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# Measuring Historical Heat

Event, Performance and Impact in China and the West

Symposium in Honour of Rudolf G. Wagner on his 60<sup>th</sup> Birthday  
Heidelberg, November 3<sup>rd</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> 2001



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Since most of the texts published in this volume are works in progress, the authors kindly ask not to use any of them for citation without their permission.

Wolfgang Kubin’s text *Der Schreckensmann* is due to be published in: Raoul David Findeisen. Sino-German Interplay.





# Measuring Historical Heat – Event, Performance and Impact in China and the West

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## A Short Description

For the past decades historical study has been dominated by the theory of *longue durée*, most famously represented by Fernand Braudel and the Annales School with their construction of the long trends of a history of "everyday life" in contrast to *histoire événementielle*. This approach deemphasizes the fact that – in retrospective at least – many historical processes inevitably acquire "event" character: they are in fact "momentous changes" in history.

It is in the act of history-writing and memory-building that events regain their field: In historical memory they turn out to be associated with and triggered by willed human action. They become explosive moments associated with crises involving state and society. They can be characterized as times of "high temperature", with a set of common features: (1) a violent break with established order that actively involves or is tolerated by large segments of society; (2) the necessity to look for new models for the behavior of individuals and groups to enact and perform the new ideal; (3) their relatively short duration but high and lasting impact, leaving society (and its people) fundamentally transformed. As one writer put it: "The past is a malleable substance, which we work into expressive shapes that in turn shape us."<sup>1</sup>

Marxist historians would claim that events are nothing more than the final explosion of long existing contradictions cumulated over time. This approach fails to take into account the singularity and incalculable nature of particular events and the even more complex nature of remembering those events. Once violent eruption is set into motion, events tend to take their own course, driven by internal dynamics of the way they are experienced, the immediate effect of those experiences, and the place they then take in complex non-predictable chains of reactions which finally lead into memory-building.

The conference will explore the structural dynamics between the event itself, the performativity therein and the impact thereof. It will study the way in which a society undergoes

violent shifts of orientation; the manner in which individuals and groups cope with the vacuum in ritual and routine through conscious staging and acting their envisaged or intended new self; and the ways in which violent transgressions of established rules and new role-playing affect society after the event as social order is "restored" and finally as the event is being remembered. The critical framework for this exploration is the question of how high temperature events release society from its "normal" everyday state and what the rules are that govern it. Thus, the conference sets out to explore the larger question of the relationship between the study of long trends in history with their seemingly "objectively" necessary drift, and the quirks of specific historical turning points.

Based on specific studies of "high temperature" events in history and their effects on memory building as seen in their repercussions in historical and philosophical writing, in literature, art, the media, film and music, the objective is to understand, from a cross-disciplinary and a cross-cultural perspective, the dynamics of momentous historical events which have impacted human societies irreversibly.

The proposed conference hopes to bring about a dialogue between young and established scholars working in the field of Chinese and European studies from different methodological disciplines (history, sociology, archeology, philosophy, literature, art history, politics, economics, linguistics and cultural studies). It is a first attempt to apply some of the specific knowledge gained from several interdisciplinary Heidelberg Lecture Series on Cultural Memory and History Building<sup>2</sup> in the last decades to the particular case of China. The conference will integrate as partners for a meaningful dialogue between China-specialists and Europeanists many of the scholars who have once contributed to these lecture series.

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> Robinson M. "Writers and the Nostalgic Fallacy," in: NYTBR 13.10.1985, 1:34-35, 34.

<sup>2</sup> These lecture series, initiated by Jan Assmann among others, have been published as Assmann J./Hölscher T. *Kultur und Gedächtnis*, Frankfurt 1988; Assmann A./Harth D. *Mnemosyne. Formen und Funktionen der kulturellen Erinnerung*, Frankfurt 1991; and Harth D./Assmann J. *Revolution und Mythos*, Frankfurt 1992.

# Antrag zur Veranstaltung eines wissenschaftlichen Symposiums

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by Barbara Mittler, Catherine V. Yeh and Michael Schimmelpfennig

## Thema:

Measuring Historical Heat – Event, Performance and Impact in China and the West

## Ort, Datum und Dauer der Veranstaltung:

Sinologisches Seminar der Universität Heidelberg, 3.–4.11.2001

## Begründung:

### 0. Deutsches Abstract

Dieses Symposium widmet sich der Untersuchung spezifischer "heisser" Ereignisse (events) in der chinesischen Geschichte. Dabei wird entgegen der vorherrschenden Konzentration der historischen Forschung auf langfristige historische Prozesse davon ausgegangen, daß bestimmte ereignishafte Momente entweder als Ereignis selbst, oder als komprimierte Erinnerung eine maßgebliche Rolle in der historischen Entwicklung spielen. Ziel des Symposiums ist es, solche – im Gegensatz zur "kalten" Geschichte des langfristigen historischen Prozesses als "heiß" bezeichnete Ereignisse – als Ereignis per se, als posthum komprimierte Erinnerung und als Prisma unterschiedlicher historischer Wahrnehmungen zu verstehen und ihre Verarbeitung in verschiedenen Medien zu analysieren, die von der Geschichtsschreibung über die Literatur und Poesie bis hin zum journalistischen Diskurs reichen.

Hierzu werden junge sinologische Nachwuchswissenschaftler mit herausragenden Vertretern ihres Faches zur Diskussion zusammengebracht. Darüber hinaus wird diesen Nachwuchswissenschaftlern, die in verschiedenen Forschungsbereichen mit unterschiedlichen

Methodiken arbeiten, Gelegenheit gegeben, mit Vertretern aus den entsprechenden europäischen Disziplinen in Kontakt treten. Für Sinologen als "Regionalwissenschaftler" ist dieser interdisziplinäre Austausch im Rahmen fortschreitend übergreifender wissenschaftlicher Zusammenarbeit von außerordentlicher Wichtigkeit. Umgekehrt bietet die Veranstaltung die Chance für Wissenschaftler europäischer Disziplinen, ihre Hypothesen in einem ihnen fremden Kulturraum zu überprüfen. Das Symposium geht von einer Thematik aus, die bereits in einer Reihe von Heidelberger Ringvorlesungen im europäischen Kontext diskutiert wurde und möchte die dort gewonnenen Erkenntnisse nun konkret auf den "Fall China" anwenden.

## 1. Anlass

For the past decades historical study has been dominated by the theory of *longue durée*, most famously represented by Fernand Braudel and the Annales School with their construction of the long trends of a history of "everyday life" in contrast to *histoire événementielle*. This approach deemphasizes the fact that – in retrospective at least – many historical processes inevitably acquire "event" character: they are in fact "momentous changes" in history.

It is in the act of history-writing and memory-building that events regain their field: In historical memory they turn out to be associated with and triggered by willed human action. They become explosive moments associated with crises involving state and society. They can be characterized as times of "high temperature", with a set of common features: (1) a violent break with established order that actively involves or is tolerated by large segments of society; (2) the necessity to look for new models for the behavior of individuals and groups to enact and perform the new ideal; (3) their relatively short duration but high and lasting impact, leaving society (and its people) fundamentally transformed. As one writer put it: "The past is a malleable substance, which we work into expressive shapes that in turn shape us."<sup>1</sup>

Marxist historians would claim that events are nothing more than the final explosion of long existing contradictions cumulated over time. This approach fails to take into account the singularity and incalculable nature of particular events and the even more complex nature of remembering those events. Once violent eruption is set into motion, events tend to take their own course, driven by internal dynamics of the way they are experienced, the immediate effect of those experiences, and the place they then take in complex non-predictable chains of reactions which finally lead into memory-building.

## 2. Zielsetzung und Notwendigkeit

The conference will explore the structural dynamics between the event itself, the performativity therein and the impact thereof. It will study the way in which a society undergoes

violent shifts of orientation; the manner in which individuals and groups cope with the vacuum in ritual and routine through conscious staging and acting their envisaged or intended new self; and the ways in which violent transgressions of established rules and new role-playing affect society after the event as social order is "restored" and finally as the event is being remembered. The critical framework for this exploration is the question of how high temperature events release society from its "normal" everyday state and what the rules are that govern it. Thus, the conference sets out to explore the larger question of the relationship between the study of long trends in history with their seemingly "objectively" necessary drift, and the quirks of specific historical turning points.

Based on specific studies of "high temperature" events in history and their effects on memory building as seen in their repercussions in historical and philosophical writing, in literature, art, the media, film and music, the objective is to understand, from a cross-disciplinary and a cross-cultural perspective, the dynamics of momentous historical events which have impacted human societies irreversibly.

The proposed conference hopes to bring about a dialogue between young and established scholars working in the field of Chinese and European studies from different methodological disciplines (history, sociology, archeology, philosophy, literature, art history, politics, economics, linguistics and cultural studies). It is a first attempt to apply some of the specific knowledge gained from several interdisciplinary Heidelberg Lecture Series on Cultural Memory and History Building<sup>2</sup> in the last decades to the particular case of China. The conference will integrate as partners for a meaningful dialogue between China-specialists and Europeanists many of the scholars who have once contributed to these lecture series.

The shared characteristics of historical events as different as the French Revolution, the Chinese Cultural Revolution (1966–76), the Tiananmen Demonstrations and Massacre (1989) or the fall of the Berlin Wall, with their high-pitched idealism and final disillusionment at the end, signal that "event" as an historical phenomenon has its own particular dynamics and powers in social transformation as well as being the object of particular types of narration. Yet like "great men" in history, "significant events" are considered today as only one, and perhaps the least important, among many other subjects in historical and cultural studies.

In the Marxist approach of dialectic materialism, history is inevitably progressing from lower to higher stages of development guided by laws unknown to the historical actors; the French Annales school of historical study focusses on long-term changes in the underlying patterns of everyday life and on social or geopolitical structures rather than on sudden changes. In every case, event history is supplemented, if not replaced, by other concepts of what constitutes the "real" moving forces in history.<sup>3</sup>

While history is considered more than just a sequence of events, in historical memory and cultural and artistic narration events do acquire a particular quality and status. When we look at, for example, the disillusionment with socialism which came at the end of Cultural

Revolution, we may conclude that this in fact reflects a long-term drift.<sup>4</sup> Yet nonetheless, it took the form of an extraordinary event to come to the surface and to enter people's consciousness. Clearly, long-term trends and developments get their push from, and find their most powerful expression in, particular historical moments, in events.

History must be perceived as multi-layered. This has been done most prominently by Reinhart Koselleck who distinguishes several time-layers or different temporal rhythms in history.<sup>5</sup> "Events" form the uppermost layer where history moves fast; there is a middle and a lowest level where things move more slowly (if at all). We would like to translate this model into a metaphorology of temperature, speaking of "hot" (fast-moving) in opposition to "cold" (slow-moving) phenomena in history.<sup>6</sup>

High temperature events in history require crisis performance. While in "low temperature" periods all the laws governing ordinary human behavior seem to be operative, in high temperature events, many of these laws are suspended and people tend to behave in a manner they have never done before, and will never do thereafter. High temperature events in history trigger the need to perform, to stage certain actions and choreograph oneself alone or collectively in historical guise for symbolic potential.<sup>7</sup> The chosen costume signals the historical model as well as one's own status aspirations; the monuments and statues to be erected symbolize the new spirit that is to govern the renewed society. Thus, the high temperature event by definition has strong features of performativity.<sup>8</sup> This significantly transforms the conditions under which such events unfold and creates their power to impose change as well as influencing the way in which they are remembered. High temperature events share the following set of features:

- They show a violent break with established order that is accepted (by force or otherwise), for the time being, by large (or at least seemingly large in retrospect) segments of society.
- The rituals, rules, and roles governing every day "low temperature" life are suspended. Thus, an empty space in both social and mental terms is created.
- To operate in this vacuum of rules, rituals and routines, people try out different possible roles, often dug up from the archives of history; accordingly, high temperature events are periods of highly conscious performative action.
- These events have a short duration and a high impact; once the "event" is over, "low temperature rules" again prevail. More often than not the event itself and the behavior associated with it is denounced, but still, everything has changed.
- The event itself acquires certain qualities including "heat" by being remembered.

The study of "event history" highlights significant crisis moments in history where society is in the state of heightened stress and intense self-awareness. Events offer us in their "high temperature" state a unique understanding of social transformation and the importance of willed – if often blind – action by individuals. The very peculiarities that set off events from everyday life may serve to highlight "low temperature" trends which lead to the event as well

as the mechanisms by which society regains and restructures its normalcy, regulates its temperature, thereafter, including the structural organization of social and historical memory.

It is the purpose of this conference, then, to study incidences of particular "historical heat." Contrasted with periods of relative chill, questions such as the following will be raised: What is the connection between the hot and the cold, the "evenemental" and the structural, what are the causes for historical transitions and discontinuities? How does an "event" become such in historical memory? For historical "heat" is a matter not only of history, but also of memory. Memory tends to condense long processes of slow development into a figure and a date (such as Moses and the institution of monotheism; Mao and the Cultural Revolution, the year 960 and Emperor Taizu of the Song). In retrospect, even long-term processes and trends tend to congeal into symbolic fixtures, "lieux de mémoire".<sup>9</sup> Depending on necessity those lieux de mémoire become the turning points of one's own history, they become "hot." This is true, in Chinese history, for example, for the "memorable" and "mythologized" May Fourth movement which has become distinctly more than a sum of its parts in Chinese cultural memory. It has been conceived as no less than the starting point of a "Chinese modernity," but was perhaps nothing more than a "halting, confused movement of a small group of intellectuals trying to awaken themselves."<sup>10</sup> Thus, "events" do not only happen, they acquire their qualities including "heat" by being remembered, (a) in the (comparatively 'cold') form of historiography and (b) in the (comparatively 'hot') form of memory.<sup>11</sup> Remembering, in this context, means the transformation and integration of historical events into the self-image or identity-structure of a society.<sup>12</sup>

The conference organizers have taken care that this tripartite view on the event itself, the event as "recycled" through historiographical writing and the event as identity-building memory is represented and problematized in the contributions. The question of how something becomes an "event" or a "date" will be rephrased and analyzed in some of the following terms: How does someone become a "person to be remembered"? (e.g. in talks by Bumbacher, Kurz, MacFarquhar, Weigelin-Schwiedrzik, Mittler)<sup>13</sup> How does something become "a book to be read," (e.g. Schimmelpfennig, Yeh) a "philosophy to be adhered to," (e.g. Gentz, Middendorf, Shaughnessy, Cohen) and a "language to be used and spoken"? (e.g. Harbsmeier, Dolezoleva-Velingerova, Kim, Volkmar) It will deal with issues such as: How does a dynasty fall and how is an emperor made? (e.g. Kurz, van Ess, Gentz, Weigelin-Schwiedrzik) How is a text conceived and why is it being read? (e.g. Shaughnessy, Kubin, Mittler, Volland) How does foreign science and technology change the lives of millions of Chinese? (e.g. Vittinghoff, Janku) How is the Chinese nation born? (e.g. Kurz, Kim)

In addressing these questions, the conference papers will focus on a number of key time-periods both in ancient and modern Chinese history (pre-Qin, Han, Song, late Qing, May Fourth period, Cultural Revolution and Tiananmen Student Movement).

It is the purpose of this conference

·to understand crisis moments in history as "high temperature events" from an interdisciplinary cultural studies approach and to explore new cross- and interdisciplinary methods of analysis for complex cultural and historical phenomena.

The conference will emphasize five analytical realms:

1. event as history
2. event as memory
3. high temperature events versus low temperature trends
4. willed human action versus "historical forces"
5. historical action as performance

·to facilitate a cross-cultural and interdisciplinary exchange in the exploration of event history by confronting evidence from widely different cultural realms and by introducing the "history" of particular events from a number of different disciplinary approaches.

·to test and, where necessary, challenge previously held assumptions imported into Sinology from European sciences. Much of the methodology used within Sinology is based on evidence from European history and culture. The advantage to this method is that this historical evidence has been accumulated over a long period of time and analyzed in extreme detail. The intrinsic weakness in this approach, however, is the fact that in direct application of European theories to Chinese subject matter, important features may be overlooked. Thus, European findings may be misread into general (universal) statements, because information from other cultures (such as China) is only marginally taken into account.

·to expand the viability of concepts and theories originally developed in the analysis of only one particular cultural experience.

For this purpose, the conference will bring together not just sinologists from the different methodological disciplines, but also a number of scholars from European subjects who will be chairs and discussants of the sinology panels, who will take part in a roundtable discussion and who will be giving keynote talks.

·to facilitate a cross-generational dialogue by offering young scholars the possibility to present their research to an experienced and critical audience of well-established scholars in the field of Chinese studies (as well as in Europeanist disciplines).

More than half of the panel talks at the conference will be given by young scholars, PhD candidates or recent PhDs. Their talks will be paired with talks by established scholars in the field and discussed by distinguished scholars from the European disciplines in



order to offer them the opportunity of a direct exchange with people they would otherwise find it difficult to contact.

### 3. Bezug zum gegenwärtigen Forschungs- und Diskussionsstand

Not just since the foundation of the Chinese Communist Party has Chinese history been determined by those who wrote and constantly rewrote it. What happened and what did not, how it happened and who made it happen, what was to be remembered, what forgotten, all of these were important questions throughout China's long history. The writing of history and thus, the making of events, was often dominated by but never completely in the hands of the strong Chinese state. From the early beginnings of dynastic history writing we already find inofficial and alternative histories, so-called *waishi* and *yeshi*. Due to a particular understanding of the functions and uses of literature in China, poetry, drama and fiction as well as philosophical writings, too, could and would be used constantly to present subjective (private) versions of history.<sup>14</sup>

The sinological literature in each of the subfields (historiography, literature/arts and philosophy) dealing with the making of "history" is flourishing. Numerous studies on the particularities of Chinese historiographical writing from its beginnings to the present day have been undertaken. Two recent international conferences convened in Heidelberg (1995 "Chinese Historiography in Comparative Perspective"<sup>15</sup> and 2001 "Modern Chinese Historiography and Historical Thinking"<sup>16</sup>) have attempted to bring together the scholarship of the most distinguished representatives in this field. The number of studies on political uses of philosophy, literature and the arts and their function in the processes of rewriting Chinese history is abundant, too. While building on the knowledge and findings gained at these conferences, the particular question raised at this conference is fundamentally different, however: this conference focusses less on history writing per se but on the particular nature of "events" within historical narration. It asks how an "event" comes into being. Thus, it attempts to rehabilitate and to reintegrate "hot events" in(to) the mainstream of sinological scholarship.

#### 1. The rehabilitation of "events"

In the past decades historical and cultural studies have seen the rise of various new theoretical approaches. Some became powerful forces, largely dominating the field. This includes the *Annales* and the post-modernist schools amongst others. While they view history from different perspectives and ideological commitments, all these theoretical approaches are united in one point: they have deemphasized event history as old-fashioned, or even a theatrical fraud. While all of these schools have enriched historical methodology through the emphasis on quantification and hard data (*Annales*) and providing stimulating new ways of

perceiving and articulating problems in various academic disciplines (Post-Modernism), in these approaches, "great events" and "great men" in history have turned into lesser important objects of study.<sup>17</sup>

In the field of Chinese studies, which takes much of its theoretical inspiration from Western disciplines and methodologies, these scholarly trends have had a significant impact.<sup>18</sup> Accordingly, event studies in history – once a strong tradition in historiography before the 1950s – have in recent decades been much in the shadow of studies of macro-trends extending over several centuries, or of post-modernist approaches, echoing earlier trends in European studies.

We are only beginning to enter a new era of "synthesis" recently, when people are trying to come to terms, again, with just how much specific events, individuals and ideas can make all the difference, without losing all appreciation for the *longue-durée* and bottom-up strand emphasized by the *Annales*. It is in this combination that some really interesting work has been produced, particularly in modern Chinese Studies,<sup>19</sup> and it is this type of scholarship which this conference hopes to stimulate by putting "events" and the complex processes of their creation back into perspective.

## 2. The reintegration of "events"

The conference focusses less on historiographical writing on particular "events" in isolation, but hopes to come to a more integrated view of particular "events" by providing several different angles on each of these events and by exploring different types of material narrating them. Thus it questions how an "event" comes into being. The Cultural Revolution, for example, is discussed on the one hand as a "disaster" in post-Cultural Revolution Party historiography (Weigelin-Schwiedrzik), and, on the other hand, as a "period of bliss" in the making of a novel (Yeh). It will also be a topic at the roundtable discussion to which we have invited Carma Hinton, who lived, as a foreigner, in China of the Cultural Revolution and will provide her view of the Cultural Revolution as an experience. This conference will offer many such cross-readings of one and the same event.

The model for this multifaceted approach to the analysis of particular events and their history is Paul Cohen's award-winning *History in Three Keys. The Boxers as Event, Experience, and Myth*<sup>20</sup> a remarkable contribution to the field of Chinese studies. It reminds the reader that "all history is narration"<sup>21</sup> and exemplifies how important and fruitful it can be to take a number of different narrations into account when studying cultural history. In dealing with different sources of historical memory and consciousness one is able, in the words of Paul Cohen "to convey something of the elusiveness of the historical enterprise, to illuminate the tension between the history that people make, which is in some sense fixed, and the histories that people write and use, which seem forever to be changing."<sup>22</sup> It is this type of scholarship – which involves sometimes difficult border-crossings between the disciplines – that the conference hopes to stimulate, especially among a new generation of scholars.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Robinson M. "Writers and the Nostalgic Fallacy," in: NYTBR 13.10.1985, 1:34-35, 34.
- <sup>2</sup> These lecture series, initiated by Jan Assmann among others, have been published as Assmann J./Hölscher T. *Kultur und Gedächtnis*, Frankfurt 1988; Assmann A./Harth D. *Mnemosyne. Formen und Funktionen der kulturellen Erinnerung*, Frankfurt 1991; and Harth D./Assmann J. *Revolution und Mythos*, Frankfurt 1992.
- <sup>3</sup> Cf. Appleby J./Hunt L./Jacob M. *Telling the Truth About History*, New York 1994.
- <sup>4</sup> Cf. the documentation from a recent symposium dealing with the origins and the afterlife of the Cultural Revolution <http://sun.sino.uni-heidelberg.de/conf/propaganda>.
- <sup>5</sup> Cf. for instance Koselleck R. (Ed.) *Formen der Geschichtsschreibung. Theorie der Geschichte IV*, München 1982. Koselleck R./Stempel H.D. (Eds.) *Geschichte—Ereignis und Erzählung. Poetik und Hermeneutik*, München (2) 1990. Koselleck R. (Ed.) *Die Französische Revolution als Bruch des gesellschaftlichen Bewußtseins*, München 1988.
- <sup>6</sup> This metaphorology can be considered loosely related to Claude Lévi-Strauss's ideas of "sociétés froides et chaudes." (Lévi-Strauss Cl. *Das wilde Denken* Frankfurt 1973 und ders. *Strukturelle Anthropologie II*, Frankfurt 1975, v.a. 39-42). In his interpretation "hot societies" remember the past in order to make it the motor of their development. This is similar to our idea that hot events are a key factor in (the narration of) historical development.
- <sup>7</sup> For the Cultural Revolution, for example, the Paris Commune became the model for political role playing and the source of conscious imitation, much as pre-imperial and later Imperial Rome became the models for the French Revolution. On the importance of such role models which have reappeared time and again since the May Fourth demonstrations in 1919 cf. Carma Hinton's film on the Tiananmen massacre of 1989, *The Gate of Heavenly Peace*, Boston 1995. Cf. also Wagner R. "Konfrontation im Imaginaire: Institutionelle Struktur und Modernisierung in der Volksrepublik China," in: Harth D./Assmann J. (Eds.) *Revolution und Mythos*, Frankfurt 1992, 313-346; Wasserstrom J. "History, Myth, and the Tales of Tiananmen," in: Wasserstrom J./Perry E. (Eds.) *Popular Protest and Political Culture in Modern China: Learning from 1989*, Boulder 1992 and Calhoun C./Wasserstrom J. "Legacies of Radicalism: China's Cultural Revolution and the Democracy Movement of 1989," in: *Thesis Eleven* 1999.57:33-52.
- <sup>8</sup> For concepts of performance and performativity cf. the ground-breaking work by Judith Butler (Butler J. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, New York 1990) as well as the useful essays in Sedgwick E.K./Parker A. (Eds.) *Performativity and Performance*, London 1995.
- <sup>9</sup> For essays dealing with this spatial conceptualization of memory cf. Nora P. (Ed.) *Les lieux de mémoire I: La république*, Paris 1984; Nora P. (Ed.) *Les lieux de mémoire II: La Nation*, Paris 1986; Nora P. (Ed.) *Les lieux de mémoire III: Les France*, Paris 1992.
- <sup>10</sup> For recent deconstructions of the established view of May Fourth cf. Schwarcz V. "Remapping May Fourth: Between Nationalism and Enlightenment" *Republican China* 1986.12/1:20-35 (citation taken from 23), Mittler B. "Verführung Emanzipation. Befreite Frauen in der chinesischen 4.Mai-Bewegung" *Figurationen* 1/2001, in press; and most prominently Dolezoleva M. (Ed.) *The Appropriation of Cultural Capital: The Burden of May Fourth*, Cambridge Mass. 2001 in press.
- <sup>11</sup> Cf. Chapter III "Optionen kultureller Erinnerung: "Heisse" und "kalte" Erinnerung" in: Assmann J. *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis. Schrift, Erinnerung und politische Identität in frühen Hochkulturen*, München (2)1997.

<sup>12</sup> We are momentarily witnessing such a process of transformation which can also be described as a process of historical "rechauffement" as the holocaust assumes in memory the dimensions of an event of gigantic dimensions and importance.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. the preliminary conference program attached below.

<sup>14</sup> For the particularities in the political use of literature since at least the conception of the Great Preface to the Book of Songs cf. the introduction "Literatur als regulierte Selbstaufklärung" in: Wagner R. (Ed.) *Literatur und Politik in der Volksrepublik China*, Frankfurt 1983.

<sup>15</sup> The proceedings of this conference in Chinese are published in Schneider A./Weigelin-Schwiedrzik S. (Eds.) *Zhongguo shixueshi yantaohui: cong bijiao guandian chufa lunwenji*, Taipei 1999. The presentations in Western languages are published in Schneider A./Weigelin-Schwiedrzik S. (Eds.) *Chinese Historiography in Comparative Perspective. History and Theory* 1996.35/4.

<sup>16</sup> For detailed information cf. <http://www.let.leidenuniv.nl/axelschneider/hg/cfp.htm>.

<sup>17</sup> This trend has been redirected, to some extent with a growing number of studies of specific events in European history, most importantly, perhaps, the French Revolution (with remarkable work done by Chartier, Ozouf and Hunt among others). Cf. for a methodical article Sewell W.H. Jr. "Political Events as Structural Transformations: Inventing Revolution at the Bastille," *Theory and Society* 25 (1996): 841-81.

<sup>18</sup> A seminal work describing this link between Chinese studies and European methodologies is Cohen P. *Discovering History in China: American Historical Writing on the Recent Chinese Past*, New York 1984.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Recent publications such as Harrison H. *The Republican Citizen* Oxford 2000, Goodman B. *Native Place, City, and Nation: Regional Networks and Identities in Shanghai 1853-1937*, Berkeley 1995, Strand D. *Rickshaw Beijing: City People and Politics in the 1920s* Berkeley 1989.

<sup>20</sup> Cohen P. *History in Three Keys. The Boxers as Event, Experience, and Myth*, New York 1997.

<sup>21</sup> For the theoretical discussion cf. White H. *The Content of the Form. Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation* London 1987 and White H. *Tropics of Discourse. Essays in Cultural Criticism*, London 1978, esp. "The Fictions of Factual Representation." Less radical in that he does not find a complete gap between reality and historical narration is David Carr (cf. Carr D. *Time, Narrative, and History*, Bloomington 1986). Cf. also Hobsbawm E./ Ranger T. *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge 1983. In the "Introduction" 13 Hobsbawm argues that all historians are in fact engaged in "the invention of tradition inasmuch as they contribute, consciously or not, to the creation, dismantling and restructuring of images of the past."

<sup>22</sup> Cohen P. *History in Three Keys*, op.cit., XIII/XIV.



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Saturday, November 3<sup>rd</sup> 2001

9.00 Welcome Address 

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9.30-10.45 Keynote Lecture 

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Jan Assmann Heidelberg, Egyptology "The Hot and the Cold in History"

11.00-13.00 Panel I

The Philosophy of Events – Part I 

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Chair: Glenn Most Pisa/Chicago, Classical Philology

Christoph Harbsmeier Oslo

"Explicit Abstraction – The Case of Classical Chinese"

Ulrike Middendorf Heidelberg

"Hot Debates on Emotions – The Problem of the Affective States in Pre-Qin and Early Medieval Chinese Political Philosophy"

Joachim Gentz Heidelberg

"Anticipating Historical Heat – Early Chinese Concepts of Time Quality and their Possible Influence on Historical Events"

14.30-15.30 Panel I

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The Philosophy of Events – Part II

Chair: Glenn Most Pisa/Chicago, Classical Philology

Friederike Assandri Rom/Heidelberg

”Dynastic Change and Reorientation of Religion – The Rise of the Tang and Daoism”

Roderick McFarquhar Harvard

”Cataclysms and China – How to get rid of Dinosaurs”

15.30-17.00 Panel II

The Historiography of Events – Part I

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Chair: Stefan Maul Heidelberg, Assyriology

Stephan Peter Bumbacher Tübingen

”Whose life is it anyway? On Traditional Chinese Biographical Writing”

Johannes Kurz Brunei

”Empereur à la surprise – The Making of Song Taizu”

Hans van Ess München

”The Fall of Kaifeng in 1127 and Censorship in *Ssu-k’u ch’üan-shu* versions of the Annals”

17.15-18.45 Panel II

The Historiography of Events – Part II

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Chair: Stefan Maul Heidelberg, Assyriology

Andrea Janku Heidelberg

”The North-China Famine of 1876–79 – Performance and Impact of a Non-Event”

Nany Kim Heidelberg/London

”Competition over National Origins in China, Japan and Korea around 1900”

Natascha Vittinghoff Göttingen

”In the Heat of the Night – Shanghai’s Electrification and the Contingency of Social Practice”

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Sunday, November 4<sup>th</sup> 2001

9.30-11.30 Panel III

The Event in literature, arts and the media – Part I \_\_\_\_\_

Chair: Lothar Ledderose Heidelberg, East Asian Art

Nico Volland Heidelberg

”Writing with Fire – PRC Newspaper Making in High Temperature Times”

Wolfgang Kubin Bonn

”Der Schreckensmann – German Melancholy and Chinese Restlessness: Ye Shengtao’s Novel *Ni Huanzhi*”

Milena Dolezelova-Velingerova Toronto

”Huang Ren (1866-1913) – The Eccentric who Discovered *Belles Lettres* for Chinese Literature ”

11.45-12.45 Panel III \_\_\_\_\_

The Event in literature, arts and the media – Part II

Chair: Lothar Ledderose Heidelberg, East Asian Art



Ed Shaughnessy Chicago

”The Writing of the Xici Zhuan and the Making of the Yijing”

Michael Schimmelpfennig Heidelberg

”The Event of Poetic Boredom or the Skill of Repetition? The ”Nine Laments”  
by Liu Xiang”

14.00-17.00 Panel IV

The Event in History and Memory \_\_\_\_\_

Chair: Tonio Hölscher Heidelberg, Archeology

Barbara Volkmar Freiburg

”Event and Interpretation – A Medical Comment”

Paul Cohen Harvard

”Remembering and Forgetting the Twenty-One Demands – A Case Study in  
Manipulation of National Memory”

Barbara Mittler Heidelberg

”A Fire and its Causes – Eunuchs and the Making of (Event) History in  
China”

Catherine V. Yeh Heidelberg

”The Cultural Revolution and the Cultural Revolution Museum – What is the  
Correct Memory?”

Susanne Weigelin-Schwiedrzik Heidelberg

”Is 20<sup>th</sup> Century Chinese History an Unending Disaster?”

17.15-19.00 Roundtable \_\_\_\_\_

Event, Performance and Impact

Chair: Rudolf G. Wagner Heidelberg

Monika Uebelhoer Marburg, Merle Goldmann Harvard, Hans-Ulrich Vogel  
Tübingen, Tonio Hölscher Heidelberg (Archeology), Glenn Most Heidelberg  
(Classical Philology), Michael Quirin Berlin, Stefan Maul Heidelberg  
(Assyriology), Rüdiger Bubner Heidelberg (Philosophy), Marianne Bastid-  
Bruguière Paris, Heike Holbig Hamburg, Thomas Kampen Berlin



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## Introduction

I was not Rudolf's student, nor, despite the color of my hair, his teacher. I am not even an aficionado of Wang Bi. But shortly after I arrived at Harvard in the mid-1980s, I detected a twittering among some of my colleagues at the Fairbank Center, people like Paul Cohen and Merle Goldman who are here today. It was the sort of excitement that one detects among birds in the period immediately before an earthquake, or, to change the metaphor, the kind of awestruck anticipation that ancient Chinese astronomers would have exhibited as they awaited the arrival of Halley's Comet. But my American colleagues, unlike the Chinese of old, were not fearful about this auspicious portent, but very happy.

In due course, Comet Wagner arrived, but displaying two differences from Halley's Comet. First, Halley's Comet was made up of ice particles; Comet Wagner was fiery hot, a miniature atomic reactor. Second, Comet Wagner did not trail a stream of ice particles behind it; rather there was a considerable amount of hot air spewed out in front of it, accompanied by much gesticulation. Yet it was a comet I remember with fondness, particularly the hot air about the iconographic significance of the details of Mao's tomb, and, prior to subsequent appearances of Comet Wagner, I too twittered in anticipation.

More recently I have noticed that the trajectory of Comet Wagner has changed for it has shot across our skies far less frequently. Now that I have come to Heidelberg I have realised why. The comet has been transformed into a star, hovering permanently over this city. Star Wagner, wan sui!

Roderick McFarquhar  
November 3<sup>rd</sup> 2001



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# The Hot and the Cold in History

by Jan Assmann, Heidelberg

The 11<sup>th</sup> of September has brought back to all of us an awareness of historical heat. This disaster was immediately sensed as an event that changed the world, as the end of something or as the beginning of something but in any case as a big change in historical temperature. Heat, this much is perhaps clear, is a metaphor for abrupt changes in history, changes that are consciously noticed as such, whereas coldness is a metaphor for changeless repetition or duration. We have learned much about terrorism during these last weeks, but above all, that the principle of terrorism is to create heat by perpetrating events. It is the event as such that counts and not a clear concept of how the world should look like, a vision of a different order of things, a set of political ideas, a political program. There is not much planning concerned with a state or order beyond the event, but only with more events. Terrorists typically have no particular sense of *longue durée*, "Tiefenzeit", long term structures and developments. They just want to intervene and to interfere. This, by the way, also defines the distinction between terrorists and liberation fighters. A liberation fighter has a clear idea of a state of affairs, an order of things which he wants to achieve by intervening and interfering. It is not the violent intervention as such which he is striving at but a long term change implying a new kind of coldness.

However, it is not only the event as such which is important, but also its impact on the general perception. Only event and perception together create historical heat, perception, that is, and interpretation. If an event is perceived and interpreted as a change, as making a difference, then may we speak of historical heat. Historical heat is a matter of differences, their production and their perception. The attack on the WTC and the Pentagon on September 11<sup>th</sup> was an event that made an enormous difference, dividing the flow of time into before and after, and this its character was established not only by the enormous and unprecedented size, the number of victims and the amount of destruction, but also by its broadcasting around the

world, its reverberation in virtually all fields of communication, especially economy. Specialists on terrorism and terrorists themselves have repeatedly stressed that without the media terrorism would be pointless and that only by mediatized amplification and dispersion a terrorist action can become an event that makes a difference. Making a difference, bringing about a "high temperature event", therefore, not only requires willful human action but also perception, interpretation, communication and memory.

I am not a specialist on terrorism, but only an Egyptologist and a friend of Rudolf who wants to make a contribution to this conference on 'Event, Performance and impact.' For an Egyptologist, such a contribution can only consist in a kind of historical reflection, going as far back in time as his sources allow him to go, and Egyptology allows us frequently to go farther back than other disciplines. But before embarking on this historical journey I would like to try a historical reflection of a different kind, asking for the possible provenance of the metaphors of high and low temperature in history which we are invited to ponder in this conference. The name that comes to my mind is that of Claude Lévi-Strauss, who made – in the late 50s and early 60s – the distinction between 'hot' and 'cold' societies. This distinction is in fact about history and not only about society. It is about the different ways societies perceive and deal with history. Cold societies are defined as having acquired or preserved a certain 'wisdom' that enables them to shut themselves up against any kind of historical change.<sup>1</sup> They give themselves institutions that preclude – perhaps not the occurrence but – the perception and cultural interpretation of events as interventions which make a difference. Hot societies, on the other hands, develop a competence of perception and interpretation that enables them to translate the various differences into a concept of history and to make their history not only a part of their self-image but also the motor of their development. Societies, according to Lévi-Strauss, become 'hot' by hierarchy, media and memory. Hierarchy creates tension and the desire for change, media provide the necessary tools for the writing of history, that is, the construction of a self-image based on differences, changes, events and memory keeps this self-image alive and acts as what Lévi-Strauss calls a 'motor of development' or what I proposed to call "mythomotrics". What Lévi-Strauss wanted to stress by introducing this distinction was, that societies lacking hierarchy, writing and historiography do not just lack history – "Völker ohne Geschichte", peoples without history, to quote Ranke's famous classification for that type of societies – but that they have and cultivate something else instead. Coldness, therefore, does not constitute the 'degree zero' of culture, but is another cultural frame in its own right. Having no history, according to Lévi-Strauss, means, not just a lack, but a cultural achievement. Coldness has to be culturally generated, as well as heat. Among cultural institutions that promote coldness are myth and ritual, whereas heat is generated by technical evolution and 'historical memory'.

