, upon leaving the city, do three Paces of Yu, call out "Ze!" and incant, saying: "Five luminosities of earth,

[225] Yan Kejun, *Quan Hou Han wen*, 79.8.
[226] See Kudô Motô, "Unbō Suikochi Shin bo chikukan nissho to dōkyō teki shuzoku," *Tōhō shukyo* 76 (1990), 50–57.
[227] Rishu yandu ban, "Rishu: Qinguo shehui de yimian jingzi," *Wenbo* 1986.5, p. 15.
[228] Hubei shengshi Jingzhou Zhou Liangwang qiao yizhi bowu guan, *Guan Ju Qinmu jiandu* (Beijing, 2001), p. 133.
[229] *Ejina Hanjian*, p. 283.

> today is favorable for travel, travel will be without death, I have already cleared the way, and no one dares oppose me!"[230]
>
> 欲急行, 出邑, 禹步三, 唬「睪!」, 祝曰: 「土五光, 今日利以行, 行毋死, 已辟除道, 莫敢義【我】當!」

Incantations are the most commonly used method of exorcism in travel rites. Above, we also saw it used when two people had to bathe together. There are in fact five basic kinds of exorcism used.

The first is that just described. It is also used in sacrifices, or when death and mourning taboos have been infringed. According to Wang Chong, after the sacrifice is performed, the gods are "chased away with knives and staffs." This is much like the release through thanksgiving of the earth god when digging in the earth for a new house is done. Called "release from the earth" (*jietu* 解土), it involved the fabrication of an earthen puppet resembling a demon, followed by a shamanic ritual.[231] One of the aims of exorcism in the context of mourning was to eliminate "repetition" (*chongfu* 重復). This has been interpreted to mean that a family member who had something in common with the deceased—name, age, birth date—might also die.[232] I think it is rather the date of death which is inauspicious. An urn with a propitiatory inscription (*zhenmu wen* 鎮墓文) says:

> On an *yiyou* day, the 27th after the new moon—a *jiwei* day—in the second month of the second year of Yongshou (156 AD), the emissary of the Lord of Heaven informed the count of graves and the chancellor of hillocks and all the officials of 2,000 bushels below the earth, the person who died today in the Cheng family is called Taochui. There was a repetition of the day and time of death. His age and that of a living family member were confused in the registers. When this message arrives, revise his age, erase the repeated items and release him from the registry that caught him in a group.[233]
>
> 永壽二年二月己未朔廿七日乙酉, 天帝使者告丘丞墓伯、地下二千石。今成氏之家死者字桃椎, 死日時重復, 年命與家中生人相拘籍。到, 復其年命, 削重複之文, 解拘伍之籍。

[230] Ibid., p. 284. The "five luminosities of earth" must refer to an earth god.

[231] *Lunheng*, "Siyi," 25.1047.

[232] Wang Yucheng, "Nanli wang taoping zhushu yu xiangguan zongjiao wenhua wenti yanjiu," *Kaogu yu wenwu* 1996.2, pp. 65–66.

[233] This text and the preceding are quoted from Ikeda On, "Chūgoku rekidai boken ryakkō," *Sôritsu yonjûshûnen kinen ronshû*, *Tōyō bunka kenkyūjo kiyō* 86 (1981), 193–278; pp. 270–71.

Here it is stated with great clarity that the day of death was a day on which "the repetition of the day and time" occurred. "Repetition" here must refer to the idea that, when someone died on a given day, there would "surely be another one" 必復之 (another death), or, when someone was buried on a given day, there would "surely be a second mourning" 必有重喪 or "another cadaver would follow" 復尸有隨. When there was a death on a day and at a time when there might be another death, an exorcistic ritual and text was needed to remove the threat. Such texts usually rely on the emissary of the Lord of Heaven to put a stop to the linkage between the living and the dead.

The second type uses symbolic methods to get rid of the inauspicious. For example, we saw above that owls were intensely tabooed. In the Han, the Eastern Prefecture 東郡 (modern Shantong province) produced owls, and the government issued a decree on that most inauspicious of days, the fifth day of the fifth month, to eat owl: "Let the Eastern Prefecture send owls. On the fifth day of the fifth month, make owl gruel 梟羹 to feed the hundred officials. We eat it because it is an evil bird 惡鳥."[234] The owl is an inauspicious bird. To kill and eat it on a taboo day like the fifth day of the fifth month symbolizes the eradication of the inauspicious and has an exorcistic function.

The third kind involves release from interdictions through talismans and incantations. In his "Guanglian zhu" 廣連珠 Cai Yong 蔡邕 writes:

> The blinking of the eyes and whistling in the ears are like small warnings 小戒, while the yelping of foxes and the barking of dogs are minor calamities 小妖 that afflict families. One seeks to avoid them by being circumspect in one's actions and to protect oneself from the evils involved with propitiatory acts and talismanic writings.[235]

From this we can see that, when a tabooed phenomenon or object appears, talismans and incantations can be used to suppress them. Such talismans were sometimes also written on propitiatory urns like those mentioned above.

The fourth kind is the "quelling" (*yansheng*) method. Wang Chong notes that his contemporaries believed that, when digging or building, one could be eaten by the year and the month and that, whenever this happened, there would be a death. A neighbor who was affected could use the quelling method to counteract the effect:

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[234] *Shiji*, "Xiaowu benji," 12.456–57, commentary quotation.
[235] *Taiping yulan*, "Jianjie B," 459.2241.

> Suspend an object representing one of the five agents. If the year and the month eat the family to the west, it should hang up a metallic object; if to the east, charcoal. Do a sacrifice to eliminate the inauspiciousness, or make a move according to the "void and loss" 空亡 taboo system in order to avert the catastrophe.[236]

If the family to the west was eaten, then the active party was in the east, which is wood, so by hanging metal the western family could conquer wood. If the affected family was to the east, then the active party was to the west, which is metal, so the eastern family could hang charcoal, representing fire, to conquer metal. This is the "quelling" method for avoiding undergoing the influence of the family which was building. In like manner, if one did not select a day and a time for travel, one could use the same method to break the taboo, as the Kongjiapo day-book says:

> The five conquests are: the east is wood, which metal conquers. Take a three-inch piece of iron and proceed to the east. The south is fire, which water defeats. Fill a container with water and, holding it, go south. The north is water, which earth defeats. Go north after taking earth and wrapping it in a cloth. The west is metal, defeated by fire. Make a piece of charcoal three inches long and wrap it in cloth to go west…By holding these objects you can travel without regard to the time.[237]
>
> 五勝: 東方木, 金勝木。鐵, 長三寸, 操, 東。南方火, 水勝火。以[illegible]盛水, 操, 南。北方水, 土勝水。操土, 北, 裹以布。西方金, 火勝金。操炭, 長三寸, 以西, 纏以布。□□行操此物不以時。

When traveling without regard to the time, one clutches a piece of iron if traveling eastward, a piece of charcoal if going west. Whichever direction one travels, one takes an object which conquers that direction. The objects held, like charcoal, are the same as those mentioned by Wang Chong. Taking an auspicious name is also a way to quell. Wang Fu mentions a family related to the emperor by marriage in the Eastern Han which, fearing the family home would not be fortunate, gave it a good name. But it still suffered many setbacks and did not succeed in flourishing.[238]

The fifth kind involves getting away from the place, direction, or time where a taboo threatened, as in the case mentioned by Wang Chong involving "making a fake move to avert disaster." There are quite a few

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[236] *Lunheng*, "Jianshi," 23.981.
[237] *Kongjiapo*, p. 140.
[238] Wang Fu, *Qianfu lun jian*, ed. Wang Jipei (Taibei, 1975), p. 49.

accounts of this method. For example, in Qin Shihuang's time, when the empress got pregnant from a private relationship with Miudu 嫪毐, fearing it become known, she did a false divination and, on the pretext of "avoiding a time" taboo, moved to Yong.[239] In the Heping era (28–25 BC), the emperor and empress moved to the Eastern Belvedere 東觀 in Kunming to avoid a time taboo.[240] "Avoiding a time" taboo means avoiding the place which was affected by the time taboo. Because a favorable time was being sought, this is also called "making the time favorable" 便時. In fact, the real reason for the avoidance was the fear that illness would result from the inauspicious character of their dwelling place, so they moved elsewhere. This is therefore also called "avoiding illness." In the Yanguang era (122–25 AD), the crown prince fell ill from fright and was out of sorts. He was taken for refuge to the home of the wet nurse of Emperor An, Wang Sheng 王聖. But his own wet nurse, Wang Nan 王男, thought that, because Wang Sheng's house had just been refurbished, earth taboos had been broken, and it was not a good place to stay. The two sides quarreled over this, and Wang Sheng used magic to ensnare and kill Wang Nan, on account of which the prince often sighed. Fearing there would be consequences, Wang Sheng then ensnared the prince, and Emperor An ended up downgrading him to King of Jiyin 濟陰王. Thus this major political upheaval was caused by the avoidance of illness and taboos on disturbing the earth.[241] Wang Fu also mentions the fact his contemporaries believed so much what shamans said that they would, "for a favorable time, run away from their homes."[242] Thus everyone, from the emperor down to the commoners, obeyed taboos of this kind.

The reason for avoiding illness by finding a favorable time was that time and home were unlucky, as Wang Chong said: "When a home is flourishing, people stay; when it is in decline, they leave it." In the period after the Han, the practice of avoiding what was in decline was even more widespread, and the "decline" avoided was not just that of a house. When the daughter of Emperor Ming of the Wei died shortly after birth, he buried her with the rites of an adult and also laid plans

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[239] *Shiji*, "Lü Buwei liezhuan," 85.2511.
[240] *Hanshu*, "Tianwen zhi," 26.1310
[241] *Hanshu*, "Laili zhuan," 15.590-91. See also, Hou Hanshu, "Lu Pi zhuan," 25.883-84.
[242] *Qianfu lun*, "Fuyi."

for going to Xuchang 許昌 to "avoid decline" (*bishuai* 避衰). Chen Qun 陳群 memorialized against this, but the emperor paid no heed.[243]

From the preceding we can see how close the relationship between taboos and the gods was. Events were often attributed less to the breaking of taboos than to the gods, and the means for gaining release from taboos also frequently involved the gods. On the one hand, people spread layer on layer of nets of taboos, and on the other they made every effort to escape these nets. The rites and methods for undoing the effect of taboos reflects peoples' efforts to twist their way out of the results of the taboos. Like the taboos themselves, these methods show the rich variety of beliefs.

Conclusion

The taboos of the Qin and Han are the complex product of popular belief and the theory of interaction between heaven and humans. Involving not only primitive shamanistic thought and taboos concerning the gods but also the regular cycles of the *shensha* and of the production and conquest of the five agents, it reflects the multi-faceted nature of belief in ancient China. The present essay, by organizing the fragmentary evidence concerning taboos into the three categories of humans and the universe, humans and humans, and humans and the gods, has sought to sketch a relatively clear picture of those beliefs.

If looked at from the point of view of humans and the universe, people of the Qin and Han believed that everything in the natural universe had to do with human fate, from dogs barking and roosters crowing to the changes of sun and moon. Any unusual change in the order of things was looked on as taboo. People therefore clung tightly to "the great cycle of the four seasons," going along with the rotation of the universe's energies and participating in nature's repeating cycles and the highly regular activities of heavenly bodies and *shensha*. Looked at from this point of view, it would seem that humans simply followed nature. But when looked at from another point of view, what the regularity of nature showed was not just a mechanistic view of the universe: people

[243] *Sanguo zhi*, "Chen Qun zhuan," 22.636. These taboos were widely practiced in the Six Dynasties; see *Yanshi jiaxun*, "Fengzao," 2.104, commentary.

needed only to master its rules in order to enjoy space to act and to choose whether to go toward or to avoid. They could even use methods that converted the inauspicious into the auspicious. Strictly speaking, it is not entirely appropriate when dealing with the content of material like that of the daybooks only to see the taboo side. They do not just tell people to avoid bad days, but, even more important, they show people how to choose good days and are, in that sense, very positive.

As regards relations between humans, in the course of a life and also in daily life, there are numerous taboos which vary according to space and time. Some reflect the interacting of heaven and humans, as those dealing with birth, from conception and pregnancy to birth and child-rearing, all of which take nature and the environment into account. Taboos relating to living and dying, disturbing the earth and traveling also have to do with nature. Other taboos reflect human relationships, like the ban on marriage between people of the same surname, or insisting on the concordance of *yin* and *yang* and the mutual succor of hard and soft in choosing marriage times. These reflect conjugal ideals and relations. Because people live in a society, taboos affect not only ego but also others, as may be seen in the taboo on contact with women who have given birth in order to avoid pollution, or the belief that children born on a given day may be harmful to their parents when they grow up, or that inappropriate behavior on the part of parents may lead to the birth of children whose fate is not good. Dwelling places and funerals concern not just one person and his family but also have an impact on the neighbors and even the entire locality. Seen in this light, taboos are important social norms and rules that enable people to live together.

Taboos are beliefs that consist in avoiding acts that it is believed may lead to disaster. Regardless of whether they are looked at from the point of view of the reasons for their production, the potential consequences or the methods for avoiding disaster, taboos were closely related to the gods and shamanistic techniques. For example, in the five agent explanation not going outside on "hiding days" was because "metal energies are buried," but the average person attributed it to the fact that on that day "the myriad demons are abroad" and going out might lead to meeting them. Wang Chong says that those who do not believe in selecting days and avoiding year and month taboos may "offend demons and meet gods." In the eyes of most people, the five agents, *yin* and *yang*, the stellar mansions, the year and the months do not just represent nature's regularity, they are gods. Taboos must "be attributed to the gods and

to the strange and be established with (the fear of) death. Then people believe them and, in fear, avoid."

Taboos include the behavior and names of the gods. For example, on some days the gods do certain things, like building houses or destroying palaces. On such days, ordinary people avoid engaging in the same activity. Taboos on the names of the gods, like the fasting and the rules followed when sacrificing to the gods, all show the links between beliefs and taboos. When someone has no choice but to infringe a taboo, he can use all kinds of methods to avoid disaster: exorcistic and propitiatory rituals such as the Pace of Yu or his talismans, and methods like killing a tabooed thing, writing talismans, incantations, quelling or moving. These methods at once reflect belief in the gods and show shamanistic concepts of mutual influence between things of a kind. In the chapter "Nansui" 難歲, Wang Chong writes this:

> Ordinary people see danger everywhere and believe readily in taboos. Those with knowledge have doubts, but no one dares be certain. That is why the educated obey taboos and the masters of the arts flourish.

The study of taboos enables us to go behind the great tradition of the erudite to uncover what people in Qin-Han society believed. In part these beliefs reflect the age-old primitive beliefs and social experience of antiquity, in part their transformation by the ethics and theorizing—as in the theory of the five agents—of the erudite tradition. That is why taboos are not just the beliefs of the commoners, they also belong to the erudite tradition. Over the long course of history, this tradition has had a very important impact on Chinese history and society and merits special attention.

DEATH AND THE DEAD: PRACTICES AND IMAGES IN THE QIN AND HAN*

Michèle Pirazzoli-t'Serstevens

Funerary practices and beliefs in the other world

Introduction

The care brought to the construction, decoration and interior arrangement of the tombs in China explains for a large part the privileged place occupied by funerary archaeology. One need only dig a little in North or Central China to encounter a tomb, often a rich one. For just the period of the Qin and Han (221 BC–220 AD), several tens of thousands of tombs have been discovered during the last 50 years. It is this prodigious work of the archaeologists that allows us to measure the importance of the funerary culture at the beginning of the imperial period.

We may say that the tombs, their décor and their furnishings together constitute a compendium of the cosmological beliefs, the conceptions and the rites linked to death, but also of the myths, divinities and demons that peopled the Han imaginary world. Han texts on funeral practices are quite scattered and allow neither an understanding of how these practices evolved nor an analysis of the reasons behind the choices. Archaeology, by virtue of series of data covering a long span of time, enables us to retrace the evolution, to make clear the articulations and the points of rupture, to get an idea of the social or regional variations and to document the aspects which the texts do not touch on: the internal organization of the tomb, beyond the notions of inner and outer coffins, the various grave goods, the iconography of the tomb and the monuments erected around the burial mound.

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It is no longer possible to treat the four centuries under consideration as a single block, as has so often been the case, overlooking the cultural diversity of the regions even within the only well-explored zone—that where a Chinese population dominated. It has also become impossible not to take into account social diversity, even if it is mainly rich tombs which have been excavated and therefore the privileged classes—from the members of the imperial family to the small landowners—which are the best represented. The two extremes of the social ladder are less well known: no imperial tomb has been opened, and the tombs of the poorest have often been neglected.

I shall begin by presenting, in its main lines, the evolution of the structure of the tombs, their decoration and furnishings, and then look at the tomb as a cosmological system, the objects and apotropaic images it contained, and the exorcist rites practiced there. Finally, I will try to see what this ensemble, interwoven with the texts, reveals of the beliefs in the next world, taking into account the different interpretations which have been advanced. In a field of studies which evolves very quickly, this short synthesis has no other pretension than to indicate the state of the field and to propose some working hypotheses.

Burial practices

Structure of the tombs

During the Han period the structure of the tombs underwent radical transformations. Between the 2nd century before and the 1st century of our era, they went from hermetically-sealed burials, vertical pits centered on nested coffins (*guomu* 槨墓) (Fig. 1), to constructions developed horizontally (*shimu* 室墓), rock-cut or more often subterranean, conceived in the image of the dwellings of the living. The tomb was entered by way of an entrance corridor, and it was possible to circulate inside the tombs, most of which were organized around a central axis. The prototype of this form of sepulchre, or catacomb-tomb (*hengxue mu* 横穴墓), as opposed to the vertical pit tomb (*shuxue tukeng mu* 豎穴土坑墓), appeared in Qin and more largely in the Yellow River valley in the 4th century BC,[1] but took its final form only in the Han. From

[1] Lothar von Falkenhausen, "Mortuary behavior in pre-imperial Qin: a religious interpretation," in *Religion and Chinese society*, vol. 1: *Ancient and medieval China*, ed. John Lagerwey (Hong Kong, 2004), pp. 109–72; 139.

then on the "horizontal" tomb was dug into a mountain, as is the case with numerous princely tombs at the beginning of the Han (Fig. 2),[2] or constructed in brick or in stone. It included, after the entrance corridor, a door, one or several chambers along the central axis and sometimes a gallery or lateral chambers disposed symmetrically (Fig. 3).[3]

This evolution is of capital importance, with its profusion of intermediate solutions and variations, according to the rank and the wealth of the deceased but also natural conditions and regional traditions—all solutions which make the Han the period in Chinese history in which the types of sepulture were the most diversified.

The new form allowed the living to easily enter and leave the tomb at the time of the funeral—a veritable revolution. The first signs of the open tomb with interior circulation, an imitation of a dwelling, appeared in Qin in the 6th century BC[4] and then, from the 5th century on,[5] in Chu, where it involved the division of the outer coffin (guo 槨) into compartments with doors. But this arrangement remained purely symbolic until the 2nd century BC.

In the Yellow River valley, particularly in Henan and in the Chang'an area, the formula of the catacomb-tomb spread and was perfected at the end of the 2nd and 1st centuries BC in tombs of small and medium dimensions. On the other hand, the former Chu region (in the middle course of the Yangzi) and Shandong remained faithful longer to the traditional formula of the outer coffin with wooden compartments. This was, however, reinforced in the princely tombs by a massive barricade

[2] E.g., for the 2nd century BC, the tombs of King Xiao of Liang and his principal wife at Bao'anshan (M1 and M2), Yongcheng county in Henan, cf. *Yongcheng Xi Han Liang guo wang ling yu qinyuan* (Zhengzhou, 1996), those of the kings of Chu at Xuzhou in Jiangsu, particularly that of Beidongshan (cf. *Xuzhou Beidongshan Xi Han Chu wang mu* (Beijing, 2003), and those of the king of Zhongshan and his wife at Mancheng in Hebei, cf. *Mancheng Han mu fajue baogao*, 2 vols (Beijing 1980). On these princely tombs, cf. Jessica Rawson, "The eternal palaces of the Western Han: a new view of the universe," *Artibus Asiae* 59.1–2 (1999), 5–58, and Susan N. Erickson, "Han dynasty tomb structures and holdings," in *The Chinese first empires: a re-appraisal*, eds Michael Loewe and Michael Nylan (Cambridge, Eng., forthcoming).

[3] Huang Xiaofen, *Han mu de kaoguxue yanjiu* (Changsha, 2003).

[4] Tomb 1 of Nanzhihui at Fengxiang in Shaanxi, which could be that of Duke Jing (r. 577–537) of Qin, cf. Falkenhausen, "Mortuary behavior," p. 118.

[5] E.g., tomb of the Marquis Yi of Zeng (ca. 433 AD) at Leigudun, Suizhou, Hubei. On this tomb, see the work of Alain Thote, re-used and quoted in Alain Thote, "Burial practices as seen in rulers' tombs of the Eastern Zhou period: patterns and regional traditions," in *Religion and Chinese society*, vol. 1: *Ancient and medieval China*, ed. John Lagerwey (Hong Kong 2004), pp. 65–107.

of aligned logs (*huangchang ticou* 黃腸題湊) that formed a real structure and was completed by a surrounding gallery. Certain princely families, as much in northern as in central China, combined the two systems (Fig. 4).[6]

The 1st century BC saw not only the spread of the custom of celebrating funeral rites inside the tomb rather than outside, meaning that a part of the front of the tomb needed to be spacious enough to receive the officiant and those close to the deceased, but also of burying the wife with her husband in the same tomb. These changes in practice brought with them architectural modifications. From then on the hypogeum had to be able to withstand the re-opening for a second coffin—whence the choice of constructions in little bricks or in stone. The funeral chamber was enlarged and often divided in two: one space in front for the rites and one chamber in the back for the coffin. In the same way, the enlargement of the space stimulated the development of the mural and architectural décor. It also privileged, in the long term, the axial plan to the detriment of that of the surrounding gallery, the space of the tomb modelling itself in this way always more closely on the house of the living (Fig. 5).

It may be said that around 25 AD, with the exception of certain zones at the periphery, the various regions of the north and center went, each in its own manner, from the tomb as a vertical pit with an outer coffin to the hypogeum. From then on, brick dominated, in competition with stone, which was reserved for rich sepultures or for the vital parts of the tomb, particularly the door.

In the 2nd century AD, the rich tomb includes an antechamber (symbol of the court), a reception room (*chao* 朝) where the rites took place, on the medial axis, then a chamber in the back for the coffin or coffins (symbol of the private apartments *qin* 寢), finally the reserves and annexes along the sides. In the same period, the fashion for sumptuous burials, the constant desire to enlarge the interior space and to increase the height of the ceilings led to the adoption of the raised barrel vault or the cupola (Fig. 6) in brick chambers and the nested coffered ceiling (*zaojing* 藻井) in the stone-built chambers. There, too, the movement

[6] Tomb of Dabaotai, Hebei, apparently belonging to King Jing of Guangyang and built around 44 BC (cf. *Beijing Dabaotai Han mu* (Beijing, 1989); but also tomb 1 of Xiangbizui at Changsha in Hunan, tomb of a king of Changsha in the 2nd century BC, cf. "Changsha Xiangbizui yi hao Xi Han mu," *Kaogu xuebao* 1981.1, 111–30.

to raise the height of the ceiling seems to have originated in the metropolitan region.

The evolution of the form of the sepulture reveals several social developments which I will enumerate and to which, at least for some of them, I shall return:

1) The entire evolution indicates the primacy given to the tomb over the ancestral temple[7] and the accent placed on the deceased as an individual. The dead person is no more just a link in the chain of ancestors, honored as such in the lineage temple. He is also and above all a particular ancestor worshipped individually in a specific place. By contrast with what happened under the Shang and the Zhou when, sealed forever, the tomb was a place for the dead only, it has become, thanks to the rites and offerings repeated there, a place where living and dead communicate.
2) The Han, in promoting the burial of the couple from the 1st century BC and then the family tomb in the 2nd century AD, made the choice for a tomb with an "open" structure, into which one can enter again, to bury other dead and, at times, to rearrange the sepulture for them. This choice raises the problem of the renewed contact of the living with the space of the dead and therefore the need, for protection, to have recourse to talismans, formulas of exorcism and attitudes and ritual practices ever more vital, even if they varied according to the regions and the social classes.

Décor of the tombs

Until the 2nd century BC, the ornamentation of the tombs was concentrated on the coffins—in wood lacquered or painted or hung with painted silks—and on the banner which could be placed on the inner coffin (containing the deceased). This banner, according to the most commonly admitted interpretation, showed the three levels of the universe, the heavens, the world of men and the underworld. The deceased (a woman in the case of tomb 1 at Mawangdui, a little after 168 BC, in Changsha, Hunan) is shown receiving homage and offerings from her

[7] Wu Hung, "From temple to tomb: ancient Chinese art and religion in transition," *Early China* 13 (1988), 78–115, and Wu Hung, *Monumentality in early Chinese art and architecture* (Stanford, 1995).

relatives before her soul ascends to paradise (Fig. 7).[8] These banners disappeared at the end of the Western Han, and their iconography was redeployed on the tomb walls.

Along with the horizontal development of the sepulture, in the 1st century BC in the Yellow River valley there spread a mode of decoration carried out in series and stamped on the large hollow bricks which formed the walls and ceilings of the tombs. The motifs, geometrical or figurative, already included certain themes which would be developed in the tombs of the Later Han: the porch flanked on either side by gate pillars *que* 闕 (Fig. 5 right) and guards, the carriages, the hunting scenes, the protective animals and objects. The first theme, long considered a sign of the deceased's social rank, is now identified by a number of authors as *tianmen* 天門, the gate of paradise, particularly since the discovery of the same motif accompanied by an inscription on sarcophagi and coffins of Sichuan dating to the Eastern Han (Fig. 8/1–4).[9] In this reading, the themes evoked on the bricks all concern the deceased's ascension to paradise. But the gate pillars *que* also mark, in a more global way, the entrance into another world, a sacred gate, that of the tomb.[10]

In the second half of the 1st century BC, the richest tombs in the same region associated with this standardized, stamped décor a painted ceiling decoration whose iconographic program centered on the evocation of the heavens, the voyage of the deceased, and his/her protection, with a strong cosmological orientation (Fig. 9).

From 50 AD on, the decoration of the tombs diversifies and becomes more complex, with marked specific regional differences, especially in style. The décors may be stamped or painted on the bricks, carved or painted on the stone slabs. They occupy more space than before. The décor may now take over the entire tomb or spread, in Sichuan for example, to the sarcophagi and the metal ornaments applied to the wooden coffins. The apogee of these parietal decorations is reached in the second half of the 2nd century AD and is linked to the fashion of luxurious burials.

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[8] *Changsha Mawangdui yi hao Han mu* (Beijing, 1973); Michael Loewe, *Ways to paradise. The Chinese quest for immortality* (London, 1979), pp. 17–59; Michèle Pirazzoli-t'Serstevens, *La Chine des Han* (Paris, 1982), pp. 46–48, 57–58.

[9] "Chongqing Wushanxian Dong Han liujintong paishi de faxian yu yanjiu," *Kaogu* 1998.12, 77–86; Lei Jianjin, "Jianyang Guitoushan faxian bangti huaxiangshi guan," *Sichuan wenwu* 1988.6, 65.

[10] Liu Tseng-kuei, "Handai huaxiang que de xiangzheng yiyi," *Zhongguo shixue* 10 (Dec. 2000), 97–127.

These decorations belong to rich but not princely tombs. The walls of the princely tombs were often painted in red cinnabar on a support (wood or a coating) covered with lacquer. They could also be hung with silks which have left only traces. Certain rich tombs in the metropolitan region adopted this method in the 2nd century AD for the principal chambers of the sepulture. This is the case of tombs 1 and 2 at Mixian in Henan.[11]

A certain number of preoccupations are at the center of the funerary programs of the rich tombs: insertion of the deceased into the cosmological system; protection of the deceased (signs, animals and plants of good omen), of his tomb and of his voyage to the other world, but also protection of those who participated in the rituals performed during the funeral; evocation of the rites (homage, banquet) which sometimes merged with the evocation of the deceased's social success, his wealth and the pleasures which it was hoped he would find again in the other world; and, finally, exaltation of Confucian virtues, in the form of historical or legendary anecdotes, exemplary lives or heroic acts to which the ruling class of the period liked to refer. The evocation of the cosmos and the deceased's ascension occupy the ceiling of the antechamber or that of the rear chamber; the depiction of the rites and of historical anecdotes appears on the walls of the principal chamber.

A number of these themes have multiple connotations, and different, non-exclusive ideas—religious or profane—may be represented in the same images. The cavalcade and the procession of carriages could thus suggest the voyages of the deceased during his official career, the funeral cortège, the deceased's voyage to paradise, or the arrival of the banquet's participants, often evoked following the cavalcade (Fig. 10). But who were the participants and at which banquet? It may be the deceased's family and friends paying him homage; or it may be the deceased advancing to receive the sacrifices of his descendants or arriving in paradise. As for the banquet itself, it may represent earthly celebrations, a banquet (funeral or commemorative) offered to the deceased, or a heavenly banquet, but also a symbol of opulence and therefore, among others, a sign of power.

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[11] Michèle Pirazzoli-t'Serstevens, "A Later Han cemetery at Mixian," in *The Chinese first empires: a re-appraisal*, eds Michael Loewe and Michael Nylan (Cambridge, Eng., in press).

If there is a consensus that the décor, hidden and shut up in the darkness of the tomb, was destined for the deceased or for the other world, its interpretation has evolved greatly over the last 50 years, although we still do not have a global understanding of the programs. Until recently there was a tendency to interpret the decoration of the tombs in the context of social life and a paradise of immortality: the representations were thought to evoke the status and wealth of the deceased, calling them to the attention of the heavenly bureaucracy, and an ideal daily world which the deceased was to find again on the other side. Other authors saw in the décor of the tombs the evocation of the deceased's life in the underworld. Divinities such as Xiwangmu, the immortals and the apotropaic animals were all seen as helping and protecting the deceased on his voyage to the paradise of immortality.

The present tendency is to interpret the décor in a more exclusively religious sense, less idealistically, as a cosmological system and as the representation—and also the prolongation—of the mortuary rites. Nevertheless, the social interpretation has not been eliminated (the deceased's life before and after his death), nor ideas of the voyage to the other world and the paradise of immortality. An attempt is made to allow the various interpretations to coexist, without always successfully articulating them the one with the other.

At the same time, there has been a great deal of interest in those who ordered the tombs with storied décor in the 2nd century AD and in the social groups behind these tombs.[12] This is an aspect which I shall not touch on here, but the stereotypical, codified aspect of the iconographic program should not be lost sight of. The personal choice of those ordering the tombs was rather limited. In the same way, regional differences consisted in variations or accentuations of a common message. I believe we must read these décors as a ritual text with obligatory formulas, each part of the tomb and, we shall see, of the offering chamber, being decorated with a restricted repertory of motifs, some of them fixed, others interchangeable.

[12] Wu Hung, *The Wu Liang shrine* (Stanford, 1989); Martin Powers, *Art and political expression in early China* (New Haven, 1991).

Arrangements and practices of deposit

Protection of the body

Aside from certain practices (treatment of the corpse, protection of the tomb) inherited from Chu and found in tombs of the beginning of the Han in ancient Chu territory (the tombs of Mawangdui, Fenghuangshan, etc.), the Han witnesses, whether textual or material, of the preservation of the body of the deceased concern emperors, princes and certain high dignitaries.

This protection consists, on the one hand, in the reinforcement of the wooden inner coffin by a *huangchang ticou*—a usage which comes from the ancient territories of Chu—and, on the other and above all, in protection of the body by a shroud, like complete armor, made of some 2,000 plaques of jade stitched[13] together (Fig. 11). Founded on the belief in the virtues of jade and in the benefits resulting from being "buried in jade" (*lianyu* 斂玉), the practice derived originally from the custom which consisted in covering the dead with jade objects, a custom which we already find in the Neolithic culture of Liangzhu.[14] Later, starting with the Western Zhou, jade was used to cover and ornament different parts of the deceased's body. As for the first complete shrouds, they appeared very late, in the second half of the 2nd century BC, and disappeared definitively with the end of the Han. These jade suits (*yuxia* 玉匣) were reserved for members of the imperial family and for certain of their "allies," such as the second king of Nanyue (d. 122 BC). The relation of the *yuxia* with the armor of the living, as James Lin noted, made it an armor for the other world, gifted with magic powers against the demons. The shroud was accompanied by jade *bi* 璧 disks placed on and under the body, on the shroud, and inlaid on the coffin, according to a very ancient tradition.[15] It was often completed by nine obturators in jade, which were also used alone for the burial of less important persons.

It is clear that, at the time, jade was considered to have virtues either of directly conserving the corpse or as protection against the demons responsible for its decomposition. Its cost naturally made it the

[13] On these *yuxia*, cf. Michael Loewe, "State funerals of the Han empire," *Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities* 71 (1999), 5–72; pp. 12–34; James Lin, "Jade suits and iron armour," *East Asia Journal* 2003.2, 21–43.

[14] Li Ling, *Zhongguo fangshu kao* (Beijing, 2000), pp. 314–17.

[15] Cecilia Braghin, "Polychrome and monochrome glass of the Warring States and Han periods," in *Chinese Glass*, ed. C. Braghin (Florence, 2002), pp. 22, 25–26.

prerogative of the wealthiest. Cinnabar, mentioned in the texts as the best drug for warding off putrefaction and used in China from Neolithic times in funerary practices, is less visible in the tombs because the excavation reports pay little or no attention to it. We know, however, that the principal chamber of the tomb of the king Liu Dao (r. 150–129 BC) of Chu at Beidongshan in Jiangsu was painted in cinnabar red over a lacquered base,[16] and the same was true of the tomb of King Xiao (r. 168–144) of Liang at Yongcheng in Henan.[17] The choice of red to heighten the decoration of the walls of the more modest tombs, but also for the interior of the lacquered tableware is certainly linked to beliefs concerning cinnabar.

Burial objects

Already in the Warring States period, two types of deposit—objects of daily use and "brilliant artifacts" (*mingqi* 明器)—made specifically to accompany the dead were supposed to bring with them wealth and comfort to the deceased in the other world[18] and make manifest his social status. They were also intended to concretize the deceased's separation from the world of the living.[19] During the Han the dead continued to be supplied both with real objects having belonged to him (*shengqi* 生器) and substitutes made especially for the tomb. In addition, with the development of the space reserved for the rites celebrated in the tomb, the food containers for the offerings destined for the dead took on a greater importance. In the Later Han they were grouped together on a kind of ritual platform in brick built in the antechamber, in the central chamber or in front of the coffin.[20]

The use of *mingqi* was generalized during the 1st century BC, illustrating a more extensive repertory of activities of daily life and including a number of objects of cosmological value. In the tombs with an axial

[16] *Xuzhou Beidongshan Xi Han Chu wang mu* (Beijing, 2003).

[17] Yan Genqi, ed., *Mangdangshan Xi Han Liang wang mudi* (Beijing, 2001).

[18] Poo Mu-chou, *Muzang yu shengsi: Zhongguo gudai zongjiao zhi xingsi* (Taibei, 1993), pp. 199–201. For a recent study of the *mingqi*, see Cary Y. Liu, in Cary Y. Liu, Michael Nylan, Anthony Barbieri-Low, eds, *Recarving China's past. Art, archaeology, and architecture of the "Wu Family Shrines"* (New Haven, 2005), pp. 205–21.

[19] Lothar von Falkenhausen, "Sources of Daoism: reflections on archaeological indicators of religious change in Eastern Zhou China," *Daoist Resources* 5.2 (1994), 1–12; 4; Lai Guolong, "The Baoshan tomb: religious transitions in art, ritual, and text during the Warring States period (480–221 BCE)," PhD Dissertation (University of California, Los Angeles, 2002), pp. 67–90.

[20] Huang, *Han mu*, p. 215.

plan, the *mingqi* were placed in the side chambers; in tombs with only one chamber, the offering containers were placed in front of the coffin, the *mingqi* near the door. With the even greater vogue of costly burials, the importance of the burial objects grew during the two first centuries of our era. Moreover, at the end of the Han, the funerary models in a number of regions included figures of exorcists and divinities responsible for warding off evil spirits, guardian animals and lamps with symbolic and apotropaic decoration. The efficacy of the statuettes placed near the dead thus redoubled that of the representations which ornamented the walls of the tombs.

The funerary complex and luxurious funerals

The Han, as before them the Qin, buried their dead outside the urban centers, generally to the north or northwest, often in cemeteries, the tombs progressively occupying the space from east to west.[21] This system did not include the emperors, whose place of burial was regulated by the *zhaomu* 昭穆 system.[22]

The imperial funerary parks are quite well known, with, at least until the middle of the 1st century BC, agglomerations attached to each imperial complex. Here also archaeology, over the last thirty some years, has enabled us to complete the descriptions in the texts of the period.[23] The surveys and excavations in the funerary park of Qin Shi huangdi, the First Emperor of the Qin, who died in the year 210 BC, and those carried out in the park of Emperor Jing (r. 156–141) of the Han are, in this respect, exemplary.[24] The mausoleum of Emperor Jing (Fig. 12)

[21] This is the case in the Shaogou cemetery to the west of Luoyang, for example, cf. Yang Zhifeng, "Guanyu Luoyang san zuo Han bihua mu de niandai xulie wenti," *Wenwu* 2003.3, 59–62; p. 61.

[22] The term *zhaomu* refers to the ritual system of the Western Zhou in which the ancestors were assigned, according to alternate generations, to the left (*zhao*) or the right (*mu*) side of the temple of the ancestors, to be honored, cf. Chang Kwang-chih, *Shang civilization* (New Haven and London, 1980), pp. 176–79, 353. For a different vision of the disposition of the mausoleums of the Western Han emperors, cf. Huang Zhanyue, "Xi Han lingmu yanjiu zhong de liang ge wenti," *Wenwu* 2005.4, 70–4.

[23] Yang Kuan, *Zhongguo gudai lingqin zhidu shi yanjiu* (Shanghai, 1985); Liu Qingzhu and Li Yufang, *Xi Han shiyi ling* (Xi'an, 1987); Wu, "From temple"; Michael Loewe, *Divination, mythology and monarchy in Han China* (Cambridge, Eng., 1994); Michael Loewe, "The imperial way of death in Han China," in *State and court ritual in China*, ed. Joseph P. McDermott (Cambridge, Mass., 1999), pp. 81–111.

[24] For a synthesis of the numerous publications on the mausoleum of the First Emperor, cf. Lothar Ledderose and Adele Schlombs, *Jenseits der Grosses Mauer: Der Erste Kaiser von China und Seine Terrakotta-Armee* (Dortmund, 1990); Wang Xueli,

and that of his empress were built inside an enclosed funerary park (*lingyuan* 陵園) covering an area of 12 km². Both mausoleums faced east and were surrounded by a wall of rammed earth with a gate flanked by pillars (*que*) with buttresses on all four sides. Four roads led to the quadrangular burial mound. The two mausoleums were surrounded by subsidiary pits (86 for Jingdi containing in particular human and animal statuettes) and numerous tombs belonging to the members of the aristocracy, tombs arranged according to a pre-established layout and, in some cases, themselves accompanied by subsidiary pits. Ritual buildings were constructed in the enclosure of the funerary park and in the surroundings. This scheme remains valid for the following emperors, except that after Jingdi, the empress was buried in a separate funerary park. In the same way, the burial mound raised above the tomb, quadrangular during the Western Han, was circular under the Eastern Han, most likely in order to conform to cosmological conceptions and the image of a round heaven above a square earth.

The dukes of Qin, during the Warring States period, seem to have been the first to erect ritual buildings on the sites of their tombs and to design a funerary park. The First Emperor represents the culmination of this manner of affirming his power. The idea of making the tomb the center of a ritual was taken up by Huidi (r. 195–188), who decreed that sacrifices would be made to his late father and to the ancestors at the tomb site, in the interior, and nearby the funeral park.

From the 2nd century BC the nobles imitated the emperor's system, with the construction of an offering shrine (*citang* 祠堂), which fulfilled at once the roles of ancestral shrine (*miao* 廟) and "chamber of rest" (*qin* 寢)[25] in both the imperial and princely tombs.[26] At the end of the 2nd century BC, the custom of building a *citang*, most often in front of the burial mound, sometimes to one side, spread widely. It is there that the family sacrificed to the deceased and that the community of his descendants met before his tablet.

The offering shrines of the Western Han were made of wood and earth, decorated inside with mural paintings and covered with a tiled

Qin Shihuang ling yanjiu (Shanghai, 1994); *Qin Shihuang ling tongche ma fajue baogao* (Beijing, 1998); for the works at Yangling, cf. *Han Yangling* (Chongqing, 2001).

[25] The *miao* is the equivalent of the official part of the palace, the *qin* of the private apartments. In it there were sacrifices four times a day; in the *miao*, 25 times a year.

[26] For the vestiges of the cultual complex of the funerary park of King Xiao of Liang and his wife, cf. *Yongcheng Xi Han Liang guo wang ling yu qinyuan* (Zhengzhou, 1996).

roof. Some of them, in southern Shandong, northern Jiangsu and Anhui, were built in stone starting in the second half of the 1st century BC. Others were built in brick. In Sichuan, in the rock-cut tombs of the Later Han, the vestibule served as *citang*. The offering shrines were constructions of widely varying dimensions and complexity according to the social rank and wealth of the deceased, but all of them had an open façade (Fig. 13). The entry was sometimes so low that the rites were performed on an altar in front of the building, which in this case was just a repository for the deceased's tablet.[27] The slabs of the stone *citang*—the only ones which have survived—were sometimes decorated with carved motifs that completed and matched the décor of the tomb. Their iconography obeyed certain fixed rules with, as an obligatory motif on the principal wall—the one at the rear before which was placed the tablet—a scene of homage in a pavilion (Fig. 14). The image has been diversely interpreted, but one of the most coherent readings sees in it the deceased receiving the sacrifice offered by his descendants.[28] At times the scene is accompanied by an inscription. Below it, still on the rear wall, a procession of carriages may symbolize the voyage of the deceased couple coming from the underworld to receive the offerings in the *citang*. To these representations is added, on the ceiling and on the upper part of the lateral walls, evocations of the heavenly world and of paradise and, on the walls, scenes from the world of the living.

When this culture of the tombs had reached its apogee, in the 2nd century AD, the tomb of an official with a salary of 2,000 bushels (*dan* 石) and more, or of a rich landowner, would be marked by a burial mound and, leading to it, one or several access ways or "spirit roads." The funerary park, planted with trees, especially cypress trees, could form a cemetery with several tombs. It was enclosed, at least symbolically, by a pair of *que* pillars at the entrance of the spirit road(s) (Fig. 15). These stone pillars, sometimes inscribed, were sometimes decorated with the same motifs as the walls of the tomb or of the offering shrine. They marked the entrance to a sacred space, that of the post-mortem residence of the deceased. Outside the *que* sometimes stood a pair of animal sculptures on either side of the access road. This led to the burial mound, in front of which was placed a stele bearing the genealogy and an encomium of the deceased. The offering shrine completed

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[27] Xin Lixiang, *Handai huaxiangshi zonghe yanjiu* (Beijing, 2000), p. 81.
[28] Xin, *Handai*, p. 92.

this complex. As Xin Lixiang has underlined,[29] a very strong symbolic link united the three ritual constructions—the tomb beneath the earth, the offering shrine and the *que*—a link which was materialized by the correspondences existing in the iconographic program of the three ensembles.

I will add only a word about luxurious burials (*houzang* 厚葬). The phenomenon existed well before the imperial epoch.[30] However, at the end of the Han it reached unprecedented proportions and this despite calls for moderation on the part of the court and from different religious movements, as witnessed by the *Taiping jing* or *Scripture of Great Peace*, which dates from the 2nd century AD.[31] The phenomenon concerns the great clans of the rich regions (southern Shandong, northern Jiangsu, Henan and the Red Basin in Sichuan) and has naturally made for a golden age of décor and tomb furnishings. It is to be explained not only by the wealth of certain families and by their desire thus to affirm their status, but also by the institutionalization of virtues such as filial piety. It is symptomatic that from the 1st century AD, the names of those close to the deceased appear on the buildings of the funerary complex, the *que* for example, evidence of a more marked attention to the survivors.[32] In a society ruled by recommendation, the descendants effectively used the monuments thus erected to distinguish themselves in the eyes of the authorities and to acquire present and future renown. They also used it to tighten political links. Those who participated in the grandiose funerals of a local potentate renewed in this way their allegiance to the deceased's family.[33]

The transformation was total after the fall of the Han, especially in North China. The ruling classes recommended simple burials and themselves set the example: no more burial mounds, no more trees, *citang* or steles; no more *que* or jade shrouds, and fewer *mingqi* in the tomb. This choice was naturally due to the hard times, but also to a realization that the luxurious burials were of no benefit to the deceased. Those who saw the innumerable tomb robberies occasioned by the wars

[29] Xin, *Handai*, pp. 322–23.

[30] Jeffrey K. Riegel, "Do not serve the dead as you serve the living: the *Lüshi chunqiu* treatises on moderation in burial," *Early China* 20 (1995), 301–30.

[31] David C. Yu (trans.), *History of Chinese Daoism*, vol. 1 (Lanham, 2000), p. 131.

[32] Yang Aiguo, "Handai huaxiangshi bangti luelun," *Kaogu* 2005.5, 59–72; pp. 65, 70.

[33] Miranda Brown, "Men in mourning: ritual, human nature, and politics in Warring States and Han China, 453 BC–AD 220," PhD Dissertation (Columbia University, 2002), pp. 197–98.

at the end of the Han—robberies which continued throughout the 3rd century—did not want their own tombs violated. This choice can also be explained by a change in the practices and expression of mourning among the elite, a change caused, among other factors, by a reaction against the ritualism of the end of the Han.[34]

The tomb as a cosmological system

The result of a very ancient current of thought, correlative cosmology (*yinyang wuxing shuo* 陰陽五行說), was generalized and systematized during the Western Han. Toward the end of the period, this cosmology took on an ethical coloring: the five agents were from then on under the supreme authority of Heaven and embodied its moral intentions. Analysis of the tombs, their décor and their furnishings, shows that in the same period (the second half of the 1st century BC), the elements of a cosmological program, not previously found in this form, took over the sepultures in the metropolitan region. This new tendency was accentuated and spread during the 1st century AD, with a more structured program, and it reached its peak of formalization in the 2nd century.

By means of a certain number of architectural choices, graphic or carved representations, and objects charged with cosmological powers or symbols, the tomb became a sort of cosmic mandala. I will touch successively on the animals of the four directions, the heavenly symbols and objects such as the *shipan* and the mirrors. We could add as well the frequent themes of the storied slabs in the tombs of the second half of the 1st and the 2nd century, such as Fuxi 伏羲 and Nüwa 女媧 (*yang* and *yin* divinities) associated with Pangu 盤古, the cosmic giant,[35] to which I will return when I discuss the gods and their representation.

The emblematic animals of the four directions

We must distinguish two groups of divine animals. The animals of the first group (*siling* 四靈), which includes the unicorn, the phoenix, the tiger and the dragon, have the virtues of good omens. The animals of the second group (called also *siling* or more frequently *sishen* 四神) are directly linked to the four directions and include the green dragon of

[34] Brown, "Men in mourning," pp. 222–27.

[35] Marc Kalinowski, "Mythe, cosmogénèse et théogonie dans la Chine ancienne," *L'Homme* 36.137 (1996), 41–60; p. 51.

the east, the white tiger of the west, the red bird of the south and the black warrior of the north (Xuanwu 玄武). The oldest mention of this group is found in the *Huainanzi*.[36] It is, roughly, in the 1st century BC that the symbols of the four directions, symbols of the four seasons too, were integrated into Han society.

The oldest complete representations of the *sishen* come from tombs in the middle of the 2nd century BC in the region of the capital, but the motif did not become popular for tomb decoration until the second half of the 1st century BC and apparently only in the middle valley of the Yellow River (Fig. 9). From Wang Mang, the theme spread, and the four animals are associated with other divinities or mythological images (immortals, Fuxi, Nüwa, Xiwangmu and Dongwanggong, Chiyou, hybrids). They are represented at the entrance and in different parts of the tomb (particularly the ceiling), as well as on coffins (Fig. 8) and sarcophagi, on a number of objects deposited in the tomb (head-covers, mirrors, pillows, ceramics), and finally on the *que* of the burial precinct. They indicate the orientation of the tomb and ensure the protection of the deceased's soul.

When, for reasons of practical contingency, the directions do not correspond, the animals are grouped and opposed by pairs in accord with *yinyang* notions. This explains why Xuanwu is always represented on the lower part of the door or on the back wall of the tomb, generally conceived to be to the north.

The celestial symbols

At the end of the Western Han, in the metropolitan region, in the framework of this conception of the tomb as a microcosm, the ceiling came to symbolize the heavens and the *sishen* were represented there together with the sun and the moon and images of stars and clouds. Several sepultures in the Luoyang region are typical of this iconographic choice: those of Bu Qianqiu (32 BC–6 AD) (Fig. 9), tomb 61 (48–7 BC) and tomb CM1231 (32–6 BC) at Qianjingdou.[37] On the ceilings of these tombs, the sun and the moon face each other in the midst of clouds, or "energies" (*qi* 氣). A crow flying is depicted in the interior of the solar disk and, in the moon, a toad.

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[36] Ch. 3, "Tianwen xun" 天文訓 and ch. 15 "Binglue xun" 兵略訓, cf. *Philosophes taoistes II Huainanzi*, eds Charles le Blanc and Rémi Mathieu (Paris, 2003): 3.24b, p. 132; 15.16b, p. 732.

[37] *Wenwu* 1993.5, pp. 1–16; Yang, "Guanyu Luoyang."

It is likely that the development, in Henan, under Wang Mang (r. 9–23 AD), of a ceiling in cupola form, mounted in four parts above a more or less square chamber—a formula which allowed the vault greater height and solidity—also responded to the intention of representing the cosmos. The cupola (or later the raised vault) permitted the representation of a round sky above a square earth (the chamber) and the unfurling of the symbolic imagery on the vault of heaven in a coherent fashion.[38] We may recall here that in the same period builders of tombs went from a quadrangular burial mound to a round one: here too the dominant idea was that of heaven conceived as circular above the square (here the underground tomb) earth.

A prefiguration of this map of heaven appeared in the tomb of the Transportation University in Xi'an[39] (Fig. 16). This is still a simple barrel vault, but already includes, around the sun and moon, the stars of the 28 mansions (*xiu* 宿).The cupola of the tomb C1 M689 and that of Yintun[40] at Luoyang, two tombs from the first decades of the 1st century AD, represent, along with the sun and the moon among the clouds or the *qi,* personages which have often been identified as the two deceased but who could also be divinities traveling in the empyrean.

The ambivalence between clouds and "breaths" (or "energies") *qi*, two co-extensive terms, appears from the 2nd century BC and perhaps earlier. Their image as motif constitutes, without any doubt, a major theme of Han iconography, the background on which are represented all the heavenly excursions, the fantastic animals and a number of divinities.

By the 1st century AD, representations of the stars not only decorate the vault of the tombs; they are also used for the ceilings of the oldest stone offering shrines. Later, during the 2nd century, although the evocation of stellar phenomena was not abandoned, it was preferred to represent the celestial world, as much in the tombs as in the *citang*, by the heavenly divinities and signs of good omen, with the former, most often in human form, occupying an increasingly important place to the detriment of the latter.[41] I will come back to the divinities (the duke of thunder, the prince of the winds), who are linked to natural phenomena

[38] Lukas Nickel, "Mortuary architecture in northern Henan at the time of Wang Mang," paper presented at the European Association of Chinese Studies Conference in Barcelona, 1996.
[39] *Xi'an Jiaotong daxue Xi Han bihuamu* (Xi'an, 1991).
[40] *Zhongguo zhongyao kaogu faxian 2003* (Beijing, 2004), pp. 99–103.
[41] Xin, *Handai*, pp. 164–66.

(and calamities). We may say that the coexistence of heavenly bodies and the powers of nature, personified, persisted on the ceilings of the rich tombs of North China in the medieval period.

The shipan *and mirrors*

A certain number of objects deposited in the tomb would seem, either in themselves or by virtue of their decoration, designed to integrate the deceased into the cosmos. Here again the tendency is much more evident from the second half of the 1st century BC than before, not that the objects were new, but because they became much more frequent in the tombs and because their decoration, as at times the inscriptions they carried, is explicit. The vogue for these objects coincided, as Anna Seidel noted, with the apogee of the apocryphal scriptures.[42]

The *shipan* 式盤 (Fig. 17) is a divining instrument conceived on the model of the universe. It consists in a square tray (the earth) with a mobile disk (the heavens) inserted in the center. The tray is divided into four zones associated with a sector (N, E, S, W) and including the elements of computation (two stems, three branches and seven mansions). On the disk are deployed, around the pivot of the Big Dipper, the 12 months and the 28 mansions. By turning the disk above the tray and looking for a favorable position, the user could determine an auspicious time and direction for a future action[43] without recourse to a diviner. In addition, it allowed the user to bring many kinds of things into correspondence, and we may say that this divination by the *shi* was the background from which emerged the theory of *yinyang wuxing*.[44] Numerous studies have been devoted to the *shipan*,[45] which in a certain way is a concrete representation of the microcosm. The oldest known examples, found in tombs of the ancient kingdom of Chu, date to the 3rd century BC.[46] If many Chinese from the Han period placed this instrument in the tombs, it is because of the efficacy they attributed to

[42] Anna Seidel, "Kokuhô, note à propos du terme Trésor national en Chine et au Japon," *Bulletin de l'Ecole française d'Extrême-Orient* 69 (1981), 229–61; p. 235.

[43] Wang Aihe, *Cosmology and political culture in Early China* (Cambridge, Eng., 2000), pp. 120–27.

[44] Li, *Zhongguo*.

[45] As well as Li, *Zhongguo*, cf. Marc Kalinowski, "Les instruments astro-calendériques des Han et la méthode *Liuren*," *Bulletin de l'Ecole française d'Extrême-Orient* 72 (1983), 309–419; Marc Kalinowski, "Les traités de Shuihudi et l'hémérologie chinoise à la fin des Royaumes combatants," *T'oung Pao* 72 (1986), 174–228; Yan Dunjie, "Shipan zongshu," *Kaogu xuebao* 1985.4, 445–63.

[46] Wang, *Cosmology*, p. 118, n. 87.

it as a regulator of the cosmic order and an integrator into the cosmos. The role of protection against evil influences must also have played a part—a point to which we will return.

The bronze mirrors in the form of game-boards (*boju jing* 博局鏡) (Fig. 18), are circular, decorated on the back with cosmological motifs. Known in the West as TLV mirrors and in China until recently as *guiju jing* 規矩鏡, they are in some sense an elaboration of the *shipan* and, beyond that, of a very ancient diagram called "two cords-four hooks" (*ersheng sigou* 二繩四鉤), from which the *shipan*, the *liubo* and the mirror in the form of a game-board all seem to have derived.[47]

The decoration on the back of the *boju jing* evokes the celestial vault above the earth (the square part in the center). Also pictured are clouds, immortals traveling across the sky, and the animals of the four directions (on the circular part), corresponding with the 12 branches (on the square part). The V or "hooks" position the four anchors (*siwei* 四維) which link the earth to the sky at the four intermediate angles of the sky (NE, SE, SW, NW); the Ts, with eight nipples on either side, are thought to symbolize the pillars supporting the sky at the four cardinal points.

The mirrors were destined to ward off harmful influences—"this engraved mirror expels all that is evil" 刻娄 [鏤]博 局去羊[祥], as certain inscriptions indicate—but they were also the symbolic representations of space and time in the framework of the cosmological conceptions of the time.[48] Originally elaborated in the metropolitan region, they were especially in vogue at the end of the Western Han and the beginning of the Eastern Han, which corresponds well to the period of the greatest attention to the correlation of the tomb with the categories of the cosmos. Later they were simplified (with a stylization of the motifs), before progressively disappearing between the end of the 2nd and the middle of the 3rd century. They then gave place to other types of cosmological mirrors such as those with the divinities and animals holding a T-square.

The space-time diagram on these mirrors is accompanied, as we saw, by the animals of the four directions and often by an inscription of wishes. One of them, on a mirror from the Wang Mang reign, the

[47] Marc Kalinowski, "The *Xingde* texts from Mawangdui," *Early China* 23–24 (1998–99), 125–202.

[48] Loewe, *Ways to paradise*.

period when a number of the most perfect of these objects were cast, formulates thus its wishes:

> The Xin dynasty has good copper which is extracted at Danyang [Anhui province]; when it is mixed with silver and tin, it is very pure and bright. May you long conserve your two parents, may your brothers be prosperous, may your children and grandchildren become government officials 新有善銅出丹陽, 和以銀錫且明, 長保二親利弟兄, 八子九孫治中央.[49]

In certain cases the inscription elaborates on the idea of the position in the center [of the universe] for the mirror's owner or the deceased, of the light dispensed by the cosmos, and of the voyage in the empyrean of the immortals but also of the possessor of the mirror.[50] The inscription thus redoubled the idea of the tomb as a mandala within which the deceased is placed in the most favorable possible conditions, in correspondence with the cosmic order. Evolving in peace within this order, he will ensure the prosperity and fortune of his descendants.

Rites of exorcism

We have seen that a number of mirrors from the Han period were used to chase away demons and evil influences. Other objects placed in the tomb also played this role—the head-covers or *wenming* 溫明[51] (Fig. 28), for example, but also a number of protective images: the animals of the four directions, the ring-holder masks *pushou* 鋪首 represented on the doors, the guardian and apotropaic divinities, certain animals (bears, deer, rams, etc.).

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[49] Mirror from Beijing daxue Saikele kaogu yu yishu bowuguan (Arthur M. Sackler Museum of Art and Archaeology of the University of Peking), cf. *Yanyuan juzhen. Beijing daxue Saikele kaogu yu yishu bowuguan zhanpin xuancui* (Beijing, 1992), n° 109.

[50] Cheng Linquan and Han Guohe, "A study of gaming board (TLV) mirrors unearthed in the northern suburbs of Xi'an," *Archaeology and Art Digest* 4.4 (2002), 97–110. See also the inscription on the mirror in tomb 4 of Yinwan, cf. *Wenwu* 1996.8, p. 8, and *Yinwan Han mu jiandu* (Beijing, 1997), pp. 47, 171, 160–61. For a translation of the inscription, cf. David T. Liu in Liu, Nylan, Barbieri-Low, *Recarving*, p. 375. See also Loewe, *Ways to paradise*, pp. 103–04.

[51] The head-cover (modern name *mianzhao* 面罩) was a sort of square open-bottomed box in lacquered and painted wood which was deposed in the coffin above the deceased's head; a mirror or a disk of jade or glass was placed against each of the interior walls. These objects with an apotropaic function have been found essentially in Jiangsu in the tombs of the end of the Western Han and of the Wang Mang period, cf. Braghin, "Polychrome," p. 27; Erickson, "Han dynasty tomb."

These forms of protection did not eliminate the need for constant recourse to exorcism (*jiechu* 解除) and, more widely, to magico-religious practices. The mental universe and, therefore, Han daily life were peopled with a great number of divinities, demons and ghosts. The frontier between these categories, moreover, was of the vaguest,[52] and their "extra-human" character implied no ethical connotation. Divinities, spirits and demons were conceived as acting for themselves. It was they who provoked calamity, illness, grief and death, but it was also possible to thwart or even kill them. Thus there existed numerous recipes to exorcise them.

For the last 20-some years, a number of works, especially in the West, have been devoted to exorcisms practiced in the tomb or around the dead, drawing not only on transmitted texts but also and above all on the texts found in the tombs and on the wall decorations of the tombs. We add immediately that the documentation concerns mainly the end of the Han (from the end of the 1st to the beginning of the 3rd century). I will return to the extremely localized character of some of this documentation, as regards both time and space, and within the society.

Rites before, during, and after burial

Different rites were done, first, in the vicinity of the corpse to help separate it from the living—the most important being the *zhaohun* 招魂 or summons of the soul—and then, while the tomb was being dug or after it was finished, to appease the god of the earth (*tushen* 土神 or *dizhu* 地主) and, finally, at the moment of burial. This last took place after a more or less long period of time, which could go from several months to several years, the delay allowing for the construction and decoration of the tomb, the carving of the stele and the collecting of gifts offered the deceased and his family. The delay also allowed those who were going to participate in the funeral—several thousand in the case of a powerful family—to make the trip.[53]

After leading the procession to the tomb, the exorcist (*fangxiangshi* 方相氏) or the funeral director (*zhongren* 冢人) was supposed to practice

[52] Cf. Donald Harper, "A Chinese demonography of the third century B.C.," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 45.2 (1985), 459–98; Poo Mu-chou, "Popular religion in pre-imperial China: observations on the almanacs of Shui-hu-ti," *T'oung Pao* 79.4–5 (1993), 225–48; and Poo Mu-chou, "Ghost literature: exorcistic ritual texts or daily entertainment?" *Asia Major* 13.1 (2000), 43–64.

[53] Brown, "Men in mourning," pp. 11–12.

several rites, one, an exorcism which consisted in striking with his halberd the four corners of the funeral chamber to chase away the tomb demons and evil influences.[54] In the 2nd century AD, armed guards or Chiyou (Fig. 19), or yet again images of exorcists were often found pictured on the frame posts or around the door of the tomb, and we may suppose that the association of the exorcist—or of the divinity in charge of banishing evil influences who is his prototype—with the animals of the directions, is the repetition, fixed forever in the stone of the door, of the ritual performed during the funeral.