At the time when Lévi-Strauss formulated his concept of hot and cold societies, similar dualistic concepts were very much en vogue among western philosophers, historians and students of Comparative Religion. The leading dualism, however, was not defined as high vs.

low temperature, but as history versus cosmos. In his book *Le mythe de l'éternel retour* (1949), the historian of religion Mircea Eliade opposed History and Cosmos in a way very similar to Lévi Strauss' later distinction.<sup>2</sup> Eliade showed History to be, not the common and inevitable destiny of every form of human life and culture, but a specific cultural option. His term for the alternative to this option was 'cosmos'. Eliade held history to be a relatively late invention and contended that humankind had lived until then, and in many parts of the world was still living, in the cultural frame of cosmos (or 'myth') rather than in that of history. Similar theories abounded in Europe after 1945. In the same vein and during the same years, the political philosopher Eric Voegelin wrote his monumental work *Order and History*, wherein he opposed the "cosmological civilizations" of the East – Egypt, Mesopotamia and China – to "Israel and revelation". Voegelin made use of the same dichotomy between cosmotheism (his term is 'cosmological myth') and 'revelation', which for him, was another term for history.<sup>3</sup> To add further examples: In his book *Meaning in History*, published in 1947, the philosopher Karl Loewith identified 'history' as a semantic formation characteristic of the Judaeo-Christian tradition and opposed it to the ancient Greek model of cosmic order and cyclical time.<sup>4</sup> In the same year, the Assyriologist and Egyptologist Henri Frankfort published his book *Kingship and the Gods*, with the sub-title "The Integration of Society and Nature", in which he showed that the rituals of Mesopotamian and Egyptian kingship were aiming at constructing and maintaining a symbiotic harmony of natural and political order.<sup>5</sup> All of the named authors were writing in exile (and, with the exception of Eliade, had been driven out of their respective home countries by the Nazis). Not only did they construct an opposition of cosmos and history, they all presented 'cosmos' as an alternative cultural option to Occidental culture and its history which had proved so fatal. Cosmos stood for a conscious form of anti-history, which was invented as a bulwark against what Eliade called "the terror of history".<sup>6</sup> Both concepts, Lévi-Strauss' 'heat' and Eliades 'cosmos' are cultural constructions of anti-history designed to keep at bay the discontents and terrors of history.

In the years following World War II, 'history' ceased to be seen as the overall determinant of human action. These thinkers who had lived through the unprecedented terrors of history which characterized the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century wanted to get out of history. "*Abschied von der bisherigen Geschichte*" – saying good-bye to history – was the title of a book by Alfred Weber that appeared in 1947. These thinkers believed to have discovered a terrorist element within the very concept of history, an element of destruction or 'apocalypticism' which they wanted to overcome by radical historicization and relativization of history itself. Thus, history came to be seen as something which had a beginning and could have an end, (*Vom Ursprung und Ziel der Geschichte*, On the Origin and the Goal of History, to quote just another book-title of these years, this time by Karl Jaspers), as a certain structure depending on specific cultural constructions and representations, and, above all, as something that may be avoided, excluded, fenced off or counteracted by other cultural constructions and representations based on models of cosmic order. History ceased to be looked at as a kind of

natural fate of humanity and began to be seen as a cultural construction which lends itself to new methods of scientific analysis. While the passionate philosophical debate about the opposition between history and cosmos did not last very long, its epistemological implications may have had a more lasting influence. A perspective of radical constructivism was installed with it that may have had long-term effects, touching perhaps in hidden ways the intellectual framework of the later constructivism of cultural studies. The new constructivism, however, does not linger excessively and exclusively on the intellectual frames of cultures. Among other things, it takes into far more serious account the role of media, the forms of transmission and, above all, the invention and use of writing in the rise and transformations of history. From this point of view, history as well as anti-history appear as forms and options of cultural memory, depending on specific institutions, techniques and media such as ritual, recitation, and writing.

More than 120 years before this new and radical relativization of history in post-war Europe, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel searched in his *Lectures on the Philosophy of History* for 'generators of history' and came to a number of surprising conclusions. Happiness, he writes, is not the ground (der Boden) of history. The periods of happiness are the empty pages in history, because they are periods of harmony, of missing antagonism, of 'coldness', we might add.<sup>7</sup> Antagonism, however, generates a tension that fuels history. Happiness is a blocker of history because it dissolves tension. Another necessary condition of history, according to Hegel, is the existence of a state. "History knows only peoples that form a state".<sup>8</sup> States, in their turn, presuppose certain forms of antagonism in the same way as does history. "A real state and a real government arise only if there is already a difference of classes, that is, if the difference between the rich and the poor has become very great".<sup>9</sup> Hegel is here clearly anticipating Lévi-Strauss' idea of societies turning 'hot' by hierarchical tension. Stratified societies build states to contain the antagonisms which set history into motion and keep it going. If, however, a society succeeds in 'naturalizing' these antagonisms by interpreting them as an integral part of the order of creation such as the Hindu caste system, history is blocked.<sup>10</sup> In this way, Hegel creates an interesting concept of anti-history or 'coldness'.

Hegel defines history as both an event and its narration, as 'res gestae' and 'historia rerum gestarum'. He equates narration with remembering. Narrating and remembering history is the same. History is what is remembered and only that is remembered which makes a difference and results in a change. "The homogeneous course of affairs of a family or a tribe is not the object of memory".<sup>11</sup> Without state, no memory and history: "Only the state provides a content that is not only apt for the prose of history but which generates history itself" ("Aber der Staat erst führt einen Inhalt herbei, der für die Prosa der Geschichte nicht nur geeignet ist, sondern sie selbst mit erzeugt.")<sup>12</sup> Implicit in Hegel's theory of history, there is already an element of "reconstructivism" reminiscent of Halbwachs' theories. While Hegel contends that there is no 'history' except for societies that develop a memory, Halbwachs states that there is no past outside its mental representation in memory. This constructivist stance enables



both to ask for ‚generators‘ of history resp. memory or, to use the leading metaphors of our conference, for generators of cultural ‘heat’.

As far as Hegel’s idea of a necessary connection between the formation of a state and the rise of history is concerned, we cannot but agree with his view. Taken in a very general sense, various forms of ‘history’ co-evolve indeed with the stratification and political organization of complex societies. Together with their institutions of political organization, these societies develop forms and media of constructing and representing the past. On the other hand, Hegel’s generators of history are much too general in order to account for the huge differences between the different forms in which history emerges in the Ancient Near East. History, as it arises in Egypt, is very different from what we observe in Mesopotamia, and Mesopotamian historical narrative is diametrically opposed to Greek models, which for us, who follow Cicero in calling Herodotus the father of history, are the ‘typical’ and ‘proper’ manifestations of historical representation. Little, therefore, is gained by using such a highly generalized concept of history with the intention of opposing it to an equally general concept of pre- or anti-history. Nor can we follow Hegel in arranging these various concepts of history in an evolutionary sequence. Instead, we would prefer to stress the diversity and peculiarity of the various forms of history as they emerge in the Ancient Near East in the context of the formation of the state. By so doing we want to challenge Hegel’s leading assumption that a new concept of history is the necessary correlative of state formation and, on the other hand, to contradict the widespread assumption that history (as so many other things) has its origin in Greece and was invented by Herodotus.

Christian Meier, for instance, recognizes only the work of Herodotus as true historiography, excluding all literary forms of representing the past that, long before Herodotus, emerged in the Ancient Near East.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, he not only denies these oriental forms of historical communication any claim to be recognized as historiography, he even takes them to be the contrary of historiography, that is, to constitute another form of anti-history. For Meier, Herodotus’ epoch-making achievement consists in breaking up the oriental constructions of meaning, which served in that context as generators of history - and memory, we may add, because memory cannot do without constructions of meaning. These constructions had to be destroyed before a new form of historiography could arise in the Western sense. Only the emancipation from ‘meaningful’ assumptions of normative truth creates a new awareness for the contingency of history, its ‘Eigensinn’. In other words, the identity of memory and history had to be broken up in order for history proper to arise. Seen from this perspective, the oriental and biblical forms of historiography must appear not as history but as memory, the opposite of history, as quintessential manifestations of what had to be overcome in order to break through towards history proper.<sup>14</sup>

If we try, however, to adopt the perspective of ancient Egyptian culture, it is the construction of coherence rather than the discovery of contingency that acts as a generator of history. The ancient idea of a connection between doing and faring, better known as historical justice, is still operative in Hegel’s famous formula “Die Weltgeschichte ist das Weltgericht” (world’s

history is world's judgment) which he borrowed from Schiller's poem *Resignation*. This view did not originate in Greece but is the exclusive achievement of Mesopotamian, Hittite and Biblical historiography. The idea of justice as a generator of history was unknown to the ancient Egyptians who knew it only, as we shall see below, in the restricted domain of personal history, that is, biography, but not of national or universal history. If we create an opposition, not between Greece and Israel, but between Egypt and Mesopotamia (including Hittite and Israelite historiography), it becomes obvious that the connecting principle of doing and faring or historical justice becomes seminal for certain forms of historical thinking. In creating this important structure for the presentation of past events, justice and juridical or legal thinking act as an oriental generator of history.<sup>15</sup> We claim that it was the institution of law, the principle of justice and the evolution of legal thinking that functioned as a generator of historical discourse in the Ancient Near East. It is this concept of history that still underlies modern definitions such as the one of Huizinga quoted above who sees history as "the intellectual form, in which a society renders account to itself of its past". This notion of responsibility and accountability which is involved in recognizing the past as 'one's own' turns the representation of the past into a form of memory.

If we confront, not Greek and Oriental concepts of history, as it is usually done, but Egyptian and Near Eastern concepts, it becomes immediately clear that we are dealing here with two radically different concepts of what we may call 'events'. The Egyptian word that comes closest to our concept of 'event' is *hprwt* and has negative connotations.<sup>16</sup> 'Event' means mishap, disaster, accident. In a very important work of wisdom literature we read that God has given man magic as a weapon to ward off the blow of events.<sup>17</sup> Events must be avoided in order to prevent them from making a difference, bringing about a change.

In Mesopotamia, events are the object not only of exclusion but also of interpretation. This has much to do with divination which played an absolutely central role in Babylonia as well as in China and Rome. In Egypt, it is the regular everyday course of cosmic life which was regarded as meaningful and which, therefore, was the object of constant observation and ritual accompaniment. Exceptional events such as lunar and solar eclipses, comets and other unusual phenomena were not invested with any specific meaning but regarded as contingent manifestations of chaos. In Babylonia, on the other hand, it was the exception which constituted the sign and provided information. The information concerned the will of the god. An 'event' was seen as a manifestation not of chaos, but of divine will. A sign points to a future event and presupposes a finality between the will of the gods and the vicissitudes of history. In Egypt, the will of the gods was absorbed in the task of maintaining the world; this is the reason why, for the Egyptians, it was not the exception but the rule, the normal everyday course of nature, which was invested with meaning. In Mesopotamia, the divine will is sufficiently free to extend its range into human affairs and to create events, that is, meaningful interventions whose meaning may and must be deciphered by specialists. As a result, history forms a realm of religious meaning and experience and becomes a matter of registration, communication and

representation.<sup>18</sup> Even in Egypt, this model grew more and more influential during the later part of the New Kingdom and led to considerable changes especially in the historiographical genres: the private autobiography and the royal inscriptions.<sup>19</sup> The traditional theology of maintenance is complemented by a theology of will which repletes the realm of *keperut* “all that happens” with meaning.

However, it would be a strong oversimplification to confront Egypt and Mesopotamia en bloc as ‘cold’ and ‘hot’ societies, the one living in cyclical, the other in linear time. This type of cultural typology based on dualisms such as the distinction between cyclical and linear time seems to me no longer possible.<sup>20</sup> This is a point in which I differ fundamentally from the dualistic thinking of the post-war theoreticians. I do not believe in ‘hot’ and ‘cold societies’, but in generators of ‘heat’ or history and ‘coldness’ or anti-history in any given society. Whether a society in its entirety may be termed ‘hot’ or ‘cold’ is a question of predominance but never of exclusive determination. No concrete civilization was ever fostering a cultural memory that was exclusively determined by one of these poles. Even Lévi-Strauss’ ‘hot societies’ cannot do completely without institutions of cyclicity and regeneration. The best example are the Jews themselves who conventionally rank as the people of history, but who, by celebrating the Sabbath, live in the most intensive forms of temporal cyclicization. Cyclical and linear constructions of time do by no means exclude each other but occur in every culture in various forms of combination.<sup>21</sup> Every civilization lives in two times, a cyclical time of regeneration which has to be confirmed and maintained by rituals and feasts and a linear time of history, in which a society “renders account of its past” and in which the past is used to legitimize the present and to lay down the foundations of the future.<sup>22</sup> In every society there are institutions, sites or loci of history and account-giving as there are sites or loci of cyclical regeneration. The specific profile of a culture is determined by prevalence of one time over the other but not by complete exclusion of the other time. Notwithstanding the fact that Ancient Egypt may be generally characterized as a ‘cold’ society, developing strong concepts of anti-history and heavily ritualized forms of cultural memory, we meet also with some very distinct sites of history.

The ancient Egyptians lived in a world which they believed to be threatened by imminent catastrophe and which they felt themselves summoned to maintain, at least to cooperate in its maintenance. Eric Voegelin, in his already mentioned *Order and History*, characterizes this world view in the following way:

“The people living in the truth of the myth sensed the cosmos threatened by destruction through time; and the ritual repetitions of cosmogony purported to ‘annul the irreversibility of time’. The experience of a cosmos existing in precarious balance on the edge of emergence from nothing and return to nothing must be acknowledged, therefore, as lying at the center of the primary experience of the cosmos”.<sup>23</sup>

Therefore, their attention was focussed on the regularities of cyclical return, renewal and regeneration. But even in this world of ritual repetition, there is one very prominent site of historical memory and communication which is the monumental tomb. For the Egyptians, the tomb is the place of account-giving. Here, they represent their life in a series of scenes and inscriptions as the accomplished result of their earthly activities and virtues.<sup>24</sup> The biographical inscriptions in private tombs are the only Egyptian texts that communicate a longer stretch of history and reconstruct the past at least for the extension of a life-time.<sup>25</sup> If we ask for the 'generator' of this form of history, we hit upon an idea that is both a religious and a juridical one: the judgment of the dead. The representation of the past in Egyptian tombs occurs in a tribunalistic context and serves the purpose of personal justification. The immortality of the tomb owner depends on posterity, on the memory of future generations and their willingness to read the inscriptions and to recall the personality of the deceased. Their judgment decides about his immortality. In the course of history, this idea is transposed on the divine plane and assumes the form of a divine tribunal where the dead are supposed to appear, to render account of their life and to receive their verdict.

The Egyptian tomb is a *lieu de mémoire*, a place to represent the past and to render account. The biographical inscription is an apology, spoken at or beyond the threshold of death. Justice functions here as a generator of history, but the history it generates is only biography and never the history of a nation. The decisive point is that the kings were held to be exempt from this form of apology and account-giving. There are neither biographical inscriptions in royal tombs nor longer historical flash-backs in royal inscriptions, because the king, by maintaining the universe through the ritual cyclization of time, is the main agent of anti-history.

In Mesopotamia, the situation is inverse.<sup>26</sup> Here, it is precisely and exclusively the king who needs the past. He needs the past, in the first place, in the apologetic frame of legitimation and justification.<sup>27</sup> His justification does not decide about his immortality but about the well-fare of his country and dynasty. Here, connective justice acts as a generator of *national* and dynastic history. There are many royal inscriptions that give account of a longer stretch and even the entire extension of a reign, and there are even not a few texts that stretch back over a series of different reigns into the remote past. An early text of this genre is known under the title "Curse on Aggade".<sup>28</sup> This is the history of the rise and fall of the Sargonid dynasty in the 23rd and 22nd centuries BCE. Among other events it relates how king Naramsin destroyed the temple of Enlil in Nippur and how Enlil answered this crime by sending the Guteans who put an end to the ruling dynasty. It is a typical example of history written after catastrophe. The end of the Sargonid empire made it possible or even necessary to write its history, and this, to wit, in terms of guilt and punishment. Continuity is saved across the break: as a continuity of justice. It is justice which makes the past meaningful and, therefore, memorable, representable, 'narratable' and 'writable' in the form of historic discourse. The juridical concept of guilt and punishment gives meaning to history and coherence to the chain of events and the sequence

of dynasties. We are only en passant mentioning the case of traditional Chinese historiography, where the history of a dynasty is written after its break-down by the following dynasty and where the rise and fall of dynasties is explained by their ways of fulfilling or forfeiting the mandate of heaven.

In Mesopotamia, historical justice is not a matter of social memory as in Egypt but of divine intervention. The gods are believed to intervene in the course of history in the form of punishment and reward.<sup>29</sup> They intervene into history because they are explicitly invited to do so. The theologization of history results from certain institutions of international law. Unlike Egypt, which knew right from the start a central government, Mesopotamia went through a long period of polycentrism with city-states connected to each other by treaties and conflicts. In this situation, Mesopotamia formed concepts and institutions not only of national, but of international law. The political institutions of the city-state were able to maintain justice within the state, but for the maintenance of law and order among the various states the gods were made responsible. They were called upon to watch over the strict observance of the treaties between states and to punish any transgressions. Treaties had to be sealed by a solemn oath sworn by both parties submitting themselves to divine supervision.<sup>30</sup> In the same way as the legal institutions of the state maintain justice inside the state, the will and the “wrath” of the gods maintain justice between states.

This tradition generated several genres of apologetic historiography, of rendering account to oneself and to the gods about one’s past. When a catastrophe occurred, it would be traced back to the intervention of an offended deity whose wrath could only be reconciled by confession and repentance. When an alliance was formed, the treaty was prefaced by a long flash back into the common history of both parties forming an alliance. When an usurper ascended to the throne, he composed especially elaborate apologetic accounts of his reign.

All these traditional genres of cuneiform historiography came to their fullest fruition in the Bible where they develop into large scale literary compositions. In the ‘deuteronomic’ tradition, every reign is judged according to the principle of the king’s obedience to the law. With few exceptions, it is a long story of disobedience, disloyalty, apostasy, injustice, idolatry, in short: of accumulation of guilt leading finally to the catastrophe of the destruction of Jerusalem and the Babylonian exile. The second form which may be called ‘covenantal history’ underlies the books Exodus and Deuteronomy, where the law, that is, the treaty proper, is introduced by an account of how God intervened for the redemption of his chosen people. The book of Deuteronomy contains not only the historical introduction and the body of stipulations, but even the curses that traditionally form the close of a treaty.<sup>31</sup> The third form, the royal apology, is represented in the Bible by the elaborate accounts dedicated to the reigns of kings Saul, David and Solomon, especially to David whose dynastic legitimacy was more than dubious.<sup>32</sup>

Biblical historiography is the apex of Mesopotamian and Hittite traditions of history writing. The idea of forming an alliance with God himself instead of only appointing God as a supervisor of political alliances draws God much closer into the ups and downs of human affairs than

what has been the case in Mesopotamia and its neighboring civilizations. There, history was just a field of possible favourable or punishing interventions by the gods; now it turns into *one* coherent connection of events stretching from creation until the end of the world known as *historia sacra* in the Judaeo-Christian tradition.

We have seen, however, that the idea of divine verdict and intervention was not totally absent even in Egypt. On the contrary, the typically Egyptian idea of a judgment after death appears as the strongest possible manifestation of the principle of divine verdict. This idea, however, generates only biographical history, because it is only an individual's justification and immortality that are at stake, whereas in Mesopotamia and Israel the idea of divine agency generates history in a much more comprehensive form, socially and temporally. Here, it is precisely the lack of the ideas of immortality and of a reward and punishment in the hereafter that generates history. The absence of immortality means that every account has to be settled on earth.<sup>33</sup> Whereas in Egypt the horizon of fulfilment extended into the hereafter, in Mesopotamia and Israel it was confined to the terrestrial world but stretched into the future, over generations and dynasties. Thus is generated what we call history. What immortality and the hereafter is for the Egyptians, history is for the Mesopotamians: a horizon of fulfilment. In Mesopotamia, however, this form of historical thinking is only rudimentarily developed and gains its full articulation only in Israel. Instead of immortality and the hereafter, there is the sequence of generations and instead of the judgment of the dead there is the verdict of history, *die Weltgeschichte als Weltgericht*, as Schiller and Hegel put it. Hegel's idea of world history as world's judgment – “*Die Weltgeschichte ist das Weltgericht*” – has always been recognized as a secularized version of *historia sacra*. But it is also a return to its origins. *Historia sacra* is the theologization of the concept of history as a form of legal discourse, of account-giving and collective responsibility. This juridical nucleus of history finds its most clear and poignant expression in Hegel's definition.

What we are witnessing today is a clash, not between civilizations but between different states of historical temperature. It is evident that our western world is privileging heat in an unprecedented degree and therefore progressing, changing and developing at a pace which creates an ever increasing distance between itself and the rest of the world. On the other side, the dynamics of globalisation impose this heat even on societies who traditionally opt for coldness, that is, against progress, change and modernisation. These societies typically react to this exposure by reinforcing their generators of coldness, regressing into medieval institutions and mentalities. By doing so they increase the distance themselves and the west in a way that, under the conditions of globalisation, cannot fail to produce tension and antagonism, precisely that kind of antagonism that acts as the strongest generator of heat. At present, this antagonism is exploding in daily events of quite exceptional heat. Obviously, we are back to the terror of history.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> *Strukturelle Anthropologie* (Bd. II, Frankfurt 1975) see also author, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis. Schrift, Erinnerung und politische Identität in frühen Hochkulturen*, München 1992, p.66-86.
- <sup>2</sup> M. Eliade, *Le mythe de l'éternel retour*, Paris 1949. German: *Kosmos und Geschichte*, Reinbek 1966.
- <sup>3</sup> Eric Voegelin, *Order and History* vol. 1, *Israel and Revelation*, Louisiana UP, Baton Rouge 1956.
- <sup>4</sup> K. Löwith, *Meaning in History*, Chicago 1949. German: *Weltgeschichte und Heilsgeschehen: zur Kritik der Geschichtsphilosophie, Sämtliche Schriften 2*, Stuttgart 1983.
- <sup>5</sup> Henri Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods. The Integration of Society and Nature*, Chicago 1949.
- <sup>6</sup> See Aleida Assmann, „Die Obsession der Zeit in der englischen Literatur der Moderne“, in: Martin Middecke, ed., XXXX.
- <sup>7</sup> *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte*, Stuttgart (Reclam) 1961, p.71.
- <sup>8</sup> *ibid.*, p.86.
- <sup>9</sup> *ibid.*, p.145.
- <sup>10</sup> *ibid.*, p.115.
- <sup>11</sup> In contrast to Halbwachs' definition of *histoire* und *mémoire*.
- <sup>12</sup> Hegel, p.114.
- <sup>13</sup> Christian Meier, „Historical Answers to Historical Questions: the Origins of History in Ancient Greece“, in: *Herodotus and the Invention of History, Arethusa* Special issue 20.1,2, 1987, p.41-57.
- <sup>14</sup> Christian Meier, *Athen*, Berlin 1993, p.589ff.
- <sup>15</sup> J. Assmann, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis. Schrift, Erinnerung und politische Identität in frühen Hochkulturen*, Munich 1992, ch. VI.
- <sup>16</sup> *Ma'at*, p.252-267.
- <sup>17</sup> *Lehre für Merikare* p.136-37 see Joachim Friedrich Quack, *Studien zur Lehre für Merikare*, Wiesbaden 1992, p.78f.
- <sup>18</sup> J. Bottéro, „Symptomes, signes, écritures“, in: J.P.Vernant et alii, *Divination et Rationalité*, Paris 1974, p.70-198.
- <sup>19</sup> See author, *Ma'at*, p.252-272; the same, „State and Religion in the New Kingdom“, in: W.K.Simpson (ed.), *Religion and Philosophy in Ancient Egypt*, New Haven 1989, p.55-88.
- <sup>20</sup> See, e.g., Thorleif Boman, xxx and, on the other hand, the objections against this type of cultural analysis J. Barr, *Biblical Words for Time*, London 1962.; A. Momigliano, „Time in Ancient Historiography“, in *History and the Concept of Time (=History and Theory Suppl. 6, 1966)*, p.1-23.; H. Cancik, „Die Rechtfertigung Gottes durch den 'Fortschritt der Zeiten'. Zur Differenz jüdisch-christlicher und hellenisch-römischer Zeit- und Geschichtsvorstellungen“, in: A. Peisl, A. Mohler (eds.), *Die Zeit*, München 1983, p.257-288.
- <sup>21</sup> Cf., e.g., Günther Dux, *Die Zeit in der Geschichte*, Frankfurt 1989. over against W. Kaempfer, *Die Zeit und die Uhren*, Frankfurt 1992. and Stephen J.Gould, *Die Entdeckung der Tiefenzeit. Zeitpfeil oder Zeitzyklus in der Geschichte unserer Erde*, Munich 1990.
- <sup>22</sup> Cf. Maurice Bloch, „The past and the present in the present“, in: *Ritual, History and Power: Selected Papers in Anthropology*, London School of Economics, Monographs on Social Anthropology No. 58, London 1989, p.1-18. Bloch contends that every society lives in cultural constructions of time that combine linear and cyclical concepts which he interprets as ‚profane‘ and ‚sacred time‘. Linear, or profane time is the time of everyday life which is very much the same in the multiplicity of cultures.

The site of cyclical time, on the other hand, is ritual and ceremonial communication in where there is much difference among cultures.

<sup>23</sup> E. Voegelin, *Order and History*, vol.4, Louisiana: Baton Rouge 1974, p.73.

<sup>24</sup> See J. Assmann, "Schrift, Tod und Identität. Das Grab als Vorschule der Literatur im alten Ägypten", in: *Stein und Zeit*, p.169-199.

<sup>25</sup> On the autobiographical genre in ancient Egypt see E. Otto, *Die biographischen Inschriften der ägyptischen Spätzeit*, Leiden 1954. and M. Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Autobiographies chiefly of the Middle Kingdom. A Study and an Anthology*, OBO 84, 1988. Andrea Gnirs, „Die ägyptische Autobiographie“, in: A. Loprieno (ed.), *Ancient Egyptian Literature, History and Forms*, Leiden 1996, p.191-242.

<sup>26</sup> See J.van Seters, *In Search of History*; A.K. Grayson, "Histories and Historians in the Ancient Near East", in: *Orientalia* 49, 1980, p.140-194; id., *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles. Texts from Cuneiform Sources* 5, Locust Valley 1970.

<sup>27</sup> See H. Tadmor, "Autobiographical Apology in the Royal Assyrian Literature", in: H. Tadmor, Moshe Weinfeld (eds.), *History, Historiography and Interpretation. Studies in biblical and cuneiform literatures*, Jerusalem 1986, p.36-57.

<sup>28</sup> A. Falkenstein, "Fluch über Akkade", in: *ZA* 57 (NF 23), 1965, p.43ff.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. J.Gw. Griffiths, *The Divine Verdict. A Study of Divine Judgment in the Ancient Religions*, Leiden 1991.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. Assmann., "Altorientalische Fluchinschriften und das Problem performativer Schriftlichkeit", in: H.U.Gumbrecht, K.L.Pfeiffer (eds.), *Schrift (Materialität der Zeichen Reihe A, Bd.12)*, Munich 1993, p.233-255.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. among many others M. Weinfeld, "The Common Heritage of the Covenantal Traditions in the Ancient World", in: L. Canfora, M. Liverani, C. Zaccagnini (eds.), *I Trattati nel Mondo Antico*, p.175-191.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. Hayim Tadmor, »Autobiographical Apology in the Royal Assyrian Literature«, in: H. Tadmor, Moshe Weinfeld (eds.), *History, Historiography and Interpretation. Studies in biblical and cuneiform literatures*, Jerusalem 1986, p. 36-57.

<sup>33</sup> Already Spinoza remarked that in the Old Testament there is no trace of a concept of immortality and of reward and punishment in the hereafter.



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# Explicit Abstraction

## The Case of Classical Chinese – Hastily but Respectfully Compiled for Rudolf Wagner’s 60<sup>th</sup> Birthday

by Christoph Harbsmeier, Oslo

### The Concept of Kingship

Bernhard Karlgren and Ted Pulleyblank define 王 as “king; rule as king”. This is a very helpful definition. But I shall try to move beyond it. When it comes to the notion of kingship, there is a cognitive progressive scale of abstraction from

1. “His Majesty, our king; occasionally: the king (of some other state)”
2. a plural “the kings (of various states)” which conceives and concedes that one’s own His Majesty is not unique, has not only predecessors and will have successors, but has colleagues as well, in an abstract sense, (like 王s)
3. a general “kings” which takes untensed predicates, or
4. a generic, typified, hypostatised 王 “the true king” often hard to distinguish from the preceding, (like 王-1)
5. the autonymous linguistic “the word ‘king’”,
6. the action of ruling as a king,
7. the abstract “kingship, the system of kingship”.

The historical importance of the abstract notion of kingship can be illustrated by the following reflection: If one wishes to raise the question not of whether one wants to replace this king or that, but whether one wants kingship at all, abstraction is of the essence of such a revolutionary thought. Otherwise one will just replace one king by another – which is just what has tended to happen in history. Thus, I submit, abstraction can be revolutionary, and a revolution with abstract problematisation is a very superficial revolution.

Compare now the concept of 皇帝 “the emperor” with the traditional 王. One may surmise that the word cannot be problematised because it is taboo. But whatever

the sociological aetiology: the word moves up the scale of abstraction with distinct reticence, if at all.

In general, there is a history of how concepts move up the scale of abstraction in classical Chinese, and the story of this is intellectually important: on what kind of evidence do we attribute abstraction to Chinese thinkers. Ideally, what we need are cases of explicit abstraction, of minimal pairs with different degrees of abstraction.

## The Concept of Government

Consider zhe4ng ㄉㄜˋ versus zhi4 ㄓㄧˋ.

LY 01.10; tr. CH

ㄨㄛˋ	ㄌㄧˋ	ㄨㄛˋ	ㄌㄧˋ	ㄨㄛˋ	ㄌㄧˋ	ㄨㄛˋ	ㄌㄧˋ	ㄨㄛˋ	ㄌㄧˋ	Zi3qi2n asked Zi3go4ng:
ㄨㄛˋ	ㄌㄧˋ	ㄨㄛˋ	ㄌㄧˋ	ㄨㄛˋ	ㄌㄧˋ	ㄨㄛˋ	ㄌㄧˋ	ㄨㄛˋ	ㄌㄧˋ	“When the Master gets to such-and-such a country
ㄨㄛˋ	ㄌㄧˋ	ㄨㄛˋ	ㄌㄧˋ	ㄨㄛˋ	ㄌㄧˋ	ㄨㄛˋ	ㄌㄧˋ	ㄨㄛˋ	ㄌㄧˋ	he is bound to learn about that country’s administration.

One asks about zhe4ng ㄉㄜˋ, and one hears about it: ㄉㄜˋ ㄉㄜˋ ㄉㄜˋ ㄉㄜˋ. 34 times there is a question about government in the sources I survey.

ㄉㄜˋ is “administration of the state” involving an abstract action noun, while ㄉㄜˋ is “the state is well governed” in all the 25 cases that I have examined. You can xiu1 zhe4ng ㄉㄜˋ ㄉㄜˋ “cultivate good government/proper administration”: and this matters, historically. You cannot xiu1 zhi4 ㄓㄧˋ ㄉㄜˋ.

One governs a state chi2 guo2 ㄔㄧˊ ㄍㄨㄛˊ ㄉㄜˋ, and then the state is well-governed guo2 zhi4 ㄍㄨㄛˊ ㄓㄧˋ ㄉㄜˋ. But the abstract concept of government of that well-governed or ill-governed state itself is neither zhi4 ㄓㄧˋ ㄉㄜˋ or chi2 ㄔㄧˊ ㄉㄜˋ. Nominal usages of zhi4 ㄓㄧˋ ㄉㄜˋ refer to the act of governing well, and the state of being governed well. The abstract notion of government is regularly zhe4ng ㄉㄜˋ ㄉㄜˋ, and the two words overlap only in the action nominalisation “practice of government, method of government”, where in fact there are contexts in which the words would seem interchangeable.

Now it is my suggestion that it is the existence of this abstract word zhe4ng ㄉㄜˋ ㄉㄜˋ which was instrumental in the development of the art of Chinese bureaucratic politics, or perhaps conversely: the existence of this word was symptomatic of that development.

## The Concept of Law

Take again the words fa3 ㄉㄚˋ “law” and lü4 ㄌㄩˋ. Much learned discussion has been devoted to the exact distinction between a law that is fa3 ㄉㄚˋ ㄉㄚˋ and a regulation that is lü4 ㄌㄩˋ ㄌㄩˋ. What has certainly not been considered in Wang Fengyang’s summary of such discussions (Ci2bia4n ㄘㄧˊ ㄅㄧㄠˋ ㄢㄢˋ) are the following two points which are the hypotheses of the present paper:

1. Fa3 -k can be used more abstractly and generically to refer not to one abstract law, nor to a set of abstract laws, but to the general principle of legality, the generic “the law” and thus refer to any legal provisions of any kind.
2. Fa3 lü4 -k must be viewed as a generalising plural word referring to all sorts of legal provisions including li4ng -O, che2ng -{ and du4 - and NOT just two kinds of provision. It is not a coincidence that the use of the combination fa3 lü4 -k is particularly frequent in HANSHU.

In fact, the standard generalising noun for laws and regulation in ancient times was not fa3 lü4 -k but fa3 du4 -k, and the term that interests me here is -k “the regime of laws and regulations” which is close but not quite identical in meaning to the very current fa3 zhi4 -k “the legal system(s)”.

GUAN 48.01.03

-----C-Q-E-N-----g-A In the past, how was it that seventy-nine generations of  
princes  
-k-----@-A did not use the same legal system

But it is essential to understand that when Ha2nfe1i constantly reverts to his “legal system” his reference does not change when he is addressing the King of Qi2n and then his own King of Ha2n: his issue is a general one. He is philosophising about the legal system “as such”, “as suches”, and for Chinese intellectual history this makes ALL the difference. The case is closely similar to the military strategists referring to wo3 - “one’s own side” his military theory is not specifically a theory of the armed forces of the state he happens to be in. He propounds a general theory. The abstract reading of the pronoun wo3 - as “one’s own party” is not just a philological detail that has been overlooked, it is of the very philosophical essence of military strategic thinking.

### The Case of Re2n -

The concept of a number was not elaborated in Chinese culture. The concept of re2n - was:

LY 04.04; tr. CH

-l-----G The Master said:  
-u-----o-A “If one’s mind is really bent on Goodness,  
-L-c- ]-C-v there is no wickedness in one.”

Is Confucius recommending concentration on:

1. the abstract “Platonic” concept of goodness as such?
2. the metaphysical force constituted by goodness?
3. the rules of behaviour that guide one towards goodness?
4. the psychological and emotional state of goodness of the heart?
5. dispositions to act in accordance with goodness of heart?
6. instances of action characterised by the agent’s psychologically turning to goodness of heart?
7. processes of conversion to practical dispositions characterised by goodness of heart?
8. objective goodness and kindness in institutions, laws and the like?
9. paradigmatic instances of individuals who were benevolent?
10. the word *re2n* — itself with all its ramifications as discussed in this list?

Let us stop at ten.

We are not assuming that Confucius was identifying, comparing or even considering these nine possibilities and making his choice from among them. However, to varying degrees commentators did, in the course of history. And I am suggesting that this list gives you some of the cognitive registers that could be pulled by traditional Chinese thinkers in the long course of Chinese intellectual history. How early in the course of this history these registers were elaborated is another question.

We can only grasp Chinese intellectual history to the extent that we sensitise ourselves to such fairly subtle but obviously never watertight repertoires of cognitive registers. Modes of abstraction constitute just one of these cognitive areas, but theoretically, not the least important one.

At first sight this may seem like an oversubtle approach. On the one hand, Chinese commentators prove this wrong. But what I want to investigate is whether the structure of the Chinese vocabulary proves it wrong, too.

## The Concept of Morality

For example, we must ask: is the combination *re2n yi4* ———q the sum of the “concrete” virtues *re2n* — and *yi4* —q, or does this term refer more abstractly to the concept of kind-hearted morality and perhaps even moral principles of all kinds?

HYDCD is representative when it defines ———R—M———q, and there seems nothing wrong with this definition, except that it completely misses out on the crucial dimension of the term: the point about abstraction.

The concrete virtues of kind-heartedness or of righteousness (whatever these are) are less abstract than the notion of morality.

There certainly are cases where the binome might be taken to refer to two separate but essentially linked virtues:

ZHUANG 14.511, tr. Victor Mair

-----q -A	Filialness, brotherliness, humaneness, righteousness,
----H-u -G-A	loyalty, trustworthiness, honor, and incorruptibility –
-----j -H-----w----- ]-A	these all enslave virtue through self-constraint,
-----h- ]-C	but they are not worth putting a premium on.

And in fact, in cases like these there is not necessarily good reason to speak of a binome  $re2n\ yi4\ \text{---}q$ : we may simply have the cooccurrence of these two words. But what about the possibility of reading  $xia4o\ ti4\ \text{---}$  as “devoted deference to seniors quite generally (not specifically filial piety plus respect for one’s eldest brother)”,  $zho1ng\ xi4n\ \text{---}H$  as “loyal devotion to those to whom one owes allegiance in general”, and  $zhe1n\ lia2n\ \text{---}u\ \text{---}G$  “moral purity in general”. Thus these binomes may refer not to the sum but to the conceptual cross-section of the two components in such a way that what the two concepts do not share is abstracted from.

The case is clearer in the following:

ZHUANG 2.79, tr. Victor Mair

-----[ ----A	As I see it,
----q-----A	the principle of humaneness and righteousness,
-O-D----{-A	the paths of right and wrong,
----M-----A	are inextricably confused.
-^c-----G?	How would I be able to distinguish among them?”

Here it would seem plausible to say that (subjective) morality or moral sensibility is contrasted with (objective and rational) moral rightness.  $Shi4\ fe1i\ \text{---}O\ \text{---}D$  represents no more two concepts than  $\text{---}u$  “size, length” would: it refers to one single dimension by mentioning its opposite points. The contrast recurs several times:

ZHUANG 6, tr. Victor Mair

-----A-----q	“You must dedicate yourself to humaneness and righteousness,
-----O-D-C	and speak clearly about right and wrong.”

ZHUANG 6.258, tr. Victor Mair

-----J -w-----H-----q-A	“Yao has already tattooed you with humaneness and righteousness
-----H-O-D-o-A	and lopped off your nose with right and wrong.

Again, when re2n yi4 —q contrasts with the general huo4 ca2i —f— ], which is NOT the sum of huo4 —f and ca2i — ], we have one abstract concept, not two:

ZHUANG 8.343, tr. Victor Mair

—————q— ]-A	those who do so for humaneness and righteousness
-h-U-----g-l-F	are commonly called “superior men”
-----f- ]- ]-A	while those who do so for goods and wealth
-h-U-----p-H-C	are commonly called “petty men.”

Even when the contrast is with collections of things like the (sum of the) Five Flavours, the question is whether re2n yi4 —q really refers to these two virtues only, and does not refer – like the Five Flavours – to the whole range of virtues:

ZHUANG 8.324, tr. Victor Mair

-B	Furthermore,
—————G—q—A	he who subordinates his nature to humaneness and righteousness,
—q	although he may do so as thoroughly
-p—v-A	as Tseng Shen and Shih Ch’iu,
-D-^-----N- ]-F	is not what I would call “good.”
————— — -A	He who subordinates his nature to the five flavors,
—q-p-\ —A	although he may do so as thoroughly as Shuerh,
-D-^-----N- ]-F	is not what I would call “expert.”
—————G—n -A	He who subordinates his nature to the five sounds,
—q-p-v-m-A	although he may do so as thoroughly as Maestro K’uang,
-D-^-----o- ]-F	is not what I would call “keen of hearing.”
—————G— — -A	He who subordinates his nature to the five colors,
—q-p— —A	although he may do so as thoroughly as Spidersight,
-D-^----- ]-C	is not what I would call “keen sighted.”

The following passage brings out a profound problem about da4o de2 —D—w:

ZHUANG 8.324 end, tr. Victor Mair

-E-\-G-D-w-A	Because I feel shame before the Way and its integrity,
-O-H-W-----	I dare not engage
—————q— —A	in the elevated manipulation of humaneness and righteousness,
—U----- ]----- ]-C	nor in the debased conduct of debauchery and perversity.

Could this be shame before the metaphysical forces quite generally, just as ZHUANG 8.318 一C-G-D-w一 perhaps is a wandering not specifically between two things, but a roaming in the realm of these various metaphysical forces of which da40 一D and de2 一w are mentioned as representative typical examples only, as words which, by figurative synecdoche refer to a more abstract entity? This needs careful examination. For example in this important passage:

ZHUANG 13.482, tr. Victor Mair

一O-G-j一j一D一A	For this reason, those in the past who clarified the great Way
一	first clarified heaven,
一D-w一A	and the Way and its virtue were next.
一D-w-w一	Having clarified the Way and its virtue,
一q一A	humaneness and righteousness were next.
一q-w一	Having clarified humaneness and righteousness,
一u一A	the observance of duties was next.

Could this not refer to a progression from Heaven/Nature first to the cosmic forces operative in it, then to moral rules imposed on it, and finally specific duties enforced in it?

Consider in this connection:

HNZ 06.09.01; ed. Che2n Gua3ngzho4ng 1993, p. 297; ed. Liu2 We2ndia3n 1989, p. 215; ed. ICS 1992, 54/4; tr. Le Blanc, p. 180f;

一e一A	Coming to the present time,
一l-b-W一A	the Son of Heaven reigns supreme,
一H-D-w一A	sustaining [all] with Da40 and De2,
一H一q一A	assisting [all] with human-heartedness (je2n) and equity (yi4).

The ruler maintains his position on the basis of the cosmic forces, and he only supplements these with moral virtues. But the danger is that

HNZ 11.01.01; ed. Che2n Gua3ngzho4ng 1993, p. 486; ed. Liu2 We2ndia3n 1989, p. 343; ed. ICS 1992, 93/1; tr. WALLACKER, p. 29;

一O-G一q一D-w-E-o一A	Therefore, Altruism and Propriety being established,
	the Way and the Virtue will move away.

The cooccurrence of re2n yi4 一q and da40 de2 一D-w is regular, but the interpretation of the terms is not always the same, and particularly not when ritualists will insist on the relevance of their notion of ritual propriety to da40 de2 一D-w:

LIJI 1, Couvreur 1.5f; Su1n da4n 1.7f; tr. Legge 1.63

—D—w—q—A                    5. 13. The course (of duty), virtue, benevolence and  
righteousness  
—D—A                                cannot be fully carried out without the rules of propriety;

Here the thought is that neither accordance with the cosmic forces, nor accordance with the principles of morality can come to perfection without ritual. Any interpretation along the lines of “the Way and its Power” would be plainly wrong in this context.

Note in any case that the cooccurrence with jia1n ba2i ——— “coexisting independent qualities in one given thing”, and certainly not “the hard and the white” as such:

ZHUANG 17.619, tr. Victor Mair

—— ]—s———Q———G    Kungsun Lung inquired of Prince Mou of Wei, saying,  
—s———D—A                    “When I was young I studied the Way of the former kings,  
———q———F                    and when I grew up I understood the conduct of humaneness  
and righteousness.  
—X—P——A                    I joined sameness and difference,  
———F                                separated hardness from whiteness,  
—M——M—A                    asserted the unassertable,  
—i——i—F                        and affirmed the unaffirmable.  
—x——a———A                    I hemmed in the thinkers of the hundred schools  
—a——f——G—F                    and refuted the disputers of the manifold persuasions.  
—^——H———F—o—C            I considered myself to be ultimately accomplished.

So much for ZHUANG, and it is worth noting that in the early LY and in the historical ZUO there is not a single occurrence of the combination re2n yi4 ———q, neither as binome nor as a free combination. On the other hand the one occurrence in LAO is most instructive: should we really take re2n yi4 ———q as two things in the following, in context?

LAO 18; tr. D.C. Lau 1982: 27

—j—D—o                        42. When the great way falls into disuse  
———q—F                        There are benevolence and rectitude;  
—z——X                        When cleverness emerges  
——j——F                        There is great hypocrisy;  
———M                        When the six relations\_ are at variance  
———O—F                        There are filial children;  
——a——                        When the state is benighted  
———C                        There are loyal ministers.



In any case, the question is this: does LAO 18 refer to two specific moral virtues, or to the very principle of morality or moral virtues in general, by a kind of figurative synecdoche? The comparison with jia1n ba2i 坚白 “the hard and the white” is crucial to keep in mind.

MENG 1A01; tr. D. C. Lau 1. 3

一y一q-z All that matters  
 一w-o-C is that there should be benevolence and rightness.

Is Mencius suggesting that filial piety, brotherly love, and loyal devotion as well as fairness shu4 恕 do not matter, because only humaneness and rectitude do? I think not. Sometimes this is so clear that even D.C. Lau translates “morality”:

MENG 6B04; tr. D. C. Lau 2.247

一H一A	If a subject,
一h-Q-H一g-A	in serving his prince, cherished the profit motive,
一H-l-A	and a son,
一h-Q-H一A	in serving his father,
一H一A	and a younger brother,
一h-Q-H一S-A	in serving his elder brother, did likewise,
一O-g-B-l-B-S一h-q-A	then it would mean that in their mutual relations,
younger	brother,
一h-Q-H一F	all cherished the profit motive to the total exclusion of
	morality.
一M一A	The prince of such a state
一C	is sure to perish. ...
一H一A	If a subject,
一h-q-H一g-A	in serving his prince, cherished morality,
一H-l-A	and a son,
一h-q-H一A	in serving his father,
一H一A	and a younger brother,
一h-q-H一S-A	in serving his elder brother, did likewise,
一O-g-B-l-B-S一h-Q-A	then it would mean that in their mutual relations, prince
	and subject, father and son, elder brother and younger brot
	her,
一h-q-H一F	all cherished morality to the exclusion of profit.
一M一A	The prince of such a state
一C	is sure to become a true King.

Is 仁 really only about these two virtues, and separately? Does 仁 really restrict attention to these two virtues to the exclusion of others? The matter is often not easy to decide. But serving one's ruler or one's father is not a special occasion for these two virtues. And in any case, when HF discusses 仁 no less than 85 times, his concern, like that of SUN when it discusses 忠, "one's own side" is abstract. A single example must suffice to illustrate how 仁 comes to mean "kind-hearted morality":

## HF 14.7.2

仁者不德而天下歸之	The rulers of our time admire the name of morality
而天下歸之	and they fail to investigate the corresponding realities.
故君子之居仁	That is why on a large scale their state is lost and they die,
而天下歸之	or in the lesser case their territory is truncated and the ruler
而天下歸之	humiliated.
而天下歸之	How does one make this clear?
而天下歸之	If one gives succour to the poor and the troubled
而天下歸之	this is what our world calls morality;
而天下歸之	showing sympathy with the people
而天下歸之	being unable to bear the idea of punishing or fining them
而天下歸之	this is what our world calls generosity and loving care.

But compare some more cases which may serve to remind one that 仁 is ambiguous between a more abstract and a concrete moral meaning:

## MENG 6A16; tr. D. C. Lau 2.239

孟子曰	16. Mencius said,
天爵	"There are honours bestowed by Heaven,
而人爵	and there are honours bestowed by man.
仁	Benevolence, dutifulness, conscientiousness, trustfulness to
義	one's word,
禮	unflagging delight in what is good,
智	– these are honours bestowed by Heaven.

## MENG 6A06; tr. D. C. Lau 2.227

心之於仁	The heart of compassion
猶天之於	pertains to benevolence,
猶水之於	the heart of shame
猶火之於	to dutifulness,
猶木之於	the heart of respect
猶金之於	to observance of the rites,
猶石之於	and the heart of right and wrong

—— ]-C	to wisdom.
——q——A	Benevolence, dutifulness, observance of the rites, and wisdom
-D——~—— ]-A	do not give me a lustre from the outside,
——T—— ]-A	they are in me originally.
——o-C	Only this has never dawned on me.

The concept of li3 yi4 ——q needs to be contrasted with li3 —— in the same way, and the question needs to be asked carefully, whether the binome refers to the sum consisting of the concepts of rectitude plus that of ritual propriety, or whether this is an abstract term referring unambiguously to bienséance, all rules of proper external behaviour, ritual or moral, including among other things such notions as that of proper behaviour characterized by kind-heartedness re2n ——.

Re2n yi4 ——q would then be moral rectitude in general, where re2n —— is the paradigmatic or prototypical psychologically orientated moral virtue. Li3 yi4 ——q would be behavioral rectitude, where li3 —— “ritual” is the paradigmatic behavioural virtue.

All this evidently needs a lot more work.

### Synonymic word formation

Generality is not the same as abstraction. But there is a connection. Pe2ng yo3u -B- is generally and often abstractly “friends of all kinds”, and not synonymous with the often concrete yo3u ——. Guo2 jia1 ——a “nation viewed primarily as a social entity” and she4 ji4 ——^ “nation viewed primarily as a religious entity” is never concretely territorial as guo2 —— “state”. Re2n mi2n -H- “population” is always abstract in reference in ways that mi2n —— often is not. Si3 wa2ng ——` “death” is abstract in ways that si3 —— mostly is not. Yi1 fu2 ——A can never refer to a concrete garment, just as da4o lu4 -D- cannot refer to an individual road, and go1ng shi4 -c- cannot refer to an individual house, and ji4 ne2ng —— cannot refer to a particular skill someone has, or ju3 do4ng -|—— to a particular action. I will not burden your birthday present with evidence on these things which are not surprising to you. But taken together it suggests, in my view, that – contrary to what is often being maintained – there is a wide variety of explicitly marked types of abstraction in classical Chinese. I am only beginning to study these various types of abstraction, and I am looking forward to being instructed by you on these matters. I have a sinking feeling in the stomach that what I have done for you in this little paper, is to write out something that is already all too familiar to you. Ich habe wohl offene Türen eingerannt. Sei’s drum! Die alten Chinesen haben dies alles im relevanten Sinne eh schon immer gewusst – wenn ich mich nicht irre.



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## Hot Debates on Emotions

### The Problem of the Affective States in pre-Qin and Early Medieval Chinese Political Philosophical Discourse

by Ulrike Middendorf, Heidelberg

What is an event? How are events and emotions related? When we speak of "Hot Debates on Emotions" in pre-Qin and early medieval political philosophy, what do we mean by this and what might be the contribution of such a topic to an 'event' that endeavors to unravel problems of 'historical heat' in terms of events? – An event may be defined just as whatever is temporally before or after anything else. It is a happening during which some object changes its properties. An event has more than an infinitesimal duration, but in the technical discourse of physics, all events are composed of point events. For people, events mark time past and present. The mind's travelling freely between the various events is a psychological rather than physical phenomenon. Broadly speaking, reflection upon events is a matter of philosophy of time or philosophy of history. Where do we place emotions therein? It is a simple truism that 'emotions' – the controversial early Chinese term *qing* — here comes into focus – are transient mental states which like 'events' *shi* — are occasioned by an efficient cause. Above, emotions and events share a common property: dynamics. The description of today's scholarly convention characterized events as "explosive moments associated with crises involving state and society," as "times of high temperature." It further outlined typical features of events such as "(1) a violent break with established order that actively involves or is tolerated by large segments of society; (2) the necessity to look for new models for the behavior of individuals and groups to enact and perform the new ideal; (3) their relatively short duration but high and lasting impact, leaving society (and its people) fundamentally transformed." Seen from this perspective, our paper deals with the perplexity of events. On the one hand event may pertain to emotion per se, on the other to a happening in time which encapsulates intellectual reflections upon emotions by scholars who discuss the topic within the realm of political philosophy. Emotions are recurring events in an individual's life. When emotions become public and discussion on emotions are of public concern, evolving from a crisis of state and society, then debates on

emotions are rightly regarded as indicators of "times of high temperature." In the following, I address to two peaks of debates on emotions in China. The first and initial debate on emotions, without which the second is unthinkable, is placed in Warring States political and philosophical discourse of the 4th to 3rd centuries BCE. The second debate falls in the Zhengshi period (240–249) during the early medieval state of Wei (220–265). After introducing the most important issues and results of the earlier debate, I highlight the outcome of the Zhengshi discussions, concentrating on the question of the 'sage' *sheng* 聖 or ideal ruler's emotion nature on which the dispute largely centered.

The problem of emotions' nature and function emerged as a hotly debated issue in pre-Qin political philosophy, ethics, epistemology, and military thought. The multifaceted fight over emotions, motivations, and drives was initiated through the question of human nature which entered political and ethical debate for reasons of state power. This proposition radically narrows the fundamental philosophical problem of human nature and emotions to tenets of power politics which aim at gaining possession of control and authority. Yet this view is corroborated by several facts. First, early Chinese sources bear ample evidence that the ruler (and in extension his government) by virtue of Heaven's mandate was responsible for promoting the welfare of his people, involving the maintenance of life, nutrition, bodily safety, and education. The accomplishment of these goals depended on the very nature of the ruler's person, a notion in which the idea of the 'godlike' sage ruler *sheng* is rooted, the charismatic man of cosmic proportions and religious significance whose achievement are a source of meaning, value, and purpose. Second, the debates on human nature seem to have gone along with the Zhou dynasty's decay and the loss of the Zhou king's authority as Under-Heaven's political and religious leaders. Third, in the 4th century BCE, apart from the *Meng Zi* 孟 子, the problem of human nature and emotions is discussed in the military texts, notably the *Shang jun shu* 尚 君 書 (Lord Shang's Writings), attributed to Wei Yang 韋 揚 (Shang Yang 商 鞅, c. 390–338 BCE). In both *Meng Zi* and *Wei Yang* the importance of the people for the state is emphasized, albeit the methods to gain the people's minds *xin* 心 are different. Within the ideological struggle of the pre-Qin philosophers between right and might, the people were not only important for political, but also for economical and military reasons. In a world of power struggle with continued warfare and restricted resources, human potential had to be calculated and trained so as to ensure adherence and efficient usage in governmental and military affairs. The affective states as pre-conventional and pre-learned properties could act like natural forces what the widely applied water metaphor indicates. The affective states' dynamic forces could be used profitably by military leaders. On the other hand, the released energy was strong enough to overturn ruler and state. Thus knowledge about human psychology had become necessary to secure position and might, within and without a nation. This explains that the issue of the nature and function of emotions and desires and their control in Warring States China was not merely an outcome of ethical enquiry and quietist life-preserving deliberations, but evolved against the background of conflict and fight. The political importance

of emotions is a recurring feature in later emotion debate and intertwined with the problem of the ruler's emotions and emotion control in general. Before exploring these two aspects closer, I roughly summarize the outcome of the pre-Qin emotion discourse found scattered through such works as the *Mo Zi* 墨子, *Meng Zi*, the Later Mohist *Warps* 墨经 and *Explanations* 墨子, the *Xun Zi* 荀子, parts of the *Guan Zi* 管子, the *Lü shi chun qiu* 吕氏春秋, military texts, recent excavated fragments from Guodian (Jingmen/Hubei), and ritual texts which became part of the Han canon:

- (1) The pre-Qin debate on emotions yielded various sets of basic emotions and interrupted-basic-emotion-sequences which became paradigmatic for subsequent discourse. Fundamental are the opposite affective states, 'love' *hao* 好 and 'hate' *wu* 恶, which are archetypal emotions in man. Since both are intrinsically linked to life and death, of which one has positive, the other negative connotations, acceptance of emotions in early China is biased towards the former.
- (2) Emotions were supposed to be innate properties of man. In contrast to 'human nature' *xing* 性, which is 'still' *jing* 静 and 'constant' *chang* 常, 'emotion' *qing* 情 is a 'moving' *dong* 动 and 'non-constant' *wu chang* 无常 force. The critical term *qing* 情 'human actuality', understood as 'reality-induced discrimination or distinction-making reality response', can be aligned with the definition of cognitive emotion theory. Thus *qing* is a verisimilar concerned-based construal of human reality, an intentional state that has propositional objects in the sense that what the emotion is about, of, for, at, or to can be specified propositionally. Emotions can contain corresponding judgements. An essential input to emotion is concern, denoting desires and aversions, and attachments and interests from which many desires and aversions derive. The energetic and dynamic aspect of the early Chinese emotion concept is aptly expressed in the term 'energy' *qi* 气, which might be the older and original word for the mind's affective states. There is some indication that *xing* and *qing* already received ethical assessment, contrasting as 'good' *shan* 善 and 'evil' *e* 恶, and were associated with the dualistic *yin* 阴 and *yang* 阳 forces.
- (3) Some texts explicitly distinguish emotions from 'desires' *yu* 欲 – as motivational personality traits and reactions to a set of environment conditions, and as intentional and value-creating part of emotion, despite contingent, relative, and unstable – and physiological drives, 'juiciness and flavor' ('nutrition') *zi wei* 滋味 and 'sounds and colors' ('sex') *sheng se* 声色, as vital adaptive resources in living beings.
- (4) Emotions elicited on the basis of the 'stimulus-response' *gan ying* 感应 principle, may transform and harm life through over-stimulation (physiological and medical aspect) and hinder knowledge acquisition through sense distortion and perturbation of the mind (epistemological aspect).

- (5) For both reasons, emotion needs control. Generally, two methods of emotion control are advised. Control through social 'rites' *li* 礼 and control through 'mind technique' *xin shu* 心术. Rites prescribe time, object, intensity, and density of the affective state and replace the natural response system by an 'artificial' *wei* 伪 one. So emotion can be modified, its experience in accord with social desirability bleached. 'Mind technique' is particularly designed for the ruler's self-control. It aims at concentrating and controlling mind, limbs, and orifices (eyes, ears, nostrils, mouth, anus, and sex organs) through distinctive meditation-like techniques or operations. In the *Guan Zi* quietist inner cultivation theories are applied to the practice of government 'non-contrivance' *wu wei* 无为. Only the sage, knowledgeable ruler, or 'gentleman' *junzi* 君子, is capable of emotion control.
- (6) In Scholastic political philosophy the basic emotion 'happiness' *le* 乐 and 'music' *yue* 乐 due to their axiomatic logical and conceptual unity entered an ideological programme fraught with consequences. Regarded as positive affective state and anchored in early ritual observance with emblematic significance, 'happiness' was an important goal of statecraft and thought to be morally significant due to aretaic ethics, or ethics of virtue, which were taken as both self-regarding and other-regarding, and as involving motives, intentions, and character-traits, as well as acts in which these may be manifest.
- (7) In China from early times on, concepts and values of music in metaphorical transference moved to the political sphere. Particularly in Scholastic philosophy, music was considered a vehicle of emotions, conveying mind and affective states of the performer or composer while imparting its own emotional quality to the listener. Through the logical and conceptual link with happiness, music became crucial to government instruction and moral reform. The gist of the 'music/happiness' construal's communicative power – shaped, controlled, and directed by the sage himself – is its bearing on the spiritual and moral molding of man and society. Music/happiness became to be viewed the primary means of bringing to man ideals, norms, and perfected actions on which social hierarchy and harmony rest.

Coming to the Han dynasty (206/2 BCE–220 CE) as interface between the two periods under consideration, the problem of human nature and emotions received still considerable attention which is proved by a host of writings like the *Huainan Zi* 淮南子 (Master of Huainan), the pseudo-Dong Zhongshu 董仲舒 (c. 179–c. 104 BCE) "Wei ren zhe tian" 天人合一 (The Maker of Man is Heaven) of the *Chun qiu fan lu* 春秋繁露 (Springs and Autumns' Abundant Dew, 41), Zhuang (Yan) Zun's 庄 (Yan) Zun's 庄子 (59 BCE–24 CE) *Lao Zi zhi gui* 老子指归 (The Old Master's Purport), Wang Chong's 王充 (27-100 CE) *Lun heng* 论衡 (Explications Balanced), the the *Bo hu tong* 白虎通 (White Tiger Comprehensive Meaning), and Xun Yue's 荀悦 (148-209) *Shen jian* 深鉴 (Extended Mirror). Without looking at these texts in detail, some general observations about emotions in Han China have to be kept in mind for a better understanding of the Zhengshi debate. The early Han accounts



witness the final integration of emotions into the speculative *yin yang wu xing* (Yin Yang Five Phases) theory that established complex structures of micro- and macrocosmic correspondences between divers 'classes' *lei* — such as the natural elements, seasons, colors, notes, tastes, smells, organs, state officials, and so forth. The heavy impact of the *Xun Zi* discourses on nature/Heaven, rites, and music, and of the "Music Record", which define fundamental function-oriented relations of nature, emotions, music, and society, on the Han political agenda propelled the emotion problem into the heart of state debate. The cross-relation of music and society which had been introduced in pre-Qin philosophy in both Scholiarist and Lao/Zhuang writings with different emphasis was officially recognized. Thus the condition of music served as evaluative indicator of the ruler and society's condition and vice versa. The system of correlative cosmology allowed even more inferences. Public discussion and private counsels about the Han emperors and their relatives' abuse of music abundantly document the difficulty of the royal members to govern and restrain personal inclinations for pleasurable divertimento. During the Former Han within the orderly system of the musical pitch-pipes as integral part of *yin yang wu xing* theory and a numerological web of acoustics, meteorology, geography, and calendrics, a highly speculative method of personality evaluation, categorization, and selection for civil and military office emerged, the so-called 'knowing subjects' technique' *zhi xia zhi shu* —U—N that purported to assess fundamentals of personality and fathom people's endowment and ability for recruitment into imperial service. With Liu Shao's —B— (fl. 224) *Ren wu zhi* —H— (Personality Records) at the beginning of the Wei empire, a work of similar intent, yet less speculative in outlook, appeared.

To sum up, during the Han the interest in man's nature and psyche continued in the tracks of the pre-Qin philosophers. Through the influence of *yin yang wu xing* theory and correlative thinking, emotions became embedded in a complex system of interrelations. Though observation and inference based on mutual correspondences it was hoped to gain deeper insight into the veiled operations of the human mind for both moral considerations and reasons of *realpolitik*. This clearly shows the already in pre-Qin sources detectable tendency of the interest in emotions not as a pure philosophical or psychological problem, but as a social and political problem. Due to the fatal alliance of music and emotions that during the Han in preponderance for Scholiarist teaching entered state rationale, the vexed question of the ruler's emotions became exalted. More pointedly, the nation's prosperity and decline depended on the ruler's emotion nature.

From historical perspective, the Wei Zhengshi era (240–249) must be considered a "high temperature" period. During this time of internal turmoil, the debates on emotions are only one result of the overheated political atmosphere which culminated in the Wei co-regent Sima Yi's —q — —t (179–251) coup d'état of 249 with the massacre of Cao Shuang — —n (d. 249), his party, colleagues, and their kinsman, among them notable statesmen and philosophers as the Master of Writing *shang shu* —| — — He Yan — — (190–249) and Wang Bi — — ] (226–249), both involved in the discussions on the emotion nature of the sage. To sketch the

political development briefly: When the Wei emperor Mingdi 明帝 (Cao Rui, r. 226–239) died in 239, a close minor member of the imperial family, Cao Fang 曹芳, became his successor. Cao Shuang and the influential general Sima Yi, whose son came to establish the Jin dynasty (265–420), jointly assumed the regency. From the very beginning of the duumvirate, the chief power belonged to Sima Yi who held the honorable title Grand Tutor *tai fu* 太傅. While concentrating on military enterprises, he left the government affairs to Cao Shuang. During this period Sima Yi strengthened his support in the army and among the mighty families outside court circles. Meanwhile Cao Shuang with the coterie of intellectual friends seemed to have worked out plans for substantial change in government philosophy and political and social practice which resulted in the stipulation of a number of administrative and legal reforms in 247. Despite of slanderous propaganda presented by the Sima fraction against Cao Shuang and He Yan, the Zhengshi period was an era of intellectual brilliance in which 'pure conversation' *qing tan* 清談 and 'Dark Learning' *xuan xue* 玄學 by contrast to traditional scholarship focusing on a new 'canon' of text exegesis including the *Zhou Changes* 周易, *Lao Zi* 老子, and *Lun yu* 論語 flourished along with spiritual liberty, expressed in provoking social attitudes that boldly insulted Scholastic establishment. The life style of He Yan, his friends, and the loosely attached group of the Bamboo Grove's Seven Worthies *Zhu lin qi xian* 竹林七賢, with the outstanding personalities Ruan Ji 阮籍 (210–263) and Xi Kang 嵇康 (223–262), in many respects mirrored the ideals of an Daoist society in which 'self-so-ness' *zi ran* 自然 as basic principle and precondition of all entities' fulfillment is acknowledged. In short, it is in these young intellectuals' conversations and writings – memorials, commentarial works, discourses, expositions, and poetry – that political philosophy took up the thread of day-to-day policies. For the Zhengshi period this meant harsh critique at the selfish, affect and desire driven political abuses of the Sima family and her clique and the impotence of the ruling house. Here the Zhengshi debate on the sage's emotion is placed with its protagonists He Yan, Zhong Hui 鍾會 (225–264), Wang Bi, Ruan Ji, Xiahou Xuan 夏侯玄 (209–249), and Xi Kang. Whereas He Yan, Zhong Hui, and Wang Bi's positions received considerable attention in Eastern and Western studies of the Dark, Ruan Ji's "Music Discourse" ("Yue lun" 樂論), Xiahou Xuan's critical refutation "Disputing 'Music Discourse'" ("Bian 'Yue lun'" 辯樂論), and Xi Kang's "On Music (the Sage) Lacks Grief and Happiness" ("Sheng wu ai le lun" 聖無哀樂論) were treated separately, banned into the realm of ethics and aesthetics of music. Internal evidence, however, suggests that the latter three essays emerged in response to an ongoing debate on the sage's affective states among the above named scholars. Drawing on common sources and notions, the "disputers of emotions' presented their arguments in a mode of philosophical conceptualizing that having its source in Later Mohism strictly observed 'name/actuality' ('reality') *ming shi* 名實 and 'speech/reason' *yan li* 言理 relations.

What were the views of these men on the sage's emotions? Before focusing on the perhaps most intriguing argument apart from Wang Bi in Xi Kang's "Sheng wu ai le lun," the positions

of the other contributors should be outlined. It seems that He Yan, presumably in about 247, inaugurated the debate with an essay that proposed "The Sage Lacks Delight, Anger, Grief, and Happiness" *Sheng ren wu xi nu ai le* 聖人無喜怒哀樂. From He Yan's commentaries to the *Lun yu* and other writings this standpoint can be stated more precisely. Rooted in the pre-Qin notion of man's Heavenly 'stillness' *jing* 靜, He maintained that people laden with emotions like 'delight and anger' *xi nu* 喜怒哀 counteract ordering 'principle' *li* 理. With the *Mo Zi*, *Guan Zi*, *Zhuang Zi*, the authors of the *Lü shi chun qiu*, and Daoist-oriented authors in the Han, He Yan uphold the thesis that desires and emotions are violent motions and upheavals of the mind which distort or block calm graspings and placings of reason. As for the sage or 'illuminated ruler' *ming jun* 明君, who in metaphorical transference is likened to the 'self-so' *zi ran* 自然 unmovable 'root' *ben* 本 of being that facilitates the myriad things' engendering and 'great completion' *da cheng* 大成, He Yan advises the cultivation of the 'governed' *zhi* 治, 'correct body' *zheng* 正, where 'correct' *zheng* implies the aspect of 'true' *zhen* 真 and possibly, as some authors conjecture, subsumes properties as 'humanity' *ren* 仁, 'filial piety' *xiao* 孝, 'rituality' *li* 禮, 'wisdom' *zhi* 智, and 'trust' *xin* 信. Embodying 'correctness', the ruler would be able to draw near and select for office 'correct men'; he would scrutinize into 'correct images' *zheng xiang* 正象 so as to suppress the raise of 'perverse minds' and enhance the 'correct Way' *zheng dao* 正道. He Yan's philosophical vocabulary in political contexts reminds strikingly of the *Guang Zi's* "Four Chapters" ("Si pian" 四篇) on mind control and meditation techniques that besides other goals aim at extinction of emotion.

According to the Wang Bi biographer He Shao 何邵 (ob. 301), Zhong Hui followed He Yan's line of reasoning. Evidence for Zhong's disapproval of the sage's emotions might be his commentary to *Lao Zi* 16, in which the teaching of 'emptiness' *xu* 虛 and 'stillness' are propagated, fully elaborated in the just mentioned "Four Chapters" of the *Guan Zi* and the *Zhuang Zi* chapters "Ying di wang" 應帝王 (Responding to Emperors and Kings, 8), "Tian di" 天地 (Heaven and Earth, 12), and "Tian dao" 天道 (Heaven's Way, 13). Zhong Hui sees the abolishment of 'affective pondering' *qing lü* 情慮 as prerequisite for attaining 'emptiness' ridge-pole' *xu ji* 虛極.

Of Wang Bi's view on the sage's emotions, He Shao claims that he opposed He Yan. Though the sage surpasses other men in terms of 'spiritual illumination' *shen ming* 神明, he shares with them the 'Five Emotions' *wu qing* 五情, to whatever five-basic-emotion-set Wang here may refer. The argument that substantiates Wang's contention runs thus: The sage's spiritual illumination enables him to embody 'hollowness and harmony' as to be completely suffused with the 'negative' *wu* 無. On the other hand, the sage's having emotions enables him to adequately 'respond to things' *ying wu* 應物 without being ensnared by them. Like Xun Zi, Wang Bi appears to have accepted that emotions are 'naturally' inherent to all men, including the sage. Emotions (affective states) and knowledge (cognition) were two kinds of naturally issued mental functions and activities of equal ontological status, produced in the

empty and still mind. Yet Wang Bi's concept of the sage's mind might be more indebted to the *Zhuang Zi's* notion of the 'mirror'-like functioning mind which "neither leads forth nor receives, responds but not stores' and "therefore is capable of overcoming things without injuring them" ("Ying di wang" 映底王). Important here is to notice that the sage through reason-guided emotion control issuing from inborn nature is never entangled, encumbered, or harmed by externally aroused emotions. The effects of emotions' self-so dynamic property receive monitoring and neutralizing through inborn nature's inertia. However, Wang's idea of dualistic interplay of human nature and emotion in the sage has to be qualified when approaching the question of 'desires' *yu* 欲. As stated above in our summary of the pre-Qin debate on emotions, desires – similar to modern emotion theory – comes within the emotion term *qing*, despite in some texts set apart. Wang indeed seems to treat *yu* separately, solely associating it with the desires of the senses. On several occasions in his *Lao Zi* commentary, Wang states (at times in paradoxical manner) that the sage who is supposed to model himself on the Way, which is 'constantly without desires' *chang wu yu* 常无欲, 'desires to have no desires' *yu wu yu* 欲无欲. In the same vein, the 'naked infant' *chi zi* 赤子 metaphor, employed for both the sage and the people, and in addition for abstract notions (which in turn are metaphors of the Way) such as 'virtue's capacity' *de zhi hou* 德之厚, 'essence's reach' *jing zhi zhi* 精之至, and 'harmony's reach' 和之至, expresses the ideal of desirelessness. Desire when not complying with human nature – i.e., not being measured and in reasonable rhythm – will be "contrary through injuring self-so-ness" *fan yi shang zi ran* 反以伤自然 (*Lao Zi* 12.1, commentary).

The cursory account on Wang Bi's views on the sage's emotions and desires and their relation to human nature, directly links – though scarcely recognized – to Xi Kang who shares with Wang a considerable amount of technical vocabulary and argument. The title of Xi Kang's "Sheng wu ai le lun" seems to be a pun on He Yan's "Sheng ren wu xi nu ai le lun" whereby Xi Kang employs *sheng* 声 'sounds' as a metaphor for *sheng* 圣 'sage'. Hence Xi Kang's essay suggests an extra-musical reading, namely "The Sage Lacks Grief and Happiness," which I considered here. The realm of music clothed in the rhetoric devise of the 'hidden' *yin* 音 is equated to the realm of ruler and society. It is a widely maintained misunderstanding that Xi Kang conceives music as wholly independent from politics. He actually replaces paradigms and stock arguments of Scholiast music theory by Daoist counterparts. Xi Kang basically tears down those Scholiast paradigms which relate to authoritarianism and determinism. These are:

- (1) Music in all cases is audible expression of inner affective states evoked by external stimuli. Within the deterministic framework of stimulus and response, and based on correlative thinking the kind of arousal necessarily fixes the kind of response.

- (2) Music influences men deeply, effecting qualitative mental changes which become visible in behavior. Thus music is the appropriate means of the sage for conveying and transferring his mind and emotions to the people who in turn adapt themselves to his model.
- (3) Only the sage through 'spirit-like' knowledge, mind technique, and rites is capable to contrive and maintain people's 'music' and 'happiness'.
- (4) Emotions have ethical content and value.

Before pinpointing the metaphorical transference in the "Sheng wu ai le lun" with regard to the sage's emotions and Xi Kang's social utopia and implied political criticism, I should briefly characterize his approach which is found likewise in his other discourses of which particularly the "Qin Exposition" 琴操, "Nourishing Life Discourse" 養生論, and "Answer to the Refutation of 'Nourishing Life Discourse'" 答難養生論 are supplementary to the "Sheng wu ai le lun." Based on a philosophy of language in the tradition of the Later Mohism, he strictly observes 'names' and 'actualities' ('realities') of material and processual entities. All kinds of entities come into existence on their own right and necessarily have to be separated from each other due to their respective ordering 'principle' *li* 理 (or 'Heaven's principle' *tian li* 天理). On the basis of natural 'divisions' ('lot') *fen* 分, their characteristic properties are determined. So the various kinds of entities neither overlap nor do act upon each other. In accord with these axioms, 'tones and sounds' *sheng yin* 聲音 and emotions are unconnected, they entertain 'no constant' *wu chang* 無常 relationship as assumed in the Scholastic theory. With other words, sounds intrinsically do not embody emotions and lack any affective extra-musical dynamics. The listener's emotional response is actually expression of subjective emotionality present in the listener which is solely triggered by music's essence which is 'harmony' *he* 和 or the 'harmonious tone' *he sheng* 和聲. Hence the same music might be emotionally different perceived, and accordingly in emotionally different ways answered. Traditional accepted statements like "a governed age's notes are secure and happy; a doomed state's tones are grievous and thoughtful" are invalid and simply not true. The theses of Xi Kang about the nature and function of sounds, emotions, and the mind, central to his theory, are given in more detail, yet not exhaustively, in the following where the three entities are kept apart. Despite interlocked in Xi Kang, all propositions concerning their intrinsic qualities have to be thought of distinctive chains:

- (1) Music is part of nature's principle and engendered by Heaven and Earth. Like other entities of Under-Heaven, such as colors, smells, and tastes, its 'body' *ti* 體 (substantial properties), with 'good' *shan* 善 or 'not good' *bu shan* 不善 (occasionally 'evil' *e* 惡, here not referring to the ethical values 'good' *shan* 善 and 'evil' *e* 惡, but to the very fact that some music is better than other music), it is 'self-so' *zi ruo* 自若 and cannot be 'altered' *bian* 變 through whatever external influences, may it political disorder or the motivational forces of emotion.
- (2) Musical harmony or the harmonious tone is Heaven and Earth's harmony. Other expressions are 'levelness and harmony' *ping he* 平和 and 'centrality and harmony'

——M. The harmonious tone is 'imageless' *wu xiang* 无象 -L-H. The idea of 'imagelessness' (implying 'formlessness' *wu xing* 无刑 -L—) is presumably based on the problematical sentences of *Lao Zi* 14, "This is called the shapeless' shape, the imageless' (no-thing's) image." It seems that Xi Kang conceives the imageless harmonious tone similar to the *Lao Zi* 41 'inaudible tone' *xi sheng* 希声 —n through which the 'great sound' *da yin* 大音 -j— as one of the Way's metaphors is defined. Wang Bi's commentary to both *Lao Zi* paragraphs may elucidate Xi Kang's implicit meaning. Wang's argument basically runs that particular tones which have 'division' *fen* 分 —, as the notes *shang* 商 — or *gong* 宫 —c, are specified so that they cannot encompass the 'masses' *zhong* 中 — of notes. Thus a specific tone is not the 'great sound'. Based on this notion, Xi Kang introduces the idea that only the undivided harmonious tone releases whatever emotion is already present in the listener's mind. So music's harmony is the necessary feature through which a human being is enabled to experience all possible emotions.

- (3) Xi Kang generally recognizes emotions as life harming forces which have to be controlled. Strong emotive states do not necessarily have outwardly visible manifestations as generally hold. Hence Xi Kang with the authors of the *Zhuang Zi* regards 'perfect happiness' *zhi le* 知乐 — as a concealed state of highest mental delight in which 'self-attainment' *zi de* 自得 —o is accomplished and a feeling of security, restfulness, and serenity prevails.
- (4) Xi Kang proposes further the distinction and unrelatedness of music and the cognitive functions of the mind. This position has significant implications which clearly transgress the realm of music per se. The view demolishes the larger assumption that various kinds of outward indicators may evidence personality traits and states of mind which for music had crystallized in the notion of the 'knower of sounds' *zhi yin zhe* 知音者 —. Thus Xi Kang firmly denies that the true nature of a person or a whole region would be discernible from its music.