Another rite, attested by short texts on bamboo or wood found in several tombs from the beginning of the Han in former Chu territory,[55] consisted in announcing the arrival of the deceased, giving his identity to the otherworld bureaucracy and also sending it a list of the goods deposed in the tomb. These "declarations to the authorities of the underworld" (*gaodi ce* 告地策) were modeled on the administrative documents of the time and indicate, as Marc Kalinowski says, the process of bureaucratization of the contractual relations between men and the gods.[56]

Several researchers have recently tried to interpret the iconographic program of certain rich tombs of the 2nd century AD as the representations of the great stages of the funeral ritual which took place in front of and within the tomb.[57] The imagery of the tombs, made operational by the ritual, would then function as a permanent manifestation of this ritual, which in itself is by nature transitory. This inscription in eternity of the funeral ritual, with the magical efficacy which this implies, would be destined for different publics: for the living who participate in the rituals during the funeral, and for the next world, that is for both the

[54] *Zhouli* (*Rites of Zhou*), cf. *Zhouli zhengzhu* (Taibei, 1979) 31, 6b, 7a; Mark E. Lewis, *Sanctioned violence in Early China* (New York, 1990), p. 191.

[55] For example, in tomb 168 at Fenghuangshan (167 BC) in Hubei (cf. "Jiangling Fenghuangshan 168 hao Han mu," *Kaogu xuebao* 1993.4, 455–513) and in tomb 3 of Mawangdui (168 BC), in Hunan (cf. Fu Juyou and Chen Songchang, *Mawangdui Han mu wenwu*, Changsha, 1992, p. 37).

[56] Marc Kalinowski, "Bibliothèques et archives funéraires de la Chine ancienne," *Comptes rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* (Paris, 2003), 889–927; p. 908.

[57] This is the case of Lydia duPont Thompson, in "The Yi'nan tomb: narrative and ritual in pictorial art of the Eastern Han (25–220 CE)," PhD Dissertation (New York University, 1998), for the tomb of Yi'nan, of Kim Irene Nedra Dramer, in "Between the living and the dead: Han dynasty stone carved tomb doors," PhD dissertation (Columbia University, 2002), for the decoration of the doors.

deceased and for the powers on whom he will depend in the other world. Nedra Dramer goes further: she believes the successive doors of the tomb are the sites for different rituals to ensure protection and the success of the initiatory passage of both the chief mourner toward his new status as family patriarch and of the deceased toward the state of ancestor. The rituals practiced at the doors and the motifs on these doors are there to materialize and reinforce this process of transformation.

Once the burial with its funerary ritual was over, the tomb was sealed, both concretely and ritually. As the inscription in the tomb of Cangshan says "[But you, the dead] have entered into the world of shadows, completely separated from that of the living."[58] In sealing the doors, the *fangxiangshi* made certain the dead could not go back through the gates to return to the world of the living. Other examples of these ritualistic readings of the décor of the rich tombs could be given, and we will return to these rites in our discussion of the ideas of the other world.

In addition to the rites done at the time of burial, the family worshipped regularly using libations and sacrifices to the deceased on the site of the tomb, either outside on the tomb itself, or in the *citang*. The deceased was also worshiped in the lineage temple, where the social identity of the departed within his lineage was celebrated.[59]

In the 2nd century AD, the three-year mourning which, during the Western Han, was followed almost exclusively by the members of the imperial family, spread throughout the ruling class. Moreover, people did not wear mourning for three years just for a father or mother, but also for a superior or a protector.

The xiaochu wen 削除文 *texts for elimination (or extermination)*

The term *xiaochu wen* designates, during the Han, the exorcistic texts which are called today *jiechu wen* 解除文 (elimination text) or *zhenmu wen* 鎮墓文 (tomb-stabilization text). These texts were found in a limited number of tombs, painted on bottles or jars (*ping* 瓶) (Fig. 20), often referred as *zhenmu ping*. Some of these jars contained medicinal drugs, others cereals or grain (used to pay taxes in the next world). Still others contained thin lead plaques in human form (*qianren* 鉛人) (Fig. 21),

[58] Wu, *Monumentality*, p. 244.
[59] K.E. Brashier, "Han thanatology and the division of 'souls,'" *Early China* 21 (1996), 125–58; pp. 152–57.

plaques thought to replace the dead for the corvées and punishments of the other world, in the manner of Egyptian *oushebti*.[60] There may have been several bottles or jars in a tomb.

Several themes appear in these texts:

- the idea that the dead should not be allowed to contaminate (*zhu* 注) the living (and thus harm them) and that it is essential therefore to sever the ties between the worlds of the dead and the living;
- the idea that the living must be freed from all responsibility with regard to the deceased, that is, to avoid the living being implicated in the faults of the dead and, for example, having their lifetime shortened because of the bad actions of the dead. The idea is that death annuls everything: the dead should not be blamed for past faults, and the living do not have to pay the debts of the dead;
- the fear that the destinies of the dead and the living be mixed. It was therefore requested of the masters of the underworld registers to sever the "resemblance," the "link," to remove the repetition (*chongfu* 重复) of name and death date that caused a second person to die, and to keep strictly separate the registers of the living and the dead;
- these texts were also aimed at facilitating the victory of the five agents the one over the other, to reinforce the *yang* and to eliminate the miasmas of the *yin*.

The exorcist who directed the ritual called himself in these texts "the envoy of Tiandi" (*Tiandi shi zhe* 天帝使者), or messenger of the Lord of Heaven. The document is written for the administration of the other world, as are the inventory lists. Tiandi's representative orders the celestial administration to deliver the deceased from punishment and the living from calamity, that the sepulture may be maintained in peace and the descendants be happy.[61] The text ends with an administrative formula copied from official documents: "Promptly, promptly in accordance with the statutes and ordinances" (*jiji ru lüling* 急急如律令). It is often accompanied by a talisman in the form of archetypical characters. On the whole, these exorcist texts are rather standardized and very coherent.

[60] Poo, *Muzang*, p. 220.

[61] Zhang Xunliao, "Dong Han muzang chutu de jiezhuqi cailiao he Tianshi dao de qiyuan," *Daojia wenhua yanjiu* 9 (1996), 253–66; p. 257.

Anna Seidel[62] was the first in the West to study these texts—she calls them "celestial ordinances for the dead"—and to use them to understand and define the beliefs in the other world of the ordinary people of the Han period. This pioneer study has had considerable influence. I will return to it when examining the various interpretations of these beliefs.

I have already indicated that the jars for exorcism were found in a limited number of modest tombs,[63] from a period, also limited, between the end of the 1st century AD (60 AD) and the end of the 2nd century AD (with a peak between 156 and 190) and in a clearly delimited region: Shaanxi and Henan above all. Then there was a sort of resurgence of the texts on jars of a similar type at Dunhuang, in Gansu province, between the end of the 3rd and the beginning of the 5th century, likewise in the tombs of the middle and lower classes. Seidel, followed by Peter Nickerson,[64] considered the texts at Dunhuang as the descendants of the Han *xiaochu wen*.

A number of themes and formulations of the Han exorcist texts have been taken up in the later Daoist texts, although modified and adapted. Wu Rongzeng[65] and Seidel saw there the expression of popular ideas which Daoism would later appropriate. Angelika Cedzich,[66] who calls these texts "grave quelling texts," and Lai Chi Tim[67] have elaborated on Seidel's thesis, showing the differences which exist between the rituals of Daoism at its beginnings and the Han popular religion of the exorcistic texts. By contrast, other specialists such as Zhang Xunliao[68] see the Han texts as vestiges of a branch of the Daoism of the Heavenly Masters at

[62] Anna Seidel, "Traces of Han religion in funeral texts found in tombs," *Dôkyô to shûkyô bunka*, ed. Akizuki Kan'ei (Tokyo, 1987), pp. 21–57.

[63] Zhang Xunliao in 1996 counted 70 jars (Zhang, "Dong Han muzang," p. 256). Lu Xiqi has inventoried about 40 tombs, cf. Lu Xiqi "Handai maidiquan de shizhi, yuanyuan yu yiyi," *Zhongguo shi yanjiu* 2006.1, 47–68.

[64] Peter Nickerson, "Daoism, death, and bureaucracy in early medieval China," PhD dissertation (University of California, Berkeley, 1996).

[65] Wu Rongzeng, "Zhenmuwen zhong suo jiandao de Dong Han daowu guanxi," *Wenwu* 1981.3, 56–63.

[66] Angelika Cedzich, "Ghosts and demons, law and order: grave quelling texts and early Daoist liturgy," *Daoist Resources* 4.2 (1993), 23–35.

[67] Lai Chi-tim, "The *Demon statutes of Nüqing* and the problem of the bureaucratization of the netherworld in early Heavenly Master Daoism," *T'oung Pao* 88.4–5 (2002), 251–81.

[68] Zhang, "Dong Han muzang," pp. 259–65.

its beginnings in North China, among low-level government officials and landowners.

Let us say once more that in the 2nd century AD, the *xiaochu wen*, like the anthropomorphic lead plaques, appeared only, with few exceptions, in the tombs of modest people. Seidel[69] thought these texts were representative of the religion of an educated class, but outside of the world of government officials: village elders, exorcists and specialists in funeral rites. She does not take into account the very local distribution of these texts, and no one since seems to have taken this into account.

These texts may actually be the result of a local tradition of funerary exorcisms linked to a religious movement and spread within a social class or in very particular cases of death (violent or premature death). This tradition naturally borrows a great deal from a common base of beliefs, particularly the idea of an otherworldly bureaucracy modeled on that of this world, an idea attested from the end of the 4th century BC.[70] Nevertheless, it seems to me dangerous to extrapolate and apply the priorities of this tradition as well as its formulations to all of China and to the whole of the Han period, as is the present tendency, assuming the various texts found in the Han tombs—texts of different epochs, regions and social milieu—to be indicative of the same beliefs and practices which are imagined to be uniform and unchanging. In addition, it is very likely that there was in China during the Han a hierarchy among the dead, in accordance with the social hierarchy of the living and the causes of death. We may suppose there were therefore diverse types of funeral rituals adapted to the circumstances.

In the same way, we may ask, as Nickerson[71] suggests for the medieval period, whether the deposit of documents in the tomb did not replace, in certain cases, the descent into the tomb of the exorcist himself.

Contracts to buy land (diquan 地券 *or* maidi quan 買地券)

These texts were most often written on ceramics or on tablets of wood or lead. Placed in the tomb, they specified, in imitation of a contract used in the world of the living, the names of the seller and the buyer, the date of purchase, the cost, the place and the surface area of the

[69] Seidel, "Traces of Han," pp. 27–8.

[70] Donald Harper, "Resurrection in Warring States popular religion," *Taoist Resources* 5.2 (1994), 13–28.

[71] Peter Nickerson, "The great petition for sepulchral plaints," in *Early Daoist scriptures*, ed. Stephen R. Bokenkamp (Berkeley, 1997), pp. 230–74; 256, n. 30.

land; they were designed as evidence of the rights of the deceased to the land of his tomb so that he could avoid long lawsuits in the other world and protect his descendants from the vengeance of the gods of the earth.[72] The oldest *maidi quan* known dates to 81 AD and comes from Shanxi. They remain very rare in Han tombs, multiplying, spreading and evolving during the Six Dynasties, with clear regional variations. Like the *zhenmu wen*, with which they share a number of similarities of formulation, the contracts were most often used in medium-sized tombs, perhaps in the tombs of those whose rights to the land could be questioned.[73]

Perception and representations of the other world

Thus there existed during the Han an extremely strong tomb culture, but it expressed no single, coherent vision of the other world. This fact naturally influenced the role and the place of the tomb in the Han imagination. Not only do the received textual sources give heterogeneous and contradictory descriptions of the deceased's fate, archaeology, as much in the texts which have been discovered as in the décor of the tombs and the objects deposed in them, also reveals very diverse and contradictory conceptions—a fact neither exceptional nor peculiar to China. In what follows, I will summarize the most widespread Han beliefs in this regard.

To begin with, several texts written by literati, the *Huainanzi*, for example, of the 2nd century BC, and the *Liji* (*Book of rites*) of the following century, describe the human being as having two distinct souls, one refined *hun* 魂, of the *yang* essence, the other coarse *po* 魄, of the *yin* essence. At death, the refined soul returns to heaven, while the coarse soul returns to earth. The underground world where the *po* soul goes is imagined as ruled by a bureaucracy conceived on the model of that of the living. To reach the heavenly world, imagined as a sort of paradise, the *hun* soul passes through the magical isles of the eastern sea, especially the isle of Penglai 蓬萊, which tradition places in

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[72] Ikeda On, "Chûgoku rekidai boken ryakkô," *Tôyô-bunka kenkyûjo kiyô* 86 (1981), 193–278; Terry F. Kleeman, "Land contracts and related documents," in *Chûgoku no shûkyô shisô to kagaku: Makio Ryôkai hakushi shôju kinen ronshû* (Tokyo, 1984), pp. 1–34.

[73] Stanley K. Abe, *Ordinary images* (Chicago, 2002), p. 91. The best recent study of the *maidi quan* is the article of Lu Xiqi, "Handai maidiquan." I thank Olivier Venture for pointing it out to me.

the sea off Shandong. During or at the end of the 1st century BC, this imaginary land was transformed and, as it were, displaced toward the far west, to Kunlun 崑崙, the cosmic mountain, domain of the goddess Xiwangmu, who reigns over a paradise inhabited by immortals. This vision is expressed, as Seidel[74] noted, by the iconography of the rich tombs of the Later Han. I will come back to these "eminent paradisiacal places of immortality."

Other texts, as for example the *xiaochu wen* of the 2nd century AD, depict the two categories of soul of the deceased dependent on two departments of the underworld. The *hun* soul is registered at Liangfu 梁父, near Mount Tai, which in this way becomes the capital of the ruler of the dead, the lord of Mount Tai 泰山君, aided by a bureaucracy along the lines of the Han bureaucracy. The *po* soul, by contrast, is overseen by a separate department of the underworld administration, the Yellow Springs, which can also be associated with Gaolishan 高里山 or Haolishan 蒿里山, another sacred place at the foot of Mount Tai. In this conception, the details of which vary according to the traditions, the deceased is shut up in a netherworld ruled by strict bureaucratic structures within which he is judged and from which he will not leave. For Seidel, the relegation of both souls to a rather disheartening underworld is an idea which belongs to the common religion, in opposition to the duality of the souls with their different dwellings after death, a duality imagined and theorized by the literati.

The analyses of Seidel, subscribed to in the work of Donald Harper, have led to the adoption of this vision of the next world by a number of Western scholars. Harper has shown that certain elements of the rites reflected in the *zhenmu ping*, such as the bureaucracy of the next world or the registers of life and death, were already present in texts exhumed from tombs of the 4th and 3rd centuries BC. But we could, in the same way, note the continuity of certain elements from the exorcistic texts of the end of the Han with medieval Daoism without assuming—and here everyone agrees—we are dealing with the same religion.

Moreover, other texts do not make a distinction between the two types of souls, but between the two souls considered as one entity and the body.[75] Still other sources, such as the funerary steles of the 2nd

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[74] Anna Seidel, "Post-mortem immortality or the Daoist resurrection of the body," *Gilgul* (Leiden, 1987), pp. 226–27.

[75] Brashier, "Han thanatology," p. 138; Poo Mu-chou, *In search of personal welfare: a view of ancient Chinese religion* (Albany, 1998), pp. 62–66, 163–65.

century AD, associate the *hunpo* with the body, which they distinguish from the spirit (*shen* 神).[76]

Finally, several texts, some from the beginning of the period and others from the end seem simply to relegate the deceased (body and soul) to the tomb: "The living have their dwellings, the [dead] tombs. Do not let the living have dealings with the dead 生人有居, [死]人有墓. 令不得與死者從事."[77] The inscription on a ceramic bottle says much the same thing: "The living have their district, the dead have the tomb. The living go forward, the dead backward. Dead and living follow different roads. Let them not meet 生人有鄉, 死人有墓.生人前行, 死人卻行.死生弈路, 毋復相[忤]."[78] But there again, certain sources present the deceased as no more able to leave the tomb, while others say he is free to go. Thus, for the *Taiping jing*,[79] the deceased can come back among the living, for better or for worse.

At present, scholars have a tendency to adopt one or another of these conceptions and apply it to all Han social classes and the entire period, taking a belief attested to by texts or iconography as a totally integrated and universal concept—an error that Seidel did not commit. Jessica Rawson and Lothar von Falkenhausen,[80] for instance, think that the tomb was the final resting place of the deceased, from which he was unable to leave. Michael Loewe,[81] Yü Ying-shih,[82] John Major[83] and many Chinese specialists have adopted, with nuances, the vision proposed by the *Huainanzi*.

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[76] Brashier, "Han thanatology," p. 149.

[77] Manuscript entitled *Cheng* (*Designations*) of the tomb 3 at Mawangdui (168 BC), quoted by Robin D.S. Yates (translated with an introduction and commentary by), *Five lost classics: Tao, Huanglao and Yin-Yang in Han China* (New York, 1997), pp. 164–65.

[78] "Xianyang Yaodian chutu de Dong Han zhushu taoping," *Wenwu* 2004.2, 86–7. The bottle, found in a tomb at Xianyang in Shaanxi, bears, beside the inscription, a painted image of the Big Dipper and talismanic characters.

[79] Zhang, "Dong Han muzang," p. 262.

[80] Jessica Rawson, ed., *Mysteries of ancient China, new discoveries from the early dynasties* (London, British Museum, 1996), pp. 24–27; Falkenhausen, "Sources of Daoism," p. 7.

[81] Loewe, *Ways to paradise*; Michael Loewe, *Chinese ideas of life and death* (London, 1982); Loewe, "State funerals."

[82] Yü Yingshi, "'O Soul, come back!' A study in the changing conceptions of the soul and afterlife in pre-Buddhist China," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 47.2 (1987), 363–95.

[83] John S. Major, *Heaven and earth in early Han thought* (Albany, 1993).

It is very likely that different concepts co-existed[84] and that one of the major preoccupations of the families was to ensure by all the means at their disposal comfort and happiness for the deceased, so that no misfortune would befall the living.[85] It is also certain that each vision of the world beyond left traces in later conceptions, Daoist and Buddhist, whether it was the idea of the different souls with their different destinations or that of a bureaucracy in the next world.

It is difficult to imagine that the tomb was the ultimate and only resting place of the deceased. This extremely reductive explanation is contradicted both by the representations accompanied by inscriptions on sarcophagi and the ornaments of coffins in Sichuan (Fig. 8); it is also contradicted by the inscriptions on the *boju jing* mirrors and, finally, by the steles standing before the tombs, which speak of the "spirit" (*shen* 神) of the deceased traveling in highest heaven.[86]

There are at least two alternatives to relegation to the prison of the tomb. In several texts and in later Buddhist rituals[87]—which we may imagine were adopted on the basis of existing beliefs—death is considered as a passage. The soul of the deceased, at first unstable and in transit, then rejoins the world of the ancestors. It is this passage which the rituals performed in the tomb in front of each door, according to Dramer,[88] were designed to protect and facilitate and that the iconography of the doors would materialize and reinforce. We find the same conception of death as a passage in ancient Japan.[89] In this conception, the funeral rites are destined to protect the living from death, from its stain, its contagion and the disasters which it brings. The desire for protection is turned against the deceased in his dangerous mutant state, before he becomes an ancestor whom one can venerate. If death is a passage, the tomb constitutes the intermediary stage par excellence.

Another alternative explanation for the dilemma of the other world is that of "post-mortem immortality,"[90] through the idea of a false death

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[84] Loewe, *Chinese ideas*, p. 114 ; Wu Hung, "Art in ritual context: rethinking Mawangdui," *Early China* 17 (1992), 111–44; p. 142.

[85] Abe, *Ordinary images*, p. 90.

[86] Brashier, "Han thanatology," pp. 147–58.

[87] Stephen Teiser, "Ghosts and ancestors in medieval Chinese religion: the Yü-lan p'en festival as mortuary ritual," *History of Religions* 26.1 (1986), 47–67; p. 64.

[88] Dramer, "Between the living."

[89] François Macé, *La mort et les funérailles dans le Japon ancien* (Paris, 1986), pp. 329, 334, 341.

[90] Seidel, "Post-mortem," pp. 230–31.

that developed in the 1st and 2nd centuries AD. The just man who, his whole life long, has accumulated merit and rid his body of all the "biodegradable" elements, pretends to be dead but in reality, delivered from his corporal envelope, becomes an immortal of a lower rank in the paradise of immortals or an official in the next world. This idea of "liberation of the body" (*shijie* 尸解) may be considered as a form of resurrection, originating in the milieu of those who, in the 1st century AD, studied the Dao, practiced macrobiotic hygiene, and believed in the immortals.[91] The ancient Daoist texts make a clear distinction between adepts who are thus reborn and ordinary people who have not accumulated merit and who, when they die, go to the underworld.[92]

I should like to conclude by insisting on the conceptual differences found in the various socio-cultural environments at the end of the Han. Anna Seidel had already realized there were different deaths and different conceptions of death according to the social milieu in the Han period and that the tradition which said that the soul rose to the paradise of the immortals was a well-anchored one among the aristocracy.[93] The idea was taken up more recently by Poo Mu-chou.[94] This idea of different social milieus is in some sense denied by Donald Harper, who defines as members of the elite all the owners of the excavated tombs of the Han period.[95] But social milieu explains at least in part the divergent conceptions between certain texts coming from the rich classes, the décor of the tombs of these same classes (with their representation of Xiwangmu and the immortals) and, on the other hand, the exorcistic texts placed in some tombs of a modest social milieu. The *Liji* makes a clear social distinction when it says that "the lower officials and the common people have no offering shrines for their ancestors and, when they die, they are called *gui* 鬼."[96]

There was most certainly yet another hierarchy of beliefs and practices, one which depended on the cause of death. Therefore, during the Han—and this is clearly visible at the end of the period—we have

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[91] Harper, "Resurrection," pp. 26–27.

[92] Commentary Xiang'er to the *Laozi*, Stephen R. Bokenkamp, *Early Daoist scriptures* (Berkeley, 1997), p. 135.

[93] Seidel, "Traces of Han," p. 48.

[94] Poo, *In search*.

[95] Donald Harper, "Contracts with the spirit world in Han common religion: the Xuning prayer and sacrifice documents of A.D. 79," *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie* 14 (2004) 227–67; pp. 230–31.

[96] *Liji* 20, "Jifa," quoted by Cedzich, "Ghosts," p. 28.

very different concepts of death and modes of worship of the dead, each system being designed to calm the fears of the living in a time of terrible disorders and anxiety throughout the whole of society.

Religious iconography in the Han dynasty

Introduction

Study of images and their place in the Han religious imagination and ritual is in its infancy and the archaeology which documents above all the tombs, enables us to make out only a certain number of divinities linked to the common religion and, more particularly, to dealing with the dead and death. For the moment, we have no image directly relevant to the imperial cult, for example, nor to the holy sites.

Apart from this first difficulty, we are faced with two other problems: the first concerns the correspondence between the received sources and the images. The images often seem disconnected from the texts; they appear to come from a parallel discourse, coherent and autonomous with regard to the texts. The case of the immortals is, we shall see, exemplary in this regard. We may think spontaneously that it is our interpretation of these representations which is at stake and that we have not found the key that would bring texts and images into correspondence. That we find such a key is not to be excluded, but when the images are accompanied by an inscription which identifies them, it does not refer to ideas found in the written sources.

Our incapacity satisfactorily to decode the Han religious iconography remains, thus, a major handicap. If the iconography of Xiwangmu is from now on well known, although its evolution[97] is rarely dealt with, that of other popular divinities, frequent on the walls of the tombs, has not been studied systematically. I shall therefore limit myself here to taking stock of the most frequent representations, whose interpretation also seems to be the best founded, and to indicating a certain number of other images for which our understanding is much less certain. I shall try, in the same spirit, to remain on the grounds of attested fact, without allowing myself (nor taking into account) overly risky interpretations.

[97] The best recent study on Xiwangmu is that of Li Song, *Lun Handai yishu zhong de Xiwangmu tuxiang* (Changsha, 2000). I thank Marianne Bujard for referring me to it.

The Han most often conceived the universe as a structure in three levels:

- on high, the world of the spirits of Heaven, over which presides Shangdi 上帝, the Lord on High, also called, according to the sources, Tiandi 天帝, Tiangong 天公, Tianjun 天君, or Huangdi 黃帝. The gods of nature over whom he rules in their turn rule over the universe, not just the physical world, but also the social order of humans;
- in the middle, the world of humans;
- and, finally, down below, the underworld where the souls of the dead live.

The three levels of this cosmology are interdependent and influence one another through the principles of *yin* and *yang* and the theory of the five agents.

Xin Lixiang introduced a fourth level, between Heaven and the world of men, where he placed the immortals reigned over by Xiwangmu,[98] thus separating the paradise of the immortals from the heavens.

Divinities and propitiatory images

Xiwangmu: her image and its evolution

Several divinities, at least one with a terrible appearance, corresponding to different traditions, coexisted before the Han under the name of Xiwangmu 西王母, Queen Mother of the West.[99] The first direct allusions to Xiwangmu as the goddess who gives immortality appear in texts of the second half of the 2nd century BC, in the *Huainanzi* at first, then in the "Daren fu" 大人賦 ("Rhapsody of the great man") by Sima Xiangru 司馬相如 (179–117 BC). These mentions should be read in the context of the vogue for mystic journeys and quests for immortality that was current among the aristocracy during the reign of Emperor Wu (r. 140–87 BC). It is, however, only at the end of the Western Han that a veritable cult takes form, linked to the idea of a paradise of immortality. At the beginning of the Han, two sacred mountains, one in the east, the island-mountain of Penglai, the other in the west, Kunlun, were identified with this paradise. During the 1st century BC Kunlun, over which Xiwangmu reigned, as she is often pictured, partially dethroned

[98] Xin, *Handai*, p. 60.

[99] Riccardo Fracasso, "Holy mothers of ancient China. A new approach to the Hsi-wang-mu problem," *T'oung Pao* 74 (1988), 1–46.

the island of Penglai. However, in the 2nd century AD when Xiwangmu was endowed with a consort, Dongwanggong 東王公, the Royal Father of the East, he was associated with Penglai.

The first representations of Xiwangmu appear in tombs of the region of Luoyang and Zhengzhou in Henan, built in the last decades of the 1st century BC.[100] The tomb of Bu Qianqiu and his wife at Luoyang is an example of this.[101] It is attributed to the period of 32 BC–6 AD. On the ceiling of the chamber (Fig. 9), the two deceased are shown in their ascension to the heavens, escorted by mythical animals (the *siling*) and welcomed by Xiwangmu, shown in a three-quarter view. Several of the future acolytes of the goddess—the nine-tailed fox, the toad (associated with the idea of birth, death, rebirth and longevity), the hare holding herbs in its mouth—accompany her. The hare, holding or crushing the drug of immortality, is, moreover, in these early depictions of the goddess, an obligatory image which may suffice, only by its presence, to evoke her.[102]

Representations of Xiwangmu are still quite rare at the end of the Western Han. Without doubt they correspond to the popularization of the divinity, whose worship, however, remains circumscribed to the Central Plain. Representations multiply under the Eastern Han and spread throughout the empire, at least into the areas peopled by the Chinese, and the theme's vogue reached its apogee in the 2nd century AD,[103] with a particularly important development in Sichuan and Shandong. By contrast, Xiwangmu appears very little in textual sources of the period.

During the 2nd century on the goddess is most often pictured full face and enthroned. She is recognizable from her headdress *sheng* 勝,[104] her short-feathered cape, or the wings with which she is endowed. She is always shown seated, on the summit of a mountain (Fig. 31), the top of a tree representing the *axis mundi* (and sometimes interpreted as the

[100] The geographic origin of these first representations may indicate, as Li Song suggests, that the movement of 3 BC which claims this goddess started in Henan and not in Shandong, cf. Li, *Lun Handai*, p. 31.

[101] Yang, "Guanyu Luoyang"; Loewe, *Ways to paradise*, fig. 16.

[102] Li, *Lun Handai*, p. 223.

[103] Loewe, *Ways to paradise*; Luo Erhu, *Chûgoku Kandai no gazô to gazôbo*, trans. Watabe Takeshi (Tokyo, 2002), vol. 1, pp. 120–24.

[104] In the form of ends of the beams of a loom.

"heavenly pillar"),[105] or on a throne combining two animal forequarters, one of a dragon, the other a tiger (Fig. 8/1, 22). She may be sheltering under a canopy. Several acolytes accompany her, generally a hare who is grinding the herbs of immortality which he and his companions have gathered, a dancing toad, a fox with nine tails (an auspicious animal) or a three-footed crow (the goddess's messenger).[106]

In Sichuan, two gate pillars *que* sometimes stand on either side of the image of Xiwangmu.[107] The *que*, which as we saw connotes the entrance to a sacred space (imperial palace, temple, offering shrine, tomb), here symbolize the gate of paradise (*tianmen* 天門). It is guarded by a heavenly official, the *da siming* 大司命,[108] the director of destiny, upon whom depends the life span of each individual (Fig. 8/1–4). As we shall see, immortals are very often associated with the image of the goddess, as are the sun, the moon, numerous auspicious signs and the representation of a *fangshi* holding an insignia and standing or kneeling before her.

Xiwangmu was, during the Han, a goddess essentially linked to beliefs concerning death and immortality. Queen of the immortals in the paradise of the west, her image decorates tombs or offering shrines; when she is pictured on objects, which may be the case in the 2nd century AD but very rarely before, they are above all objects destined for the tomb (money trees, lamps, mirrors). Representing and venerating Xiwangmu in the sepulture must have helped the deceased attain Mount Kunlun, considered as an *axis mundi*, and enter into the world of the immortals. Her worship, at the end of the Han, touched the entire upper class and certainly presents multiple facets. Her association with Dongwanggong[109] is linked to the myth which makes the smooth course of the universe depend on the meeting of two divinities, real cosmic forces whose periodic union brings about the annual renaissance of nature's cycle.[110] In certain regions, such as Sichuan, Xiwangmu was perhaps also revered as a divinity helpful to men and the souls of the

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[105] Li, *Lun Handai*, pp. 156–59.

[106] Lucie Lim, *Stories from China's past* (San Francisco, 1987), Pl. 61, 62, 63; Abe, *Ordinary images*, p. 31, fig. 2–20, 43, fig. 2–36; Luo, *Chûgoku*, vol. 2.

[107] Xin, *Handai*, fig. 148, 149.

[108] Liu, "Handai."

[109] Frequent in the north of Shaanxi, rare in Sichuan, cf. Li, *Lun Handai*, pp. 133, 172.

[110] Kominami Ichirô, "Seiôbo to shichi seki denshô," *Tôhô gakuhô* 46 (1974), 33–82; Loewe, *Ways to paradise*.

dead, a popular divinity whose worship corresponded to the need for a personalized deity whose aid could be invoked.[111]

Divinities presiding over the cosmic order; divinities of the celestial world

The primordial couple Fuxi and Nüwa is abundantly represented in Later Han tombs. The two divinities have a human head with the body of a serpent which sometimes has legs. Often enlaced, they hold in their hands, the one a T-square symbolizing the earth, the other a compass symbolizing the sky, but also at times the plant of immortality[112] or a musical instrument,[113] for Fuxi and Nüwa are at one and the same time the first ancestors and the divinities who regulate Heaven and Earth.[114] The divine couple may merge with the sun and the moon, likewise represented at times as figures with the body of a serpent, each carrying the relevant image, of the sun or the moon[115] (Fig. 23). These cosmic couples, whether Fuxi and Nüwa, Heaven and Earth, *yin* and *yang*, or Xiwangmu and Dongwanggong, are at once the originators and maintainers of the ordering process of space and time. They are also thought to rule over the destiny of humans and to have therefore the power to prolong life. Their presence in the tomb would bring a double protection; to help the deceased on his voyage toward immortality and offer to those who survived him happiness and long life.

Other natural divinities are represented on the ceiling of some offering shrines of the 2nd century AD, above all in the region of Nanyang in Henan, as well as in Shandong and Jiangsu.[116] They are identified as Leigong 雷公, the duke of thunder, Yüshi 雨師, the master of rain, Fengbo 風伯, the prince of the winds, Shandian 閃電, the lightning; and so on. Leigong is recognizable by the drum he beats, Fengbo by

[111] Jean M. James, "An iconographic study of Xiwangmu during the Han dynasty," *Artibus Asiae* 55.1–2 (1995), 17–41.

[112] Wang Jianzhong and Shan Xiushan, *Nanyang liang Han huaxiangshi* (Beijing, 1990), Pls 159–62; 167–70.

[113] Lim, *Stories*, Pl. 66; Wang and Shan, *Nanyang*, Pl. 164.

[114] Kalinowski, "Mythe," pp. 51–53 ; Marc Kalinowski, "Fonctionnalité calendaire dans les cosmogonies anciennes de la Chine," *Etudes chinoises* 23 (2004), 87–122; pp. 92, 104.

[115] Wang and Shan, *Nanyang*, Pl. 176; Lim, *Stories*, Pl. 66.

[116] We shall mention as examples the ceiling slabs of the offering shrine of Hongloucun at Xuzhou in Jiangsu and of the Left Chamber of the Wu family shrines at Jiaxiang in Shandong, cf. Xin, *Handai*, fig. 100.

the wind which comes out of his open mouth and Yüshi by the vase of water he pours (Fig. 24). These divinities depend upon the supreme divinity of the Han pantheon, Tiandi, of whom they are the messengers and whose orders they execute. They are associated with the stars, in the same way as Tiandi is with the seven stars of the Big Dipper (Beidou xing 北斗星) which form, in certain images, his carriage.[117] The reading and, above all, the interpretation of these representations is not always unanimous. Certain authors[118] interpret these divinities as helping the deceased in their ascension to Heaven. Xin Lixiang, by contrast, sees them as terrifying, responsible for punishing humans for their faults, with Tiandi sending natural calamities in response to the evil actions of men.[119] But it is perhaps dangerous to privilege a single reading of these divinities who are, in certain texts,[120] associated with mystical wanderings throughout the cosmos. In these voyages they open the way, serving as escort and protection to the poet-traveler. It is true that some three centuries separate texts such as the "Far-off journey" and the representations of the 2nd century AD tombs, and it cannot be excluded that the vision of the pantheon has changed, at least in part, during this period.

The celestial divinities travel between the heavens and the world of men in the midst of clouds, often in cloud carriages or carriages harnessed to dragons, tigers, deer or fish—all animals serving as mounts and messengers between the different worlds. The divinities are also aided by divine beings, such as the immortals who can mount dragons, deer or fish.[121] To these voyages are undoubtedly linked the representations of rivers crossed by bridges which mark the frontiers between the different worlds. Divinities and the dead are thus depicted in their voyages between the underworld, the earth, and the heavens.[122]

Many other gods and spirits are represented on the ceilings and walls of the tombs and offering shrines. A number of these divinities,

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[117] Ex. ceiling slab of the Front Chamber, that of Wu Rong, died in 168 AD, of the offering shrines of the Wu family at Jiaxiang in Shandong, cf. Xin, *Handai*, fig. 100.

[118] Li, *Lun Handai*, p. 95.

[119] Xin, *Handai*, pp. 61, 164, pp. 177–83.

[120] This is the case, for example, of the "Yuanyou" ("Far-off journey"), very probably from the 2nd century BC, translated in Rémi Mathieu, *Qu Yuan. Élégies de Chu*, translated from the Chinese, presented and annotated by Rémi Mathieu (Paris, 2004), pp. 147–48.

[121] On the symbolism of fish, see Kim Daeyeol, "Poisson et dragon: symbole du véhicule entre l'ici-bas et l'au-delà," *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie* 14 (2004), 269–90.

[122] Xin, *Handai*, pp. 332–34.

which we are not able to identify with certainty, are probably local, linked to sacred places. I will return to this problem when treating the immortals.[123]

Demons and exorcists

Han funeral art also shows demons (*xiegui* 邪鬼) or exorcists thought to chase them away. These evil spirits most often take on the appearance of animals such as dogs or snakes. The distinction between these demons and the celestial divinities is a fluctuating one. All belong to the supernatural world, and each is more distinguished by his powers than by his nature.[124] In the same way, it is not easy to detect the difference between the image of the evil spirit and that of the exorcist (*fangxiangshi*) who has taken his form and is responsible for eliminating or at least controlling him.

One of the animals who most often takes on the role of the exorcist or of protector against demons is the bear. Thus the exorcist in the Danuo 大儺, the great exorcism, which aims at chasing away the pestilences on the eve of the new year, wears a mask and a bearskin. The image of a bear standing on its hind legs (or of a man disguised as a bear) appears, for example, on the ceiling of the left chamber[125] of the Wu family offering shrines at Jiaxiang (Shandong).[126] The animal carries a crossbow on its head and arms in each of its paws (Fig. 24). Other very similar representations, but in the form of a tiger, are found in tombs at Yi'nan[127] (Fig. 19), in Shandong, for example. Identified as the messenger of Tiandi by Hayashi Minao,[128] as Chiyou 蚩尤 (inventor of arms, god of war and rain and mythical prototype of the exorcist) by a majority of scholars,[129] they doubtless have a role of guardian against

[123] On the local cults, see the work of Marianne Bujard and what she says of the state of the question in Bujard, *Le sacrifice au Ciel dans la Chine ancienne. Théorie et pratique sous les Han Occidentaux* (Paris, 2000), pp. 221–25.

[124] Poo, "Popular religion," pp. 231–35.

[125] The Left Chamber is renamed chamber 2 in Liu, Nylan, Barbieri-Low, *Recarving*.

[126] Third register of the north slope, west section of the ceiling, cf. Xin, *Handai*, Fig. 96, p. 171; cf. Liu, Nylan, Barbieri-Low, *Recarving*, particularly cat. 1.32.

[127] Central panel of the north wall of the antechamber, cf. Zeng Zhaoyue, ed., *Yi'nan gu huaxiangshi mu fajue baogao* (Shanghai, 1956), Pl. 33.

[128] Hayashi Minao, "Kandai kishin no sekai," *Tôhô gakuhô* 46 (1974), 223–306; pp. 225–28.

[129] Derk Bodde, *Festivals in classical China* (Princeton, 1975), pp. 122–26; Lewis, *Sanctioned violence*, pp. 189–95; Lydia Thompson, "Demon devourers and hybrid creatures: traces of Chu visual culture in the Eastern Han period," *Yishu shi yanjiu* 2001.3, 261–93; Richard von Glahn, *The sinister way, the divine and the demonic in Chinese religious culture* (Berkeley, 2004), pp. 39–42; Liu, Nylan, Barbieri-Low, *Recarving*.

the demons and expeller of pestilences.[130] Another quite frequent image in the tombs in the region of Nanyang[131] consists in figuring the combat of a bear (or of an exorcist disguised as a bear) and a fantastic ox endowed with a frontal horn.

Auspicious omens

The bad conduct of men, we have seen, arouses the wrath of Heaven, who punishes them by sending catastrophes announced by presages of ill fortune. But Heaven also sends marks of its contentment with virtue, particularly that of the emperor and his ministers. These auspicious omens (*xiangrui* 祥瑞) could be animals, fantastic (dragons, phoenix, unicorns, etc.) or rare, strange plants, objects which are exceptional or have a mythical connotation (*gui* 珪 tablets and *bi* discs of jade or glass, divine tripod, pearls), natural phenomena (clouds, stars, sweet dew). The Han texts are full of these auspicious apparitions understood as a favorable response from Heaven. They are essentially political in nature, insofar as they serve within the framework of the theory of the heavenly mandate to legitimize the sovereign and his actions. Being integrated within the concept of the resonance between Heaven and humans (*tianren ganying* 天人感應), they also acquire, with their opposite the signs of ill omen, a moral dimension which the Han elite exploited extensively, above all in the two first centuries AD. Finally, and more generally, the auspicious apparitions bear witness to the magico-religious strain which ran through all Han society.

Certain auspicious omens appear on objects or on the walls of the tombs as early as the Western Han, although it is not always possible to attribute to them the status of auspicious omen and to make therefore the distinction between a message sent by the heavens and a simple sign of good fortune or protection. The status of celestial message is, however, entirely clear in certain tombs and offering shrines of the 2nd century AD,[132] when the images, probably copied from illustrated catalogues now lost, are accompanied by a short inscription identifying them (Fig. 25).

[130] Seidel, "Traces of Han," pp. 34–35. On the apotropaic function of the bear image, cf. Abe, *Ordinary images*, pp. 44–47.

[131] Wang and Shan, *Nanyang*, Pl. 93, 202, 214.

[132] This is the case in tomb 1 at Wangdu in Hebei, in that of Helinge'er in Inner Mongolia and in the offering shrines of the Wu family at Jiaxiang, cf. Martin J. Powers, "Hybrid omens and public issues in early imperial China," *Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities* 55 (1983), 1–55; Wu, *The Wu Liang shrine*, pp. 73–107.

The immortals

One of the recurring images in mortuary art, as also of Han art and literature generally, is that of the immortals. They are pictured on the walls of the tombs and on a number of objects, according to a stable iconographic canon. They are winged or dressed in a short cape and skirt of feathers, their bodies covered with down or long hairs. They have large ears and wear their hair swept back into a point. They are often depicted as moving in the midst of clouds and sometimes holding what is interpreted as the plant of immortality (Fig. 26). At times these images are accompanied by an inscription which identifies them without ambiguity as *xian* 仙 ("immortals"). Once constituted, their iconography, although it does evolve, and there are regional variations, kept the basic characteristics we have mentioned.

Origin of the theme

The theme was born in the Warring States period. In fact, a considerable body of cultural data bear witness to the development of the search for immortality among the masters of recipes (*fangshi*) at the court of the kings of Qi and Yan in the second half of the 4th century BC.[133] These masters said that in the middle of the Bohai Sea there were sacred mountains in which lived immortals and which harbored drugs of immortality. They also pretended to have the methods that would enable humans to communicate with the immortals, reach their paradise, and benefit from their longevity.

The masters of recipes of Qi and of Yan, who combined their practices with cosmological theories, were very active at the court of the First Emperor (r. 221–209 BC). He sent people out several times in search of the immortals. This quest for immortality was intensified at the court of the Han emperors, particularly under the reign of Wudi. He imagined himself capable, with the help of the *fangshi*, of renewing the exploit of the legendary Yellow Emperor who, the *fangshi* at court claimed, had risen to heaven on a dragon's back, accompanied by his companions and his wives.

The first evocations of the immortals in the transmitted literature appear in the *Zhuangzi*,[134] in the "Far-off journey" of the *Chuci*,[135] and

[133] Yü, "O Soul."
[134] *Zhuangzi*, ch. 1, cf. Wang Xianqian, ed. *Zhuangzi jijie* (Taibei, 1972, vol. 26) p. 4a.
[135] Cf. Mathieu, *Qu Yuan*, pp. 145–46.

in the *Huainanzi*.[136] The immortals are described there as roaming freely in the air, peaceful, nourishing themselves on wind and dew, riding clouds and dragons, united to the Dao and, like it, without beginning or end. These texts show a desire to transcend the world and evoke the possibility of humans freeing themselves from their form and, by traversing the cosmos, reaching immortality.[137] Texts from the 2nd century BC, such as the "Far-off journey" and the *Huainanzi* mention several immortals, Wangzi Qiao 王子喬,[138] Prince Qiao, Chisong zi,[139] Master Red Pine, Han Zhong, and, of course, the Yellow Emperor, Huangdi, who, with dozens of others, will become the subject of worship and hagiography in the following centuries.

The fascination with the immortals and their world disappeared from imperial ideology following the criticism of the scholars and the reforms they promoted in the 1st century BC. But it remained alive in the private worship of the aristocracy and spread throughout the entire society between the second half of the 1st century BC and the 2nd century AD. This diffusion was often accompanied by an adaptation to new models and religious practices. The ancient figures of immortality were transformed by "reincarnating" themselves as scholar-magicians venerated locally for having accomplished prodigious acts and acceded to immortality or, as in the case of Wangzi Qiao, into a pious son.[140]

In addition, several texts from the end of the Han, like the *Scripture of Great Peace* presented to Emperor Shun (r. 126–145), reorganized the world of the immortals according to their merits. They distinguished between celestial immortals, the highest in the hierarchy, those who could wander in the empyrean and ascend to highest heaven, the earthly immortals who continued to live among men and haunted the mountains and, finally, at the bottom of the scale, the immortals who, after feigning death, were delivered from their bodily envelope. The latter became officials in the underworld. The idea of a hierarchy is evidence of the bureaucratization of the cult of the immortals at the end of the Han. It puts as much stress on moral criteria—on good actions—as on the alchemical and physiological practices for attaining immortality.

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[136] *Huainanzi*, cf. *Philosophes*, p. 173 (chs 4, 9a), 493 (chs 11, 13b), 965 (chs 20, 10a).

[137] Michael J. Puett, *To become a god. Cosmology, sacrifice, and self-divinization in early China* (Cambridge, Mass., 2002), pp. 221, 239–45.

[138] Marianne Bujard, "Le culte de Wangzi Qiao ou la longue carrière d'un immortel," *Études chinoises* 19.1–2 (2000), 115–58.

[139] Max Kaltenmark, *Le Lie-sien tchouan* (Paris, 1987), pp. 35–42.

[140] Bujard, "Le culte," pp. 124–25.

This hierarchy will be taken up again by Ge Hong (283–343) and by the various Daoist schools of the Six Dynasties.

The iconography of the immortals and its evolution

The oldest representations of spirits possessing certain attributes which will become characteristic of the immortals come from the coffins of tomb 1 at Mawangdui in Changsha (a little after 168 BC) (Fig. 27). They are, on the coffin with a black background, creatures who are moving in the midst of volutes of clouds, along with other hybrids. Their untied hair forms a point behind the head, and they have tufts of hair on their elbows.[141] These tufts, like the hair gathered in a point, are also to be seen on the spirit on the coffin with a red background in the same tomb[142] and on some contemporary lacquers. These images from the 2nd century BC, exceptional and coming from tombs linked to the aristocracy,[143] have certainly contributed to the constitution of an iconography of the immortals. However, we must wait until the end of the 1st century BC before this takes shape. One finds the image, still quite rare, painted or stamped on the walls or the ceiling of certain tombs in Henan and on a larger number of precious objects. In the majority of cases, the immortal is pictured riding a dragon.[144] At this time also appear two classical attributes of the immortals of the Later Han: big ears and wings.[145] The most frequent image shows a slender, naked creature, its limbs covered with down or hair, winged, with a sort of tail and its hair floating into a point, bounding among clouds and fantastic

[141] Mawangdui M1, cf. *Changsha*, I, fig. 17–21, Sun Zuoyun, "Mawangdui yi hao Han mu qi guan hua kaoshi," *Kaogu* 1973.4, 247–54; fig. 5/1–5.

[142] Mawangui M1, cf. *Changsha*, I, fig. 25.

[143] I shall mention also a gilded bronze plaque, a carriage ornament, in the subsidiary pit n° 1 of tomb 2 at Bao'an shan, at Mangdangshan in Henan. The tomb is that of princess Li, wife of King Xiao of Liang, who died in 123 BC, cf. Yan, *Mangdangshan*, fig. 21/5.

[144] Tomb 61 in Luoyang (cf. "Luoyang Xi Han bihuamu fajue baogao," *Kaogu xuebao* 1964.2, 107–25; Pl. IV/3 and Pl. VIII), tomb of Qianjingtou, also in Luoyang (cf. "Luoyang Qianjingtou Xi Han bihuamu fajue jianbao," *Wenwu* 1993.5, 1–16; fig. 25 and Pl. I); cf. also Yang, "Guanyu Luoyang."

[145] For ex. the pair of *zun* vases of Youyu (Shanxi) dated 26 BC (cf. Guo Yong, "Shanxi sheng Youyu xian chutu de Xi Han tongqi," *Wenwu* 1963.11, 4–12, fig. 4–5, Pl. I-II); the lacquers of tomb 101 at Yaozhuang, in Jiangsu, second half of the 1st century BC (cf. "Jiangsu Hanjiang Yaozhuang 101 hao Xi Han mu," *Wenwu* 1988.2, 19–43); the silk embroidery of the tomb of Yinwan in Jiangsu, 9–23 AD (cf. "Jiangsu Donghai xian Yinwan Han mu jun fajue jianbao," *Wenwu* 1996.8, 4–25; color Pl. II).

animals (Fig. 28). These immortals are ethereal, disincarnated, half-way between man and animal. At times they hold something resembling a plant (the drug of immortality).

The image also appears on a number of mirrors in the form of a chessboard (*boju jing*), along with the animals of the four directions (*sishen*) or the five auspicious animals (*wuling* 五靈, that is those of the four directions plus, in the center, the unicorn, symbol of the earth) in relation with the five agents[146] (Fig. 29). The inscription on some of these mirrors evokes the immortals represented on the object. Thus it is said that

> they do not know old age. When they thirst, they drink at the springs of jade. When they hunger, they eat jujubes. They roam at large throughout the world. They wander between the four seas. The dragon on the left and the tiger on the right chase [the evil influences] and protect the Way. May your longevity be equal to that of metal or stone, which are the precious goods of the country.[147]

Another inscription says "they rove at will on the celebrated mountains, gathering the plant of immortality."[148] These inscriptions insist on a certain number of themes and associations. Besides the association of the immortals with the *sishen* and the *wuling* which was maintained on other types of mirrors during the first three centuries AD, their link with the sacred mountains, particularly with Taishan, is noteworthy, as is the theme of the immortals harnessing dragons and riding the clouds. Finally, the idea that the immortals help give longevity and the hope of joining them in their happy life without constraint are leitmotifs of the inscriptions on the mirrors.

The image of the immortal underwent its greatest expansion in the 2nd century AD. It ornamented a variety of objects, above all lamps, and was a part of the décor of the tombs in proportions and following associations which varied according to the regions. On a certain number of lamps from this period, the immortal plays the role of lamp-holder[149] (Fig. 30). His pointed hair, high ears, feathered cape and skirt and his wings are all utterly typical of the 2nd century immortals. The immortal

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[146] Sun Ji, "Ji zhong Handai de tu'an wenshi," *Wenwu* 1982.3, 63–69.
[147] Mirror C 3201 in Loewe, *Ways to paradise*, pp. 198–99.
[148] Mirror C 4102 in Loewe, *Ways to paradise*, pp. 198–99.
[149] Ex. lamp discovered at Wuzhou in Guangxi, cf. "Guangxi Wuzhou shi jinian lai chutu de yipi Handai wenwu," *Wenwu* 1977.2, 70–1; Pl. 3/1; for another example (attributed by error to the Western Han), cf. *Chine des origines* (Paris, 1994), n° 47.

of these lamps has acquired a sort of bodily density which shares in the tendency to anthropomorphize the divinities characteristic of iconography at the end of the Han. In addition, this immortal, perfectly humanized despite his wings, ears and feather clothes, is sometimes endowed with several non-Han features such as a big nose or a large moustache, which make him look like a *hu* barbarian.

In 2nd century tombs the immortals are associated with Xiwangmu and Dongwanggong and with the animals and divinities—henceforth endowed with wings (Fig. 24, 31)—who protect the deceased, his tomb, and his voyage to the other world. These immortals decorate above all the doors, and they are very often associated with the east. For example, they appear on the east leaf of the doors or, in Sichuan, on the long east side of the sarcophagi.

These characteristics form in a sense the common basis of the different representations of the immortals in the 2nd century tombs, but within this homogenous framework, the variations are major and quite complex. They involve the iconography itself, the gestures,[150] and the associations with other divinities. For instance, the direct association with Xiwangmu or her consort varies largely from one region to another: quite plentiful in Shandong, it is rarer in Shaanxi and in Sichuan, rarer still in Jiangsu, non existent in Henan.

If we try now, on the basis of the component elements of the theme and of their evolution, to understand how the iconography of the immortals was constituted, it appears clearly that it is a combination of autochthonous elements and others which were imported. The man-animal hybrids at the origin of the first images are native.[151] The link with birds, in particular, is very ancient. The long ears as a sign of wisdom,[152] of which we possess examples from antiquity, are also native,[153] as was

[150] The immortals in Sichuan are very often, much more than in other regions, pictured playing at *liubo*.

[151] The hybrids are not absent either from the repertory of the steppes; see, for example, a small plate from the Scythian goryte (ca. 350–325 BC) of Soboleva Mohyla, in Ukraine, of which a good number of characteristics foreshadow the Han immortals. Cf. *L'Or des rois scythes* (Paris, 2001), n° 154.

[152] A characteristic of Laozi, cf. Anne Cheng, *Histoire de la pensée chinoise* (Paris, 1997), p. 177.

[153] At Sanxingdui, in Sichuan, for the 12th c. BC, these ears characterized the heads and masks in bronze, cf. Alain Thote, ed., *Chine, l'énigme de l'homme de bronze* (Paris, 2004). The divinity of the *ge* from Jingmen, in Hubei, dating from the Warring States period, and identified by Li Ling as Taiyi is also endowed with large ears (cf. Rawson, *Mysteries*, p. 149 n° 68). Finally, still in Chu, one finds this feature on the hybrids on

the hair flowing to a point, characteristic of demons and the possessed, but also of "uncivilized" people[154] and therefore of the barbarians. The attribute "wings," on the other hand, is a borrowing from the repertory of the steppe population, which they themselves had adapted from a very ancient tradition from the Middle East. The wings were first applied in China to various animals, real (felines, rams, horses) or fantastic (dragons, unicorns), all quadrupeds for which the addition of wings made them a part of a supernatural world (Fig. 8/4–5, 9, 24, 25, 29). Little by little they became the characteristic of a number of divinities linked to the other world (Xiwangmu, Dongwanggong) and of divine beings such as the immortals who in some sense play the role of messengers between the celestial world and mankind[155] (Fig. 24–26, 29–31).

Similarities and differences between the visual art and received texts

Wang Chong (27–c. 97) consecrated a chapter of his *Lunheng* (*Balanced assessments*) to refuting the idea that one can modify one's destiny and attain immortality.[156] In this chapter he evokes the fallacious paintings which show the immortals, their bodies covered with hair, their upper arms transformed into wings, traveling in the clouds (Fig. 28). The image corresponds to that on the objects or in the tombs of the 1st century AD. The correspondence between image and text is remarkable here. By contrast, the descriptions in the *Liexian zhuan* (*Biographies of arrayed immortals*; 2nd century) are, in some regards, without their equivalent in the visual culture of the Han. If one certainly finds the hairy bodies, the big ears and the flowing hair,[157] the square pupils are unknown in the Han images. The *Liexian zhuan* immortals, like those in the poems at the end of the Han, ride dragons or white deer, as in the representations (Fig. 29), but they are also said to ride cranes, a subject which does not appear, to my knowledge, on any Han image.[158]

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the inner coffin of the marquis Yi of Zeng's tomb at Leigudun (ca. 433 BC), in Hubei (cf. *Zeng Hou yi mu* (Beijing, 1989), II, Pl. coul. II, Pl XI/2–3).

[154] Harper, "A Chinese demonography," p. 476.

[155] Michèle Pirazzoli-t'Serstevens, "Inner Asia and Han China: borrowings and representations," pp. 435–453. Proceedings of the symposium *New frontiers in global archaeology: defining China's ancient tradition*, Arthur M. Sackler Museum of Art and Archaeology at Peking University, 2008, ed. Thomas Lawton (Tokyo, 2008).

[156] Ch. 2, *Wuxingpian*, cf. Wang Chong, *Lunheng* (Shanghai, 1974), pp. 21–24.

[157] Kaltenmark, *Le Lie-sien tchouan*, pp. 78–79, 168–69, 179–80.

[158] Kaltenmark, *Le Lie-sien tchouan*, pp. 109–10. Ge Hong in his *Baopuzi* also evokes the immortals mounted on cranes.

The association immortals/clouds (Fig. 24, 26, 28, 31) appears as an obligatory formula, both in the texts and in the images. The clouds are, to take up the description of Jean-Pierre Diény, the escort or a part of the equipment of the space wanderers.[159] The association of the immortals with mountains is much more marked in the literature than in the visual culture,[160] while the association with auspicious animals—a real topos of the Han representations—is virtually absent from the descriptions in the texts.

These differences are not surprising. The West has known a comparable autonomy of religious representations by comparison with texts.[161] Moreover, the divergences exist too, during the Han, in the heart of the written traditions. Marianne Bujard has already remarked a similar phenomenon concerning the figure of the immortal Wangzi Qiao, between the *Liexian zhuan*, the stele consecrated to Wangzi Qiao in the 2nd century at Mengxian, near Shangqiu in Henan, and other sources. She attributes these variations to "the geographical dispersion of the places of cult linked to the immortal."[162]

The relative autonomy and specificity of the images by comparison with the texts of the literati and the divergence between different traditions of worship are phenomena that cannot be ignored for the Han period. We have seen that they also concern the image of Xiwangmu. Nevertheless, the multiplication of the representations of Xiwangmu and of the immortals in the tombs of the 2nd century AD, and still more perhaps in the second half of the century, is an indication of the vogue of the quest for immortality and paradise, particularly marked, it seems, in the upper classes. It also expresses, in its fashion, the eschatological preoccupations of the period and, more generally, the religious anxiety which characterizes the "disordered landscape" characteristic of north and central China at the end of the Han.

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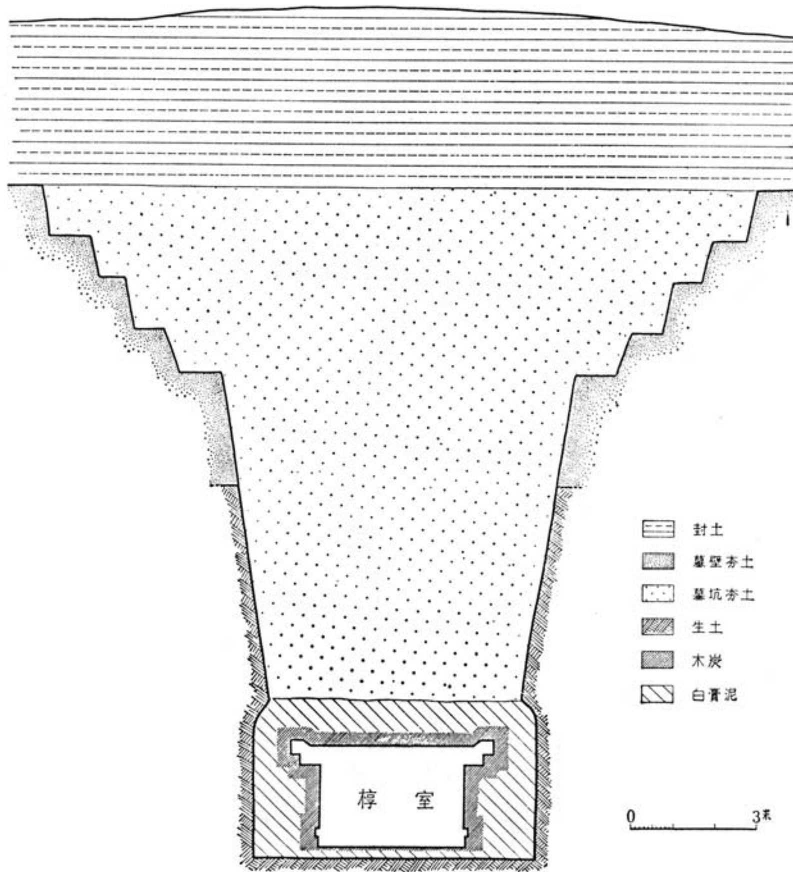
159 Jean-Pierre Diény, "Esquisse d'une poétique des nuages," *T'oung Pao* 80.4–5 (1994), 377–99; p. 387.

160 For example, remember that the images of immortals are rare on the incense burners in the form of a mountain (*boshanlu*). However, one may believe that these incense burners evoke the mountains where the immortals and the hermits lived, in search of the plant of immortality. On the *boshanlu*, cf. Susan N. Erickson, "Boshanlu—mountain censers of the Western Han period: a typological and iconological analysis," *Archives of Asian Art* 45 (1992), 6–28.

161 Jean Delumeau, *Que reste-t-il du paradis?* (Paris, 2000), p. 12.

162 Bujard, "Le culte," p. 122. The identification of the immortals with local cult centers was already emphasized by Anna Seidel, cf. A. Seidel, "Chronicle of Daoist studies in the West 1950–1990," *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie* 5 (1989–90), 223–347; p. 248.



图三 墓葬横剖面图

Fig. 1. Cross-section of tomb 1 at Mawangdui, Changsha, Hunan, a little after 168 BC, after *Changsha*, 1973, I, fig. 3.

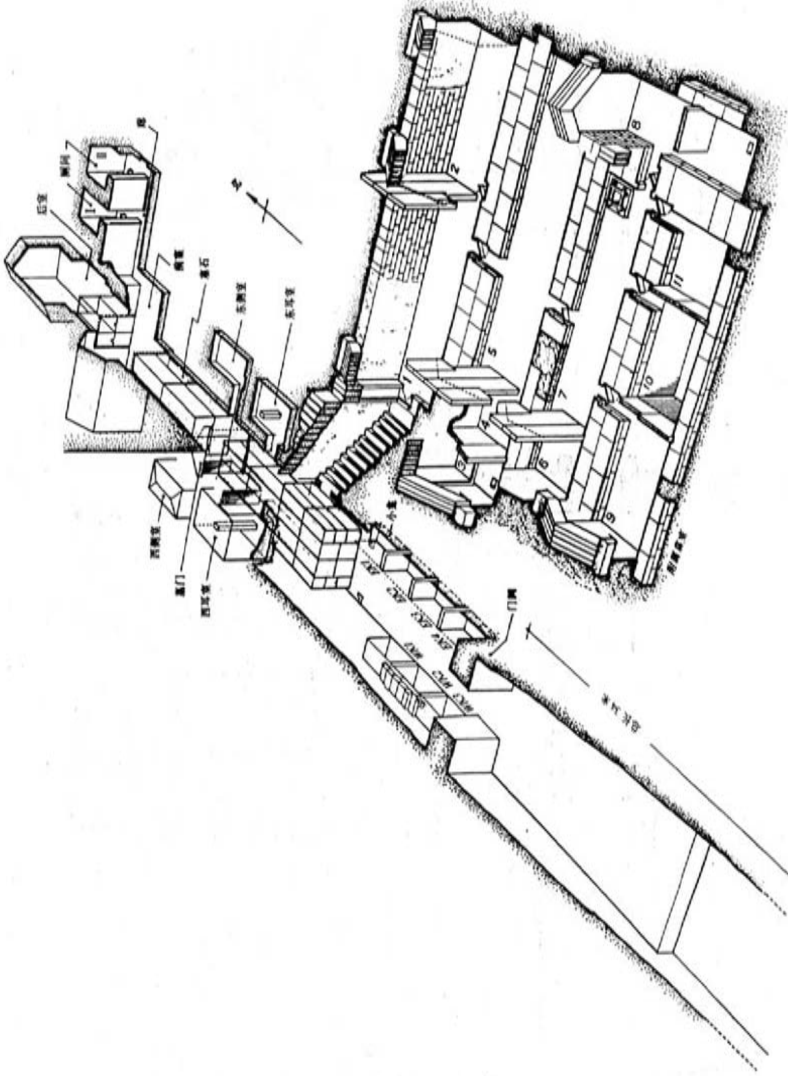


Fig. 2. Plan of the tomb of Liu Dao, king of Chu (150–128 BC) at Beidongshan, Xuzhou, Jiangsu, from *Xuzhou Beidongshan*, 2003, fig. 4, p. 8.