These four points of Xi Kang's argument, including the general remarks at the outset of this subsection, should be sufficient to proceed to the more compelling question of the "Sheng wu ai le lun's" hidden social and political message. As stated above the metaphorical transference fuses the semantic fields of music and society. Having refuted traditionally acknowledged views on the relation of both, Xi Kang institutes a set of theory constitutive metaphors for general and particular aspects of social order from the source domain of Daoist sociopolitical thought and philosophy of mind which is presented in Dark Learning idiom of text analysis. To connect with "Hot Debates on Emotions," the sage who embodies and imparts the Way is conceptualized as Under-Heavens' 'sound' *sheng*. Thus the sage lacks emotions. This implies that he shows no likings or disliking, is 'not selfish' *wu si* 无私 -L-p, 'impartial' *wu pian* 无偏 -L—, and 'public-minded' *gong* 公 ½. The harmony of music in which every single specified note finds its proper 'place' *wei li* 位 according to natural allotment may be compared to a self-regulatory society in which the ruler following the *zi ran* 自然 principle's guideline

accomplishes 'simple teaching' *jian yi zhi jiao* 簡易之教, acts out 'non-contrivance', is 'still' above, while his subjects 'comply' below. Xi Kang's ideal social order of the harmonious tone, in which 'dark transformation' *xuan bua* 玄化 was regarded the dynamic force, contrasts markedly with governmental policies of external social regulations and control as know from the Late Han and Wei empires with Names' Teaching *ming jiao* 名教. The "Sheng wu ai le lun" neither denies society's need for a powerful ruler and subjects who obediently follow the ruler's performance. On the contrary, similar to Wang Bi, Xi Kang's societal utopia as envisaged in the "Sheng wu ai le lun" virtually depends on 'the One and the Many' *yi zhong* 一中 relation that realizes basic ontological and cosmogenic principles. Generally, the political critique of the Zhengshi philosophers was directed toward the Cao family's state control and intervention policy, continuous military campaigns against its two rivals Shu and Wu, and the failure of reconstructing inner stability and security. On the other hand, they attacked the power policy of Sima Yi who availed of the deteriorating situation.

As noted in the introductory remarks to the Zhengshi debates on the sage's emotions, they merely constituted one aspect of the Dark Learning philosophical movement which indeed marked a period that set new standards in scholarly discourse. The criterion of novelty in argumentative strategy and structure undoubtedly apply to many of the time's works. More problematical seems to fathom the actual impact of these writings on practical politics and in historical perspective. With regard to the Zhengshi emotion debate, Six dynasty accounts suggest that Xi Kang's "Sheng wu ai le lun" with the radical conceptual separation of music and emotion had high and lasting influence in several of the emigrant families of the Southern dynasties (420–589). However, it is hard to judge what the genuine interest in this essay was. Accordingly, one may suspect that the "heat" of the actual event to which the latter part of this study addressed was perhaps intense, yet short and ephemeral just like an emotion.





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# Anticipating Historical Heat

## Early Chinese Concepts of Time Quality and their Possible Influence on Historical Events<sup>1</sup>

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### Introduction

High temperature events do not occur all of a sudden out of nowhere. They are either *post eventum* interpretations of historical events which are not related to the way those events were perceived by people of that time. Or, if they are at the time *in eventu* perceived as high temperature events, they have to be interpreted as selfconscious performances which became possible only on the basis of specific expectations and concepts following determined models formed by a collective memory of a commonly accepted historical interpretation. The hermeneutical function of such an event within the historical narrative becomes clear through the fact that it needs the combination of historical actors, narrators, producing and reproducing subjects and a *mémoire collective* in order to become fixed and institutionalized in a certain line of transmission.<sup>2</sup>

### 1.

One of the central premises of such historical interpretations concerns the concept of time. In order to master and understand historical breaks the concept of time is one of the fundamental means of orientation and of structure giving. It causes expectations regarding appropriate action and explains events.<sup>3</sup> Only the commonly shared conviction that such a thing as a sudden high temperature moment of time may possibly occur leads to events which might be characterized as such. The basic assumption underlying such a conviction is the model of linear time in which everything always is possible, a model which to my knowledge in its theoretical form only has been developed in ancient Greece and Israel,<sup>4</sup> – and, probably, Egypt.<sup>5</sup> Yet, the interpretation of historical events in those cultures despite the existing theories of linear time mainly followed cyclical models which also served as the basis for different prognostication methods determining the quality of time. Astronomical cycles were the basis

of astrological calculation. On the other hand, theological premises following biblical historiography determined the qualities of calendarical units like the days of a week which were associated with the seven days of the creation of the world etc.<sup>6</sup> Historical events were likewise interpreted within the frame of defined cyclical models which didn't allow anything substantially new to arise.<sup>7</sup> Historical time was perceived as cyclical and the interpretation of historical events thus never left the frame of historical precedents<sup>8</sup> which were collected in special collections of historical *exempla*.<sup>9</sup> The application of the linear time concept to the realm of historical and political consciousness and interpretation, develops as late as the 18<sup>th</sup> century in Europe and is realized in its radical form only after the French Revolution of 1789. It is not until then that the exemplarity of ancient models for the explaining of historical events is given up in favour for an uprising into a completely new future which has no precedences in history.<sup>10</sup> It is only in the 18<sup>th</sup> century that the distance between what Koselleck calls „space of experience“ (Ereignisraum) and what he calls „horizon of expectation“ (Erwartungshorizont) starts to grow,<sup>11</sup> and it is only with the French Revolution that the term „revolution“ which since the 16<sup>th</sup> century had slowly been changing from a naturalistic cyclical concept into a political one gains the modern sense which implies a radical break with the historical past.<sup>12</sup> This development which lead to the possibility of what is meant by high temperature events could only take its course on the basis of a linear time model which came to be predominant in Europe.

Such a model, however, can not be found in China before its westernisation.

In early China, in the last passage of the book *Mengzi* (early 3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C.), we do have the idea of a sage appearing every 500 years, an event which might be called a high temperature event. This idea might be taken as a conceptual precursor of what in late Zhanguo times (middle 3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C.) then is elaborated by the Zou Yan school in terms of *wuxing* theories as a model of dynastic cycles which is further worked out and developed in Qin and Early Han times (late 3<sup>rd</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C.). However, these theories are based on a model of cyclical time which regularly includes phases of high temperature events which lead to predictable and calculatable changes.

We do of course also have many concepts of cultural and social development in early China<sup>13</sup> as well as many different phantasies about utopian worlds, both, in the past and in the future.<sup>14</sup> However, all these models do not correspond to the concept of linear time but remain within the frame of the basic assumption of a time model which has to be conceived in cyclical terms and does not allow high temperature events coming up as sudden violent breaks.

The cyclical model of time does, of course, not imply that things remain basically the same. On the contrary, since Chinese philosophy on the basis of its cyclical time model has from its beginning elaborated models of development and change it never had a problem of explaining change like we find it in early Greece with Aristotle who had to invent the concept of an unmoved mover in order to be able to explain change and development which the earlier platonic model was not able to do.<sup>15</sup>

The conception of a decline or, as Rudolf Wagner puts it, an „end of history“<sup>16</sup> expressed in Ban Gu’s „Gujin renbiao“ chapter of the *Hanshu* or the buddhist *mofa*-concept of an end of the world show that longterm developments were not only perceived in regard to the past. Yet, again no sudden break is expected.

## 2.

So, do we have Chinese traditional concepts of time which imply phases of high temperature events in the sense it has been defined for the conference?

From the very beginning of what we know about concepts of time in Chinese history we find time calculated in units which, at the same time, denote specific qualities. The ten day sacrificial cycle (*xun* 旬) which we find in oracle bone inscriptions (13<sup>th</sup> century B.C.) as one of different time designations shows very clearly that each of these ten days was in an increasingly routinized form associated with a certain ancestor and thus possessed a certain character or quality.<sup>17</sup> The same is true for seasonal designations of time which are from early times on also embedded in a system of correspondances and thus associated with certain agricultural and ritual actions and astrological and mythical constellations.<sup>18</sup> This phenomenon which we do not only find in China<sup>19</sup> became in later times (3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C.) systematized in the form of correlative systems like the one we find as “Yue ling 月令” in the *Liji*.<sup>20</sup>

In the Chu Silk manuscript, an excavated text dated to the fifth century B.C. we find the twelve months pictured as twelve gods which corresponds to the earlier conception of a correlation of the ten day cycle with ten ancestors.<sup>21</sup>

The *Yijing*, a text the conceptual origin of which may be dated at least as early as the Wu Ding period of the Shang dynasty (ca. 1200–1181 B.C.)<sup>22</sup> conforms in a structural way to the ten day week *xun*. Instead of ten time units we have eight respectively 64. They form a cycle and are correlated with specific qualities through short interpretative statements which resemble to similar statements on oracle bones and were probably written down at the beginning of the Zhou dynasty (ca. 1040–221 B.C.).<sup>23</sup> The important difference lies in the fact that in the oraclebone divination the time unit and its correlated ancestor were known, yet, the auspicious or inauspicious correlation of the oracle issue and given time unit was unclear and open. In the divination of the *Yijing*, however, the unit of the divinatory time was unclear and open. Once this had been decided through milfoil divination the correlation of this time unit to its divinatory quality (formulated by the commentary) became relatively clear. This model of a hidden divinatory time unlike astrological or any other regularly abstract cycles has no calculable connection to the calendrical time at all. It is thus a completely autonomous second cycle of time which follows not the normal chronological but other cosmological rules which can only be conceived by sages. This concept of time seems to me to be very unique since by this divinatory move all anthropomorphic elements in the open parts of the divination (like the will, anger, favour etc. of the ancestors and gods) were replaced by rules respectively

divinatory methods.<sup>24</sup> Milfoil divination did not replace the bone oracle in later times both existed side by side.<sup>25</sup>

Time, from the earliest scripts we have on, is counted in terms of the *ganzhi* cycle. This cycle, the origin of which is still a matter of dispute,<sup>26</sup> is again composed of elements denoting single days which are associated with certain qualities.<sup>27</sup> The basic thought of this system of auspicious and inauspicious days already present in texts from the end of the second millennium B.C. is a hemerological one. This hemerological thought which we have transmitted in further systematized and very elaborated form in hemerological texts (*rishu* 日书) is transmitted mainly in collections excavated from Warring States tombs,<sup>28</sup> especially from Chu 楚 from the period from ca. 350–300.<sup>29</sup> These from an intercultural perspective relatively late<sup>30</sup> hemerological texts are documented in a very fragmentary form outside of the tombs until Tang times<sup>31</sup> and are still in use in China today.<sup>32</sup> They reflect a practice which, judging from the oracle bone inscriptions, had begun at least as early as the second millennium B.C. in China. The various, diverse and contradicting, hemerological texts have in common the basic assumption that any moment of time corresponds to a certain quality which can be calculated for any human action. However, the texts give very different models according to which such a calculation should be carried out and the qualities are connected to the cyclical time units often on the basis of very diverse value systems such as the five phases (*wuxing*), mantic series of unknown origin like *jianchu* 占筮, *jichen* 日辰, *fanzhi* 反支 etc.,<sup>33</sup> the polarity of male and female (*nan*-k – *nü*-k or *pin* 坤 – *mu*-d), the human body, animals (probably derived from astronomical cycles)<sup>34</sup> musical harmonies,<sup>35</sup> mythical narratives,<sup>36</sup> agricultural almanachs,<sup>37</sup> spirits/ gods/ demons (*shen* 神), correlations of seasons and directions (*dichong* 日冲), astronomical constellations (28 *xiu*, Xuange, Zhaoyao).<sup>38</sup> We find in one hemerological text the application of up to six different models<sup>39</sup> which shows that the correlation of time unit and corresponding quality was not fixed and allowed a wide range of flexibility in the interpretation of all sort of different temperatured events.<sup>40</sup>

### 3.

All these different models of cyclical designations of different qualities of time only served as basic assumptions for the main purpose which laid in divinatory prognostication acts. Divination in China like in ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia and other cultures was one of the most important political institutions. The „Hongfan“ chapter of the *Shangshu* lists five institutions which had to be consulted (according to fixed rules given in the chapter) for important political decisions: The heart of the ruler, his nobles and officers, the masses of the people, the tortoise, and the milfoil diviners.<sup>41</sup> The *Zuo zhuan* also shows the parallel use of different divinatory institutions.<sup>42</sup> Although these institutions are repeatedly viewed in a sceptical and controversial way<sup>43</sup> we find hundreds of predictions in the *Zuo zhuan*<sup>44</sup> which form a literary unit like we find it in texts like the *Guoyu* and some other pre Qin texts like the *Chunqiu shiyu* excavated in Mawangdui.<sup>45</sup> Nearly all of these predictions are fulfilled.<sup>46</sup> The historical material in these

cases verifies the correctness of the prediction without talking about it explicitly.<sup>47</sup> The reason for it is that within the historical narrative these predictions, like remonstrances,<sup>48</sup> serve a moralistic function. The following historical success or failure is always at the same time a historical judgement regarding the action of the emperor.<sup>49</sup> The question whether predictions are possible and should be followed or not is not relevant at all. What is important for our question concerning historical heat is the fact that big events were successfully predicted and never happened unexpectedly. Political as well as natural calamities were explained as the outcome of immoral behaviour part of which was the disregard of given predictions. We find in early China a close relationship between divination and historiography.<sup>50</sup> No big event happened without prediction. Traditional Chinese historiography conceptually took over the last two of three parts which we find in divinatory literature starting with the inscriptions of the oracle bones<sup>51</sup> until the Han dynasty<sup>52</sup> (206 B.C. – 220 A.D.) and probably later: a certain device put in form of a question or a statement (which is the specific divinatory element), a prognosis in the form of an advice for a specific action, and a confirmation which verifies the positive outcome of the action suggested by the divination. Historiography which is one of the main players in the production of events partly had the function of verifying the connection of the two latter elements and thus to explain events morally as outcomes of predictions. The Historiography of the *Zuo zhuan*, *Guoyu*, *Chunqiu shiyu* and other ancient pre-Qin historical narratives shows that certain events were perceived as big and outstanding events. But they were not perceived as sudden breaks. They were rather interpreted and explained as results of a longlasting development the result of which could thus be foreseen. In the *Hanfeizi* we find the following passage:

“-l -L --- -R -K --- -O --- -g -A -l --- -A -H -Q --- -o -C ---  
 -D -@ --- -n - ] -A --- -H --- -o -C -Z --- -A --- -[ --- -n -A  
 -n --- -O -h -A -O -h --- -C -G --- -D -D --- -C ---  
 --- -A --- -o -A --- -g --- -C --- -l --- -g -T -I --- -A  
 --- -D --- -f -A -G --- -C -G -l -L --- -R --- -D  
 --- -C

Zi Xia said: ‘Regicides and parricides as recorded in the Spring and Autumn Annals number tens. None of them was an outcome of one day’s fermentation. It always grew from a bud and developed into maturity.<sup>53</sup> On the whole the wicked deeds, repeatedly committed, become a pile. When the pile is mature, the urge to commit further villainy becomes strong. When the urge is strong, it is liable to extend to murder. Therefore, the enlightened sovereign uproots them early. Now the attempt of Tian Chang to launch a rebellion could be seen budding, but the ruler never censured him. Yanzi never made his ruler suppress offensive ministers but advised him to confer favours. In consequence, Duke Jian suffered the calamity in posterity.<sup>54</sup> Therefore, Zi Xia says: ‘Who is skilful in maintaining his position would nip an evil in the bud.’”<sup>55</sup>

In the “Wen yan ———-commentary to the *kun* —[ -hexagramm of the *Yijing* we find the following similar passage:

“-n -----a-A -----l -y-F -n -----a-A -----l -o-C ----I ---  
 -g-A -l -I ----A -D -@ ---@ -i ---G-A -----o-A ---  
 -G -----G - ]-C -----G -u- i -----B ----C-v -\ ----- ]-C  
 [ ----- ]

A household that accumulates the good must abound in blessings; A household that accumulates what is not good must abound in misfortune. The murder of a prince by his subject, the murder of his father by his son – these affairs are not wrought between dawn and evening. They have festered for some time and not been dealt with at an early stage. *Yi* says: ‘Frost underfoot again, solid ice comes soon.’<sup>56</sup> <sup>57</sup>

In the *Lüshi Chunqiu* there is another passage which further shows the connection between divinatory signs and the destiny of a state:

„-j -----A -H ---O ---f ---A -----U -A -l -k -F ---  
 ---A -----h -A -\ -----u -A -----A ---C ----k  
 -A ---d -----} -A -----e -A ---g -----C -Z ---Q -H -----  
 -U ---} -u - ]-C -----H -----P -A -----@ -x - ] -----` ---  
 -----A -----A -----A -----u -C -D -W -----M - ]  
 -C -H -----x -A ---P -----x -C -t -H -W -----d ---A -U ---d ---  
 -A -D -N ----- ]-C -\ ----- ]-C -----n ---q -----o -C

Among those in antiquity who were good in interpreting the physiognomy of horses, Han Fengshi judged according to the physiognomy of the mouth and of the teeth, Ma Chao according to the physiognomy of the cheeks, Zi Nüli according to the physiognomy of the eyes, Wei Ji according to the physiognomy of the mane, Xu Bi according to the physiognomy of the tail, Tou Fahe according to the physiognomy of the chest and ribs, Guan Qing according to the physiognomy of the lips, Chen Bei according to the physiognomy of the legs, Qin Ya according to the physiognomy of the front and Zan Jun according to the physiognomy of the hind part. Those ten men were all generally held to be the world’s best in their craft. The basis of their physiognomical judgement was not the same, but if they only saw one mark of a horse, they would discern whether the joints were high or low, whether the steps were blundering or nimble, whether its condition was tough or easily exhausted and whether its abilities were strong or weak.

Such is not only the case with the interpretation of the physiognomy of horses. Human beings also have [such] marks. Affairs and states all [likewise] have [such] marks. That the wise men know a thousand years of the past and a thousand years of the future is not because they imagine it. They rather seem to have it from what has been stated above. The divination books *Lütu* and *Fanbo* derive from it.<sup>58</sup>

Furthermore, big events, even if they by the time had no historical precedent, were not perceived as single events but were recorded in order to serve as precedents for later generations. In the *Guoyu* the historiographer warns his ruler in regard to a certain action by telling him that there does not exist any precedence (*gu* –G) for this action. When the ruler answers that he then would create a new one the historiographer replies that in case of success he would record it as a precedence, in case of failure, however, he would record its treachery (*ni* –f).<sup>59</sup>

#### 4.

Divination is event oriented. However, the event is bound into a fixed and defined frame of quality cycles and has to be interpreted within.<sup>60</sup> Thus not every event is always possible. Deviating events are interpreted through correlating them within a different system of cyclical qualities. It was one of the central political functions of the divinatory office to avoid historical heat, to avoid hot events, to avoid sudden uncalculable breaks. In opposition to other political institutions which served and serve the same political purpose until today, however, the divinatory concept which was based on the concept of quality defined time units averted sudden heat already at the conceptional level. Historical heat and violent breaks were not impossible. But they could be anticipated and through regular and routinized divination would only occur if predictions would not be followed. Historical heat was anticipated in the divinatory act where it was controlled ritually.<sup>61</sup> The conceptual and institutional frame was so tight, that spontaneous heat without prediction could not easily occur at any time. Calendars in the form of seasonal ordinances which gave seasonal agricultural, political and ritual routine instructions together with the advices given by the *pre factum* divination defined what to do when. And since the blessing of heaven and earth and the ancestral and other spirits depended on this neatly calculated equilibrium it was not easy for members sharing the same cultural assumptions to break out and create new roles of behaviour. If there is conceptually no space for violent breaks the vacuum in which political hot events develop does not easily occur. If one is to follow the powers which according to fixed laws form history in a predictable way one does not as easy break out of preformed patterns as in a culture where it is generally assumed that it is oneself who forms history. As already mentioned above, in Europe, time became disposable for human action only in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>62</sup>

#### 5.

There is yet another side to this very firm side of the institution of time-quality based divination. It is the instrumentalisation of this institution for the aim of producing historical heat. The legitimation, which the Early Han for a long time had struggled for *a posteriori* was at the end of the first century B.C. in a subtle way *a priori* prepared for an event of historical heat which should, as a hot event, be situated within the fixed frame of historical predictions

and thus within a time quality which could not be denied anymore. Wang Mang's 王莽 (45 B.C.–23 A.D.) seizure of power in 9 A.D. was legitimized as a sort of long time predicted (thus not sudden) hot event which based itself strongly on omina and apocryphical texts.<sup>63</sup> In this case divinatory modes served the production of historical heat and the occurrence of a violent break. This method of an *a priori* definition of a hot event leading to a violent (yet no sudden) break and dynastic change was since then (often brought forward in an *a posteriori* way) a major feature of any claim to the throne. It was part of political and military moves as well as of religious milleniaristic movements up to the falun gong movement today.<sup>64</sup> It thus survived as a part of China's political culture into a time where the sudden occurrence of high temperature events is taken for granted.

## Conclusion

Events always occur in the frame of specific expectations. They become historical through a complex process of interpretation which again always proceeds within a certain frame of commonly acknowledged presuppositions. Hot events became possible in Europe only after the French Revolution on the basis of a model of linear time which allows the concept of sudden breaks and of something unprecedented new.

In Chinese traditional historiography due to its cyclical view of time and its close relationship to divination there was conceptually no space for isolated hot events. We rather find a huge amount of different interpretation models existing side by side with which any sort of event could be classified as belonging to some sort of preceded pattern in the way it has been common in Europe up to the 18<sup>th</sup> century. This changes radically with the western impact on China in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It is only thereafter that historical heat occurs also in China.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Paper written for the symposium „Measuring Historical Heat: Event, Performance and Impact in China and the West,“ on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of Rudolf G. Wagner (3.11.01).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Hans Robert Jauss, „Versuch einer Ehrenrettung des Ereignisbegriffs,“ in: R. Koselleck, W.-D. Stempel (ed.), *Geschichte – Ereignis und Erzählung*, München: Fink, 1973, p. 554–560, p. 556.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Ernst Wolfgang Becker, *Zeit der Revolution! – Revolution der Zeit? Zeiterfahrungen in Deutschland in der Ära der Revolutionen 1789–1848/49*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1999, p. 20.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Gregor Ahn, „Die ungewisse Zukunft und der imaginäre Zeitstrahl – Konkurrenz und Koexistenz divergierender Zukunftsbilder und prognostischer Strategien in der europäischen Religionsgeschichte,“ in: *Mitteilungen für Anthropologie und Religionsgeschichte* 13 (1998): 5–48, p. 14–25.

<sup>5</sup> S. Morenz in his *Ägyptische Religion*, p. 79–83 introduces this concept into Egyptology. Jan Assmann, however, doubts the suitability of this model for the Egyptian case. Cf. Jan Assmann, *Zeit und Ewigkeit*



*im Alten Ägypten. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Ewigkeit.* Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1975, p. 43–45.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Kocku von Stuckrad, „Tagewählerei im jüdisch-christlich-manichäischen Kontext,“ talk held at the 28<sup>th</sup> Deutscher Orientalistentag in Bamberg, 27.3.2001.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Reinhart Koselleck, *Vergangene Zukunft. Zur Semantik geschichtlicher Zeiten*, Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1979, p. 72–74.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Becker, op. cit., p. 13.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Peter von Moos, *Geschichte als Topik*, Hildesheim: Olms, 1988.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Koselleck, op. cit., p. 88.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Koselleck, op. cit., p. 359.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Becker, op. cit., p. 13–14. Cf. also Reinhart Koselleck, op. cit., p. 67–86 as well as his „Revolution, Rebellion, Aufruhr, Bürgerkrieg,“ in: Koselleck et al. (ed.), *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*, vol. 5, Stuttgart, 1984, p. 653–788, p. 653.

<sup>13</sup> Apart from different genesis myths (*Taiyi sheng shui, Laozi, Guanzi, Xici, 2xHuainanzi*) which show similar strings of development, we have in ancient China similar positions as in ancient Greece where we have with positions of Epikur, Aischylos, Platon etc. the model of a cultural development from raw to refined. However, culture in China is never perceived as a present of the gods or as an act of Ananke like we find it in ancient Greece. It would rather be perceived as an achievement of the sage kings or philosophers (a position which we also find in ancient Greece, cf. Werner Krauss, *Zur Anthropologie des 18. Jahrhunderts: Die Frühgeschichte der Menschheit im Blickpunkt der Aufklärung*, ed. by Hans Kortum and Christa Gohrisch, orig. Berlin (east): Akademie-Verlag, 1978, repr. Frankfurt/M, Berlin: Ullstein, 1987 quoting Eduard Norden's, „Beiträge zur Geschichte der griechischen Philosophie,“ in: *Jahrbuch für klassische Philologie*. Supplement vol. 19, (1893).) Cf. *Mozi* "Ci guo" etc., *Liji*, "Li yun", Sun Xidan, p. 587 (Legge 369) *Mengzi* 3A4, Yu myth (*Shangshu* Yu gong etc.), "Xici", *Xunzi, Zhuangzi*, Lu Jia Xinyu, *Zhonghua*, p. 146, *Hanfeizi* 49, *Da Dai Liji*, "Wudi de" (Di Shun), Wang Pinzhen ---u ---, *Da Dai Liji jiegou* -j --- ---0 --- ---, Beijing: *Zhonghua*, 11983, 21989, p. 122ff., Grynepas, p. 136ff. etc. xxx "Chuanshuo zhong woguo wenming de kaihua --- --- --- --- ---} ---," xxx. Monique Nagel, "'Erfinder' und 'Erfindungen': Historiographisches und Enzyklopädisches im *Sbi-pên*, einem genealogischen Handbuch der chinesischen Antike," in: *Bochumer Jahrbuch zur Ostasienforschung* 19 (1995): 25–49, p. 36–37. A.C. Graham, *Disputers of the Tao*, p. 270–273. Michael Puett, Diss., *HJAS* article (1998) xxx. A similar position to that of Poseidonios, that the ancient sages according to the principle of analogy to natural phenomena invented culture (cf. Karl Reinhardt, *Poseidonios*, München, 1921, p. 392ff., p. 402 ff.) may be found in the postface of the *Shuowen jiezi*. For a translation cf. K. Thern, *Postface of the Shuo-wen Chieh-tzu: The First Comprehensive Chinese Dictionary*, Madison, 1966.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Wolfgang Bauer, *China und die Hoffnung auf Glück*, München, 1971. English translation: *China and the Search for Happiness: Recurring Themes in Four Thousand Years of Chinese Cultural History*, transl. by Michael Shaw, New York, 1976. Like the myth of the golden age, for the first time written down by Hesiod (*Werke und Tage*), phantasies about the reign of Kronos, later taken up by Seneca, Virgil (4th Eklog) and the author of the octavia tragedy (a topos which became again very prominent in the time of the renaissance) we have different models of an idealized past especially associated with the reigns of the ancient kings Yao, Shun and Yu. Barrett differentiates further between a belief in a complete preservation of that past (*Xunzi*) and a belief in a fragmentary preservation (*Zhuangzi*). Cf. T.H. Barrett, *Li Ao. Buddhist, Taoist, or Neo-Confucian?* Oxford: Oxford UP, 1992, p. 139f. In opposition, we have similar models of an utopia in future especially with the daoist millenarian movements. Cf. Isabelle Robinet, *Histoire du Taoisme*, Paris: Cerf, 1991. Translated as *Geschichte des Daoismus*. München: Diederichs, 1995. As a third variation we have concepts of cyclical building up and destroying order like we find it in the Gong Gong/Nü Wa and Yu flood- myth, in *Mengzi* 3B9, in

Mawangdui „Yao“ etc. Cf. K.C. Chang xx, Anne Birell, *Chinese Mythology: An Introduction. (Foreword by Yuan Ke)*. Baltimore/ London: John Hopkins University Press, 1993 and esp. her TP article xxx.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Gustav Wolf Seek, „Leicht – schwer und der Unbewegte Beweger (*De caelo* IV 3 u. *Ph* VIII 4),“ in: *Die Naturphilosophie des Aristoteles*, Darmstadt, 1975, p. 391–399.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Rudolf G. Wagner, „Ban Gu and the End of history,“ unpubl. manuscript for a talk held at the International Conference on Historiography, Heidelberg, 1995.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. David N. Keightley, „Shang Divination and Metaphysics,“ 1988, p. 378–383; Keightley, „Late Shang Divination: The Magico-Religious Legacy,“ p. 17–20; Keightley, „In the Bone: Divination, Theology, and Political Culture in Late Shang China,“ unpubl. script from 12.10.1994, p. 21; Sarah Allan, *The Shape of the Turtle*, p. 120 and Tung Tso-pin (---@---), *Fifty Years of Studies in Oracle Inscriptions*, 1964 (orig. *Jiaguxue wushi nian* ---Q---, 1955), p. 98–108.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Chen Mengjia ---a, „Wuxing zhi qi yuan ---\_---,“ in: *Yanjing xuebao* -P --- 24 (1938): 35–53, p. 42; A. Rickett, *Guanzi*, 1985, p. 163 (same article in *Kuan-tzu*, 1965 and *T'oung Pao* 48 (1960): 195–251); L. de Saussure, *Les Origines de l'Astronomie Chinoise*, Paris, 1925, p. 126 f.; M. Granet, *Fêtes et chansons anciennes de la Chine*, Paris, 1929, p. 176–178.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. J.F. Hewitt, *History and Chronology of the Myth-Making Age*, London, 1901, p. 20 ff., B. Warner, „Astronomical Knowledge in Africa,“ in: C. Walker (ed.), *Astronomy Before the Telescope*, 1996, p. 304–317, p. 306; W. Orchiston, „Australian Aboriginal, Polynesian and Maori Astronomy,“ in: Walker, op. cit., p. 318–328, p. 320, 324 and 325; S. Langdon, *Babylonian Menologies and the Semitic Calendars*, London, 1935, p. 2, 10; M. Cohen, *The Cultic Calendars of the Ancient Near East*, Bethesda, Maryland, 1993, p. 5.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. my *Das Gesicht der Geschichte: Die Chunqiu-Exegese des Gongyang zhuan von ihren Anfängen bis zu Dong Zhongshu*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2002, p. 180–187 or my „The System of the ‘Monthly Ordinances (yueling ---0)’“ forthcoming in the *Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities*. For a short description cf. my „Ritual Meaning of Textual Form: Evidence from Early Commentaries of the Historiographical and Ritual Traditions,“ in: Martin Kern (ed.), Collection of articles of the conference on „Rituality and Texts“, Oct. 20–22 in Princeton. Forthcoming New York: Suny, 2001.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Hayashi Minao -L -w-` ---, „The twelve gods of the Chan-guo period silk manuscript excavated at Ch'ang-sha,“ in: Noel Barnard (ed.), *Early Chinese Art and its Possible Influence in the Pacific Basin*, 1974, p. 123–186.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Zhang Zhenglang „Shishi Zhouchu qingtongqi mingwen zhong de Yi gua ---P ---C --- ---,“ in: *Kaogu xuebao* 4 (1980): 403–415 translated by Huber and Yates into English as „An Interpretation of the Divinatory Inscriptions on Early Chou Bronzes“ in: *Early China* 6 (1980–81): 80–96. Cf. p. 93. Cf. also Zhang Yachu -i --- und Liu Yu -B -B, „Cong Shang Zhou bagua shuzi fuhao tan shifa de jige wenti -q ---P -K --- r --- -b -k ---L --- -D,“ in: *Kaogu* 2 (1981): 155–163 translated by Ed. Shaughnessy as „Some Observations about Milfoil Divination Based on Shang and Zhou bagua Numerical Symbols,“ in: *Early China* 7 (1981– (1981–82): 46–54.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Yu Yongliang -E ---d, „Yigua yaoci de shidai jiqi zuozhe ---N ---@---,“ in: *Zhongyang yanjiuyuan lishi yuyan yanjiusuo jikan* ---s -| ---v -y ---s ---Z 1.1 (1928): 29–46, esp. p. 34–37. See also Ed. Shaughnessy, „The Origin of an *Yijing* Line Statement,“ in: *Early China* 20 (1995): 223–240.

<sup>24</sup> Vandermeersch describes the transition from nature divination to ritual cosmology, from *di* --- to *tian* --- at the beginning of the Zhou dynasty in a similar way. Cf. *Wangdao ou la voie royale*, Paris, 1980, vol. 2, p. 376.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. for example *Zuo zhuan* Ai 9.4 where both technics are used. Cf. also *Shangshu*, Legge, p. 291 and esp. p. 334–338. Vandermeersch tries to give a plausible explanation for the transition of the technique of bone oracle to *Yijing* divination. He considers the bone oracle even after the coming into use of the *Yijing* divination to be the more important one. Cf. *Wangdao*, vol. 2, p. 300 ff.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. L. Vandermeersch, *Wangdao*, vol. 2, p. 323; for a more recent discussion cf. the contributions at the International Conference on Shang Civilization in *Early China – Supplement 1* (1986) and E.G. Pulleyblank, “The *Ganzhi* as Phonograms and their Application to the Calendar,” in *EC* 16 (1991): 39–80 and “Early Contacts between Indo-Europeans and Chinese,” in: *International Review of Chinese Linguistics* 1.1 (1996): 1–24, p. 8–11. In this issue the counter arguments may also be found in the following review articles.

<sup>27</sup> In the commentary to the “Xia xiao zheng 𠄎L 𠄎p 𠄎𠄎” it says: “*Ding bai*, this is a auspicious day 𠄎B 𠄎𠄎𠄎 𠄎A 𠄎N 𠄎𠄎 𠄎].” Cf. *Dai Dai Liji* 𠄎j 𠄎𠄎𠄎 𠄎O, Wang Pinzhen, op. cit., p. 31. “*Ding bai*” even might be taken as a general designation for an auspicious day. Cf. Pang Pu 𠄎e 𠄎𠄎, “‘Wu yue bing wu’ yu ‘zheng yue ding hai’ 𠄎m 𠄎𠄎 𠄎𠄎 𠄎𠄎 𠄎n 𠄎P 𠄎m 𠄎𠄎 𠄎B 𠄎𠄎 𠄎n,” in: *Wenwu* 6 (1979): 81–84. For a list of occurrences of certain *ganzhi* combinations see L. Vandermeersch, *Wangdao*, vol. 2, p. 339 f. Cf. also D. Pankenier, “Early Chinese Astronomy and Cosmology: the ‘Mandate of Heaven’ as Epiphany,” PhD. Stanford, UMI, 1985, p. 62–63.

<sup>28</sup> For a general introduction see M. Kalinowski, “Les traités de Shuihudi et l’hémérologie chinoise à la fin des Royaumes-Combattants,” in: *T’oung Pao* 72 (1986): 175–228 and M. Loewe, “The Almanachs from Shui-hu-ti: A Preliminary Survey,” in: *Asia Major* (3rd series) 1.2 (1988): 1–27. For further sources cf. my *Das Gesicht der Geschichte*, op. cit., p. 180–187 or, in a more elaborated form, my “Frühe chinesische Tagewählerei. Texte, Inhalte, Konzepte und Methoden,” talk held at the 28<sup>th</sup> Deutscher Orientalistentag in Bamberg, 27.3.2001.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. Li Ling 𠄎𠄎 𠄎s, (W. Boltz übers.), “Formulaic Structure of Chu Divinatory Bamboo Slips,” in: *Early China* 15 (1990): 71–86, p. 71; Rao Zongyi 𠄎𠄎 𠄎v 𠄎[, Zeng Xiantong 𠄎𠄎 𠄎𠄎 𠄎q, *Yunmeng Qinjian risbu yanjiu* 𠄎𠄎 𠄎𠄎 𠄎𠄎 𠄎𠄎 𠄎𠄎 𠄎s, 1982, S. 73–81; Kudo Motoo, “The Ch’in Bamboo Strip *Book of Divination* (*Jib-shu*) and Ch’in Legalism,” in: *Acta Asiatica* 58 (1990): 24–37.

<sup>30</sup> In other ancient cultures such as in ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia the earliest hemerological texts transmitted to us date many centuries earlier. Cf. Christian Leitz, *Tagewählerei: Vollständige Übersetzung des Buchs bst nbh pb. wy dt.* Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz (Ägyptologische Abhandlungen Bd. 55), 1994 and its review from Joachim Quack in: *LingAeg* 5 (1997): 277–287. Cf. also A. von Lieven “Tagewählerei im Alten Ägypten,” talk held at the 28th Deutscher Orientalistentag in Bamberg, 27.3.2001 and Nils P. Heeßel, “Tagewählerei in Babylonien und Assyrien,” talk held at the same occasion.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. M. Kalinowski, “Les traités de Shuihudi et l’hémérologie chinoise à la fin des Royaumes-Combattants,” in: *T’oung Pao* 72 (1986): 175–228, p. 176.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. R.J. Smith, *Chinese Almanachs*, HK, 1992, p. 1–18 and M. Palmer, *T’ung Shu: The Ancient Chinese Almanach*, Boston, 1986, p. 14–28.

<sup>33</sup> For the *jianchu*, *jichen* and *fanzhi*-series see M. Kalinowski, op. cit., p. 197–200.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. M. Kalinowski, op. cit., p. 208.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. M. Kalinowski, op. cit., p. 200–204.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. M. Kalinowski, op. cit., p. 183 (note 29).

<sup>37</sup> I found only one occurrence (𠄎V 𠄎T 𠄎𠄎 𠄎𠄎 𠄎A 𠄎𠄎 𠄎H 𠄎𠄎 (𠄎v) 𠄎𠄎 𠄎𠄎 i (𠄎}) 𠄎a 𠄎A 𠄎O 𠄎G (𠄎𠄎) 𠄎o 𠄎h 𠄎C) in *Yunmeng Qinjian risbu yanjiu* strip 754 (back). The wording “waking of insects 𠄎o 𠄎h” has a parallel at the beginning of the first first month of the early almanach “Xia xiaozheng”, cf. Wang Pinzhen, op. cit., p. 25, cf. also Liu Lexian 𠄎B 𠄎𠄎 𠄎𠄎, op. cit., p. 293. Further parallels may be found in the ordinances for the second month in the „Yueling“-chapter of the *Liji*: 𠄎R 𠄎𠄎 𠄎q 𠄎𠄎G 𠄎g 𠄎𠄎 𠄎𠄎@ 𠄎A 𠄎V 𠄎𠄎 𠄎o 𠄎\ 𠄎A 𠄎𠄎 𠄎o 𠄎𠄎 𠄎A 𠄎𠄎 𠄎j 𠄎𠄎A 𠄎H 𠄎T 𠄎𠄎 𠄎C 𠄎a 𠄎𠄎 𠄎q 𠄎n 𠄎A 𠄎O 𠄎𠄎 𠄎o 𠄎𠄎 𠄎a 𠄎𠄎 𠄎C 𠄎𠄎 𠄎h 𠄎h 𠄎𠄎A 𠄎𠄎 𠄎e 𠄎𠄎A 𠄎S 𠄎H 𠄎H 𠄎𠄎C (Cf. Sun Xidan 𠄎] 𠄎𠄎 𠄎𠄎, *Liji jijie* 𠄎𠄎 𠄎O 𠄎𠄎 𠄎𠄎, Beijing: Zhonghua, 1989, 3 vols, p. 494). The *Lüshi Chunqiu* has a slightly different version (cf. Chen Qiyu 𠄎𠄎 𠄎𠄎 𠄎𠄎, *Lüshi Chunqiu jiaoshi* 𠄎f 𠄎𠄎 𠄎K 𠄎𠄎 𠄎𠄎 𠄎𠄎, Shanghai: Xuelin, <sup>1</sup>1984, <sup>2</sup>1990, 2 vols., p. 567).