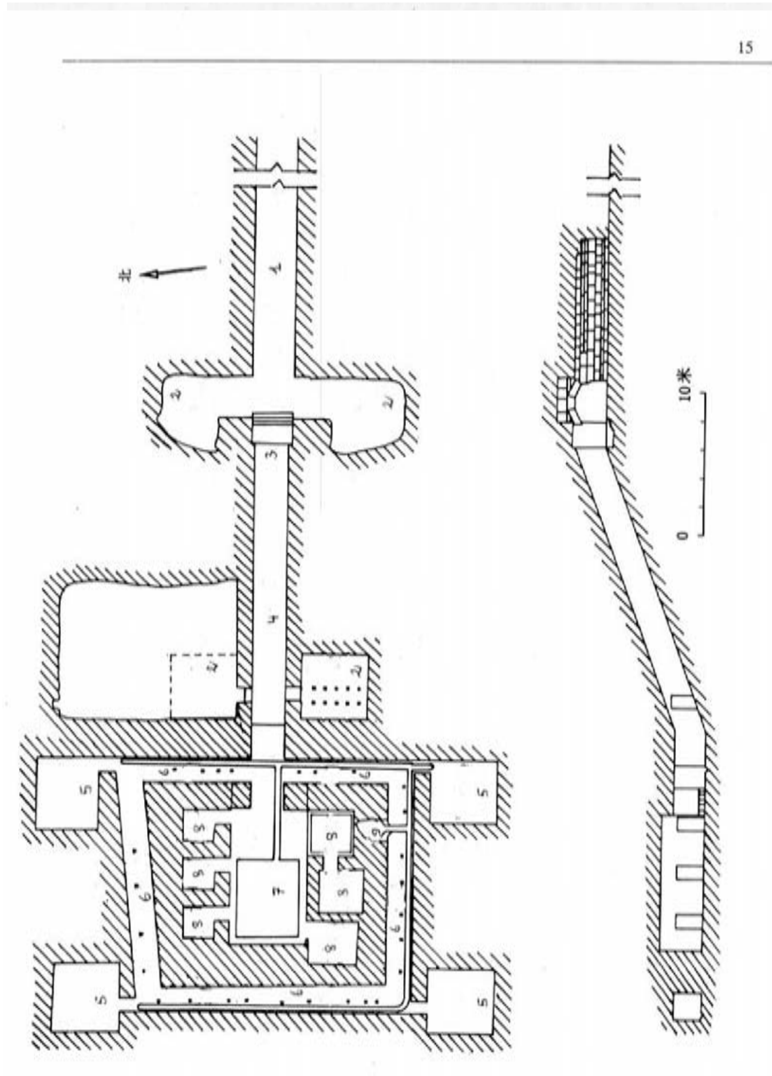


Fig. 3. Plan of the tomb of Liu Wu, King Xiao of Liang (168–144 BC) at Bao'anshan (M1), Henan, from Yan 2001, p. 15, fig. 3. 1—entrance corridor; 2—side chamber; 3—door; 4—entry; 5—corner chamber; 6—gallery; 7—main chamber; 8—lateral chamber; 9—well.

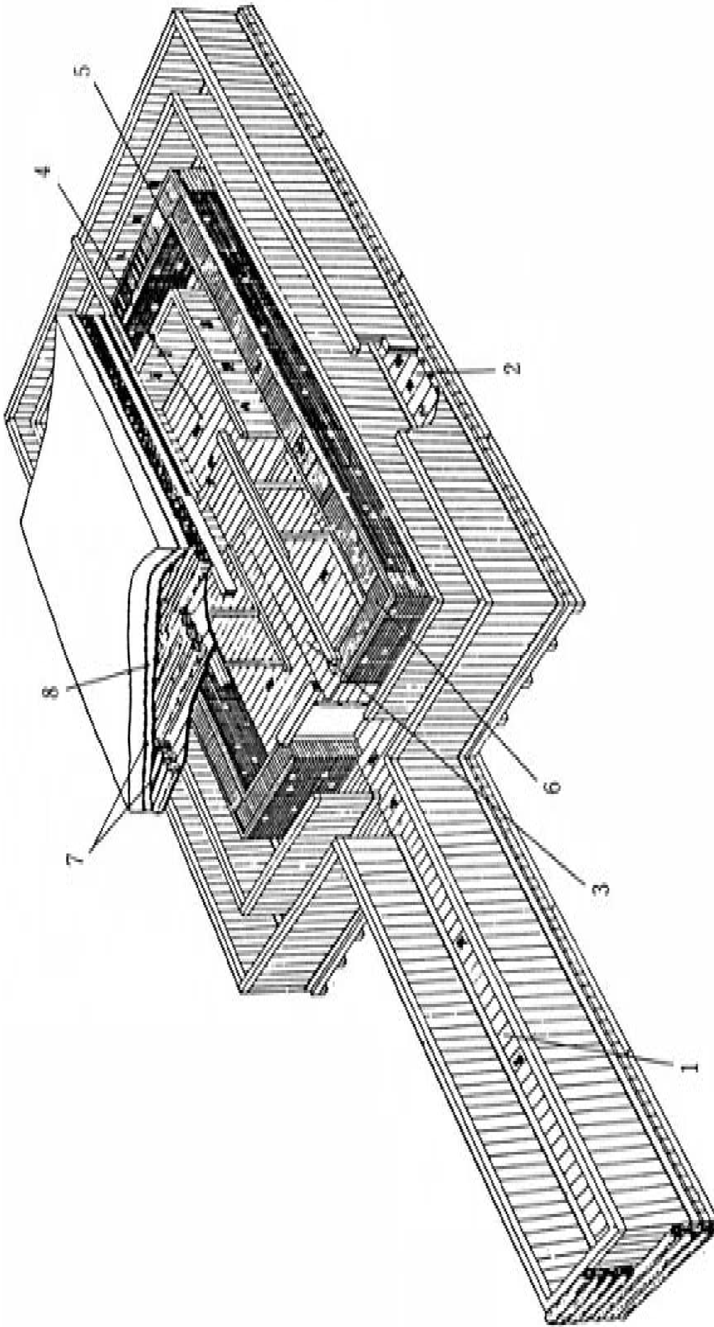


Fig. 4. Reconstruction of the tomb of Liu Jian, king of Guangyang (d. 44 BC) at Dabaotai (M1), near Peking, from *Beijing* 1989, fig. 13, p. 10.
1—entrance corridor; 2—exterior gallery; 3—antechamber; 4—coffin chamber; 5—interior gallery; 6—*huangchang ticou* (log structure); 7—charcoal; 8—white clay.

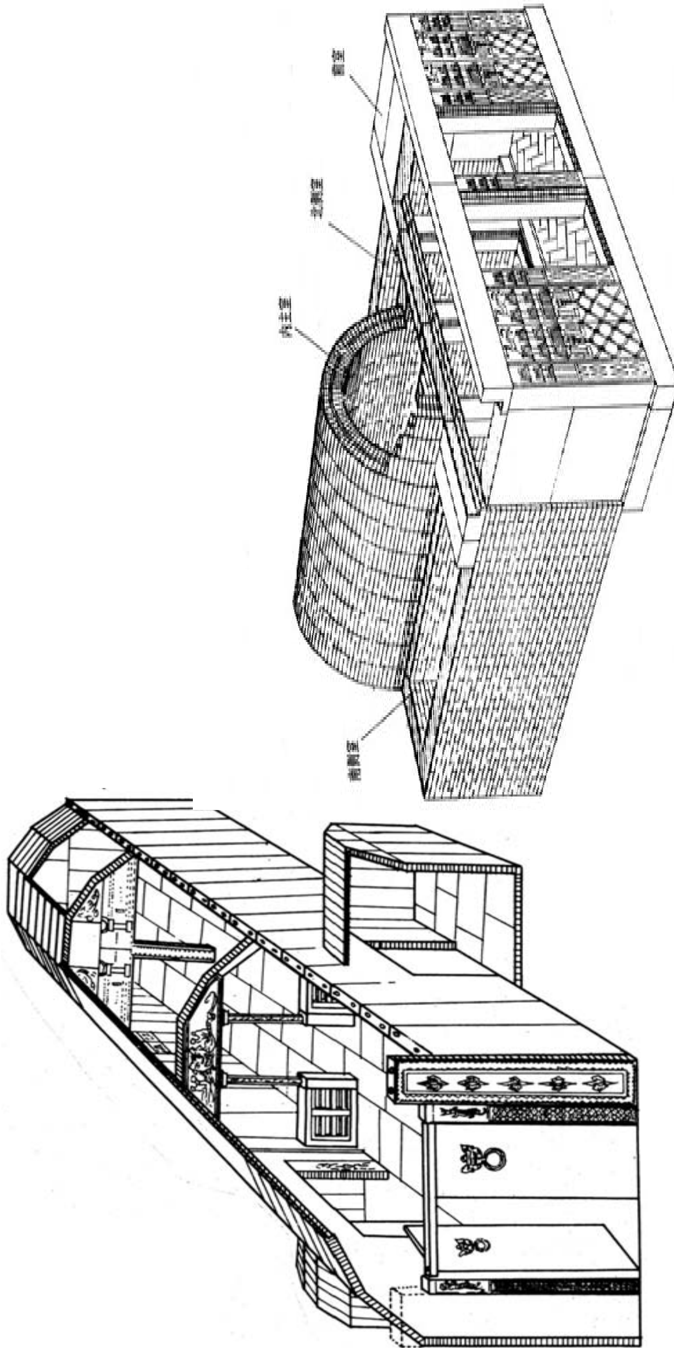


Fig. 5. At left: tomb from Yanshi county, Luoyang, Henan (9–23 AD), from *Wenwu* 1992.12, p. 3; at right: tomb at the Zhaozhai brickyard, Nanyang county, Henan, end of the Western Han, from Xin 2000, fig. 118, p. 225.

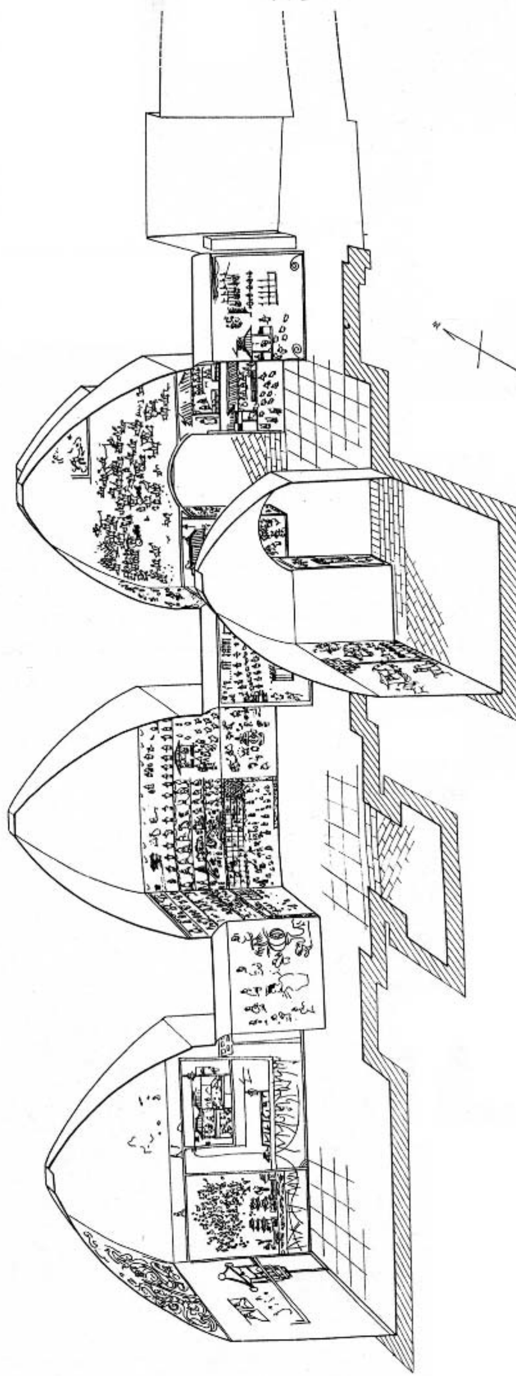


Fig. 6. Plan of the tomb of Helinge'er, Inner Mongolia, around 170 AD, after *Helinge'er Han mu bihua*, Beijing, 1978 (plan 1, full page engraving).

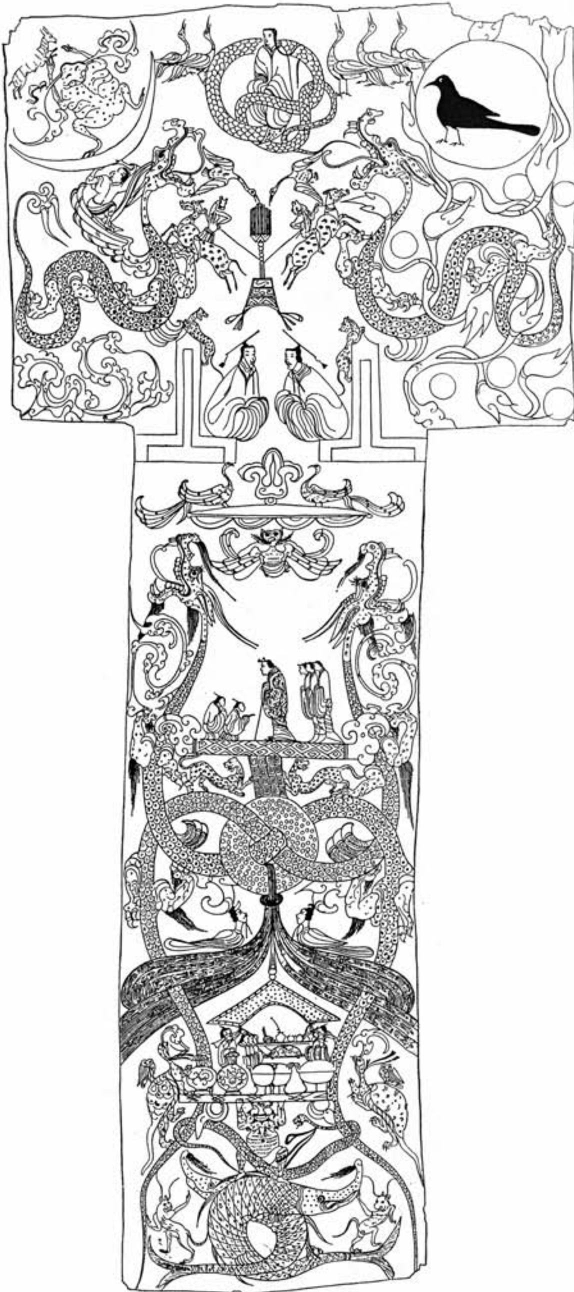


Fig. 7. Drawing of the banner from tomb 1 at Mawangdui, silk, H. 2.05 m, Changsha, Hunan, a little after 168 BC, from *Changsha* 1973, I, fig. 38.

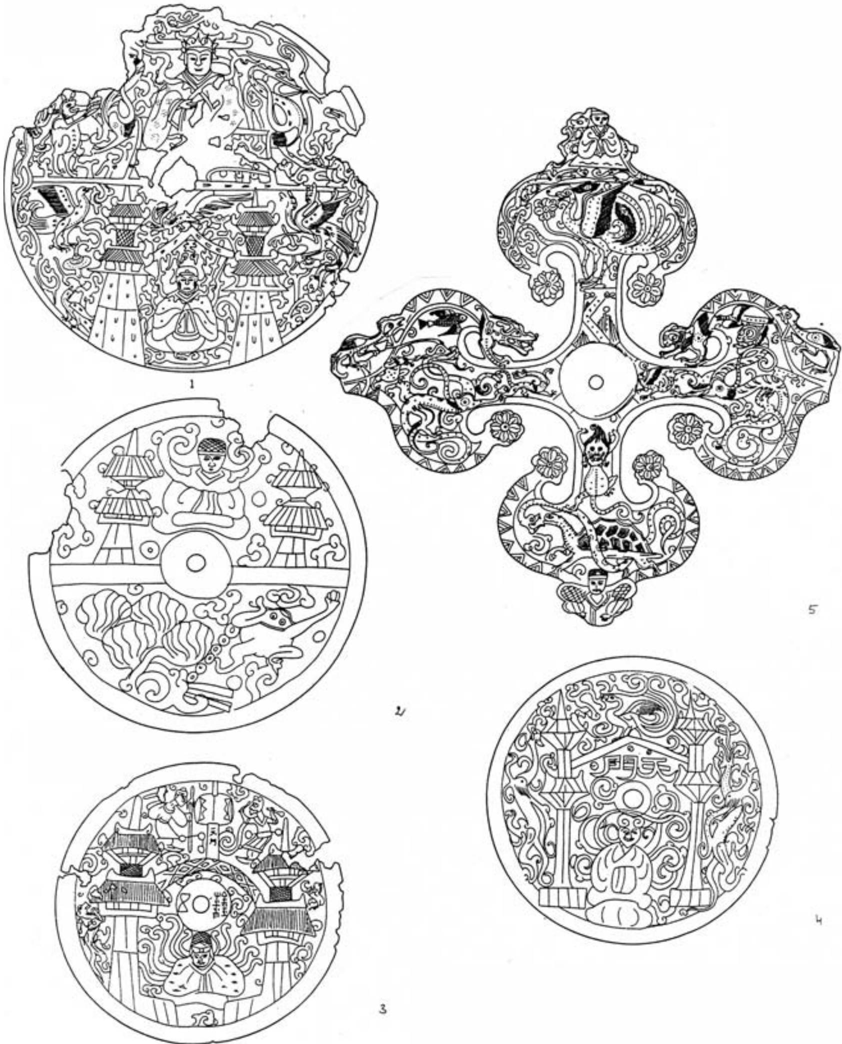


Fig. 8. Drawing of the gilded bronze plaques decorating wooden coffins, Wushan county, Sichuan, second half of the 2nd century–beginning 3rd century AD, from *Chongqing* 1998, fig. 2, 4, 7.

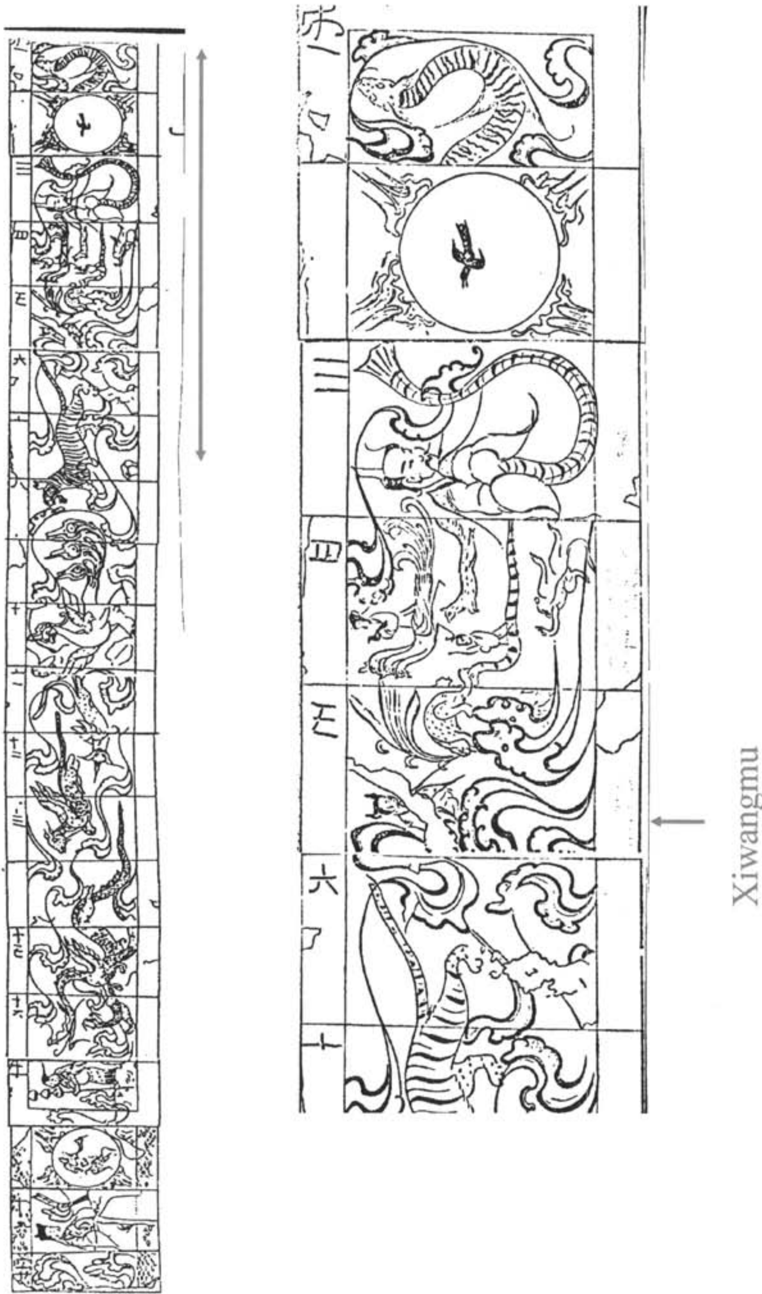


Fig. 9. Drawing of the painted decor on the ceiling of the tomb of Bu Qianqiu at Luoyang, Henan, ca. 32 BC–6 AD, from *Wenwu* 1977.6, pp. 10–11.

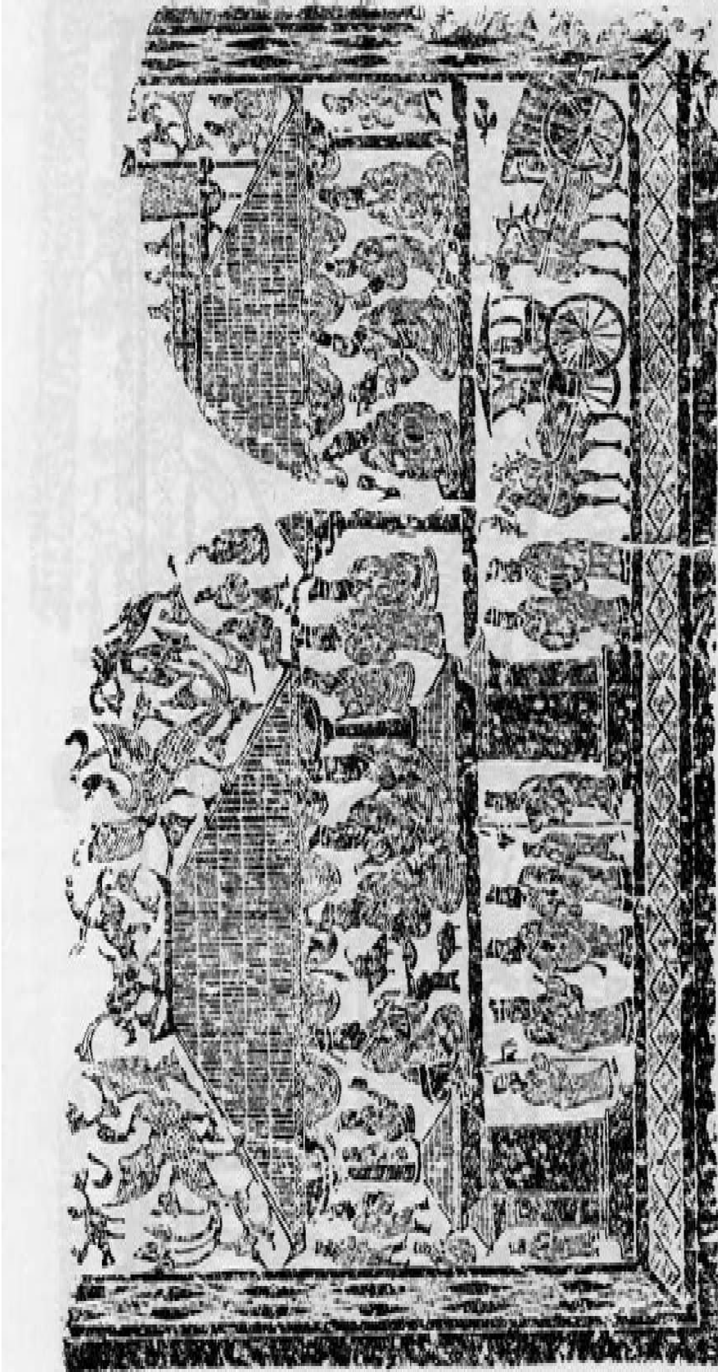


Fig. 10. Ink rubbing of a carved stone (H. 1.02, L. 2.08) found near tomb 1 at Honglou, Tongshan county, Jiangsu, 2nd century AD, from *Jiangsu Xuzhou Han huaxiangshi*, 1959, n° 50, Pl. 39.

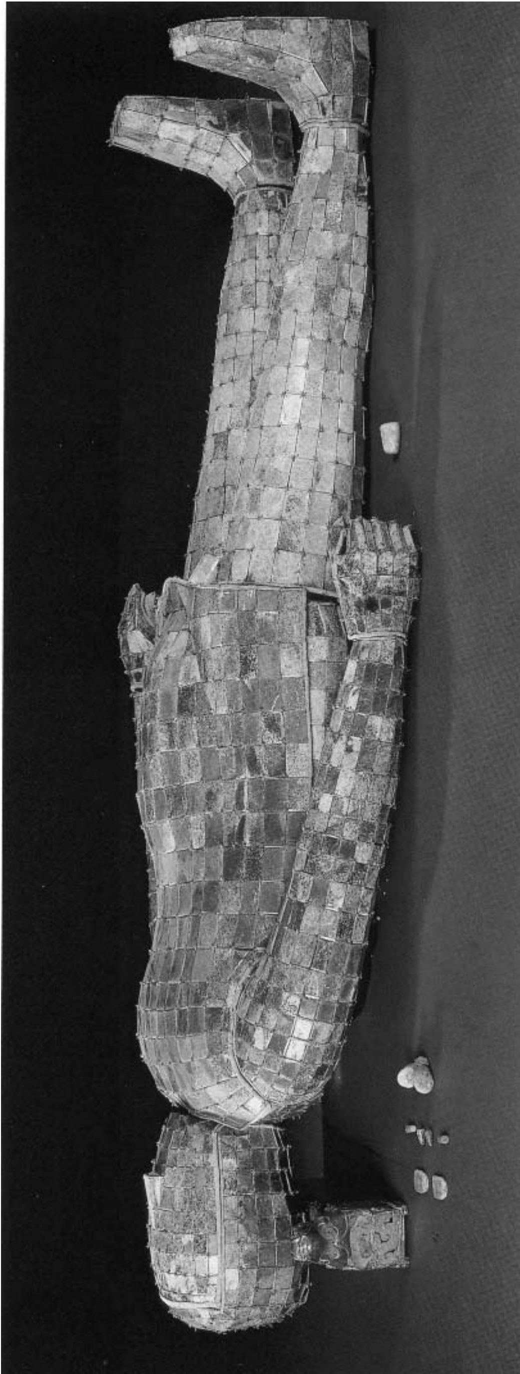


Fig. 11. Jade suit of Liu Sheng, king of Zhongshan (154–112 BC), and the obturating plugs found on the body, Mancheng, Hebei, from Rawson, ed., 1996, n° 81.

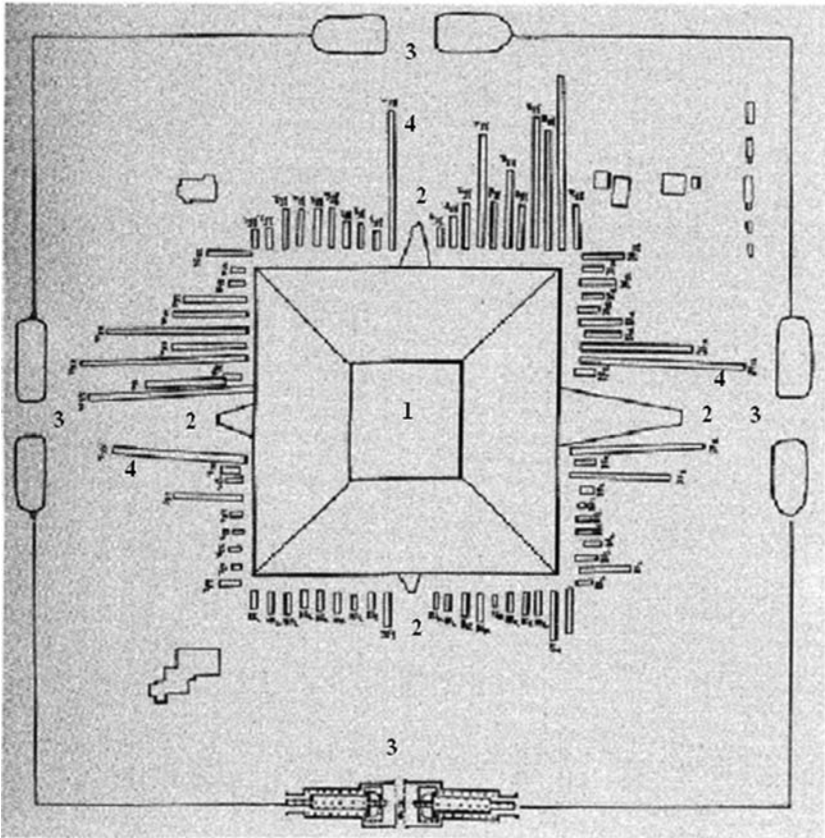


Fig. 12. Plan of the mausoleum of Emperor Jing (157–141 BC), from Han 2001, p. 8.
1—burial mound; 2—access road; 3—door with gate pillars *que* on either side; 4—burial pits.

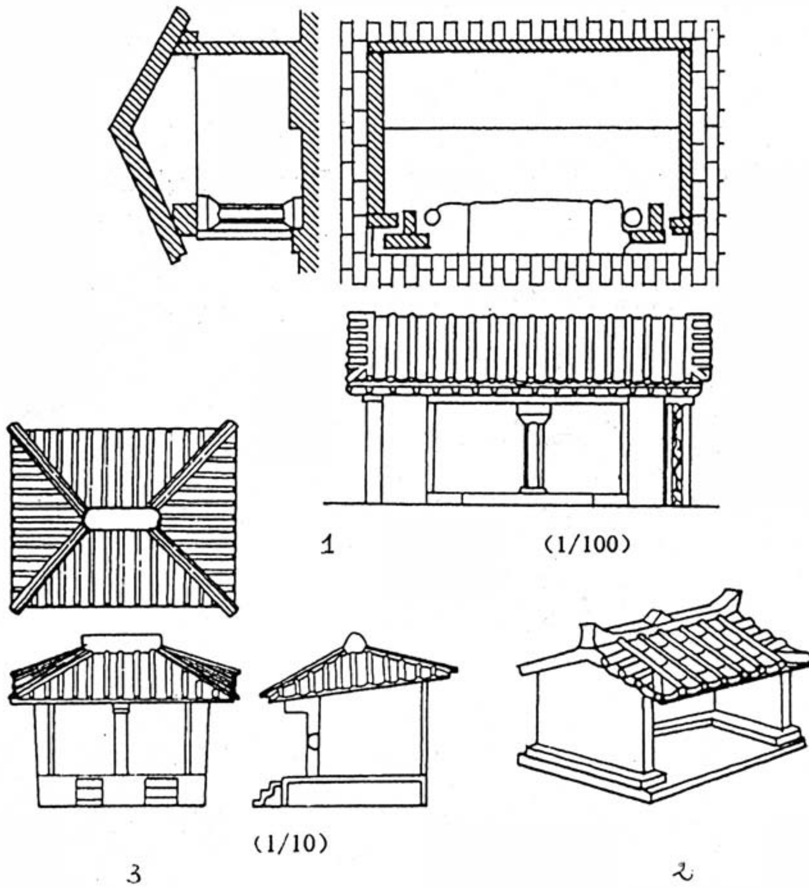


Fig. 13. Plan of three offering shrines (*citang*), 1st–2nd century AD: 1—stone *citang* of Xiaotangshan, Changqing county, Shandong; 2—stone *citang* from the tomb at Baiji, Qingshanquan, near Xuzhou, Jiangsu; 3—earthenware model (*mingqi*) of a *citang*, tomb at Jinlingzhen, Zibo, Shandong. From Huang 2003, fig. 118, p. 273.

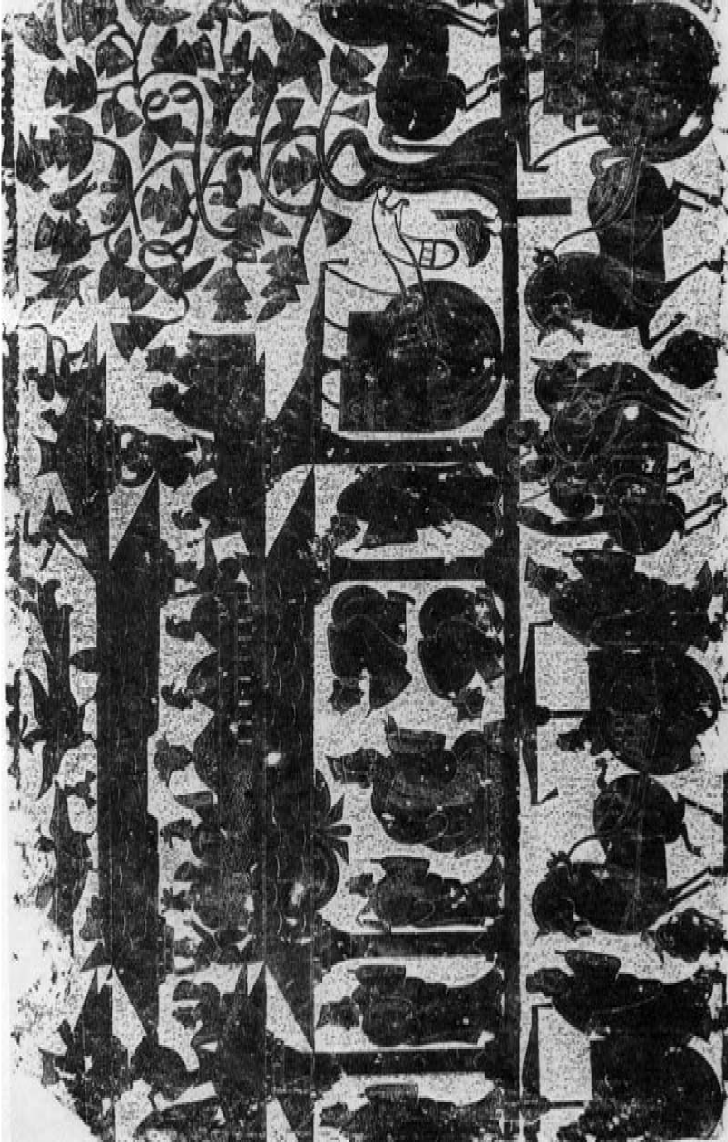


Fig. 14. Ink rubbing of a carved stone showing a scene of homage (1 m 20 × 74 cm), rear wall of a small offering shrine (*citang*); the stone was used again in a later tomb, discovered at Songshan, Jiaxiang county, Shandong. From Zhu Xilu, *Jiaxiang Han huaxiangshi*, 1992, fig. 63.

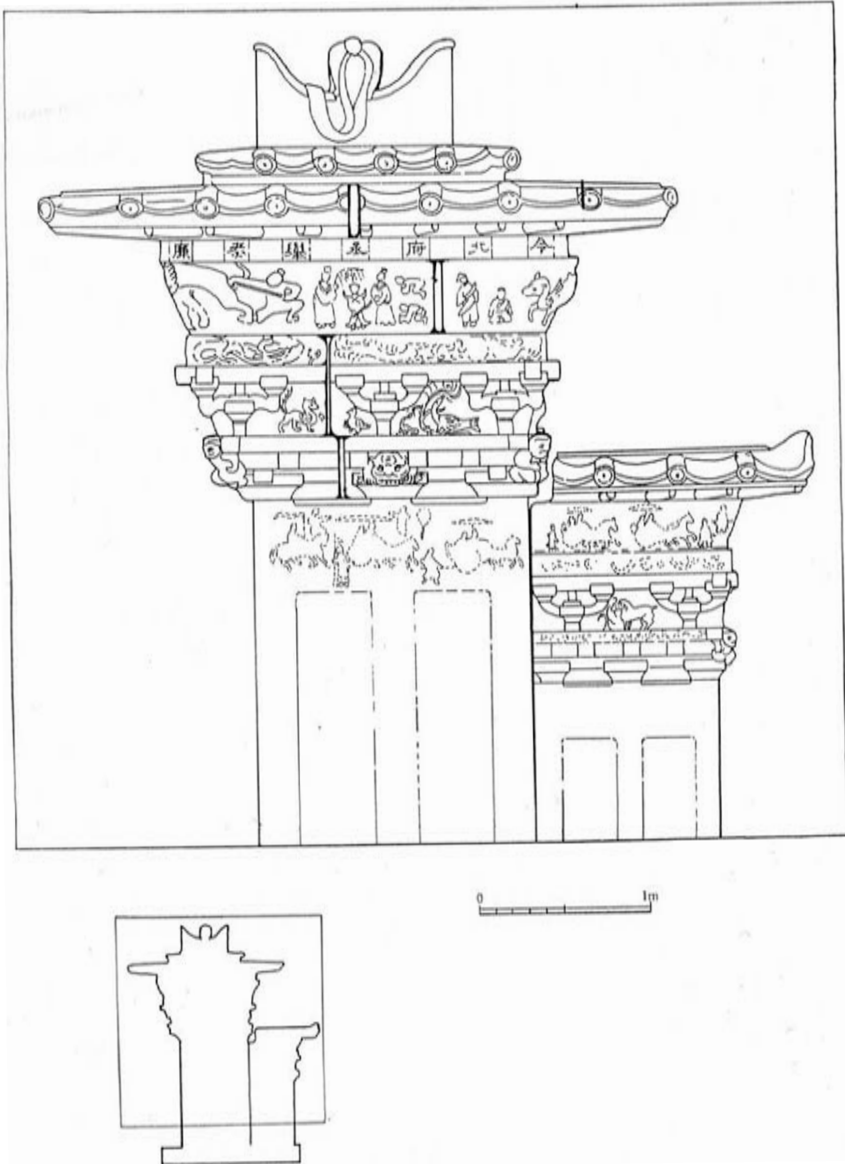


Fig. 15. Right-hand pillar from a pair of gate pillars *que* from the funeral precinct of the tomb of Gao Yi, governor of the commandery of Yizhou, d. 209 AD. Sandstone, H. 5.75 m, Ya'an, Sichuan, from Luo 2002, fig. 403, p. 290.

Fig. 16. Drawing of the map of the sky on the vault of the tomb of Jiaotong University, at Xi'an, Shaanxi, end of the Western Han, from *Xi'an* 1991, p. 25.

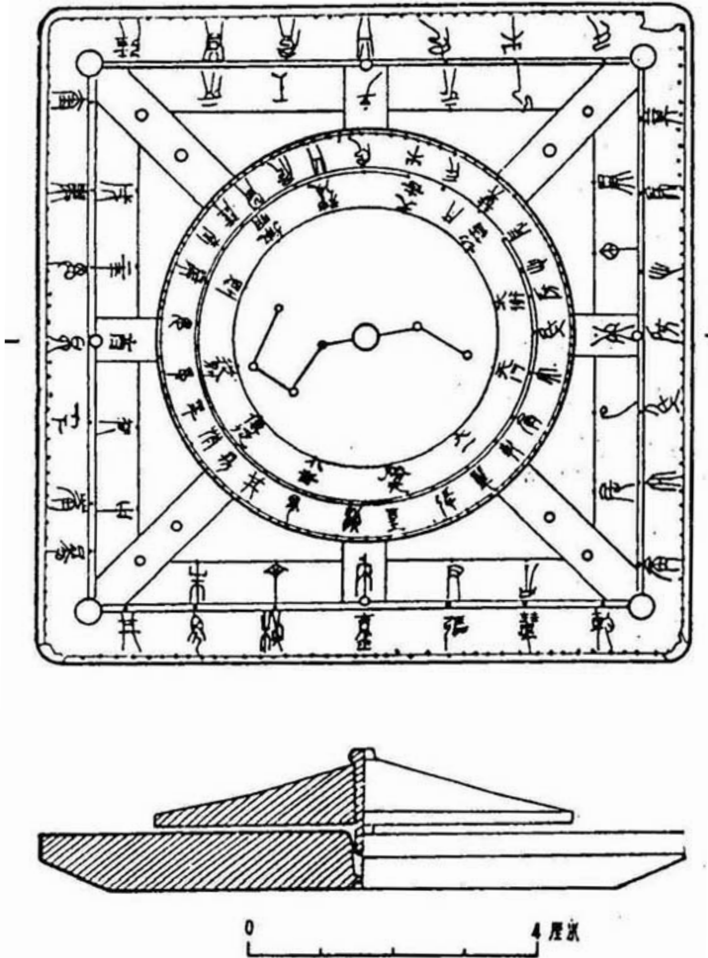


Fig. 17. *Shipan* in lacquer, tomb 62 of Mozuizi, Wuwei county, Gansu, ca. 8 BC, from *Wenwu* 1972.12, p. 15, fig. 8.

Fig. 18. *Bojujing* mirror, bronze, D. 19.6 cm, Wang Mang interregnum (9–23 AD), Department of Archaeology, Beijing University, from *Yanyuan* 1992, no. 109.

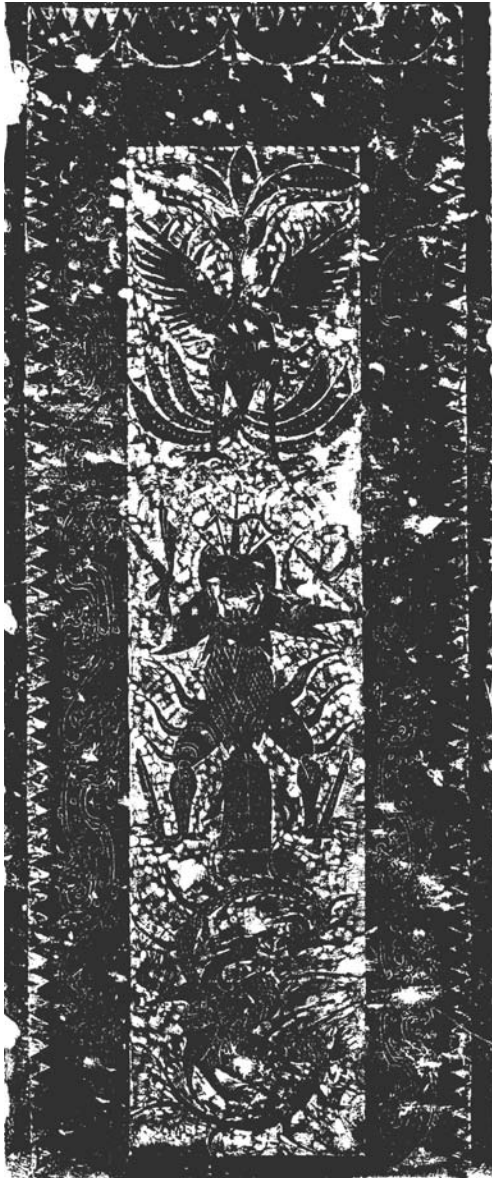


Fig. 19. Ink rubbing of the central panel (carved stone) of the door linking the antechamber to the central chamber: Chiyou, with, above, the red bird of the south and, underneath, the dark warrior (Xuanwu) of the north. Tomb of Yi'nan, Beizhai, Shandong, second half of the 2nd century AD, from Zeng 1956, Pl. 33.

天帝使者
谨为杨氏
之家镇安
隐冢墓谨
以铅人金玉
为死者解
適生人除罪
過(过)瓶到之后
令母人为安
宗君自食
地下租岁二千
万令后世子子
孙孙土宦位至
公侯富贵
将相不绝[移]
[丘]丞墓□
下当用者
如律令

Fig. 20. *Zhenmuping* of tomb 5 at Zhangwan, Lingbao county, Henan, 2nd century AD, from *Wenwu* 1975.11, p. 79.

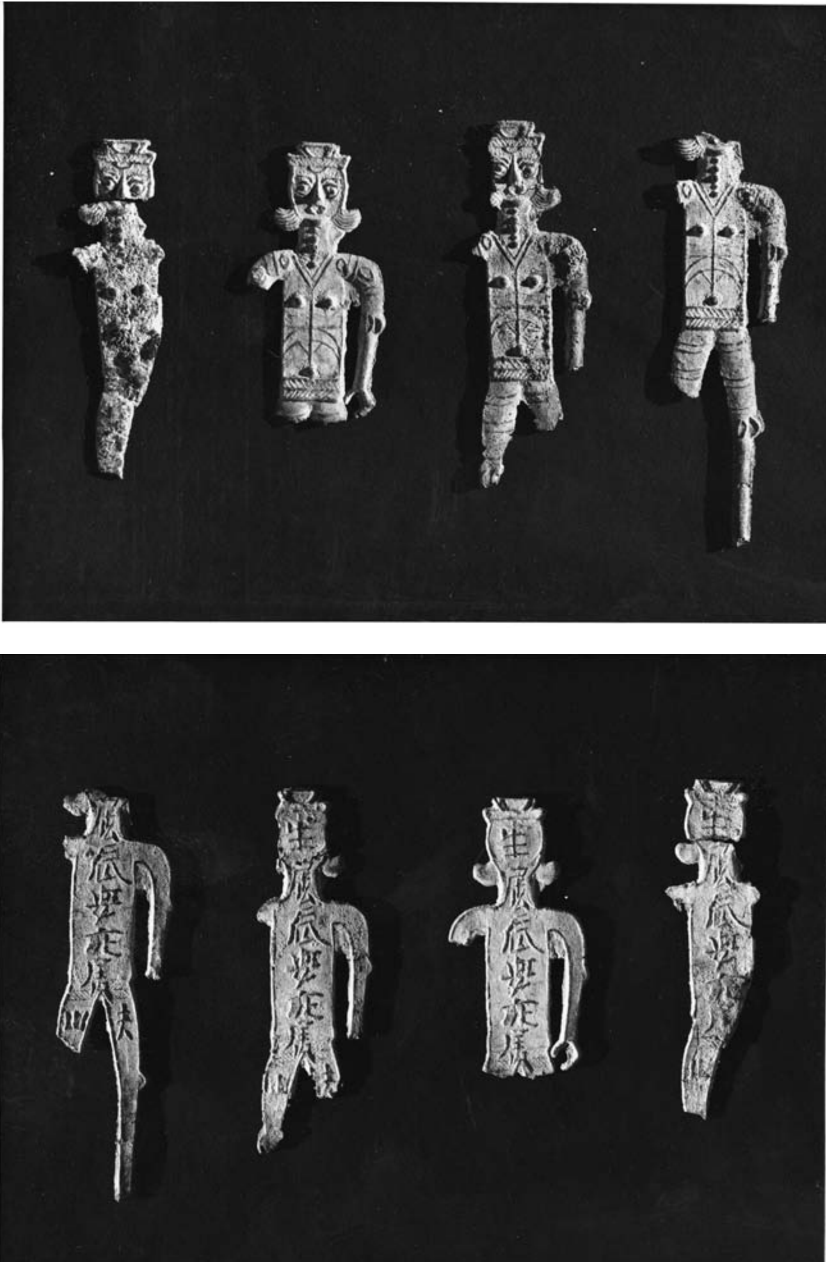


Fig. 21. Small lead plates in the form of a man; inscribed on the back, "living he depended on Chang'an, dead he depends on Taishan," 2nd century AD, Musée Guimet, Paris (inv. MA 2995–2998).

Fig. 22. Moulded brick (H. 40.3 cm, L. 45.5 cm) representing Xiwangmu, her acolytes, a *fangshi* and praying figures, tomb 1 of Qingbaixiang at Chengdu, Sichuan, 2nd century AD, Provincial Museum of Sichuan, Chengdu. From Lim 1987, Pl. 63.

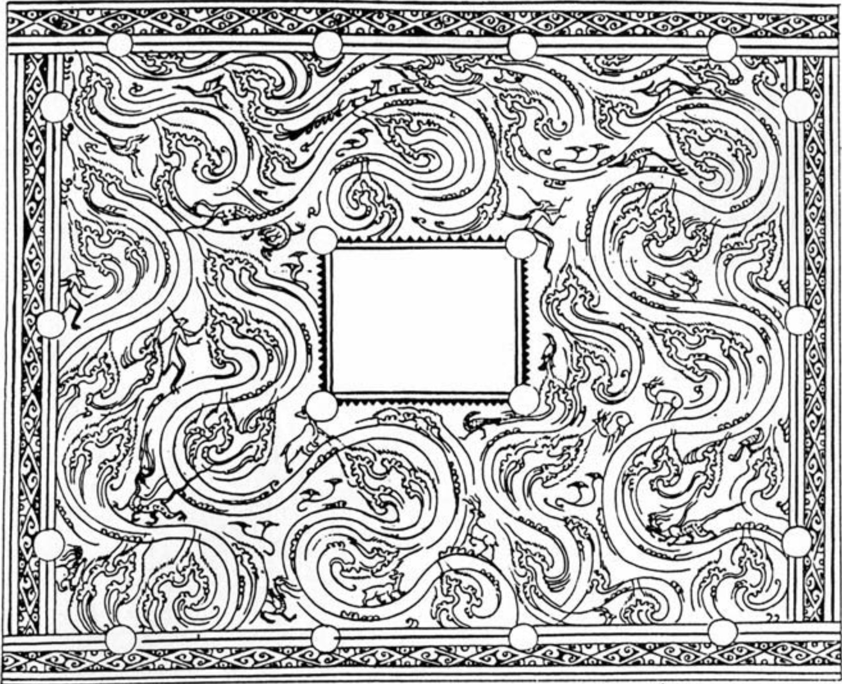
Fig. 23. Moulded brick (H. 39.2 cm, L. 47.9 cm), from a tomb in Chongqing county, Fuxi and Nüwa: Fuxi holds a drum and is supporting the sky; Nüwa holds a Pan's pipe and supports the moon with her left hand; 2nd century AD. Provincial Museum of Sichuan, Chengdu. From Bagley, ed., *Ancient Sichuan* (Seattle, 2001), n° 109.

Fig. 24. Drawing of the ceiling (north slope, west section) of the Left Chamber (or Chamber n° 2) in the offering shrines of the Wu family cemetery, Jiaxiang, Shandong, middle of the 2nd century AD. From Xin, 2000, fig. 96.

Fig. 25. One of the auspicious omens (*xiangrui*), here a winged roe-deer (*zhangzi*), represented in the antechamber of tomb 1 at Wangdu, Ding county, Hebei, perhaps the tomb of the duke of Fuyang, ca. 180 AD. From *Chûka Jinmin Kyôwakoku Kan Tô hekiga ten* (Tokyo 1975), n° 7.

Fig. 26. Drawing of an immortal flying in the midst of clouds, on a carved stone of the tomb of Yi'nan, Shandong, second half of the 2nd century AD. From Zeng 1956, p. 57, fig. 25.

Fig. 27. Above, drawing of the decor painted on the long left side of the coffin with red background of tomb 1 at Mawangdui, Changsha, Hunan, a little after 168 BC, from *Changsha* 1973, I, fig. 25; below, drawings of spirits and hybrids painted on the coffin with a black background in the same tomb, from Sun 1973, fig. 5.



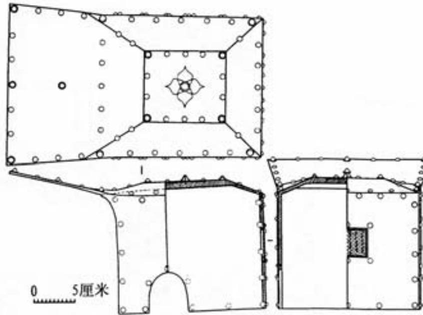


Fig. 28. Above, drawing of the decor painted on the side of the head cover (*wenming* = *mianzhao*) in lacquered wood of tomb 101 at Yaozhuang, Hanjiang county, Jiangsu, second half of the 1st century BC. From *Jiangsu* 1988, fig. 27, p. 35; below, reconstruction of the head cover of the wife in the couple tomb M102 at Yaozhuang, ca. 9 AD, from *Kaogu* 2000.4, p. 59, fig. 18.

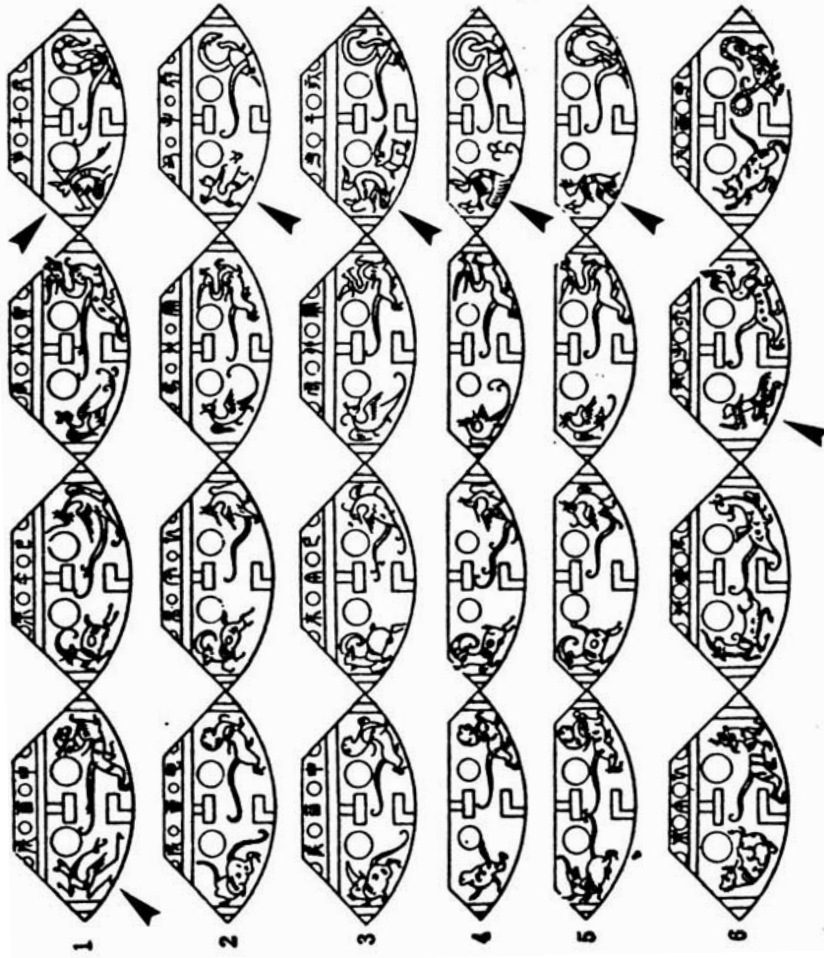


Fig. 29a. Immortals associated with the five auspicious animals (*wuling*): on *bojujing* mirrors, first quarter of the 1st century of our era. [The images of the immortals are indicated by an arrow.]

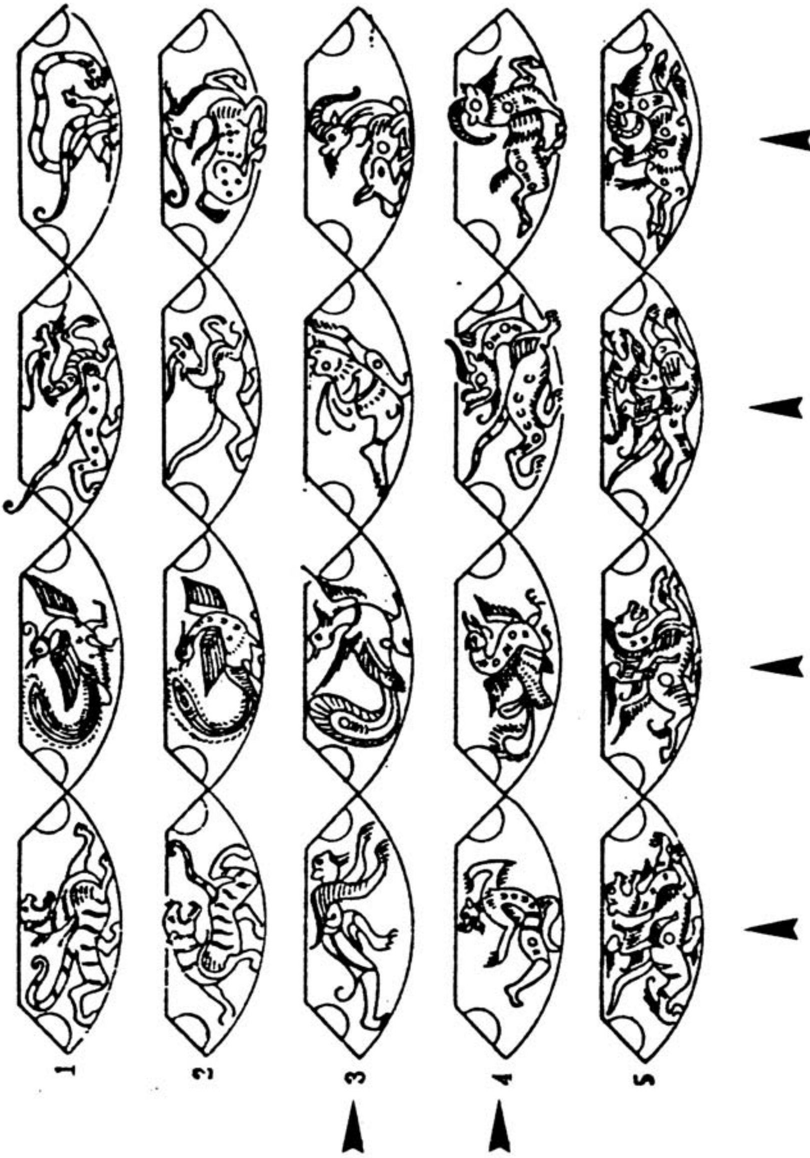


Fig. 29b. Immortals associated with the five auspicious animals (*wuling*): on four-nippled mirrors, 1st–2nd century AD. From Sun 1982, fig. 4 and 7. [The images of the immortals are indicated by an arrow.]

Fig. 30. Three-branched lamp carried by an immortal, bronze, H. 36 cm, 2nd century AD, Wahl-Rostagni collection. From *Chine* 1994, n° 47.

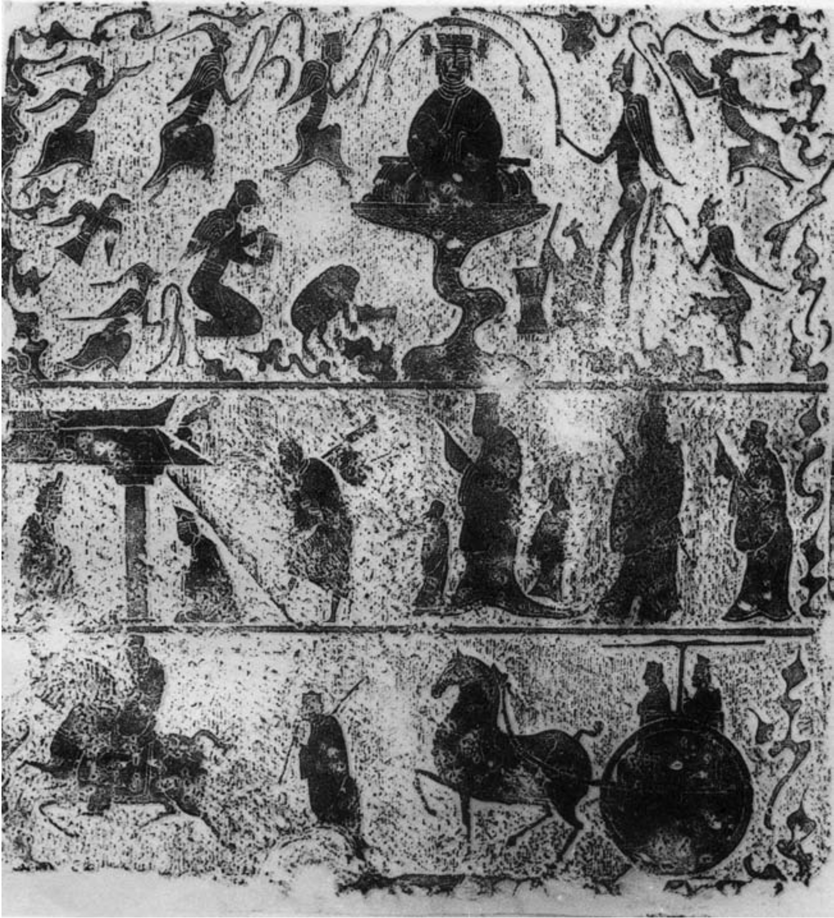


Fig. 31. Ink rubbing of a carved stone from an offering shrine (*citang*), re-used in tomb 1 at Songshan, Jiaxiang county, Shandong: In the upper register, Xiwangmu enthroned on the Kunlun, accompanied by acolytes (among them the hare crushing the drug of immortality), immortals, and a winged divinity with the head of a cock, 2nd century AD. From Zhu Xilu, *Jiaxiang Han huaxiangshi*, 1992, fig. 46.

EASTERN HAN COMMEMORATIVE STELAE: LAYING THE CORNERSTONES OF PUBLIC MEMORY

K.E. Brashier

In the waning years of the Han Dynasty as Cao Cao 曹操 (155–220) waged his campaigns against the south, a 12-year-old cowherd named Deng Ai 鄧艾 (d. 264 AD) migrated with his mother to Yingchuan. There he encountered the stele of Chen Shi 陳寔 (d. 187 AD), prefect of Taiqiu 太丘, bearing the eulogy "His refinement served as the *model* for the age, and his behavior served as a *pattern for officials*" 文爲世範, 行爲士則. Deng Ai was allegedly so impressed by Chen Shi's praiseworthy virtues, he duly changed his own personal name to Fan 範 ("Model") and his formal name to Shize 士則 ("Pattern for officials").[1] Posthumously recounting Chen Shi's personal story, the stele had successfully served its function as a cornerstone to the public memory by anchoring the prefect's identity in the physical and mental landscape and by extending his influence into a future generation.

While the custom of inscribing stele hymns for the dead predates the boy Deng Ai, it would have been a new practice during Chen Shi's own life, the general custom arising in the 140s AD and spreading across all the Han population centers from Shandong to Sichuan in the second half of the 2nd century.[2] Unlike their modern Western counterparts, these stelae or *bei* 碑 recorded more than just the name, birth and death dates of the grave occupant. They instead reeled off highlights from the dedicatee's whole life in an allusion-laden, ornate prose preface leading up to an ancestral hymn that concentrated the essence of who the dedicatee was and of what was to be remembered. Deng Ai theoretically encountered Chen Shi's identity filtered down to its core, a core worthy of emulation.

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[1] *Sanguo zhi* (Beijing, 1975) 28, p. 775. The received Chen Shi stele texts do not include the *Sanguo zhi*'s exact words, although they clearly refer to this justification for his posthumous name.

[2] For a thorough treatment on dating the Han stele era, see Miranda Brown, *The politics of mourning in early China* (Albany, 2007), pp. 42–50.

Just as Deng Ai rode upon the prefect Chen Shi's coattails, Chen Shi himself rode upon the coattails of earlier cultural champions anchored within the communal memory. Drawing upon pre-imperial classics such as the *Lunyu* 論語 (*Analects*) and the *Shijing* 詩經 (*Book of songs*), his stele likens the prefect to Liuxia Hui 柳下惠, a worthy man whom the state had failed to recognize, and to the lords of Fu 甫 and Shen 申, heaven-sent guardians to the king.[3] These early stelae typically describe how their dedicatees resonated with this past hero or ranked with that historical stalwart. That is, the stele tied the dedicatee's particular identity into an existing web of cultural symbols, and so reading a stele is an exploration of the *communes loci* where ancestral cult and public memory overlap.

The late anthropologist Clifford Geertz famously remarked:

> Believing, with Max Weber, that man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun, I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning.[4]

Weber directly linked an individual society's religious format with its own value orientations so that each religious idea system fit uniquely with that particular culture's economic needs and communal wants. In turn, Geertz likewise argued against one-size-fits-all explanations for religion and instead favored particularized, site-specific understandings of what it constituted. Culture—of which religion is a sub-unit—is the collection of "webs of significance that he *himself* has spun"; it is not a single universal overlay to be explained away by immutable natural laws. When we turn to the preservation of identity in these stele inscriptions, Geertz would have us sort through the various webs of significance that comprise the meaning of an individual's existence: the genealogical web, the geographical web, the web of cultural heroes now used to position the dedicatee and so forth. Chen Shi's stele becomes a "You are here" signpost within this complex web, locating him relative to everyone else and thereby giving him meaning. Yet the ancestral cult—that complex set of webs surrounding the late Chen Shi—might not be "religion" as we limit and explain it today. The ancestral cult here overlaps with less

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[3] For Chen Shi's stele, see *Cai zhonglang ji* (Shanghai, 1936), 2.5b–8a ("Chen Taiqiu bei"); Li Shan, *Wenxuan* (Shanghai, 1986) 58, pp. 2504–07 ("Chen Taiqiu beiwen").

[4] Clifford Geertz, "Thick description: toward an interpretative theory of culture," *The interpretation of cultures* (London, 1993), p. 5.

"religious" idea systems of public memory and literary heritage. As Geertz would contend, Han society's own needs and wants produced a different interpretation of what constitutes the rubric of religion, and while we will here focus upon the religious webs of significance within which the stele dedicatee finds himself suspended, the stele translations to follow show that such ties to the ancestral cult are clearly interwoven with other kinds of webs, other cultural norms of identity.

To tease out these religious webs preserved by the stele, this chapter begins with its physical and textual ancestors, after which it will present three representative examples, the first dedicated to a man, the second to a woman, and the third to a child. Each grave stele maps out different kinds of webs, each giving shape to different kinds of posthumous identities.

The stele's physical predecessors

The stelae of the 2nd century AD are not the product of mono-causal evolution; they instead result from a confluence of several traditions of inscribed markers and mortuary implements. Over the past millennium, historians of epigraphy have regularly lined up a chiseled ancestry beginning with the "stone drums" 石鼓 of the Eastern Zhou and continuing to the inscriptions of Qin Emperor Shihuang, to much later Han mountain inscriptions, and finally to Han funerary markers that had merely labeled the grave's occupant. Alongside this list of inscribed forebears, these same historians have also traced a lineage of funerary tools, a lineage that usually ends with coffin-lowering poles called *bei* 碑 in the *Liji* 禮記 (*Book of rites*) which they then unconvincingly identify as the stone stele's direct predecessor because of the coincidence of name. Because our own focus is the religions of early China, we should here single out the tradition of sacrificial bronze vessels as the stele's most significant parentage because both vessel and stele similarly preserved eulogistic texts and, as will be seen below, bore sacrificial foodstuffs. Furthermore, the Han stele inscribers idealized metal and stone together as longevous commemorative media, and they themselves explicitly identified bronze vessels as their own product's forerunner.

The indestructible nature of "metal and stone" (*jinshi* 金石) was already much vaunted by several pre-Han texts, texts that regard such media as useful in preserving sagely instruction and merit. The *Mozi* repeatedly states that the sage kings used bamboo and silk as well as

metal and stone to preserve their knowledge for later generations,[5] and in at least one case, it privileged metal and stone over bamboo and silk because the latter tended to rot away.[6] In another case, it specified that these metal and stone inscriptions were located on bells and ritual vessels.[7] The *Lüshi chunqiu* 呂氏春秋 (*Annals of Sire Lü*) echoed the *Mozi* by stating, "Thus achievements and merits are inscribed upon metal and stone and written on basins and trays."[8] Such inscriptions were by no means records of mundane, daily affairs, and the *Xunzi* recognized the laborious effort invested in manipulating the metal and stone media.[9] The Qin mountain inscriptions also record that past vassals had recourse to metal and stone writings, and these mountain inscriptions similarly refer to their own medium as that of "metal and stone."[10] In fact, Martin Kern has noted striking parallels between Qin Emperor Shihuang's own stone inscriptions and those found on ritual vessels.

By the Han, *jinshi* as a compound, or more specifically a morphological hendiadys, was well established and simply meant "indestructible material." This compound became widely employed, particularly in the phrase "longevity like metal and stone" 壽如金石 found in poetry, on mirror inscriptions, and later in the stele inscriptions themselves. Although closely associated with writing in all of these texts, this compound specifically came to refer to "epigraphy" only long after the Han.

Fifteen hundred years ago, Liu Xie 劉勰 (ca. 465–522) not only vaunted metal and stone durability, he argued that, in practical terms, metal vessels in fact yielded to stone stelae over the course of the Han dynasty. He writes:

> Vessels with merits engraved upon them gradually declined, and so subsequent dynasties used stelae, replacing metal with stone, both being indestructible. They moved from the shrine to the grave and accompanied

[5] Wu Yujiang, *Mozi jiaozhu* (Beijing, 1993), pp. 97 ("Shang xian"), 178 ("Jian'ai"), 415, 424 ("Fei ming"), 687 ("Gui yi").

[6] Wu Yujiang, *Mozi jiaozhu*, p. 340 ("Ming gui").

[7] Wu Yujiang, *Mozi jiaozhu*, p. 734 ("Lu wen"). All the Mozi references appropriately fall outside what Graham calls the "purist" chapters, the chapters which derive their support from utilitarian grounds rather than from historical evidence.

[8] Xu Weiyu, ed., *Lüshi chunqiu jishi* (Beijing, 1985), 22.14a ("Qiu ren"); 17.26b ("Shen shi").

[9] Wang Xianqian, ed., *Xunzi jijie* (Beijing, 1988), p. 8 ("Quanxue").

[10] *Shi ji* 6, pp. 246–47. The second Qin emperor added an appendix to each stone inscription in order to inform posterity that these texts referred to his father's achievements (*Shiji* 6, p. 267), and he, too, uses the phrase "metal and stone inscriptions" 金石刻.

> the practice of erecting a funerary mound. Since the Eastern Han, stelae and memorial pillars have risen like clouds, and as for apogees of talent [in this field], none was higher than Cai Yong.[11]

The Han stele inscriber Cai Yong 蔡邕 (133–92) himself had already drawn this connection between vessel and stele in his "Discussion on inscriptions" ("Ming lun" 銘論):

> Bells and cauldrons are the vessels of ritual and music; they shed light upon virtues and record achievements in order to express them to one's descendants. This is because among indestructible materials, nothing is as indestructible as metal and stone. From recent times, everyone inscribes [virtues and achievements] upon stelae.[12]

Archaeology confirms the decline of bronze vessels in the Han dynasty. Iron became cheaper and greatly improved since its first appearance as crude cast iron in the Eastern Zhou. Coins and mirrors made up the bulk of Han bronze production, and the vessels still being produced were now generally unadorned, such as those excavated at Mancheng.[13] Like Liu Xie and Cai Yong, modern scholars such as Tsuen-Hsuin Tsien correlate this decline in ritual bronze vessels with the rise of stelae, arguing that bronze inscriptions almost completely ceased to function as historical records once the stelae became popular.[14] Yet this correlation is too simple. By the early Western Han, the number of ornate, inscribed bronzes was already nowhere near the scale of the Shang and Zhou dynasties, but stelae did not become common for another three centuries until the reigns of emperors Huan and Ling. Even so, during this hiatus the concept of the bronze vessel's everlasting nature was continually revived through the wide usage of the *jinshi* metaphor and through the legendary and actual recovery of bronzes. Bronze vessels were not simply forgotten; their absence was noticed and, at least by Wang Chong 王充 (27–ca. 100 AD), lamented. He criticized his era for not inscribing virtues upon bronze vessels, warning that future

[11] Fan Wenlan, ed., *Wenxin diaolong zhu* (Beijing, 1978), p. 214 ("Lei bei").

[12] Cai Yong, *Cai zhonglang waiji*, 2.10b ("Ming lun").

[13] Jenny F. So, "The waning of the Bronze Age: the Western Han period (206 BC–AD 8)," in *The great Bronze Age of China*, ed. Wen Fong (London, 1980), p. 326. It should be noted that some of those unadorned vessels from the Han may have at one time been painted with designs.

[14] Tsuen-Hsuin Tsien, *Written on bamboo and silk: the beginnings of Chinese books and inscriptions* (Chicago, 1962), p. 38.

generations would think the Han did not match the virtues of earlier, vessel-producing dynasties.[15]

What did the bronze vessel bestow upon its heir, the stone stele? First and foremost, it bequeathed its longevous material existence upon its successor. For example, the following stele dedicated to Yang Tong 楊統 (d. 168), chancellor of Pei 沛, is typical in its boasts of sturdiness:

> They engraved the stone and erected the stele, and the inscription of merit was made vastly illustrious. It will be radiant for a hundred thousand years so that it will never be obliterated... Establishing one's words so that they do not decay is what our ancestors treasured. Recording one's name on metal and stone is to hand it down for time without end.[16]

A few stele inscriptions explicitly draw the link between bronze vessel and stone stele, such as the following statement by Cai Yong which precedes the hymn dedicated to the grand commandant Li Xian 李咸 (d. 175 AD):

> As for one's name, nothing is more exalted than indestructibility, and as for one's virtue, nothing is considered more flourishing than its lasting ten thousand generations. When inscriptions are made manifest on bells and vessels, their pure radiance will brighten posterity. We cut the stone and erect the stele so that this recorded virtue will never be destroyed.[17]

The stele was heir to the earlier bronze tradition of durable inscriptions, but as will be seen below, it may have also carried on that bronze tradition in another way, namely in presenting sacrificial food to the ancestors.

Finally, Eastern Han stelae must be seen in the context of increasing usage of stone in architectonic cemeteries as the dead gradually enjoyed a greater physical presence in the mundane landscape. For example, Li Daoyuan 酈道元 (d. 527 AD) writing from the vantage point of the 6th century saw Han stelae still *in situ* surrounded by the stone medium. The abundance of stone is evident in his description of Yin Jian's grave built in 187 AD and located in modern Henan:

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[15] Huang Hui, ed., *Lunheng jiaoshi* (Beijing, 1995), pp. 850–51 ("Xu song"). Elsewhere in the same essay (p. 855), he similarly lamented the lack of Han stone inscriptions like that of Qin Emperor Shihuang.

[16] Hong Gua, *Li shi*, in *Shike shiliao xinbian* (Taipei, 1982) ser. 1, vol. 9, 7.16b ("Pei xiang Yang Tong bei"). The penultimate sentence alludes to a *Zuozhuan* passage. See Yang Bojun, *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu* (Beijing, 1981), p. 1088 (Xiang 24).

[17] Cai Yong, *Cai zhonglang ji*, 5.5a ("Taiwei Runan Li gong bei").

> The grave of Yin Jian 尹儉, chief of Anyi 安邑, is located northwest of Peng Mountain 彭山. There is a stone shrine west of the grave, in front of the shrine there is a pair of stone gateposts, and east of the gateposts there is a stele. South of the gateposts there are two lions facing each other. To the south there are two memorial pillars. Southwest of the stone columns there is a pair of stone sheep. The grave was built in the fourth year of the Zhongping reign period.[18]

This description demonstrates that the stele was nestled among numerous other stone mortuary objects. The reasons behind this new emphasis on the Eastern Han cemetery as an additional site of ancestral reverence are still a matter of debate, but this novel physical context joins the other historical influences in the confluence that led to the rise of the stelae.

The stele's textual predecessors

But what form did the texts themselves take? In most general terms, the stele inscription consists of a title or heading, a lengthy biographical prose preface, a commemorative hymn and occasionally at the end a few details as to the stele's erection.[19] A list of donors is often inscribed on the back of the stele, donors who usually consisted of either the dedicatee's subordinates or his colleagues and fellow officers.[20] Almost all modern scholarship has honed in on the biographical prose, contending that inscriptions are derivative from biographies in the standard histories of Sima Qian and Ban Gu. The hymn is dismissed as a simple appraisal akin to "the Grand Historian states the following" 太史公曰 at

[18] Shi Zhicun, *Shuijing zhu beilu* (Tianjin, 1987), p. 358. Anyi is located in southern Shanxi, but Yin Jian does not appear in the historical records.

[19] To place the stele inscription format relative to other contemporaneous eulogistic forms, see Robert Joe Cutter, "Saying goodbye: the transformation of the dirge in early medieval China," *Early medieval China* 10–11.1 (2004), 67–129.

[20] Brown has convincingly demonstrated that stelae often embody horizontal rather than hierarchical social relationships. Because they were often financed by colleagues and fellow officers, they also emphasized the local service of the dedicatee in their home jurisdictions. See Brown, *The politics of mourning in early China*, pp. 94, 125. While I agree with her assessment, this regional emphasis need not be seen as consciously competing with the rhetorical veneration of dynastic service even though the court was indeed waning at this time. Although there are a few notable exceptions in which regional service is valued at the expense of dynastic service, most stelae are simply dedicated to local officials, locally financed, and hence locally focused, and so there may have been no expectation of highlighting dynastic service.

a biography's conclusion, even though Sima Qian and Ban Gu generally did not write their appraisals in verse. Yet such generalizations are easily dismissed in light of what the stele inscriptions themselves say about their literary predecessors. That is, the stelae repeatedly vaunt the *Book of songs* as their inspiration and explicitly focus the Han reader's attention upon the stele hymn as an active, vocalized form of praise to be committed to memory.

The few surviving glimpses into stele composition point to the pivotal role of the stele hymn and not to the biographical prose. For example, in 143 AD a 14-year-old girl named Cao E 曹娥 threw herself into a river because she could not endure life knowing her father had drowned and his body been lost.[21] This act of filial respect later drew the attention of the regional authorities, and the prefect of Shangyu 上虞 in modern Zhejiang commissioned Wei Lang 魏朗 to write her stele inscription. Wei Lang finished it, but before presenting it, he met the prefect at a drinking banquet. The prefect asked for the text, but Wei Lang modestly declined, apologizing for his lack of ability. At this point, the young poet Handan Chun 邯鄲淳 (fl. late Eastern Han) arrived, and the prefect asked him to write the Cao E inscription on the spot. The poet did so, and the result was so good that Wei Lang dejectedly destroyed his own draft.[22] Thus the Cao E inscription in this story was written by a poet at a drinking banquet—an occasion often associated with writing poetry—suggesting that Handan Chun's product was the stele's hymn and not the biographical preface.

Thus writing a stele was regarded as writing poetry, and the Qing scholar Ye Changchi wrote, "As for the host of stelae from the Qin and Han, it is clear that they are the same type of composition as odes and hymns."[23] Sometimes the erection of a stele was described as "erecting the stele hymn" 立碑頌,[24] and in the lists of surviving literary contributions appended to the end of 14 *Hou Hanshu* biographies, the stele genre is usually grouped with hymns and other types of poetry. Aside from recognized stele writers, close relatives were sometimes asked to write the hymn. For example, the daughter of Dou Zhang 竇章 (d. 144 AD) found favor with Emperor Shun, and upon the occasion of her early death, the emperor "summoned the office of historiographers to

[21] *Hou Hanshu* 84, p. 2794.

[22] This anecdote is from the *Guiji dianlu* 會稽典錄 by Yu Yu 虞預 (fl. early 4th century) as recorded in the commentary for *Hou Hanshu* 84, p. 2795.

[23] Ye Changchi and Ke Changsi, *Yushi, Yushi yitongping* (Beijing, 1994), p. 388.

[24] *Hou Hanshu* 52, p. 1731.

erect a stele and hymn (*song* 頌) her virtue," and Dou Zhang himself was singled out to write the lyrics.[25]

More importantly, stele inscriptions themselves point to the hymn as the inscription's focus. For example, the prose portion of the stele of Zhang Shou 張壽 (d. 168 AD), chancellor of the Zhuyi marquisate 竹邑侯, ends with "setting forth the inscribed text to the left," a reference to the hymn.[26] When Shi Xun 石勛 traveled to the cemetery of his maternal uncle Fei Feng 費鳳 (d. 177 AD), he "gazed up at his stele's threnody and cherished its virtuous tones," after which he was so moved that he had a second stele inscribed entirely in a poetic format. He "set forth a poem, approximating [Confucius' disciple] Zixia 子夏 gathering up the master's words in ancient times."[27] A stele dedicated to the grand administrator Hu Shi 胡碩 (d. 168 AD) introduces the hymn by explaining why his survivors resorted to inscription, stating that, "When our forebears pass away, they rely upon the sounds of hymns."[28] In these three examples, the inscriptions explicitly point to verse as their medium for proper remembrance. The prose preceding that verse established a frame through which the verse was to be viewed; it served as the verse's "preface" (*xu* 序) and was so identified at least by Liu Xie's time.

Like Greek stelae, Han grave inscriptions were not meant to be read in silence,[29] and several offer details on incorporating music within their ancestral evocations as the following three examples demonstrate. That of a certain Jing 景, chancellor of Beihai 北海, in Shandong is dated 143 AD and ranks among the oldest stelae, its textual format somewhat different from the later standard.[30] Its introduction acknowledges that remembrance can take both visual and audio form:

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[25] *Hou Hanshu* 23, p. 822. Note that the Office of Historiographers is here already involved in composing the stele text; government offices would in later dynasties be ordered to write, regulate, or at least approve stele texts. To cite another example of court involvement, according to *Hou Hanshu* 44, p. 1511, the emperor ordered Cai Yong to compose a hymn (*song* 頌) for Hu Guang, which survives in the form of a stele text.

[26] Hong Gua, *Li shi*, 7.19b ("Zhuyi houxiang Zhang Shou bei").

[27] Hong Gua, *Li shi*, 9.21a ("Fei Feng biebei").

[28] Cai Yong, *Cai zhonglang ji*, 5.9a ("Chenliu taishou Hu gong bei"); see also Cai Yong, *Cai zhonglang ji*, 2.2a ("Guo Youdao Linzong bei").

[29] Describing Greek mortuary stelae, Jesper Svenbro wrote, "Inscribed or not, the sêma in itself is silent, but whoever recognizes it when passing by will speak. The stone will trigger speech." Much of early Greek was meant to be spoken when read, and "if the text is to find total fulfilment, it needs the voice of the reader, the reading voice." See Svenbro, *Phrasikleia: an anthropology of reading in ancient Greece*, tr. Janet Lloyd (Ithaca, 1993), pp. 16, 45.

[30] Some scholars identify this stele as the oldest of the surviving Han stelae; see Fan Bangjin, "Dong Han mu bei suyuan," *Han bei yanjiu* (Jinan, 1990), p. 59.

> Of the host of rulers from high antiquity, there are none who did not pour forth their radiance [gap] into infinity or let their fragrance and brilliance drift downward through their written documents. Their persons perish, but their conduct remains bright; their bodies disappear, but their names survive. Some are manifested in images via arrays of pictures; others are revealed in hymns via pipes and strings. Posterity will intone their effulgence, and documents of bamboo and silk will detail their merits. Therefore we composed a threnody as follows.[31]

It thus records that past lords can be remembered through documents and pictures as well as through hymns and intoned words. A vocalized remembrance is also the case in the second example; that from the stele dedicated to Chen Shi encountered by the cowherd Deng Ai:

> Appropriately we have carved an inscription to mark the grave, causing later generations who will singingly intone the fame of his virtue [lit. "the virtuous musical notes"] to know that the tomb mound is located here.[32]

Finally, a Qinghai stele erected in 180 AD dedicated to the thrice-venerable Zhao Kuan 趙寬 specifically links the stele's own hymn with this musical evocation:

> Our most honorable father—his excellent virtue has not yet spread forth. With regard to dangling down one's reputation into infinity and causing the tones of pipe and string to flow, if we could not record such exemplariness upon metal and stone, how could we transmit it onward? Therefore we cut the stele and engrave the inscription, brightly manifesting him henceforth. The lyrics for him are as follows.[33]

Thus Zhao Kuan was to be remembered via pipe and string but only as long as the stele inscription was there to transmit the lyrics. Such stelae were tools of musical evocation, manifesting their subjects by recalling bygone virtues.

Not surprisingly, the *Book of songs* is the most commonly cited work that "roused" (*gan* 感) the survivors to inscribe the dedicatee's text, but instead of referring to the work as a whole, the prefaces tend to cite either a particular poem or section of poems. For example, the stele of Grand Commandant Liu Kuan 劉寬 describes the process of highlighting the dedicatee's past as follows:

[31] Hong Gua, *Li shi*, 6.9a–b ("Beihai xiang Jing jun ming").
[32] Cai Yong, *Cai zhonglang ji*, 2.5a ("Wenfan xiansheng Chen Zhonggong ming").
[33] Gao Wen, *Han bei jishi* (Kaifeng, 1997), p. 434 ("Zhao Kuan bei").

> Thereupon his former colleague Li Qian 李謙 and others, roused by the hymns that narrated the virtue of Yin 殷 and Lu 魯, believed that vast virtue and excellent splendor ought always to be manifested. Therefore they combined and organized that which he had done and recorded the overall gist, chiseling the stone and erecting the stele. The lyrics for him are as follows.[34]

Reference to the Yin and Lu hymns in the *Book of songs* probably alludes not only to the hymns but also to the hymnists that other prefaces explicitly identify. The stele preface of a certain Colonel Xiong 熊 of Suimin 綏民 concludes as follows:

> In ancient times, Zhou's Cultured Duke 周文公 composed hymns. [Zheng] Kaofu 〔正〕考父 of Song 宋 and the duke's son Xisi 奚斯 retrospectively admired surviving worthiness and recorded narrations on past merit. Therefore [his former subordinates] carved this stele to tell future posterity. The composition for him is as follows.[35]

The Duke of Zhou (posthumously titled "Zhou's Cultured Duke"), Zheng Kaofu and Xisi were regarded as the authors of the *Book of songs*' Zhou, Shang, and Lu hymns respectively. Many other stelae single out Xisi as the ideal intermediary, and for a final example, that of Grand Commandant Yang Zhen 楊震 concludes as follows: "Daring to emulate the retrospective narrations of Xisi, [his subordinates] therefore planted the dark stone along the grave's path. The lyrics for him are as follows."[36]

Here the inscribers identify themselves as textual intermediaries akin to *Book of songs* hymnists who had built bridges spanning the gulf between past and future. In fact, at least eight surviving stelae liken their creation process to Xisi composing the Lu hymns.

Ultimately the stele hymn is a grave label and an end product that marked life's completion; it is also an extension into the future, requesting that the verses be carried forward. In fact, sometimes stelae bluntly state this goal of memorization. The stele debatably attributed to Wu Ban 武斑 ends with the wish that his unforgotten reputation will be "recited with a sigh for ten-thousand years,"[37] and that ascribed to his brother, Wu Rong 武榮 (d. 167 AD), also concludes with a hymn

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[34] Hong Gua, *Li shi*, 11.2b–3a ("Taiwei Liu Kuan bei"). For a thorough explanation of 'former colleague,' or *guli* 故吏, see Brown, *The politics of mourning in early China*, pp. 91–4.

[35] Hong Gua, *Li shi*, 11.15b ("Suimin jiaowei Xiong jun bei").

[36] Hong Gua, *Li shi*, 12.2a–b ("Taiwei Yang Zhen bei").

[37] Hong Gua, *Li shi*, 6.12b ("Dunhuang zhangshi Wu Ban bei").

to be "recited for ten-thousand generations."[38] This new Han *Book of songs* would insert its dedicatees into the public memory, audaciously transforming them into foundational cornerstones of the Han Weltanschauung. Such audacity will become more evident as we turn to three sample inscriptions.

A sample inscription dedicated to an adult male: the stele of Xianyu Huang

Descending from these physical and textual ancestors, we now come to the Han stelae themselves, of which references to about 700 different Han stones can be culled from the received textual tradition according to a 2004 study.[39] The densest region of stelae is around Jining in Shandong province, but they spread across China to Sichuan with a particularly heavy cluster stretching along the region south of the Yellow river in northern Henan. But what was valued in these stelae so that they became relatively popular? Why were their dedicatees' webs of significance preserved on stone for "ten thousand generations" and "a hundred thousand years?"

The stele of Xianyu Huang 鮮于璜 (d. 125 AD), grand administrator of Yanmen 雁門 in northern Shanxi 山西, is fairly representative of the genre.[40] Erected in 165 AD, it stands 2.42 m. high, and its top is triangular with a dragon and tiger depicted on either side of the raised-relief, seal-script heading that proclaims "The stele of the gentleman Xianyu, the Han's former grand administrator of Yanmen" 漢故雁門太守鮮于君碑. There is also a 15 cm.-diameter hole immediately below the heading. Only one of the 508 characters on the front of the stele is unreadable, and being the first character of the preface, it is probably *jun* 君 ("the gentleman") because most Han stelae begin this way. Otherwise, the *li*-script characters are clear and orderly, the grid lines within which they were written still visible. As is common, the inscription is physically divided into a biographical preface and hymn. This hymn mainly

[38] Hong Gua, *Li shi*, 12.8b ("Zhijinwu cheng Wu Rong bei").

[39] Lai Fei, *Qi Lu beike muzhi yanjiu* (Jinan, 2004), pp. 12–20, details the known Han stele numbers and distribution and includes a useful map. Only about a third of these 700 stones can be identified with a particular place, and of course most of these stones are references only and not transcriptions.

[40] Excavated in 1973 in Wuqing county 武清縣 within the municipal region of Tianjin, the Xianyu Huang stele gently sidesteps the thorny issue of worn-away stones, bad rubbings, and wrong transcriptions from the Song dynasty.

laments Xianyu Huang's early death, but on the reverse is a second hymn which, like most stele hymns, portrays his life and accomplishments in highly colored language. The reverse also includes two lists of names, the first of Xianyu Huang's children and the second of earlier Xianyu generations, bringing the number of characters there to 319. The latter list slightly differs from that of the biographical preface. Here only the front inscription is translated, and any relevant information provided by the reverse is footnoted:[41]

> [This gentleman's] now-tabooed personal name is Huang and his formal name is Boqian. His ancestry stems from the scions of Jizi in the Yin dynasty and from the pure brilliance of the chancellor of Jiaodong in the Han dynasty.[42] He is the great grandson of an internuncio,[43] the grandson of a "filial and incorrupt" recommendation recipient,[44] and the eldest heir of an attendant.[45]
>
> The heaven-conferred disposition of this gentleman was a bright intelligence, and his penetrating ingenuity was excellent. He was never ill in his mother's care and never troublesome under his instructor's supervision. By the time he was standing upright and his milk teeth had fallen out, he followed rightness, cherishing and delighting in the constant principles. He mastered the *Rites* of Dai the Younger,[46] and within both the inner

[41] For the original report in the archaeological journals, see Tianjin shi wenwu guanlichu and Wuqing xian wenhua guan, "Wuqing xian faxian Dong Han Xianyu Huang mubei," *Wenwu* 1974.8, 68–72. For Gao Wen's commentary, see *Han bei jishi*, pp. 284–94 ("Xianyu Huang bei"). For a rubbing of the text, see Kinseki takuhon kenkyūkai, *Kan hi shūsei* (Kyoto, 1994), pp. 168–69; see also Tianjin shi wenwu guanlichu, *Han Xianyu Huang bei* (Beijing, 1982). The characters in the latter rubbing are either in the original size or close to it, and this publication includes a transcription and brief introduction but no commentary. For two brief articles mostly devoted to its calligraphy, see Li Haonian, "Han Yanmen taishou Xianyu Huang bei kaolue," in *Han bei yanjiu* (Jinan, 1990), pp. 260–66; and Ma Dadong, "Xianyu Huang bei yu Han lishu tan," *Han bei yanjiu*, pp. 340–45.

[42] Jiaodong is located near modern Pingdu on the Shandong peninsula. The stele reverse identifies this person as Chancellor Xianyu Hong 鮮于弘, whose formal name was Yuanyu 元譽.

[43] The stele reverse identifies this person as Probationary Internuncio Xianyu Cao 鮮于操, whose formal name was Zhongjing 仲經.

[44] The stele reverse identifies this person as the *xiaolian* recommendation recipient Xianyu Qi 鮮于琦, whose formal name was Weigong 瑋公.

[45] The stele reverse identifies this person as Provincial Attendant Xianyu Xiong 鮮于雄, whose formal name was Wenshan 文山. However, the stele reverse inserts a generation between Xianyu Xiong and Xianyu Qi, that of Investigator Xianyu Shi 鮮于式, whose formal name was Ziyi 子儀 and who had died early. Thus Xianyu Huang is not the grandson but the great grandson of the *xiaolian* recommendation recipient. Gao Wen believes the detailed stele reverse is probably accurate. Perhaps the stele reverse is not so much an explanation of the stele front's genealogy but an emendation because Xianyu Shi, if he had died before his father, may never have served as family head.

[46] Dai Sheng 戴聖 (1st century BC), also known as Xiao Dai or Dai the Younger, is

apartments and the clan at large, he cultivated filial piety and friendliness. He reviewed the old and understood the pivotal.[47] Because of his brilliant radiance and truthful sincerity, he advanced upward, his reputation climbing. [Grand administrator] Wang of Shang commandery examined his filial piety[48] and appointed Huang as gentleman of the palace, where he was transferred to the post of right-regiment major [under the general who] crosses the Liao river.[49] Huang pacified the northern Di tribe so that the frontier region was orderly and quiet. He was transferred to the post of prefect of Ganyu[50] where he regulated the state and instructed those below him, perfecting his government by means of ritual. The people intoned his kindness, and his subordinates cherished his greatness. He left office to mourn his father's death, but when he put away the mourning clothes and satisfied the rituals, he again responded to the summons of the three excellencies, was appointed to the offices of grand commandant and attached as an associate to the Bureau of the West. Huang's piercing plans were regularly submitted, and his practical undertakings daily discussed. The people of the royal house regarded him as excellent and virtuous, and the highest officers regarded him as worthy of occupying the side mat.[51] As for the wriggling Hunyu tribe, they carried out banditry in the ten thousand states.[52] The soil of Ji was barren and cropless,[53] and on the roads emaciated corpses stared across at one another.[54] The emperor consulted this gentleman's plans, and in the Yanping reign period (106 AD), the emperor appointed him as a certified frontier pacification officer. Huang was in charge of two provinces, issuing directives and administering laws. He corrected and censured the greedy and perverse until his gentle influence flowed forth and he was praised at court as a Duke of Shao.[55] The sage emperor treasured Huang's good conduct, and he subsequently

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credited with condensing the ritual anthology compiled by his uncle Dai De 戴德 (1st century BC) to form the current *Liji*.

[47] This phrase alludes to Confucius' statement that "By reviewing the old and understanding the new, one can become a teacher"; see Cheng Shude, ed., *Lunyu jishi* (Beijing, 1996), p. 94 ("Wei zheng").

[48] Shang commandery is located in northern Shaanxi 陝西.

[49] The post of this general, which has nothing to do with the Liao river, becomes permanent in 65 AD and controls a garrison situated in the Ordos region of northwest China, the purpose of which was to prevent reunification of the Xiongnu. See Hans Bielenstein, *The bureaucracy of Han times* (Cambridge, 1980), p. 120.

[50] Ganyu of the Donghai commandery is located on the coast of northern Jiangsu.

[51] The side mat is reserved for honored guests.

[52] The name Hunyu 葷育 (variant 葷粥) is a pre-Han designation for the Xiongnu; see *Shiji* 110, p. 2879.

[53] By the Eastern Han, Ji already has various identifications, as general as the regions of modern Shanxi 山西 and Hebei or as specific as the southern part of modern Hebei around the city of Gaoyi 高邑.

[54] This phrase occurs in Yang Bojun, *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu*, p. 1236 (Zhao 3).

[55] Mencius explains the term *shuzhi* 述職 as the feudal lords coming to court to report on their own duties; see Jiao Xun, ed., *Mengzi zhengyi* (Beijing, 1996), p. 122 ("Liang Hui wang").

granted him seals and tallies. In the first year of the Yongchu reign period (114 AD), Huang was appointed grand administrator of Yanmen. He bent his body's joints in humility and was pure in his conduct. He honored frugality and clung to economy,[56] favoring a government of rule by example. The interdictions and transformations brought about by his name and teachings were like the wind reaching the grass.[57] From time to time, the Wuhuan tribes near the commandery were wily and rebellious. This gentleman governed with stern strength and reduced those who were slow in their submission. During the Yongchu reign period (114–119 AD), he was honored for his achievements at the Han palace.

He possessed great virtue and a lofty reputation, and his lasting affection was daily renewed. Within he harmonized the nine clan relationships, and without he created concordance between far and near. He kept his progeny and subordinates undefiled, causing his household to reach a state of completion.[58] His giving alms to the destitute and relieving the impoverished[59] can indeed be ranked with [Confucius' disciples] Yan [Pingzhong] and Zang [Wenzhong] of antiquity. He ought to have realized achievements and blessings, reaching the limit of his ranks and prolonging his years. Was it to be expected that he encounter tragedy and meet with a premature death?[60] In the fourth year of the Yanguang reign period (125 AD), in the sixth month on a *renxu* day, he died in retirement.[61]

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[56] Gao Wen, *Han bei jishi*, p. 290 ("Xianyu Huang bei"), citing *Hou Hanshu* 10, p. 428, believes *shuxiu* 束修 means "was disciplined and cultivated order" 約束修整, but *xiu* here means "pruned back, economized," and is parallel to "frugality" 儉, well describing a non-interventionist government.

[57] *Cao* 屮 is a common variant of *cao* 草. A ruler's transformative influence is often likened to a wind, and the gentleman's influence over the common people is likened to the wind bending the grass. See Cheng Shude, *Lunyu jishi*, p. 866 ("Yan Yuan"); Jiao Xun, *Mengzi zhengyi*, p. 330 ("Teng Wen gong"). This image is frequent in stelae, such as in that of Chen Shi (Cai Yong, *Cai zhonglang ji*, 2.4a ["Wenfan xiansheng Chen Zhonggong ming"]), whose government caused the people to return to virtue so that they were "like grass and trees bending in a driving wind" 猶草木偃于翔風.

[58] My translation of this sentence is uncertain, and Gao Wen is silent in his commentary.

[59] *Zhou* 周 here signifies *zhou* 賙 ("to give alms").

[60] Gao Wen, *Han bei jishi*, p. 294 ("Xianyu Huang bei"), and others note that the second hymn disagrees with Xianyu Huang's early age at death, that he could not be regarded as having died young because he was more than 81 years old. These sources are referring to the second hymn which, after stating that "he left office because of illness" 以病去官, continues with 廿有餘年, 踰九九, 永歸幽廬. However, the phrase *jiujiu* 九九 ("nine nines") is not his age but actually means fullness, particularly the fullness of the ideal lifespan. For example, an early *chenwei* text explains "Nine nines is 81, which is the completion of the human allotment" 九九八十一, 是人命終矣; see Yasui Kōzan and Nakamura Shōhachi, eds, *Wei shu jicheng* (originally *Issho shūsei*) (Hebei, 1994), p. 986 ("Xiaojing yuanshen qi" 孝經援神契). Thus we should render the second hymn's statement in the subjunctive as "After more than twenty years, he *would have* passed his full term to return forever to the darkened hovel." There is no disagreement in age.

[61] Gao Wen, *Han bei jishi*, p. 291, "Xianyu Huang bei," notes that there was no *renxu* day in that year's sixth month.

In general, inscribed and carved statements are how a great eminence is manifested, forming links among ancestors and connecting up forebears. If a person did not possess abundant virtues, how would this be possible? Therefore this gentleman's grandsons Fang, Cang, Jiu, and others thereupon joined together to quarry the mountain and obtain this stone, displaying his posthumous title and establishing his appellation [upon it], handing them down over the hundred thousand years to come in order to inform posterity. The hymn for him follows.

〔君〕諱璜, 字伯謙。其先祖出于殷箕子之苗裔, 漢膠東相之醇曜。而謁者君之曾, 孝廉君之孫, 從事君之元嗣也。

君天姿明達, 徹僤有芳。在母不瘽, 在師不煩。岐齔謡是, 含好典常。治《禮小戴》, 閨族孝友, 溫故知機。煇光篤實, 升而上聞, 上郡王府君察孝, 除郎中, 遷度遼右部司馬。慰綏朔狄, 邊宇艾安。遷贛榆令, 經國帥下, 政以禮成。民誦其惠, 吏懷其威。喪父去官。服終禮闋, 復應三公之招, 辟大尉府, 除西曹屬。蔵謨屢獻, 使事日言, 王人嘉德, 台司側席。蠢爾葷育, 萬邦作寇。冀土荒饉, 道殣相望。帝咨君謀, 以延平中拜安邊節使, 銜命二州, 受莢秉憲。彈貶貪枉, 清風流射, 有邵伯述職之稱。聖上珍操, 璽符追假。永初元年, 拜雁門太守。折節清行, 恭儉束修, 政崇無爲。聲教禁化, 猷風之中。時依郡烏桓, 狂狡畔戾。君執以威權, 征其後伏。永初之際, 有勳力于漢室。

令德高譽, 遺愛日新，內和九親, 外睦遠鄰。免浣息隷, 爲成其門。周無振匱, 亦古晏臧之次矣。當遂功祚, 究爵永年。意乎不造, 早世而終。以延光四年, 六月壬戌, 卒于家。

蓋銘勒之云, 所以彰洪烈, 纂乃祖, 繼舊先。非夫盛德, 惡可巳哉。於是君之孫魴、倉、九等，乃相與刊山取石, 表謚定號, 垂之億載, 以示昆苗。其頌曰。

於鑠我祖,	Oh! How lustrous is our grandfather—
膺是懿德,	He embosomed spotless virtue
永惟孝思,	And forever kept filial thoughts in mind,
亦世弘業。	Causing the magnanimous occupation to extend generation after generation.[62]
昭哉孝嗣,	He indeed radiates over his filial descendants,
光流萬國。	His brilliance flowing through the ten thousand states.
秩秩其威,	This grandeur so awe-inspiring!
娥娥厥頌,	That appearance so lofty!
此宜蹈鼎,	He would have been worthy to serve as a support to the cauldron
善世令王。	And good at causing great kings to last from generation to generation.[63]

[62] Wang Xianqian lists seven Han stelae which use this term *yishi* 亦世 to mean *yishi* 奕世 ("accumulated generations") and believes it is so used in the *Shijing* as well; see Wang Xianqian, *Shi sanjiayi jishu* (Beijing, 1987), p. 825. There is truth to this claim of extending Xianyu Huang's occupation from generation to generation because his sons also become aide-de-camps, chief clerks and prefects in northern regions.

[63] Gao Wen, *Han bei jishi*, p. 292, believes *shi* 世 is a variant for *yi* 勩, "to toil." Here I am keeping the same meaning of *shi* from six lines above.

如何夙隕, Why did he fall so early
丁此咎凶。 And incur this calamitous misfortune?
國無人兮王庭空, The state has no people, and the royal court is empty;
士罔宗兮微言喪， The officials have lost their lineages, and profound words have died off;
王機悵兮嘉謀荒。 The royal standard has flagged, and the excellent plans are wasted.
旌洪德兮表元功, (And so we) banner vast virtue and display primal merit,
闡君靈兮示後萌, Clarifying this gentleman's numen and informing later generations.
神有識兮營壇場。 While his spirit possesses consciousness, may it occupy this altar area.[64]

The text concludes with the date of inscription, namely that it was "made in the eighth year of the Yanxi reign period (165 AD) in the 11th month on the 18th day, which was a *jiyou* day" 延熹八年, 十一月十八日己酉造.

Stelae such as that of Xianyu Huang commonly extol the dedicatee's heaven-conferred disposition, his mastery of certain texts within the classicist tradition, his entry into officialdom (often via the *xiaolian* recommendation system), and his filial observance of mourning duties for his parents, all alongside a list of offices held in which he naturally manifested a host of Classicist virtues. While much can be learned about such cultural markers that make up his identity, we shall here limit ourselves to the religious "webs of significance" within which the late Xianyu Huang found himself suspended. These webs can be carefully untangled to yield three kinds of strands that would situate him within larger networks, namely those relative to his predecessors, those relative to his descendants and those relative to his own conditional existence.

With regard to the web of Xianyu Huang's predecessors, the stele itself asserts its own role of "forming links among ancestors and connecting up forebears." Other inscriptions similarly weave their dedicatees into existing networks of ancestors and past cultural heroes, utilizing the language of connectivity. The dedicatee typically "continued the carriage tracks opened by" X, "followed the example of" Y, and "could be classed with" Z. For example, an inscription dedicated to the eminent

[64] Gao Wen, *Han bei jishi*, pp. 284–94, following his transcription of characters into their modern equivalents.

Han scientist and poet Zhang Heng 張衡 (78–139) connects him to both scientific and literary greats:

> He continued the illustrious vestiges of [the legendary astronomers] Xi 羲 and He 和 and carried on the distant influence of [the poet Sima 司馬] Xiangru 相如. If he had lived in the Spring and Autumn period, he would have traveled off to the halls of Queli 闕里to be counted among [Confucius' disciples] Zaiyu and Zigong, to be weighted equally with Youzi and Xiazi.[65]

Zhang Heng joined the ranks of the famous historical champions who populated the public memory, riding their coattails to immortality, and like Xianyu Huang, he would have numbered among Confucius' disciples.

One way in which stelae affirmed ancestral ties in particular was by immediately surveying the dedicatee's genealogical background, a survey often beginning with the surname's origin that usually derived from an ancient state name. As there were a limited number of surnames and a finite number of states, stelae effectively tied their dedicatees into the common heritage, particularly as these ties between surname and state were regularly avowed by canonical references. Xianyu Huang's own lineage here begins with Jizi, a connection that derived from his surname. According to tradition, King Wu had enfeoffed Jizi at Yu 于 in Chaoxian 朝鮮, and so Jizi's lineage adopted the surname Xianyu 鮮于. Jizi was also said to have presented King Wu with the "Hongfan" 洪範 of the *Shangshu* 商書 (*Book of documents*),[66] and so Xianyu Huang through his ancestry could now be located upon the general geographical and cultural map. A large number of stelae begin with a stalwart in the public memory ranging from Yao and Houji to Zhuanxu and the Yellow Emperor. Hans Bielenstein contended that such fanciful beginnings indicate that rememberers "were willing to suspend judgment and flatter the deceased concerning their pretentions [*sic*] to ancient descent."[67] Alternatively, claiming these grand connections could be seen as a mapping exercise in which *anyone* could locate his or her surname within the grander cultural landscape and thereby position family and self relative to everyone else. There co-existed other popular schemes

[65] *Li shi*, 19.19b ("Zhang Pingzi bei"). While the stele is included in Han collections, it in fact dates to just after the Han.

[66] *Shiji* 38, pp. 1609–20.

[67] Bielenstein, "Later Han inscriptions and dynastic biographies: a historiographical comparison," in *Guoji Hanxue huiyi lunwenji*, vol. 3, pt.2 (Taipei, 1981), p. 580.

that claimed to diagram all humanity such as one practice that traced every surname pronunciation back to the musical tones assigned to the five phases.

With his family origin thus anchored by Jizi, Xianyu Huang's genealogical survey then fast forwards to his most recent three or four forebears, a lineage portrayal common to these stelae. A few inscriptions extend their immediate ancestries further back, perhaps the longest being that of Zhao Kuan whose stele identifies his lineage progenitor as the cultural hero Shaohao and then details the ten generations immediately prior to Zhao Kuan himself. Beginning in the reigns of Emperors Wen and Jing, it names twenty-five relatives, including the famous Western Han general Zhao Chongguo 趙充國, and it then describes how the Zhao ancestral clan split and spread over all of China, his own parents migrating 350 kilometers eastward to escape the increasingly rebellious Qiang 羌. Yet most stelae only identify forebears who might have been within living memory, and regardless of length, they regularly conclude the genealogical section by focusing upon the dedicatee as the product of that descent. One states, "The virtue carried by these accumulated generations thus collected within this gentleman" 彼亦世載德以臻于君,[68] and another concludes that the genealogy "extended down to the gentleman so that his heaven-conferred disposition was a goodness that was purely excellent and that shed light upon the past" 誕降于君, 天姿純懿昭前之美.[69]

What is noteworthy about this typical lineage portrayal of a distant, territory-bound forebear followed by the most recent ascendants is that it mimics the general order of tablets in the ancestral hall. There the progenitor—he who had first secured the land—stood alone in front and only the most recent generations of ancestors along the sides. The rest were regarded as having faded from active, ritualized remembrance. Resemblances to the ancestral shrine do not end there because the stele heading itself most likely shared the textual format of ancestral tablets, the earliest surviving examples of which date to just after the Han.[70]

With regard to the web of Xianyu Huang's descendants, the stele text immediately begins by denoting his now-tabooed personal name, a taboo that defined the deceased's sphere of influence among the

[68] Hong Gua, *Li shi*, 9.1b ("Beijun zhonghou Guo Zhongqi bei"). For *yishi*, see n. 62.
[69] Hong Gua, *Li shi*, 8.1b ("Wei wei Heng Fang bei").
[70] For examples of early ancestral tablets, see Zhao Chao, *Han Wei Nanbei chao muzhi huibian* (Tianjin, 1992), p. 3.

living whether it be limited to within the household or extended across the empire as in the case of dynastic rulers. While tabooed names for officials were to be avoided for only a single generation, at least one Eastern Han inscription would flout such restrictions, banning a recent ancestor's name within the household for further generations because his influence had not yet dissipated.[71] While almost all grave stelae removed names from everyday speech, some of them conversely added names to the dedicatee by detailing the choice of posthumous name as in the case of Chen Shi above, who was to be remembered as "Sir Wenfan" or "Refined model" 文範先生.

Besides name (and hence identity) manipulation, these stelae further demarcated the descendant network by serving as a focus of ritual sacrifice. As in the case of Xianyu Huang, their inscriptions often emphasize the exact date of death perhaps because that date indicated future "prohibited days" (*jiri* 忌日) when the descendants would formally remember the dead. A few stelae even precisely date the *xiaoxiang* 小祥 and *daxiang* 大祥 or first and second death anniversaries respectively. It is even possible that the stele was itself a tool actively used in these remembrances, and elsewhere I have argued at length that sacrifices were suspended from the prominent hole in the upper portion of the stone, a hole also present here on Xianyu Huang's stele beneath the heading. Han ritual handbooks, standard histories, excavated exorcism texts, and other sources frequently refer to a wooden funerary tablet called a *chong* 重 that accompanied the coffined body before final burial. Food offerings were hung from holes drilled into it, and inscribed banners identifying the coffin occupant were attached to it. It was roughly the same height as the average Han stele, and the *chong*'s hole would thus explain this enigmatic hole found atop many of these gravestones. A stele with a prominent hole might even self-identify as a "spirit-sacrifice stele" 神祠之碑, or it might speak of "setting forth the spring sacrifice."[72] Thus like its bronze-vessel predecessor—which the stele itself claims as ancestor—the stone preserved its dead through both texts and food.[73]

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[71] Yuan Weichun, *Qin Han bei shu* (Beijing, 1990), pp. 73–75; Gao Wen, *Han bei jishi*, p. 2 ("Sanlao huizi jiri ji").

[72] See Gao Wen, *Han bei jishi*, p. 175 ("Li Mengchu shenci bei") and Hong Gua, *Li shi*, 12.17a ("Li Yi furen bei"), respectively. Additionally the Song epigrapher Zhao Mingcheng will sometimes dub certain now-lost inscriptions as "spirit-sacrifice stelae," but it is uncertain whether he is devising the labels himself or deriving them from the stele headers.

[73] For the full argument, see Brashier, *Evoking the ancestor: the stele hymn of the*

Having a son to offer those sacrifices was of course never guaranteed, and an inscription might have the dedicatee presenting the "fertile fields of the ancestral line" 祖業良田 to the offspring of a younger brother.[74] That of a gentleman of the palace surnamed Guo announces his nephew as heir with the same language used in imperial adoptions from collateral branches: "If you are the successor of someone, then you (act as) son for that person" 爲人後者爲之子.[75] Although not a stele, an inscription on a cemetery gatepost dedicated to Wang Ziya 王子雅 by his three daughters laments the end of his own line of descent:

> This late gentleman begot us daughters but had no sons. Now we place his spirit in the dark dwelling and screen away his soul within the Earth Lord. In such darkness and without posterity—how can we manifest our lord's virtue?[76]

The inscription therefore marked the termination of his line of descent, its dedicatee left undefined within the darkness.

Xianyu Huang's stele thus positioned him within a network of both ancestors and descendants, but it also positioned him relative to his own temporal continuum of existence. Almost all stelae—Xiangyu Huang's included—lament the dedicatee's premature death regardless of the person's final age. That final age was in itself a marker of personal worth because value in early Chinese cultural and religious idea systems was regularly measured in terms of how long something or someone survived—the older, the better. Moreover, it was a marker of social value because age translated into social rank as officially recognized by Han legal and administrative practices. "Peerdoms" or *jue* 爵 were universally bestowed to mark enthronements, omens, and so forth up to a maximum of 20 ranks, the eight lowest being extended to commoners as well. The universal bestowal meant that the older one was, the more

Eastern Han dynasty (25–220 CE) or Brashier, "Text and ritual in early Chinese stelae," in *Text and ritual in early China*, Martin Kern, ed. (Seattle, 2005), pp. 249–84.

[74] Hong Gua, *Li shi*, 9.18b ("Tangyi ling Fei Feng bei").

[75] Hong Gua, *Li shi*, 17.5a ("Langzhong Guo jun bei"). For a second example of a stele using this phrase in similar circumstances, see Hong Gua, *Li xu*, 11.5a ("Duxiang xiaozi Yan Ju bei"). For two examples of imperial usage, see *Hanshu* 86, p. 3506; *Hou Hanshu* 35, p. 1194. This phrase is also found in the *Gongyang zhuan*, the *Yi li*, and the *Baihu tong*.

[76] Shi Zhicun, *Shuijing zhu beilu*, p. 367. Wang Ziya's substantial wealth seems to have been divided among his daughters because each is said to have contributed five million cash for the tomb and elegant shrines of high quality stone, stone so polished it radiated light like a mirror.

he had acquired, and so it was ultimately a formal seniority system. Stelae sometimes mention their dedicatee's scaling the peerdoms in tandem with achieving old age. They also note "the honor of stool and staff" 几杖之尊, referring to the autumnal "registration of households" 案戶 that ranked the people according to age, 70 year-olds also receiving a royal staff with a pigeon finial.[77] According to a late Western Han register excavated at Yinwan there were 2,823 people aged 70 and up who were "staff recipients" 受杖 that year in the Donghai area.[78] Thus age affected the web of significance surrounding the self.

But what of that web of significance once death ended the accretion of years? Unlike Western conceptions of an eternal afterlife, Xianyu Huang's own postmortem existence was merely conditional as indicated in the inscription's closing lines: "While his spirit possesses consciousness, may it occupy this altar area." Other inscriptions frequently resort to the phrase *hun er youling* 魂而有靈, "if/while the *hun*-soul be numinous," as in the phrase, "If the *hun*-soul be numinous, may it consider this kind honor excellent."[79] Recently discovered during the rushed archaeological work prior to the planned flooding of the Yangzi's Three Gorges region, a stele dated 173 AD describes the posthumous impact of a prefect who had died 70 years earlier: "While his *hunling* was [still] present, the farmers were anxious and knotted up, the travelers brushed away their tears, the weaving women cried in silence, and the officials longingly brooded."[80] According to this stele, the prefect continued to affect the living as they then offered him seasonal sacrifices and sang of his continuing influence, and so the stone was erected to preserve his name forever.

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[77] *Hou Hanshu, zhi* 5, p. 3124. For a discussion on these festivals and the pigeon symbolism, see Bodde, *Festivals in Classical China*, pp. 341–48, 361–80.

[78] Xie Guihua, "Yinwan Han mu suojian Donghai jun xingzheng wenshu kaoshu," in *Yinwan Han mu jiandu zonglun* (Beijing, 1999), pp. 28–29. Bodde, *Festivals in Classical China*, pp. 347–48, suggests that the "registration of households" and "entertaining of the aged" became institutional realities only in the Eastern Han.

The Yinwan register also records 33,871 people above the age of 80 (a third of which were above 90) in this region, comprising more than 2 percent of the population.

[79] Cai Yong, *Cai zhonglang ji* 1.19a ("Dingming"). Variations of this phrase incorporate *ru* 如 or *ruo* 若, thereby justifying a conditional reading.

[80] *Chongqing Zhongguo Sanxia bowuguan—Chongqing bowuguan* (Beijing, 2005), pp. 97–8.

A sample inscription dedicated to an adult female: the stele of Zhang Xianzhang

Xianyu Huang's inscription adheres to the general format of most Han stelae. From Sichuan to Shandong, stele texts exhibit a degree of uniformity in their presentations of genealogy, geographical ties, biography, age at death, burial date, and so forth in a fairly consistent order. One preface refers to the dedicatee's former subordinates "solemnly thinking upon the regulations concerning inscriptions" 惟銘勒之制, although whether they were referring to specific prescriptions or to general traditions cannot be determined.[81] However, the format is not so standardized as later scholars since at least the Song dynasty have generalized, and some stelae—particularly those dedicated to women and children—stray far from such conventions. These non-conformist stelae in fact tend to be more interesting because they give us glimpses into Eastern Han life well beyond the dull list of appointments held and the classicist stereotypes manifested. Such texts are more of the nature of belles-lettres and survive in literary collections rather than on stone surfaces.[82]

The following example of a stele dedicated to the woman Zhang Xianzhang demonstrates the range of data that Han stelae offer the modern reader. It distinguishes four stages of Zhang Xianzhang's life—namely pre-motherhood, motherhood, death and afterlife—each section

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[81] Hong Gua, *Li shi*, 11.20a ("Gaoyang ling Yang Zhu bei").

[82] Brown, *The politics of mourning in early China*, pp. 65–84, has recently argued at length about a new form of rhetoric in which filial piety toward the mother was of growing importance in the Eastern Han, and she uses stele texts, particularly the texts that survive from Cai Yong, as partial evidence. While her contention may be true, it should be noted that stele texts dedicated to women and children may have had a better chance of survival than those dedicated to men precisely because the former were of a higher literary quality. Those dedicated to men are often dull listings of offices and appointments mixed with common clichés of success drawn from the classicist tradition. In contrast, those dedicated to women and children lack that kind of biographical data and were hence an open slate (literally) for more literary efforts in their attempts to survey life's achievements. Hence they might have had a significantly higher chance of survival, particularly in literary collections such as that of Cai Yong. Furthermore, according to Brown's own statistics, 92 percent of stelae were dedicated to men and were typically financed by colleagues and fellow officers, meaning that sons had less of a need to memorialize their fathers relative to the need to memorialize their mothers. These and other considerations could skew any statistics we derive from an already small sampling of surviving stele texts. Such is not to argue Brown is wrong but only to express hesitations about the available evidence.

beginning with the words "[Hu Guang's] wife" (*furen* 夫人). Throughout the inscription, her identity is clearly defined by those around her. The author, Cai Yong, was responsible for many stele texts in the Chenliu region east of Luoyang, and this text is entitled "The divine declaration for the wife of the grand tutor Hu, city marquis[83] of Anle" 太傅安樂鄉侯胡公夫人靈表. Any allusions will be explained immediately below the translation:

> [The grand tutor Hu Guang's] wife was the eldest daughter of the old Zhang collateral lineage in Bian district, and her formal name was Xianzhang. Her deportment was excellent, her manner careful. She grasped principle and probed profundity. Benevolently filial and pleasantly accommodating, she heeded the rituals without misstep. She embodied the deportment of a "young orchid" and followed in the footsteps of "the thoughtful and reverent." In the second year of the Yongchu reign period (108 AD), when she was 15, she first came into this household as a bride, extending and perfecting the guiding principles of the family. Above her, she served her kind mother-in-law, fully pleasing her and extending respect to her. Below her, she instructed the children, comprehensively educating and leading them. Her extreme virtuosity cultivated the subtle while her excellent fame expanded into the spiritual. Thus was she able to partake in the achievements of [the dynastic mothers] Tairen and Taisi as well as join in the glories of giving birth to a lineage. If one is to attend the spring sacrifice at the great hall, one must [first] care for the mulberry trees at the silkworm chambers. For radiant favors, there must be sacrifices, and for sacrificial clothing, there must be [silkworms].[84] She continually carried out such ritual service for more than 30 years.
>
> Hu Guang's wife bore five sons, and the personal name of the eldest was Zheng with the formal name Boqi. There was also Qianyi with the formal name Shuwei, Ning with the formal name Zhiwei, and Yi with the formal name Jirui. Before Boqi and the second son [who is not listed above] were old enough to experience the capping ceremony, they met with an oppressive *qi* that took both of them in their childhood. Shuwei declined office via the commandery's "filial and incorrupt" recommendation system, and together with Jirui, he extensively roamed across the regions and commanderies. He was instead recommended via the "abundant talent" system[85] and served as prefect of Ye and of Jing, then becoming

[83] In the Han, there were three marquis ranks, the lowest being *tinghou* 亭侯, the highest *xianhou* 縣侯 and this *xianghou* 鄉侯 between them.

[84] I am here suggesting a correction in the text: *chong* 珫 (or 充) is a jade ear ornament, but the context clearly wants something involving sericulture here. *Chong* 充 and *chong* 虫 ("worms") are not only homophonous, they are similar in appearance when written.

[85] Hans Bielenstein, *The bureaucracy of Han times*, pp. 136–37, compares the two entry methods, noting that these recommendations from only the highest officials were

a gentleman consultant.[86] Through him, Jirui became an attending secretary, grandee remonstrant and consultant, palace attendant, general of the gentleman-of-the-household rapid as tigers and grand administrator of Chenliu. Both died early.

Hu Guang's wife was mournfully afflicted and wearily grievous. From that point on, she suffered illnesses that only intensified when she met with the death of her mother-in-law. In the third year of the Jianning reign period (170 AD), she died at the age of 77.

When Hu Guang's wife was alive, she prepared the food with diligent labor, and she offered up nourishment with kind reverence, thereby supporting life and offering up benevolence. To continue this fine concept, we buried her with her mother-in-law on this year's intercalary month, interring her at this spot.[87] While her *hun*-soul is still numinous, may she respectfully look after "arranging [mother's] bedding and asking how she spent the night,"[88] and may her spirit's mind delight in this task. That she truly be at peace, her eldest daughter Jinying will reverently reflect upon her and always hold her in her thoughts, her sorrowful anxiety knowing no end.[89] She thereupon had this declaration made and had it engraved upon this durable, jade-like stone. The hymn follows.

夫人編縣舊族章氏之長女也, 字曰顯章。令儀小心, 秉操塞淵, 仁孝婉順, 率禮無遺。體季蘭之姿, 蹈思齊之跡。永初二年, 年十有五, 爰初來嫁, 誕成家道, 仰奉慈姑, 竭歡致敬, 俯誨膝下, 化導周悉。至德脩于幾微, 徽音暢于神明。故能參任姒之功, 兼生人之榮。朝春路寢, 贊桑蠶宮。光寵有祭, 祭服有珫。前後奉斯禮者三十餘載。

夫人生五男, 長曰整、伯齊, 次曰千億、叔韡, 次曰寧、稚威, 次曰碩、季叡, 伯仲各未加冠, 遭厲氣同時夭折。叔讓郡孝廉, 及季更歷州郡, 寧舉茂才葉令、京令爲議郎, 季以高弟爲侍御史諫議大夫侍中虎賁中郎將陳留太守, 皆早即世。

more restrictive in number than that of the "filial and incorrupt," that in all around 3000 men in the Eastern Han had probably been recommended this way. Instead of a probationary period, they went straight to office, and there was no age limit. That he received this distinction is hardly surprising as he was the son of one of the most powerful ministers in the empire.