<sup>57</sup> Cf. Richard Rutt, *Zhouyi: The Book of Changes. A New Translation with Commentary*, Richmond: Curzon, 1996, p. 439.

<sup>58</sup> Cf. *Lüshi Chunqiu*, book 20, end of the chapter “Guan biao”, Chen Qiyou 陈其猷, *Lüshi Chunqiu jiaoshi* 吕氏春秋集解, Shanghai: Xuelin cbs, <sup>1</sup>1984, <sup>2</sup>1990, p. 1413–1414.

<sup>59</sup> Cf. *Guoyu* „Luyu shang“, 04.04, Shanghai: Shanghai guji, p. 156.

<sup>60</sup> Prognostication is possible only on the basis of the assumption that within history there are formal structures which repeat themselves. Cf. Reinhart Koselleck, „Die unbekannte Zukunft und die Kunst der Prognose,“ in his *Zeitschichten. Studien zur Historik*, Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 2000, p. 203–221, p. 208.

<sup>61</sup> The earliest divinatory act in China of which we know is the divination with oracle bones which at the beginning were put into a fire. The resulting cracks (or their sounds) were interpreted as divinatory signs. Thus it is the heat of the fire through which at the beginning divinatory control of historical heat is gained. By controlling the divinatory essence of the heat of the fire through oracle bones historical heat is controlled as well.

<sup>62</sup> Cf. Becker, op. cit., p. 15.

<sup>63</sup> Cf. xxx. Bielenstein?

<sup>64</sup> Cf. Stephan Peter Bumbacher, „Die Politik der Unsterblichen: Vorspiele für die Endzeit: ‘Falun Gong’ und der chinesische Messianismus,“ in: *FAZ*, no. 268, 1999, p. xxx.



# \_\_\_\_\_ Dynastic Change and Reorientation of Religion

## The Rise of the Tang and Daoism

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It is widely known (remembered!), that Daoism came to a great flourishing in Tang times, owing to the fact that the Tang emperors claimed to be descendents from Laozi, and accordingly promoted the Daoist religion.

This paper will apply the concept of event, performance, impact and memory, trying to explore the structural dynamics between the 'event' of the dynastic change from Sui to Tang, the performance of the Daoist religious community in this event and the impact this particular event and the associated dynamics had on the development of the Daoist religion.

The term Daoism will be used here referring to the organized religious community in, or connected to, the capital and the court, that called themselves Daoists.<sup>1</sup>

Considering the 'event' in the context of Religion poses several difficulties: first, we will not be looking at 'society', but only at a small segment of society. This segment is, in the case of organized religion, 'independent' of society in the sense, that it does have its own, particular set of rules and ideologies that govern its behaviour and outlook. It is part of society at the same time, since it does exist in society and depend on society. A time of crisis, an event, would concern this segment just as much as the rest of society, the need to perform would be there, but the choice of performance would be influenced by its particular ideologies and creeds. These ideologies are tied to a 'sphere beyond the realm of man', namely to the divine.

Since the 'divine' usually belongs to a rather intangible sphere, it is very difficult to accommodate within historical research. Modern science has excluded the possibility of the existence of the divine wilfully interacting with the realm of humans. There is therefore a strong tendency to deny the realm of the divine and its possible influence on the course of events in the realm of human history. Divine interactions with humans get to be treated as 'invented' or 'constructed' by humans to serve their particular purposes. This paper will,

for lack of a better approach, follow this established technique. But while doing this, we will have to be conscious of the fact, that this treatment of the divine is conditioned by the 'academic mind' and does not necessarily reflect the perception of the people at the time of crisis<sup>2</sup>.

Politically speaking Daoism as well as Buddhism over the Nanbeichao time had grown to become an important part of the intellectual and political life of the gentry and all strata of society. The affiliation with the court was necessary to support growing structures of institutionalised monasteries in the capital. Daoism as well as Buddhism vied for imperial support. The religions had become an important element in the legitimating of dynasties and the creation of ideology.<sup>3</sup>

It has to be added, that ultimately neither Daoism nor Buddhism wanted to compete with the Confucian state-ideology. There came to be established a sort of division of competence: while the this-worldly side of governing was unquestionably relegated to Confucian doctrine, the other-worldly side, covering anything from spiritual cultivation to the protection of the gods, (divine help in military campaigns, rain sacrifices etc.) instead was claimed by the Daoists and the Buddhists alike.

It seems, that in times of upheaval and chaos, there is a tendency to look 'beyond the chaotic realm of humanity' for guidance.

Thus in times of high temperature the realm of the divine, which may in ordinary times be marginal and distant, gains importance. In consequence, also a religious community may gain importance. The distance between the divine and human may lessen, to the point of a direct response to the need in the realm of humans by [perceived] interference of the divine.<sup>4</sup>

The divine interference comes to constitute a secondary 'event' within the primary event. In the process of memory building in some cases it even eclipses the primary event itself.

## 1. The situation

In 589, the Sui Dynasty had unified the empire of China after centuries of division in different states. The Dynasty was to be short-lived, as of 613 rebellions started to increase, an unsuccessful military campaign against Koguryô in Korea further weakened the standing of the emperor, 616 he left the capital and by 617 the state was in utter chaos. Different rebel-leaders were fighting for power over the newly unified empire. It has been estimated, that among the more than 200 rebel groups about ten had a chance of establishing a stable regime and conquering the empire.<sup>5</sup> Among those rebel – leaders Li Yuan<sup>6</sup>, later Tang Gaozu, was to gain predominance, he proclaimed his empire, the Tang dynasty in the year 618, but had to continue to fight against other rebels until about 624 peace and order were restored.

## 2. Performance

In the time of chaos and fighting after the fall of the Sui, it had to be decided who was going to be the ruler of the unified empire. This decision would be based in great part on



military ability and strategic astuteness – but that was not going to be enough to prove, that one person was to be the legitimate emperor of China.

This proof had to come from some authority other than pure, tangible, military prowess<sup>7</sup>.

It is in this context, that the performance of members of the religious communities in the heat of the events during the campaign of Li Yuan begins. We find Daoists and Buddhists prophesying the ascent to power of Li Yuan<sup>8</sup> and presenting or reporting favourable portents confirming that Li Yuan would obtain the Heavenly Mandate.<sup>9</sup>

Among the many portents reported at the time the most efficacious was going to be a theophany<sup>10</sup>: In 620<sup>11</sup>, after Li Yuan had claimed the throne but was still fighting other rebels, a theophany occurred at Mt Yangjiao<sup>12</sup>. In several visions, a divinity showed itself to a common person, Ji Shanxing, on the mountain. The visions began early 620<sup>13</sup> rather obscurely, leading by the 8<sup>th</sup> month of that year to a clear statement of the divinity: he claimed to be Li Laozi, and he claimed Li Tang as his descendents.<sup>14</sup>

Most probably, Daoists in the entourage of Li Yuan manipulated the series of visions and their reports.<sup>15</sup>

Now, as much as both the Daoist and Buddhist communities were in need of assuring themselves a good standing with the newly emerging central power, so was Li Yuan in need for legitimation and means to bolster the morale of his troops who were still fighting powerful enemies even after the throne was taken by Li Yuan. The appearance of the divinity Lord Lao was reported to the troops assuring them of divine assistance in their fight.

The idea of being descendent from Li Laozi, a god, and getting divine protection not from a regular god but from a god-ancestor must have been very appealing – and indeed the idea became central to the building of Tang ideology.<sup>16</sup>

Ultimately the concept of Laozi as ancestor of the Tang was born in the context of a high-heat situation, stimulated by the conscious staging of the Daoists as well as of Li Yuan. We may add, the fact, that Li Yuan's name was Li was a coincidence: he could have been called Wang, Liu etc., and would have not been associated with Laozi.

### 3. Dynamics

The logic consequence of Li Yuan accepting the idea of Li Laozi being his ancestor and therefore protecting god of the Tang Dynasty was that Daoism was elevated to the first religion in the ritual ranking of the three religions that had been practised already in former dynasties.

However, the Daoists were not the only religious community trying to find their place in the newly emerging empire. The Buddhist community who had been supported by the Sui emperors had to do the same.

In the time before the final restoration of peace, the Buddhist and the Daoist community were fighting in heated debates about their position within the new state. The issue was predominance in the ritual ranking. This would on a practical side bring about massive impe-

rial sponsoring. However, this sponsoring was not for free. The religion had to offer good reasons for it, legitimating the newly established empire, assuring divine protection, and helping to ideologically consolidate power, just to name a few. In the acrimonious debates the two religions tried to present themselves as the better equipped to meet the needs of the empire and, at the same time, in a very polemical way to discredit the opponents.

#### 4. Impact on the development of Daoism – "adjusting to the performance"

Leaving aside the obvious results of imperial sponsorship of the Daoist religion<sup>17</sup>, the constellation of circumstances described so far brought about a 'change of direction' in the long-term development of Daoism.

The event of the establishment of the Tang Dynasty and the myth of the divine help of Laozi, a set of circumstances that was ultimately created by staged performance responding to the needs of a "hot" situation, would become a crucial issue in the struggle to define the positions within the state.

The Tang rulers, beginning with Gaozu and Taizong, used this set of circumstances to build a powerful ideology to consolidate their power<sup>18</sup>. Laozi became the god-ancestor of the Tang. This myth, constructed around the 'memory' of his appearances to help the Tang to gain the Heavenly Mandate, was confirmed in edicts and public acts. This set a framework for the still ongoing debate between Buddhists and Daoists trying to define their positions under the new dynasty.

While the Daoist community could use the officially proclaimed ideology and the myth of Laozi being the ancestor of the Tang in order to ensure themselves predominance over the Buddhists<sup>19</sup>, the Buddhists responded by trying to prevent the dominance of Daoism at court. Since the fact, that Laozi was the ancestor of the Tang, accepted and declared by the emperor, was not to be debated<sup>20</sup>, the Buddhists conceived a different strategy: the dissociation of Laozi, ancestor of the Tang, from the Daoist religion.

This attempt was not as off-handed as it seems from today's point of view.

Daoism at the beginning of the seventh century was still in the process of formation. Many different traditions were amalgamated, and the most important of these, the southern traditions of Lingbao and Shangqing, did not claim to originate with Laozi.

Nevertheless, these traditions had the strongest theoretical background in terms of offering a valid alternative to Buddhism as a state-religion. Especially the Lingbao Scriptures had incorporated the Buddhist Mahayana conceptions of universal salvation. This concept, as is clearly visible in the first chapter of the *Benji jing*<sup>21</sup>, was also interpreted in a sense, that the omnipotent gods of Daoism would rush to help any state in difficulties, provided the state embraced and protected the Daoist religion. This concept seems to actually have been a major tenet of these texts; they claim to be the one vehicle<sup>22</sup> that will save all and everyone. These

developments must have been essential in the context of competition with Buddhism for supremacy in state-ideology. They offered to a ruler willing to support Daoism not only an abstract possibility of salvation through religion accessible to everybody, but also the concrete possibility of access to divine power to support and aid the ruler in anything from warfare to natural disasters like drought or flood.

These concepts were associated mainly with Yuanshi tianzun and not with Laozi.

We may add, that many other indications point to the fact, that by the time of the Sui Dynasty, Daoism in the capital was, though steadily transforming and adapting, influenced primarily by the southern system<sup>23</sup>.

The heated debates between Buddhists and Daoists about the issue set in motion a very complex and far-reaching intellectual development.

In the struggle for who was going to be the first religion of the state there emerged quite a clear definition of such a religion. The Buddhists, namely Falin<sup>24</sup>, demanded that a religion may be only called as such, if it had 1) a set of holy revealed scriptures, which serve to educate and transform the people, and 2) a founder of the religion who had to be the source of the scriptures - and had to be of royal origin!<sup>25</sup>

This definition was applicable to Confucianism (the Confucian classics having been revealed by the three kings and five emperors, who would be called founders of the religion) and to Buddhism – Gautama Buddha having been the son of a king and – at the time – was considered as the source of all Buddhist scriptures.

It put the Daoists under great pressure to prove that their religion was qualified to be called a religion. The condition of the royal origin of the founder was wisely not questioned – any contrary remark would have been an offence to the ancestor of the current royal house-, but the idea that Laozi should have been the origin of all Daoist revealed scriptures was heavily attacked.

Responding to this attack necessitated a shift of orientation of the Daoists in the capital.

In the course of the debates between Buddhist and Daoists after 620 we find the same Daoists, who are considered authors of the Benji jing, a text purporting to be revealed by Yuanshi tianzun, citing Laozi as the major god of Daoism. Yuanshi tianzun seems to be relegated to the background in the debates with the Buddhists.

The attempts to ascertain that Laozi, ancestor of the Tang, was the founder and main god of the Daoist religion were undertaken with large intellectual efforts. We find references to new ‘revealed’ i.e. authored scriptures<sup>26</sup>. However, writing Holy Scriptures was a risky business, for fabrication was considered a crime<sup>27</sup>.

Along with the sudden pre-eminence of the god Laozi, also the text of the Daode jing, probably the only text ascribed to Laozi at the time, which was not susceptible to any doubts about the authorship, did get newly enforced attention. Above all, great efforts were made to show that the concept of Mahayanistic salvation was present in this text. On a philosophical level the theory of the two levels of truth, as well as the dialectical method of the tetra lemma,

which was introduced in China mainly with the Madhyamika teachings, was used in the interpretation of the Daode jing<sup>28</sup>. This theory formed the philosophical backstage for the Mahayana conception of a Bodhisattva who, though knowing the supreme truth in order to teach the beings resorts to a conventional level of truth to teach and save the people. This concept being present in the Daode jing would prove that the (new) conception of Laozi as a 'personally involved', accessible deity helping the state<sup>29</sup> was part of the original teaching of Laozi.

Finally yet importantly a lot of energy was spent on a large-scale cleansing of Daoist scriptures<sup>30</sup> from elements that were at odds with the newly emerged concept of Daoism. The sacred texts were remodelled to fit in with the demands of the times.

Around this time also we find the first elaborations of the Sanqing, the Trinity of Gods considered to be the highest gods of Daoism even today, Yuanshi tianzun, Dadaojun and Laojun (the deified Laozi).<sup>31</sup>

This development although it went through certain ups and downs<sup>32</sup> set the course of the Daoist religion for the time of Tang rule, if not longer.

## 5. Memory-building – the disappearance of 'the men that made a difference'.

The case of Daoism and the rise of the Tang shows, how in times of high heat, a religious community, that would in low-temperature times be rather marginal, performing in response to the needs of the particular situation acquired a new importance and influence.

The performance itself is dictated by various, largely fortuitous historical circumstances - the surname of Li Yuan being Li, and not Wang, Liu, Ma or Ge to begin with. Once put in motion, it causes dynamics of its own. Since the performance of the Daoists was not a 'logical' cause of long-term development, but an impromptu in a critical moment, the religious community had to adjust its image (including the conception and position of God Laozi, the holy texts, etc.) not to the event itself but to the 'logic' demands of the performance. (We may say, that this process extends into the realm of the divine: a god is fundamentally transformed.)

This change of image becomes part of the process of memory building.

The religious community's ideology is tied to the realm of the divine. In memory, the 'high temperature' of the rise of the Tang 'extended' into the realm of the divine and thus brought about a direct interference of a god. This constitutes an event in itself<sup>33</sup>. In the historiography of the religious community, this 'secondary event' eclipses the events in the 'real world'.

In Daoist historiography the rise of the Tang is described as the event of Laozi coming down to earth to install his ancestors as emperors<sup>34</sup>.

In this memory, the men whose performance ‘made the difference’, who were actively involved in the process of adjusting, disappear: there are almost no references whatsoever to these men in Daoist historiography<sup>35</sup>.

The quality of remembering the wilful divine, the myth of a god actively interfering, necessitates the ‘disappearance’ of the main actors on the historical stage.

The memory thus constructed by emphasis of some and omissions of other elements conditioned the view and the study of Tang Daoism, if not of Daoism in general to a great extent even until today.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Our current state of knowledge of Daoism in the late Nanbeichao, Sui and early Tang times does not allow any generalizations beyond this limited segment. There may have been many centres with completely different teachings and conceptions throughout the empire – carrying on older strands of Daoist tradition in the original conceptions or having modified scriptures and teachings to meet their particular circumstances. See e.g. Qing Xitai, 1994, v. one, part 2, for a short description of different sects of Daoism. Some of these, usually tied to a particular place or mountain, must have existed already in Tang Dynasty.

<sup>2</sup> In defence of the adopted approach we may mention, that scepticism with regard to divine interference was existent also in Tang dynasty, see e.g. Wechsler, 1985, p.58-60.

<sup>3</sup> See Mather 1979 (Northern Wei), Jansen, 2000, (Liang), Wright, 1957, (Sui), Benn, 1977, (Tang)

<sup>4</sup> From the point of view of the effect on a situation, it is quite irrelevant to question the genuineness of this interference.

Thus, the sceptical mind would interpret the theophany we will describe as construed by some farsighted Daoists. The effect would be a psychological support for the troops of the Tang, which would have given them the crucial advantage in the ongoing fighting.

The much less sceptical mind of people involved in a major crisis, after the complete break-down of established order, looking for help, might interpret the theophany as the sign that god (Laozi in this case) was on their side miraculously aiding them to win the fight.

Psychological advantage or divine help, the Tang subdued the rebels.

<sup>5</sup> Wechsler, 1979, p. 161. Li Yuan was not the only rebel who had belonged to the social elite of the Sui. (Compare Wechsler, 1979, p. 152.)

<sup>6</sup> The Li Tang family had been part of the ruling class of the Toba empires for generations. D. Twitchett (1979, p.4) characterized the changes Northern Zhou – Sui – Tang as coup d’état replacing one member of a group of noble families of the Northern aristocracy by another one. In terms of overall social history, this is correct. Nevertheless it has to be kept in mind, that especially the fall of the Sui and the seizure of power by Li Yuan were not a well-orchestrated change of power. The empire had to pass through a period of turmoil and insecurity. In the perspective of a group of people, like the Daoists, that were relying on the support of the court, of an emperor, these replacements of a dynastic family would be seen certainly as an event of major change, which necessitated re-orientation of the whole group.

<sup>7</sup> Compare Wechsler, 1985, p. 56: "From the end of the Former Han onward, auspicious omen were regarded as indispensable symbolic affirmations of the legitimacy of the founding rulers, palpable signs that they possessed the surpassing virtue required by the Mandate of Heaven doctrine. Auspicious omens were typically manipulated for political advantage not only by a prospective regime but by individuals or groups seeking to curry favour with that regime in order to obtain material rewards."

We may add, that not only material awards might have been the aim of the manipulation and report of omens, but also the positioning of a group or individuals within the newly emerging regime. Wechsler, 1985, p. 55-77 discusses in detail the management of portents by different individuals and groups in the beginning and early years of the Tang Dynasty.

<sup>8</sup> The Daoist Chi Hui (Hunyuan sheng ji, 8, p. 1b-2b; Benn, 1977, p. 26-27), Wang Yuanzhi (Jiu Tang shu, 192) and the Buddhist Jinghui (Chang'an zhi, 8, p. 11b)

<sup>9</sup> This is in 20th century research generally interpreted as a form of ingratiating oneself with the person, that one perceives to have the greatest chances to become the winner in the ongoing times of upheaval. In the historiography of the times instead it is often, at least by the performers party, depicted as divinely inspired foresight. At the time of the event itself, it may very well have been interpreted as a communication from the divine to the humans by means of an mediator, a person like a monk, who is supposed to be in closer contact with the divine than the normal mortals.

<sup>10</sup> The described appearance of a divine being was not the only theophany. Already in 617 a white clad divine being had appeared to Li Yuan, who was in difficulties in his military campaign at Mt. Huo, giving him sound military advice (Jiu Tang shu, 1). This unnamed divinity would be later identified with Laozi. (Hunyuan shengji, 8, 3a. Youlong zhuan, 5, p.10b)

<sup>11</sup> This incident, which is recorded in a Confucian source (Tang huiyao, 50) for the 3rd year of the reign of Li Yuan has been placed conveniently into the first month of the first year of his reign by Daoist historiographical sources (e. g. Youlong zhuan, 5, 10b Du Guangting, Lidai zong Dao ji, p.3b, Hunyuan sheng ji, 8, p. 3a.)

<sup>12</sup> Benn, 1977, p. 29, has undertaken speculations as to the men behind this incident.

<sup>13</sup> There are recorded appearances of the divinity for the second, 4th, 5th, and 8th month. Ji Shanxing did reportedly not communicate his visions after the first, but only after the second incident. The occurrence was taken very seriously and sacrifices at the place, where the vision had taken place, were ordered. This brought about the third apparition. Only in the last vision of that year, the divinity said explicitly, that he was Laozi, and that the Li family were his descendents. It is noteworthy, that in 619 a rebel Liu Wuzhou had moved against Taiyuan, the base of Li Yuan and captured it, moving south towards the capital. Another rebel, Wang Shichong had captured Luoyang in the same year and was marching towards the capital.

In the year 622, when the Tang were fighting the rebel Liu Heita, the deity appeared again to Ji Shanxing, assuring him of the imminent victory of the Tang in this battle. (Benn, 1977, p. 28-30)

<sup>14</sup> Note, that ultimately the fact, that Li Yuans surname was Li is purely accidental. There does exist in China a very old tradition of a messiah named Li Hong, who comes to save the troubled world and establish the empire of great peace. It seems that this myth was used consciously not by Li Yuan, but by another rebel – leader whose surname was Li as well.

It has been stated often, that Li Yuan picked up the idea of being descendent from Li Laozi mainly in order to gain status for his own, Toba-origin, family in the eyes of the predominantly Chinese aristocracy of the Shandong area. This was one, but not the only one reason.

<sup>15</sup> Benn, 1977, p. 31 discusses several hypotheses concerning this question.

<sup>16</sup> This ideology was prepared in careful and public acts, beginning with Gaozu and culminating over a century later in the reign of Xuanzong. A detailed study of this ideology is to be found in Benn, 1977.

<sup>17</sup> Benn, 1977, Barrett, 1985, Kohn, 1999.

<sup>18</sup> Benn, 1977. This ideology was built up gradually over time, culminating in the reign of Xuanzong (reign 712-756).

<sup>19</sup> Daoist historiography concerning the beginning of Tang Dynasty is generally elaborating in detail on the appearances of Laozi to help his descendent Li Yuan to gain the Heavenly mandate, see the texts quoted in note 9.

<sup>20</sup> The fact was actually debated: Falin (d. 640) wrote in his Bianzheng lun a chapter about rulers honouring Buddhism (T 2110, 3+4) In the second part he first relates the story of the victory of Li

Yuan in the crisis after the fall of the Sui without any reference to help of Laozi (p.511a-b). He emphasises Li Shimins (Tang Taizongs) military accomplishments in the battles against Wang Shichong, Liu Heita and Liu Wuzhou (they posed the big threat to the newly proclaimed Tang in 619). Another chapter of the *Bianzheng lun*, chapter 6, answered to polemical texts written to show that Laozi was superior to Buddha. A court Daoist denounced the text in 639 as slanderous with regard to the imperial ancestor.

In his defence, Falin stated that the Li Tang were of Toba origin and had nothing to do with Li Laozi. For good measure, he added a very unpleasant description of Laozis father, quoting some apocryphal Buddhist text (Falin *biezhuan*, T 2051, p. 210a). This would eventually cost him his life. He was denounced for slandering the imperial ancestor and sentenced to death for this crime. The death-sentence was after changed into exile – he died on his way there.

<sup>21</sup> This text was written in the Sui and Early Tang Dynasty. It is not a Lingbao Scripture, but a scripture representing Daoism in Sui and early Tang times. It is evident in the scripture that Daoism heavily relied on the southern tradition. The main god of this text is not Laozi, but Yuanshi tianzun, highest god of the Lingbao scriptures.

<sup>22</sup> Note: Weinstein, 1973, has shown, how the Tiantai sect of Buddhism gained pre-eminence in Sui China through imperial promotion, also because their teaching of an all-embracing one vehicle appealed to the needs of the Sui.

<sup>23</sup> We may also assume, that the institutional structures, the initiation order, and the monastic life were modelled according to the southern system (compare Ozaki Masaharu, 1984). This is confirmed by two very influential texts, the *Shengxuan neijiao jing* (ca. 574) and the *Benji jing* (Sui to early Tang), which were written by Daoists in the capital. Unfortunately there are not yet any studies of these texts, which are preserved in numerous Dunhuang manuscripts, in any Western language. Their importance in Sui and Early Tang times is attested by the large numbers of copies of these texts found in Dunhuang, further by extensive quotations and by the fact that they were also debated in the court debates.

It has to be noted though, that the tradition since Han times, of the emperor honouring Laozi, was kept alive also in Sui times, in 586 a stele inscription was ordered to be set up at Laozis birthplace. Nevertheless it seems, that in competing with the Buddhists for possible influence at court the Daoists concentrated on developing scriptures like the mentioned *Benji jing* or *Shengxuan jing*, relying on the Lingbao scriptures in order to introduce the Mahayana conception of universal salvation and in the same vein assistance to the state. These concepts were especially important with a view to presenting the religion as a source of state-ideology, which would help to consolidate the unified empire and support the ruling power.

Compare e.g. *Sui shu* 35: In the description of Daoism in the *Sui shu*, the author Changzun Wuji clearly states that Daoism has its origin with Yuanshi Tianzun. Note: The book *Laozi* is included with a description that emphasizes the Dao as the origin of the cosmos, is included not in this chapter, but in chapter 34 among the philosophers (*zi*).

<sup>24</sup> *Bianzheng lun*, T 2110, 2, p. 499. Falin elaborated on the theory of Daoan. Daoan had in his *Erjiao lun* (in T 2103, 8) proposed, that only Buddhism and Confucianism could be called a religion. He adduced many reasons, e.g. the question of the founder of a religion, but his argumentation did not yet have the highly generalized form of a definition, that Falin would propose.

<sup>25</sup> The second point was particularly effective against the Daoists. The largest part of their scriptures, especially the ones, that could compete with the Buddhist scriptures as far as the domain of the 'other world' (cosmology, soteriology, etc.) was concerned (the this-worldly domain being unquestionably governed by Confucian doctrines) were not revealed by Laozi, they rather belonged to the Lingbao Tradition etc. The condition of the royal origin (Buddha was the son of a king who renounced to the kingdom in order to be king of the Dharma, Laozi was an archivist in the libraries of the Zhou) is in a way logic, and certainly very convenient, from a Buddhist point of view.

<sup>26</sup> There are references for the fabrication of Daoist scriptures in early Tang Dynasty in Buddhist accounts (see e. g. Xianzheng lun, T 2112, p. 569c; Fozu lidai tongji, T 2036, 12, p. 581). Unfortunately, there has been done very little research on Sui and Early Tang Daoism, so we still know very little about these texts.

<sup>27</sup> The proof, that a religious scripture was fabricated, falsified, had let throughout history to censuring, even to prosecution (One example is the Daoist Kaitian jing. In 520, it was proven to be fabricated. The text was destroyed. (Kohn, 1995, p. 177) Another example would be the Huahu jing, or the Sanhuang jing, both several times censured.)

<sup>28</sup> This theory had been used earlier, certainly in the Sui, eventually in the Liang Dynasty in the interpretation of the Laozi, but it gained great momentum in early Tang Dynasty, where it became the major reading of the Laozi.

<sup>29</sup> Livia Kohn has studied the role of Laozi in history and myth. In the context of the description of Laozi in official inscriptions in Tang Dynasty she concludes (S. 52): "In the political vision of the Tang, Lord Lao, the personification of the ineffable Dao, the distant creator god and granter of obscure revelations is thus transformed into a practical, accessible deity, whose appearances and activities have a direct impact on the state and its fortunes. This new image of the god goes hand in hand with the redefinition of the role of the Daoist religion at this time..."

<sup>30</sup> It has always been puzzling why quotations of texts very often are not to be confirmed by the texts in the Daozang. There are indications, which show, that many a Daoist in early Tang times was busy rewriting his own schools revealed texts (see e.g. Fayuan zhulin, T 2122, 55, p 704). Major targets in this cleansing process were related to the ongoing struggle with Buddhism: references to Buddha as Laozi's teacher, obvious copies of Buddhist terminology, eventually also of complete scriptures. Most probably, the censuring was not restricted to these targets. A study of the phenomenon and impact of this most probably large-scale cleansing process has not yet been undertaken. An indication is for example the long list of quotations from the Sandong zhunang (in Reiter, 1990), a Daoist encyclopaedia from the early seventh century, which could not be verified in the texts of the Daozang as we have them today. (Not all of the discrepancies may be related to censuring, many texts may simply have been lost over the ages, but that remains to be established.)

Fayuan zhulin, 55, p. 403b-c relates one example: In the Daye era of the Sui Dynasty a Daoist named Fu Huixiang in the Wutong guan (c. Qing Xitai, 1994, v. 1, p. 28: this temple had been established by Sui Wendi near the palace) fabricated a sutra named Chang'an jing, copying the Buddhist Nirvana sutra. The authorities censured the text. Li Rong, an important Daoist living in the capital in the second half of the seventh century, and some others rewrote this text, producing the Taishang lingbao yuanyang jing. This text is extant (DZ v. 186). Compare the description of the text in Ren Jiyu, 1991, Daozang tiyao Nr. 333.

<sup>31</sup> The concept of the Sanqing, the three pure regions, originated with the Shangqing line of Daoism in the south and has been steadily elaborated. First denoting the highest heavens of the Shangqing system, it came to be associated as a term for the gods presiding over the three heavens. There are a large variety of attributions of gods to these heavens throughout the history of Daoism. It seems though, that the establishment of Laozi, who in the Ranking of the Pantheon by Tao Hongjing (the Weiye tu) was still on a mere fourth place, as part of the trinity of the highest heavens took place in Early Tang. The earliest scriptural description is found in the Fengdao kejie, a text of early Tang. (Kohn, 1998, p. 126.) See also Qing Xitai, 1994, v. three, p. 14 for interesting references.

Note: these three are related to with the term Sanyi (Three one). Ma Shu, 1996, interpreted this as referring to Laozi 42: The One brought forth the Two. Two brought forth Three... I do not think that this interpretation is valid for the time of the origin of the theory. In Early Tang times, with the flowering of the Chongxuan-school, SANYI was interpreted as referring to Laozi 14, where three aspects of the DAO, invisible, inaudible and intangible, are described. Thus the term connotes the ultimate identity of the three, creating a powerful concept for the integration of the three major gods of Daoism.



<sup>32</sup> E.g.: Wu Zetian, who established for a short time her own Dynasty preferred Buddhism to Daoism, after her abdication and the re-establishing of the Tang, Daoism came to dominate again.

<sup>33</sup> Assuming, that the established order is that the gods reside in heaven, man on earth, an appearance of a god on earth could be interpreted as a break with established order. Or else, the god would not have been prompted to come down to earth and interfere, if there would not have been a ‘time of high heat’.

<sup>34</sup> Examples are Hunyuan shengji, 8, and Youlong zhuan, 5, or Lidai zongdao ji. These texts are not exactly historiographical, but rather hagiography, nevertheless they do treat historical events, which is more than one can say of the most part of writings in the Daoist tradition.

<sup>35</sup> Note, that they are not mentioned in official historiography either, probably for similar reasons.

## Glossary

Benji jing	--- --g	Liu Heita	-B --- -k
Chang'an jing	--- -w -g	Liu Wuzhou	-B -Z -P
Chi Hui	-a -u	Sandong zhunang	-T -} - ] -n
Chongxuan	--- --	Sanqing	-T -M
Dadao jun	-j -D -g	Sanyi	-T -@
Daoan	-D -w	Shangqing	-W -M
Daode jing	-D -w -g	Shengxuanjing	-A --- -g
Falin	-k -L	Sui	-H
Fu Huixiang	--- -f ---	Taishang lingbao	--- -W -F - _ --- --
Gaozu	--- --	yuanyang jing	-g
Ji Shanxing	-N --- --	Taiyuan	--- --
Jinghui	--- --	Taizong	--- -v
Kaitianjing	-} --- -g	Tang	---
Laojun	--- -g	Tiantai	--- -0
Laozi	--- -l	Wang Shichong	--- -@ -R
Li	---	Wang Yuanzhi	--- -- --
Li Hong	--- --	Wutongguan	--- -q -[
Li Shimin	--- -@ ---	Wu Zetian	-Z -h ---
Li Yuan	--- -W	Xuanzong	--- -v
Liang	---	Yuanshi tianzun	--- -l --- -L
Lingbao	-F - _	Zhou	-P

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Title cited, full title, (author) [date] edition

T = Taisho; DZ = Daozang; HY = Harvard Yenching Index number

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## Cataclysms and China

### How to get rid of Dinosaurs

by Roderick McFarquhar, Harvard

When I was asked to write a paper which fitted into the organisers' wish to contrast what one might call hot events and cool history, I wanted to suggest the importance of cataclysms in human affairs. The cataclysm that wiped out the dinosaurs seemed appropriate for a number of reasons which I shall come to. The fossil record indicates that after dominating the earth for eons, the dinosaurs disappeared 65 million years ago. The dominant scientific opinion now attributes this to a global cataclysm caused by the collision with earth of a massive comet or asteroid. Not just the dinosaurs, but somewhere between 70 and 85% of all life forms were wiped out in the equivalent of a geological minute.

Since I suggested the title of this paper, however, the United States has suffered the cataclysmic terrorist act of the destruction of the World Trade Center towers. Already this event is described on all sides in the US as changing the national consciousness in a number of ways. It has certainly changed the presidency and the foreign policy of George W. Bush. Yet historians prefer to take the long view, to deny the likelihood that individual events, let alone individual human beings like Osama Bin Laden, can have decisive effects, and this event is still too recent to enable one to assess its long term impact.

What I want to do in this short paper is to suggest that the Chinese modernisation process, 160 years and counting, would not have got to where it is today without a series of events which could also be described as cataclysmic in human terms. They were necessary if the dinosaurs of the Chinese system and society were ever to be killed off. This is because inertia, in my view, is the most powerful force in politics. Most people, most of the time, in most countries do not wish to experience cataclysms, do not wish to partake in revolutions, but prefer to cultivate their gardens. They may well want change and to live better, but left to themselves they would bear almost any hardship rather than plunge into the uncertain and almost certainly dangerous endeavour to change their lot by revolutionary means. As you all

know, the Chinese Communist Party today warns of and relies on the fear of luan among the people as a major safeguard of its regime.

The attitude of the Chinese people towards luan is hardly surprising. China's modern history over the past two centuries comprises an extraordinary series of cataclysms that might have finished off a people less resilient than the Chinese. The question is: how do those cataclysmic events fit into the slow, incremental changes of the historical record, enabling historians, on the one hand, to argue that the denouement was simply the 'inevitable' consequence of a long series of preceding events, but equally allows me to argue, I hope more cogently, that without the cataclysms inertia would have prevailed?

## I.

As early as 1794, the British emissary Lord Macartney described the Qing empire as 'an old, crazy, First rate man-of-war, which a fortunate succession of able and vigilant officers has contrived to keep afloat for these one hundred and fifty years past, and to overawe their neighbours merely by her bulk and appearance, but whenever an insufficient man happens to have the command upon deck, adieu to the discipline and safety of the ship. She may perhaps not sink outright; she may drift some time as a wreck, and will then be dashed to pieces on the shore; but she can never be rebuilt on the old bottom.' Summing up his abortive mission to the court of Qian Long to try to establish trade relations, Macartney went further, opining that he would not be surprised if the dismemberment of the Qing preceded his own death. His views might be taken as merely the jaundiced appraisal of a diplomat frustrated by the failure of his mission, and as he died in 1806 and the Qing empire did not finally collapse till 1912, he was over a century out. But remember, even the dinosaurs took an estimated 10,000 years to die out after the meteor plunged into the Yucatan Peninsula. Recent historians have borne out Macartney's vision of a dynasty under threat, even if he could not have pinpointed all the reasons. The doubling of the population and massive inflation during the 18th century were among the factors that touched off the devastating series of internal upheavals, starting with the 10-year White Lotus rebellion which erupted in 1796, only two years after Macartney's departure, and culminating in the Taiping rebellion in the mid-19th century. The dynasty's central military forces were 'enfeebled by opium and corrupt leadership,' and were low in competence and morale; the Qing was only saved by the ability of capable viceroys and governors to raise new provincial armies to defeat the rebels. To 19th century Chinese historians, these must have seemed like symptoms of the declining period of a dynastic cycle; eventually, the Qing would give way to another dynasty.

But of course Macartney's mission was the harbinger of an even more destabilising series of cataclysms, the assaults of the imperialist powers, beginning with the Anglo-Chinese Opium War of 1839–42. Unused to serious seaborne assaults on the empire, and despite the alienation of Hong Kong, the opening up of Chinese ports, and the beginning of extra-territoriality, the Qing only slowly refocused their attention from the traditional areas of military threat to the

north. But the Taiping Rebellion of 1850-64, demonstrating the insidious influence of a barely-understood Christianity taught by Western missionaries, and the Anglo-French assaults of 1856-60, carrying the new threat to the capital, and encompassing the destruction of the summer palace, finally resulted in the first major effort to grapple with the threat posed by Western ideas and gunboats by reenergising the traditional Confucian polity in the Tongzhi restoration of 1862-74. The attempt was abortive, but cataclysms had overcome inertia. As Teng and Fairbank wisely observed: 'The response of Ch'ing officialdom to Western military power seems to have gone through a curious cycle: the brief activity of the opium War period was followed by the stagnant xenophobia of the 1850s, the promising innovations of the 1860s were followed by an apparent diminution of effort in the 1870s and the 1880s...China's attempted regeneration in each period required the shock of actual foreign aggression and defeat to provide its stimulus. When the heat was off, the effort at reform cooled down.'

What Teng and Fairbank described as the 'renewal of creative effort' occurred after the next major cataclysm of the 19th century the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-5, resulting in the cession of Taiwan. The Meiji Restoration, unlike the Tongzhi one, had led to genuine self-strengthening, as Japan's stunning defeat of imperial Russia would confirm a decade later. Western victories over China could be attributed in part to superior weaponry, and the Chinese had begun setting up arsenals and shipyards under the ethos of 'Zhong xue wei ti, xi xue wei yong' (Chinese studies for the base, Western studies for use), attempting to graft Western weaponry on to the Confucian polity. But defeat by a 'younger brother' nation – the 'island pirates' as one conservative mandarin called the Japanese – whose civilization owed so much to China's culture was an extraordinary humiliation which promoted more radical rethinking.

Too radical, as it turned out. The reformers led by Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao were too eager, ambitious, and inexperienced, perhaps thinking that the Guangxu emperor had finally achieved the power to implement their program. In a debate between Kang and conservative officials in January 1898, a Manchu prince said 'The laws of the ancestors cannot be changed,' to which Kang replied: 'The laws of the ancestors were designed for the administration of the land of the ancestors. Now if we cannot even defend the land of the ancestors, how can we talk of their laws?' But the effective abandonment of the imperial Confucian system with the long-term hope of the creation of a constitutional monarchy was too threatening to too many officials and ultimately to the Empress Dowager Cixi herself. In September 1898, she stopped the reform program dead in its tracks, made the emperor a virtual prisoner and resumed her regency. The only enduring monument to those heady '100 days' is Peking University.

It required one more cataclysm to undermine Cixi's opposition to reform. When the Boxers began slaughtering Christian missionaries in 1900, Cixi espoused their cause and besieged the foreign legations in the capital. The imperial powers, now including Japan, united to march on Beijing, raise the siege and force the Empress Dowager to flee to Xi'an.

To appease the foreigners and enable herself to return to the capital, she abandoned her opposition to reform. From 1901 onwards, decrees were issued abolishing the civil service exam system, thus destroying Confucianism's role as the official imperial ideology, and promoting constitutionalism in an effort to save the monarchy.

It was too late. Frustrated by the earlier reform failures, Sun Yatsen had already decided that the alien Manchus had to be overthrown, the imperial institution destroyed, and a republic created. The Empress Dowager was able to hold things together until her death, but within four years thereafter the 2,000 year old imperial system had been abandoned in favor of a republic. And while the democratic system that Sun Yatsen hariments with a return to family farming in the early 1960s were quickly suppressed by Mao, but within a decade of his death in 1976 the peasants had been liberated from the commune system, and even from the land as they abandoned farming for small industry, and left their villages for towns and cities.

The Leap was the greater disaster for the people, but the Cultural Revolution was the greater disaster for the party-state. As the great and the good of the party elite in the capital and in the provinces were harangued, humiliated, beaten, and even killed by the Red Guards, the authority of the party was inevitably undermined. Indeed, outside the factional struggles between surviving and parvenu members of the elite in the capital, the institutional life of the party ceased for a number of years. After the end of the Cultural Revolution, Deng Xiaoping revived the party and reversed the verdicts on those leaders who had been purged, but he could not restore the prestige both had once held.

Equally importantly, Deng devalued doctrine. After the Cultural Revolution, it was inevitable that the hyping of Mao Zedong Thought would be discontinued. But Deng went farther. By embracing the principle that 'practice was the sole criterion of truth,' he rendered doctrine irrelevant to what was now declared to be the main aim of the party-state: the creation of a strong, modern state. This had of course been the aim of reformers from the beginning of the century. Looking around in the 1980s at the economic miracles that had sprouted up in the old Chinese cultural area while China itself had been undergoing self-inflicted cataclysms, Deng evidently decided, in a favorite phrase, that it didn't matter what color the cat was as long as it killed the mouse. If it took capitalist methods to modernise China, so be it. Both these reforms inevitably meant a diminished role for the party as an institution as peasants and entrepreneurs took decisions for themselves, though individual cadres eagerly joined in the reforms.

Creditably, Deng also sought to destroy the imperial chairmanship. The office was abolished. Deng himself, though clearly the paramount leader, did not seek the highest offices of state or party. And to assist in dispelling the inward-looking mindset that had permitted the worship of a godlike Mao, as well as to promote modernisation, Deng opened up the country to new ideas and sent the best and the brightest abroad to study. Those ideas went beyond ways of making better mouse traps; students and intellectuals saw that there could be better ways of



running the state. The dinosaur that had apparently been destroyed in 1912 was again under threat.

For, coming on top of the early cataclysms, the Deng reform program, just like Kang Youwei's, amounted to a coup-de-grace, a stealth cataclysm. In 1989, as in 1912, it was shown that a decade of reform had undermined the three civilian institutions of the state-leader, cadres, and doctrine. When students demonstrated, as in the May 4th Movement and in the Cultural Revolution, but this time peacefully, calling for democracy, nobody called on them to return to their campuses in the name of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought. The Central Committee of the CCP and the National People's Congress were not allowed to meet for fear that the cadres might have been infected the same ideas as the students. The five-man Politburo Standing Committee, supposedly the country's leading body split three ways: two for the imposition of martial law, two against and one abstention. Only when Deng, acting as a *deus ex machina*, rallied his fellow gerontocratic emeriti, and brought in the army, was he able to suppress the 50-days reform movement in a hail of bullets.

The difference with 1912 is instructive. Then, the general in charge of the army brokered the end of the Qing, presumably assuming that he was only ousting a dynasty not destroying the system, and that he could shortly reestablish that imperial system under his own aegis. In 1989, Deng as Chairman of the Military Affairs Commission, saved the system, knowing that if he did not, it could never be recreated.

But looking around the old Chinese cultural area in the 1990s, he must have dreaded the sight of a new set of East Asian miracles: the rise of democratic systems in Taiwan and South Korea. Coming quickly after the Beijing democracy movement of 1989, the collapse of the East European satellites and, in 1991, virtually overnight, the dissolution of both the Soviet Union and its Communist Party demonstrated the fragility of communist systems and empires.

In China, T-Rex has become a brontosaurus. The last dinosaur still lives. But it limps badly.



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# Whose life is it anyway?

## On Traditional Chinese Biographical Writing

by Stephan Peter Bumbacher, Tübingen

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The doctoral thesis of our present-day's person celebrating his jubilee, written ages ago and far away from here, was concerned with the discussions between the eminent member of the southern Chinese *sangha*, Shi Huiyuan, and the Kuchean missionary Kumârajîva on questions the former had regarding Nâgârjuna's *Dazhi du lun* (—j —————)<sup>1</sup>, a commentary on one version of the *Prajnâpâramitâ sûtra*. However, I do not have the intention to dig out Rudolf Wagner's Buddhist roots. Rather, I should like to treat Kumârajîva's activities in China, as translator of Buddhist texts, as a „hot event“ that was instrumental in propagating Buddhism and helped changing the Chinese tradition as a whole.

Whatever a „hot event“ may be, for it to become an integral part of the cultural „memory“ it has to be cast into a durable medium – one of which may be the historiographer's account. Once written down on bamboo or silk the historian's record was by no means fixed. This is especially true for biographies. Biographical texts in China were quite volatile writings, in constant flux as it were. On the other hand, Chinese historiographers – lay ones as well as religious ones – as a general rule did not write the *vita* of a person of their interest anew each time they were to present the character in question. Instead, they used the earlier version at hand, cut out passages no longer suiting their own intentions, re-shuffled already existing pericopes and inserted others to be found in different texts that deemed serving the compiler.

Of the various versions of Kumarajiva's *vita* it is the one contained in Huijiao's (—z—, 497-554) *Gaoseng zhuan* (————, compiled ca. 519)<sup>2</sup>, in one of the chapters dedicated to the translators (*yijing* ———g), that one usually remembers first. Then there also exists an official biography contained within the *History of the Jin Dynasty* (*Jin shu* ———) of 644, to be found in the chapter on those who possessed „skills and techniques“ (——N). Less known

is the fact that an abridged version, said to be taken from the *Gaoseng zhuàn*, is contained in the *Taiping guangji* 太平廣記 of 978, in the chapter on „foreign monks“ (*yi seng* 異僧). And only specialist may know that the *Chu sanzang jiji* 大唐西域記, compiled by Sengyou 僧祐 (d. 518) between 479 and 518, also has a Kumarajiva *vita*.<sup>3</sup> Of this version there also exists a later redaction in Zhisheng's 智昇 (668-740) catalogue of Buddhist works, the *Kaiyuan shijiao mulu* 開元釋教錄 of 730<sup>5</sup>.

Collation of these versions shows that they all are derived from one and the same original text which, however, is no longer extant. Nevertheless, none is identical with any of the others, they all show important variations. I shall now first try to present their relationship. Then the variations will have to be interpreted in their own right.

## 1. Textual criticism

Due to the shortness of the available time I cannot go into the philological details. Suffice it to say that collation of all five versions shows that all are cognate. In fact, all derive from the same archetype as it were. However, we may divide them into two groups:

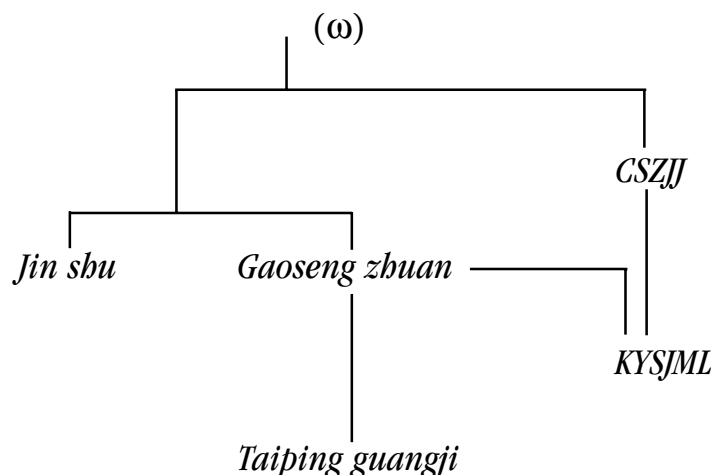
1. what we may call the „religious“ group comprising the *Chu sanzang jiji*, the *Gaoseng zhuàn* and the *Kaiyuan shijiao mulu*, and

2. what we may call the „secular“ group consisting of the *Jin shu* and the *Taiping guangji*.

The most complete version is that of the *Gaoseng zhuàn* containing roughly 60 pericopes. Compiled at almost the same time if not slightly earlier, the *Chu sanzang jiji* is shorter by approximately a quarter. Based on this version, the *Kaiyuan shijiao mulu* inserts a substantial amount of *Sondergut* which, on analysis, turns out to be an excerpt from Sengrui's *Gaoseng zhuàn* biography<sup>6</sup> and a large part of Daorong's *Gao-seng zhuàn* biography<sup>7</sup>.

The *Jin shu* presents but half of the text, inserting two pericopes plus a handful of small sentences whose provenance is unclear. The *Taiping guangji*, acknowledging *Gaoseng zhuàn* as its sources, abridges the text by about 50 %.

Based on the collation of these versions the following *stemma* can be derived:



## 2. Kumârajîva

The *Gaoseng zhuan* presents Kumârajîva's life in two parts of almost equal size. The first nar-rates his live outside China, the second within. It all starts with naming his grandfather, an independent and unusual character. Then we are told that his father refused to accept the post of a minister as he preferred to become a monk. But the king urges him to marry his younger sister who after declining all other advances falls in love with this man. She, although pregnant, led a devout Buddhist life, fasting and honouring the nuns. Omina were interpreted to the effect that her son would be a wise man. After giving birth to a son, she wanted to enter the monastery but her husband would not allow her. So she produced a second son. A ghastly experience let her reflect on the origins of suffering. She abandoned eating until her husband allowed her to take the nun's vow. Aged seven, Kumârajîva was a brilliant student. In order to escape the king's lavish presents mother and son left the court. They crossed the Indus river and went to Kashmir meeting there the famous *dharm*-teacher Bandhudatta, adherent of Hinayana Buddhism. As Kumârajîva was of an extraordinary talent he was invited at court where he, during a public disputation of heterodox Buddhists, refuted them. The king, full of admiration, gave him the highest payment in kind his government had to offer. The abbot sent him senior monks to give him a hand. Mother and son, then aged twelve, returned to Kucha where the son declined all official posts offered. Then they went to Sogdiana where a famous arhat uttered a prophecy to the effect that Kumârajîva, even if he should not be capable to entirely fulfill the religious rules he at least might become an outstanding teacher of the *dharm*. In Kashgar he learned the *abhidharm*. The king of Kashgar and his monk advisor plotted to celebrate Kumârajîva in order to win the king of Kucha's friendship. So they let him publicly teach. In his leisure time he studied the heterodox *sûtras*, the *veda*, belles lettres etc., especially the works on divination and prophesy. Accordingly, his own predictions were always accurate. On the other hand, he was not very scrupulous in his self-discipline nor did he care what others said about him. (19) At that time, a couple of princely brothers followed him. The younger one was very good at the Mahayana, thus Kumârajîva felt obliged to meticulously compare the Hinayana- and Mahayana-texts. As a result, he from now on preferred the latter. (20) He showed his talents as a skilful disputer and his fame spread to the east. The king of Kucha in person took him back. At home, Kumârajîva instructed the princess in the Mahayana. His mother, knowing that Kucha was doomed, advised her son to spread the Mahayana to China and returned to India. (26) Still in Kucha, Kumârajîva was tempted by Mâra to abandon his studies but he resisted. In a very long pericope we find Bandhudatta coming to learn from his former student. After a discussion on the emptiness of the dharmas, which for the guest was a concept unheard of, the latter is convinced and accepts his former disciple as his own Mahayana-teacher. Meanwhile in China, Fu Jian the ruler of the former Qin, was advised at two occasions by the brother of the Kuchean king and others to conquer the west. Having heard of Kumârajîva's fame he finally envoyed Lü Guang to conquer Kucha and Karashar, instructing

him to fetch Kumârajîva. The latter prophesied Kuchas peril, but the king would not follow his advise and was killed by Lü Guang. This general initially treated Kumârajîva badly, made him drunk and locked him together with a woman in a secret room. He changed his attitude after Kumârajîva had correctly prophesied an incident. When they learned that Fu Jian was killed by Yao Chang, Lü called himself ruler. Kumârajîva then predicted a series of uprisings and gave Lü advise. (40) He also denounced a foreign *daoren* who pretended being able to cure a sick friend of Lüs. After Lü Guang's death Kumârajîva gave further evidence of his clairvoyance. Lü Guang and his sons kept him during several years in Liangzhou and would not let him go when Yao Chang came to power as they feared Kumârajîva could give him some good advise. Only when Yao Xing, Chang's heir, defeated the Lüs he could receive Kumârajîva in the capital Chang'an. He cherished him and, taking an active interest in Buddhism himself, even assisted him occasionally in his big translation project. (48) Then follows the catalogue of Kumârajîva's translated Buddhist works. As a consequence of his activities and his deep knowledge, people from far away came to see him. Especially the monks Daosheng and Huiyuan consulted him and Sengrui constantly accompanied him and assisted him in writing. Yao Xing, praising his high intellect and arguing that he should produce offspring in order to transmit his intelligence, urged him to take ten prostitutes and no longer to dwell in the monastery but to live in a separate building. It is due to these circumstances that Kumârajîva thought that his missionary activities were not as successful as they could have been. When he felt his end was near he had some foreign disciples chant exorcistic formulas but it was too late. He then assessed his translating work and produced a last prophecy. Then follows the description of his body's incineration, an explanation of his name is given and, finally, a discussion of the discrepancies in various sources concerning the date of his death is offered.

### 3. Kumârajîva's *Lives*

Sengyou in his account of Kumârajîva's *vita* in the *Chu sanzang ji ji* left out ten entire pericopes altogether plus a whole series of minor parts. The most remarkable variations include the following:

**a) Political:** The plot of the king of Kashgar and his monk advisor to use Kumârajîva in order to win the Kuchean king's sympathy is removed as are the visits of the king of Qianbu with the younger brother of the Kuchean king at Fu Jian's court to urge the latter to subdue the west. Incidents like Lü Guang's declaring himself king or his son Shao being assassinated by Zuan, son of a secondary wife of Lü Guang's are omitted as well. In addition, nothing is said about the reasons why the Lüs kept Kumârajîva in the west and prevented him to see the Yaos in the capital nor that Yao Xing in a military campaign destroyed Lü Long, as a consequence of which Kumârajîva could go to Chang'an. It is thus but consequent that the political advice Fu Jian at one occasion gave Lü Guang is passed over in silence. By leaving out these aspects, Sengyou systematically reduced the larger context of Kumârajîva's life thus diminishing his „global“ as it were importance.

**b) Religious:** Quite remarkably, Sengyou also altered the religious scope of this biography. Everything that in the *Gaoseng zhuan* version deals with the *śūnyatā* concept is systematically left out. We don't learn how Kumârajîva was introduced into the subtleties of Mahâyâna-Buddhism by the younger one of the princely brothers and, after himself comparing Hînayâna and Mahâyâna, decides to follow the latter. We don't hear how he converts his own former master, Bandhudatta, to the Mahâyâna nor what sort of arguments both exchanged in their discussion.

Zhisheng's *Kaiyuan shijiao mulu* follows Sengyou's *Chu sanzang ji ji* closely but not ex-actly. A series of remarkable differences can be observed, indeed. On the one hand, this version omits some 13 pericopes that are still seen in Sengyou's work, on the other, it either preserves from the earlier source or introduces passages or pericopes that do not belong to the latter. Among the omitted pericopes we find, most interestingly, those dealing with Lü Guang locking in Kumârajîva together with a woman and with Yao Xing urging him to take prostitutes. In other words: Kumârajîva's sexual activities are purged. On the other hand, the description of the wider political context is further diminished as the *Kaiyuan shijiao mulu*, in addition to the omissions found in the *Chu sanzang ji ji*, leaves out the various rebellions that broke out after Fu Jian's assassination. Further details on Lü Guang as well as an account of the heirs of his rule, Lü Shao and Lü Zuan, are not provided either.

As the only one of all versions under consideration, the *Kaiyuan shijiao mulu* inserts a pericope taken from Sengrui's *vita* as to be found in the *Gaoseng zhuan*. This text offers a vivid example how Kumârajîva is not satisfied by the style of a given Chinese translation of a Sanskrit text and struggles for a better one. It is Sengrui who offers a possibility which immediately strikes the former as excellent. It is then said that in this way both worked hand in hand in translating. By introducing this aspect, however, Zhisheng is correcting to some extent Kumârajîva's fame as a gifted translator, showing that Sengrui's influence should not be underestimated.

The *Tai ping guang ji* acknowledges the *Gaoseng zhuan* as its source. Accordingly we would expect an almost exact copy of it. However, this is not the case. In fact, it skips almost the whole first part of Kumârajîva's life and starts its account with Fu Jian's activities to bring him to China, thus leaving out all information concerning his studies with various masters as well as his preference for the Mahâyâna. The Chinese episode of Kumârajîva's life is preserved faithfully with the exception of Yao Xing's admiration for Buddhism which is left out. Similarly, the accounts of the famous monks who consulted Kumârajîva such as Dao-sheng, Huiyuan or his collaborator Seng Rui are not provided nor are his doubts about his own efficiency as missionary. The *Tai ping guang ji vita* ends with Kumârajîva's incineration, not mentioning the problem of the various dates of his death etc.

In a mere secular environment the *Jin shu* or official history of the Jin dynasty provides the shortest version of Kumârajîva's *vita*, based as it was on the same text that was used by the other versions too. However, the selections and omission are too subtle to be analysed in this short presentation. They deserve a longer discussion. Suffice it for the time being to draw your attention to one specific aspect. For the compilers of the *Jin shu* Kumârajîva's sexual activities played such an important role that they even inserted two pericopes, not seen elsewhere, that emphasize Kumârajîva's deeds in this respect. In the *Jin shu* it is not Yao Xing who urges him to take prostitutes, rather it is Kumârajîva himself who, while he was explaining the *sûtras* in the Zaotang monastery and Yao Xing together with all virtuous *sra-manas* and the ministers were listening and looking up to him on the high throne in awe, un-expectedly descends and informs Yao Xing that he has sexual desires and needs a woman. Yao then called a court lady, and, although both the lady and Kumârajîva were together only once, she bore him male twins. The account then goes on saying that many of the monks followed him [in so doing]. Kumârajîva disapproving this behaviour set up a test which only he passed in order to make clear to them that he alone may entertain women.

Reading this, one cannot escape the impression that the *Jin shu* was eager to de-nounce Kumârajîva. He could not be attacked on the ground of his translation efforts as the results had stood up to the time, so they had to choose another sensitive area. Whether this makes sense in the context of the compilation of the *Jin shu* in the early Tang when the rulers preferred Daoism to Buddhism remains to be analysed.

#### 4. Conclusion

In conclusion we may say that while we today can collate the various versions of the Kumârajîva *vita* and, as I have tried to do during this presentation, assess them individually, a Chinese reader who had only, say, the *Chu sanzang ji ji* at hand would not have seen Kumârajîva's rôle in a wider political perspective placing him in relation to the mighty rulers of his time nor would he have seen the importance the *'sûnyatâ*-concept had for him. On the other hand, a reader of the *Kaiyuan shijiao mulu*, in addition, learned nothing about the sexual aspect of Kumârajîva's life but he was informed about the sort of teamwork practiced in Kumârajîva's translation project. The readers of the *Tai ping guangji* knew nothing about the whole first part of Kumârajîva's life led outside China, while the *Jin shu* emphasized Kumârajîva's sexual life for some reason.

To sum up: although all versions of Kumârajîva's *Life* deal with the „hot event“ of his existence and the tremendous influence he had on the propagation of Mahâyâna Buddhism in China, and although they all can be traced to the same original account (the omega in our *stemma*), they all handed over a different Kumârajîva to the long-term memory of the Chinese tradition.

Thank you for your attention.



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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> T 25.1509.

<sup>2</sup> Zürcher?

<sup>3</sup> T55.2145, pp. 0100a23ff.

<sup>4</sup> T 55.2154.

<sup>5</sup> Nobel?

<sup>6</sup> T 50.2059. ....

<sup>7</sup> T 50.2059.6: 363a.



# Empereur à la Surprise

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## The Making of Song Taizu

by Johannes Kurz, Brunei

### Introduction

In the following paper I am focusing on an event that occurred one early morning in February 960 a few miles north of the capital of the dynasty of the Later Zhou dynasty (951–960). That event was the origin of the founding of the Song by the proclamation of an ‘unexpected’ and ‘surprised’ new emperor. It was the culmination or boiling point of a development that had begun with the death of the last emperor of the Later Zhou in the winter of 959, who had left the throne to a five-year-old child. The event serves in official historiography as the beginning of a new unified empire, and as the convenient end of the period of the Five Dynasties and Ten States (*Wudai shiguo* 五代十国) period between 907–960.

This period was a disruption of the normal rise and fall of Chinese dynasties because it had seen the fragmentation of the once strong and united Chinese empire into a northern half where five dynasties succeeded each other within 53 years, and a southern half which was dominated by several empires and kingdoms in their own rights. Taking the topic of the conference into consideration the period as a whole may be regarded as one featuring high temperature, or a ‘violent break with established order’.

The chance that LeRoy Ladurie mentions as one decisive ingredient in the occurrence of events in the present case is as much man made as accidental in two senses.<sup>1</sup> First of all, the accession of a child emperor without proper backing by senior advisors throughout Chinese history opened the door for mature contenders for the throne outside the ruling imperial family.<sup>2</sup> Secondly, the specific military situation in early 960 with its dangers of attacks by the Qidan and the Northern Han provided a welcome pretext for the future emperor to leave the capital city at the head of the crack troops, who from the historical accounts had just waited to make him the new ruler.

The founding of the Song is related in official dynastic histories as well as in privately compiled works. The event first of all was recorded in the official history of the Five Dynasties (*Jiu Wudaishi* 五代史 N-v) that was endorsed by the Song founder Zhao Kuangyin (宋太祖 J-N, can. as Taizu 太祖, r. 960–976) himself.

Historiographers were not very happy with the way that the event was described there. In order to make the event seem inevitable they took recourse to introducing more information that would not only embellish the dry factual record of the coup d'état, for that was basically what it was, but also to remove any doubts about the legitimacy of the actual usurpation itself. The event at Chenqiao post station (Chenqiao *yi* 陳橋驛) then was made into a very meaningful event and absolved the new emperor simultaneously from the stigma of usurper.<sup>3</sup>

The additional details that were provided by historians consist of predictions based on the observation of supernatural phenomena as well as physiognomic studies, prophecies in the form of rumors among the common people at the capital, and complete and utter drunkenness on the side of the new emperor. Private and official works were in this respect cross-fertilizing as will be seen by a survey of some of the relevant sources from the early Northern Song to the Official History of the Song (*Songsbi* 宋史 v), completed in 1345.

### The Incident: The Official Record

The first description of the incident at Chenqiao post station is contained in the Old History of the Five Dynasties (*Jiu Wudaishi* 五代史 N-v), which was compiled on Taizu's order in the years between 973–974. The work officially ended the period of the Five Dynasties and Ten States, even though some of the Ten States were still existing as vassal states of the Song, such as Wu-Yue 吳越 (907–978) in Zhejiang and the Southern Tang 南唐 (937–975) in Jiangnan. The following description from the Old History of the Five Dynasties then must be regarded as the imperially accepted version of the event. Nevertheless scholars by comparison with the *Songsbi* less often consult it. It reads:

On the *guimao* day [of the seventh year under the reign title Xiande of the Later Zhou dynasty (February 2, 960)] the metropolitan army was dispatched and it set up camp for the night at Chenqiao post station. The new day had not yet dawned, when the army rebelled and its officers were shouting: „Ten thousand years!“ Clad in their armor and their swords ready, they encouraged [Zhao Kuangyin] strongly assuming the highest position [as emperor] this very day. They helped him on his horse and urged him to lead them southwards [towards the capital].<sup>4</sup>

Zhao Kuangyin appears here as the victim of the circumstances, a mutiny by the military officers, as he is forced by his officers and troops to accept emperorship.

The main point in this depiction of the event is that it puts the responsibility for the coup d'état on the army, and not on Zhao Kuangyin. As factual as this account is it leaves room for

a wide range of speculation, which very probably is the reason why some later texts chose to render the event inevitable and embellish it with more information. Once in the saddle, Zhao took firm control of the situation, giving commands related to the well being of the imperial family of the Later Zhou.

It should be noted here that the New History of the Five Dynasties (*Xin Wudaishi* 新五代史) written by Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修 (1007–1072) and posthumously presented to the palace libraries in 1073, omits the occurrence at Chenqiao post station altogether.

Ouyang Xiu confines himself to the following statement:

On the *jiazhen* day of the first month of spring of the seventh year [under the reign title] Xiande [the Later Zhou] abdicated the throne. The Song was established.<sup>5</sup>

The event in this work thus carries no importance and Ouyang Xiu avoids having to deal with the legitimacy of the action. This is for the modern reader somewhat frustrating since one would have expected Ouyang Xiu to present his opinion especially since the compilation of the work was done in private and was not intended for publication. It was then up to privately compiled works to supply more details on how the incident at Chenqiao had or might have happened.

The account that has been cited very often as the definite account of the so-called revolt at Chenqiao is found in the official history of the Song, which was hurriedly compiled in the years between 1343–1345. The description of the event at Chenqiao reads like follows:

In the spring of the seventh year [under the reign title Xiande (960)] the Northern Han<sup>6</sup> together with the Qidan invaded the empire, and the army was ordered to fight them off. When the army had reached Chenqiao post station Miao Xun 苗詢, who served in the army and was knowledgeable about stars, mentioned to [Zhao Kuangyin's] retainer Chu Zhaofu 楚昭符,<sup>7</sup> that he had observed a second sun beneath the sun. A dark glow emanating from there covered the sky for a long time.<sup>8</sup>

During the fifth night watch (between 3–5 a.m.), the officers gathered at the gate to the post station and talked loudly about making the supreme commander of the palace corps<sup>9</sup> emperor. Someone wanted to stop them, but they did not listen. In the dawn they pressed their way into the station, and Taizong<sup>10</sup> entered [his brother's room] to explain [the situation], whereupon Taizu got up. The officers meanwhile stood with drawn swords in the courtyard and said: „The armies have no ruler and they would like to make the defender-in-chief<sup>11</sup> emperor.“ Taizu had not yet answered, when they put a yellow robe around him. All of them knelt around him, they shouted „Ten thousand years!“ and then they helped him on his horse.<sup>12</sup>

Zhao Kuangyin in this account appears to have not known anything of what was going on around him. Something great was going to happen anyway, but we are left to guess what it might have been, as the astronomer in this entry does not give an interpretation of his observation. Zhao Kuangyi, the younger brother of Zhao Kuangyin's, had to wake his brother to inform him of the decision taken by his troops, and when Zhao Kuangyin finally got up, he was wrapped in the imperial yellow. Though he was forced to accept the offer he showed no reluctance towards it. It seems strange that with all the noise that the officers produced Taizu did not wake up even though, as we will see below, an earlier work gave a good reason for Taizu's sound sleep.

The usurpation account is in *Songsbi* preceded by an anecdote involving emperor Shizong 世宗 (Chai Rong 柴榮, r. 954–959) of the Later Zhou, who on the way back to Kaifeng from another northern campaign the previous year, was reading in his book collection when he came upon a leather case. This case contained a piece of wood that was about one meter long with an inscription that read, „the palace troop commander will be emperor“. Annoyed by this, Shizong as soon as he had returned to Kaifeng replaced the current palace troop commander Zhang Yongde 張永德 (928–1000) with Zhao Kuangyin, thus sealing the fate of his dynasty.<sup>13</sup> The *Songsbi* provides the further information that Miao Xun was promoted to astronomer in the Hanlin Academy once his prediction had come 'true'.<sup>14</sup>

## The Incident: The Unofficial Record

The *Yubu qinghua* 玉宇清華 written by Wenying 文穎 in 1078 contains an interesting detail concerning the army astronomer Miao Xun whom we have encountered in the *Songsbi* account:

Miao Xun served the Zhou as an official in the palace army and he studied astronomy under Wang Chuna 王欽. When he was about to follow Taizu on the northern campaign, Chuna instructed Xun: „At the beginning of the *gengshen* year (960) the sun will approach the *kangsu* 亢宿-constellation. This constellation is extraordinary and of a resolute character, and its [associated] animal therefore is the dragon. I am afraid that he will compete with the sun. Should that really be the case, then it will be the when a [new] emperor will appear [on earth].“<sup>15</sup>

At the start of the *gengshen* year there appeared another sun above the sun. Everybody thought that their eyes deceived them and they used oil basins to have a look [at the reflections of the suns on the surface of the oil], but surely there were two suns together in the sky. That was the time when Taizu rose to the position of emperor at Chenqiao.<sup>16</sup>

In this entry we learn that Miao Xun was a disciple of Wang Chuna (915–982) who told him of the consequences of the ominous stellar constellation of the new year. The heavenly

portent is not believed by the people who are trying to understand it as a hallucination but are otherwise convinced through closer inspection. It appears again logical from Wang's prediction that the usurpation of the throne was unavoidable.

Note that here the additional sun appears above the regular one, which in terms of hierarchy makes more sense than in the other accounts. In a very real sense the additional sun is superseding the old one as the new emperor is going to supersede the old one.

The choice of Wang Chuna as the agent of interpretation is similarly 'convincing' as he served the Later Zhou as astronomer and was later to prepare the new calendar of the Song, the *Yingtian li* 应天历, work on which he completed in 964.<sup>17</sup>

A few chapters later in his book, Wenying is treating the Southern Tang and their dealings with the Later Zhou. Han Xizai 韩熙载 (902–970), a northern scholar working at the southern court, was sent to Kaifeng to transmit the congratulations of the Southern Tang emperor Yuanzong 元宗 (r. 943–961) to Shizong on the occasion of his succession to the throne. When Han returned to Jinling (modern day Nanjing) Yuanzong wanted naturally to know about Shizong who would be his potential adversary in the years to come. Han merely shrugged off Shizong, whom he does not concede a long lifespan, but instead is full of praise for Taizu, whom he describes as majestic, charismatic, extraordinary, and energetic.<sup>18</sup>

Han Xizai again is a suitable choice as an eyewitness since he had a record of predicting developments that would eventually come true. While the anecdote here merely gives more evidence of Han Xizai's keen perception, it also shows us how Wenying is trying to introduce Taizu as a truly remarkable person.

However apart from his performance during the audience in which Han saw him, and his impressive physical appearance, we get no further information relating to his qualities. No wonder then also, that Yuanzong did not understand Han's statement, when Taizu came to power six years later.

Sima Guang 司马光 (1019–1086) starts his *Sushui jiwen* 水镜, a collection of miscellaneous notes, with yet another description of the founding of the Song. His monumental chronological history of China, *Zizhi tongjian* 资治通鉴 (1084), ends in 959. Thus he avoided having to deal with the event that sparked the founding of the Song. In the *Sushui jiwen* Sima Guang writes:

On the first day, a *xinchou* day, of the first month of the first year of [the reign title] Jianlong<sup>19</sup> (31.1.960), a memorial from Zhending reported that the Qidan had joined forces with the Northern Han to invade [our territory]. At the time Taizu served as military governor of Guide commandery and supreme commander of the palace corps. He received an order from emperor Gongdi of the Zhou to lead the guards and the metropolitan army to fight off the enemy. On the *guimao* day (2.2.960) the army left the capital and set up night camp at Chenqiao post station. Its officers secretly conspired saying: „The ruler is young and weak and not yet able to personally lead the government. We have been

dispatched now to resolutely eliminate the bandits for the state. Who is consequently going to acknowledge this? It is better to first establish the supreme commander as emperor. Afterwards it still will be not too late for the northern campaign.“

On the *jiazhen* (3.2.960) day the officers wearing their armor and holding their weapons gathered at the gates of the station. They produced a lot of noise and suddenly they entered the station, where Taizu had not yet risen. Taizong was at that time chief manager of the palace ushers and servitors and he entered [his brother's room] to explain [the situation]. Taizu rose startled and went out. When they saw him all officers who were standing around in the court with their arms ready said: „The army has no ruler and we wish to make the defender-in-chief emperor.“ Taizu had not yet answered when someone put a yellow robe around him. They crowd in the court fell to their knees and shouted loudly: „Ten thousand years!“ This could be heard for several miles. Taizu firmly rejected this but the crowd did not listen and forced Taizu on his horse, to lead them back south [towards the capital].<sup>20</sup>

In its factuality the text is reminiscent of the Old History of the Five Dynasties. Taizu is here seen „firmly rejecting“ the honour that is offered him by his officers, but yet again he is unable to escape his appointment. No heavenly signs are used in this version of the event to predict Taizu's usurpation, but in a later entry, we are told by Sima Guang, that when the army was about to leave the capital, „loud words were heard that on the day the army would take to the field the palace corps commander should be made emperor“.<sup>21</sup> The event is not one that just occurred by chance or was supported by Heaven but was man-made and planned. Interestingly Sima Guang notes that no one at the Later Zhou imperial court noticed anything about what was going in the army.

It is here that Taizong makes his appearance as the messenger of the developments outside the post station. It is though not because of his relation to Taizu that he enters but on account of the official post that he holds, that gives him access to his brother's room.

The most detailed version of the event in early February 960 is found in the *Xu zizhi tongjian changbian* ———v—q———s by Li Tao ———v (1115–1184), who finished this work in 1183. He starts his book where Sima Guang had ended his *Zizhi tongjian*, that is with the year 960:

On the *guimao* day (2.2.960) a huge army left [the capital] by the Aijing-Gate (*Aijingmen* —R———)<sup>22</sup> in discipline and great solemnity. The minds of all were only slightly at peace. The colonel Miao Xun from Hezhong was skilled in astronomy and he saw that beneath the sun there was another sun. A dark glow emanated from there that covered the sky for a long time. He pointed that out to a personal servant of Taizu named Chu Zhaofu from Songcheng, saying: „This is the will of Heaven.“ After reaching Chenqiao post station that evening all the



officers came together and conspired. They said: „The ruler is young and weak and cannot lead the government himself. If we are now with all our might crushing the enemy for the state who is consequently to acknowledge this? It is better to first make the palace corps commander emperor. Afterwards it will still be not be too late to go on the northern campaign.“

The chief lackey Li Chuyun 李楚云 from Shangdang went to tell Taizu's younger brother [Zhao] Kuangyi about this matter. Kuangyi then served as chief manager of the palace ushers and servitors. Together with Chuyun he went to see the secretary of the military commissioner of Guide, Zhao Pu 趙普 (922–992)<sup>23</sup>, who was from Ji 冀. They had not finished talking when suddenly the generals entered and shouted and talked confusedly. Both Kuangyi and Pu in order to bring the situation under control explained to them the wrong and the right of the matter. They said: „The defender-in-chief is absolutely loyal and he will most certainly not forgive you.“ The generals looked at each other and they withdrew a little to gather again with drawn swords and talked loudly: „For some accidental words uttered in the army we came together but now have already settled the discussion. If the defender-in-chief does not follow [our decision] then we will peacefully retire and accept punishment.“ Pu after having checked the situation and finding that he could not remove them [from the post station] together with Kuangyi proclaimed loudly: „An usurpation is a big matter. In the first place it needs thorough planning. How do you achieve an advantage by recklessly rebelling?“ Thereupon everybody sat down to hear [Pu's] orders. Pu addressed them again: „The foreign bandits are violating our territory. Is no one going to do something about it? First let us expel the enemies and return [to the capital], and then discuss this.“ The generals not agreeing replied: „At present the government is handled by many hands. If we wait for the withdrawal of the bandits and the return of the army, then it won't be possible to realize a change of the existing situation. But if we speedily enter the capital and install the defender-in-chief [as emperor] he can lead us in all dignity, and destroying the enemy will not be difficult. If, however, the defender-in-chief does not accept our plan, then it will be difficult, with all certainty, to make the six armies advance.“ Pu turned to Kuangyi and said: „Now, that the matter has come to a point where it can no longer be changed, the [present] government must be confined soon.“ Consequently he told the generals: „Even though it is said, that in the installation of a new king and the establishment of a new dynasty the mandate of heaven realizes itself, they must be tied to the hearts of the people as well. The advance troops have already yesterday crossed the [Yellow] River, and every military governor have taken command in their respective regions and the capital. If we start a rebellion it will not only affect the foreign bandits unpredictably but much more so all quarters [of our country]. If we can send the troops a serious imperial order not to command any robbery and plunder, the minds of the people in our capital will not be agitated, and consequently all quarters will be accordingly peaceful and quiet. You, the generals, will also be able to secure wealth and rank for eternity.“

Everyone agreed to that. Thereupon, in that time of the night, Guo Yanyun 郭彦云, a soldier of the guard, rode to inform Shi Shouxin 石守信 (928-984) from Junyi, the commander-in-chief of the palace guards, and Wang Shenqi 王审琦 (925-974) from Luoyang, the inspector-in-chief of the palace guards. Both Shouxin and Shenqi adhered closely to Taizu.