[86] Jing and Ye districts were about 150 km apart from one another to the east and southeast of the capital Luoyang, respectively, both in modern Henan.

[87] Li Daoyuan briefly describes the location of this cemetery; see Shi Zhicun, *Shuijing zhu beilu*, pp. 376–79. It is perhaps because she has no surviving children that she is merged into the lineage cemetery via a more subordinate role. Yet judging from the offices they held, her third and fourth sons were old enough to have families to continue the lineage.

[88] Ritual texts such as the *Liji* typify filial respect with this act of arranging a parent's bedding at night and then in the morning asking how they slept. Here the phrase could be taken as a symbol for filial attendance extended into the afterlife, but it could also be more literal. For example, dutiful palace maids daily arranged the bedding and pillows for the imperial ancestors in Luoyang. See *Hou Hanshu, zhi* 9, p. 3200.

[89] There survive other cases of daughters overseeing remembrance rites in the absence of sons; see for example, Shi Zhicun, *Shuijing zhu beilu*, p. 367.

夫人哀悼劬悴, 由是被疾, 遭太夫人憂篤, 年七十七, 建寧三年薨。
夫人之存也, 契闊中饋, 婉孌供養, 依生奉仁, 紹述雅意, 其閏月,

祔于太夫人, 窀穸于茲地。魂而有靈, 欽明定省, 神心欣焉。其實寧之, 元女金盈, 追慕永思, 憯怛罔極。遂及斯表, 鐫著堅玟。頌曰。

悲母氏之不永兮 We grieve over mother's mortality
懷殷恤以摧傷 And nurse much sorrow because she has withered away.
惟子道之無窮兮 The guiding principles of being a proper child have no end,
惜聞誨之未央 And we will take care to heed her instructions forever.
庶黃考以期頤 When it is possible to reach the age of 90 or a 100,
胡委我以夙喪 Why did she abandon us by dying so early?
憂心怛以激切 Our distressed hearts are alarmed and agitated;
亦割肝而絕腸 Our insides are twisted and cut up, too.
昔先聖之遺辭 A sage of the past once left behind a text
言仁者其壽長 That said the benevolent enjoy longevity.[90]
嗟母氏之憂患 But alas—the despondence and misfortunes mother had to endure!
體愷悌以慈良 She embodied kindliness and goodness.
失延年之報祜 Yet she lost her due blessings of extended years—
獨何棄乎穹蒼 Why was she forced to leave our vaulted azure sky?

日月忽以將暮 As the sun and moon suddenly approach darkness,
�khu長結以含愁 We bundle up the long cords on our robes and hold in our distress.
尋脩念于在昔 If we pursue distant thoughts into the past
原疾病之所由 And trace the origin of her affliction,
遭元子之弱夭 She met with the early death of her first child,
心傷悴以自憂 Her heart severely wounded with spontaneous anxiety.
暨叔季之隕終 When her third and fourth son were brought down,
哀情結以彌綢 The threads of mourning that were woven around her constricted all the more.
皇姑歿而終感 Once mother-in-law's influence was brought to an end with her own death,
遂大漸兮速流 Mother's illness greatly surged and quickly flooded forth.
疾䁥䁥而日遘 It became so inflamed that she faced it everyday;
氣微微以長浮 Her *qi* became thin and protractedly unstable.
銷精魂以遐翔 Her quintessential *hun*-soul was worn away so that it flew off,
曾不可乎援留 And we were unable to make it stay.

爾乃順旨于冥冥 And so she will [now] heed orders in such darkness,
繼存意于不違 Continuing to uphold her intentions not to disobey.
爰祔靈于皇姑 On this account we interred her spirit with her mother-in-law

[90] The sage is Confucius; see Cheng Shude, *Lunyu jishi*, p. 408 ("Yong ye").

尙魂魄之有依 To serve as a support to her *hunpo*.[91]
潛幽室之黯漠 Sinking into the black vastness of the dark chamber,
惜昭明之景輝 She will care for [her mother-in-law's] luminous brightness of radiant illumination.
一往超以未及 Once she has traveled beyond us, she will be out of reach;
傾阻邈其彌遲 The moment she is cut off from us, she will fall further and further behind us in time.
顧新廟以累欷 With repeated sobbing, we look to her new shrine;
伏几筵而增悲 Our grief redoubled, we bow to her table and mat.
嗟既逝之益遠 We sigh at the growing remoteness of the departed,
眇悠悠而不追 Gazing off into the distance without pursuing her.[92]

We might here review her life in terms of lineage interdependence and her relationship to the ancestors:

- The two allusions "young orchid" and "the thoughtful and reverent" are from the *Book of songs*. The first refers to a young girl who carefully gathered and boiled duckweed to offer as a sacrifice in the ancestral hall.[93] The second describes Tairen 大任, the worthy mother of King Wen, who appears again later in this inscription.[94] Together they portray Zhang Xianzhang as a woman who revered the lineage's past and was responsible for its future propagation.
- Tairen and Taisi are the mothers of kings Wen and Wu respectively, founders of the Zhou Dynasty. The parallel image of *shengren* 生人 may allude to the poem "Sheng min" 生民 or "The birth of our people" about Jiang Yuan, the mother of Houji who was the ancestral progenitor of kings Wen and Wu. In that poem, Jiang Yuan gave birth to her son because she was good at ritual sacrifices, and here the next line depicts Zhang Xianzhang as highly competent in ancestral offerings. Elevating her to impossible heights, this inscription gives

[91] For examples of interring the spirit, see Brashier, "Han thanatology and the division of 'souls.'" *Early China* 21 (1996), pp. 136–38. The received texts also provide several early cases of people being buried in close proximity to others in order to serve them in the afterlife.

[92] *Cai zhonglang ji*, 4.12b–15a ("Taifu Anle xianghou Hu gong furen lingbiao").

[93] In the *Book of songs*, the girl is identified as *qijinü* 齊季女 which either means "a young girl of Qi" or "a respectful young girl." See *Mao Shi zhengyi* in *Shisan jing zhushu* (Yangzhou, 1995), p. 286 ("Cai pin"). The *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu*, p. 1151 (Xiang 28), cites this poem but calls her *jilan* 季蘭, which either means "the young orchid" or is a name. The commentators are not in agreement. I take it here as a description of the women and not her name because of the parallel citation immediately below.

[94] *Mao Shi zhengyi*, p. 516 ("Si qi").

Zhang Xianzhang the potential for spawning a glorious lineage, thus making the subsequent tragedy all the more poignant.

- Sericulture was traditionally the woman's domain, and just as the emperor symbolically ploughed an ancestral plot, the fruits of which went to the ancestral shrine, the empress notionally raised the silkworms and made the clothes to be worn at the ancestral sacrifices. It is important to note here that Zhang Xianzhang's 30-year service to the ancestral shrine appears immediately before the list of her sons, evoking a causal relationship. "Lineage past" would here attempt to assure "lineage future" through Zhang Xianzhang in the present.
- Only four names for Zhang Xianzhang's five sons are given, but the careful Han reader would have immediately understood the depth of her misfortune by looking at the formal names. The prefixes *bo* 伯, *shu* 叔 and *ji* 季 are here standard indicators of first, third and fourth sons respectively. The inscription indicates that the first and second sons—that is, the *bo* and *zhong* 仲 sons—died at the same time because of an "oppressive *qi*," probably an epidemic of some type. If this second son died as an infant, he would probably have remained unnamed. Note also that the one son who is named but without one of these prefixes is Zhiwei—*zhi* 稚 meaning "tender" or "child"—a name that, along with the absence of prefix, suggests he died in his youth, too.
- Most interesting of all, Zhang Xianzhang takes a subordinate position among the ancestors—an aid to her mother-in-law's spirit—perhaps because she could not be buried with her husband who was still alive. (We know from other inscriptions that two of her sons themselves had sons at her time of death, and so the lineage carried on despite the untimely death of a whole lineage generation.) For whatever reason, the spirit Zhang Xianzhang would tend to the soul of her mother-in-law, who in fact had died only the year before at the age of 91.

Zhang Xianzhang's inscription underscores several issues of lineage cohesion: cohesion among the living; cohesion between the living and their dead, and cohesion among the dead. Like Xianyu Huang's stele inscription, this text depicts a self manifested in its ties to others.

A sample inscription dedicated to a child: the stele of Feng Sheng

But what happens when that self does not have a chance to weave the surrounding relationship net, when that self dies too young to get caught up in webs of significance? The few examples of stelae dedicated to children depict their dedicatees, not in terms of what happened, but in terms of what *ought* to have happened had the world been in proper harmony.

A stele dedicated to the boy Feng Sheng 逢盛 whose formal name was Bomi 伯彌 argues that human-heaven resonance had fallen out of kilter. The cosmic order had become disrupted, obstructing the potential state of affairs. Had that not been the case, this precocious boy turned great official would surely have deserved a stele. Again any allusions will be explained immediately below the translation:

> This child's now-tabooed personal name was Sheng, and his formal name was Bomi. He was the great-great grandson of the prefect of Bo, the great grandson of the ruler of Suicheng, the grandson of the ruler of Anping and the eldest son of the official of all purposes.[95] In his gestation, he embosomed a proper *qi*, and his birth was able to come about in a natural manner. While this child was still being nurtured, he was capable of speech at an early age, and by the time his hair grew long, he was wise and astute. When he "crossed the courtyard," he received his instruction; when he withdrew, he recited the *Songs* and the *Rites*. He was open-minded, and his thoughts were probing. He would "hear one part and understand ten." His calligraphy and painting were precise, and his grasp of the mean was the model of perfection. "By daily progress and monthly advance, his studies held fast to brilliance."[96] In talent, he was second only to Xiang Tuo, and he ought to have become an exemplar.
>
> His life was bequeathed from heaven, and everything was present there at the beginning. This means that his task ought to have been accomplished.[97] "His deportment and appearance would have been

[95] Bo district was located on the western edge of modern Shandong, Suicheng district was in the far northeastern corner of Han China in modern Korea, and Anping district was in modern Jiangxi province.

[96] *Mao Shi zhengyi*, p. 599 ("Jing zhi"), in which a king beseeches his ministers to aid him in according with the ways of heaven.

[97] This line alludes to the *Daode jing* 9 which states: "It is the way of heaven to retire after accomplishing one's tasks." Many of the phrases in this inscription contrast heaven's ideal with human reality. See Gao Ming, *Boshu Laozi jiaozhu* (Beijing, 1996), p. 261.

good,"[98] and he would have been orderly and honest. He ought to have been established at court and advanced as an official, reaching the limits of human honors.[99] He would have instructed generations to come by manifesting his enlightened virtue, and his posterity would have highlighted his prominence. Yet how can we awaken this decadent age when vast heaven is unkind, forcing Bomi to take a shortcut through life and sending down this great calamity?

When he was 12, the Year was in Xiexia,[100] and on the *yisi* day of the fifth month, he stopped breathing. A premature death pulls down the sun's intense brightness; "it is a bud that fails to flower."[101] Yet lifetimes have their designated spans, and there can be no way out of it. His compassionate father was grieved and distressed; he agonizingly wailed for his "Li" to come back. On the *dingyou* day of the 12th month, he then placed Bomi within the yellow clay that will cover Bomi forever, causing him to sink away, to exist no longer. Thereupon the grief of [his father's] retainers Sun Li of Dongwu district, Wang Sheng of Xiami district, and others shook the three dimensions, and they all came to the same idea. Together they quarried this stone and recounted the boy's talent and beauty that will never decay because of this inscription. The lyrics for him follow.

童子諱盛, 字伯彌, 薄令之玄孫、遂成君之曾孫、安平君之孫、五官掾之長子也。胎懷正氣, 生克自然。撫育孩嬰, 弱而能言。至於垂髦, 智惠聰括。過庭受試, 退誦詩禮。心開意審, 聞一知十。書畫規矩, 制中园范, 日就月將, 學有緝熙。才亞后槖,[102] 當爲師楷。

自天生授, 罔不在初。謂當功遂, 令儀令色, 整齊珪角。立朝進仕, 究竟人爵, 克啓厥後, 以彰明德, 胤嗣昭達。何痛季世, 顥天不惠, 伯彊涇行, 降此大戾？

年十有二, 歲在協給, 五月乙巳, 噓吸不反。夭隕精晃, 苗而不秀。命有悠短, 無可奈何。慈父悼傷, 割哀回鯉。其十二月丁酉, 而安措諸永潛黃壚, 沒而不存。於是門生東武孫理、下密王升等感激三成, 一列同義。故共刊石, 敘述才美以銘不朽。其辭曰。

[98] This line is from the "Multitudinous people" of the *Songs*; see *Mao Shi zhengyi*, p. 568 ("Cheng min").

[99] The reference to "human honors" may allude to the *Mencius* (Jiao Xun, *Mengzi zhengyi*, p. 796 ("Gaozi") that states that in the proper world of the past heaven bestowed honors such as benevolence and duty, after which "human honors" (i.e., ranks) followed. As both the *Mencius* and this stele indicate, that resonance between heaven and humans no longer existed. Note that the first couplet under "the details of death" in Xianyu Huang's stele seems to allude to both the *Daode jing* (see above) and *Mencius* references as well.

[100] Xiexia is the eighth year in the 12-year cycle, corresponding to *wei*.

[101] Cheng Shude, *Lunyu jishi*, p. 614 ("Zi Han").

[102] Hong Gua, Li shi, 10.9a ("Tongzi Feng Sheng bei"), discusses this 后 in detail and concludes that 缿 is intended, which can be pronounced Xiang as in Xiang Tuo.

嘉慈伯彌 Excellent and kind Bomi!
天授其姿 Heaven bequeathed his disposition.
蚤克岐嶷 Early in life he was capable of striding and standing firmly,[103]
聰叡敏達 And he was perceptive and penetrating.
當遂委蛇 There should have followed in an unhindered manner
立號建基 The establishment of titles and the foundation of his line.
時非三代 But these times are not like the Three Dynasties—
符命無恒 A cosmically aligned destiny is no longer guaranteed.
人生在世 In this age, human life
壽無金石 Lacks the longevity of metal and stone.
身潛名彰 The body is hidden away, but the name is manifest,
顯於後葉 Displayed to later generations.[104]

The stele then concludes that it was "erected on the *dingmao* day which is the fifth day of the fourth month of the fourth year of the Guanghe reign period (181 AD)" 光和四年四月五日丁卯立.

Even though Feng Sheng was only 12 when he died, his stele still draws more than ten allusions, mostly from the classicist tradition and several evoking the image of Confucius interacting with the young:

- When Confucius' son Li 鯉 "crossed the courtyard," Confucius advised him to study the *Songs* and the *Rites* so that he would learn how to talk and take a stand. This stele subsequently calls Feng Sheng by the name of Li to make the equation complete.[105]
- Confucius' young and much-favored disciple Yan Hui could "hear one part and understand ten," an image that resonates well here because Yan Hui had also died young, much to Confucius' anguish.[106]
- According to legends that date at least as early as the unification, a seven-year-old boy named Xiang Tuo acted as a teacher to Confucius. Eastern Han mausoleum reliefs often depict Xiang Tuo, toys still in hand, offering advice to the master.[107]

This stele expresses anguish precisely because the webs of significance that ought to have spun out over time were in fact denied Feng Sheng.

103 A phrase from the *Shi jing*; see *Mao Shi zhengyi*, p. 530 ("Shengmin").
104 Hong Gua, *Li shi*, 10.8a–9b ("Tongzi Feng Sheng bei").
105 *Lunyu jishi*, p. 1168–69 ("Ji shi").
106 *Lunyu jishi*, p. 307 ("Gong ye").
107 The earliest text to mention this story appears to be *Zhanguo ce*. See Yao Hong and Huang Peilie, *Zhanguo ce* (Shanghai, 1985), p. 282 ("Wenxin hou yu gong Zhao yi guang Hejian").

"There should have followed in an unhindered manner the establishment of titles and the continuance of his line," it laments. Its only recourse is then to tie Feng Sheng to the precocious young people of antiquity, to class him with other children still worthy of remembrance.

Conclusion

Xianyu Huang was a modern Duke of Shao; Zhang Xianzhang was the current version of dynastic mothers Tairen and Taisi; and Feng Sheng was the Yan Hui of a new generation. While it is easy to condemn early stele inscriptions for their audacity—and such condemnations already existed as early as the Han itself—these were the stock images of a predominantly oral culture, making the dead more memorable precisely because they became exaggerated by being classed with the greats. In essence, the dead were given meaning by being positioned relative to the anchor points of public memory. They were riding on the coattails of their heroic forebears. Yet at the same time, the potency of those heroic forebears was itself being revitalized through regular evocation. They were being resurrected and refreshed via their modern analogues; the newly dead and the heroic forebears lived off one another.

In the modern West, the closest literary genre to the Han stele is the obituary, and perhaps it should not be surprising that early American obituaries exhibited the same two-way relationship between dedicatee and cultural heroes. According to Janice Hume in her *Obituaries in American culture*:

> Obituaries illustrate how the national memory of American cultural symbols is reflected in, and thus influences, the commemorations of the lives of individual citizens. For example, when references to George Washington or Daniel Boone serve to illustrate characteristics of ordinary citizens generations after the passing of these icons, memories of individuals and collective memory are connected and publicly legitimized. Thus, there is a link, a symbiotic relationship, between published commemorations of individual lives and public memory.[108]

The stone broadsheets of the Han were no different, suggesting that associating the newly dead with heroic forebears is not culture-specific but a function of how public memory generally works.

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[108] Janice Hume, *Obituaries in American culture* (Jackson, MS, 2000), p. 13.

Yet Han stelae would take that remembrance a step further than their modern newspaper counterparts. Their dedicatees would not just ride the coattails of their prestigious predecessors; they would audaciously attempt to stand among them. By explicitly mimicking the act of the *Book of songs* creation, stele writers would transform their dedicatees into new icons using the same vehicle that preserved their heroic forebears so that future ages might dub themselves a modern Xianyu Huang, a current version of Zhang Xianzhang, or the Feng Sheng of a new generation. Inscribed on a far less disposable medium, they would await future young cowherds to encounter their stones, hymn their dead, and become enwrapped in these newly spun webs of significance.

LATTER HAN RELIGIOUS MASS MOVEMENTS AND THE EARLY DAOIST CHURCH

Grégoire Espesset*

The general historical and social background against which occurred, during the second half of the Latter Han dynasty (25–220 AD), the confluence of revelations and religious mass movements, is sufficiently known for our purpose: an empire increasingly menaced by non-Chinese peoples on its outer edges; struggles between a few upper-class family clans for dominion over infant sovereigns and the actual exercise of power in the palace; remonstrance and political maneuvers of civil servants who claimed integrity in the face of a corrupted and overly severe government; numerous cases of regional banditry, popular uprisings, and attempted coups by self-proclaimed "emperors," "kings" and "heirs" of various kinds.[1] At the same time, repeated disasters (drought, rains, floods, hailstorms, earthquakes, epidemics and famine) were seen as reflecting the loss of cosmic balance provoked by human misbehavior.[2] In terms of classical history, this situation of near permanent crisis and successive, often overlapping, uprisings from 132 on, was to culminate in the general unrest of 184. Several generals, among whom Cao Cao 曹操 (155–220), took the opportunity of this social upheaval to rise to the status of near-independent warlords and began to compete for supreme power. Their struggle sounded the death knell for the imperial sovereignty of the Han house, long before Emperor Xian 獻帝 (r. 190–220), the last Han ruler, abdicated in favor of Cao's son Pi 曹丕 (187–226).[3]

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[1] See *The Cambridge history of China*, 1, *The Ch'in and Han dynasties: 221 BC–AD 220*, eds Denis Twitchett and Michael Loewe (Cambridge, 1986), pp. 223–376. For a chronological table listing 42 rebellions between 108 and 180 AD, 37 of which spanned the years 132–80, see Lin Fu-shih, *Han dai de wuzhe* (1988; repr. Taibei, 2004), pp. 187–92.

[2] For a table listing more than 300 disastrous events during the Latter Han dynasty, see Satō Taketoshi, ed., *Chūgoku saigaishi nenhyō* (Tokyo, 1993), pp. 11–22.

[3] On the role of Daoists in the abdication, see Howard L. Goodman, *Ts'ao P'i transcendent: the political culture of dynasty-founding in China at the end of the Han* (Seattle, 1998).

Against such a harsh background, prospects for a better personal life—if not yet salvation—gained through religious observance under the strict guidance of an enlightened master must have seemed very appealing, especially in provincial and rural milieus, far away from the highest sociopolitical spheres. The imperial cult had specialized in the worship of a cosmological, "ethicized" heaven. Either uninvited or unwilling to share in the rationalism of the elite, the people may have felt it necessary to perpetuate the more or less abandoned cults of numerous national, regional, and local divinities—divinities of the popular religion, which represent local society throughout Chinese history. There must be a connection between such phenomena as the "ethicization" of the religion of the elite and the massive expansion of popular religious activities on the one hand, and the strengthening of a body of canonical learning and the emergence of alternative forms of knowledge on the other.

According to the sources, Chinese society was already predisposed to respond massively to religious prompting by the end of the first Han dynasty (206 BC–8 AD). The earliest known record of a large-scale religious movement is arguably the great excitement provoked by the imminent advent of the Queen Mother of the West (Xiwangmu 西王母) in northeast China in the first half of the year 3 BC.[4] Exchanging "tokens" (*chou* 籌) of the Queen Mother of the West, thousands of people met on the roads and, after passing through 26 commanderies and kingdoms, reached the imperial capital. Some gathered to worship the goddess and perform rituals involving singing and dancing, while auspicious scripts (*fu* 符) ensuring the bearer would not die 不死 circulated among the faithful.[5] Though the soteriological movement included improper and possibly reprehensible collective behavior, no political or military threat was foreseen by the authorities, which apparently did not need to restore law and order by force. Indeed, from the official point of view, the event

[4] On this Han literary and iconographic figure inherited from the lore of pre-imperial China and later integrated into the Daoist pantheon, see Michael Loewe, *Ways to paradise: the Chinese quest for immortality* (London, 1979), pp. 86–126; Suzanne Cahill, *Transcendence and divine passion: the Queen Mother of the West in medieval China* (Stanford, 1993).

[5] Ban Gu (32–92), *Hanshu* (92 AD) (Beijing, 1962), 11.342; 26.1311–12; 27C.1476; Xun Yue (148–209), *Hanji* (200) (Beijing, 2002), 29.504. The *Hanji* gives the number of commanderies and kingdoms involved in the movement as 36. The *Hanshu* passages are translated and discussed in Loewe, *Ways to paradise*, pp. 98–100; Cahill, *Transcendence and divine passion*, pp. 21–23.

seemed worth recording mostly in connection with a series of abnormal cosmic phenomena seen as being characteristic of an excess of *yin* 陰, the purported cause of which lay in the arrogant conduct of Empress Dowager Fu 傅 and her meddling in governmental affairs.[6] Wang Mang 王莽 (r. 9–23 AD), who relied heavily on supernatural speculations to rise from his position of regent to that of supreme ruler, used to refer in his edicts to the Queen Mother of the West movement as one of the omens of his accession.[7] Sociologically, the major differences between this early mass movement and those discussed below would seem to be the absence of a named leader (or leaders) and the lack of a central organization, either religious or paramilitary.

Notes on Latter Han popular movements[8]

To begin with, mention should be made of a neglected statement. On the occasion of a campaign fought during the year 212 AD, we read that the official figure reflecting the number of rebels killed was "increased tenfold" 以一爲十 by the command in order that the victory appear as a "great military achievement" 大武功.[9] Albeit limited to a single case, this admission may well reflect a common practice left unstated in the official documents, for obvious reasons. Consequently, the reader should always bear in mind that the large figures given in the official sources of Chinese history for mass phenomena such as uprisings and battles are probably not reliable and are better regarded as symbolical quantities rather than statistical data.

The Scarlet Eyebrows: Han legitimists or bandits?

In 18 AD, during Wang Mang's rule, amid a growing climate of general insurrection, one Fan Chong 樊崇 assumed the leadership of a few hundred highwaymen in Langye 琅邪 (in present-day Shandong 山東 province). The gang merged with other insurgent groups, victims of famine, and destitute persons from neighboring areas, until the horde amounted

[6] *Hanshu*, 27C.1476–77. Empress Dowager Fu was the emperor's grandmother.
[7] *Hanshu*, 84.3432; 98.4033.
[8] The account provided here in fact begins just prior to the Latter Han.
[9] Chen Shou (233–97), *Sanguo zhi* (297) (Beijing, 1959), Wei, 11.339; Sima Guang (1019–86), *Zizhi tongjian* (1084) (Beijing, 1956), 66.2112–13.

to “tens of thousands” of men. As their strength rapidly increased, the outlaws killed local officials and, in 22 AD, defeated generals sent by Wang Mang. Before the battle, all the insurgents dyed their eyebrows vermilion (*zhu* 朱) as a distinctive sign, hence their usual appellation in the sources, Scarlet Eyebrows (*chimei* 赤眉).[10]

The death of Wang Mang at the hands of one of the factions of Han legitimists in 23 AD opened a period of civil troubles. Banditry spread while attempted coups d'état and rebellions multiplied. Some of the Liu 劉 pretenders saw in the Scarlet Eyebrows a serious threat and made their submission the priority military objective, whereas the issue seemed secondary to others, who urged reconquering the entire empire first.[11] In the year 24, “hundreds of thousands” of Scarlet Eyebrows (among several other seditious groups) invaded central China but Liu Xuan 劉玄, who attempted to restore the Han dynasty as Emperor Gengshi 更始帝 (r. 23–25), persuaded the leaders to surrender to him in his temporary capital, Luoyang 洛陽. Although the rebel leaders were granted official titles (Fan Chong was made general of the imperial guard 驍騎將軍), this submission was short-lived, even more so than Liu Xuan's reign. Demoralized and longing for their native east, the Scarlet Eyebrows threatened to disband unless offered action or perhaps a higher purpose; in 25, the leaders established as new emperor another member of the Liu lineage, Penzi 劉盆子 (b. 11 AD), the youngest of three brothers, and granted each other pompous titles, but the attempt failed. In 25, and again in 26, the rebels occupied the former capital of Chang'an 長安, which suffered massive destruction and looting. But they lacked supplies, and dissent was spreading among the leaders. In the year 26, “more than 100,000” Scarlet Eyebrows were defeated by the forces of the future Han restorer, Liu Xiu 劉秀 (6 BC–57 AD); in 27, after a second defeat, “80,000” of them surrendered to Xiu, who granted an amnesty to the leaders and allowed them to settle in Luoyang. Concerning Fan Chong, the extant accounts differ as to the time of his death: he either died or was killed in 25, or resumed plotting after the amnesty and was executed in 27.[12]

[10] *Hanshu*, 99C.4154, 4172–78; *Hanji*, 30.536–40; Yuan Hong (328–76), *Hou Hanji* (Beijing, 2002), 1.3–4; 3.41; Fan Ye (398–445), *Hou Hanshu* (445) (Beijing, 1965), 11.478.

[11] *Hou Hanji*, 1.6; 2.22; 3.38.

[12] *Hanshu*, 99C.4193; *Hou Hanji*, 1.10; 2.28–31; 3.35–36, 43–44, 49; 4.57–61; *Hou Hanshu*, 11.475; 16.601; *zhi* 志, 18.3358.

As the Scarlet Eyebrows and most of their leaders (including Fan himself) were illiterate, only a spoken oath was required of the new recruits, and a basic system of equal and direct retribution served as law. An informal hierarchy borrowed its titles from the Han local bureaucracy: elder (*sanlao* 三老), a title Fan Chong is said to have assumed; retainer (*congshi* 從事); and constable (*zuli* 卒吏, or perhaps clerk, *zushi* 卒史). The ranking members would simply address one another as "giant" (*juren* 巨人). No written documents, banners, commands, or military units were used, at least until the Scarlet Eyebrows, at the apex of their strength, formed thirty "campaigning armies" (*ying* 營, another Han term), each gathering 10,000 men under the leadership of an elder and a retainer.[13] And, as we shall see further on, the group included religious officials in charge of a local cult.

Zhang Jue and the Yellow Turbans: a failed coup?

Yellow Turban bandits (*huangjin zei* 黃巾賊) or simply Yellow Turbans (*huangjin*) was a name given the movement by contemporary people. Like the term "moth bandits" (*ezei* 蛾賊), it was not a name chosen by the rebels themselves.[14] The well-known historical characteristics which distinguish this movement include its scale, its specific sociopolitical organization, the support it reportedly gained among high government officials within the imperial capital, and the fact that the hypothesized causes of the popular success of the movement were taken up by factions in their struggle for imperial favor. The leaders of the Yellow Turbans, Zhang Jue 張角 and his two brothers Zhang Liang 梁 (or 良) and Bao 寶, appear primarily in official records as renowned, self-proclaimed "great physicians" (*dayi* 大醫), i.e., charlatans who for more than ten years—their popular success feeding on the domestic crisis of the 170s—had "served the way of good actions" 事善道, or even

[13] *Hou Hanji*, 1.3; 3.40; *Hou Hanshu*, 11.478–81. For the corresponding Han nomenclature, see Charles O. Hucker, *A dictionary of official titles in imperial China* (Stanford, 1985).

[14] *Hou Hanji*, 24.473; *Hou Hanshu*, 71.2300. See Paul Michaud, "The Yellow Turbans," *Monumenta Serica* 17 (1958), 47–127; Howard S. Levy, "Yellow Turban religion and rebellion at the end of the Han," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 76.4 (1956), 214–27; Howard S. Levy, "The bifurcation of the Yellow Turbans in Later Han," *Oriens* 13–14 (1961), 251–55; Qing Xitai et al., *History of Chinese Daoism*, 1, trans. David C. Yu (Lanham, New York, 2000), chap. 2, "Early Daoist texts and the rise of popular Daoist sects," pp. 179–92.

"converted" 教化 the world to the "way of good actions." Around 180, the Zhangs had established 36 territorial units 坊, each one with its own military command, and their followers were said to have numbered in the "hundreds of thousands."[15] The throne misjudged the gravity of the situation despite the early warnings of a few officials and the denunciation of one of Jue's followers. At first the rebels won a few battles but, at the end of a ten-month campaign which included several decisive battles and mass executions, the Yellow Turbans were defeated and the three brothers and their lieutenants incapacitated. Liang and Bao were both executed, while Jue is said to have died from illness before the ultimate fight.[16]

Though they were officially defeated in 184, Yellow Turban leaders and their troops continue to appear in the chronicles until at least 207. In 188, a Yellow Turban leader, Ma Xiang 馬相, proclaimed himself Son of Heaven but was soon defeated and killed. In 191, Yellow Turban forces of no less than "300,000" men ravaged the Bohai 勃海 region (in present-day Shandong). In 192, Cao Cao claimed "one million" Yellow Turbans were active in the Yan 兗 area (Shandong).[17] In 196, Yellow Turbans defeated local governmental troops in Beihai 北海 (Shandong). In 200, several Yellow Turban leaders joined Yuan Shao 袁紹 (d. 202) in his rivalry with Cao Cao. Finally, the assassination of the king of Jinan 濟南 in 207 was attributed to Yellow Turbans again—roughly one generation after the 184 outbreak![18] The obviously exaggerated figures notwithstanding, the above chronology testifies to the enduring vitality of the Yellow Turbans as a subversive identity and rallying flag.

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[15] *Hou Hanji*, 24.473; for *dayi*, the (later) *Hou Hanshu*, 54.1784, reads *daxian* 大賢, "great worthy"; *Sanguo zhi*, Wu, 46.1094. From the detailed passage in the *Hou Hanji*, it is clear that *fang* referred to a territorial unit, not a military command; see Hucker, *A dictionary*, p. 208, no. 1892. But the corresponding passage of the *Hou Hanshu*, 71.2299, prunes the earlier version so that the term designates both a territorial unit and a military command. Modern studies usually perpetuate the misuse.

[16] See *Hou Hanji*, 24.473–78; *Hou Hanshu*, 8.350; *Zizhi tongjian*, 58.1865–73. For other Yellow Turban leaders, some of whom were also named Zhang though unrelated to Jue and his brothers, thus adding to the confusion, see Michaud, "The Yellow Turbans," pp. 111–12.

[17] This single dubious figure surpasses in number the 360,000 estimate—i.e., no more than 0.7 percent of the total population of contemporary China according to the official census—established by Michaud, "The Yellow Turbans," pp. 100–04.

[18] *Sanguo zhi*, Wei, 1.9–10, 13; 17.522; Shu, 32.876; *Hou Hanshu*, 8.356; 9.385; 48.1610; 70.2263; 73.2359; 75.2432; *Zizhi tongjian*, 60.1925, 1935–36, 1940; 62.1990; 63.2030; 65.2073.

Before the 4th-century *Hou Hanji* and the 5th-century *Hou Hanshu*, a 3rd-century source, of which only quotations survive, calls Zhang's movement the Way of Great Peace, *taiping dao* 太平道.[19] Indeed, an occurrence in the *Hou Hanshu*, unsupported elsewhere and rather ambiguous, states that "Zhang Jue had many of these [Great Peace] writings."[20] These "divine writings" 神書 were said to have been found by one Gan Ji 干吉, who transmitted them to his pupil Gong Chong 宮崇 from Langya 琅玡, who in turn submitted them unsuccessfully to the throne under Emperor Shun's 順帝 rule (126–44).[21] But establishing a possible historical and literary relationship between that text, now lost, and the *Taiping jing* 太平經 in the Ming Daoist canon remains highly hypothetical.[22] The military titles chosen by the Zhang brothers in 184 ("general of the Lord of Heaven," *tiangong jiangjun* 天公將軍, "of Earth," *digong jiangjun* 地公將軍, and "of Man," *rengong jiangjun* 人公將軍) may seem reminiscent of the *Taiping jing*'s ideology, which is centered around the heaven-earth-man triad, but the triad already had a long history by that time and belonged to the Chinese archive, in the Foucauldian sense of the word, rather than to a specific tradition.[23]

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[19] Yu Huan 魚豢, *Dianlüe* 典略 (Essentials of the [Wei] records; ca. 270), quoted in *Sanguo zhi*, Wei, 8.264, commentary by Pei Songzhi 裴松之 (372–451), and *Hou Hanshu*, 75.2436, commentary by Li Xian 李賢 (651–84).

[20] *Hou Hanshu*, 30B.1084: "張角頗有其書焉," where *qi shu* 其書 designates the *Taiping qingling shu* 太平清領書 (Writings of the pure guidance of Great Peace), a work described in the *Hou Hanshu* (30B.1080, 1084) as dealing with the respect due heaven and earth and conformity with the five agents (*wuxing* 五行) and also providing various recipes for ensuring the prosperity of the state and descendants for the emperor.

[21] *Hou Hanshu*, 30B.1080 (quoting Xiang Kai's 襄楷 166 AD admonition), 1084. Langya is synonymous with Langye, the place mentioned above, in present-day Shandong province. Though it recounts Xiang Kai's admonition to the throne (22.427–28), the earlier *Hou Hanji* does not mention Gan Ji or "divine writings" of Great Peace.

[22] *Taiping jing* (Scripture of Great Peace), HY 1093. The same may be said of the possible relationship between these two texts and an even earlier Great Peace text mentioned in the *Hanshu*, 75.3192, the *Tianguan li baoyuan taiping jing* 天官曆包元太平經 (All-encompassing scripture of Great Peace in accordance with the computation system of the celestial offices), a book purportedly dealing with the renewal of the heavenly mandate of the Han, and twice alluded to as belonging to the "prophetic" (*chen* 讖) literature genre; see *Hanshu*, 11.340; 99A.4094.

[23] For the titles of the Zhangs, see *Hou Hanshu*, 71.2300; *Zizhi tongjian*, 58.1865. On the triad in the *Taiping jing*, see Qing et al., *History of Chinese Daoism*, pp. 79–84; Grégoire Espesset, "À vau-l'eau, à rebours *ou* l'ambivalence de la logique triadique dans l'idéologie du *Taiping jing* 太平經," *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie* 14 (2004), 61–95. See also Anne Cheng, "De la place de l'homme dans l'univers: la conception de la triade Ciel-Terre-Homme à la fin de l'antiquité chinoise," *Extrême-Orient Extrême-Occident* 3 (1983), 11–22; Hu Jiacong, "Daojia Huang-Lao xue de tian-di-ren yiti guan," *Daojia wenhua yanjiu* 8 (1995), 18–30.

Interestingly, about the same period, the earliest firmly dated text of the Way of the Heavenly Master (*tianshi dao* 天師道) uses the variant expression *taiping zhi dao* 太平之道 in reference not to Zhang Jue's historical movement but to the revelations bestowed by "the Dao" upon Gan Ji—not during the 2nd century AD but at the end of the Zhou 周 era![24] Gan Ji was already becoming a figure of Daoist hagiography, also known as Lord Gan 干君 in Daoist sources. Though there probably was a historical Gan Ji who actually lived toward the end of the Latter Han dynasty, the connection of this character with the tradition of Great Peace and his role as an intercessor in the revelation of Great Peace texts are probably a later Daoist invention.[25]

Zhang Lu's "theocratic" state in Hanning

The official sources first tell us of a medium (*yaowu* 妖巫 or *wuren* 巫人) named Zhang Xiu 張脩, from Ba commandery 巴郡 (in present-day Sichuan 四川), who locally led a group of followers—sometimes referred to as "grain bandits" 米賊, "grain mediums" 米巫 or "grain people" 米民—into the 184 AD uprising.[26] Zhang Lu 張魯, apparently unrelated to Zhang Xiu, appears in 191, not as a religious or rebel leader but, together with Xiu, as two provincial officials holding military titles obtained thanks to the acquaintances of Lu's mother in the provincial

[24] "Da daojia lingjie" 大道家令戒 (Rules governing the family of the great Tao; 255), in *Zhengyi fawen Tianshi jiaojie kejing* (Commandments of the Heavenly Master from the canon of Orthodox Unity; late 3rd century?), HY 788, 13a. No Great Peace text is mentioned. See also Stephen R. Bokenkamp, *Early Daoist scriptures* (Berkeley, 1997), p. 168.

[25] Gan is alternatively spelled Yu 于, and Ji sometimes given as Shi 室. For a convincing critical approach to the mention of Gan Ji in the *Hou Hanshu*, see Jens Østergård Petersen, "The early traditions relating to the Han dynasty transmission of the *Taiping jing*," *Acta Orientalia* (Copenhagen) 50 (1989), 133–71; 51 (1990), 173–216. For Daoist hagiography on Gan Ji, see Maeda Shigeki, *Shoki dōkyō kyōten no keisei* (Tokyo, 2004), pp. 17–37.

[26] *Dianlüe*, quoted in *Sanguo zhi*, Wei, 8.264, and in *Hou Hanshu*, 75.2436; Chang Qu (ca. 290–ca. 360), *Huayang guozhi* (ca. 340), ed. Liu Lin (Chengdu, 1984), 2.117; *Hou Hanshu*, 8.349. The nicknames stem from the "way of the five bushels of grain" (*wudoumi dao* 五斗米道), the appellation given the group in reference to a contribution made by the adepts; see a quotation from Liu Ai 劉艾 (ca. 160–after 220) in *Hou Hanshu*, 8.349; 75.2435; *Huayang guozhi*, 2.114. The contribution superseded a local tax levied by the Han administration and constituted a breach of the state taxation prerogative; see Zhang Zehong, "Wudoumi dao mingming de youlai," *Zongjiaoxue yanjiu* 4 (1988), 12–17.

government.[27] The two Zhangs were entrusted with a military mission in the Hanzhong 漢中 area by Liu Yan 劉焉, governor (*taishou* 太守) of Yi 益 province (in modern Sichuan). There, either Xiu was killed in battle or Lu had him eliminated; Lu then incorporated Xiu's followers and seized the city of Hanzhong. After the death (in 194) of Liu Yan, his son Zhang 劉璋 succeeded him and killed Lu's mother and brother. Lu then consolidated his position in Hanning 漢寧, as he had renamed Hanzhong, and the throne had no choice but to recognize his takeover and, accordingly, made him governor of Hanning. Lu was tempted to claim kinghood but a counselor dissuaded him. In his capacity as governor, Lu sent tribute to the throne.[28] An interesting historical and social feature of the territorial entity ruled by Lu was its strong non-Chinese ethnic component.[29]

The territory under Lu's jurisdiction is said to have been organized into territorial units referred to as *zhi* 治, "parishes" or "dioceses" in Western translations, with the first 24 founded by Lu's grandfather Ling, or Daoling, 道陵 in 143 AD, the next 12 by Lu's father Heng 衡 in 196, and the last eight by Lu himself, in 198.[30] Doubts concerning the historicity of Zhang Ling and his role in the founding of the Heavenly Master church are not a recent development in Sinology. Pelliot wrote a century ago that Lu necessarily had a grandfather, whose name *might* have been Zhang Ling and who *might* have studied the Dao and enjoyed local or regional notoriety; that Lu certainly used the "legend" of his grandfather to strengthen his own local prestige and authority; and that

[27] Lu's title was *duyi sima* 督義司馬 (investigative commander) and Xiu's *biebu sima* 別部司馬 (adjunct division commander); see Goodman, *Ts'ao P'i transcendent*, p. 75, where the character 都 is misprinted for 督.

[28] *Sanguo zhi*, Wei, 8.263–64; Shu, 31.867; *Huayang guozhi*, 2.114–18; *Hou Hanshu*, 75.2432–37; *Zizhi tongjian*, 60.1928; 63.2040; 64.2043.

[29] See Rolf A. Stein, "Remarques sur les mouvements du taoïsme politico-religieux au IIe siècle ap.J.-C.," *T'oung Pao* 50.1–3 (1963), 1–78, pp. 21–38; Terry F. Kleeman, *Great perfection: religion and ethnicity in a Chinese millennial kingdom* (Honolulu, 1998), pp. 25–46; Liu Ts'un-yan, "Was Celestial Master Zhang a historical figure?," trans. Benjamin Penny et al., in *Daoism in history: essays in honour of Liu Ts'un-yan*, ed. Benjamin Penny (Oxford, 2006), pp. 199–202.

[30] See Franciscus Verellen, "The twenty-four dioceses and Zhang Daoling: the spatio-liturgical organization of early Heavenly Master Taoism," in *Pilgrims, patrons, and place: localizing sanctity in Asian religions*, eds Phyllis Granoff and Koichi Shinohara (Vancouver, 2003), pp. 15–67. For the historical development of the *zhi*, Verellen draws on sources quoted in texts from the Ming *Daozang* the earliest of which date to the second half of the 6th century (pp. 16–18).

Zhang Ling's traditional and exceptional longevity is hard to accept.[31] Maspero also criticized the received "pontifical" filiation Zhang Ling ~ Zhang Heng ~ Zhang Lu.[32] Indeed, the sole extant biographical data belong to the later legend of the patron saint of the Church.[33] We will probably never know whether a man named Zhang Ling had revelations in 142 AD, nor if the same man, aged 122, passed away around 156. Heng's historicity is even less well documented than Ling's, hence even more dubious; according to a classic interpretation, arguably too oedipal to be uncritically admitted, this Heng was no other than the Zhang Xiu eliminated by Lu.[34] As a result, the traditional Daoist lineage before Zhang Lu may well amount to one of the earliest cases of "invention of tradition."

Sources record that Zhang Lu "did not establish government subalterns" 不置長吏 but ruled through his own administration, composed of officials bearing the title *jijiu* 祭酒.[35] On this basis, every scholar specialized in the history of Chinese religion feels compelled to call Hanning "an autonomous sect with an independent territorial base," or "an independent theocratic state," a "theocracy," or "China's first, and for a long time its only, theocracy," or even "a Daoist state" or "statelet."[36] This recurrent modern terminology would be appropriate and even

[31] Paul Pelliot, review of J.J.M. De Groot, "Is there religious liberty in China" (*Mitteilungen des Seminars für Orientalische Sprachen zu Berlin* 5 [1902], 103–51), *Bulletin de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient* 3.1 (1903), p. 104.

[32] Henri Maspero, "Note additionnelle sur les Maîtres Célestes de la famille Tchang," in *Mélanges posthumes sur les religions et l'histoire de la Chine*, 2, *Le Taoïsme* (Paris, 1950), pp. 179–84. See also Liu Ts'un-yan, "Celestial Master Zhang," pp. 190–92. For an ideal family tree admitting the traditional filiation, see Camille Imbault-Huart, "La légende du premier pape des Taoïstes et l'histoire de la famille pontificale des Tchang," *Journal Asiatique* 8.4, 3 (1884), p. 454, plate.

[33] Qing et al., *History of Chinese Daoism*, pp. 134–41; Verellen, "The twenty-four dioceses," pp. 29–34; Liu Ts'un-yan, "Celestial Master Zhang," p. 189.

[34] Pei Songzhi's assumption, in his commentary to the *Sanguo zhi*, Wei, 8.264. For the problem of Zhang Xiu, see Liu Ts'un-yan, ibid., pp. 193–97.

[35] *Dianlüe*, quoted in *Sanguo zhi*, Wei, 8.263, and in *Hou Hanshu*, 75.2436; *Huayang guozhi*, 2.117. In the *Huayang guozhi* account, this statement appears after the recognition of Lu's takeover by the emperor and the bestowing of the dignity of governor on him. *Jijiu* (libationer or chancellor) was originally a Han official title; see Hucker, *A dictionary*, p. 130, no. 542.

[36] See Peter Nickerson, "*Abridged codes of Master Lu for the Daoist community*," in *Religions of China in practice*, ed. Donald S. Lopez, Jr. (Princeton, 1996), p. 348; Kleeman, *Great perfection*, pp. 88–89; Barbara Hendrischke, "Early Daoist movements," in *Daoism handbook*, ed. Livia Kohn (Leiden, 2000), p. 139; Qing et al., *History of Chinese Daoism*, pp. 158–59, 206; Barbara Hendrischke, *The Scripture on Great Peace: the* Taiping jing *and the beginnings of Daoism* (Berkeley, 2006), p. 26.

necessary if theocracy was an abnormal phenomenon in the Chinese context, but theocratic forms of political authority were the rule rather than the exception: the emperor was officially called the Son of Heaven, and the ruling mandate of his house was understood as emanating from the highest transcendent powers—a textbook case of theocracy. For all that, strangely, China's imperial state is rarely called "theocratic." The crucial piece of information in these statements is not that Lu's administration was made of priests in lieu of laymen but rather that, although acting as a local potentate and, soon after, officially raised to high office, Zhang Lu never embraced the orthodox ways of an imperial governor and retained his former methods of a clique leader instead.

His territory being of strategic importance for the control of the southwest, Lu came under attack from both Cao Cao and his rival Liu Bei 劉備 (161–223) in 211. Dubbed "a bandit…not worth worrying about" by Liu Bei in 212,[37] Zhang led military activities like any other warlord, occasionally forming alliances with some of them, in particular Ma Chao 馬超 (176–222), whom he made his right hand man in 213, with the dispatch of much-needed fresh troops and the title *dujiang jijiu* 都講祭酒.[38] Even after Ma, repeatedly defeated, went over to Liu Bei's side—he logically ended up with a high military command in the Shu 蜀 (221–63) administration—Zhang's military activities continued, unsuccessful though they generally were, and peaked in 214. The following year, according to the official sources, Zhang finally agreed to submit to Cao Cao, but with highly favorable terms of surrender, namely, official titles for himself and his five sons and the marriage of his daughter to a son of Cao. On that occasion again, Zhang Lu distinguished himself as a smart political negotiator, even though he probably never met Cao.[39] Textual evidence suggests that "the hereditary leader Zhang" (Zhang *xishi* 張係師, i.e., presumably the historical Zhang Lu) died in 216 or

[37] *Zizhi tongjian*, 66.2106–11, 2117. I quote Rafe de Crespigny's translation in his *The last of the Han: being the chronicle of the years 181–220 AD as recorded in chapters 58–68 of the* Tzu-chih t'ung-chien *of Ssu-ma Kuang* (Canberra, 1969), p. 294.

[38] *Dianlüe*, quoted in Pei Songzhi's commentary to *Sanguo zhi*, Shu, 36.946; *Zizhi tongjian*, 66.2123. On Ma's title, see de Crespigny, *The last of the Han*, p. 480, n. 13. Hendrischke's contention, in "Early Daoist movements," p. 141, that "Zhang [Lu] was not an independent ruler in a formal sense," in particular because "he did not set up officials of high rank," is thus invalidated.

[39] *Sanguo zhi*, Shu, 32.884; *Huayang guozhi*, 2.119; *Zizhi tongjian*, 67.2128, 2138–40. For a convincing reexamination of the historicity of the meeting between Zhang Lu and Cao Cao in 219, see Howard L. Goodman, "Celestial-Master Taoism and the founding of the Ts'ao-Wei dynasty: the Li Fu document," *Asia Major* 3rd series 7.1 (1994), 5–33.

early 217 AD, and that from this date onwards, including under the early Wei 魏 (220–65) dynasty, the religious group faced political difficulties.[40] Between 215 and 219, inhabitants of the Hanzhong area were forced to migrate northwards, possibly in several successive waves, which led to the spread of the new Daoist religion to other parts of the empire.[41]

Supreme deities

Defining the supreme gods of the religious mass movements of the Latter Han era, not to mention their "pantheon" if indeed they had any such notion, is a very difficult task.[42] Information about their religious beliefs and practices is scarce and certainly biased, at least to some extent. For example, the statement according to which Zhang Jue and his brothers "killed people to sacrifice to heaven" 殺人以祠天 in 184 contains one acceptable item of information—the cult to heaven—and one which, to the modern mind, seems unlikely in the context of a successful mass movement—human sacrifice.[43] Besides, Chinese official sources as well as Buddhist polemical literature usually connect the Yellow Turbans with the Heavenly Masters and emphasize the similarities between the religious practices of both communities, as modern Sinology would do centuries later.[44] For instance, in the *Zizhi tongjian*, when Zhang Xiu bursts onto the dramatic scene in 184 AD, his leadership, organization, and practices are immediately compared with those of Zhang

[40] Tao Hongjing (456–536), *Zhen'gao* (499), HY 1010, 4.14b. See Goodman, ibid., pp. 30–31.

[41] *Sanguo zhi*, Wei, 15.472–73; 23.666. For more on the early Heavenly Master church, see also Maeda Shigeki, "The evolution of the Way of the Celestial Master: its early view of divinities," *Acta Asiatica* 68 (1995), 54–68; Bokenkamp, *Early Daoist scriptures*, pp. 29–37; Kleeman, *Great perfection*, pp. 66–80; Qing et al., *History of Chinese Daoism*, pp. 126–72; and Terry Kleeman, "Community and daily life in the early Daoist church," in *Early Chinese religion. Part Two: The period of division*, ed. John Lagerwey (forthcoming).

[42] As regards Daoism, we lack sources pointing to a unified pantheon before the Tang; see Stephen R. Bokenkamp, "The Daoist pantheon," in *Early Chinese religion. Part Two: The period of division*, ed. John Lagerwey (forthcoming).

[43] *Hou Hanshu*, 71.2300. The statement may be understood as referring to an extraordinary sacrifice prior to the uprising as much as to a common practice.

[44] The locus classicus is the quotation of the *Dianlüe* in the *Sanguo zhi*, Wei, 8.264.

Jue.[45] True, scattered Yellow Turban troops and their followers, routed by Cao Cao in 192, were said to have fled to the region which would become the Heavenly Master church's hallowed grounds, so that both communities may have eventually merged together; but evidence is needed. On this point, Rolf Stein's careful survey of the question still proves useful reading more than 40 years after its writing, despite Stein's own extrapolations.[46]

The "shamanistic" cult of the Scarlet Eyebrows

Historical sources record that the Scarlet Eyebrows movement included mediums (*wu* 巫) from Qi 齊 (Shandong) who would beat drums, dance, and pray to a god called Prince Jing of Chengyang 城陽景王 for his blessing. The Prince, according to the mediums, was infuriated by his present low condition and felt he deserved a much higher rank (*xianguan* 縣官).[47] Those who laughed at the Prince's complaint fell ill, and the whole army was greatly impressed. This was the main incident which prompted the Scarlet Eyebrow leaders to enthrone their own Han emperor. Indeed, the deity was none other than Liu Zhang 劉章 (200–177 BC), a former prince of the Han dynasty who had ruled briefly a fief in the region of origin of the rebels and, having contented the population of the princedom, had been worshipped at the local level ever since his death, with full official support. The adolescent monarch Penzi, unwillingly crowned by the Scarlet Eyebrows after a lucky draw performed during a religious ceremony, was one of his descendants.[48]

In its original location, Prince Jing's cult remained successful until its suppression by Cao Cao among numerous other "unorthodox cults" (*yinsi* 淫祀).[49]

[45] *Zizhi tongjian*, 58.1872.

[46] See Stein, "Remarques," pp. 3–7. See also Michaud, "The Yellow Turbans," pp. 76–81.

[47] On the role of *wu* in popular movements from Wang Mang through the Latter Han dynasty, see Lin Fu-shih, *Han dai de wuzhe*. On the place of the *wu* in early China, see Lin's chapter in the present work and his "Early medieval shamans and politics," in *Early Chinese religion. Part Two: The period of division*, ed. John Lagerwey (forthcoming). Rendering *wu* by "shaman" remains controversial. As for *xianguan*, literally district magistrate, it could be an indirect reference to the imperial dignity in the present context; see Hucker, *A dictionary*, p. 241, no. 2510.

[48] *Hou Hanji*, 3.40–41; *Hou Hanshu*, 11.477–81; 42.1451.

[49] *Sanguo zhi*, Wei, 1.4, commentary.

Zhang Lu's "way of ghosts" and early Daoist cults

From the official viewpoint, Zhang Lu deceived his followers with a *guidao* 鬼道, an expression also applied to his mother, who is said to have intrigued to obtain an official title for him.[50] We may wonder what the "way of ghosts" (a literal rendition for *guidao*) refers to in official discourse, given the wide array of meanings and applications of the word *gui*:[51] vague hermetic techniques perhaps, or unofficial, hence heterodox, religious practices, or the arts of the medium, which included healing.[52] Later Buddhist sources would use *guidao* as a coverall—an obviously deprecatory designation of the Chinese indigenous popular religion, of the mass movements occasionally associated with it, and of the practices purportedly advocated by its leaders—and Zhang Ling and his successors were named as typical examples.[53] But *guidao* may simply reflect the emphasis put by the communities of the Latter Han period on various threats from the unseen world and the apotropaic rituals offered by their sacerdotal personnel in response.

It is commonly assumed that the supreme god of the early Daoist church was called "Lord Lao" (Laojun 老君) or, alternatively, "newly emerged Lord Lao" (*xinchu* Laojun 新出老君) and "Most High Lord Lao" (Taishang Laojun 太上老君). And yet, as far as these divine titles are concerned, we hardly find any firsthand supporting evidence, at least for the Latter Han. Seidel has convincingly reconstructed the process of deification which transformed the "philosopher" Laozi 老子 into a divine entity worshipped during the Han dynasty, basing her study mainly on an inscription from a stele erected in 165 on Emperor Huan's 桓帝 (r. 147–67) initiative.[54] Reportedly a Huang-Lao 黃老 devotee, Huan

[50] *Hou Hanshu*, 75.2432; *Sanguo zhi*, Wei, 8.263.

[51] See Michel Strickmann, *Chinese magical medicine*, ed. Bernard Faure (Stanford, 2002), pp. 71–74; Poo Mu-chou, "The concept of ghost in ancient Chinese religion," in *Religion and Chinese society*, 1, *Ancient and medieval China*, ed. John Lagerwey (Hong Kong, 2004), pp. 173–91.

[52] "Magical techniques," in Stein, "Remarques," pp. 6–7, and Hendrischke, "Early Daoist movements," p. 140. For examples of *wu* practices involving *gui* in Han times, see Lin, *Han dai de wuzhe*, pp. 50–56. For a later (early 4th century AD) therapeutic application of *guidao*, see Lin Fu-shih, *Jibing zhongjie zhe: Zhongguo zaoqi de daojiao yixue* (Taibei, 2001), pp. 135–36. For an interpretation of *guidao* as the "family teaching" of Zhang Lu and his mother, see Liu, "Celestial Master Zhang," pp. 198–202.

[53] For example, see Falin (572–640), *Poxie lun* (On refuting error; 622), T 52, no. 2109, 11.167b; Falin, *Bianzheng lun* (Debate on the right; ca. 633), T 52, no. 2110, 2.500a.

[54] See Bian Shao 邊韶, "Laozi ming" 老子銘 (Inscription to Laozi; 165), in Hong Gua (1117–84), *Li shi* (Transcriptions into regular script; 1177) (Beijing, 1985), 3.1a–3b;

ordered an imperial sacrifice to Laozi (not "Laojun" in our source) to be performed the same year, before sacrificing in person to the philosopher-god in the following year (166).[55] Another stele inscription even suggests that Laozi's identification with the Dao itself may have taken place as early as the middle of the 2nd century.[56] Unfortunately, both inscriptions fail to link the deified Laozi with a defined movement. The former mentions "those who are fond of the Dao" 好道者, while the latter contains no information on the matter. "Lord Lao" appears several times in Ge Hong's 葛洪 *Baopu zi* 抱朴子 (Master who embraces simplicity; ca. 330) but the book, reputedly, does not mention the Heavenly Master church, though the phrase '*tianshi*' 天師 is present in a scripture title.[57] All the Daoist narratives devoted to the founding revelations of 142 AD and including the name of the deity involved, plus the titles of the scriptures bestowed upon Zhang Ling on the occasion, belong to the later legends of the church's origins.

The tetra-syllable "*xinchu* Laojun" is attested to as early as 255 in the "Da daojia lingjie" (14a), a text incorporated in a later Daoist scripture. The earliest occurrence of Taishang Laojun is sometimes thought to be that in the *Zhen'gao*, but apart from the fact that the *Zhen'gao* is a later compilation and is known to contain interpolated material, doubt remains as to whether the occurrence refers to a single Most High Lord Lao or two distinct entities, a "Most High" and "Lord Lao."[58] The phrase

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translated in Anna Seidel, *La divinisation de Lao tseu dans le taoïsme des Han* (Paris, 1969), pp. 122–28.

[55] *Hou Hanshu*, *zhi*, 8.3188, with a description of the altar erected on the occasion.

[56] "Laozi shengmu bei" 老子聖母碑 (Stele to the saintly mother of Laozi; 153), attributed to Wang Fu 王阜, quoted in *Taiping yulan* (Imperially reviewed encyclopedia of the Taiping era; 984), ed. Li Fang (925–95) (Beijing, 1960), 1.4a. Liu Yi, "Laozi mu bei kaolun," *Shoudu shifan daxue xuebao* 4 (1998), 34–41, argues that the inscription quoted in the *Taiping yulan* is of a much later date than Wang Fu's original composition.

[57] Ge Hong (283–343), *Baopu zi neipian*, ed. Wang Ming, 2nd ed. (Beijing, 1985), p. 334. Ge completed a first version of the *Baopu zi* in 317 and the final version around 330; see *The Taoist canon: a historical companion to the Daozang*, eds Kristofer Schipper and Franciscus Verellen (Chicago, 2004), pp. 70–71 (hereafter quoted as *The Taoist canon*).

[58] See *Zhen'gao*, HY 1010, 5.14b. The validity of the occurrence is examined in Terry F. Kleeman, "Reconstructing China's religious past: textual criticism and intellectual history," *Journal of Chinese Religions* 32 (2004), 29–45. The *Zhen'gao* was compiled from original autograph manuscripts attributed to Yang Xi 楊羲 (330–86) and his patrons Xu Mai 許邁 (300–48) and Xu Mi 許謐 (303–76), which Tao gathered mostly in the years 488–90 and authenticated. See Isabelle Robinet, *La révélation du Shangqing dans l'histoire du taoïsme*, 2, *Catalogue analytique des œuvres du Shangqing originel* (Paris, 1984), pp. 313–29.

famously appears once in the *Xiang'er* 想爾 commentary to the *Laozi*, an exegetical work generally dated to the early 3rd century and even attributed by some to Zhang Lu.[59] But, since the single available version of this commentary is a Dunhuang 敦煌 manuscript probably copied at the end of the 6th century in north China, the occurrence perhaps reflects the recently acquired predominance of the four-character title in Daoist discourse after Kou Qianzhi 寇謙之 (365–448) had been granted revelations by the same Most High Lord Lao in 415.[60] The relationship of the commentary with the early Heavenly Master movement is unclear; according to Schipper's entry in *The Taoist canon*, the text would even seem "closer to the (Mawangdui 馬王堆 [Hunan 湖南 province]) versions (of the 2nd century BC or earlier) than to any other of the early *Laozi* versions" and may "[represent] an earlier stage of community Daoism than the ecclesia of the Heavenly Master." One wonders if the *Xiang'er* commentary represents the whole Heavenly Master church or a "dissident" group within it.[61]

Finally, another stele inscription, dated 173 AD, mentions Zhengyi 正一 ("Orthodox Unity") and "Daoist rites of the Heavenly Master" (*tianshi daofa* 天師道法) but does not name Laozi nor a Lord Lao.[62] It is worth pointing out that the reading of its opening sentence is marred by a problematic character, in all likelihood *lao* 老.[63] If this reading is

[59] *Laozi daojing, shang, Xiang'er* 老子道經上想爾 (Laozi's scripture of the Tao, Part 1, Xiang'er), London, British Library, MS Stein 6825 (late 6th century?). Photographic reproduction in Ōfuchi Ninji, *Tonkō dōkyō: zuroku hen* (Tokyo, 1979), pp. 421–34. Critical edition in Jao Tsung-i, *Laozi Xiang'er zhu jiaojian* (Hong Kong, 1956). English translation in Bokenkamp, *Early Daoist scriptures*, pp. 78–148; p. 8 for the relevant passage (cols 108–09 in the MS). For the date and authorship of the *Xiang'er* commentary, see Qing et al., *History of Chinese Daoism*, pp. 160–61; Kristofer Schipper's entry "*Laozi Xiang'er zhu* 老子想爾注" in *The Taoist canon*, pp. 74–77.