The officers stood around the station waiting for the dawn. Taizu slept a drunken sleep and at first did not wake up. When the *jiazhen* day dawned, loud shouting arose from the four sides and a noise that made the plains tremble. Pu and Kuangyi entered to explain the situation to Taizu when the generals in armor and with weapons in hand knocked in the gate and rushed in saying: „Your generals are without a ruler and we want to make you, the defender-in-chief, emperor.“ Taizu rose startled and put on his clothes. He had hardly replied, when they pushed him outside to hear about the matter. Someone put a yellow robe on Taizu’s body and then they knelt in the courtyard and yelled: „Ten thousand years!“ Taizu resisted them firmly but the crowd did not accept this. Consequently all of them forced Taizu on a horse and compelled him to proceed southwards.<sup>24</sup>

This text is introducing information that gives the names of some of the main actors in the revolt, namely Taizong, Zhao Pu, Shi Shouxin and Wang Shenqi. Taizong and Zhao Pu were close to Taizu, while Shi and Wang had staid behind in the capital with some of the palace guards and thus in control of the imperial court. As the text says, they were supporters of Taizu, but they were also his subordinates.

The discussion between Zhao Pu and the officers depicts the degree of determination on the side of the officers. Once especially Zhao Pu has understood this, he turns to give constructive advise how to proceed further in the matter. The alternative to this would have been chaos that had to be avoided by all means. Luckily for him, Taizu was asleep throughout the proceedings since he had drunk too much. When he is finally awake nothing new happens in this version of the story. He is wrapped in the imperial yellow, his refusal is not accepted, and he is made to lead the army towards the capital. The drunkenness introduced in this story is a good explanation of why he did not wake up while all the noise was going on outside his room. On the other hand, he must have really been drunk.

The *Dongdu shiliie* compiled by Wang Cheng, was completed in 1186. Quite a few of its biographies have been incorporated almost unchanged into the *Songsbi*. Finished only three years after the *Xu Zizhi tongjian changbian*, it features an abridged and less detailed account:

On the first day, a *xinchou* day, of the first month in the spring of the seventh year [under the reign title Xiande] (31.1.960) a mounted courier from Zhending reported to the throne that Liu Chengjun 刘承俊 from Taiyuan<sup>25</sup> had allied with the Qidan and invaded [our] territory. Thereupon Taizu was ordered to lead a big army on a northern campaign. On the *guimao* day the army left the capital and the palace attendant Zan Jurun 詹巨 run was dispatched to [prepare]

a farewell in the suburbs. In the capital at that time a rumor was often heard: „It is planned to make the supreme commander emperor.“ When Chenqiao post station was reached pushing [Taizu to the throne] was widely discussed in the army. During the first night watch (7–9 p.m.) the officers gathered at the station gate and when suddenly the battalions [of the guard] had formed, they said: „We face a ten thousand fold death, rushing forward with bare blades to kill the enemy for the state. The emperor is a child and it is better to make the supreme commander emperor and afterwards go on the northern campaign.“ At this time Taizu who had been urged to drink parting cups until he was drunk, slept in his room and was not aware of what was going on outside. At daybreak the officers, with bows ready and blades drawn, made straight for the door. Knocking at it and entering they came face to face with [Taizu] and helped him up. When Taizu came outside to hear about the matter, he was put into a yellow robe. All the battalions knelt before him and said: „The army is without a ruler and we want the supreme commander as emperor.“ Then they shouted: „Ten thousand years!“ and this could be heard for several dozens of miles. Taizu scolded them but they would not retire, but instead forced him on his horse to lead them back south.<sup>26</sup>

In this account the heavenly omen is omitted, as well as the rumors in the capital, but it gives more details on the reason why Taizu was dead drunk. The intensity of the shouting of his men emphasizes their dedication to the new emperor though it fails to make the earth tremble like in Li Tao's book. By now the yellow robe is accepted as an integral component of the whole story, which finds its way even into the official *Songsbi* account. For both Li Tao and Wang Cheng drunkenness was a legitimate reason to sleep, but this was not accepted into the official history of the Song.

## Conclusion

The Chenqiao revolt was the beginning of the return to the normal state of affairs that is a united Chinese empire on Chinese territory, which was through several dynasties to exist until 1911. It also featured in its aftermath the dismantling of the power of the very people that had initiated it, the military officials and officers who had been instrumental in the successful usurpation of imperial power. Taizu was well aware that in order to prevent his dynasty from increasing the number of northern dynasties pretending to rule all of China, but achieving nothing, he had to drastically diminish the power of military governors and the military. Thus he implemented a policy in which civil officials supervised military officials, which in the long run resulted in the Song dynasty creating a civil bureaucratic state.

The only outward sign to people in the south of China for instance was the adoption of new reign titles and a new calendar by the Song, but this may have failed to convince them completely of the ambition and competence of Zhao Kuangyin. Fortunately for him, he possessed

the military means to support his claim. Until his death under dubious circumstances (murdered by his younger brother?) in early 976 he had managed to bring most of the autonomous parts of the empire back under one rule. Taizong continued Taizu's enterprise by establishing a court that engaged, apart from the running of the empire, also in the re-creation and re-invention of the cultural and literary traditions of China with the cooperation of scholars from all over the empire.

We have seen that the description of the event ranges from short factual accounts to very detailed stories with lot of additional information that was only provided more than hundred years after the event. This raises the question why? The answer may lie in the distance of the historian to the event that made it possible for Wenying and Sima Guang to introduce the heavenly omen as a harbinger of imminent dynastic change.

Li Tao and Wang Cheng writing after the Song had lost the northern part of their empire to the Jin — (1115–1234) and the restoration of the Song in the south, were even less hampered in their approach to the event which is evident in their depicting the alcoholism of the founder of the Northern Song.

The event thus developed historiographically over time but always had to be defended as an act involving an unwilling and involuntary new emperor who only bowed to the power of the circumstances. With that the event lost the taste of a usurpation that had been long in the planning and probably was known to Taizu.

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> See Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, „The Event and the Long Term in Social History: the Case of the Chouan Uprising“, in *The Territory of the Historian* (Brighton: The Harvester Press, 1979), p. 114.

<sup>2</sup> The most well known case in the west is probably that of the child emperor Puyi, last ‘ruler’ of the Qing dynasty.

<sup>3</sup> For depictions and analyses of the political significance of the Chenqiao incident see Waltraud Weiers, „Die Revolte in Chen-Qiao: Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der Gründung der Song-Dynastie im Jahr 960 n.Chr.“, Diss. (Bonn, 1970); Peter Lorge, „The Entry and Exit of Song Founders“, *Journal of Sung-Yuan Studies* 29 (1999):43-62; Frederick W. Mote, *Imperial China 900-1800* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000), pp. 95-98.

<sup>4</sup> *Jiu Wudai shi* 九代史, comp. by Xue Juzheng 薛居正 et al. (Taipei: Hongshi chubanshe, 1977), 120.1596-97.

<sup>5</sup> *Xin Wudaishi*, comp. by Ouyang Xiu (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974/1992), 12.125.

<sup>6</sup> When the Later Han was terminated by the Later Zhou dynasty in 951, remnants of the court escaped to the north where a member of the imperial family of the Later Han established the empire of the Northern Han. This state was to survive until 979 when the Song destroyed it.

<sup>7</sup> Chu Zhaofu (911-979) has a biography in *Songsbi* 257.8959-8960 that does not mention his role in the Chenqiao incident. Apparently however he must have been the one who reported it, since Miao Xun did not meet Taizu to tell him about the omen. The *Songsbi* biography is based on Miao's biography in *Dongdu shilüe* 一F一, comp. by Wang Cheng 一W (?-ca. 1200) (Taipei: Wenhai chubanshe, 1979), 25.425-426.

<sup>8</sup> The description suggests a solar eclipse. I have had no access to more information concerning solar eclipses in China.

<sup>9</sup> Official titles have been translated according to Charles O. Hucker, *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985). Taizu had been promoted to the post of supreme commander of the palace corps in 955.

<sup>10</sup> Zhao Kuangyi 一J一q (r. 976-997), younger brother of Zhao Kuangyin, was to become the second emperor of the Song after his brothers death. He is referred to here, as in other texts, by his posthumous imperial title.

<sup>11</sup> When the last Zhou emperor Gongdi 一V (Chai Zongxun 一v一, r. 959-960) ascended the throne Zhao Kuangyin was appointed military governor of Guide commandery and defender-in-chief, one of the three highest ranks in the court bureaucracy.

<sup>12</sup> SS 1.3-4.

<sup>13</sup> *Songsbi* 1.3.

<sup>14</sup> See *Songsbi* 461.13499.

<sup>15</sup> This is referring to the *Yijing* 一g. See *Zhouyi zhengyi* 一P一q 1.2 in *Shisanjing zhushu* 一Q一T一g一, rev. by Ruan Yuan 一 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1980).

<sup>16</sup> *Yubu qinghua*, comp. by Wenying, in *Xiangshan yelu* 一s一, *xulu* 一, *Yubu qinghua* 一M一 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1984), 1.6.

<sup>17</sup> See his biography in *Songsbi* 461.13497-98. This calendar was found to be faulty during the reign of Taizong and Miao Xun's son Shouxin 一u一H (955-1000) was ordered to create a new which upon completion was titled *Qianyuan li* 一. See *Songsbi* 461.13499.

<sup>18</sup> *Yubu qinghua* 9.93.

<sup>19</sup> Sima Guang uses the reign title Jianlong (960-962) of the Song dynasty that was given the period as soon as the calendar of the Song had been established. At the time however the actual reign title was still that of the Later Zhou, namely Xiande (954-959).

<sup>20</sup> Sima Guang, *Sushui jiwen* (Xuehai leibian), 1.1a-b.

<sup>21</sup> *Sushui jiwen* 1.3b.

<sup>22</sup> I have not been able to locate this gate but as Chenqiao is situated the north of Kaifeng it was very probably one of the northern gates of the city. Under the Song the northeastern gate of the city-wall was called Chenqiao gate (*Chenqiaomen* 一). See the map in Heng Chye Kiang, *Cities of Aristocrats and Bureaucrats: The Development of Medieval Chinese Cityscapes* (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 1999), p. 118.

<sup>23</sup> Ji is a place east of modern day Beijing. Zhao Pu rose under the Song to the position of grand councillor.

<sup>24</sup> *Xu Zizhi tongjian changbian*, comp. by Li Tao (Taipei: Shijie shuju, 1983), 1.1-2b. This account has been copied in its entirety into the *Taiping zhiji tonglei* 一v一 by Peng Baichuan 一^一t (early 13th cent.) (Yangzhou: Jiangsu Guangling guji keyinshe, 1990), 1.2b-3a.

<sup>25</sup> Liu Chengjun or Liu Jun 一B一v was the second emperor of the Northern Han (r. 954-968).

<sup>26</sup> *Dongdu shilüe* 1.71-72.



# The Fall of the Kaifeng in 1127 and Censorship in *Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu* versions of the Annals

by Hans van Ess, München

"In all writings by authors of the Sung dealing with the Liao, Kin, and Yüan, and by authors of the Ming dealing with the Yüan, - wherever in these chronicles terms used for the enemy's country are perverse – these should be deliberated upon and changed to words that are correct. Discussions which are extremely partisan and false should be labelled and destroyed."1

This statement was made in or shortly after 1778 as one out of a big number of inquisitionary items drafted by the commission responsible for the compilation of the biggest collection of Chinese writings, the *Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu*. Although it is well-known that *Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu* versions often are of bad quality and that they should be quoted only after having been checked against other editions, there is a current in Sung studies which praises the Siku editors for having made use of the Ming encyclopedia *Yung-lo ta-tien* and for having thereby saved a great many of texts from falling into oblivion or from vanishing altogether. For example, in a recent article Charles Hartman states that only by making use of texts which were preserved in the *Yung-lo ta-tien* can we get a clear picture of the events which took place during the thirty years after the fall of the Northern Sung capital K'ai-feng in 1127. Traditional sources such as the standard history of the Sung bear the stamp of judgements made by the Neo-Confucian thinker Chu Hsi and are prejudiced against the peace-faction at court which was led by the infamous regent Ch'in Kuei (d. 1155). In Hartman's words:

Save for the indiscriminate appetite of the *Yung-lo ta-tien* compilers and the keen eye for scholarly value of the *Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu* editors, neither Li T'ao's *Long Draft* (the Hsü- Tzu-chih t'ung-chien ch'ang-pien; HvE) nor Li Hsin-ch'uan's *Chronological Record* (the *Chien-yen i-lai hsi-nien yao-lu*; HvE) our best sources for the history of the Northern and Southern Sung respectively, would have survived to modern times.2

Two contradictory opinions on the value of texts contained in the *Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu* are at stake, and this is the issue which this paper is concerned with.

For the Sung and many of their subjects the invasion of the Jurchen and the fall of K'ai-feng was a catastrophe of almost unprecedented dimensions. Although China had been divided for more than fifty years between 907 and 960, this event could only be compared to the division of China in the fourth century A.D., a time which was far beyond the historical memory of the ordinary citizen of the twelfth century. For the first time since ages "barbarians" had conquered the whole central plain, a territory which already at that time was identified as being the cradle of the culture of China. This event was dealt with in numerous literary works. Because of the prominence accorded to commentaries on the canonical scriptures, these were probably the most appropriate texts where a digestion with wide dissemination could take place.

Naturally, the most historical one among the canonical scriptures, the Ch'un-ch'iu, was ideal for discussions on the barbarians and on the mistakes of a Chinese government. It can be no surprise, therefore, that a great number of commentaries on the Ch'un-ch'iu were produced after 1127. Among them there were two important texts written by members of the "tao-hsüeh" movement which was to culminate in the person of Chu Hsi at the end of the twelfth century: The commentary of Hu An-kuo submitted at court in 1136 and the one of Kao K'ang, probably completed around 1143 or 44.3 About 15 percent of the entries contained in the commentary of Hu An-kuo deal in one way or another with the subject of the barbarians, far more than in the first three commentaries Tso-chuan, Kung-yang and Ku-liang, and, of course, in the main text for which the subject of the barbarians – i or ti – is only a minor issue.

The *Ch'un-ch'iu* commentary of Hu An-kuo was to become the standard commentary which candidates at the palace examinations of the Ming had to know. It lost in importance only under the Manchurian Ch'ing who disliked its strong anti-barbarian language which they understood as being directed against themselves - as is well-known, the Jurchen and the Manchu were closely related, Manchu is a variant of the Jurchen language. Because of the importance which this commentary once had, we are fortunate to possess several different block-printings dating back to the Sung period. Despite its contents different editions have also been included into the *Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu*: Altogether there are three different editions extant in the Wen-yüan ko edition of this collection, namely the commentary itself, a version with a subcommentary by the Ming scholar Wang K'o-k'uan, and finally the edition *Ch'un-ch'iu ta-ch'üan* by another Ming scholar, namely Hu Kuang who basically copied the Wang K'o-k'uan edition. Interestingly, there is also a version in the *Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu hui-yao* which contains a best-of selection of the most important texts and which was compiled for the exclusive use of the Ch'ien-lung emperor.

A comparison of the different *Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu* editions with the Sung editions reveals an interesting picture: All four *Ssu-k'u* texts have been severely censured but no edition in all cases in the same way as another edition. Whereas the *Ch'un-ch'iu ta-ch'üan* edition, with



eleven entries that were cut out altogether and several changed to a degree that it is almost impossible to recognize Hu An-kuo's meaning, seems to be the worst one at first sight and the Ch'ien-lung text of the *hui-yao* the one that was least of all affected, there are also cases where the picture is exactly the other way round. Although it is quite interesting to look into the motives which might have guided the *Ssu-k'u team* when they made these different editions, this is not the place to discuss these issues. Instead we should have a look at the second commentary mentioned a minute ago.

For some reasons Kao K'ang's commentary, which bears the title "Ch'un-ch'iu chi-chu", has not enjoyed the same popularity as the one of Hu An-kuo although both commentaries heavily drew on the opinions of Ch'eng I. As Hu An-kuo quoted the opinions of earlier Chunqiu scholars extensively without mentioning their name, so Kao K'ang made use of Hu An-kuo's commentary without referring directly to him. The sons of Hu An-kuo disliked Kao K'ang because they saw in him a traitor who collaborated with Ch'in Kuei who just had made peace with the Jurchen and who had "sold" the North of China. But that Kao K'ang tried to compete with Hu An-kuo on the field of Ch'un-ch'iu exegesis may have been a reason for their hatred, too. Although this argument is not made in Sung sources themselves, it is quite clear that the Kao commentary is much more conciliatory than the one of Hu An-kuo. It does contain a lot of criticism and strong language against the barbarians as well. Yet, as is also the case in a Yüan dynasty commentary, the Ch'un-ch'iu pen-i by Ch'eng Tuan-hsüeh, this criticism can usually be turned against the Sung themselves. According to this argumentation, the barbarians could only become as strong as they were because the Sung had been so corrupted. They were not worse than the real culprits who had been subjects of the Sung.

As far as the transmission of the Kao-commentary is concerned, we face the opposite situation of the one we have in the case of Hu An-kuo: Would the text not have been included into the *Yung-lo ta-tien* and afterwards copied into the *Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu*, it would have been lost. Thanks to the *Ssu-k'u* editors today we can compare Kao's ideas with those of Hu An-kuo. There is, however, one strange exception. Two parts of the text, namely the second half of the 14th year and the years 15 to 33 of Duke Hsi and parts of year 16 and the years 17 to 31 of Duke Hsiang of Lu were, as a small note by the editors says, missing. Only small parts of the gaps have been filled by using the commentary of Ch'eng Tuan-hsüeh who quoted Kao K'ang. It is interesting to note that in the 13th year of Duke Hsi, a year before the text is missing from the Kao K'ang commentary we can read the following entry in the Ch'un-ch'iu: "In the thirteenth year, in spring, the Ti invaded Wei." Hu An-kuo commented:

When Duke Huan of Ch'i organized the meeting of Yang-ku, he gave a drinking party at this occasion. His demeanor was bad. Men of Ch'u attacked Huang, but he did not send for troops to help [huan]. Thus he became negligent of his duties which he had written down in his treaty. He became lazy. At this moment the Ti-barbarians began to ogle at the Middle States. This year they invaded Wei, next year they invaded Cheng, and thus they came close to the Chou-capital. The I of the Huai-river came as well and caused problems in Chi without

encountering any difficulties. Po-i gave this warning to Shun: "Do not be lazy, do not be negligent, then the Four Barbarians will come to court." (Ta Yü mo). This means that there can be no pause in being sincere...

When the power of the great hegemon Huan of Ch'i declined the barbarians began to "ogle" the Middle States. Kao K'ang comments in a shorter way:

The Ti once destroyed [the capital] of Wei. Wei had shifted its capital to Ch'u-ch'iu. Now they invaded that place, too... Since Ch'u had attacked Huang without that anybody had helped [Huang], they Ti knew what they had to expect from the Middle States. By looking at the strength of the Ti we can discern the weakness of the Feudal lords. (16/2b).

Although this entry is much shorter than the one of Hu An-kuo, both texts see the invasion of that year as an event of particular importance. This is the point which these commentaries identify as the year when the Ti realized how weak the Middle States actually were. It is interesting to note that none of the old commentaries is interested in this event. But indeed, in them we do not find many entries dealing with the barbarians before that date neither.

The term "I and Ti" barbarians is the most important label used for strong language against the barbarians in the Sung, especially in the language of Hu An-kuo, and the Manchu did not like this term.<sup>4</sup> The word does not occur in the Ch'un-ch'iu and not in the Tso-chuan. It is, however, used by Kung-yang and Ku-liang in 17 resp. 20 entries. The dissemination of these entries among the whole texts looks as follows:

	Kung-yang	Ku-liang
Yin	1	-
Huan	1	-
Chuang	1	-
Min	-	-
Hsi	4	2
Wen	1	1
Hsüan	1	3
Ch'eng	1	2
Hsiang	2	5
Chao	2	4
Ting	2	2
Ai	1	1

There is a clear picture as far as the Kung-yang is concerned: Duke Hsi is the ruler of Lu at whose times the commentary speaks most about the I and the ti. In Ku-liang Duke Hsiang and Chao are especially important. As a coincidence we find the two dukes, in the case of which the Kao commentary is incomplete, among the three having most I and Ti entries in Kung-yang and Ku-liang. This can, however, just be a coincidence: Only 3 of the 4 Kung-yang entries fall into the missing part, and only one out of five Ku-liang entries for duke Hsiang belongs to this part.

Thus, the result is surprising but not significant. Nevertheless, when I discovered this, I thought that there might be more to it, and I started to do more detailed research on the Hu-commentary. This commentary contains altogether 718 entries. There are much less entries per year for the last four dukes, including duke Hsiang, than for the earlier dukes. For example, there are 6,1 entries per year on average during the eleven years of Duke Yin, the first ruler of Lu, but only 1,8 entries per year for Duke Hsiang. The average for Duke Hsi is 3,27 entries per year. The following list shows the entries in which Hu An-kuo's Ch'un-ch'iu commentary talks about "barbarians":

	Year
Yin	2 (2x), 3, 9
Huan	1, 2 (4x), 5, 15
Chuang	5, 23, 27, 28, 30, 31
Min	1
Hsi	1 (3x), 2, 7, 11, 12, 13, 18 (2x), 19, 21 (2x), 23 (2x), 24, 25, 26 (3x), 27, 28, (2x), 29, 31, 32, 33
Wen	8, 9 (2x), 10 (2x), 14, 15
Hsüan	1 (2x), 3, 8, 9, 11 (2x), 12, 14, 15 (3x), 16, 18
Ch'eng	1, 2 (2x), 3 (2x), 4, 6, 7 (2x), 9, 13, 15
Hsiang	1, 7 (2x), 18, 20, 21, 23, 27, 29 (2x), 30
Chao	4, 5, 7, 11, 12, 13 (3x), 16, 17, 22, 32
Ting	4, 10
Ai	4, 10 (2x), 13

It is obvious that the second half of the time of Duke Hsi is the time with the most entries on barbarians in this text. However, the case is not as clear concerning Duke Hsiang. We have to calculate how many "barbarian"-entries there are in relation to the total sum of entries:

	Total	Barbarians	%
Yin:	67	4	ca. 6%
Huan:	72	7	ca. 10%
Chuang:	109	6	ca. 5,5%
Min:	11	1	ca. 9%
Hsi:	108	27	ca. 25%
year 15-33	64	19	ca: 30%
Wen:	73	7	ca. 10%
Hsüan:	97	14	ca. 14%
year 8-16	56	10	ca. 17%
Ch'eng:	61	12	ca. 20%
year 1-9	53	10	ca. 25%
Hsiang:	56	11	ca. 20%
year 16-32	29	8	ca. 27%
Chao:	82	12	ca. 14%
year 11-17	23	7	ca. 30%
Ting:	32	2	ca: 6%
Ai:	23	4	ca. 17%

There is a rather high number of entries on barbarians during the time of Duke Hsüan. However, they are not as visible as those at the time of Dukes Hsi and Hsiang because there is also a comparably high absolute number of entries. It is clear that the two periods that were allegedly missing in the *Yung-lo ta-tien* edition of Kao K'ang's commentary belong to the four periods with the highest ratio of "barbarian"-entries in Hu An-kuo's commentary. The high ratio during seven years of the reign of Duke Chao are not to be taken too seriously: Actually we find most of these entries only in three years, namely in the years 11-13. Thus, there remain only the years 1 to 9 of Duke Ch'eng, a span of time which is shorter than the long "barbarian" sections of Duke Hsi and Hsiang. Here, Kao's commentary is rather tame.

It should have become clear by now that these calculations should lead us to the conclusion that those parts of the Kao K'ang commentary which according to the *Ssu-k'u* compilers strangely were not extant when they found the manuscript in the *Yung-lo ta-tien* were in reality probably still there. They are not missing by coincident but because they must have contained what the Manchu considered to be insulting language. It was easy for the *Ssu-k'u* team to exert this kind of censorship: According to research of the 20th century for about two centuries almost nobody had had access to the *Yung-lo ta-tien* before the *Ssu-k'u* editors used it, and even then the access to this encyclopedia was handled in an extremely restrictive way. Of course, they could have cut out more of the text. But then they would probably have

destroyed too much of it. They were happy to have found a commentary written by a Neo-Confucian author who was less aggressive than Hu An-kuo, and therefore they copied as much of it as they could from the *Yung-lo ta-tien* into their own compilation.

Although the texts which have been compiled for the *Ssu-k'ü ch'üan-shu* on the basis of the *Yung-lo ta-tien* are, of course, of tremendous value for anyone interested in the history of the Sung, we have to be extremely careful when using them. Not only the Kao K'ang commentary to the Ch'un-ch'iu is an example for this. Charles Hartman has in his fine article shown how different the picture of Ch'in Kuei in the *Chien-yen i-lai hsi-nien yao-lu* is from the traditionally known one. We should be aware of the fact that the Manchu probably wanted their Chinese subjects to do exactly what Hartman has done: to revise their opinion on this "traitor" by carefully reading new textual evidence.<sup>5</sup> They did not only censure in a negative way, but they also aimed at establishing a textual basis for a new world-view which was more inclusive than the old one going back to the Sung or the Ming. The *Ssu-k'ü ch'üan-shu* project was an attempt at building a nation composed not only of Chinese but also of other people living in the realm governed by the Ch'ing.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Luther Carrington Goodrich, *The Literary Inquisition of Ch'ien-Lung*, New York 1935 u. 1966, S. 218, Zitat aus den Anweisungen für die Inquisition, niedergelegt von der Ssu-k'ü Kommission (nach 1778). Vgl. eine ganz ähnliche Aussage aus einem im einleitenden Kapitel des Ssu-k'ü ch'üan-shu tsung-mu enthaltenen Edikts (Peking 1965 u. 1987, S. 4B), zitiert bei Goodrich S. 144-147, sowie Goodrichs eigene Paraphrase auf den Seiten 44-53.

<sup>2</sup> Charles Hartman, "The Making of a Villain: Ch'in Kuei and Tao-hsüeh", *HJAS* 58 (1998), p. 59-145, p. 145.

<sup>3</sup> This date is probable because of some passages contained in *Chien-yen i-lai hsi-nien yao-lu*. While Kao K'ang was a very influential official at court during the time between 1142 and 1144 officials demanded that new commentaries on the classics should supersede the old subcommentaries dating back to the T'ang period. They also wanted to settle the dispute between adherents of the two main currents, namely Wang An-shih and Ch'eng learning. As Kao K'ang seems to have been the driving force behind these new measures it seems more than plausible that his commentary was the one that should become standard as far as the Chunqiu was concerned. The commentary of Hu An-kuo was at this time already identified as the commentary of the adherents of Ch'eng learning.

<sup>4</sup> This is the reason why this word was censored in most (but not all) editions of the Hu-commentary in the *Ssu-k'ü ch'üan-shu*. It was apparently not censored in the case of Kao's commentary - probably because this work did not enjoy the same degree of popularity.

<sup>5</sup> The famous neoconfucian text *Chih-yen* of Hu Hung is, of course, also a case in point. There does exist a copy of this text which was recompiled by the *Ssu-k'ü* editors on the basis of the *Yung-lo ta-tien* and which is different from the traditionally received text. It does not contain chapter headings

starting with a chapter titled "Mandate of Heaven" (T'ien-ming) and ending with one on the "Central Plain" (chung-yüan). These headings could easily be misread as a program for the reconquest of Northern China, and it does not come as a big surprise that they are not included in the *Ssu-k'u* edition.

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# The North-China Famine of 1876–1879

## Performance and Impact of a Non-Event

by Andrea Janku, Heidelberg

A protracted drought was the most immediate cause of the "Great Famine" that brought havoc to large parts of North China in the late 1870s. According to contemporary official estimates it cost about ten million people's lives and thus was the worst famine the country ever had experienced to that date.<sup>1</sup> It is perhaps due to Paul Cohen's suggestion that a drought is basically characterized by the absence of rain, and therefore could be considered a non-event,<sup>2</sup> that I was tempted to use this term in the title of this paper. Actually, as a cursory reading of the *Shenbao*, Shanghai's most important Chinese-language newspaper at the time, shows, the famine was THE event of those years, figuring very prominently in almost every single issue of that paper, with countless articles about famine conditions, famine relief measures and future preventive policies being printed. Nevertheless, the famine was generally not considered an important historical event in the modern historiography of China. A check of the index of the two late-Qing volumes of the *Cambridge History of China* did not reveal a single reference to the Great Famine, and although the monumental *General History of the Qing Dynasty* by Xiao Yishan does shortly mention the "Great Famine in Shanxi" in the chronology of events, it does not receive any treatment in the main body of the historical account.<sup>3</sup>

If we then go back again to the times of the event itself, we find an immediate concern about the memory of the famine expressed in the compilation of an updated edition of the official chronicle of Shanxi province, the province hit most severely by the calamity, ordered by the governor Zeng Guoquan two years after the end of the famine. The preface states that the project was motivated by the fear that "after this great evil there would be no evidence in the documents" (*da jin zhi hou, kong wenxian wu zheng*).<sup>4</sup> Here not only the fear that the famine could fall into historical oblivion finds an explicit expression, but the detailed "Record of famine relief policies" ("Huangzheng ji") included in the new edition of the *Shanxi tongzhi*,

subsuming all aspects of the famine relief campaign under the all-embracing cover of governmental relief, also shows an implicit concern about the historiographical hegemony over the event.

In short, whereas the famine surely was an exceedingly hot event in the eyes of the contemporaries, the long-term historical impact of the event until recently does not seem to have been duly acknowledged or even recognized. Moreover, as we shall see, historical judgement on the event should turn out to be a rather ambivalent affair, a fact that also accounts for the tendency to ignore it in historiographical writing.

Given the fact that the frequent occurrence of all kinds of disasters leading to more or less severe subsistence crises was a persistent feature of the general condition of the country (with increasing severity since the early nineteenth century), what should be different with the famine of 1876-79? The *Shanxi tongzhi* account starts with the remark that relief efforts during the years 1877/78 were of a nature that "broke all established rules" (*po ge*). On the textual surface this statement points to the extraordinary broad geographical and timely scope of the disaster, that made necessary tax remissions over a period of three years and made parts of ten provinces to recipients of official relief aid.<sup>5</sup> But actually, there was much more to it than that. Two factors accounted for its difference: the use of the press and the international scope of relief efforts.

Initially, it was through Western missionaries, that the famine was widely publicized, first in the treaty port press in Tianjin and Shanghai, then in Hong Kong, Japan, London and the United States. Chinese elites in the new commercial centers south of the Yangtze river soon responded to the missionary relief efforts. Very quickly the famine had become an international and thus also a national event. As such, it is to be considered as one in a series of high temperature events, including the Sino-French war in 1884/5 and, most prominently, the Sino-Japanese war in 1894/5, that contributed to the fostering of a national sentiment in China.<sup>6</sup> Whereas famines continued to occur and the efficient organization of relief continued to be a major social issue, the Great Famine stood out among them in its catalyzing effect on the emergence of a modern Chinese nationalism. This was due to a subtle sense of competition between the different groups of agents (state/official, foreign/missionary, local/quasi-private) that characterized the campaign as a whole, and the imperialist attitude in guise of a civilizing mission which accompanied the foreign relief effort, putting the Chinese side – official as quasi-private agents alike – under severe stress and turning famine relief into an act of national self-assertion.

Whereas 1877/78 certainly was not the first time that non-official agencies were involved in the organization of famine relief in China, it certainly was the first time that a vigorous and broadly based public campaign was started in order to raise relief funds. Timothy Richard from the Baptist Missionary Society was the first to draw broader attention to the evolving



disaster. He and his colleagues agitated among foreign merchants and diplomats in order to solicit funds from the foreign communities in China and from their home countries, making extensive use of the press, in order to alert people to the seriousness of the situation.

First letters by Timothy Richard reporting on the consequences of a drought in Shandong, being the precursor of the major disaster to come, were published in the Shanghai English language press in the early summer of 1876.<sup>7</sup> He began to appeal to the foreign community in Shanghai when he felt that the dimension of the calamity by far exceeded the possibilities of the small foreign community in Chefoo. In March of the following year, Richard placed a request for famine subscriptions in the *Shenbao*.<sup>8</sup> In the same month, the Shantung Famine Relief Committee was established by members of the foreign community in Shanghai.<sup>9</sup> J.H. Ferguson, Consul General in Chefoo, appealed to the representatives of Western powers in China, South-East and East Asia for help. Communications from Roman Catholic priests and the Bishop of Shandong to the British consul in Chefoo were published in the *North China Herald*.<sup>10</sup>

After news spread in Qingzhou (Richard's missionary base in Shandong), that Shanxi was affected even worse, Richard set out from the prefectural city of Taiyuan to an investigation tour through the central and southern parts of that province – and returned with an account horrifying to the utmost. "To see and hear was painful in the extreme. I cannot write all." His "famine diary" told about starving people, reduced to creeping skeletons, streets covered with emaciated corpses, dragged around by dogs, and desperate people having lost any sense of propriety. It told about the severity of official's dealing with 'unruly' people, in a vain effort to maintain something like "public order" in an environment where trees were stripped off their bark, villages were deserted, and houses pulled down, with refugees everywhere, wandering around between heaps of dead bodies, eating cakes made from stones and millet husks ("it does not look bad, but tastes like what it is – dust") and the roots of rushes ("causing the face to swell"). Crime and murder prevailed among those still living, and Richard abstained from more than vaguely hinting at the signs of cannibalism that had not escaped his attention. He conveyed a vague idea of the desperately insufficient official relief efforts, that were concentrated in the cities, and generally just left the people in the mountain villages to perish altogether, while he presented himself as a most competent relief administrator, who had made his first experiences during the Shandong famine the year before and maintained good contacts with the higher officials of the province.<sup>11</sup> The "famine diary" was published in the English-language press in Shanghai and in London, and left an even deeper impression on the newspaper readers than the former accounts. Now it was acknowledged that the famine seemed to be much more severe than had been assumed previously, and increased efforts were made to raise more funds. The subscriptions to the China Famine Relief Fund (in Shanghai) amounted to 70,757.46 Taels by April, 35,000 of which were directly remitted from London, where a Relief Committee had been founded in February 1878. Other major sums were

coming from Hongkong, Foochow, Amoy, Yokohama and Tokyo, Kobe and Shanghai, minor sums from America and other Chinese cities, most of them treaty ports.<sup>12</sup>

This was immediately countered by Chinese relief activities. Facing the stirring activism within the Western community, Chinese gentry/merchants gathered in Shanghai and Suzhou to engage in private relief work. The methods used were similar in many ways, most importantly, both held high the principle of public accountability, implemented by the regular publication of accounts and reports on the relief work in the newspapers. There obviously was a division of labor, with Western relief work concentrating in Shanxi and the Chinese being active in Henan (it was said that people in Henan were particularly repugnant to foreigners). But surely there was an undercurrent sense of rivalry. The presence of Western relief in the Chinese press basically took the form of figures, that sometimes seemed to be printed in order to instigate even more funds from the Chinese side. Short news items of two to four lines on Western aid were matched by long and meticulous accounts of Chinese subscriptions, even listing single donations of less than one dollar. Reading the *Shenbao* one could easily get the impression, that famine relief consisted mainly of the Chinese relief bureaus established in Shanghai and Suzhou. These were either affiliated to semi-official self-strengthening enterprises, such as the China Merchants' Steam Navigation Co. and the Telegraph Office, or to gentry-organized halls of benevolence, most important of which were the Guoyutang, situated in the Chinese city of Shanghai, and two relief offices belonging to gentry-established benevolent halls in Suzhou. It was the latter group from which the reportedly fearless and selfless figures emerged, who could match the zeal of the missionary and set out for famine-stricken Henan to engage personally in the risky job to distribute relief.<sup>13</sup>

When the London campaign started early in 1878, certainly the first time that people in a foreign country made a major effort to rescue starving Chinese, Guo Songtao, then Chinese ambassador in London, felt obliged to publish a note of gratefulness, stating

"I regret that it should be necessary for China to appeal to the sympathies of other countries, and I desire publicly through the medium of *The Times* to give expression to the gratitude which I feel. I would add that that which the English nation is now doing for a far distant country is an act of disinterested kindness for which the people of China will ever remain its debtors."<sup>14</sup>

The ambivalent sentiment on the Chinese side towards foreign relief for China is already present in this statement. And even though large sums of money were mobilized by the London committee, the symbolical impact of foreign relief aid surely largely outweighed its material effects.

This was reinforced by articles in the English press commenting on the Chinese "backwardness", which were symptomatic of the changing discourse on Asia and China on

the side of the imperialist powers.<sup>15</sup> After the famine had unfolded to its full scale, *The Times* in London stated in a leading article:

There are various reasons, too, which make the case of China far more hopeless than that of India. An exceptionally dry season has in both countries been the primary cause of the disaster. But this in China has been aggravated in many ways by the faults of the Government. Incredible wastefulness, universal corruption, and a determined rejection of the expedients of modern science in the way of developing the resources of the country, or of restoring and improving the means of intercommunication, are among the charges brought against the Chinese Government by the Secretary of the Legation at Peking ... We need not wonder that where such a state of things exists permanently the strokes of famine and of every other calamity should fall with especial heaviness. Famine, it must be remembered, is a thing which, *in countries like India and China*, must be expected from time to time to recur. ...

But is there, it will be asked, nor hope for either country that these epochs should be averted? *They do not occur in England, or, indeed, among any of the civilized nations of the world*. Is there no prospect that this immunity from famine should be extended more widely, ...?<sup>16</sup>

Similar statements were also to be read in the Shanghai English-language press:

*As European society is at present constituted, a famine is almost an impossibility ...*<sup>17</sup>

Famine had become an indicator of the progress of human civilization, an implication to which the Chinese, who had to struggle for their age-old claim to be at the center of the civilized world, were especially vulnerable. This kind of comments depreciatory of China reached a Chinese audience through translations published in the newspapers.

In the mirror of Western "wealth and power" the images of the starving Chinese displayed to a world audience became the epitome of China's own poverty and weakness, in a sense rather different from military defeats. The need of foreign help in securing the bare subsistence of the people conveyed an unbearable sense of cultural inferiority. Moreover, with their engagement in famine relief, foreign agents put themselves in a position that should be exclusively occupied by the state and its agents. (Therefore in the *Shanxi tongzhi* account of the Great Famine foreign missionaries do not occur, and private relief organized by Chinese elites are subsumed under official relief efforts.)