[60] Wei Shou (506–72), *Weishu* (554) (Beijing, 1974), 114.3050–51. This locus is also the earliest occurrence of "Taishang Laojun" in the corpus of Chinese official histories. Kou's Daoist reform was promulgated under the early Northern Wei 北魏 (386–534); see Richard B. Mather, "K'ou Ch'ien-chih and the Taoist theocracy at the Northern Wei court, 425–451," in *Facets of Taoism: essays in Chinese religion*, eds Holmes Welch and Anna Seidel (New Haven and London, 1979), pp. 103–22.

[61] Terry Kleeman, "Daoism in the third century," in *Purposes, means and convictions in Daoism. A Berlin symposium*, ed. Florian C. Reiter (Wiesbaden, 2007), pp. 11–28, suspects an internal dispute centered on "the special veneration accorded Laozi . . . as the embodiment of the Dao."

[62] "Miwu jijiu Zhang Pu tizi" 米巫祭酒張普題字 (Inscription of Zhang Pu, Libationer of the grain mediums; 173), in Hong Gua, *Li xu* (Supplement to the transcriptions into regular script; 1179) (Beijing, 1985), 3.8a–b.

[63] Kleeman, *Great perfection*, p. 69. The alternate form of *lao* is commonly encountered in other stele inscriptions. For unconvincing tentative readings of the character,

correct, then we have the phrase "ghost soldiers of the Heavenly Elder," *tianlao guibing* 天老鬼兵. Originally one of the ministers of Huangdi 黃帝 (the Yellow Emperor), the Heavenly Elder was later seen by Daoists as the sixth manifestation of Laozi as an advisor to the sovereign (*diwang shi* 帝王師), i.e., the one active in the time of Huangdi, as the *Laozi bianhua jing* 老子變化經 shows.[64] But, like the *Xiang'er* commentary, the *Laozi bianhua jing* is today believed to represent the ideas of a Daoist group distinct from the Heavenly Master church. Finally, according to Stein, *tianlao* may be an equivalent of *laogui* 老鬼, a familiar name for Lord Lao in a tomb purchase contract dated 485 AD.[65] But whether this equivalence also applies to the 173 AD stele inscription or not remains to be determined.

Zhang Jue's yellow god

In the official sources, when the emperor questions high officials about the causes of Zhang Jue's popular success, Zhang's teachings are referred to as "the way of the Yellow Turbans" (*huangjin dao* 黃巾道), if not as "deviant arts" (*yaoshu* 妖術).[66] But, perhaps even more puzzling, Zhang is elsewhere said to have worshipped the way of Huang-Lao.[67]

Admittedly, the earliest reference to Huang-Lao in Chinese official sources is to be found in the *Shiji* 史記 (Records of the historian), a work presented to the emperor in 91 BC and which mentions "the arts of the Way and Virtue of Huang-Lao" 黃老道德之術.[68] A philosophical current mainly dealing with statecraft during the Han dynasty, Huang-Lao opened up to immortality and self-cultivation concerns during the Latter Han dynasty, venturing into the religious sphere. During

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see Sawa Akitoshi, "Gotōbeidō seiken no soshiki kōzō," in *Dōkyō bunka eno tenbō*, ed. Dōkyō bunka kenkyūkai (Tokyo, 1994), pp. 134, 149, n. 12.

[64] See *Laozi bianhua jing* (Scripture of the transformations of Laozi; ca. 185 AD?), London, British Library, MS Stein 2295 (copied 612). Photographic reproduction in Ōfuchi, *Tonkō dōkyō: Zuroku hen*, pp. 686–88. French translation in Seidel, *La divinisation de Lao tseu dans le taoïsme des Han*, pp. 59–75; p. 66 for the relevant passage (col. 46 on the MS). For the date of the text, see Seidel, ibid., pp. 73–74: the last date mentioned is 155 AD and the last event, the founding of a temple 30 years later. On Tianlao as a manifestation of Laozi, see Seidel, ibid., p. 66, n. 5.

[65] Rolf A. Stein, "Religious Taoism and popular religion from the second to seventh centuries," in *Facets of Taoism*, eds Welch and Seidel, p. 77, n. 83.

[66] *Hou Hanji*, 24.476; *Hou Hanshu*, 78.2534–35; *Zizhi tongjian*, 58.1864, 1867–68.

[67] *Hou Hanshu*, 71.2299; 76.2470.

[68] Sima Qian (145–86 BC), *Shiji* (91 BC) (Beijing, 1959), 74.2347.

the 2nd century AD, Huang-Lao was in vogue in the palace. Emperor Huan of the Latter Han is blamed in the *Hou Hanshu* for his worship of Huang-Lao during the Yanxi era (158–67) and his complete destruction of local places of worship (*fangsi* 房祀), a criticism possibly aimed at a form of religious radicalism in Huang-Lao practices and beliefs.[69] But in his written admonition to the throne in 166, Xiang Kai pointed to the emperor's lack of respect for the teachings of "Fotuo (i.e., the Buddha) and the way of Huang-Lao" 佛陀黃老道.[70] Though one of the admitted influences in the formative stage of the Daoist religion (and, interestingly, in the ideological development of the *Taiping jing*),[71] Huang-Lao seems to lack a satisfactory charting as a tradition in transition, despite an increasing number of studies.[72] Moreover, the understanding of the bi-syllable was soon perverted by Buddhist discursive practices, which used "Huang-Lao" as a common deprecatory equivalent for Daoism and called Daoists "followers of Huang-Lao."[73]

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[69] *Hou Hanshu*, 76.2470. For the meaning of *fangsi*, see *Hou Hanshu*, 57.1841, where a similar case of destruction of local places of worship (*fangsi*) is ascribed to Luan Ba 欒巴 (d. 168)—a Han official and adept of the Dao but not of Huang-Lao specifically—as a means of putting an end to disturbances caused by supernatural entities attracted by offerings in an area swarming with cults to spirits (*guishen* 鬼神); at first dissatisfied with the destruction, the locals eventually acknowledged the end of the disturbances. Interestingly, the *Xiang'er* commentary and precepts also oppose offerings to spirits; see Bokenkamp, *Early Daoist scriptures*, pp. 119–20. On Luan Ba and his possible relationship with the historical Zhang Ling, see Liu, "Celestial Master Zhang," pp. 219–26.

[70] *Weishu*, 114.3028. For a similar association, see *Hou Hanshu*, 30B.1082–83, which has Futu 浮屠, assumed to be the earliest Chinese transcription for Buddha; see Endymion Wilkinson, *Chinese history: a manual*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, Mass., 2000), p. 40.

[71] See Chen Ligui, "Cong *Taiping jing* kan daojiao dui Huang-Lao lilun de fuhui yu zhuanhua," *Zhongguo xueshu niankan* 16 (1995), 27–52.

[72] Recent interpretations include Chen Ligui, *Qin Han shiqi de Huang-Lao sixiang* (Taibei, 1997); Robin D.S. Yates, *Five lost classics: Tao, Huang-Lao, and Yin-Yang in Han China* (New York, 1997); Michael Loewe, "The heritage left to the empires," in *The Cambridge history of ancient China: from the origins of civilization to 221 BC*, eds Michael Loewe and Edward L. Shaughnessy (Cambridge, 1999), pp. 986–88. So far, the link between the *Huangdi sijing sipian* 黃帝四經四篇 (Four canons of the Yellow Emperor, in four chapters), listed in the *Hanshu*, 30.1730, and the manuscripts excavated from tomb no. 3, dated 168 BC, at Mawangdui, is still hypothetical. See Edmund Ryden, *The Yellow Emperor's four canons: a literary study and edition of the text from Mawangdui* (Taibei, 1997), pp. 1–2.

[73] For instance, the phrase "followers of Huang-Lao who worship the way of the five bushels of grain" 奉五斗米道黃老之徒 appears in an anecdote dated 313 AD, in Daoshi (d. 683), *Fayuan zhulin* (Forest of pearls from the garden of the law; 668), T 53, no. 2122, 13.383b–c. For many instances of Huang-Lao as a deprecatory equivalent for Daoism, see Daoxuan (596–667), *Guang hongming ji* 廣弘明集 (Expanded collection for the spread of enlightenment; 664), T 52, no. 2103, 4.114c; 8.135b, 136a; 10.153a; 12.171c, etc.

The well-known slogan of the 184 AD general uprising was: "Azure Heaven is dead; Yellow Heaven should rule. The year is *jiazi*, which is a very good omen for the world" 蒼天已死, 黃天當立, 歲在甲子, 天下大吉.[74] In his commentary to the *Sanguo zhi*, Pei Songzhi quotes a message sent to Cao Cao by the rebels. This message provides an interesting variant of the slogan, which not only names the Han dynasty, but also emphasizes the political change under way as a cosmic, hence inevitable phenomenon: "The course of the Han is finished; the Yellow House must rule. This is a major celestial revolution, which it is beyond your ability to stop" 漢行已盡, 黃家當立, 天之大運, 非君才力所能存也.[75] To be fully understood, both versions should be connected with one of Jue's self-proclaimed titles, Yellow Heaven (*huangtian* 黃天) or, as it is found elsewhere as a fully developed formula, Supreme Peace of the Yellow Heaven (*huangtian taiping* 黃天泰平).[76] It seems clear that Zhang sought to found a new dynasty which would bring forth an era of renewed cosmic equilibrium. Before him, Wang Mang, founder of another dynasty, had chosen yellow as the emblematic color for his own rule.[77]

In their message to Cao Cao, the Yellow Turbans liken the Dao of their leader to the Great One of the central yellow (Zhonghuang Taiyi 中黃太乙).[78] To associate the center with the color yellow is standard practice in the five agents logic of Chinese "correlative" cosmology, traditionally but perhaps groundlessly ascribed to Zou Yan 騶衍 (3rd century BC). The early Han emperors sacrificed to the spatialized Five Emperors (*wudi* 五帝); before them, the Qin 秦 (221–207 BC) sacrificed to four of these emperors, excluding the northern one.[79] The "Seal of the Yellow God, sovereign of the center" 黃神中皇之章, a protective Daoist

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[74] *Hou Hanshu*, 71.2299.

[75] *Sanguo zhi*, Wei, 1.10.

[76] See *Sanguo zhi*, Wu, 46.1094; *Hou Hanshu*, 8.348.

[77] The symbolic role of colors in political and religious movements throughout the Han era is a well-known feature of the history of early imperial China, as rightly emphasized in Hendrischke, "Early Daoist movements," pp. 136–37; Qing et al., *History of Chinese Daoism*, pp. 189–90. For a discussion of Zhang's political motives, see also Michaud, "The Yellow Turbans," pp. 97–100.

[78] *Sanguo zhi*, Wei, 1.10. See Liu, "Celestial Master Zhang," pp. 234–38.

[79] See Marianne Bujard, *Le sacrifice au Ciel dans la Chine ancienne: théorie et pratique sous les Han occidentaux* (Paris, 2000), pp. 67–69, and her chapter in this volume. The former kings of Qin traced their ancestry back to the Yellow Emperor (so did the kings of Qi 齊); while kings of other states sacrificed to the White Emperor, the Green Emperor, etc. For a survey of state rituals in pre-imperial China, see also Loewe, "The heritage left to the empires," pp. 978–82.

artifact of which specimens have been discovered and dated to the 1st or 2nd century AD, reflects the paradigmatic association of a yellow deity with the center.[80] In Han astronomy, the Yellow Emperor was identified with the central star (β Leo) of a five-star constellation, the Seats of the Five Emperors (Wudizuo 五帝座), located in the Taiwei 太微, that is, *not* in the most central sector of the nocturnal sky. Zhang Heng 張衡 (78–139) called him the Yellow God Xuanyuan (*huangshen* Xuanyuan 黃神軒轅) in this astronomical context.[81] Having noticed the association of the Yellow God with the Northern Dipper, i.e., *Ursa Major*, in late 2nd century AD funerary material (*huangshen beidou* 黃神北斗), Seidel believed the entity to be one of the "different names or facets of the same supreme deity of Han religion in various traditions and contexts" and, as such, to be equivalent to Heavenly Emperor (*tiandi* 天帝) and Yellow Emperor.[82] A Yellow God is also mentioned in connection with the Northern Dipper in fragments of weft or apocryphal texts (*wei* 緯) related to the *Hetu* 河圖 (Yellow River Chart), which depict the Yellow Emperor as proceeding from "the essence of the Yellow God of the Northern Dipper" 北斗黃神之精.[83]

To conclude, the Yellow God, the Heavenly Emperor, and Huangdi may be regarded as three hypostases of a single supreme deity, but their exact name, power and astronomic identification possibly varied from group to group. For instance, in a manual for visualization which, at least partly, may date back to the Latter Han, the *Laozi zhongjing* 老子中經, the Yellow God appears as a divine officer bearing the title of general inspector (*zongyue* 總閱) and is in charge of checking each adept's moral account every year in the eighth month, as the censors of the Han administration used to do during their annual tour of the empire.[84]

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[80] See Strickmann, *Chinese magical medicine*, pp. 141–42. The seal is mentioned in the *Taiping yulan*, 675.3137b; 676.3146b. The name of an analogous "transcendent seal of the Yellow God" (*huangshen yuezhang* 黃神越章), without any reference to the center in its name, is inscribed on a grave-securing jar dated to the late 2nd century AD; see Ikeda On, "Chūgoku rekidai boken ryakkō," *Tōyō bunka kenkyūjo kiyō* 86 (1981), p. 274, no. 9.

[81] See Zhang Heng, *Lingxian* 靈憲 (*Celestial rules*), quoted in *Hou Hanshu*, *zhi*, 10.3216. Xuanyuan is another name of Huangdi.

[82] See Anna Seidel, "Traces of Han religion in funeral texts found in tombs," in *Dōkyō to shūkyō bunka*, ed. Akizuki Kan'ei (Tokyo, 1987), pp. 25–30.

[83] *Jūshū Isho shūsei*, 6, *Kato: Rakusho*, eds Yasui Kōzan and Nakamura Shōhachi (Tokyo, 1995), pp. 47, 85. Born from "the daughter of a chthonic deity" 地祇之女, the Yellow Emperor is a cosmic product of the conflation of heaven and earth.

[84] See John Lagerwey, "Deux écrits taoïstes anciens," *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie* 14 (2004),

The Great One's color may have been yellow for Zhang Jue and his followers but, in the context of earlier state cults, its emblematic color was purple, i.e., the imperial color *par excellence*. Taiyi had been made the head of the pantheon by Emperor Wu 武帝 (r. 140–87 BC) whose religious activities were driven by his quest for immortality. Under Wang Mang, the cult had been confirmed, Taiyi being then worshipped together with the feminine divine earth as a masculine deity bearing the title of "Great One and Emperor on High of August Heaven" 皇天上帝泰一. After the restoration of the Han house at the beginning of our era, Taiyi was progressively removed from state cults, but transmitted and epigraphic sources suggest that, though discarded by the elite, it remained a leading deity in popular religion.[85] Two other stele inscriptions from the 160s and 170s depict in similar terms fellow Dao enthusiasts who come from afar and gather in a holy place, sometimes to play music and chant songs to the Great One, sometimes to perform meditation and visualization.[86]

Of course, Taiyi also had a stellar counterpart, probably β UMi (Kochab). Unlike the astral seat of the Yellow Emperor, not only was this star located in the Ziwei 紫微 (Purple Tenuity, i.e., the circumpolar area of the nocturnal sky) but even more than that, it was polar, or almost polar, in Han times. This idea of the celestial and axial supremacy of Taiyi underlies a fragment of *Chunqiu wei* 春秋緯 (Spring and Autumn weft exegesis) which regards the Great One as "the seat of the Heavenly Emperor of the North Pole" 北極天帝位, that is, another central and pivotal location.[87] In addition, the fragment states that Taiyi's radiance contains "primordial pneuma" (*yuanqi* 元氣), a crucial concept in Han times.

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pp. 150, n. 28, 162–63; Kristofer Schipper, "The inner world of the *Lao-tzu chung-ching* 老子中經," in *Time and space in Chinese culture*, eds Chun-chieh Huang and Erik Zürcher (Leiden, 1995), pp. 114–31; Kristofer Schipper's entry for the *Taishang Laojun zhongjing* 太上老君中經 (HY 1160) in *The Taoist canon*, pp. 92–94.

[85] Li Ling, "An archaeological study of Taiyi 太一 (Grand One) worship," trans. Donald Harper, *Early Medieval China* 2 (1995–96), 1–39; Bujard, *Le sacrifice au Ciel dans la Chine ancienne*, pp. 142–49; Qing et al., *History of Chinese Daoism*, pp. 185–88.

[86] Bian Qian 邊乾, "Wangzi Qiao bei" 王子喬碑 (Wangzi Qiao stele; 165), in *Li shi*, 20.17a–b; Liu He 劉合, "Di Yao bei" 帝堯碑 (Emperor Yao stele; 175), in *Li shi*, 1.5b. For a discussion of the authenticity of the first stele and a French translation, see Marianne Bujard, "Le culte de Wangzi Qiao ou la longue carrière d'un immortel," *Études chinoises* 19.1–2 (2000), pp. 125–30.

[87] *Jūshū Isho shūsei*, 4B, *Shunjū ge* 春秋下, ed. Nakamura Shōhachi (Tokyo, 1992), p. 166. See Seidel, *La divinisation de Lao tseu*, p. 57.

Beliefs and practices in context

Religious therapeutics

Healing was one of the basic needs of the masses in the context of the social upheaval, almost continual warfare and repeated epidemics of the Latter Han. This may explain why, though religion and medicine admittedly became increasingly remote from each other during the early centuries of imperial China, therapeutic practices were one of the central features of popular religion as opposed to elite cults and court rituals. In this regard, the extant *Taiping jing* expresses two ideas of equal importance: first, the cosmos needs to be healed in order for universal equilibrium to be restored; second, believers struck down by illness because of their sins need to be healed in order to fulfill their longevity allotment.[88] Though expressed in surviving strata probably of different periods, these ideas are not antagonistic, in that both suggest a therapeutic way to deal with the dramatic issues of cosmic imbalance and human mortality. In this light, Paul Unschuld's comment on the *Taiping jing* seems of striking relevance, all the more so in that it emanates from a scholar outside the field of Daoism: "Nowhere else do we find such a clear admission of the complete integration of medical and political concepts."[89] Remarkably, cosmic dysfunctions are believed to be induced by human misconduct at all levels of society but above all within the palace—ideas on the same wavelength as the ideology of the weft fragments.

According to scarce information provided by official sources, ritual healing was one of the few characteristics common to the two major Latter Han mass movements. To begin with the Yellow Turbans, the annalists who wrote the records later compiled as the official histories did not dwell on the religious life of the community but did stress the therapeutic functions of their practices in contemporary local society. Zhang Jue and his two brothers, as we have seen, called themselves "great physicians." The masters (*shi* 師 seems to refer here to a title

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[88] On the first idea, see Lai Chi Tim, "The Daoist concept of central harmony in the *Scripture of Great Peace*: human responsibilities for the maladies of nature," in *Daoism and ecology: ways within a cosmic landscape*, eds N.J. Girardot, James Miller and Liu Xiaogan (Cambridge, Mass., 2001), pp. 95–111; on the second idea, see Grégoire Espesset, "Criminalized abnormality, moral etiology, and redemptive suffering in the secondary strata of the *Taiping jing*," *Asia Major* 3rd series 15.2 (2002), pp. 48–49.

[89] Paul U. Unschuld, *Medicine in China: a history of ideas* (Berkeley, 1985), p. 121.

in the priestly hierarchy of the movement) would carry "nine-knot staves" (*jiujie zhang* 九節杖) with which they would cast their charms and spells (*fuzhu* 符祝). The sick would be instructed "to kneel and prostrate, and confess their faults" 跪拜首過 (or, as a variant reads, "to kowtow and reflect upon their faults" 叩頭思過). They would ingest lustral water (*fushui* 符水). Patients who got better would be praised as Daoist faithful while those who retained their morbid condition would be considered nonbelievers.[90]

The features of the "way of the five bushels of grain" are slightly better documented. They included two social spaces, individual and collective: under Zhang Xiu, "quiet chambers" (*jingshi* 靜室) where the sick would withdraw to reflect upon their faults (*si guo* 思過);[91] under Zhang Lu, "charity lodgings" (*yishe* 義舍) similar to the postal relays of the imperial administration (*tingchuan* 亭傳) but, in addition, offering free food supplies for the traveling (and abstemious) faithful. Each territorial unit (*zhi* 治) was under the authority of a grand libationer (*da jijiu* 大祭酒). "Ghost troopers" (*guizu* 鬼卒; a title reminiscent of *guidao*) formed the novitiate of the movement, if not its armed forces, as *zu* may imply. Ordinary libationers (*jijiu*) included *jianling* 姦令[92] who were in charge of the repeated recitation in chorus (*duxi* 都習) of "Laozi's text in five thousand characters" 老子五千文 (a version of the *Daode jing* 道德經 including a commentary later ascribed to Zhang Ling),[93] and "ghost clerks" (*guili* 鬼吏; also reminiscent of *guidao*) who made the sick confess their faults (*shou guo* 首過) and implore and pray (*qing dao* 請禱) for their recovery by means of personal handwritten documents dispatched to the Three Officers (*sanguan* 三官) of Heaven, Earth and Water. Under Zhang Lu, minor transgressions could be remitted by means of repairing 100 paces of road 治道百步 and prohibitions included killing in spring and summer, "in compliance with the 'Monthly ordinances' " (*yi* Yueling 依月令), and the consumption of alcoholic beverages.[94]

[90] *Hou Hanji*, 24.473; *Dianlüe*, quoted in *Sanguo zhi*, Wei, 8.264, and in *Hou Hanshu*, 75.2436; *Zizhi tongjian*, 58.1864.

[91] See Stein, "Remarques," pp. 70–72; Yoshikawa Tadao, "Seishitsu kō," *Tōhō gakuhō* 59 (1987), 125–62.

[92] Officers of the community's vice squad? Kleeman, "Community and daily life in the early Daoist church," believes that *jianling* points to the illegitimacy of the officials.

[93] For instance in the *Bianzheng lun*, 6.531c–32a.

[94] *Sanguo zhi*, Wei, 8.263–64, including the *Dianlüe* quotation in Pei Songzhi's commentary.

The stele inscription dated 173 AD suggests that the conferment of the title of *jijiu* was already current in religious communities several years before Zhang Xiu and Zhang Lu appear in the official sources of Chinese history.[95] But there is no evidence that the title, which already had a long history by that time,[96] was the trademark of the early Heavenly Master church in the context of Latter Han religious movements.

Self-confinement and pneumatic techniques

The practice of seclusion for a religious purpose ascribed to the "way of the five bushels of grain" reminds us of a similar practice of the early Christians toward the end of the 1st century if not before.[97] It is also present in the *Taiping jing*: while "deeply secluded in a retired chamber," the saints and worthies of Antiquity would "meditate on the Dao" 深居幽室思道, and the proper thing to do in order to achieve the Dao was, following their example, "to maintain one's purity and quietness in a retired chamber" 守清靜於幽室.[98] In addition to Stein's remarks, I would suggest that these secluded places may have something to do with those chambers (*shi*), carefully insulated and hermetically closed, built for the purpose of "watching for the ethers" (*houqi* 候氣) as described by Cai Yong 蔡邕 (133–92) in his treatise on pitch pipes and the calendar ("Lüli" 律曆), later included in the *Hou Hanshu*.[99] I would also suggest that these chambers have to be connected somehow with political ideology, as reflected by the *Taiping jing*: not only the saints and

[95] "Miwu jijiu Zhang Pu tizi," in *Li xu*, 3.8a–b; see Kleeman, *Great perfection*, pp. 68–69. The same title *jijiu* appearing in the "Baishi shenjun bei" 白石神君碑 (Stele to the divine lord of the white stone) inscription, dated 183, in *Li shi*, 3.22b–24a, is assumed to be an honorific form of address rather than a religious dignity; on that stele, see Marianne Bujard, "Célébration et promotion des cultes locaux: six stèles des Han orientaux," *Bulletin de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient* 87.1 (2000), 247–66; K.E. Brashier, "The spirit lord of Baishi mountain: feeding the deities or heeding the *Yinyang*?," *Early China* 26–27 (2001–02), 159–231.

[96] See Stein, "Remarques," pp. 42–59; Ōfuchi Ninji, *Shoki no dōkyō* (Tokyo, 1991), pp. 334–42.

[97] See the Gospel according to Matthew (ca. 80–100 AD), 6:6: "But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret."

[98] *Taiping jing hejiao* 太平經合校, ed. Wang Ming, 2nd ed. (Beijing, 1979), pp. 48, 278; the theme of retreat also appears on pp. 30, 63, 109, 174, 180.

[99] *Hou Hanshu*, *zhi*, 1.3016; translation of the passage in Joseph Needham et al., *Science and civilisation in China*, 4, *Physics and physical technology*, 1, *Physics* (Cambridge, 1962), p. 188; for the authorship of this treatise, see B.J. Mansvelt Beck, *The treatises of Later Han: their author, sources, contents and place in Chinese historiography* (Leiden, 1990), pp. 61–63.

worthies of Antiquity, but the emperor of today should "sit quietly in a retired chamber, free from anxiety" 安坐幽室無憂, while petty officials deal with routine governmental matters.[100] Needless to say, the theme bears the hallmark of "non-interference" or "non-striving" (*wuwei* 無爲) ideology.[101]

Still in the *Taiping jing* but now in a more religious context, the spiritual purpose of meditation in seclusion is made clear as we read that it will produce divine visitation (eventually, all gods will spontaneously come before the adept) or the adept's own ascension for an audience with the heavenly gods.[102] Though not explicitly referring to the practice of seclusion, the author of the *Xiang'er* commentary emphasizes the same need for "purity and quietness" (*qing jing* 清靜), an "unfocused" state of mind allowing the faithful to regulate the circulation of cosmic pneuma within their own body and to commune with the Dao.[103] In a 2nd-century stele inscription dedicated to a local saint named Fei Zhi 肥致, who lived roughly one century before it was erected (fl. 76–89 AD), the discourse revolves around the phrases *rushi* 入室 ("entering the chamber," col. 7), *daoren* 道人 ("man of the Dao," col. 5), *zhenren* 真人 ("perfected," col. 10), *xiandao* 仙道 ("way of immortality," col. 18) and *shizhi* 石脂 ("mineral grease," a siliceous paste used by seekers of immortality, col. 19).[104] Unfortunately, the stele fails to name any religious movement.

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[100] *Taiping jing hejiao*, ed. Wang, p. 322. That the ruler should sit quietly (*an zuo*) and constantly be free from anxiety (*wu you*) and annoyance (*wu shi* 無事) is one of the themes of the Great Peace agenda; see, for instance, *Taiping jing hejiao*, ed. Wang, pp. 133, 136.

[101] See Liu Xiaogan, "*Wuwei* (non-action): from *Laozi* to *Huainanzi*," *Taoist Resources* 3.1 (1991), 41–56; Liu Xiaogan, "Naturalness (*tzu-jan*), the core value in Taoism: its ancient meaning and its significance today," in *Lao-tzu and the Tao-te-ching*, eds Livia Kohn and Michael LaFargue (Albany, 1998), pp. 211–28.

[102] *Taiping jing hejiao*, ed. Wang, pp. 427, 450.

[103] Translation in Bokenkamp, *Early Daoist scriptures*, pp. 99–101, 118, 141–42. See also Michael J. Puett, "Forming spirits for the Way: the cosmology of the *Xiang'er* commentary to the *Laozi*," *Journal of Chinese Religions* 32 (2004), 1–27. On the ideological connection between the *Xiang'er* commentary and the *Taiping jing*, see Jao, *Laozi Xiang'er zhu jiaojian*, pp. 98–101; Qing et al., *History of Chinese Daoism*, p. 171; Guo Wu, "Cong *Taiping jing* he *Laozi Xiang'er zhu* kan daojiao shenxue de chuangli," *Shanghai daojiao* 4 (1993), 6–11; Zeng Weijia, "Cong *Taiping jing* yu *Laozi xiang'er zhu* kan zaoqi daojiao shenxian sixiang de xingcheng," *Qiusuo* 5 (2003), 243–45.

[104] Xu Jian 許建, "Henan Liang dong Anle Fei jun zhi bei" 河南梁東安樂肥君之碑 (Stele of Lord Fei of Anle, east of Liang, Henan; 169); on which, see Kristofer Schipper, "Une stèle taoïste des Han récemment découverte," in *En suivant la Voie royale: mélanges en hommage à Léon Vandermeersch*, eds Jacques Gernet and Marc Kalinowski (Paris, 1997), pp. 240–42 (translation), 246 (reproduction of an ink rubbing), 247 (transcription by Feng Congde 封從德).

In ancient China, the notion of *qi* 氣 as a sort of cosmological and ontological *materia prima* was admittedly shared by many traditions, if not by all of those known to Sinologists.[105] An overwhelming concept encompassing the macro- and microcosmic spheres, *qi* is one of the key words in the discourse of the *Taiping jing* and *Xiang'er* commentary; it is also in common use among the weft fragments, though frequently in the mantic context of atmospheric and astronomic observation, given the importance of the theme in the collected remnants. The idea of a primordial, or original, pneuma (*yuanqi*) as the subtle, primeval source of all particularized forms of *qi* prior to the formation of the universe retained a prominent position in Daoist cosmogony and cosmology.[106] On this theoretical basis, a wide array of pneuma-related practices developed, involving rituals, breathing techniques and meditation.[107] One of the most famous examples is the rite known as the "merging of pneumata" (*heqi* 合氣), soon condemned by Daoists—condemnation taken up later by Buddhists—because of abusive interpretations and hence poorly documented in ancient sources, but which, as Kleeman reminds us, was "so central to the Celestial Master identity that it could be used as synonym for a member of the Church."[108] But when the received understanding of the rite as a sexual union is put into perspective, its religious significance as a reversion to primordial unity appears to be at least equally important.[109] Together with beliefs and practices testified to in a cluster of Great Peace materials,[110] this ritual

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[105] Bokenkamp, *Early Daoist scriptures*, p. 15. In English, the word *qi* is variously translated as "breath," "vapor," "steam," "pneuma" or even "energy"; see Ulrich Libbrecht, "Prāna = pneuma = ch'i?," in *Thought and law in Qin and Han China: studies dedicated to Anthony Hulsewé on the occasion of his eightieth birthday*, eds Wilt L. Idema and Erik Zürcher (Leiden, 1990), pp. 42–62; Bokenkamp, *Early Daoist scriptures*, pp. 15–20.

[106] See Isabelle Robinet, "Genèses: au début, il n'y a pas d'avant," in *En suivant la Voie royale*, eds Gernet and Kalinowski, pp. 121–40.

[107] See also Catherine Despeux, "Pratiques bouddhiques et taoïques du IIIe au VIe siècle (221–581)," in *Religion et société en Chine ancienne et médiévale*, ed. John Lagerwey (Paris, forthcoming).

[108] Kleeman, "Daoism in the third century."

[109] As argued by Gil Raz, "The Way of the Yellow and the Red: re-examining the sexual initiation rite of Celestial Master Daoism," paper presented at the "Symposium in celebration of *The Taoist canon: a historical companion to the Daozang*," University of Chicago, 6–8 October 2005. Raz differentiates the sexual practices of the Daoists from non-Daoist "arts of the bedchamber," *fangzhong shu* 房中術; on which, see Douglas Wile, *Art of the bedchamber* (Albany, 1992); Donald J. Harper, *Early Chinese medical literature: the Mawangdui medical manuscripts* (London and New York, 1998), pp. 135–41; Li Ling, *Zhongguo fangshu kao*, rev. ed. (Beijing, 2000), pp. 382–433.

[110] See Espesset, "À vau-l'eau, à rebours," pp. 79–81.

may have prefigured the agenda of the future inner alchemy (*neidan* 内丹) practitioner, namely to return to a cosmic and ontological state of original non-differentiation by reversing the entire process of cosmogony through the successive stages of internalized elixir refining.[111]

Daoist discourse on pneuma practices revolves around numerous compounds, among which *xingqi* 行氣 ("circulating pneuma") and *tiaoqi* 調氣 ("regulating pneuma") in the context of *taixi* 胎息 ("embryonic breathing"); *biqi* 閉氣 ("pneuma retention"), *buqi* 布氣 ("diffusing pneuma") and *guqi* 固氣 ("stabilizing pneuma") for therapeutic purposes; *yanqi* 咽氣 ("swallowing pneuma"), *shiqi* 食氣 and *fuqi* 服氣 ("ingesting pneuma") in dietetic observance and ritual; and *qiguan* 氣觀 ("observation of pneuma") in meditation and visualization. Traces of these practices appear in Han sources, though arguably still not fully theorized, ritualized, nor collectivized. Harper's masterful study of the medical texts excavated from early Han funerary sites suggest that "vapor" (as he renders *qi*) played an essential role in physiology, dietetics, gymnastics, etiology and therapeutics.[112] Wang Chong 王充 (27–ca. 100 AD) ridiculed "specialists of the Dao" for their "conducting pneuma" (*daoqi* 導氣, here to be understood in the light of the compound *daoyin* 導引, "gymnastics," used by Wang in the same passage) as a mean to gain an extended longevity, and cast doubt on pneuma ingestion, preferred by such people to "ingesting matter" (*shiwu* 食物), i.e., eating ordinary food.[113] The "Laozi ming" stele inscription also alludes to breathing techniques (呼吸至精).[114] The *Taiping jing* mentions fasting and breath control 自不食與氣結 as well as pneuma ingestion in several places, here as a method to unite with primordial pneuma, there in connection with the regulation of breath, elsewhere in opposition to ordinary sustenance ("ingesting tangible matter" 食有形之物); "pneuma regulation" (*tiaoqi*) also appears, but as a part of the fulfillment of the collective role of human beings in the macrocosm rather than in the context of individual

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[111] See Isabelle Robinet, "Le rôle et le sens des nombres dans la cosmologie et l'alchimie taoïstes," *Extrême-Orient Extrême-Occident* 16 (1994), 93–120; Fabrizio Pregadio and Lowell Skar, "Inner alchemy (*neidan*)," in *Daoism handbook*, ed. Kohn, pp. 464–97.

[112] See Harper, *Early Chinese medical literature*, "Prolegomena," pp. 3–183 (*qi* appears on almost every page). See also Unschuld, *Medicine in China*, pp. 67–73.

[113] Wang Chong, *Lunheng* (Balanced assessments; ca. 75), ed. Yamada Katsumi (Tokyo, 1976), pp. 497, 520. The whole chapter is translated in Alfred Forke, trans., *Lun-Hêng*, 1, *Philosophical essays of Wang Ch'ung* (1907; repr. New York, 1962), pp. 332–50.

[114] "Laozi ming," in *Li shi*, 3.3b; translated in Seidel, *La divinisation de Lao tseu*, p. 128.

practice.[115] Later on, the *Hou Hanshu* would recount how an aging Cao Cao surrounded himself with "masters of techniques" (*fangshi* 方士), among whom two specialists of embryonic respiration and nutrition (胎息胎食) and breath control (結氣不息).[116]

Sources of Latter Han religious movements

In the 173 AD stele inscription mentioned above, the phrase "Daoist rites of the Heavenly Master" (*tianshi daofa*) and its ordination context are assumed to imply that the Heavenly Master community already transmitted a corpus of scriptures by the late 2nd century of our era, at least for ritual purposes.[117] However, it is impossible to name confidently which texts were included in this corpus nor, for that matter, in the corpus of any other religious movement believed to have played a role in the formative years of the Daoist church and before the end of the Latter Han. In terms of literary history, the major problems concern the dating and authorship of texts and the hazards of their transmission, including textual modification, disappearance, and intertextuality: texts assumed lost reappear or are "rediscovered," re-edited under different titles, integrated into other texts, or divided into a number of separate texts. In this regard, the case of the *Taiping* texts mentioned or quoted through the centuries, either lost or extant, is of striking relevance. The worldview of the received *Taiping jing* bears a distinctive Han "cachet" (for want of firsthand evidence still to be provided by archeological and epigraphic finds) but the same may be said of many texts in the Daoist canon, including material of unquestionably later origin. Contrary to a widespread idea, the surviving text does not tell us much about Latter Han religious movements as far as historical facts are concerned: to my knowledge, the extant scripture includes no date or allusion to any datable event, name of person or group, toponym firmly identifiable, or

[115] *Taiping jing hejiao*, ed. Wang, pp. 48, 90, 278, 316, 450, 605, 658.

[116] *Hou Hanshu*, 82B.2750–51; passage translated in Ngo Van Xuyet, *Divination, magie et politique dans la Chine ancienne* (Paris, 1976), pp. 143–46. The term *fangshi* may have originated from the Zhou official title mentioned in Hucker, *A dictionary*, p. 209, no. 1912.

[117] Terry F. Kleeman, "The structuring of reality in Daoist moral codes," paper delivered to the "Conference on religious thought and lived religion in China," Vancouver, BC, 14–15 September 2002.

quotation of sources which would enable us to locate incontrovertibly its origins in time and space.[118]

Though often quoted in later Daoist sources, most of the earliest scriptures of the Heavenly Master are lost, e.g., the *Zhengyi jing* 正一經 (Scripture of Orthodox Unity), and those preserved in the Ming Daoist canon, when datable, usually prove to be of comparatively later date. One has only to consult the entries provided in the *The Taoist canon* for 16 Heavenly Master texts "in internal circulation" in the Six Dynasties (220–589). Among the dates proposed there, one will note the following formulae: "Six Dynasties" (five times), "third century?" (four times), "Eastern Jin (317–420)" (twice), "fifth century?" (once); one text is dated "ca. 255"; and the remaining three texts are given the dates of their putative authors, spanning the years 365–478.[119] So, in the majority of cases, and despite the recent advances made in the field of Daoist studies, which the content of some entries brilliantly reflects, dating remains nearly as doubtful as it was when the second edition of the *Daozang tiyao* 道藏提要, the Chinese forerunner of the *The Taoist canon*, was released a decade ago.[120] As a result, our knowledge of the early Heavenly Master scriptural corpus depends on the retrospective interpretation of Six Dynasties material, from the 3rd century at the earliest. For this reason, rather than dealing here with the complex issues of philological dating which specialists are still painstakingly debating, I will focus on a few issues of theological and epistemological relevance connected with the cultural representations of the Han era and the corresponding discourse in contemporaneous sources.

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[118] The analysis of the rhymes in a few versified passages of heptameter composition has allowed recent Chinese research to confirm a Han date for these elements, but the heuristic method of these studies has yet to be verified before being extended to other parts of the text. See Wu Weimin, "*Taiping jing* yu qiyan shi de chuxing," *Shanghai daojiao* 3–4 (1989), 34–40; Wang Jian, "*Taiping jing* zhong de qiyan shi," *Guizhou shehui kexue* 135 (1995), 82–84.

[119] Entries by Ursula-Angelika Cedzich (nos. 1205, 1218), Adrianus Dudink (nos. 790, 1195), Marc Kalinowski (no. 1289), and Kristofer Schipper (nos. 615, 658, 785, 786, 789, 1127, 1243, 1273, 1288, 1294, 1343), in *The Taoist canon*, pp. 120–37.

[120] Cf. the corresponding entries in *Daozang tiyao*, eds Ren Jiyu and Zhong Zhaopeng, 3rd ed. (Beijing, 2005), pp. 268 (no. 610), 284 (no. 653), 341–42 (nos. 779–80), 343–44 (nos. 783–84), 535 (no. 1118), 577 (no. 1185), 581–82 (no. 1195), 587–88 (no. 1207), 603 (no. 1231), 617 (no. 1261), 623–24 (nos. 1276–77), 625–26 (no. 1282), 650 (no. 1331).

Heaven and masters

Famously, the two characters *tian* 天 and *shi* 師 already appear as a compound in a group of "various chapters" ("Zapian" 雜篇) of the *Zhuangzi* 莊子 defined by A.C. Graham as "ragbag" chapters, "quite heterogeneous" and "badly fragmented." In a fragment left by Graham unassigned to any of the textual strata he believed the *Zhuangzi* to be made of, we find the Yellow Emperor kowtowing twice before a perspicacious boy from whom he has just sought advice about the best way to govern the empire, and praising him as his "Heavenly Master."[121] In the *Taiping jing*, the same compound is commonly used by the disciples to address their master in the dialogue parts, as shown by the number of occurrences of the compound in the most widely used critical edition of the text.[122] The three-character compounds *tianshi dao* 天師道 and *tianshi jiao* 天師教 even occur in the same *Taiping jing*, but they refer to the teaching of the master (in the dialogue parts), not to a religious organization or dogma.[123] As for the official histories, the first tri-syllable remarkably does not appear as a reference to the Daoist church before the middle of the 7th century,[124] while the second, to my knowledge, is simply foreign to the whole corpus of standard histories.

The bi-syllable *tianshi* is also found in epigraphic material unearthed from Han funerary sites. In the manuscript on bamboo slips from Mawangdui entitled *Shi wen* 十問 (Ten questions) and dated to the early 2nd century BC (ca. 180), *tianshi* is the title of one of the "ten macrobiotic specialists" (Harper) consulted by none other than the Yellow Emperor himself.[125] Three centuries later, 2nd-century AD inscriptions designed

[121] *Zhuangzi* (4th–2nd centuries BC), partly by Zhuang Zhou (ca. 370–301 BC), "Xu Wugui"; see Burton Watson, trans., *The complete works of Chuang Tzu* (New York, 1968), pp. 264–66. For the textual strata to which the "various chapters" may belong, see Angus C. Graham, *Chuang-tzŭ: the seven inner chapters and other writings from the book Chuang-tzŭ* (London, 1981), p. 28.

[122] About 90 occurrences in the *Taiping jing hejiao*. Dialogue, discursive and mixed forms alternate in the received *Taiping jing*, reflecting textual strata assumed to be of different social and historical origins. For a critical approach to the criteria used to define these strata, see my paper "Criminalized abnormality," pp. 1–5; Hendrischke, *The Scripture on Great Peace*, pp. 347–53.

[123] For *tianshi dao*, see *Taiping jing hejiao*, ed. Wang, pp. 70, 82, 357, 680; for *tianshi jiao*: pp. 98, 238, 291, 312, 391, 432, 460.

[124] See Fang Xuanling (578–648), *Jinshu* (644) (Beijing, 1974), 67.1803; 77.2030; 84.2199.

[125] See Harper, *Early Chinese medical literature*, pp. 28–29 (description of the manuscript under the classification mark VI.A), 122 (Harper's commentary), 385–88 (English translation).

to secure graves mention a "divine master of the Heavenly Emperor" (*tiandi shenshi* 天帝神師), a phrase assumed to be a near equivalent of another tetra-syllable from similar epigraphic sources, "emissary of the Heavenly Emperor" (*tiandi shizhe* 天帝使者).[126] And references to a deified heaven called either Heavenly Lord (*tianjun* 天君) or Duke (*tiangong* 天公, perhaps a respectful form of address which could be rendered as "Sire Heaven") may be found in archaeological material as well as in transmitted sources.[127]

Western Zhou (1045–771 BC) documents suggest that the belief in a deified heaven played an important role in the political and religious life of the early Chinese elite. And yet, by the middle of the Spring and Autumn period (770–481 BC), "no prophet spoke on behalf of Heaven, no priests explained its will, there was not even a sacred book to explicate Heaven's demands of the people."[128] Heaven's influential role was either ignored, questioned or played down as a mere behavioral ideal—at any rate, it had fallen far below its former status—in the discourse of the elite of the Warring States era (480–221 BC). During the Han dynasty, for ideological and political motives, Dong Zhongshu 董仲舒 (195–115 BC) pleaded for a return to the religious tradition of the Zhou and laid the theoretical basis of a new imperial cult to Heaven, but his posthumous victory in 31 BC also ensured the absolute separation of the heavenly and human realms.[129]

It is certainly not a coincidence that this evolution through the centuries before and after the founding of the empire was contemporaneous with the development of more "rational" cosmological theories. However, Han sources, either official or unofficial (e.g., the *Taiping jing*), suggest that cosmology underwent a process of "moralization"

[126] See Anna Seidel, "Geleitbrief an die Unterwelt: Jenseitsvorstellungen in den Graburkunden der Späteren Han Zeit," in *Religion und Philosophie in Ostasien: Festschrift für Hans Steininger zum 65. Geburtstag*, eds Gert Naundorf, Karl-Heinz Pohl and Hans-Hermann Schmidt (Würzburg, 1985), p. 179; Seidel, "Traces of Han religion in funeral texts found in tombs," p. 28.

[127] Seidel, ibid., pp. 25–30; Espesset, "Criminalized abnormality," pp. 6–17; Donald Harper, "Contracts with the spirit world in Han common religion: the Xuning prayer and sacrifice documents of AD 79," *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie* 14 (2004), pp. 236–37, n. 28; 256–61. *Tiangong* should here be distinguished from the "indirect reference to the Emperor" mentioned by Hucker, *A dictionary*, p. 509, no. 6706.

[128] Yuri Pines, *Foundations of Confucian thought: intellectual life in the Chunqiu period, 722–453 BCE* (Honolulu, 2002), p. 61.

[129] See Bujard, *Le sacrifice au Ciel dans la Chine ancienne*, pp. 63–75, 219–25; Michael J. Puett, *To become a god: cosmology, sacrifice, and self-divinization in early China* (Cambridge, Mass., 2002), Chapters 6–8.

toward the beginning of our era.[130] This moralized cosmology seems to go well with the conception of heaven which we find precisely in the *Taiping jing*.[131] The archaic conception of heaven reflected in the extant *Taiping jing*, somewhat reminiscent of the Mohist concept of the "will of heaven" (*tianzhi* 天志), helps us understand why the Great Peace agenda was briefly endorsed by the throne under Emperor Ai's 哀帝 rule (6–1 BC) before its promoters were accused of heresy and their reforms, which failed to bring forth any beneficial effects, of being contrary to the Classics (*jing* 經).[132]

In addition to frequent references to a transcendent source of legitimacy and imperial or royal dignity, popular leaders of the Han era may also have included the concept of master (*shi*) in their titles.[133] The various titles Zhang Jue is said to have chosen for himself include "great worthy and excellent master (or master of court gentlemen)" (*da xian liang* [or *lang*] *shi* 大賢良 [or 郎] 師), while Zhang Lu is said to have styled himself "master lord" (*shijun* 師君) and Zhang Xiu, "master of the five bushels of grain" (*wudoumi shi* 五斗米師).[134] At least originally as an official title, *shi* did not refer to a charismatic or religious figure, but rather to an imperial official with advisory or educational functions.[135] For example, Dong Zhuo 董卓 (d. 192), the well-known official who seized power in Luoyang in 189, chose the archaic title of one of the highest court dignitaries, "great master" (*taishi* 太師), in 191, at the peak of his career.[136] Clearly, *shi* as a title (or a compound title including *shi*) is indicative of the continuation of an influence first and foremost of a hierarchical and bureaucratic nature. In the *Taiping jing*, the "enlightened master" 明師 and his handful of still dull disciples 愚生 eager to improve are not only the active partners in dialogue in

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[130] For the moralization of cosmology in official sources, see Wang Aihe, *Cosmology and political culture in early China* (Cambridge, 2000), pp. 129–72; in the *Taiping jing*, see Espesset, "À vau-l'eau, à rebours."

[131] See Barbara Hendrischke, "The place of the *Scripture on Great Peace* in the formation of Taoism," in *Religion and Chinese society*, 1, ed. Lagerwey, pp. 251–61.

[132] *Hanshu*, 11.340; 75.3193–94. Ideologically and rhetorically, the incident revolved around "the compliance with heaven's mind" 應天心, the renewing of "the original mandate of heaven" 天之元命, and the help 佑 sent down to the deficient emperor by August Heaven 皇天.

[133] For examples, see Hendrischke, "Early Daoist movements," pp. 137, 156; Qing et al., *History of Chinese Daoism*, pp. 175–79.

[134] *Sanguo zhi*, Wei, 8.263; *Hou Hanshu*, 71.2299; *Zizhi tongjian*, 58.1872. For *xianliang* 賢良 as a title in Han nomenclature, see Hucker, *A dictionary*, p. 242, no. 2515.

[135] Ibid., p. 421, no. 5202.

[136] *Hou Hanji*, 26.506; *Zizhi tongjian*, 60.1919. See Hucker, *A dictionary*, p. 481, no. 6213.

the rhetorical format of the *Taiping jing*,[137] they also represent major concepts in the sociopolitical ideology of the text.

A probable reason for the increasing prestige of masters during the early centuries of imperial China is the added value of a claimed personal knowledge of the transcendent realm. By that time, ideas of ascension to heaven and other supernatural experiences were already a familiar part of the mental framework of the Chinese, as witnessed by numerous accounts in both received and excavated sources. The polyvalent *Taiping jing*, here again, offers an excellent example of "self-divinization" as the master recalls how, after "a very long time" spent "achieving the Dao and accomplishing Virtue," he could "unite his will with heaven" and "know what heaven wished to say"; then heaven sent forth "essential spirits of the Great Yang" to instruct him. This autobiographic synopsis ends with the statement that "[he has] taken heaven as his master" 以天爲師.[138] This idea that heaven may be taken as one's master may seem reminiscent of *Zhuangzi*, where, with identical wording, it figures among the characteristics of the saint (*shengren* 聖人).[139]

Outside the official hierarchy and sometimes perhaps in rejection of the civil service, the charismatic and scholarly figure of the master as a "philosopher" (*zi* 子) had a long history when the empire was founded.[140] Concomitant with the ascending status of this-worldly masters and, I suspect, inseparable from it, was a similar process of deification undergone by some prestigious masters of the past. This process naturally took place on the imaginary and representational level but undoubtedly had a profound social and historical impact. Since Seidel's study, the best-known example is of course the deification process of Laozi, to which we need not return.

Less emphasized in religious studies is the case of Confucius, even though his cult began immediately after his death, first at the local

[137] See Barbara Hendrischke, "The dialogues between master and disciples in the *Scripture on Great Peace (Taiping jing)*," in *A Daoist florilegium: a festschrift dedicated to professor Liu Ts'un-yan on his eighty-fifth birthday*, eds Lee Cheuk Yin and Chan Man Sing (Hong Kong, 2002), pp. 185–234.

[138] *Taiping jing hejiao*, ed. Wang, p. 70. I translate and discuss the passage in my paper "Revelation between orality and writing in early imperial China: the epistemology of the *Taiping jing*," *Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities* 74 (2002), p. 71.

[139] *A Concordance to the Zhuangzi*, ed. D.C. Lau (Hong Kong, 2000), p. 73. This locus classicus belongs to one of the problematic "ragbag" chapters in Graham's stratigraphy.

[140] See Mark Edward Lewis, *Writing and authority in early China* (Albany, 1999), pp. 63–73, 83–94.

level and later on as a full state-sponsored sacrificial activity in Lu 魯 according to Sima Qian.[141] The official history of the Latter Han records one sacrifice to Confucius ordered by the emperor in 29 AD, and three sacrifices to Confucius and his 72 disciples performed by the emperor in person, in 72, 85 and 124 AD.[142] The unhistorical role of Confucius—as the ideal compiler, editor, expurgator and/or transmitter of the works which were to be included in the "Confucian" canon—progressively developed until it became widely accepted from the Han era on, albeit with varying and often conflicting interpretations as regards the exact nature of his contribution and its extent.[143] But this is arguably only a part of the sanctification process through which the figure of the Sage was recast into Han orthodoxy as a prophet of the accession of the Han house.[144]

Epistemology and revelation

Since orthodoxy builds its identity in opposition to heretical types defined by itself, the concept of heresy and heretical concepts are both essential in the shaping of orthodoxy.[145] With the weft or apocryphal (*wei*) remnants and the composite *Taiping jing*, we enter the unorthodox sphere of the epistemic alternatives which various social groups felt compelled to offer as a challenge to the centralized state, its orthodox ideology, and the established canon. In 175 AD, the standard version of the Five Classics was carved upon stone and the resulting steles, known as *shijing* 石經, were erected in Luoyang for public use.[146] This coincided with the period of almost absolute eunuch domination: the eunuchs had instigated a "proscription of the faction" (*danggu* 黨錮) in 169, a measure aimed at virtually any politically involved group or person in disagreement with their control over the emperor and potentially

[141] *Shiji*, 47.1945.

[142] See *Hou Hanshu*, 1A.40; 2.118; 3.150; 5.238; *zhi*, 8.3184. For a table summing up Latter Han imperial sacrifices, see Mansvelt Beck, *The treatises of Later Han*, pp. 90–94.

[143] See John B. Henderson, *Scripture, canon, and commentary: a comparison of Confucian and Western exegesis* (Princeton, 1991), pp. 21–37, and Michael Nylan's chapter in the present work.

[144] Lewis, *Writing and authority*, pp. 218–38.

[145] See John B. Henderson, *The construction of orthodoxy and heresy: Neo-Confucian, Islamic, Jewish, and early Christian patterns* (Albany, 1998).

[146] *Hou Hanshu*, 8.336; 64.2116; *Zizhi tongjian*, 57.1834–36. See also Wilkinson, *Chinese history*, pp. 439–40, and Michael Nylan's chapter in the present work, which calls into question the traditional understanding of this event.

plotting against them.[147] Though there is no apparent causal relation between the events of 169 and 175, the carving of the Stone Classics added intellectual and epistemological closure to the elimination of all political debate by the dominant clique.

A recent comparative study suggests that the weft writings may have "served as an authoritative foundation" for *jinwen* 今文 ("new text") hermeneutics as regards any topic not covered by the Classics.[148] But the fact that the *weishu* are often conveniently but reductively referred to as "the Confucian apocrypha"[149] in the West has obscured their uniqueness and the richness of their content, which covers exegesis of the Classics, but also politics, history, morals, mantic arts, apotropaic rituals, cosmology (including cosmogony and cosmography), theology, ontology, musicology and more. For example, the *Hetu* and *Luoshu* 洛書 (*River Luo writ*), long before reappearing as numerological graphs of the magic square genre during the Song,[150] were transcendent documents of political and religious significance conveyed to chosen men by supernatural beasts (a tortoise and a dragon-horse) that emerged from the waters of the Yellow river and the river Luo.[151] An *Yijing* 易經 commentary ascribed to Zheng Xuan 鄭玄 (127–200) and quoted in the weft companion entitled *Qian zuo du* 乾鑿度 states that "[he who] receives the river Luo Writ has been appointed Son of Heaven"; and, according

[147] See Rafe de Crespigny, "Political protest in imperial China: the great proscription of Later Han: 167–184," *Papers on Far Eastern history* 11 (1975), 1–36. For the role of eunuchs in the politics of the Latter Han, see also Michaud, "The Yellow Turbans," pp. 67–75.

[148] See Hans van Ess, "The apocryphal texts of the Han dynasty and the old text/new text controversy," *T'oung Pao* 85.1–3 (1999), p. 61. "New text" and "old text" (*guwen* 古文) refer to competing versions of the Classics in Han times, proponents of which debated political and institutional issues through their commentarial activities; see Michael Nylan, "The *chin wen/ku wen* controversy in Han times," *T'oung Pao* 80.1–3 (1994), 83–145.

[149] The relevance of the term "apocryphon" as a translation for *wei* is discussed in van Ess, "The apocryphal texts of the Han dynasty," pp. 30–36. On these documents, see Jack L. Dull, "A historical introduction to the apocryphal (*ch'an-wei*) texts of the Han dynasty," PhD thesis (University of Washington, 1966); Zhong Zhaopeng, *Chenwei lunlüe* (Taibei, 1993).

[150] See Isabelle Robinet, "Les marches cosmiques et les carrés magiques dans le taoïsme," *Journal of Chinese Religions* 23 (1995), 81–94.

[151] See Anna Seidel, "Imperial treasures and Taoist sacraments: Taoist roots in the apocrypha," in *Tantric and Taoist studies in honour of R.A. Stein*, 2, ed. Michel Strickmann (Brussels, 1983), pp. 296–302; John B. Henderson, *The development and decline of Chinese cosmology* (New York, 1984), pp. 82–87. For a wooden figurine of a dragon-horse excavated from a Han tomb, see Li Lin, "Cong Qinghai chutu mu longma kan Han dai mashen chongbai," *Wenbo* 1 (1991), 56–59.

to fragments of *Lunyu* 論語 (Analects) weft material, the Yellow River Chart was expected to reveal to the monarch-to-be the predetermined dates of his tenure (*qi* 期) together with advisory material (*mou* 謀) and the writs (*shu* 書), charts (*tu* 圖) and auspicious omens (*fu* 符) betokening his legitimacy.[152] The fragmentary weft writings collected by Yasui and Nakamura are teeming with occurrences of esoteric material for enthronement such as charts (*tu*), records (*lu* 錄), glyphs (*wen* 文) and "cinnabar writs" (*danshu* 丹書) revealed to imperial contestants by auspicious animals: scarlet birds (*chique* 赤雀), phoenixes, dragons. Among the recipients are the Yellow Emperor and Confucius himself, here as the uncrowned king, *suwang* 素王.[153]

At first, the Han sovereigns encouraged the proliferation of weft texts, but also of prophetic materials (*chen*), which blossomed under Wang Mang's rule. Emperor Guangwu 光武帝 (r. 25–57 AD), the founder of the Latter Han dynasty, is known to have relied widely on weft texts and prognostications in order to assert the transcendent legitimacy of his accession to the throne, as much as Wang Mang. A scarlet light (*chiguang* 赤光) was said to have lit the chamber where the future Guangwu had been born; the year of his enthronement, he claimed that he rode a scarlet dragon (*chilong* 赤龍) in a dream, and an "auspicious omen of submission to the scarlet" (*chifu fu* 赤伏符) circulated among the people.[154] The treatise on sacrifices ("Jisi" 祭祀) in the *Hou Hanshu* quotes a weft text entitled *Hetu chifu fu* 河圖赤伏符 (Auspicious omen of submission to the scarlet of the Yellow River Chart) among several other prognostication texts related to the Han.[155] Guangwu even officially ordered in the year 56 AD that "charts and prophecies" (*tuchen* 圖讖) be spread throughout the empire.[156] But from the end of the dynasty

[152] *Jūshū Isho shūsei*, 1A, *Eki jō* 易上, eds Yasui and Nakamura (Tokyo, 1981), p. 48; *Jūshū Isho shūsei*, 5, *Kōkyō, Rongo* 孝經論語, ed. Nakamura (Tokyo, 1992), pp. 117, 120, 130.

[153] *Jūshū Isho shūsei*, 4B, ed. Nakamura, pp. 135–36.

[154] *Hou Hanji*, 1.1; 3.39; *Hou Hanshu*, 1A.21–22; 1B.86; 17.645. Liu Bang 劉邦 (240–195 BC) had chosen red (agent Fire) as his emblematic color before he founded the Han dynasty in 206 BC, then had ruled under the aegis of the color black (Water). Emperor Wu had changed for yellow (Earth). Emperor Guangwu reverted to red in 26 AD, i.e. one year after he restored the Han house.

[155] *Hou Hanshu*, *zhi*, 7.3165–66. Fragments of the *Hetu chifu fu* are collected in *Jūshū Isho shūsei*, 6, eds Yasui and Nakamura, p. 98. See also Huang Fushan, "Dong Han tuchen *Chifu fu* benshi kao," *Jingxue yanjiu luncong* 8 (2000), 319–50.

[156] *Hou Hanshu*, 1B.84.

onwards, weft texts were repeatedly prohibited and destroyed.[157] Centuries later, providing founders of dynasties with revealed documents legitimizing their accession had become the most prominent political function of Daoist dignitaries.[158] As for the *fu*, reinterpreted as talismans or esoteric glyphs with (among other) apotropaic and therapeutic functions, their design, production, use and distribution to the faithful were perpetuated by Daoist and extra-Daoist religious traditions right down to the present.[159]

Modern scholarly attention has already been drawn to the possible role of the weft ideology in the shaping of the Daoist religion, and on the relationship of the weft texts to the *Taiping jing*.[160] Due to the difficult social conditions toward the end of the Han dynasty, the expectations of people engaged in self-help movements were inclined to feed on numinous matters and, as masters claimed new and transcendent sources of inspiration, revelation would legitimately appear as an alternative and higher form of knowledge. In the *Taiping jing*, the authority of the master's discourse solely and satisfyingly proceeds from its intrinsic divinity; and his own text, being of heavenly nature and thus the only reliable one, should be used as an epistemological tool to check any other writing ever produced.[161] In the *Xiang'er* commentary, those who derive knowledge from non-Daoist writings (*waishu* 外書) are denounced as "deceptive" or "deviant" masters, unable to fathom the truth of the Dao (*dao zhen* 道真, or revealed truth), while the single acceptable scripture is said to be "this text of the Dao" 此道文, obviously a self-reference

[157] See Dull, "A historical introduction," pp. 112–31.

[158] See Seidel, "Imperial treasures and Taoist sacraments," pp. 348–66; John Lagerwey, "Taoist ritual space and dynastic legitimacy," *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie* 8 (1995), 87–94; John Lagerwey, "Rituel taoïste et légitimité dynastique," *Bulletin de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient* 84 (1997), 99–109.

[159] See Seidel, "Imperial treasures and Taoist sacraments," pp. 310–16; Monika Drexler, *Daoistische Schriftmagie: Interpretationen zu den Schriftamuletten* Fu *im* Daozang (Stuttgart, 1994); Catherine Despeux, "Talismans and sacred diagrams," in Daoism handbook, ed., Kohn, pp. 498–540; Strickmann, Chinese magical medicine; Christine Mollier, "Talismans," in *Divination et société dans la Chine médiévale: étude des manuscrits de Dunhuang de la Bibliothèque nationale de France et de la British Library*, ed. Marc Kalinowski (Paris, 2003), pp. 405–29.

[160] See Seidel, "Imperial treasures and Taoist sacraments," pp. 335–40; Li Yangzheng, "*Taiping jing* yu yinyang wuxing shuo, daojia ji chenwei zhi guanxi," *Daojia wenhua yanjiu* 16 (1999), 89–106; Hsiao Dengfu, *Chenwei yu daojiao* (Taibei, 2000).

[161] See my "Revelation between orality and writing in early imperial China," pp. 78–93.

to the *Laozi* interpreted in the light of the *Xiang'er* commentary.[162] The days of the intellectuals of the pre-imperial era who struggled with each other over effectiveness of method and acceptability of ideas are past. We are witnessing the birth of scriptural bodies of revelations claiming to supersede any past or present competing corpus, in conjunction with the first known large-scale popular gatherings of potential believers expecting the enlightened leadership of providential men.

Great Peace

A theme already found in the main text of the Classics and their exegetical apparatus, Great Peace is generally understood to refer to a state of universal equilibrium engendered by the right behavior and governance of the ruler—the way of Great Peace, *taiping zhi dao*.[163] To some extent, this definition is applicable to Great Peace in the *Taiping jing*, at least in its main textual stratum. But the context of revelation gives the notion a new dimension. Just as the orthodox canon (official knowledge) was carved upon stone in 175 AD, revealed knowledge demanded a concrete form in order to be definitively established and to circulate among the faithful. Any manifestation serving the purpose would simultaneously belong to the codified form of the revelation and constitute an integral part of it. Thus every *taiping* text was simultaneously the means of revelation of Great Peace ("divine writings," *shenshu* 神書) and one of the phenomena characterizing the advent of Great Peace (an auspicious omen). In other words, Great Peace went beyond the thematic content of these texts and their material format.

Expectedly, the received *Taiping jing* shares the ideas of the great responsibility of the ruler for bringing about Great Peace and of the auspicious omens sent by Heaven in response. The sovereign should acknowledge the orthodox writings of the Dao (including the Master's own writings) and ensure their widest practice throughout the empire, starting with himself, so that the collective and cumulative burden of past human transgressions (*chengfu* 承負) might eventually be dispelled.[164]

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[162] See Bokenkamp's translation in *Early Daoist scriptures*, pp. 107–09.

[163] For instance, see *Shisan jing zhushu* (Thirteen classics with commentaries and subcommentaries), ed. Ruan Yuan (1764–1849), pp. 419a, 2616b (1818; repr. Beijing, 1980). For a recent historical survey of the intellectual background of the notion of *taiping*, see Hendrischke, *The Scripture on Great Peace*, pp. 4–13.

[164] *Taiping jing hejiao*, ed. Wang, pp. 53, 66, 100. See Barbara Hendrischke, "The concept of inherited evil in the *Taiping jing*," *East Asian History* 2 (1991), 1–30; Kamit-

The *Xiang'er* commentary also uses the rhetoric of Great Peace.[165] The notion is also commonly encountered among the fragments of weft texts, which suggests that there were ideological exchanges or reciprocal influence between weft hermeneutics and Latter Han religious mass movements. In the weft fragments, Great Peace is a positive characteristic of an idealized early Zhou dynasty. Its advent also depends on the proper ritual behavior of the sovereign and his Virtue (*de* 德) as well as on the euphonic resonance of musical notes. When the time has come, the advent of Great Peace is confirmed by the observation of specific auspicious signs, including harmonious weather conditions, the growing of rare plants, and stellar phenomena such as the path of a meteor or the color of a given star. There is even mention of a "metropolis of Great Peace" 太平之都 in the center of heaven, which reminds us of the pivotal location of the stellar deity Taiyi and would seem to foreshadow later Daoist cosmography.[166] It is on the basis of these comparatively consonant Han ideologies that Daoist schools and sectarian groups throughout the Six Dynasties would emphasize the prophetic value of Great Peace, particularly in salvation and cataclysmic contexts.[167]

Concluding remarks

Anyone in early imperial China would assuredly have had some kind of religious beliefs—more or less elaborate, more or less intense, more or less conformist—and anyone pursuing political power would make use of religious claims if they might help his cause. But Latter Han religious mass movements should also be approached within their historical and sociopolitical context, i.e., the decline of central authority

suka Yoshiko, "*Taiheikyō* no shōfu to taihei no riron ni tsuite," in *Rikuchō dōkyō shisō no kenkyū* (Tokyo, 1999), 301–37.

[165] See Bokenkamp's translation of the relevant passages of the *Xiang'er* and his comments in *Early Daoist scriptures*, pp. 90, 128–29, 136–37.

[166] See *Jūshū Isho shūsei*, 1A, eds Yasui and Nakamura, pp. 129, 163; *Jūshū Isho shūsei*, 2, *Sho: Chūkō* 書中候, eds Yasui and Nakamura (Tokyo, 1995), p. 87; *Jūshū Isho shūsei*, 3, *Shi: Rei: Gaku* 詩禮樂, eds Yasui and Nakamura (Tokyo, 1988), p. 90; *Jūshū Isho shūsei*, 4B, ed. Nakamura, p. 78; *Jūshū Isho shūsei*, 5, ed. Nakamura, pp. 42, 126; *Jūshū Isho shūsei*, 6, eds Yasui and Nakamura, pp. 94, 124, 127, 192.

[167] See Christine Mollier, *Une apocalypse taoïste du Ve siècle: le Livre des incantations divines des grottes abyssales* (Paris, 1990); Stephen R. Bokenkamp, "Time after time: Taoist apocalyptic history and the founding of the Tang dynasty," *Asia Major* 3rd series 7.1 (1994), 59–88; Strickmann, *Chinese magical medicine*, pp. 85–103.

and the resulting compensations—more or less adequate—in the form of new bonds of local and regional solidarity. Common people would probably feel that the inexorable slipping of the imperial hold allowed such incidental appropriations of power, unacceptable as they might be under circumstances of peace and prosperity. Whenever the data is available, we realize that the nomenclature and organization of the mass movements discussed in this paper mostly stem from the official bureaucracy. Those who claimed or seized power locally were not just brigand leaders or megalomaniac gurus, whatever their stereotypical representation in the official discourse. By way of illustration, I will mention the case of a commandant of cavalry 騎都尉 who, in present-day Hebei 河北 province, toward the end of the 2nd century, ruled a local community which enacted its own laws, punishments and marriage regulations, and even created its own school system; non-Chinese tribes from the area ended their plundering activities and sent gifts.[168] And yet, no particular religious activities are reported in the official sources, nor the religious healing practices we half expect to find among them. I think it probable there were many other such instances of mutual aid communities in various parts of the empire, but most of them were omitted in the official sources because of lack of information or of relevance to the government. Religious mass movements are an integral part of this phenomenology, and the most tangible part of it.

Politics and religion interacted in a much more complex way than suggested by the picture painted in average textbook accounts.[169] Let me take a few more examples. In the winter of 148 AD, two unrelated usurpers were subdued and executed. The first called himself Son of the Yellow Emperor (Huangdi *zi* 黃帝子) and appointed his own officials; the second claimed to be a Perfected (*zhenren*) and was convicted of plotting a seditious action.[170] Though the source fails to provide any religious affiliation, the titles of both characters are reminiscent of contemporary Daoist and Huang-Lao ideas and discourse—just like those of dozens of other would-be emperors during the Han era. Elsewhere, we are told of a Latter Han military leader named Zhang Jin 張津, who abrogated the laws and statutes of the Han house (or, in a later rendition, was fond of cults to spirits), would wear a crimson turban, play drums

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[168] *Sanguo zhi*, Wei, 11.341–42; *Zizhi tongjian*, 60.1947–48.

[169] The importance of countless local cults, in particular, is still underestimated, as suggested by Marianne Bujard, "Célébration et promotion des cultes locaux."

[170] *Hou Hanshu*, 7.293.

and lute, burn incense and read heterodox popular books of the Dao.[171] Here again, the official redactors fail to identify clearly the character as a follower of Huang-Lao or a medium, or as being an individual and unaffiliated practitioner rather than adhering to a religious group. The worship of spirits (*guishen*) suggests popular local cults while the colored head gear, musical instruments, and burning of incense could refer to Daoist as well as Buddhist practices. Needless to say, though very Daoist-sounding in a literal English equivalent, the expression *daoshu* 道書, "books of the Dao," may have actually covered a wide variety of writings in Han context; and not only *daoshu*, but the homophonous phrase *daoshu* 道術 ("arts of the Dao") could designate such diverse techniques and areas of knowledge as astronomy, hemerology, mantic arts, *jing* hermeneutics, *wei* exegesis and more.[172]

In the final analysis, what does the word "Daoism" applied to the religious life of the Latter Han era mean? In Seidel's wording, the period spanning the years 82–193 AD would be "before and outside of Daoism" and the epigraphic and archaeological sources of the same period would reflect "pre-Daoist or proto-Daoist Han religion."[173] At any rate, it seems clear that what is sometimes referred to as Daoist religious identity today may cover, in Latter Han times, a number of rival sectarian groups, which at most shared a religious "fondness for the Dao," as the 2nd-century stele inscriptions referred to above put it,[174] but also would disagree on issues of dogma and practice, as well as, probably, ecclesiastical authority. This is in line with the denunciation, by the author of the *Xiang'er* commentary, of "deviant learning" from "deviant masters," "deceptive sages with their knowledge of deviant writings" and "flawed or unproductive teachings."[175] And, similarly, the *Taiping jing*'s discourse resorts to a rich lexicon to stigmatize all possible kinds of unacceptable speech, either oral or written: heterodox 邪, false 僞, wicked 惡, spurious 巧, or shallow 浮華.[176] As a result, the

[171] *Sanguo zhi*, Wu, 46.1110; *Zizhi tongjian*, 66.2105. Both passages are translated in de Crespigny, *The last of the Han*, p. 281; Qing et al., *History of Chinese Daoism*, p. 191.

[172] See Stein, "Remarques," pp. 39–40; Hoshina Sueko, "Kan dai ni okeru dōjutsu no tenkai: keigaku, shin'i, jutsusū," *Shirin* (Kyoto) 83.5 (2000), 39–65; Kristofer Schipper's "General introduction" to *The Taoist canon*, pp. 5–7.

[173] Seidel, "Traces of Han religion," pp. 28, 39.

[174] On the same wavelength, see Anna Seidel, "Das neue Testament des Tao: Lao tzu und die Entstehung der taoistischen Religion am Ende der Han-Zeit," *Saeculum* 29.2 (1978), 147–72.

[175] Translated in Bokenkamp, *Early Daoist scriptures*, p. 108.

[176] *Taiping jing hejiao*, ed. Wang, pp. 92, 139, 162, 431, 435, 512.

concept of a "Daoist identity" seems quite anachronistic, even if one deliberately restricts its use to the Heavenly Master group—an ideological bias echoing the strong monistic component of Daoism's apologetic discourse on itself.

When retrospectively superimposed, identity seems to give birth to self-contradictory utterances in our scholarly discourse. For example, let us consider the following premise: "It seems reasonable to limit the appellation 'Daoist' to those movements which not only engaged the services of certain religious or perhaps Daoist experts, but were actually led by them."[177] Would any mass movement only need the active presence of "certain religious experts"—say, a few mediums, or Buddhists, or state ritualists—to be safely called a "Daoist movement?" There can be no doubt that the Scarlet Eyebrows, be it the leaders or the rank-and-file, would be extremely surprised to discover themselves filed under this heading. One wonders if the term is still relevant as an epistemological notion when dealing with a complex array of phenomena defying research compartmentalization and conventional simplification.

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[177] Hendrischke, "Early Daoist movements," p. 137.

THEY SHALL EXPEL DEMONS: ETIOLOGY, THE MEDICAL CANON AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF MEDICAL TECHNIQUES BEFORE THE TANG*

Li Jianmin

> Once, when Duke Huan went hunting in the marshes with Guan Zhong as the driver of his chariot, he saw a ghost. The Duke grabbed Guan Zhong's hand and said: "Did you see that?" Guan Zhong answered, "Your servant didn't see anything." When the duke returned, he became gloomy and withdrawn and fell ill, to the point of not going out for several days. A gentleman from Qi named Huangzi Gao'ao said: "The duke has harmed himself. How could it have been a ghost who harmed the duke! When pent-up *qi* dissipates without returning, it causes insufficiency. When it ascends without descending, it causes irascibility in the person. When it descends without ascending, it causes forgetfulness in the person. When it neither ascends nor descends, but remains in the center of the body by the heart, then it will cause disease.
>
> *Zhuangzi*, "Mastering life"[1]

Introduction: demons as disease-causing agents

The deepest source of disease is fear; unknown things are the breeding ground of fear. Even though Duke Huan of Qi 齊桓公 and Guan Zhong 管仲 went hunting together, it was only Duke Huan who encountered the ghost. Duke Huan was greatly frightened and fell ill to the point of not leaving his home. Being haunted by demons served as the dominant etiological notion during the pre-Qin period.[2] Nevertheless, Huangzi Gao'ao 皇子告敖 in the story above rejected the possibility of Duke Huan seeing a ghost and instead suggested that the direct cause of his disease

* Translated by Sabine Wilms.

[1] Wang Shumin, *Zhuangzi jiaoquan* (Taibei, 1988), "Dasheng," pp. 693–94.

[2] Yan Yiping, "Zhongguo yixue zhi qiyuan kaolue," *Dalu zazhi* 2.8–9 (1951), pp. 20–22, 14–17. See also Song Zhenhao, "Shangdai de wuyi jiaohe he yiliao suxin," *Huaxia kaogu* 1995.1, 77–83 and 13; Zhang Wei, *Shangdai yixue wenhua shilue* (Shanghai, 2005), pp. 97–100.

was excessive worrying, a type of emotion also referred to as "pent-up *qi*" 忿滀之氣. Stagnation of congested *qi* caused pathological changes in the person on both the physical and emotional level, such as irascibility or mental confusion. The ghost that Duke Huan saw with his own eyes was a delusion produced by the action of *qi*.[3] Furthermore, people believed that the disquietude caused by being haunted by demons was the result of "loss of virtue" 失德. The *Han Feizi* 韓非子 states: "What everybody refers to as 'being haunted' (*sui* 祟) is in fact a condition wherein the *hun* and *po* souls have departed and the spirit is in disarray. When the spirit is in disarray, virtue is absent. When demons do not haunt a person, the *hun* and *po* souls do not depart, and when the *hun* and *po* souls have not departed, the spirit is not in disarray. The state of the spirit not being in disarray is called 'having virtue.'"[4] The cycles of *qi* were found everywhere in early China. The *hun* and *po* souls inside the human body, the spirit and "virtue" all are a type of the subtlest *qi*. At the same time, the notion of "*qi*" also carries the implication of moral principles 道德倫理.[5]

The time around the 4th century BC was a key period in the transformation of etiological notions in the early medical classics. Before this time, the main causes of disease had been factors that invaded the human body from the outside, such as climatic changes or calamities caused by demons. According to the chapter on "Medical offices" 醫官 in the *Zhouli* 周禮 (*Rites of Zhou*), "the four seasons each have their pestilential diseases." The "Discussion on wind" 風論 in the *Suwen* 素問 (*Plain questions*) also explains that "wind is the leader among the hundred diseases."[6] Nevertheless, exterior causes like climatic change gradually began to be calculated and subjected to laws, becoming closely linked to hemerology.[7] At the same time, we must pay special attention to the rise of theories on internal causation and psychologi-

[3] For a discussion of *qi* in the early classics, see Du Zhengsheng, *Cong meishou dao changsheng: yiliao wenhua yu Zhongguo gudai shengming guan* (Taibei, 2005), pp. 122–54.

[4] Chen Qipo, *Han Feizi jishi* (Taibei, 1974), "Jielao," p. 357.

[5] Liu Xiang, *Zhongguo chuantong jiazhi quanshi xue* (Taibei, 1993), pp. 93–105.

[6] Ishida Hidemi, "Kaze no byôinron to Chûgoku dentô igaku shisô no keisei," *Shisô* 799 (1991), 105–24.

[7] Jao Tsung-i, "Tan Yinqueshan jian 'tiandi bafeng wuxing kezhu wuyin zhi ju,'" *Jianbo yanjiu* 1 (1993), pp. 113–19; Donald Harper, "Physicians and diviners: the relation of divination to the medicine of the *Huangdi neijing* (Inner canon of the Yellow Thearch)," *Extreme-Orient, Extreme-Occident* 21 (1991), 91–110.

cal explanations.[8] According to the “Discussion on celestial truth from remote antiquity” 上古天真論 in the *Suwen*, “When people are tranquil and empty [of desires and upsets], true *qi* will follow them and the spirit will be guarded inside. Where could disease possibly come from?”[9] The “Discussion on explaining the five excesses” 疏五過論 in the *Suwen* states that, “Even if not struck by [external] evil, disease can form internally.”[10] These expressions quite clearly emphasize protecting the spirit internally in the vein of Daoist discussions on “cultivating life,” rather than focusing on the harm done to the human body by external evils.[11] The *Zhuangzi* 莊子 states: “[When a person is] level and at ease, tranquil and quiet, worries are unable to enter and evil *qi* is not able to take the person by surprise. Hence the person’s virtue is complete and the spirit lacks nothing.”[12] The *Huainanzi* 淮南子 reads:

> When people are greatly enraged, they smash their *yin*; when they are greatly joyful, they drop their *yang*. Thinness of *qi* causes loss of voice; surprise and terror cause mania; worry and grief cause increased hatred. Consequently, diseases accumulate. When likes and dislikes are manifold, misfortunes will follow upon each other.[13]

These quotations all emphasize disease as being formed by a person’s emotions. In the story told above about Duke Huan of Qi seeing a ghost, Huangzi Gao’ao also explains the ghost as being generated internally.

Admittedly, the new theories about *qi* and those about internally caused disease interpreted the same phenomena quite differently. Nevertheless, the story of Duke Huan seeing a ghost also reflects the fact that ghosts as disease-causing agents were still rather important.[14] The present chapter analyzes the transformation and new definition of

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8 Yamada Keiji, *Chûgoku igaku ha ikani tsukuraretaka* (Tokyo, 1999), pp. 99–103.

9 Long Bojian and Long Shizhao, *Huangdi neijing jijie: Suwen* (Tianjin, 2004), p. 18.

10 Ibid., p. 1109.

11 This topic is discussed in Xu Fuguan, *Liang Han sixiang shi*, vol. 2 (Taibei, 1993), pp. 41–49.

12 Wang Shumin, *Zhuangzi jiaoquan*, “Keyi,” p. 556.

13 Liu Wendian, *Huainan honglie jijie* (Taibei, 1985), “Yuandao,” pp. 20–21.

14 For demonological etiologies and related ritualistic treatments, see Liao Yuqun, “Zhongguo gudai zhoujin liaofa yanjiu,” *Ziran kexue shi yanjiu* 12.4 (1993), 373–83; Zhu Yingshi, “‘Zhoujin boshi’ yuanliu kao—jian lun zongjiao dui suishu xingzhengfa de yingxiang,” *Tang yanjiu* 5 (1999), 147–60; Fan Jiawei, *Liuchao Sui Tang yixue zhi chuancheng yu zhenghe* (Shatian, 2004), pp. 59–89; Nathan Sivin, “Chûgoku dentô no gireiteki iryô ni tsuite,” in Sakai Tadao, ed., *Dôkyô no sôgôteki kenkyû* (Tokyo, 1981), pp. 97–140; Yamada Keiji, *Yeming niao: yixue, zhoushu, chuanshuo* (Tokyo, 1990), pp. 3–51.

demons as causes of disease that emerged between the Warring States and Six Dynasties periods, with a special focus on their role in the medical classics. I suggest that the sudden rise in theories of internal causation in the Warring States period and additional developments in theories on moving *qi* and external causes in medicine in the middle of the Eastern Han period are two clues for understanding developments in etiology. In the final years of the Eastern Han, the latent current of demonological etiology combined with the notion of wrongdoing in ancestor worship and resurfaced, while ritualistic medical techniques like *jinzhou* 禁咒 ("charms and curses") at the same time received the approval of physicians. As a result, they no longer occupied a peripheral corner in medicine, but were canonized and slightly later, systematized. In this chapter, I shall focus on the relationship between ritual, cosmology and theories of the body, in the hope of deepening the reader's understanding of "religious" medical treatments during this period.

The new definition of zhuyou 祝由 *(incantations for removal) in the medical classics*

People and ghosts (*gui* 鬼) occupied the same space. While some research indicates that ghosts, goblins, specters and anomalies had a tendency to appear in specific areas[15] and other studies touch on shifts in notions about the afterlife,[16] in early Chinese society the people intermingled closely with ghosts in their daily life and activities. The section entitled "Spellbinding curses" (*jiejiu pian* 詰咎篇) in the daybook manuscript (*rishu* 日書) from Shuihudi 睡虎地 (Hubei) clearly demonstrates that spirits of every shape and form could harass and play tricks

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[15] For example, Jiang Shaoyuan, *Zhongguo gudai lüxing zhi yanjiu* (Shanghai, 1937).

[16] For representative works, see for example Poo Mu-chou, *Zhuixun yiji zhi fu: Zhongguo gudai de xinyang shijie* (Taibei, 1995), pp. 192–265; Wu Hung, "Handai yishu zhong de 'tiantang' tuxiang he 'tiantang' guannian," *Lishi wenwu* 6.4 (1996), 6–25; Lian Shaoming, "'Zengji kun' mingwen suojian Chudi guannian zhong de dixia shijie," *Nanfang wenwu* 1996.1, 112–13; Liu Xinfang, "Haogong, haoxian yu haoli," *Zhongguo wenzi* 24 (1998), 113–18; Ying-shih Yü, "O soul, come back!—a study in the changing conceptions of the soul and afterlife in pre-Buddhist China," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 47.2 (1987), 363–95; K.E. Brashier, "Han thanatology and the division of souls," *Early China* 21 (1996), 125–58; Yoshikawa Tadao, *Chûgoku kodaijin no yume to shi* (Tôkyô, 1985), pp. 7–40; Kominami Ichirô, "Kandai no sorei kannen," *Tôhô gakuhô* 66 (1994), 1–62.

on people, causing people to fall ill with life-threatening conditions or to suffer from nightmares and other mental abnormalities. The section proposes different self-help methods when facing these various types of special ghosts.[17] These techniques are called "methods for releasing and expelling" (*jiezhu zhi fa* 解逐之法),[18] and are said to resemble ancient rituals for exorcising pestilence like the *nuo* 儺.[19] At times, they are also called the arts of *zhuyou* 祝由 (incantations for removal) or of *zhoujin* 咒禁 (cursing charms).[20]

From the perspective of etiology, the section on "Spellbinding curses" in the Shuihudi daybook regularly blames all sorts of vexation that people experience "without reason" on harassment by various types of "ghost." For example, "if all the people in a household suffer epidemic disease even though there is no reason for it, some dying and others falling ill, this means that a malicious ghost is inside." "If all the people in a household have no *qi* to breathe and are unable to move, this means that a devouring spirit is present in the household."[21] Suffering is always personal, and people therefore aspire to find a genuine cause. What this text referred to as "without reason" most likely implied that the person considered himself to be without moral fault. Alternatively, the so-called "theory of *qi*" (*qilun* 氣論) was ineffective and unable to supply a cause. Among the diseases mentioned in this chapter, emotional and psychological disorders predominate. Thus we find descriptions such as "a person suffering from a grieving heart without reason," "a girl who is not insane but sings in the note *shang* 商," "a person who is worried without reason" and "a person who is angry without reason."[22] People assumed that the various types of suddenly appearing fortuitous pain stemmed from harassment by demons. Still, ritualistic healing was used not only to manage psychological or mental disorders, but at the same time also addressed all sorts of physical disorders.[23] Nevertheless, Yamada Keiji has pointed out in his research on the "The recipes for fifty-two ailments" (*Wushi'er bingfang* 五十二病方) in the Mawangdui 馬王堆 silk manuscripts that the range of incantatory treatment methods

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[17] Liu Lexian, "Shuihudi qinjian rishu 'jiejiupian' yanjiu," *Kaogu xuebao* 1993.4, 435–54.
[18] See Huang Hui, *Lunheng jiaoshi* (Taibei, 1983), "Jiechu," pp. 1035–41.
[19] Jao Tsung-i, "Yinshang jiawei zuo 'nuo' kao," *Minsu quyi* 84 (1993), 31–42.
[20] Li Ling, *Zhongguo fangshu kao* (Beijing, 2000), pp. 330–40.
[21] Liu Lexian, "'Jiejiupian' yanjiu," pp. 435–36.
[22] Ibid., pp. 435–37.
[23] Liao Yuqun, "Zhoujin liaofa yanjiu," p. 382.

still focused primarily on three classes of disorders, namely psychological, incurable and randomly occurring illnesses.[24]

Life for the common people in antiquity can perhaps be characterized as falling under the category of "pandemonism" 泛鬼論. In this context, the term *gui* 鬼 (demons) in the "Spellbinding curses" refers to ghosts, evil spirits, anomalies, specters and other words without clear distinction in meaning. In fact, a few birds and beasts or natural phenomena also have magical characteristics that can haunt and harm people. For example, "if a dog constantly enters people's houses at night, takes hold of the husband, and plays with the women, but cannot be caught, this is a spirit dog pretending to be a ghost"; "if wild beasts resemble the six domestic animals and speak when encountering humans, this is the *qi* of whirling wind."[25] These spirits are animated and able to speak with and play tricks on humans. They consist not only of immaterial evil spirits such as apparitions that tend to be difficult to catch. Humans also caught a number of ghosts that they could cook and eat, such as in the following instances: "There is a red pig with a horse's tail and a dog's head. If you cook and eat it, it has beautiful *qi*." "If a wolf constantly calls out to people saying, 'Open the door for me,' then it is not a ghost. Kill it, then cook and eat it. It has delicious flavor."[26]

Nevertheless, the real foundation for believing in ghosts came from the notion that people turned into ghosts after death. The section on "Spellbinding curses" from Shuihudi contains the following entries: "When a person's wife, concubine, or friend dies, its ghost will return"; "A ghost that constantly enters a person's chamber stark naked is a child who has died young and was not buried"; "An infant ghost, who constantly yells out to people 'Give me food!' is a ghost whose mother has died while still breastfeeding."[27] Ghosts of newly deceased persons or of those who never received a proper burial or worship were the cause of haunting (*sui* 祟). Among the factors that caused ghosts to haunt people and bring illness, the spirits of ancestors were particularly important. Hence, the primary cause of disease in the Shuihudi daybook is the souls of close relatives, like "father and mother," "the king's father," "the king's mother," "the king's parents" and "the mother on high," The second most important etiology is being haunted by evil ghosts like

[24] Yamada Keiji, *Yixue, zhoushu, chuanshuo*, pp. 8–9.
[25] Liu Lexian, " 'Jiejiupian' yanjiu," p. 436.
[26] Ibid., pp. 436–38.
[27] Ibid., pp. 436–37.

"external ghosts" or "external ghosts that have died prematurely." In addition, shamans themselves were also able to use their art to cause a person to fall ill.[28] Wang Chong 王充 (27–91 AD) points out in the *Lunheng* 論衡 (*Balanced assessments*) that those shamans who make it their profession to perform rites of divine benefaction and declaration 禱告 for other people are also able by cursing to transfer a person's disease or to aggravate a person's misfortune.[29] Therefore, whenever a person suffered from illness "without reason," it was in fact necessary to consider whether it was a spirit or shaman that had done the haunting. In the bibliographical chapter of the *Hanshu* 漢書 (*History of the Former Han*), there is a section on "calculations and techniques" (*shushu* 數術). In it, we find titles like "auspicious signs transforming into anomalies" 禎祥變怪, "humans, ghosts, specters, and the six domestic animals transforming into anomalies" 人鬼精物六畜變怪, "curses for transforming into anomalies" 變怪誥咎 and "capturing the inauspicious and investigating demonic entities" 執不祥劾鬼物, that is, books that are related in content to the excavated daybook manuscripts.[30] This makes it eminently clear that the belief in spirits as disease-causing agents was wide-spread and strong not only in the lower levels of society.

Among the recipes for *zhuyou* 祝由 found in manuscripts like the Shuihudi bamboo slips, the Mawangdui silk texts, and the Zhoujiatai 周家臺 bamboo slips,[31] a number of ritualistic actions for the treatment of disease by expelling demons are meant to be executed by affected individuals themselves, but shamans were also involved on occasion. In *The recipes for fifty-two ailments* from Mawangdui, for example, there are 34 recipes for *zhuyou* 祝由, which is 12 percent of the total of 283 recipes—not a very high rate. Out of these, a total of 25 recipes contain incantatory terms like "incant" 祝曰, "call out" 呼曰, "say" 曰, "spit and spout" 唾噴 or "blow out fiery breath" 吹; three recipes contain incantations for direct recitation; three recipes combine incantations with performative acts like the "Pace of Yu" 禹步, and two recipes contain only the Pace of Yu without any incantations, leaving but two recipes.[32] Regarding the content of the incantations, some implore the

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[28] Kudô Motô, "Suikochi shinkan « nissho » ni okeru byôinron to kishin no kankei ni tsuite," *Tôhôgaku* 88 (1994), 1–21.
[29] Huang Hui, *Lunheng jiaoshi*, "Yandu," p. 948.
[30] Gu Shi, *Hanshu yiwenzhi jiangshu* (Taibei, 1980), pp. 237–38.
[31] For the incantatory recipes from Zhoujiatai, see Hubeisheng Jingzhoushi Zhouliang yuqiao yizhi bowuguan, *Guan ju Qin Hanmu jiandu* (Beijing, 2001).
[32] Yan Jianmin, *Wushi'er bingfang zhubu yi* (Beijing, 2005), pp. 233–35.

spirits for help, others refer to methods and implements for exorcizing the disease-causing demons, and still others adopt a fierce tone to intimidate the demons:[33]

1. Then spit on the ladle and chant this incantation over it: "Spouter, spout ferociously. On high be like the sweeper star. Down below be like congealed blood. You will be seized left of the gate. You will be cut apart right of the gate. Should you not desist, you will be quartered and exposed in the marketplace."[34]
2. At sunrise have the person with inguinal swelling face east beneath the roof gutter. Have another person grasp a rammer, face west, and chant this incantation: "Today. So-and-so's inguinal swelling bulges today desist. So-and-so's inguinal swelling desist. [1][35] your Father and Mother. Both are expired—*bai* (arbor-vitae) rammed them. Throwing down Father and hitting the Sons, how can there not be desistance." Hit the inguinal swellings twice seven times with the rammer. After completion, immediately say: "So-and-so rise. Inguinal swelling desist."[36]
3. Chant this incantation: "Spouter. Child Sprite Father. Child Sprite Mother. Do not hide [3] north. Shamanka Mistress searches for you and certainly catches you. She [1] your four limbs, plaits your ten fingers, and casts you [1] water. Being human, being human—you join demons." Each time travel [1] with large-bellied gourds for axles and a worn out winnowing basket for the chassis. Harness it to the person's black pig and travel through the person's home.[37]

Most importantly, *zhuyou* incantations treated illness by expelling spirits with symbolic actions, tools and words. Thus, infant convulsions (example 1) and child sprite disease (example 3) are treated with the actions of spitting saliva and spouting, followed by the recitation of incantations. Additionally, the person performing the act holds a food ladle or wooden stick and uses it to attack the disease-causing demon (examples 1 and 2). The incantatory phrases threaten, for example, to dismember the spirit: "If you still will not desist from doing evil, your body will be dismembered in public" (example 1). Because the spirit sometimes could in turn implicate relatives, we find a father and a son, as the spirit world was characterized by hierarchical relationships. Thus

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[33] Zhang Lijun, "'Wush'er bingfang' zhuyou zhi yanjiu," *Zhonghua yishi zazhi* 27.3 (1997), 144–47.

[34] Ma Jixing, *Mawangdui gu yishu kaoshi* (Changsha, 1992), p. 374. Translation by Donald Harper, *Early Chinese medical literature* (London, 1998), pp. 233–34.

[35] Numbers in brackets refer to the number of missing characters in the original.

[36] Ibid., p. 481. Trans. Harper, ibid., pp. 262–63.

[37] Ibid., p. 636. Trans. Harper, ibid., p. 302.

the incantation in example 2 threatens the disease-causing demon, saying: "Your father and mother both were killed by arbor-vitae sticks. So how could you not stop doing evil?" And the incantation in example 3 points out: "Regardless of whether it is the ghost's father or mother, neither of them has a burial site, and the shamanka will most certainly find you. Breaking your four limbs, binding your ten fingers, she will take you and throw you into water." In other words, she will drown the demon.[38] Spirits were always on the lookout for places to live in. Different disorders were related to specific spirits attacking or haunting the human body.

The haunting spirits each frequented specific regions where they were particularly active. In the *Zhuangzi*, after Huangzi Gao'ao had attributed Duke Huan's illness to internal harm, the duke asks him whether ghosts exist, and Gao'ao responds:

> In trenches in the mud lives the *li* 履 spirit; in the stove lives the *ji* 髻 spirit; inside the entrance where there is a lot of hustle and bustle resides the spirit of the thunderbolt 雷霆神; below the northeastern wall live ghosts called *bei'a* and *guilong* 倍阿鮭蠪; below the northwestern wall lives the ghost *yiyang* 泆陽; in the water lives *wangxiang* 罔象; the ghost of the hills is called *shen* 峷; in the mountains lives the uniped 夔; in open fields lives the *panghuang* 彷徨; and in marshes lives the *weiyi* 委蛇.[39]

The chapter "Revisions on ghosts" 訂鬼篇 in the *Lunheng* quotes a legend from a *Book of rites* (*Lishu* 禮書):

> Emperor Zhuanxu 顓頊 had three sons who became pestilence demons after death. Among them, one lives in the waters of the Jiang 江 river and is the *nue*/malaria demon 虐鬼; one lives in the Ruo 若 river and is the *wangliang* 魍魎 demon; the last one is the demon of small children, who lives in empty houses and abandoned sheds and hides in dark moist corners to startle children.[40]

Both of these examples illustrate how people in antiquity in their daily lives faced dreaded places, whether in corners of their own homes or outside, where spirits lay in hiding to wait for an opportunity to haunt humans. The Chu manuscripts from tomb no. 2 at Baoshan 包山 (Hubei), discovered in 1987, contain records of divinations and sacrifices accomplished during the last three years of the occupant's life before he

[38] Zhang Lijun, "Zhuyou zhi yanjiu," pp. 145–46.
[39] Wang Shumin, *Zhuangzi jiaoquan*, p. 694.
[40] Huang Hui, *Lunheng jiaoshi*, p. 935.

died of illness (318–316 BC). In these records, we encounter spirits that had been exorcised, described as “harming people” 人害, “not guilty” 不辜, “died prematurely” 殤, “died in battle” 兵死 and “drowned persons” 溺人.[41] Pestilence demons (*ligui* 厲鬼) and ghosts of wrongly accused persons (*yuanhun* 冤魂) are the most commonly mentioned spirits in these texts. Among the exorcistic rituals used here, a few attempt to prognosticate the location of the evil haunting. Even though the spirits were ubiquitous, they still tended to be active in specific locations.[42]

At this point in time, a new development occurred, namely the synthesis of the discourse on demonic haunting with the newly arisen theory of *qi*. With regard to contemporaneous seasonal rituals, each of the four seasons was associated with different epidemic disorders and pestilential *qi* that harmed people. Therefore, the collective Nuo 儺 ritual was performed to exorcise disease.[43] The remarks about the state Nuo in the “Monthly ordinances” (“Yueling” 月令)—“Order the state Nuo: at the nine gates, dismember and cast out 磔攘 in order to conclude the *qi* of spring”—refers to the practice of dismembering dogs at each of a city’s gates and hanging them from the gate, so as to cast out baleful *qi*. Sun Xidan has collected the explanations of classical scholars from the Han period regarding the Nuo. They reflect the pragmatic character of belief in the Han period:

> Nuo simply means to expel pestilence from the home. In the *Zhouli*, the *fangxiang* 方相 exorcists were in charge of it. “Ordering the state Nuo ritual” (*guo nuo* 國難) means that the people in the state are ordered to perform the Nuo. This refers to the energies (*qi*) of *yin* and *yang* which flow between heaven and earth. When they are evil and foul and not right, they can constantly strike people and cause illness. The ghosts of the unfortunate dead (*ligui* 厲鬼) take advantage of this and create harm. Now, *yangqi* is diffuse, while *yinqi* is sunken and stagnant. Hence the *qi* of *yin* cold is most harmful. Furthermore, ghosts are also *yin* in kind and constantly take advantage of *yin* to emerge. Therefore, in mid-autumn, when *yinqi* reaches the earth, the Son of Heaven initiates the Nuo ritual. In the last month of winter, *yinqi* is most exuberant and it is also the end of the year. Therefore he orders those in charge to do the Great Nuo. In the last month of spring, *yangqi* is exuberant. The reason there are also Nuo performances then is that there are people who have contracted the *qi* of winter cold but have not immediately fallen ill. When they are now exposed frequently to the *qi* of spring warmth, this can make it break out.

[41] On this manuscript, see further the chapter by Marc Kalinowski in Volume One.
[42] Li Ling, *Zhongguo fangshu kao*, p. 293.
[43] Kurihara Keisuke, “Takujô no shûzoku ni tsuite,” *Tôhôgaku* 45 (1973), 1–17.

> Hence the Nuo is used to expel it. *Zhe* 磔 means to dismember the body. When you "dismember and cast out at the nine gates," pestilence is driven out of the country. By dismembering victims who are sacrificed to the spirits of the state's gates, the aim is to cast out misfortune and disaster, to interdict the ghosts of pestilence, and prevent them from regaining entry in the future.[44]

The activity of pestilence ghosts was not only restricted in space, but also in time. Hence the ghosts also awaited certain seasonal changes before they emerged. In the framework of a numerological cosmology, people used the waxing and waning of *yinqi* and *yangqi* to express their experience of the seasons. Since ghosts were associated with *yin*, the times when they haunted humans also coincided with the growth and decline of cold *yinqi* throughout the course of the year. In the late Eastern Han period, the classical scholar Zheng Xuan 鄭玄 (127–200 AD) used apocrypha (*weishu* 緯書) and the explanations of astrologers to argue the following: in the third month, which is the last month of spring, the sun moves from the *wei* 胃 mansion to the *mao* 昴 mansion, both of which are in close vicinity to the stars Daling 大陵 and Jishi 積尸, which govern the affairs of death and burial: "As a result of the *qi* of Daling and Jishi being set free (*yi* 佚 [逸]), the pestilence ghosts (*ligui*) emerge with it." In the 12th month, which is the last month of winter, the sun passes through the mansions *wei* 危 and *xu* 虛. In the vicinity of *wei*, there are the four stars called *fenmu* 墳墓 (tomb), as well as the "stars in charge of the demon officials." At this time, "the pestilential demons follow the strong *yin* and emerge to harm humans." Among the *qi* in the human body, there is also seasonal *qi*. To explain the reason so many people tended to fall seriously ill during times of seasonal change, people in early China gave a new interpretation to the Nuo exorcism that had been transmitted from long ago.[45]

As a key contribution to this development, medical classics like the *Huangdi neijing*[46] 黄帝内经 (*Yellow Emperor's inner classic*) applied the theory of *qi* to create a new interpretation for the practice of *zhuyou*. The "Discussion on moving essence and transforming *qi*" 移精變氣論 in the *Suwen* contains the following conversation:

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[44] Sun Xidan, *Liji jijie* (Taibei, 1984), pp. 396–97.

[45] Zhan Yinxin, *Shenling yu jisi—Zhongguo chuantong zongjiao zonglun* (Nanjing, 1992), pp. 384–85.

[46] For a discussion of the formation and date of the *Neijing*, see Liao Yuqun, *Qihuang yidao* (Shenyang, 1992), pp. 51–76.

> The Yellow Emperor asked: "I have heard that when the ancients treated disease, they only moved essence and transformed *qi*. Thus they were able to perform *zhuyou* and that was all. In our current age, disease is treated with toxic medicines to treat the inside and with needles and stones to treat the outside. Sometimes it is cured, sometimes not. What is the reason for this?[47]

This quotation restricts the practice of *zhuyou* to the psychological function of changing the patient's mind. Moreover, the new medical techniques were explained as befitting the arrival of a new age:

> People in the present age are not like this. Anxiety and worrying hem in the inside, or the body is injured on the outside. Moreover, they have lost compliance with the four seasons and go against what is appropriate in the cold or in summer heat. Bandit wind frequently arrives, and emptiness evil arrives morning and night inside, in the five viscera and in the bones and marrow, and externally damages the orifices, the flesh and the skin. For these reasons, minor illnesses invariably become serious, and major illnesses invariably lead to death. Therefore, performing *zhuyou* cannot end illness.[48]

At the same time, a new rationalization was created for demons as disease-causing agents: the chapter on "Bandit wind" 賊風 in the *Lingshu* 靈樞 (*Magic pivot*) states:

> If a person has not encountered evil wind and also does not suffer from an apprehensive and fearful will, but suddenly falls ill, what is the reason for this? Could it be due to anything but the activity of demons?[49]

This serves to show that suddenly occurring disorders continued to be easily attributed to demonic haunting, which reminds us of the abovementioned concept of "without cause" from the "Spellbinding curses" chapter of the Shuihudi daybook. Furthermore, "bandit wind" as a "latent evil" 故邪 functioned as a preexisting cause precisely because it lay latent inside the body before any outbreak:

> This also serves as a latent evil that has lodged here prior to erupting. As a consequence, the will has aversions and desires, blood and *qi* are disordered internally, and the two *qi* strike at each other. Its origin is minute, and it cannot be seen or heard. That is why it resembles demons and spirits.[50]

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47 Long Boxian and Long Shizhao, *Suwen*, p. 189.

48 Ibid.

49 Long Bojian and Long Shizhao, *Huangdi neijing jijie: Lingshu* (Tianjin, 2004), p. 1879.

50 Ibid., p. 1879.

Pre-existing evil transformed when a person's emotions were stimulated, as, for example, by experiencing something loathsome or by unsatisfied desires, inducing the formation of illness. This seems to have indirectly reinforced the role played by "internal causes" in illness. Taking it a step further, seeing a ghost had become the result of sickness, apprehension or excessive deliberation. The *Lunheng* also states that the pain induced by illness generates fear and apprehension:

> People suffering from illness experience severe physical pain and therefore say that demons are assaulting them with whips and staffs. If they see demons, they keep mallets and ropes by their side. In the fear and apprehension due to the pain of illness, they have absurd apparitions. At the onset of disease, they experience fear and surprise; hence they see demons arriving. Suffering from illness, they fear death; hence they see the demons' anger. Experiencing the pain of disease, they see demons' beating. All of these are empty fictions of their imagination and not necessarily real.[51]

Therefore it is not the case that spirits caused disease but just the opposite. Fear and apprehension were the imaginary origin of disease and pain.

As described above, conditions mentioned in the recipes for *zhuyou* included a variety of pathological changes of both the spirit and the body. Nevertheless, the only disorders related to ghosts and spirits in the medical classics are "withdrawal" (*dian* 癲) and "mania" (*kuang* 狂). These two diseases are both associated with abnormalities of the spirit, withdrawal manifesting itself by an abnormally quiet attitude and mania by an abnormally animated one. As explained in the chapter on "Withdrawal and mania" 癲狂 in the *Lingshu*, "persons with mania have an increased appetite and a tendency to see ghosts," and they snigger to themselves. This pathological state is caused by great joy having injured the heart.[52] The cause of disease is here identified as damage to the spirit from great joy, and the recommended method of treatment is acupuncture. Moreover, the 20th to 59th "Difficult issues" in the *Nanjing* 難經 (*Classic of difficult issues*), a book that was compiled around the 2nd century AD, likewise identifies "seeing ghosts" as a symptom of mania.[53] That is, according to the medical understanding of the time, seeing ghosts was the result of mania, not its cause. In fact, a large

[51] Huang Hui, *Lunheng jiaoshi*, "Dinggui," p. 931. Cf. Alfred Forke, tr. *Lun-hêng. Part I. Philosophical essays of Wang Ch'ung* (Leipzig, 1907), p. 239.

[52] Long Boxian and Long Shizhao, *Lingshu*, p. 1631.

[53] Guo Aichun and Guo Hongtu, *Bashiyi nanjing jijie* (Tianjin, 1984), pp. 48, 112.

number of technical terms for causes of disease in the *Neijing* such as "evil" (*xie* 邪) or "evil *qi*" are terms that were transformed or reproduced from the earlier discourse on demonic haunting (*guisui* 鬼祟). In particular, the evil *qi* of wind, cold, summer heat, dampness and so on is indistinguishable from past notions about ghosts, spirits and anomalous entities. Again, the understanding of nightmares, for example, is in the Shuihudi daybook associated with being haunted by malign demons,[54] while it is in the *Lingshu* chapter on "Dreams caused by excesses and evils" 淫邪發夢 explained under the category of "excess evil" (*yinxie* 淫邪). This category refers to disease causes like emotions, overeating, taxation and rest that invade the human body from the outside and then operate in conjunction with the body's constructive and defensive *qi* or follow mental activities like those of the *hun* and *po* souls and so prevent the person from sleeping peacefully by generating strange dreams and illusions.[55] There is also a condition called "evil crying" (*xieku* 邪哭), a disorder that is contracted without having experienced abnormal grief or joy. It manifests itself in the form of increased dreaming, where the patient is unable to control his own spirit. Moreover, it can be divided into two types according to the chapter on "Pulses, symptoms, and treatments of accumulations of wind-cold in the five viscera" 五臟風寒積聚病脈証并治 in the *Jingui yaolue* 金匱要略 (*Essential prescriptions of the golden coffer*):

> When evil crying causes unrest in the *hun* and *po* souls, it is a lack of blood and *qi*. Lack of blood and *qi* is associated with the heart, and when heart *qi* is empty, such people are fearful. When closing the eyes and falling asleep, they travel far in their dreams and the spirit is scattered, while the *hun* and *po* souls move frenetically. Feebleness of *yinqi* causes withdrawal; feebleness of *yangqi* causes mania.[56]

This type of reasoning doubtlessly resulted from the rationalization of the discourse on demonic haunting.

From the time of the Warring States on, etiology in the early medical classics underwent path-breaking changes. Here, we are looking at a great diversity of notions about disease within a single time period.

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[54] See Lin Fu-shih, "Shishi shuihudi Qin jian 'rishu' zhong de meng," *Shihuo yuekan* 17.3.4 (1988), 30–37.

[55] Long Boxian and Long Shizhao, *Lingshu*, pp. 1783–89.

[56] Guo Aichun and Wang Yuxing, *Jingui yaolue fanglun jiaozhu yuyi* (Beijing, 1999), pp. 125–26.

Contemporaneous efforts to treat disease reveal aspects of a variety of mutually conflicting etiologies. As the "Separate discussion on the five viscera" 五藏別論 in the *Suwen* indicates, if a patient believed in spirits, the physician would not be able to obtain good treatment results. If the patient was unwilling to use needles or stones (or in other words, believed in *zhuyou* and other shamanic methods), the physician's hands were tied and he was at wits' end. If the patient did not trust the physician, the disease could not be treated. In such cases, forcing the patient to listen to the doctor would only cause weariness and wasted efforts.[57] That said, what these repeated admonitions in the medical classics reveal is that the notion of spirits as disease-causing agents was still very much present in the daily lives of the majority of patients. They demonstrate that specters had not scattered but were on the contrary just waiting for an opportunity to emerge. The following section will examine in detail the new features and further developments of the discourse on demonic haunting after the Han period.

New developments in the theory of demons as disease-causing agents

Wherever disease exists for even a single day, the belief in spirits will not disappear. In fact, as far as people in ancient China were concerned, no matter what type of illness affected them, they interpreted it as a personal punishment or warning from the spirits. Thus the theory of demonic haunting was at the root of etiology. To be sure, the influence of climatic disasters was huge, but changes in the natural world were subsumed under the law of retaliation under the control of the spirits. Disease was one of the tools by which the spirits acted out their intentions. In the medical texts after the Warring States period, content related to demonic haunting is rare, and "wind" became the new dominant notion of disease. At the same time, the perils of the outside world had to coincide with internal depletion of the body before they could give rise to disease.[58] In the story quoted at the beginning of this chapter, with his explanation that "the duke has harmed himself,"

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[57] Long Boxian and Long Shizhao, *Suwen*, p. 178.

[58] Shigehisa Kuriyama, *Shenti de yuyan—cong Zhong Xi wenhua kan shenti zhi mi* (Taibei, 2001), pp. 234–47.

Huangzi Gao'ao wrote a new page in the history of attitudes toward demonic haunting.

Seek the cause inside yourself: the Warring States and early Han practitioners of the art of "nurturing life" strove to guard the essence spirit within and to attain an attitude of freedom from desires in both mind and body as the backdrop for a complete absence of disease and for longevity. The *Lüshi chunqiu* 吕氏春秋 (*Annals of Sire Lü*) states:

> The sage observes the appropriateness of *yin* and *yang* and discerns what is of benefit to the myriad things so as to facilitate life. For this reason, the essence spirit is peaceful in the physical body and the years of life are extended. Being extended means that they are not shortened but continued and their number is completed. Striving to complete their number, the sage removes all harm. What does "removing harm" refer to? Great sweetness, sourness, bitterness, acridity, and saltiness: these five fill up the physical body, generating harm. Great joy, anger, anxiety, fear, and grief: these five take hold of the spirit, generating harm. Great cold, heat, dryness, dampness, wind, rain, and fog: these seven move essence, generating harm. For this reason, whenever you want to nurture life, you had better know the root. When you know the root, disease has no reason to arrive.[59]

In this text, the "root" (*ben* 本) indicates the source of life, and the essence spirit is most often more important than the physical body in this holistic thinking. Slightly later, Dong Zhongshu 董仲舒 (176–104 BC) wrote in the chapter on "Abiding by the way of Heaven" 循天之道 in the *Chunqiu fanlu* 春秋繁露 (*Luxuriant dew of the Annals*):

> Harmony and pleasure constitute external happiness 外泰, essence and spirit internal fulfillment 內充. If external happiness cannot compare with internal fulfillment, how much more is this true of external harm 外傷![60]

Harmony and pleasure on the outside cannot compare with the fulfillment of essence, spirit and the life span. Important to note here is the fact that both of these discussions are partial in the sense that they apply only to prevention and a time when no illness has become apparent. For the treatment of disease, the medical texts also broke new ground in discussing the relationship between environmental disease causes, like climate and demonic haunting. These two aspects developed independently as well as in mutual exchange.

[59] Wang Liqi, *Lüshi chunqiu zhushu* (Chengdu, 2002), "Jinshu," pp. 292–95. Cf. John Knoblock and Jeffrey Riegel, trs, *The annals of Lü Buwei: a complete translation and study* (Stanford, 2000), p. 99.

[60] Su Yu, *Chunqiu fanlu yizheng* (Beijing, 1992), p. 453.

In addition to external evils like wind or rain harming people, discussions on etiology during the period of the *Neijing* also emphasized internal factors like predilections, rest and work, and habits of daily life as causes of disease. The "Discussion on regulating the channels" 調經論 in the *Suwen* states:

> Evil is engendered either by *yin* or by *yang* [factors]. Generation by *yang* means contracting disease due to wind, rain, cold, or summer heat. Generation by *yin* means contracting disease due to food and drink, lifestyle, *yin* and *yang*, or joy and anger.[61]

In this quote, "*yin* and *yang*" refers to sexual intercourse between men and women. In the 2nd century BC, the famous physician Chunyu Yi 淳于意 (b. 216 BC) left behind 25 case histories. In these records, explanations of external disease causes are more specific. Among internal causes, sexual intercourse constitutes a rather substantial proportion. Examples are "drinking liquor while having intercourse," "being in great anger when joining [in sexual intercourse]," "desiring a partner but being unable to obtain one" and so on.[62] The *Lingshu* chapter on "Forms of disease related to evil *qi* in the viscera and bowels" 邪氣藏府病形 states:

> Worry and fear result in damage to the heart. Cold in the body or cold drinks result in damage to the lung. Since these two types of cold attract each other and the center and the outside are both damaged, *qi* moves counter-clockwise and rises up. When malign blood is retained internally after a fall, and if *qi* moreover ascends as a result of great anger and fails to descend but collects below the rib cage, this results in damage to the liver. When a person is beaten and falls forward, or when a person has engaged in sexual intercourse while drunk, or been exposed to wind while sweating, the result is damage to the spleen. When sexual intercourse has been excessive or the person has bathed while sweating, the result is damage to the kidney.[63]

Insufficient caution during sexual intercourse was a primary factor in inducing disease. For this reason, the chapter on "The beginnings of the hundred diseases" 百病始生 in the *Lingshu* points out:

> Wind, rain, cold, and heat are unable to cause vacuity 虛, and evil 邪 alone cannot harm a person. When a person suddenly encounters racing wind

[61] Long Boxian and Long Shizhao, *Suwen*, pp. 779–80.
[62] Liao Yuqun et al., *Zhongguo kexue jishu shi—yixue juan* (Beijing, 1998), pp. 89–91.
[63] Long Boxian and Long Shizhao, *Lingshu*, p. 1354.

> or fulminant rain and yet does not fall ill, this means that there was no vacuity. Therefore, evil alone cannot harm a person. It is invariably only when the two vacuities of vacuity wind and vacuity in the body combine with each other 兩虛相得 that wind is able to settle in the body.[64]

This etiology of internal "vacuity" can be regarded as a monumental development in classical medicine.

With regard to external evils, the emphasis on fire and heat as pathogens deserves special attention. While "cold" 寒 and "summer heat" 暑 are commonly mentioned in combination, the significance of these two is not equal. The chapter on the "Constant profusion of warmth and heat" 暖燠常多 in the *Chunqiu fanlu* describes how warm days are more common than cold days in the changes of the seasons and how the prevalence of *yangqi* over *yinqi* is the root from which the myriad things are generated:

> From the first month to the tenth month, heaven's work is completed. When you count the time in between, how many days do *yin* and *yang* each occupy? Between sweltering and chilly days, which ones are more common? In the time from the creation of things to their completion, how many times do dew and frost fall? Thus, in this time, from spring to fall, the weather is balmy and harmonious. It is only when we arrive in the ninth month, that is, the end of autumn, that *yin* begins to outnumber *yang* and that the weather therefore occasionally becomes chilly and frost falls. When chills and frost come down from heaven, things are surely already completed. For this reason, the ninth month is the time when heaven's work is for the most part done, and in the tenth month, it is completely finished. Thus, when we record their traces and count their actual presence, chilly days are much less frequent.[65]

In any single year, the *qi* of fire and heat prevailed most often; among the familiar six *qi* (i.e., wind, cold, summer heat, dampness, dryness and fire), words associated with fire and heat are comparatively abundant. The "Great treatises in seven chapters" 七篇大論 in the *Suwen*, which outline the theory of the movement of *qi* 運氣, was composed in the Eastern Han.[66] In these chapters, we can see the reappearance of a theory of the external causation of disease. The six *qi* as discussed in the "Great

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[64] Ibid., p. 1940.

[65] Su Yu, *Chunqiu fanlu*, pp. 347–48.

[66] For information on the formation of the seven chapters on the movement of *qi* in the current *Neijing*, see Qian Chaochen, *Neijing yuyan yanjiu* (Beijing, 1990), pp. 293–94; Li Xueqin, " 'Suwen' qi pian dalun," *Li Xueqin xueshu wenhua suibi* (Beijing, 1999), pp. 140–51.

treatise on the epoch and cycles of heaven" 天元紀大論 and the "Great treatise on the revolutions of the five agents" 五運行大論 take the five agents as framework, but divide fire into two, namely sovereign fire (*junhuo* 君火) and ministerial fire (*xianghuo* 相火), thereby forming a total of six *qi* when combined with wind, cold, dryness and dampness. Furthermore, the "Great treatise on the essentials of supreme truth" 至真要大論 also proposes that in general all disease originates from the changes of the six *qi* and that physicians must observe the disease mechanisms and not violate the principles of the movements of the six *qi*. Following this, the chapter discusses the properties of diseases and the special characteristics of the natural climate, fire and heat being the most common disease evil:

> All heat, visual distortion, and tugging are related to fire.
> All clenching, shuddering, and chattering with the seeming loss of the spirit's guard are related to fire.
> All counterflow and upsurging are related to fire.
> All distention and abdominal enlargement are related to heat.
> All agitation and manic jumping are related to fire.
> All disease with sounds, where tapping makes a drum-like sound, is related to heat.
> All disease with swelling, soreness, pain of the instep, and fright are related to fire.
> All cramping, arched back rigidity, and turbid fluids are related to heat.
> All sour retching, vomiting, and fulminant downpour with lower body distress are related to heat.[67]

Moreover, the common people in the Han period also perceived demonic haunting in terms of fire and heat. It was suggested that ghosts are formed of *yangqi*, that *yangqi* is red in color, and that therefore humans who see ghosts also see them in this color. According to the *Lunheng* chapter "Revisions on ghosts,"

> Ghosts are *yangqi*, sometimes hidden sometimes visible. *Yangqi* is red, and for this reason whenever humans see ghosts, their color is pure red. Flying demons are *yang*. *Yang* is fire, and for this reason flying demons are flame.[68]

This explanation is quite contrary to the standard explanation that ghosts were associated with *yinqi*. At that time, people assumed that fire was

[67] Long Boxian and Long Shizhao, *Suwen*, pp. 1081–85.
[68] Cf. Forke, tr., Lun-hêng, "Dinggui," p. 246.

toxic when exuberant and that it was a kind of *yangqi*. The chapter on "Word toxin" in the same text explains even more directly:

> If without bumping into anything a person's body hurts without any reason, the place that hurts looks like it has been struck by a staff. Human *fei* 腓 disease refers to being beaten by ghosts. Ghosts are evil spirits 妖 of greater *yang*. In minor cases, the disease is called *bian* 邊, and honey and cinnabar are used to treat it. Honey and cinnabar are *yang* substances, and the treatment therefore involves like substances.[69]

The treatment of "like with like" is a principle of classical medicine. Nevertheless, these treatments and diseases related to demonic attacks like *fei* and *bian* are not recorded in the medical literature. Thus they are most likely beliefs that were found in the lower levels of society. That ghosts and fire are similar by nature was a new notion among theories of demonic haunting. Huangfu Mi 皇甫謐 (215–282 AD) proposed in a discussion on mania in the *Zhenjiu jiayi jing* 针灸甲乙經 (*Systematized classic of acupuncture and moxibustion*): "Mania [manifests in] the tendency to see ghosts and fire. *Jiexi* 解谿 (ST 41, 'Ravine divide') governs it."[70] This text is a 3rd century medical classic that not only rearranged earlier accepted theories, but was apparently also influenced by new ways of thinking. The chapter on "Channel vessels" 經脈 in the *Lingshu* contains a description of psychological disorders associated with the "stomach foot *yangming* vessel" 胃足陽明之脈. In patients with such conditions,

> the disease results in aversion to people and fire, fear and surprise when hearing the sound of wood, a tendency of the heart to stir, staying alone behind closed doors and sealed windows, and in severe cases wanting to climb high and sing or take off clothes and run around.[71]

In such patients, the disease manifested itself in states tending toward an exuberance of fire, heat and *yang* that were very theatrical and prone to violent outbursts.

The question whether ghosts and spirits existed at all ultimately remained unanswered. The theory of *qi*, all-inclusive as it was, could explain a plethora of phenomena, but was still insufficient at times because the existence of ghosts and spirits tended to be so closely related to the experience of disease as to be inseparable. There were

[69] Huang Hui, *Lunheng jiaoshi*, "Yandu," pp. 941, 949. Cf. Forke, tr., *Lun-hêng*, p. 299.
[70] Zhang Canjia and Xu Guoqian, *Zhenjiu jiayi jing jiaozhu* (Beijing, 1996), p. 1737.
[71] Long Boxian and Long Shizhao, *Lingshu*, p. 1468.

people who saw ghosts with such certainty that they engaged in activities to alarm others as a consequence. And physicians and practitioners of the occult arts also discovered that a number of substances had effects related to the realm of the spirits: ingesting some substances could make a person see spirits; others were able on the contrary to treat diseases caused by ghosts.

In regard to etiology, the *Shennong bencao jing* 神農本草經 (*Divine Farmer's classic of materia medica*) from around the Eastern Han period[72] integrated the theory of *qi*, centered on wind, with the theory of demonic haunting. In the preface of this text, we find a list of major diseases that includes "malignity strike" 中惡, "fright evil" 驚邪, "epilepsy" 癲癇 and "ghost infixation" (*guizhu* 鬼疰),[73] of which epilepsy is the only disease that is also found in medical classics like the *Neijing*. According to my own calculations, there are approximately 50 medicinal substances in the *Shennong bencao jing* that are related to demonic haunting.[74] For example, *longdan* 龍膽 (*Gentianae radix*) treats the evil *qi* of fright epilepsy and kills *gu* 蠱 toxin;[75] *baiji* 白及 (*Bletillae rhizoma*) treats bandit wind and ghost attacks, and *fei* 痱 disablement and slackness with failure to contract;[76] *guijiu* 鬼臼 (*Dysosmae versipellis rhizoma*) is indicated for killing *gu* toxin, for ghost infixation and spectral things, and for repelling malign *qi* and inauspiciousness.[77] Looking at the main indications of these medicinals, evil *qi* 邪氣, malign *qi* 惡氣 and ghosts appear to be very similar notions. Particularly noteworthy is the fact that diseases of demonic haunting like ghost infixation are most common. For example, *lanshi* 藍實 (*Polygoni tinctorii fructus*) kills *gu* [toxin], child sprites and infixation by ghosts;[78] *shilongchu* 石龍芻 (*Lepironiae radix*) treats ghost infixation;[79] *bizi* 彼子 (*Torreyae semen*) gets rid of the three types of worms, *gu* toxin, ghost infixation and "hidden corpse" 伏尸;[80] *shixia changqing* 石下長卿 (*Cynanchi paniculati radix*) is indicated for ghost infixation, spectral things and malign *qi*,

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[72] Wang Jiakui and Zhang Ruixian, *Shennong bencao jing yanjiu* (Beijing, 2001), p. 39.

[73] Ma Jixing, *Shennong bencao jing jizhu* (Beijing, 1995), p. 31.

[74] Li Jianmin, "Suibing yu changsuo: chuantong yixue dui suibing de yizhong jieshi," *Hanxue yanjiu* 12.1 (1994), pp. 145–48.

[75] Yang Pengju, *Shennong bencao jing jiaozhu* (Beijing, 2004), p. 49.

[76] Ibid., pp. 244–45.

[77] Ibid., p. 254.

[78] Ibid., p. 62.

[79] Ibid., p. 82.

[80] Ibid., p. 189.

killing the hundred specters, *gu* toxin and old goblins, mania with tendency to run away, and wailing with sorrow and confusion.[81] The character *zhu* 疰 in the term "ghost infixation" is identical with the character *zhu* 注, which means "infiltrating contagion." The section on "Explaining diseases" 釋疾病 in the *Shiming* 釋名 (*Explaining names*) defines it as follows: "Infixation disease means that one person has died and another person contracts it when the *qi* pours in."[82] Ghost infixation is a disease that was passed on from a dead person to a living person through contagion by hidden corpse *qi*, in severe cases to the point of killing off entire households.[83] In addition, the so-called hidden corpse (*fushi* 伏尸) apparently referred to skeletons of corpses that had been abandoned without proper burial or worship and were now able to haunt and harm humans. In Han dynasty funerary notes, these types of bodies are called "corpse" 尸, "hidden corpse," "hidden corpse bones" 伏尸既骨, "corpse skeleton" 尸骸, and "human bodies with green-blue bones" 青骨死人.[84] Regardless of whether it was called ghost infixation or hidden corpse, both of these were diseases of demonic haunting characteristic of the middle and late Han. We will discuss these in greater detail in the following section.

The *Shennong bencao jing* contains roughly 20 medicinal substances that are able to kill or get rid of the "three worms" (*sanchong* 三蟲). Regarding these three worms, some scholars have proposed that they simply refer to parasites in the human body, but others believe that they are in fact identical with the "three corpses" (*sanshi* 三尸), whose nature resembles that of spirits and ghosts.[85] According to the chapter on "Subtle meanings" 微旨 in the *Baopuzi* 抱朴子 (*Master who embraces simplicity*),

> As for the material quality of the three corpses, they are shapeless and in reality belong to the category of ghosts and spirits. They want people to die early so they can become ghosts, wander about at will, and enjoy people's sacrifices and libations.[86]

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[81] Ibid., p. 258.

[82] Bi Yuan, *Shiming shuzheng* (Taibei, 1979), p. 64.

[83] See Wan Fang, "Gudai zhu (zhu) bing ji rangjie zhiliao kaoshu," *Dunhuang yanjiu* 1992.4, pp. 91–98.

[84] Li Jianmin, "Zhongguo gudai 'Yanci' lisu kao," *Qinghua xuebao* 24.3 (1994), pp. 338–40.

[85] For a discussion on the three corpses and corpse *gu*, see Miyagawa Hisayuki, "Dôkyôteki shintairon ni okeru shichû to konpaku," in Naitô Motoharu, ed., *Chûgokuteki jinseikan, seikaikan* (Tokyo, 1994), pp. 259–71.

[86] Wang Ming, *Baopuzi neipian jiaoshi* (Beijing, 1996), "Weizhi," p. 125.

The three corpses served as a system for keeping a watch on humans: when people committed a crime, they ascended to heaven and made a report to the director of destiny 司命之神, and ghosts and spirits would then cause humans to suffer from disease or premature death. The *Baopuzi* mentions that the three corpses take advantage of times when a person is weak or in an inauspicious period to "summon evil *qi* and recklessly invite ghosts and goblins to come and cause harm."[87] In other words, the occurrence of disease was due to evil ghosts 鬼邪 inside the human body introducing evil ghosts outside the body (see below for more details). This replicates the *Neijing* notion of "two vacuities attracting each other." The *Baopuzi* contains a list of titles of Daoist classics, in which we find book names like "Collection of the three corpses" 三尸集, "Classic on calling the body's spirits to treat the hundred diseases" 呼身神治百病經, and "Classic on the capture of mountain ghosts and old goblins to treat evil specters" 收山鬼老魅治邪精經.[88] Against this backdrop, the renewed interest of physicians in the notion of demonic haunting was imminent.

According to earlier ideas, diseases caused by demonic haunting were characterized by their sudden onset, their randomness and possibly by the fact that they were impossible to fully explain or treat. Discourse on demonic haunting during the middle to later Han period by contrast focused on the contagiousness of disease, in particular on disorders passed within a single household, and on moral factors related to demons conferring disease. These new developments in the discourse on demonic haunting coincided with the formation of ideas about the underworld in the Han dynasty. In the late Eastern Han Daoist text *Taiping jing* 太平經 (*Scripture of Great Peace*)[89] we can see how the state, family and individual blended subtly into a community of mutual benefit whose interactions included the transfer and hereditary transmission of disease. Or to put it simply, individual suffering was interpreted as an expression of collective transgression.

The authors of the *Taiping jing* believed that the latter age (in the text referred to as the age of "late antiquity") was characterized by bands of ghosts in competition and the rampant spread of disease. In this age,

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[87] Ibid., "Zaying," p. 271.
[88] Ibid., "Xialan," p. 334.
[89] See Jiang Sheng and Tang Weixia, eds, *Zhongguo daojiao kexue jishu shi* (Beijing, 2002), pp. 557–68.

> Having an inherited burden (*chengfu* 承負), heaven and earth are now replete with catastrophes, demonic entities, specters, calamities, and corpse blame. In addition, there will be rheumatism and skin diseases. Now, in late antiquity, people are subject to drifting disasters too numerous to name.[90]

"Inherited burden" refers to all kinds of disasters that stem from the transgressions of the ancestors passed down to their descendants.[91] Moreover, the inherited burden thus created led to

> demonic spirits and other evil creatures greatly prospering. They avail themselves of the human path and move about in broad daylight without avoiding people. They cause diseases that are incurable and form lines of demons that never stop moving.[92]

In the latter days, demons would thus not just occasionally harass people but would be present all the time without rest, to the point where hundreds of demons would emerge in broad daylight and every type of disease would flourish. For this reason, adherents of the Daoist religion promoted commandments and occult techniques to help people gain release from their transgressions. As the *Taiping jing* states:

> To dispel disease 解病 and bring peace to the emperor, Heaven must make gentlemen of morality explain to the many sages how to transform the people, that they meditate their transgressions 思過 in order to gain release from the burden of blame inherited from the ancestors 解先人承負之謫. Have each person make his own calculation and do not allow them to be lax.[93]

Human transgressions could be quantified, and the various deities that controlled human destiny recorded these faults so that descendants in later generations could be held responsible for their ancestors' sins. The *Taiping jing* points out:

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[90] Wang Ming, ed., *Taiping jing hejiao* (Beijing, 1960), p. 293. All translations from the *Taiping jing* have been revised by Grégoire Espesset; many may be found in his "Criminalized abnormality, moral etiology, and redemptive suffering in the secondary strata of the *Taiping jing*,"*Asia Major*, Third Series 15.2 (2002), 1–50.

[91] Maeda Shigeki, "Gôhô to shime no aida—oya no inga wa ko ni mukuiruka," in *Nihon Chûgoku gakkai sôritsu gojûnen kinen ronbun shû* (Tokyo, 1998), pp. 1137–52.

[92] Wang Ming, ed., *Taiping jing*, p. 49. Cf. Barbara Hendrischke, tr., *The Scripture on great peace. The* Taiping jing *and the beginnings of Daoism* (Berkeley, 2006), p. 128.

[93] Wang Ming, ed., *Taiping jing*, p. 255.

> There are no faults, small or great, that Heaven does not know. Reports on good and evil deeds are noted in registers, which are thoroughly collated on a daily, monthly, and yearly basis, and years are subtracted from [each human's] count (*suan* 算, i.e. life span allotment). [Those] whose evil deeds never stop then see the Gate of demons 鬼門. Earth gods summon and question them [to check whether] their statements are concordant with [the registers. If] they are not, embittered ghosts inflict punishment on them until they admit [their wrongs]. Their names are transmitted to the bureau of fate (*mingcao* 命曹) for a final comparison [of their records and, if their] count (*suan*) is exhausted, they enter earth (i.e. the realm of the dead), and their transgressions are passed on to their descendants.[94]

After death, there were detailed institutions for trials, and officials in the underworld challenged the deceased person face to face. Those who had committed sins brought disaster to their living descendants. In this context, unceasing disease was the result of sins committed by the ancestors. The *Taiping jing* further describes this process:

> As the reports become numerous, they are all transmitted and reach the Hall of Light (Mingtang 明堂), [where] they are thoroughly collated, and [the wrongdoer's] family and personal names are entered in the registers by [the divine clerks] in charge. When [his] transgressions amount to a burden, [clerks] inform their directors, who inform the [jurisdiction of] Greater Yin 太陰. Officials of Greater Yin summon [the wrongdoer's] ancestors, interrogate and beat them by way of punishment, and order them to return to their household to tell [the wrongdoer] that he is cursed and held accountable for the burden [of his transgressions], that his conviction is underway and cannot be stopped, which is why disease is sent to him. A household stricken with disease must gain release from the Yin (*jieyin* 解陰, i.e., ancestor ghosts) and have the indictment repealed (*jiezhe* 解謫) in order that [the sentence] not be enforced. Having the indictment repealed removes [disease, but if] the indictment is not repealed, disease does not cease, the blame is upheld and [the sentence] enforced.[95]

The Hall of Light was a celestial institution; Greater Yin referred to the place of judgment in the netherworld. The sins of the ancestors brought a string of diseases to the descendants, and households smitten by disease knew of numerous techniques for delivering their ancestors from the accumulated transgressions of their evils. At the same time,

[94] Wang Ming, ed., *Taiping jing*, p. 526. Note that Wang Ming's replacement of *gui* 鬼 by *si* 思 is not justified; cf. Espesset, "Criminalized abnormality," pp. 36–37.

[95] Wang Ming, ed., *Taiping jing*, p. 624; cf. Espesset, "Criminalized abnormality," pp. 33–34.

these served to release the family from its continuous suffering from illness. In certain circumstances, the ancestors were detained in the underworld, and the living did not know the cause of the haunting. If the living failed to find out the cause and show penitence, the members of such a household would end up dying one after the other:

> In addition, ancestors are imprisoned, and sacrificial divination fails to discover the cause 祠卜問不得 [of the haunting. In order] to succeed, they must perform [divination] on the [proper] date, and Heaven will grant [the culprit] extra time. [If the culprit] has not shown [repentance] when the deadline is reached, he fails to apologize to Heaven 謝天, [who] orders Earth to summon [his] body to enter the ground and [his] *hun* spirits to be interrogated in the heavenly prisons 天獄. Then the investigation moves on to the next [member of the household], and deaths follow one another.[96]

In the ideology propagated by the *Taiping jing*, there was no such thing as death or disease without cause. The most important cause of disease was falling ill as a result of harm inherited from the ancestors or retribution by demons. The text repeatedly emphasized doctrines like the following:

> When death occurs in the womb or before the person reaches adulthood, this means that the person is innocent but has inherited the burden of the ancestors' transgressions... Numerous cases of disease involving demonic entities 鬼物 means that the spirits of heaven and earth are angry.[97]

The life of later generations incorporated the world of the ancestors and was also intimately linked to the intention of the supreme deities. Spirits who executed their spirit duties in a less than satisfactory manner, such as incomplete investigation of the good and bad deeds of the living, were banished from court by the celestial deities to the world of mortals. The *Taiping jing* tells the following story:

> The day the Lord of Heaven (*tianjun* 天君) announces his orders, the gods await their instructions outside. They are told to prostrate themselves on the ground and then stand up when it is their turn of duty. That day, the gods are told the Lord of Heaven did not intend to spare them, but could not stand to have them harmed either. So he orders them banished to the world of men in the capital Luoyang for ten years, to sell medicinal drugs and heal disease without overcharging the sick.[98]

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[96] Wang Ming, ed., *Taiping jing*, pp. 605–06.
[97] Ibid., p. 23.
[98] Ibid., p. 611.

Having the ancestor's crimes and calamities passed on to descendants is one aspect of the traditional Chinese notion of "retribution" (*bao* 報).[99] The "Biography of Wang Jian" in the *Shiji* 史記 (*Records of the historian*) explains the law of retribution: "Three generations of generals spells inevitable defeat. What does 'inevitable defeat' 必敗 refer to? Because inevitably many are killed, the descendants receive the inauspiciousness."[100] An ancestor's sin of killing another person returned to affect the following generations. The "Biography of Geng Yan" in the *Hou Hanshu* 後漢書 (*History of the Latter Han*) also explains: "Three generations of generals is a Daoist 道家 taboo."[101] Regarding the haunting of departed spirits, the disaster affected the children and grandchildren of bloodthirsty ancestors. The "Biography of Xiang Kai" in the *Hou Hanshu* espouses a similar view: "When an innocent person is killed or a sage punished, disaster strikes for three generations."[102] Once the notion of trans-generational retribution had been mystified and incorporated into religion, it became an accurate law of the "Way of Heaven." The Daoist classic *Laozi Xiang'er Zhu* 老子想爾注 (*Xiang'er commentary on the Laozi*) from the late Eastern Han states: "When affairs are settled with soldiers and killing without measure occurs, disaster will return to the individual and to his children and grandchildren."[103] The abovementioned expression "inherited burden" was merely another aspect of disorders like ghost infixation and hidden corpse, as Yang Liansheng has pointed out: "The meaning of *zhulian* 注連 is identical with 'inherited burden' in the *Taiping jing*."[104] *Zhulian* refers to the return of new ghosts to haunt their old home, causing uninterrupted calamities (see below). So-called "land contracts" (*diquan* 地券) and "tomb-quelling texts" (*zhenmuwen* 鎮墓文) from the middle and late Eastern Han show a view of the underworld that directly reflects the fear that the deceased would return to haunt the living, as well as the hope and efforts of establishing a balanced continuity of generations.[105]

[99] For research on the concept of *bao* in ancient China, see Lien-sheng Yang, "The concept of Pao as a basis for social relations in China," in ed. John K. Fairbank, *Chinese thought and institutions* (Chicago, 1957), pp. 291–309.

[100] Sima Qian, *Shiji* (Taibei, reprt., 1984), "Wang Jian liezhuan," pp. 2341–42.

[101] Fan Ye, *Hou Hanshu* (Taibei, 1978), "Geng Yan liezhuan," p. 715.

[102] Ibid., "Xiang Kai liezhuan," p. 1077.

[103] Jao Tsung-i, *Laozi Xiang'er zhu jiaozheng* (Shanghai, 1991), p. 38.

[104] Yang Liansheng, "Gushi zhaji liangtiao," *Zhongguo wenzi* 12 (1988), 103.

[105] Research on "land deeds" and "tomb-quelling texts" is plentiful. See for example Chen Pan, "Yu lishi yu minsu zhi jian kan suo wei 'yiqian' yu 'diquan,'" in *Jiuxue jiushi shuocong* (Taibei, 1993), pp. 795–821; Yuasa Yukihiko, "Chiken chozon koshaku,"

By comparison with the reserved attitude of the *Neijing* with regard to demon haunting, the 4th century text *Zhouhou fang* 肘後方 (*Prescriptions to be kept up one's sleeve*) by Ge Hong 葛洪 (280–359) records a large amount of information on demonic diseases[106] such as "malignity strike" 中惡, "visiting hostility" 客忤, "ghost attack" 鬼擊, "nightmares and insomnia" 魘寐不寤, "five corpses" 五尸, "corpse infixation" 尸注 and "ghost infixation" 鬼注. It also contains detailed descriptions like the following:

> All cases of sudden death, malignity strike, and corpse-like reversal 尸厥 are caused by sudden deviation or blockage, lack of flow between above and below, and one-sided exhaustion affecting the natural *yin* and *yang* energies of heaven, earth, and the human body. Hence even when the person is in the realm of death 死境, he can still be treated and saved because his allotted *qi* is not yet exhausted. When a condition at this time is further complicated by the presence of ghosts and spirits, you can still protect and rescue them with the art of talismans.[107]

He further explains:

> Now when a shaman or shamaness actually sees a person being suddenly stabbed, pierced, or swayed by spirits 神鬼, this is brought on because the person has infringed his rank, encountered violent opposition, seen his body's spirits disperse and weaken 身神散弱, or committed some sin. If the case is not serious, it may be dismissed, but if it is serious, it will usually result in death.[108]

In serious cases, such as when ancestor spirits haunted the patient, "after death, [the condition] would again be passed on to another relative, up to the point of extinguishing the entire household."[109]

Worthy of our attention here is the fact that when the 5th century Daoist Tao Hongjing 陶弘景 (456–536 AD) rearranged the *Zhouhou fang*, he divided the various diseases in this text into three major categories, namely "internal diseases" (*neibing* 內病), "externally arising diseases" (*waifa bing* 外發病) and "diseases of suffering caused by things" 爲物所苦病. He classified diseases of demonic haunting as belonging

Chûgoku shisô kenkyû 4 (1981), 1–34; Anna Seidel, "Traces of Han religion in funeral texts found in tombs," in Akitsuki Kanei, ed., *Dôkyô to shûkyô bunka* (Tokyo, 1987), pp. 21–57; Wang Su and Li Fang, *Wei Jin Nanbeichao Dunhuang wenxian biannian* (Taibei, 1997).

[106] See Wang Liqi, *Ge Hong lun* (Taibei, 1997), pp. 84–91.

[107] Shang Zhijun, *Buji zhouhou fang* (Hefei, 1996), p. 13.

[108] Ibid., p. 16.

[109] Ibid., p. 24.

to the category of internal diseases and identified externally arising diseases as those that are caused by the contraction of external evils like wind or cold.[110] The ghosts in his category of internal diseases were not associated with conditions caused by the presence of spirits in a person's mind, but refer to actual *hun* and *po* souls and spectral beings existing outside the person's body. These spirits are external evils 外邪 transformed into internal causes 內因化 and are therefore classified as different from external disease causes such as wind evil. Without question, this classification constitutes a major innovation in the theory of *qi* and at the same time was yet another affirmation of the notion of demons as disease-causing agents.

Roughly contemporaneous with the *Zhouhou fang*, the *Maijing* 脈經 (*Pulse classic*), composed by Wang Shuhe 王叔和 (b. 180 AD), is primarily a compilation of pre-Han classics, but, in comparison with the *Neijing* and *Nanjing*, once again contains information on demon-related diseases. The *Maijing* 脈經 chapter on "Calming diseases of the eight extraordinary vessels" 平奇經八脈病 states: "There is a disease [caused by] ghosts and goblins, and death from wind. The patient suffers from mental confusion, and it may result in the calamity of death."[111] The same text also states as follows in the chapter on "Disease patterns of the heart hand lesser *yin* channel" 心手少陰經病證:

> The five viscera are at once the abode of the *hun* and *po* souls and the support of the essence spirit 精神. When the *hun* and *po* souls become volatile, the five viscera are empty, and evil spirits immediately take up residence there. The deities are employed by them, and the demons descend on them. [In this condition], the pulse is short and slight, and the viscera are insufficient. As a result, the *hun* and *po* souls are disquieted.[112]

The terms "evil spirits" (*xieshen* 邪神), "deities" (*shenling* 神靈) and "demons" (*gui* 鬼) undoubtedly refer here to objective entities and are not rhetorical fictions of human imagination. The *Maijing* even asserted with certainty on the basis of hard-to-describe pulse qualities that a number of diseases were caused by spirits:

> A slippery [pulse means] ghost infixation.
> A stringlike and hooklike [pulse means pain] below the rib cage as if stabbed with a knife, an appearance like flying corpse 蜚尸, and extreme encumbrance but not to the point of death.

[110] Ibid., p. 10, Tao Hongjing's preface.
[111] Shen Yannan, ed., *Maijing jiaozhu* (Beijing, 1991), p. 61.
[112] Ibid., p. 181.

> A tight and urgent [pulse means] hidden corpse.
> A pulse that arrives now large now small, now long now short means haunting (*sui* 祟).
> A pulse that arrives surging, large, and swaying means haunting by the local earth god (*shesui* 社祟).
> A pulse that arrives sunken and moist with numbness and heaviness in the limbs means haunting by the spirits of the soil (*tusui* 土祟).[113]

Seeing ghosts with your own eyes was not reliable enough, and the physical pain caused by disease was an obscure state that was difficult to express fully. Nevertheless, the pulse served as the most important diagnostic standard in the ancient Chinese medical classics, and the emergence of ghost pulses indirectly transmitted traces of the changes of that time.

Spirits did in fact exist, and we have seen that theoretical developments related to demons as disease-causing agents in the Han dynasty followed two major strands. The first was the discussion of external evils like wind and cold and most notably of fire heat as the most important disease evil, to the point where ghosts and spirits came to be considered a form of fire evil. The second strand, occurring in the late Eastern Han, was the revival of theories about demonic haunting, the spirits of deceased ancestors in particular. The ancestors did not just live on in the active memory of their descendants, their voices and faces were everywhere present. Indeed, without the collective identity of a family, there is no individual identity. In comparison with earlier notions of demonic haunting, these new diseases and their etiologies stressed moral roots. In addition to spirits being external evils that caused internal damage, the transgressions of the ancestors in particular were passed down to descendants in the form of disease. In the following section, I will focus on the disease of infixation in order to elaborate further on the process by which the recognition of sin and the influence exerted by ancestor worship caused changes in etiology and ritualistic treatment methods.

The age of "infixation disease": a tale of fears and cures

Why is the event of a person falling ill related to guilt inherited from the ancestors? How is sin passed down? The middle to late Eastern

[113] Ibid., pp. 112–16.

Han period witnessed the rise of so-called "diseases of infixation" (*zhubing* 注病), such as ghost infixation or corpse infixation. These types of demonic haunting diseases stood out as collective, involving successive outbreaks, and being severely contagious. Moreover, they were conditions with obvious religious significance. In his preface to the *Shanghan lun* 傷寒論 (*Discussion of cold damage*), Zhang Zhongjing 張仲景 explained: "My clan used to be numerous, with more than 200 members. Since the Jian'an era (196–219), however, in less than ten years, two out of three have perished."[114] Large-scale cases of disease-induced death could be linked to spreading attacks of external cold evil.[115] Nevertheless, when disaster struck one person after another among the members of a clan, people could not help becoming suspicious: why is it only us but not other people who are struck by misfortune? What is the reason that even within a single household some people died but others were lucky and avoided problems? According to mystical explanations that arose later in religious Daoism, the first year of Han'an (142 AD) constituted the end of an ancient cosmic cycle. *Chisongzi zhangli* 赤松子章曆 (*Master Red Pine's almanac of petitions*) even states that, "in the Han period, humans and demons intermingled and specters and evils were active everywhere." In this type of age where an "apocalyptic pathos" overshadowed everything else, "wind" evil was of course not a sufficient explanation for the rise of disease,[116] and people had an excessive need for rescue and redemption.

Chronic diseases with recurrent outbreaks certainly differ from the individual and occasional trouble caused by the mischievous acts of spirits or a violation of prohibitions. People could recover from an illness, but conditions like chronic incurable diseases, repeatedly recurring diseases, or diseases that affected one member after another in a family, in severe cases spreading across generations to extinguish entire households, caused people extreme worry and despondence. Later Daoist classics like the *Jinsuo liuzhu yin* 金鎖流珠引 (*Commentary on the flowing gems of the golden lock*) referred to "infixation disease" as "haunting the

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[114] Guo Aichun and Zhang Hailing, *Shanghan lun jiaozhu yuyi* (Tianjin, 1996), "Zixu," p. 2.

[115] For a discussion of the spread of pestilential disease in the late Eastern Han, see Qian Chaochen, *Shanghan lun wenxian tongkao* (Beijing, 2001), pp. 57–69.

[116] Wang Tianlin, "Tianshi daojiao tuan de zuiguan ji xiande sixiang," in Li Fengmao and Zhu Ronggui, eds, *Yishi, miaohui yu shequ—daojiao, minjian xinyang yu minjian wenhua* (Taibei, 1996), pp. 511–45.

clan" 祟家族.[117] This disease name vividly pointed to the collective and continuous nature of infixation disease in family relationships.

The persistent notion that ancestors could pass on good or bad fortune after their death originated in the context of the system of performing "hidden good deeds to accumulate merit," because "hidden good deeds" (*yinde* 陰德), as explained below, come from the ancestors and not from the self. The "Explanation of characters" 文言 in the *Yijing* 易經 (*Book of changes*) states: "A family that accumulates merit invariably has good fortune in abundance; a family that accumulates non-meritorious acts invariably has calamities in abundance."[118] At this time, people greatly valued blood relationships and expected that favors would spread to their closest kin. According to the *Wenzi* 文子, "Those with hidden good deeds [from their ancestors] invariably have manifest retribution (*yangbao* 陽報 [in the present generation])."[119] By the same token, those with hidden crimes also passed on far-reaching disasters to later generations. Liu Xiang 劉向 (79–7 BC) therefore suggested in his *Shuoyuan* 說苑 (*Abundance of elucidations*): "When a person with outstanding virtue perishes, it is because of misfortune left over (*yuyang* 餘殃) from his ancestors. When a reckless person lives on, it is the result of blessings left over (*yulie* 餘烈) from the ancestors."[120] This also explained why good people might not be rewarded, while worthless descendants reaped good fortune as a result of their ancestors' leftover good deeds.[121] The *Shuoyuan* includes several stories that discuss this principle. For example:

> Bing Ji 邴吉 performed hidden good deeds for Emperor Xiaoxuan when the latter was in humble circumstances. When he ascended the throne, the people did not know about this, nor did Ji speak of it. Ji was promoted from the position of aide to the commander in chief to that of imperial censor. The Emperor Xuan heard about this and was about to enfeoff him when Ji fell severely ill. The emperor thought then to send someone to confer the silk on him and enfeoff him while he was still alive, but the grand mentor of the heir apparent Xia Housheng 夏侯勝 said: "He is not about to die. I have heard that a person with hidden good deeds will surely enjoy his just rewards, he and his descendants. The fact he has fallen severely ill before enjoying his reward means this is not a deathly illness."[122]

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[117] Wang Liqi, *Ge Hong lun*, p. 94.
[118] Zhou Zhenfu, *Zhouyi yizhu* (Beijing, 1996), p. 16.
[119] Wang Liqi, *Wenzi shuyi* (Beijing, 2000), "Shangde," p. 302.
[120] Xiang Zonglu, *Shuoyuan jiaozheng* (Beijing, 1991), "Congtan," p. 387.
[121] See Xu Sufei, *Shuoyuan tanwei* (Taibei, 1989), pp. 452–69.
[122] Xiang Zonglu, *Shuoyuan*, "Fu en," p. 123.

As predicted, Bing Ji recovered from his illness and was enfeoffed with the title Lord of Gao. His hidden good deeds were, moreover, passed down to his descendants.

The *Baopuzi* poses the following question: why is it that among the common people there are some who haven't the slightest idea about the arts of the Way but still manage to live out their whole lives in peace? Ge Hong replies: "It is possible that there are hidden good deeds and meritorious acts, as a result of which they receive blessings and protection."[123] While the "left-over blessings" and "left-over misfortune" of the ancestors were often just two sides of a single coin, most people in the late Eastern Han seem to have worried more about the perils that the "hidden crimes" (*yinzui* 陰罪)[124] of the ancestors could create in the lives of later generations. This was a major shift in the notion of family guilt.

The concept of "left-over misfortune" can be understood as crimes that could be transferred but not cleared up. The chapter on "Original destiny" (*benming* 本命) in the *Da Dai liji* 大戴禮記 (*Book of rites of the Elder Dai*) states:

> There are five kinds of major crime 大罪: the crime of transgressing against heaven and earth will affect five generations; falsely accusing civil or military [officers] will affect four generations; transgressing against human relationships will affect three generations; falsely accusing ghosts and spirits will affect two generations; murder affects only the murderer.[125]

The ranking of crimes by how many generations would be punished was a way of describing the severity of the crime and did not necessarily refer to the actual number of generations affected. Nevertheless, in the "Treatise on the suburban sacrifice" 郊祀志 in the *Hanshu*, Liu Xiang 劉向 quotes the "Great commentary to the *Changes*" 易大傳 as follows: "When someone falsely accuses a spirit, calamity will affect three generations." Thus, according to these mystical explanations, punishment for the crime of offending a spirit did not stop with the offender's own person but could reach several generations into the future.[126] The Eastern Han classical scholar Zheng Xuan explained that the term "invocation with writing tablets" (*cezhu* 策祝) from the chapter on the "Great invoker" 太祝 in the *Zhouli* refers to offering up a petition

[123] Wang Ming, *Baopuzi neipian*, "Dao yi," pp. 176–77.
[124] Ibid., p. 127.
[125] Huang Huaixin, *Da Dai liji huijiao jizhu* (Xi'an, 2005), p. 1391.
[126] Ibid., p. 1392.

to inform the spirits: "Invocation by means of writing tablets aims to send crime-diseases (*zuiji* 罪疾) far away." The characters "crime" (*zui* 罪) and "diseases" (*ji* 疾) should be read in combination. They refer to certain types of "retribution diseases" 報應病 like ghost infixation or corpse infixation that existed under certain circumstances as a result of the crimes of ancestors.[127]

Most importantly, the character *zhe* 讁 (indictment, blame) was transformed in the Han from its legal sense into a technical term referring to an indictment of human beings by spirits. It meant indictment as the result of committing a crime and was often combined with the word for crime in the term "indictment for a crime" (*zuizhe* 罪讁).[128] In the *Taiping jing*, the notion of *zhe* appears frequently: "Because a foolish man's schemes are shallow, he is indicted (*zhe*) by heaven while alive and by earth after his death."[129] "Ever since the creation of heaven and earth, the punishments (*zhe*) of drifting disasters 流災 and accumulating poisons 委毒 [have existed]."[130] The "crime" here is of course related to punishment for wrongdoings, but we cannot reduce it to this. While the punishment that a person received after death for crime was comparable to the laws in the world of the living, the term *zhe* with its religious connotations furthermore denoted a type of intangible right over the person, a type of negative power to enslave him. In the chapter on "Explaining heaven" 釋天 in the *Shiming* 釋名 (*Explanation of names*) the Eastern Han author Liu Xi 劉熙 states: "'Pestilence' (*yi* 疫) means 'labor service' (*yi* 役). It means there are demons forcing the person into labor service 言有鬼行役也."[131] When humans suffered from a terrible illness, it must have seemed like being tormented and forced into labor service by demons.

When did rituals to absolve the dead of their crimes first arise? Among the Chu bamboo slips from the Warring States period unearthed at Jiudian 九店 (Hubei), the "Gao Wuyi" 告武夷 ("Announcement to

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[127] Lian Shaoming, "Jianxing ershiba nian 'songren' jiechu jian kaoshu," *Shijie zongjiao yanjiu* 1996.3, 116–19.

[128] *Baopuzi waipian*, "Tanmi": "Lord Cao gnashed his teeth wishing to kill him, but there was no real crime deserving of capital punishment according to the law, and he was also wary of having the reputation as someone who had killed a scholar. So he banished him as a drum official."

[129] Wang Ming, *Taiping jing hejiao*, p. 74. Cf. Hendrischke, *The Scripture on great peace*, p. 176.

[130] Ibid., p. 86.

[131] Bi Yuan, *Shiming shuzhen*, p. 5.

Wuyi") is the prayer of a soldier killed in battle. Relying on the textual research and explanations of Zhou Fengwu, we offer the complete citation below:

> [Hao! I] dare to implore Wuyi, the Son of [unidentified name]. You reside at the foot of Fu Mountain 復山 and in the wilderness of Buzhou 不周. The Lord 帝, having determined that you have no occupation, commanded you to take charge of those who died by weapons. Today, so-and-so (the deceased) wishes to eat. So-and-so (the invocator) dares to ask his (the deceased's) wife to offer strips of silk 攝幣 (i.e. money), and fragrant provisions 芳糧 are offered for the sake of so-and-so (the deceased) to atone for his crimes 贖罪. Your Lordship in the past has received so-and-so's (the invocator's) cut strips of silk and fragrant provisions. Please deign to allow so-and-so (the deceased) to come back to eat as usual."[132]

While this text does refer to "atoning for crime" (*shuzui* 贖罪), there is no hint of the notion that a dead person could pass his crime on to later generations. In general, we may say that the spirits were primarily the object of people's requests for blessings. The chapter on "Analysis of haunting" 辨崇篇 in the *Lunheng* states this:

> When the family residence is in disrepair and flying misfortune and drifting corpses gather in a person's house, people pray to their ancestors for help against misfortunes and delivery from evil. In case of disease, they do not invite a physician, and when they are in difficulties, they do not reform their conduct. They ascribe everything to misfortune and say they have violated prohibitions 犯觸.[133]

This entire chapter discusses taboos related to time. The common people believed that when ghosts harassed a household it was primarily caused by the fact a taboo had been violated. In this context, the ancestors served as guardians who could eliminate the misfortune. Nevertheless, the same chapter also mentions the term "repeated funeral" (*chongsang* 重喪). This refers to repeated deaths in a family, which is also related to the failure to choose an auspicious day.[134]

The quantifiability of crime and its integration into the worship of the director of destiny are another important element. According to research by Du Zhengsheng, prayers for long life were in early China primarily directed toward the ancestors. From the incantations for good

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[132] Zhou Fengwu, "Jiudian Chujian 'Gao Wuyi' chongtan," *Zhongyang yanjiuyuan lishi yuyan yanjiusuo jikan* 72.4 (2001), 941–59; p. 956.

[133] Huang Hui, *Lunheng jiaoshi,* p. 1009; trans. based on Forke, *Lun-hêng*, p. 529.

[134] Ibid., p. 1010.

fortune preserved in writings on bronze, we know that feudal lords in the early Western Zhou focused mostly on the continuity of the family clan. From the middle of the Western Zhou, the practice of praying for the longevity of an individual gradually developed among the nobility. But in the Eastern Zhou, the celestial deity or Lord of Heaven replaced the ancestors as the source and master of human destiny. He became closely linked with human life, a notion that was gradually extended from a monopoly of the Zhou king down to the feudal lords, to the nobility and later to the common people. At the same time, an organized system of officials and ministers to manage life in the human realm began to develop, parallel to that of the Lord of Heaven, and all sorts of director of destiny deities appeared.[135] The establishment of director of destiny deities signified the spirits of heaven were directly involved in human affairs and not so distant they could not be reached. In 1986, a wooden slip was excavated from Qin tomb no. 1 in Tianshui, Fangmatan 天水放馬灘, in Gansu, describing "a dead person returning to life." The story comes from a report made in the 38th year of King Zhao of Qin 秦昭王 (269 BC) by the district aide of the Di district 邸縣 to the royal aide in the capital. It relates how a person named Dan 丹 unexpectedly returned to life three years after his death:

> I, Dan, was restored to life 復生 because I was Xi Wu's caretaker 犀武舍人. The reason Xi Wu disputed his caretaker's [1] life-mandate was because he thought that Dan was not yet fated to die. Therefore he made a declaration to the scribe of the director of destiny 司命吏, Gongsun Qiang 公孫強, who then had a white dog dig up the pit to let Dan out. He stood on the tomb for three days. Then, in company with the scribe of the directory of destiny, Gongsun Qiang, he went northwards beyond the Zhao lands 趙氏 to the northern land of Boqiu 柏丘.[136]

Thus below the director of destiny, there were subordinate officers whose duties were related to the destiny of the people in their charge.

In the chapter on "Methods of sacrifice" 祭法 in the *Liji* 禮記 (*Book of rites*), the king performed seven sacrifices and the feudal lords

[135] Du Zhengsheng, *Cong meishou dao changsheng: yiliao wenhua yu Zhongguo gudai shengming guan*, pp. 159–202.

[136] Li Xueqin, *Jianbo yiji yu xueshu shi* (Taibei, 1994), pp. 181–90; trans. based on Donald Harper, "Resurrection in Warring States popular religion," *Taoist resources* 5.2 (Dec. 1994), p. 14 (the bracketed number indicates one missing character). For stories of people returning to life after death, see the important research article by Stephen F. Teiser, "Having once died and returned to life: representations of hell in medieval China," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 48.2 (1988), 433–64.

five. In both cases the director of destiny is the first listed. Only the commoners, who were allowed but one sacrifice, did not sacrifice to the director of destiny. Nonetheless, the recommendation in "Funeral rites of gentlemen" 士喪禮 in the *Yili* 儀禮 (*Rites and ceremonies*) to the effect that gentlemen should, "in case of disease, perform the five sacrifices," suggests the director of destiny was also involved in matters relating to disease. Zheng Xuan explains that the director of destiny "is a minor spirit who resides among humans and is in charge of watching for minor transgressions and making denunciatory reports 譴告." This seems to have been the prevailing way in which the director of destiny was worshipped in the Han period.[137]

Above, we mentioned the existence of the three corpses or three worms inside the human body. From the late Eastern Han on, the director of destiny and the corpse worms formed a single system for managing transgressions. The *Baopuzi* explains that on every *gengshen* 庚申 day the three corpses inside the human body ascend to heaven to report to the director of destiny any wrongdoings committed by their host.[138] The *Zhouhou fang* describes in its discussion of corpse disease how the "corpse demons (*shigui* 尸鬼) inside the body" of living humans cause disease.[139] At this stage, worship of the director of destiny was popularized even further and the spirits were not just extra-human powers, but were internalized to become a part of the human body.

At the same time the director of destiny became a deity who spied out wrongdoings, the precise quantification of "crimes" developed. This type of thinking is most visible in the *Taiping jing*:

> Now I fear that mean persons are extremely stupid and cannot [be made to observe] prohibitions again, and altogether will outrage and disorder the *qi* of the pervading august peace (i.e., the *qi* of great peace). Therefore, Heaven's great urgency is now to assign all the gods to record their [deeds] on a daily basis according to their conduct, recording and investigating every detail. [Every] three years, or when there is an intercalary month, a medium investigation [is to be conducted; every] five years, a major investigation. Those with severe transgressions will be indicted; those with minor transgressions will have their years [of life] reduced by a subtraction of count (*suan*) [units]. Every third generation [conduct] a major punishment; every fifth generation, an extermination.[140]

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137 Wang Guowei, *Wang Guowei xueshu suibi* (Beijing, 2000), pp. 6–7.
138 Wang Ming, *Baopuzi neipian*, "Weizhi," p. 125.
139 Shang Zhijun, *Buji zhouhou fang*, p. 21.
140 Wang Ming, *Taiping jing hejiao*, p. 672.

The spirits' recording of human transgressions required a minor investigation (*xiaokao* 小考) every year, a medium investigation (*zhongkao* 中考) every three years and a major investigation (*dakao* 大考) every five years. This system presumably imitated the system of annual evaluations in the human realm. Indeed, the chapter on the "Ministry of education" 地官 in the *Zhouli* describes a system by which villagers were evaluated every three years, and the chapter on "Royal governance" 王制 in the *Liji* states that the emperor made an inspection tour every five years, and the celestial court also had a system of assessment.[141] "Subtracting count [units]" (*duosuan* 奪筭) meant reducing a person's lot of life. Moreover, crimes could accumulate. Major punishment was meted out once in every three generations, and when five generations were reached, the entire clan could be extinguished. The "count" (*suan*) originally referred to the number of years that Heaven allotted a human being before birth. If a person died prematurely and there were years left over, these were called "left-over count [units]" (*yusuan* 餘算) and could be granted by Heaven to another person. The same held true for crimes. The *Baopuzi* explains that if a person is guilty

> but only had evil intentions and no evil deeds, his lot of life is reduced. If he has done evil deeds and harmed other people, a period of twelve years is wrested away. If he dies before the twelve years are up, then the calamity will affect his descendants.[142]

Thus if a person died before he had paid fully for his evil deeds, the son ended up paying for the father's crime, and so on ad infinitum. The statement in the *Yanshi jiaxun* 顏氏家訓 (*Family instructions of Sire Yan*) by Yan Zhitui 顏之推 (b. 531) that, "when a person's transgressions have been recorded in the netherworld, ghosts reduce their lot of life," shows this belief was already deeply rooted in people's minds by that time.[143]

Infixation and corpse disease are non-existent in the medical records of the *Neijing* period. But the *Zhubing yuanhou lun* 諸病源候論 (*Discussion of the origin and symptoms of the various diseases*) compiled in the Sui by Chao Yuanfang 巢元方 contains separate entries that systematically sum up the "Various symptoms of corpse disease" 尸病

[141] See *Qunqiu fanlu*, "Kao gongming;" Baihutong, "Xunshou," "Kaochu"; *Fengsu tongyi*, "Shanze," etc.
[142] Wang Ming, *Baopuzi neipian*, "Weizhi," p. 126.
[143] Wang Liqi, *Yanshi jiaxun jijie* (Beijing, 1993), "Guixin," p. 406.

諸候 and "Various symptoms of infixation disease" 注病諸候.[144] This book was completed in 610 AD and offers a comprehensive summary of the various aspects of medicine during the early medieval period. The *Zhubing yuanhou lun* describes infixation disease as "extremely diverse in appearance, with up to 36 or even 99 different types."[145] This clearly demonstrates that medieval China can be regarded as an age with great fear of infixation disease. By contrast with the extensive information in the *Zhubing yuanhou lun*, the major medical texts of the Jin and Yuan periods mention infixation disease only rarely. Even in the Ming and Qing dynasties, when large quantities of medical literature were produced, we rarely find references to these types of disease.

The psychology of fear of infixation disease was related to the fearful worship of the ancestors. In this context, we need to pay attention to the funerary custom called *guisha* 歸殺, "returning home to kill." The *Yanshi jiaxun* explains:

> According to heterodox books, after a man's death, his soul returns home to kill (*guisha* 歸殺). The sons and grandsons all flee, and none are willing to stay at home. They draw talismans on tiles and take all kinds of quelling action (*yansheng* 厭勝). On the day of burial, they light a fire in front of the gate and spread the ashes outside. They perform the *fu* 祓 sacrifice to send off the family ghosts (*jiagui* 家鬼) and send petitions for stopping disease by infixation and contagion 章斷注連.[146]

The term "family ghosts" refers to the ancestors.[147] The families of recently deceased persons dreaded the return of their spirits and therefore utilized a variety of methods to exorcise them. Among these was the Daoist ritual of "petitioning" (*zhang* 章) Heaven to beseech the celestial deity to interrupt the harm done by the deceased toward subsequent generations.[148] According to the detailed research of Franciscus Verellen on the practice of sending petitions in the *Chisongzi zhangli*,[149] the

[144] Ding Guangyou, ed., *Zhubing yuanhou lun jiaozhu* (Beijing, 1994), pp. 682–714.
[145] Ibid., p. 691.
[146] Wang Liqi, *Yanshi jiaxun*, "Feng zao," p. 98.
[147] Ibid., pp. 100–01.
[148] Ibid., pp. 101–02. Also see Wang Liqi, "Liangzhong wenhua de beihou," *Chuantong wenhua yu xiandaihua* 1994.1, 82–85.
[149] Fu Feilan, "Tianshidao shangzhang keyi—'Chisongzi zhangli' he 'Yuanchen zhang jiaoli chengli' yanjiu," in Li Zhitian, ed., *Daojiao yanjiu yu Zhongguo zongjiao wenhua* (Hongkong, 2003), pp. 37–71; also Franciscus Verellen, "The Heavenly Master liturgical agenda according to Chisong zi's petition almanac," *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie* 14 (2004), 291–343, esp. pp. 337–39.

two characters *zhu* 注 and *lian* 連 should be read separately, referring to the two distinct haunting diseases of *guizhu* 鬼注 (ghost infixation) and *fulian* 伏連 (latent implication).[150]

When did the funerary custom of *guisha* arise? Or in other words, when did the fear of the ancestors and the belief that the ancestors could leave behind hidden crimes that would bring disaster to their descendants start? In my opinion, these developments coincided with the above-mentioned formation of the underworld bureaucracy and the discourse on indictment of ancestral spirits in the Eastern Han period and should not be pushed back too early.[151] The grave-quelling texts that have been excavated dating from the middle of the Eastern Han on (also sometimes called "infixation-releasing instruments," *jiezhu qi* 解注器), illustrate that the harm the dead could inflict on the living was directed particularly against relatives or members of the same community.[152] These grave-quelling texts were all very similar and, in particular, emphasized over and over that "the living and dead have parted ways and will not interfere with each other; the dead will no longer cross paths with the living and ask them for favors."[153] Moreover, since the crimes of the dead were transferred and passed on as disasters, people also made figurines out of lead or pine to be punished in their stead, praying for the separation of the living and dead. The "Bamboo slip for release of the pine figurine" 松人解除簡 from around the 4th century AD contains the following record:

> The master has been repeatedly marked down, and the pine figurine answers for this. The deceased person has been indicted for his crime and forced into labor service: the pine figurine answers for this. The six domestic animals perform labor service: the pine figurine answers for this. Do not come back for the older or younger brother. Do not come back for the wife. If the pine figurine withdraws too early or does not answer betimes, flog it 300 times, in accordance with the rules and regulations.[154]

[150] See Li Jianmin, "Contagion and its consequences: the problem of death pollution in ancient China," in Yasuo Otsuka, Shizu Sakai, and Shigehisa Kuriyama, eds, *Medicine and the history of the body* (Tokyo, 1999), pp. 201–22.

[151] Regarding the funeral rite of *guisha*, historical data postdating the Song period, as cited in the research of Sawada Mizuho, is most abundant. See Sawada Mizuho, "Oni kaeru—Kaisatsu hiô no fûkuroa, Sawada Mizuho, ed., *Chûgoku no minkan shinkô* (Tokyo, 1982), pp. 406–49.

[152] Liu Zhaorui, "Tan kaogu faxian de daojiao jiezhu wen," *Dunhuang yanjiu* 1991.4, 51–57.

[153] Zhang Xunliao, "Dong Han muzang chutu de jiezhu qi cailiao he Tianshidao de qiyuan," *Daojia wenhua yanjiu* 9 (1996), p. 257.

[154] Lian Shaoming, "Songren jiechu jian kaoshu," p. 116.

Among the common exorcistic expressions in the grave-quelling texts, expressions like "repeated" 重復 or "again" 復 are frequently connected to time: "because [the person prayed for was] of the same year and month [of birth as a person whose time had come], his death date was noted by repeating [that of the person whose time had come]" 或同歲月重復勾校日死; "day and time of death [represent] the repeating of the destiny [of a person whose time had come]" 死日時重復年命; or "the time and day of release is a repeated record" 解時日復重勾校. Jao Tsung-i interprets this to mean the times of the dead and living persons were confused: "In the registers of destiny of the living and the dead, the time and day of the deceased and the living persons were confused, producing contrary infixation" 相注忤. The terms "infixate and go contrary" 注忤, "infixate and implicate" 注連, and "infixate and haunt" 注祟 are basically identical.[155] In general, this could explain why the deceased haunted the living and why certain people in a household fell ill, but there were others who were fortunate and were spared suffering.

"Infixation disease" was not a type of disease, but rather a large category of diseases. The Daoist literature continuously warned that the deceased passed on disasters, and because of the extreme contagiousness of infixation disease, people in this period were familiar with a large number of syndromes that were induced by death and burial. The *Zhubing yuanhou lun* records the following:

1. When a person with a weak year destiny goes to a place where a funeral is taking place and suddenly experiences fear and aversion, it is the corpse worms inside his body that, because they by nature shun evil, now welcome the outside perversity in. This creates chronic disease. Outbreaks of this disorder are revealed by stabbing pain in the heart and abdomen, distention and fullness, and rapid breathing. Whenever such a person encounters a funeral, the disease will erupt. Therefore it is called "funerary corpse" 喪尸.[156]
2. When a person touches or encounters a dead person's corpse or even just comes close to one, the corpse's *qi* enters the person's abdomen and links up with the corpse worms inside the body to form disease. Outbreaks of this disorder also manifest with stabbing pain in the heart and abdomen, distention and rapid breathing. As this disease breaks out whenever the person smells corpse *qi*, it is called "corpse *qi*" 尸氣.[157]

[155] Jao Tsung-i, "Dunhuang chutu zhenmuwen suo jian jiechu guanyu kaoshi," *Dunhuang tulufan yanjiu* 3 (1998), 15–16. For different explanations of the term *fu* 復 in the grave-quelling texts, see Liu Zhaorui, "'Chengfu shuo' yuanqi lun," *Shijie zongjiao yanjiu* 1995.4, pp. 100–07.
[156] Ding Guangyou, *Zhubing yuanhou lun*, pp. 688–89.
[157] Ibid., p. 689.

3. When a person dies of infixation disease and someone approaches his home, that person will contract the disease and suffer similarly, even to the point of dying from it. Then it can again easily affect the person next to them. That is why it is called "death infixation" 死注.[158]
4. When a person with vacuity in the body comes close to a corpse at a funeral, he will receive the corpse's *qi*, and it will lodge in his channels, network vessels, viscera and bowels. If he later touches or sees a coffin, this will make it move. As a result, the person will experience stabbing pain in the heart and abdomen, even to the point of vomiting. That is why it is called "funerary infixation" 喪注.[159]
5. When a person has contracted pestilential *qi* and died as a result, leftover calamity will not stop but pour into his children, grandchildren and relatives. Evidence that they have contracted this disease is that their condition resembles that of the deceased person. Therefore, the disease is called "calamity infixation" 殃注.[160]

People's fear of death was such that they needed only to encounter it for the disease to break out. All five types of infixation disease listed above were complicated, persistent and incurable. Once they had broken out, new outbreaks would occur whenever the patient suffering from the disease attended a funeral, saw or touched a coffin or corpse or even just smelled corpse *qi*. A number of infixation diseases were extremely contagious, affecting children and grandchildren as well as outsiders. The patient's body exhibited obvious symptoms but, rather than saying that infixation illness was a kind of disease, it would be better to say the person was worried sick about infection from death pollution.

The concept of infixation disease was thus expanded from a fear of family ghosts to worrying about death and funeral-related matters, interlinked with concerns about contagion. In the Liu-Song period, Liu Yiqing 劉義慶 (403–444 AD) explained in the *Youminglu* 幽明錄 (*Record of the obscure and apparent*) that the older and younger brother of Sima Long 司馬隆 and Wang Xiang 王箱 "together got a broken coffin and took it apart to make a cart. Shortly thereafter, all three experienced trouble suffering from infixation implication 更相注連 and endless misfortune." According to Wang Xiang's mother, it was because they had taken the wood from a coffin to make a cart that "Long and the others died, were buried and destroyed" 死亡喪破.[161] By contrast, the

[158] Ibid., p. 699.
[159] Ibid., p. 707.
[160] Ibid., p. 153.
[161] Lu Xun, *Gu xiaoshuo gouchen* (Taibei, 1978), pp. 301–02.

famous physician Xu Sibo 徐嗣伯, also of the Liu-Song, specialized in using a deceased person's pillow for the treatment of corpse infixation, apparently based on the principle of treating ghost infixation disease with a substance of the same category. Thus, Xu Sibo explains:

> Corpse infixation means that ghost *qi* is latent and has not yet arisen. Hence it makes the person sunken and stagnant. Throw a dead person's pillow at it and the *qi* of the *hun* soul will fly off and be unable again to attach itself to the body 附體. Thus, the corpse infixation will be cured.[162]

At the same time, the dead person's pillow was just like the wood from the coffin and could cause disaster if used wrongly. For this reason, Xu Sibo advocated, after using the dead person's pillow, to "bury it in the place it came from."[163] It was returned to its original place in order to prevent anything related to death and burial from haunting the living.

The discussion of *qi* in the *Neijing* does not address the question of demonic haunting, but in medieval medical literature, ghosts and spirits are just as real as external evils like wind. As the chapter on "The various symptoms of ghost infixation" 諸注候 in the *Zhubing yuanhou lun* explains, "If a person has been dead for over three years, the *hun* soul turns into wind and dust. If they attach themselves to humans and form disease, this is called 'wind infixation' 風注."[164] In this quotation, "wind" was originally a transformation of a dead person's *hun* and *po* souls. The mystified flow of *qi* was used as evidence for the continuing presence of people after death. The chapter on the "Symptoms of evil infixation" 邪注候 in the same text further explains: "Whenever we speak of evil, it refers to *qi* that is not right. We say that the blood and *qi* in a person's bowels and viscera is right *qi*, while wind, cold, summer heat, dampness, goblins, demons and monsters are all evil."[165] In the development of etiology, this unquestionably constitutes a considerable extension of the explanation of *qi* that is not right, incorporating the very demonological factors that the early medical classics had eliminated. In Tao Hongjing's *Zhengao* 真誥 (*Declarations of the perfected*), the family ghosts described in the *Yanshi jiaxun* can be understood as "the *qi* of tomb infixation" 冢注之氣 or "infixation *qi*"

[162] Li Shutian, *Gudai yijia liezhuan jieshi* (Shenyang, 2003), p. 118.
[163] Ibid., p. 118.
[164] Ding Guangyou, *Zhubing yuanhou lun*, p. 691.
[165] Ibid., p. 700.

注氣: "What needs to be controlled is the *qi* of tomb infixation. Your condition is still favorable. Alternatively, I can send up a petition of sepulchral complaint 冢訟章. I should memorialize for you, and then the infixating *qi* will be cut off."[166]

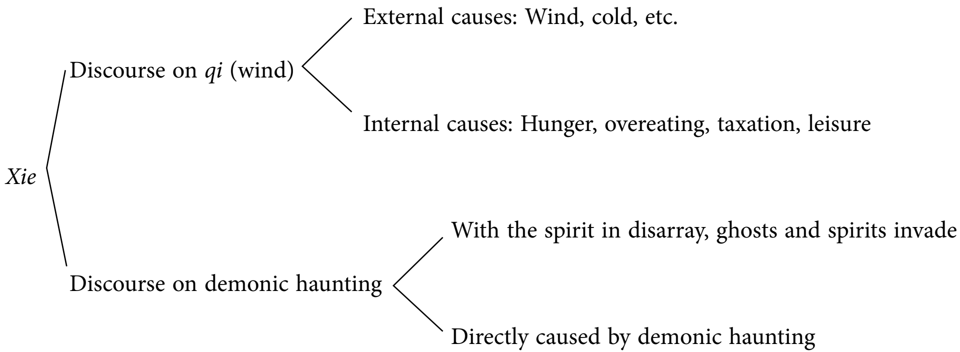
The art of delivery from infixation, fundamentally different from acumoxa and medicinal therapy, consisted in presenting petitions to confess one's own and one's ancestors' sins. In his preface to the *Bencao jing jizhu* 本草經集注 (*Variorum of the Divine Farmer's classic of materia medica*), Tao Hongjing discusses the revival of three simultaneously existing and related etiologies and their treatment in the form of cursing charms 禁咒:

> Now the reasons for disease are many, but they all are related to evil 邪. What is evil is so because it is not right 不正. It refers to that which is not normal in the human body. Wind, cold, summer heat, dampness, hunger, overeating, taxation and leisure—all these are evil, and it is not just ghost *qi* that causes terrible diseases. Humans live in *qi* as fish live in water. When the water is muddy, the fish become thin; when *qi* is clouded, humans become sick. Nothing is more serious than when evil *qi* 邪氣 harms a person. Once the channels and network vessels have received this *qi*, they pass it on into the viscera and bowels which, depending on their state of vacuity or repletion, cold or heat, knot it into disease. Disease then gives rise to disease until it spreads and mutates on a wide scale. The spirit 精神 uses the body for its residence. When the body receives evil, the spirit is also in disarray. When the spirit is in disarray, ghost spirits 鬼靈 enter. Their demonic power gradually strengthens, while the hold of the spirit gradually weakens. How could this not lead to death? The ancients compared this to planting poplars, which is quite apt. Nevertheless, there are also diseases that originate in ghosts and spirits. In such cases, it is suitable to use prayer 祈禱 to exorcise them.[167]

The term "evil" (*xie* 邪) as a general guiding principle for etiology can basically be divided into the discourse on *qi* (wind) and the discourse on demonic haunting. In the latter case, we find two different situations: first, evil spirits can seize a chance and invade the body of a patient whose spirit is already weakened. Second, evil spirits can directly attack the human body. Infixation disease encompassed both of these

[166] See Yoshikawa Tadao and Mugitani Kunio, *Shinkô kenkyû (Yakuchû hen)* (Kyoto, 2000), p. 368.

[167] Shang Zhijun and Shang Yuansheng, eds, *Bencao jing jizhu* (Beijing, 1994), pp. 15–16.



circumstances: in the case of fault passed down from the ancestors, "there are also diseases that originate with ghosts and spirits." In all other cases, the determining factor was the patient's weakened body:

Thus *xie*-based etiology is composed of two complementary theories, one involving *qi* (wind), the other "demonic haunting" (*guisui*). *Qi*-derived diseases, in turn, can be of external or internal origin—wind and cold as opposed to hunger, overeating, taxation and leisure—while haunting can also take two forms, one in which it is because the spirit (*jingshen*) is in disarray that demonic spirits can invade the body, the other in which demonic spirits are directly responsible for the haunting-derived calamity. On the basis of Tao Hongjing's new definition of *xie*, methods of prayer like "release from indictment" 解謫 or "release from infixation" 解注 were independent. They were not just auxiliary treatments in addition to acupuncture and medicinal therapy. Prayer drove out disease and interrupted fear.

By comparison with the story with which we began this chapter, of Lord Huang of Qi falling ill after seeing a ghost, the process of infixation disease was a more communal and continuous type of haunting misfortune. It was all the more threatening to people because the family was at its core, and the disease attacked and spread within the household, possibly involving outsiders. In this case, it was impossible to use the internal vacuity of an individual's body or the spirit's loss of composure as an explanation. Much more convincing was the explanation of misfortune left over from the ancestors, to the point where crimes and evil accumulated over generations could cause continuous death. This was an age in which infixation disease was abnormally dynamic.

Epilogue: the neglected middle

The time has come to conclude this otherwordly journey. Slow as our trip has been, it has only allowed us a bird's-eye view of the subject. This chapter has explored the discourse on demonic haunting and its transformations from the pre-Qin through Han periods. The notion of demons as causes of disease passed through three stages. In the first stage, theories of internal causation that arose in the Warring States period combined with the doctrine of *qi* to emphasize the function of the spirit 神 in the human body. The idea that ghosts and spirits internally caused disease in the channels and network vessels was explained away as shadowy ghosts born of a mind in doubt. The second stage coincided with advances in theories on external causation during the Han dynasty, based on external evils like wind and cold. Most notably, attention was focused on fire and heat as pathogenic agents. In this context, spirits were temporarily also conceptualized as the *qi* of heat toxin. Lastly, in the middle to late Eastern Han period, the frequent discussion of concepts like "hidden blame" 幽謫 or "left-over calamity" 餘殃 served again to confirm the existence of demonic haunting and at the same time added an ethical dimension at its root. This constitutes the third stage. The theories of demonic haunting that took shape during these three stages coexisted and formed a range of variations in different layers that have continued to the present day.

Incantations for removal 祝由, cursing charms 咒禁 and ritualistic treatments themselves also changed. Around the 7th century, Sun Simiao 孫思邈 (581–682) compiled the *Jinjing* 禁經 (*Classic of charms*), in which he systematized relevant treatment methods. The complexity of its contents far exceeds that of the earlier Shuihudi daybook or *The recipes for fifty-two ailments*. In this text, cursing charms formed the core of emergency treatments, in combination with medicinal decoctions, acumoxa, *daoyin* 導引 exercises and talismans.[168]

Religious beliefs can be regarded as a type of "medical treatment" in its broadest sense. The discourse on demonic haunting and the diseases of ghost or corpse infixation that the present chapter has touched on are positioned at the intersection between the two fields of religion and medicine. In our general understanding of the history of China, does

[168] See Huang Zhenguo, "Zongjiao yiliao shuyi chutan—yi 'Qianjin yifang, jinjing' zhi jinshu wei li," MA thesis (Sili Furen daxue, 2001).

the history of religion and medicine supplement or correct our fantasies or facts about the Chinese people and their culture? In contrast to past studies of political or institutional history, historians have more recently tended to focus on the history of society or of the common people. Nevertheless, regardless of whether we are reconstructing institutionalized religion or the mentality of popular beliefs, it is in fact impossible to do so without knowledge of the literature passed down from the elite. The true extent to which the everyday life of people in the "lower classes" was affected by notions of spirits and ghosts is still far from clear. As to scholars who think that "people's ideas about the world after death frequently mirror ideas about the real world,"[169] while we cannot say this type of statement is wrong, it certainly has its limitations. We must ask more carefully: what are the cultural and social mechanisms by which the world above ground and the world below corresponded and related to each other?

Do we really mean that social history is a mere extension of political and institutional history? And what are the differences in our basic assumptions about religious history and standard history? Perhaps we must also search for a religious mentality and its practice in a "middle layer," representing the majority—the mainstream—between upper and lower, the elites and masses. This "middle layer" ignores the differences between institutional and popular religion, and it includes the basic common beliefs and practices of all classes.[170]

Regardless of whether we are looking at the ancient past or modern times, a person of faith frequently looks to the spirit world for guidance in his life in the real world. Every person's constructed history depends on his own ideas and aims and, in the end, brings about the predictions of the gods. This constitutes the mysterious link between human history and preternatural forces. It is just like the inner world of a 9th century official that the sinologist Robert van Gulik described so attentively in a novel:

> The last time the ancestral shrine had been opened was twenty years earlier in Tai-yuan when his father proclaimed his marriage with his first lady to his ancestral Judge Di. He knelt with his bride behind his father and saw before himself a thin white-bearded form, with a dearly wrinkled face... At the far end of the hall he dimly recognized the long, golden, shimmering

[169] Du Zhengsheng, *Cong meishou dao changsheng*, p. 315.

[170] See Daniel L. Overmyer, "Convergence: Chinese gods and Christian saints," *Ching Feng* 40.3–4 (1997), 215–32.

> robe of his great ancestor who sat motionless on his high throne. He had lived eight centuries ago, not long after the wise Confucius…The judge spoke with a clear voice: "The unworthy descendant of the illustrious house of Di, named Jen-Dzie, oldest son of deceased Counselor Di Tschenyuan, respectfully submits that he neglected his duties to the state and the people, and for that reason will resign from his office as of today." As his words came to an end, the vast assembly dissolved before his unworldly eyes.[171]

The nearer we are to the history of another world, the nearer we are to our own as yet unknown history.

[171] Robert van Gulik, *Nagelprobe in Pei-tscho* (Zürich, 1990), p. 39.

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