The politics of famine relief had always played an important role in the constitution of imperial legitimacy. Social peace and political stability rested with it. It was for this reason that the Qing rulers had set up an official system of famine relief that had been working fairly well during the 18<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>18</sup> and without doubt this was a very important element in the symbolic foundation of imperial rule. By the 19<sup>th</sup> century the situation had changed dramatically. There

was a wide-spread perception that "floods and droughts were everywhere" (*shui han bian zai*), entailing increasingly serious subsistence crises the government was more and more unable to cope with adequately. Thus, while the relationship of the frequent occurrence of "heaven-sent" disasters to dynastic decline was readily made,<sup>19</sup> through the new international context of relief, the nation was placed at the heart of everybody's concern. People in Shanghai and Suzhou would donate money for far-away Henan and Shandong, thus fulfilling their part of their own responsibility, as they perceived it now, for the well-being of the whole country. This was very different from former elite participation in famine relief, that usually was initiated by local officials and limited to the immediate local environment.<sup>20</sup>

It was in this context that the references to "the country" became more and more urgent. A reader who preferred to stay anonymous retrospectively characterized private relief during the Great Famine as an effort "to save the people for the country" (*wei GUO jiu min*). And he repeated this same phrase twice in his essay urging on the wealthy residents of Shanghai to make their contribution to the relief fund now being collected for the flood victims of their own province. It is remarkable that he left a blank space before the character "guo" – "country", in the same way as it was usual before terms referring to the emperor or the dynasty.<sup>21</sup>

While "the people" were put at the center of imperial ideology, they were made an object of politics at the same time. If we use this basic tenet for our analysis of international famine relief, the consequences for the status of China must have been threatening to the Chinese mind: Whereas in the context of a Chinese discourse on famine relief, it was the starving peasants who were reduced to a matter of negotiation being mainly of symbolical value for the ideological constitution of the state, in the context of an international discourse on relief for the destitute Chinese, it was China herself who somehow was reduced to a matter of negotiation, with the dreadful poverty and desperate backwardness legitimizing imperialist ambitions, be they of economic, political or religious character. Thus Chinese bodies ending up as food sold on the market and Chinese women and children being sold into slavery became a grotesque image of the commodification of a people – first of all by itself, a concern imminently present in the Chinese counterpart to Timothy Richard's famine diary, an account on the distribution of relief funds in Henan, published in the *Shenbao* in 1878.<sup>22</sup> If it was due to the loss of legitimacy (and agency) of the imperial state and the encroachment of the "rich and powerful" West in the guise of Christian charity that new social forces began to constitute themselves in Shanghai and the surrounding urban centers, underlying these new forces was the ambivalent consciousness that China's predicament somehow was brought about by the Chinese themselves, that was aroused through the Western mirror. Thus, on the part of the wealthy commercial centers, a shameful and inadmissible feeling of cultural inferiority was nourished by the experience of famine in other parts of their country, and with it the desire for a strong and cohesive nation that would be fit to compensate for this humiliating experience.

The basic feature of Chinese national consciousness in the context of the nineteenth century world of modern nation-states was that of material inferiority and an insulted cultural pride. This could not well be dealt with on the assumption that this was a self-imposed predicament. Only through the redirection of the cause of that humiliation to an "other", as was the case with the defeat by Japan in 1895, could this feeling of shame be relieved, or at least forcefully articulated, without questioning the very foundations of imperial/state legitimacy, in the contrary, with the intent of strengthening the polity.

The North-China famine of 1876-79 certainly was not an event in the sense of a consciously staged act that conventionally would deem worth of being remembered in a positive sense through the erection of monuments or the writing of heroic accounts. But it certainly was an event in the sense that it somehow inadvertently urged on a break with the established order (*po ge*). State and society surely were "in a state of heightened stress and intense self-awareness" that called for heroic actions. But was it Timothy Richard's event, as his own hagiographic account (and also Bohr's study) seems to suggest? Was it the moment of non-official social forces to constitute themselves and make themselves known? Or was it the state, in the end, who orchestrated solitary and largely desperate efforts of different groups, every single of which had their own views and uses of the event? The true hero was an anti-hero, the body of the Chinese nation, left behind deeply wounded and strengthened at the same time, in the ambivalent sense that it was increasingly getting aware of its own predicament.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> This figure is indicated in the *Shanxi tongzhi* (1892), stating that approximately four million people enjoyed some kind of government relief, while at least 10 million perished. "Huangzheng ji", in *Shanxi tongzhi*, juan 82, Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1990, v.12, p. 5639).

<sup>2</sup> *History in Three Keys: The Boxers as Event, Experience, and Myth*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1997.

<sup>3</sup> To be fair, we do have a scholarly account of the missionary engagement in famine relief (Paul R. Bohr, *Famine in China and the Missionary: Timothy Richard as Relief Administrator and Advocate of National Reform, 1876-1884*, Cambridge: East Asian Research Center, Harvard University, 1872) and, partly to be seen as a response to it, a study of government relief efforts (He Hanwei, *Guangxu chunian (1876-1879) Huabei de da banzai* (The great North-China drought famine of the early Guangxu reign), Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, [1980]). But it is only recently that this kind of events begins to penetrate into the more general historical mind.

<sup>4</sup> *Shanxi tongzhi*, v.1, 32.

<sup>5</sup> *Shanxi tongzhi*, v.12, 5613.

<sup>6</sup> Perhaps even the Taiping rebellion belongs to this chain of events alienating southern elites from the northern dynasty while driving them closer to an imaginary Chinese nation.

<sup>7</sup> For a detailed account of Timothy Richards relief work see Bohr, *Famine in China and the Missionary*. Cf. also Richard's own autobiography: *Forty-Five Years in China. Reminiscences by Timothy Richard, D.D., Litt.D.* London: Fisher Unwin, 1916.

- <sup>8</sup> "Xi jiaoshi quan juan shu", *Shenbao* 3.4.1877.
- <sup>9</sup> "Shantung Relief Fund", *North China Herald* 15.3.1877.
- <sup>10</sup> *North China Herald* 22.3.1878.
- <sup>11</sup> "The Shanxi famine" (letter to the Rev. W. Muirhead, secretary of the China Famine Relief Fund), *North China Herald* 21.3.1878.
- <sup>12</sup> "Statement of China Famine Relief Fund Account to 15th April, 1878", *North China Herald* 20.4.1878. When subscriptions were closed late in 1878, a sum of 200,000 Taels altogether had been collected, including 32,302 pounds from the London Committee and 60,000 pounds from a Mansion House Relief Fund opened by the Lord Mayor of London. At roughly the same time a much higher sum was collected in Britain for the relief of a severe famine in India. According to official Chinese documents (memorials by Zeng Guoquan, Governor of Shanxi), by the end of the famine, a total of more than 10 Mio Taels plus 1,7 Mio *shi* of cereals had been given for relief from the official side, for the province of Shanxi alone). He Hanwei, *Guangxu chunian (1876-1879) Huabei de da banzai*, 58.
- <sup>13</sup> Cf. the example of the relief activist Xiong Chunshu, who died from famine fever in Henan. "Lu Xiong shanshi xiongzhuang gan er wei shuo", *Shenbao* 22.2.1879.
- <sup>14</sup> *The Times* 15.2.1878.
- <sup>15</sup> Cf. David Arnold, *Famine. Social Crisis and Historical Change*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988, ch.6: "Other people's hunger".
- <sup>16</sup> *The Times*, 30.3.1878. Italics added.
- <sup>17</sup> "Famines and national customs", *North China Herald* 21.3.1878.
- <sup>18</sup> Pièrre-Étienne Will, *Bureaucratie et famine en Chine au 18e siècle*, Paris: EHESS, 1980.
- <sup>19</sup> Usually the fall of the Northern Song dynasty was evoked, cf. e.g. *Shenbao* 17.8.1889; 11.10.1889.
- <sup>20</sup> This is a change first mentioned by Mary B. Rankin in *Elite Activism and Political Transformation in China, Zhejiang Province 1865-1911*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1986, 142-147.
- <sup>21</sup> Buliumingren, "Zhenjuan moyi", *Shenbao* 6.11.1889.
- <sup>22</sup> In Pan Shaoan's famine diary the trade with women and children flourishing during the famine received by far the most attention. "Yu xing riji", *Shenbao* 27.6.1878.

# Competition over National Origins in China, Japan and Korea around 1900

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by Nany Kim, Heidelberg/London

This paper proposes a comparative reading of national ancestral origins in the hot phase of nation-building in China, Japan and Korea. The investigation focuses on images of ancestral founders of the ethnic nation (*minzu*) but also considers racial origin and East Asia as a new regional framework.

The contentiousness and competition over questions of national origin is obvious enough – today, a century on, it actually appears not to have lost much of its heat. Nevertheless, it seems to me that interrelations between the three national identities are all too often overlooked. Points of exchange, borrowing and debate are not always easily identified, since modern nationhood in East Asia was invented in dichotomy and dialogue with "the West." This paper explores some aspects of how modernizers in Japan, China and Korea, through creating modern "Eastern" identities against "Western" pressure, renegotiated positions vis-à-vis their regional neighbours.

During our student days Prof. Wagner liked to point out that the actual "impact" of Western imperialists on China was considerably weaker than the extreme alarm of its Chinese "response." In fact, this great and lasting alarm also applies to Japan and Korea. While a sense of crisis could hardly be described as unfounded in the case of Korea, it is quite interesting that it also lingered on in Japan, even after the victory over Russia in 1905.

One tentative answer might be that the Western threat was not the only factor to elicit a sense of crisis among educated Chinese, but that the Japanese challenge – though less discussed – also played an important role. Similarly, the lasting insistence on national danger in Japan could in part go back to anxiety about China, and perhaps even Korea. The case of Korea offers an interesting indication that intellectual preoccupation did not directly reflect existing

threats: during the period of increasing Japanese domination from 1895 to 1910 discourse in the Korean periodical press centred on the "West" and on China.

This investigation of some aspects of national imagery tests an approach that emphasizes East Asian interrelatedness in dealings with East-Western dichotomies.

I'll start my exploration in Japan, continue in Korea, and finish in China. This is of course not the chronological order. The formative phase of modern nationhood was the 1880s and 1890s in Japan, The late 1890s and early 1900s in China, and the 1900s in Korea. The order was chosen simply to facilitate comparison.

### Japan- leadership and insecurity

Let me start with Japan, for the invention of the modern ethnic nation (*minzoku*) started here, and its implementation of the nation state (*kukka*) was the most thorough and successful.

In all three countries the formation of the modern nation took place against the backdrop of an intense sense of crisis and as a conscious ideological effort. It was a process of shrinking from a shared, ecumenical civilization of the educated to sovereign nation-states that at least theoretically involved all citizens. Carol Gluck's analysis of Japan's modern myths vividly describe the making of *minzoku* and *gokumin* (citizens) as well as the importance of the sense of crisis in the process.<sup>1</sup>

The enterprise of inventing an imperial tradition had begun with the Meiji restoration of imperial rule. The nation-state rested on loyalty and filial piety towards the emperor as who, as the descendant of an unbroken line from godly founding ancestors, represented in his person as the uniqueness and cohesion of the nation. In the construction of imperial legitimacy, Korean antiquity fulfilled a critical role. Myths about early Japanese rule and influence in Korea were elaborated, creating an early empire beyond the national borders.<sup>2</sup>

By the later Meiji period, accounts of Japanese origin were well established. The presentation of history in the national format provided a narrative framework for a teleological trajectory from the beginnings to up to the present. As Japan came to be understood as an essentially discrete entity, China and Korea could no longer find any mention as senior, radiating civilization. Instead, both were excised from Japan's original formation.

In the first generation of textbooks on national history from the 1890s, the modern interpretation of national foundation and ancient history is fully formed. External influence before the consolidation of the original Yamato state is precluded. By incorporating founding myths of the eighth-century records *Koshiki* and *Nihon shôki* as the "age of gods" and traditional datings of proto-history of up to a thousand years before the contact with the mainland was constructed.<sup>3</sup> Modern historical methods and auxiliary sciences such as archaeology and linguistics were employed to substantiate the picture of an earliest, pristine Japanese society at the eve of the historical age.



The new received version of history successfully downplayed "continental influence" the formation of the original nation-state and elided questions of cultural seniority. Both nevertheless remained hot issues, as will become apparent in indirect forms to address them.

Interests in the new regional framework of Tôyô (the "Orient" though mostly referring to the core region East Asia) illustrate the dynamics and anxieties of the process. The new nation was embedded in the new regional identity. Formulated as "one half of the whole" in dichotomy to Seyô (Occident) it almost naturally placed Japan in the centre. The "east" as well as the "Ocean" could naturally be associated with Japan and carried positive connotations.

This very effect, I think, was one of the reasons why modern Western historical representations gained such breathtaking momentum so quickly: they de-centred China beautifully.<sup>4</sup>

*Yô* (ocean) certainly was a qualitative jump from *hai* (sea), a component of most commonly used designations for Japan – as *hai* was forever coterminous with the barbarian fringe and could not be imagined as rising above the outer rim of civilization.<sup>5</sup> If East Asia was to be open, maritime and enterprising (as Britain!), Japanese leadership was a matter of course.

The effectiveness of modern historiography and frameworks of national reference in generating empire and nation were striking. It was only consequential, that Japanese scholars eagerly began to exercise new, Western research methodology. And, rather fascinatingly, many newly acquired tools were first employed in Tôyôshi (Oriental history) and on the subject of ancient Korea.<sup>6</sup>

Shiratori Kurakichi (1865–192?), the principal architect of tôyôshi at the Imperial University of Tôkyô started his career with an essay on Tan'gun, the mythical founder of Korea. Relegating Tan'gun to the realm of myth, Shiratori was able to argue two points: First, he could date the beginnings of Korean history much later than traditional dates suggest – namely later than those of Japan. Second, with Korean origins stripped from venerable age and state formation beginning only with the Han commanderies in the late second century BC, he offered historical evidence that Korea could claim no seniority over Japan. On the contrary, it was a junior nation in East Asia, which furthermore began its history as a receptacle of foreign influence, be it Jizi, Han Wudi, or Yamato. Furthermore, by ascribing the invention of Tan'gun to Buddhists of the third century AD, he could minimize the influence of Buddhism in the formation of Korean historical origins prior to that time. By extension, Shiratori thus also dated the beginnings of Buddhism in Japan unusually late, thus buttressing the nativist rejection of Buddhism as an alien, superimposed influence.<sup>7</sup>

In textbook accounts of ancient Japan, both Korea and China were reduced from bringers of civilization to passive objects. The victory of Empress Jingû over Silla and the existence of a "prefecture of Imma" in the southern tip of Korea were presented as fact.<sup>8</sup> Korea, depicted as

having been subjected to Japanese influence in ancient times, could hardly have at the same time actively transmitted cultural achievements from China to Japan. Instead, direct contacts through Japanese envoys from the third century onwards were assumed to have provided the main avenues of Japanese acquisition of Chinese civilization. With Korea a passive "bridge" at best and Japanese envoys taking the key role, it was possible to depict learning from China as an active and selective process determined solely by Japanese needs and choices.

At the same time, however, Korea was still needed to establish an ethnic link with Northeast Asian continental peoples. Although definitions of races and ethnic origins remained shifting, in the "history of common descent" Koreans and Japanese came to be pictured as branches of a Northeast Asian race. Within the common East Asian dualism that identified southern people with *wen*, civilization and refinement and northern people with *wu*, military prowess, linking the formation of the Japanese ethnic nation with such valiant races as Koguryô in northern Korea and the Puyô from Manchuria provided the necessary "northern" ingredient in Japanese antiquity that otherwise lacked in native and Chinese descriptions of the early Japanese.<sup>9</sup>

Japanese images of national origin in the new regional framework of Tôyô bring out the enthusiasm for the new national format and modern historical method: Both enabled Meiji historians to systematically assert Japanese uniqueness and to position Japan at the hierarchical centre of the region. China was de-centred on general grounds of Japanese purity, uniqueness and amalgamation of the virile northern characteristics and southern culturedness in the Japanese nation.<sup>10</sup>

However, while finding faults with Chinese national character could diminish China's position of influence, its cultural seniority remained uncontested. For this reason, Hangaku scholars insisting on due veneration for ancient China rejected some modern reinterpretations.

Superiority over Korea was critical in the assertion of imperial power. It was established in specific argument and consolidated through a considerable body of research. However, the preoccupation with Korea in early Tôyôshi research in itself reflects lasting anxiety and defensiveness in Japan's claims for regional leadership. At the same time, modern research methods, especially archaeology, began to produce evidence that contradicted national models of explanation. Only by tenuous constructions, such as the northeast-Asian cultural core, was it possible to find an albeit uneasy accommodation for these challenges to Japanese centrality.

### Korea – subjugation and exaltation

In the period, Koreans had good reason to watch developments in Japan closely. After the Sino-Japanese War of 1894/5, Korea became an independent "empire," in name but not in fact. With the Russo-Japanese War of 1905, it was reduced to a protectorate, and in 1910 became a Japanese colony.

Against this backdrop, it is startling that in the brief periods of some press freedom, Korean nation-builders were mostly preoccupied with de-centring China. André Schmid has provided a lucid description of the process for the nationalist newspapers of the early 1900s.<sup>11</sup>

During the same period, nationalist historians created the Korean national history complete with paraphernalia: history writing in the teleological, national format that excised China, a national dating system that set the starting point of Korean history with the traditional dating of the mythical founder Tan'gun at 2333 BC, and a religion of the Great Ancestor Tan'gun (Taejongkyo) providing a spiritual bond of the nation.

It is obvious that their image of national history was modelled on ongoing Japanese and Chinese discourses. In fact, the first hasty effort to introduce new history (*sin sa-ch'e*) had largely been confined to the production of textbooks in the new format, which were directly lifted from Japanese models. These faithfully reproduced standard Japanese interpretations of Korean history, even the subsequently most hotly contested issues, such as the ancient Japanese prefecture of Imma in southern Korea.<sup>12</sup>

Korean nationalist history began as a critique of Japanese interpretations of Korean antiquity in general, and of the new Korean textbooks in particular. With its focus on antiquity and early history, it appears to both echo and refute Japanese writings on Korea. While the general framework complete with periodization and a trajectory from rustic but virile beginnings to increasing stagnation was accepted, aspects of national origin and essence and of submissiveness towards China were singled out for refutation.

The young Chang To-bin (1888–1963) rejected notions of common racial origin of Japanese and Koreans and of any possibility of a colonization of Korea from Japan or the occupation of Korean territory in ancient times. His main argument is Korean cultural seniority, which in a nutshell is expressed in the fact that the Korean kingdoms acquired (Chinese) writing well before Japan.<sup>13</sup>

In the reappraisal of Korean antiquity between 1905 and 1910, the reinterpretation of Korea's two ancestral founders, Tan'gun and Kija, illustrate both the distancing from China and the assertion of Korean superiority vis-à-vis Japan.

Korean histories of the 13<sup>th</sup> century provide two founders of the nation; Tan'gun and Kija. Tan'gun, a godly figure and a contemporary of Yao and Shun, reportedly descended from heaven in the late third millennium BC and became the lord of Chosôn. Kija (C:Jizi) was a relative of the last Shang-King of the late second millennium BC who is recorded to have gone East and to have been enfeoffed with Chosôn (C: Chaoxian).

Kija had been central in Chosôn representation of Korea as a "Little (but truer) China" and in the Chinese recognition of Korean ranking as the most cultured tributary. In the rise of Korean enlightenment (*kyemong*) and nationalist history, however, he all but disappeared.

Instead, in the years after 1905, Tan'gun was written about at length, despite the fact that historical accounts do not provide more than a few lines on his exploits. Even a "rediscovered,"

clearly fake account entitled *Tanki gosa* (Amazing ancient history of Tan'gun) was officially published by the Ministry of Education.<sup>14</sup>

In 1908, Sin Ch'ae-ho, the most extreme of the national historians, wrote and published his historical vision in his *Doksa sillon* (New Reading of History).<sup>15</sup> By shifting the emphasis from Tan'gun to the Puyô nation as the main racial component of the Korean nation, he developed a picture of an ancient Korean federation that encompassed all of Manchuria and most of Korea. At the same time, he relegated Kija to a vassal of the Puyô kings and the Chinese civilisatory influence to a very secondary role within a well-established cultural system.

Reflecting such grandiose compensatory tableaux, the religion of the Great Ancestor was founded in 1909 and soon acquired the character of a proselytising religion whose believers set out to save and unite their "brothers and sisters" not only in Korea of the whole "Pan-Tong'i-nation" (C:Dongyi) throughout "Liaodong, Manchuria, Mongolia, as well as in the old territories of the Jürchen, the Mohe, Qidan, and Xianbei, and in the Qing and Japanese states."<sup>16</sup>

Forced to build modern national identity under Japanese domination and against the weight of preformulated and already half-accepted Japanese interpretations of Korean history, nationalist historians took to an ideological counter-attack on all fronts. In a disintegrating state and facing increasing repression, Korean nationalist historians had no means to carry out original research. For the time being, the national re-invention had to make do with re-interpretation. Visions of national origin took an extremely exalted and religious turn.

Having accepted an essentialized notion of independence, they were quick to assert traditional seniority over Japan. Whereas any ideas of Japanese affiliation were quickly and easily rejected as absurd, the characterization of Korea as being intrinsically unfit for independence, as it had always been subordinate to China, brought a neuralgic response. Confronting both Qing paternalism and Meiji "defamation," Sin Ch'ae-ho countered with an attack that however was directed entirely at China. His invention of a "Pan-Tong'i" cradle of civilization in Manchuria claimed the virile Northern ethnic and cultural origin of East Asia for Korea.<sup>17</sup>

## China – centrality disclaimed and reclaimed

Meanwhile, the application of categories of modern nationalism to China involved a brutal shrinking process from a theoretically all-encompassing civilization to "one nation among others." However, the example of Japanese new national power convinced Chinese patriots of all denominations that building a modern nation was the only way to "save the nation" (*jiuguo*).

There was little resistance to a change in identity that was perceived as a historical necessity. In the East Asian context the independence and – at least nominal - equality of former inferiors was accepted. The change is, for example, reflected in the designation of the former tributary

Chosôn in Chinese newspapers: From 1895 onwards, official or neutral became standard designations, while names and references that implied subsidiarity disappeared.

Chinese modernizing intellectuals routinely used the new vocabulary, frameworks, and forms of writing; adapting models set in Japanese writings. By the early 1900s, Huangdi (the Yellow Emperor) was invoked as the ancestral national founder; histories in the national format, and history textbooks lifted from Japanese models, a range of "national" dating systems to choose from,<sup>18</sup> and a national Confucius religion Datongjiao – to be soon forgotten again.<sup>19</sup>

On the whole, images of Chinese national identity appeared comparatively fuzzy. From the 1900s to the 1920s, fragmentation was pervasive. Nevertheless, in an intense and controversial debate of national identity, some common themes can be found.

The regional framework East Asia underwent a subtle redefinition. In the introductory phase around 1900, terminology of Dongyang/Tôyô, formats and topics of East Asian history clearly show the formative role of the Japanese example. However, Dongyang remained one among several terms, and by about 1920, Dongya became the established Chinese word for East Asia. Chinese regional identity thus avoided the Japanese enhancement of "Ocean-" characteristics, while also lessening the East-West dichotomy.

More importantly, East Asia was not the leading framework for locating China geographically and culturally. In geographic descriptions, it usually appeared simply as a geographic subdivision of the Asian continent. Culturally, it carried a vague appeal to commonality between neighbouring, formerly related nations. By placing China within the expanses of the Asian continent, the position of China as just one country among many was highlighted. At the same time, however, the weight of China as the largest and most populous country in the largest continent was emphasized.

The Asian rather than the East Asian framework allowed for a look around in all directions. The standard introduction to China's geography thus included the enumeration of neighbouring countries from Mongolia, Central Asia, Persia, India, Burma, Vietnam to Japan and Korea. In other words, it allowed for a quiet reassertion of a central weight, while a fixation on East Asian rivalry was avoided.

Racialist discourse is plentiful in Chinese writings, yet remained highly fluid.<sup>20</sup>

In common parlance, the identification with the Yellow race was positive and convincing and for nation-builders it had a welcome effect in consolidating the image of Huangdi (the Yellow Emperor) as a common ancestor for all Chinese. Racialist definitions were left vague; "yellows" could at times refer to all Asians, at times to the "sons and grandsons of Huangdi."

Racialist nationalism had its heyday in the agitation against Manchu rule. Chinese revolutionaries in Japan constructed Han-Chinese and Manchu as opposed ethnic groups.<sup>21</sup> Even before the fall of the Qing, however, the ethnic subdivisions of the Chinese people led to an uneasy recognition of ethnic diversity within China. There was an awareness of conflict

between the too much insistence on ethnic boundaries and the aim of nation-building within the borders of the Qing empire.

An article by Liang Qichao of 1901 illustrates a pragmatic attitude. Liang identifies "over ten races" in China, but continues to describe only "six important races." Among these, Han-Chinese "are defined openly as "us, who presently are distributed throughout China, referred to as the aristocrats of civilization, the sons and grandsons of Huangdi." As to the origin of human races, he rejects the exact definition of peoples along racial delineation as impossible. Pointing out that people have mixed with each other over thousands of years, he describes such a notion as "either foolish or false." Therefore, the fact that all family records claim Huangdi as their progenitor carries little conviction. Nevertheless, he suddenly comes round to yellow ancestry as common denomination for all citizens of China so as to be able to unit the "400 Million compatriots."<sup>22</sup>

Within the East Asian context, Chinese writings generally follow the ranking of "superior" Northern and "inferior" Southern races. Despite many changes and redefinitions, the inhabitants of China, with the exception of some southern "aboriginals" are consistently grouped as Northern. Superiority over all South and South-East Asians is thus safely established. Japanese and Koreans are also politely described as "pure Northern," however, they are placed in a category of their own and thus kept essentially separate.

In textbooks of the Republican period,<sup>23</sup> Chinese national origins are repositioned by presenting them in the context of world history.

While following the Japanese modern format, descriptions discuss Chinese national origins, prehistory and antiquity with great emphasis on the general trajectory of human history. Insistence on early achievements of civilization placed in comparison of other ancient civilizations, and the evaluation of Chinese history against the pattern of euro-centric world history positioned China as the leader of East Asia and constructed the East-Western dichotomy as between China and Europe.

In the comparative reading of images of national origin in China, Japan and Korea the intensely self-critical scrutiny of tradition by Chinese intellectuals stands out. Chinese writers never seemed to tire of lambasting Chinese culture, national character or even its Asian geography. Whereas Japanese scholars rejected Western notions of Asian geographic determinism as possible sources of fatalism in the 1880s, Liang Qichao's "Shortcomings of Asian geography" was still reprinted in schoolbooks of the 1930s.<sup>24</sup>

Shiratori Kurakichi applied modern critical methods to Korean historical classics in 1985 and to Chinese in 1909,<sup>25</sup> but the emperor system prevented too critical scrutiny of Japanese classics until 1945. In 20<sup>th</sup> century China, doubts about cherished traditions and critical investigations of antiquity were necessary ingredients of serious scholarship.

It seems to me that this continuing questioning of Chinese tradition did not necessarily reflect greater insecurity, but is indicative of an inward-directed discursive mode. Intellectuals as "men of resolve" painted pictures of extreme gloom with the aim of whipping and shaming their compatriots into patriotic action. The same men, after all, drew quite friendly pictures of China when writing for a foreign audience.<sup>26</sup>

The self-inspection of Chinese intellectuals had a problematic consequence in their relations with other East Asians: it severely restricted their curiosity. Liang Qichao's stance on studying Japanese history is symptomatic: he advises Chinese students to Japan to study general middle school textbook to catch up in modern history. However, his main interest in Japanese historiography is learning of new approaches to Chinese history. He regards recent Japanese history as important solely as an example of modernization. Anything prior to the 19<sup>th</sup> century appears tedious and negligible to him, since Japan's earlier history "has nothing to do with the main trends in world history."<sup>27</sup>

Whether defensive rhetoric or conviction, the common representation of Japan and Japanese writings as a shortcut to the "West" witnesses to a taking notice of perceiving Japan, even of Chinese intellectuals who lived there for years. The widespread refusal to pay any more attention than necessary to the expanding neighbour, born perhaps from a too intense felling of humiliation, and the observation of Korea from the outward perspective of another object of imperialist subjugation contributed to ignorance concerning both countries. As a consequence of lacking active interest, ready-made Japanese interpretations of both Japanese and Korean history became largely accepted.

## Conclusion

This paper has explored a three-sided monologue. Discourses in Japan, China and Korea appear to be directed at a home audience or formulated in a remote dialogue with an often generalized "West." Issues of East Asian difference are developed without direct exchange. For example, Shintô of course must be an entirely indigenous tradition, its connection with the modern identification of citizens with their states could not conceivably be related to Christianity. When Kang Youwei initiated Tatongjiao in Japan, he was able to acknowledge Christianity as an inspiration, but referred to Shintô only highly obliquely. Similarly, when he founded Taejongkyo, Sin Ch'ae-ho duly left Kang Youwei (and Shintô) unmentioned

Although a first and unfinished attempt, I hope that my example of comparative East Asian reading illustrates that Chinese, Japanese and Koreans looked left and right while addressing national issues apparently imported from the West and that taking these indirect exchanges into consideration has considerable effects on our historical understanding.

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> Carol Gluck. *Japan's Modern Myths: Ideology in the Late Meiji Period*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985.

<sup>2</sup> See André Schmid, "Colonialism and the 'Korea Problem' in the Historiography of Modern Japan: A review article" *Journal of Asian Studies*, 59/4 (Nov. 2000): 963, and Hatada Takashi, *Ilbonin ûi Han'gukkwon* (Japanese views of Korea), tr. Yi Kidong, Seoul: Ilchogak, 1997.

The insistence on unique and independent origin itself is, of course, not novel. It can be traced back to the earliest existing historical works, the *Koshiki* and *Nihon shôki* and was a major topic of national learning (also termed nativism) of the 18th and 19th centuries. However, within the national format of history writing, Japanese essentialism became systematized and consolidated as a necessary precondition to modern nationhood.

<sup>3</sup> See e.g. Hajimo Yoshiyaki. *Nihon reshiki* (Japanese history), Tokyo 1891.

Textbooks generally reproduced the traditional datings, describing a "history of 2500 years." Already in the 1880s, however, scholars advanced critical analyses of the datings in the 8<sup>th</sup> century histories. Kume Kunitake (1839-1931) recognized that events were predated by up to several 60-year-cycles and concluded that the beginning of the historical era should be dated 68 BC. Apparently, Kume's research into antiquity was too critical in a time of nation-building around imperial sanctity, for when he subjected shintoism to historical scrutiny in 1892, he lost his academic position. See Tanaka, 70-74, and Gluck, 132.

<sup>4</sup> I borrow the term "de-centring" from André Schmid, who coined the term for the Korean context.

<sup>5</sup> In classical Chinese, "sihai," the four seas, could be used interchangeably with siyi, the four barbarians. In Chinese, Korean, and to some extent in Japanese discourse, Japan was commonly referred to as "Haidong" East of the Seas, a very marginal position.

<sup>6</sup> As a discipline in its own right, Tôyôshi began in the mid-1890s, when it was accorded its own space in the school curriculum and received its own department at the Imperial University. See Tanaka, pp. 12-26?, Schmid, "Colonialism and the Korea Problem'," pp. 962-3. At this point, present-day China was safely de-centered, both in discourse – as reflected in the use of Shina from the early 1880s onwards - and in fact – with the defeat in the War of 1894/5.

Research on Korean history within the framework of Tôyôshi generated a substantial body of research. Before the turn of the century, Japanese institutions sent trained historians and archaeologists to Korea (See Pai Huang Il, 16.). Japanese scholars laid the foundations of disciplines such as archaeology and folk studies. The modern Japanese version of Korean history became an influential model through adapted textbooks in Korea and China and translations of studies such as Hayashi Taisuke's *Chôsenshi* (History of Korea) into Korean and Chinese in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>7</sup> Tanaka, 12, 82-86.

<sup>8</sup> Thankfully, the dispute over early Korean-Japanese relations is beyond the scope of this paper. For a recent reappraisal from the Korean perspective in English, see Hong Wôn-tak, *Paekche of Korea and Japan*.

<sup>9</sup> See Hatada Takashi, *Ilbonin ûi Han'gukkwon* (Japanese views of Korea), tr. Yi Kidong, Seoul: Ilchogak, 1997, ch. 2.

<sup>10</sup> For the theme of the unique North-Southern blend in the original formation of the Japanese nation in Shiratori Kurakichi's writings, see Tanaka, pp. 168-9.

<sup>11</sup> André Schmid. "Decentering the 'Middle Kingdom': The Ambiguities of Anti-Chinese Rhetoric in the Korean Nationalist Press, 1895-1910." Unpublished paper, 1997.



<sup>12</sup> Han Yông-u, "Minjok sahak ûi sônngnip kwa chônkae" (Beginnings and developments of national history" Guksakwan nonch'ong 3 (Oct. 1989): 260-3.

<sup>13</sup> Chang To-bin, "Kyokwasô ûi mangbalhan ku'ô (Remarks t4extbook absurdities)" Leading article in TaeHan maaeil *sinbo* 1908.10.27. Quoted in Kim Ch'ang-su, *Han'guk minjok undongsa yôn'gu* (Studies in the history of the Korean national movement). Seoul: Pôm'usa, 1995, pp. 89-90.

<sup>14</sup> Cho In-sông, "Hanmal Tan'gun kwankye sasô ûi chaegôn't'o: 'SinTan silgi', 'Tanki kosa', 'HuanTan Koki' rûl chungsim ûro." (New investigations on histories of Tan'gun in the late Han'guk empire period: wit a focus on 'SinTan silgi', 'Tanki kosa', 'HuanTan Koki'). In Guksakwan nonch'ong 3 (Oct. 1989): 237.

The interest in Tan'gun as a founder prior to Chinese influence goes back to 18<sup>th</sup> century Chosôn scholars, who asserted an independent Korean identity. See

<sup>15</sup> Dankye Sin Ch'ae-ho sônlsaeng kinyôm saôbhoehoe (ed). *Dankye Sin Ch'ae-ho chônjip* (Complete works of Shin Ch'ae-ho). Seoul: Dankye Sin Ch'ae-ho sônlsaeng kinyôm saôbhoehoe, 1987.

There is no doubt that *Doksa sillon* was inspired by Liang Qichao's "Xin shixue." Zhan Zhuoyin documents Sin's reading and translations of Liang. It is interesting in itself that Shin took care to avoid any mention of *Xin shixue*. See Zhan Zhuoyin, "Shen Caihao de Manzhouguan" (Sin Ch'ae-ho's view of Manchuria), *Hanguo xuebao* 9 (1990): 38.

<sup>16</sup> Preface to Tan'gunkyo p'o'myôngsô (Declaration of the Tan'gun religion), 1909, repr. In Yi Man-yôl (ed). *Minjok undong ch'ongsô* (Collectanea on the National Movement), vol. 6: *Chongkyo kyoyuk t'ujaeng* (The battle in religion and education), pp. 115-124. Seoul, 1981.

<sup>17</sup> Ironically, this construction, too, draws on Japanese models. The Koguryô-Yamatô theory of common racial origin was a comparable attempt to generate a large, Northern, and virile Japano-Korean entity in prehistoric times that could reduce China to the weaker "Southern" strand.

<sup>18</sup> See Rudolg G. Wagner, "???"

<sup>19</sup> The new religion inspired the nationalist historian Pak Ûsik to found Taedongkyo as a parallel Korean organization. It seems possible that this Korean creed in Beijing was about as successful among Koreans as the original Datongjiao among Chinese.

<sup>20</sup> Frank Dikötter, *The discourse of Race in Modern China*. London: Hurst, 1991.

<sup>21</sup> It seems to me, that one motivation for the Minbao journalists' racialist stance was the need to refute then common Japanese criticism of Chinese cultural character as lacking ethnic cohesion and the ability to unite beyond the family clan. The racialist stance appears particularly pronounced among Japan based revolutionaries. The early Yu Youren certainly was as vociferous anti-Manchu, but concentrated on corruption in and arbitrary mistreatment of the people by the Manchu government.

<sup>22</sup> Liang Qichao, "Zhongguoshi xushuo" (Narration of Chinese history), in *Liang Qichao quanji*, edited by Zhang Pinxing et. al. Beijing, 1999, p. 449-51.

Liang's attitude to dating systems and the beginning of Chinese history was similarly flexible. Having in 1898 proposed a dating system beginning with Yao, he soon supported Kang Youwei's system that started with the death on Kongzi. Although he was inclined to regard the period of the Hundred Schools around the sixth century BC as the beginning of the truly historical age for China, Liang argued for an extension of antiquity up to the time of the Great Yu. Finally, in a sudden nationalist turn, he recommends the inclusion of Huangdi as useful, though rejecting other mythical emperors for lack of historical credibility. See Liang Qichao, "Jinian gongli" (Principles of dating systems), in *Quanji*, pp. 173-4, and "Zhongguoshi xushuo," p. 451.

<sup>23</sup> In preparing this paper, I have not been able to consult textbooks from the late Qing.

<sup>24</sup> Liang Qichao, "Yazhou dili dashi lun" (Outline of the geography of Asia), in *Yinbingshi beji: Wenji*, juan 10, pp. 69-76, and Hong Dichen, *Yazhou geguo shidi dagang* (Outline of the histories and geographies of Asian countries) Nanajing: Nanjing zhengzhong shuju, 1935.

<sup>25</sup> In his critical study of the *Shujing* Shiratori cast doubt on the very existence of the Xia (22-5-1766) and Shang (1766-1122) dynasties. See Tanaka pp. 117-127. His interpretation rejected by Hayashi

Taisuke (1854-1923) for inconsistency and the oversight of the recently discovered archaeological sites of Anyang.

<sup>26</sup> A well known later example is Lin Yutang's *My country and my people*. In the late 1890s, Liang Qichao expended much effort in describing China's critical state, but he nevertheless also wrote a perfectly positive evaluation of the future of the Chinese – for a Japanese paper. See "Lun Zhongguo renzhong zhi jianlai" (On the future of the Chinese race), in *Quanji*, pp. 263-5.

<sup>27</sup> Liang Qichao, "Dongji Yuedan," in *Quanji*, pp. 325-35.

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# In the Heat of the Night

## Shanghai's Electrification and the Contingency of Social Practice

by Natascha Vittinghoff, Göttingen

In the following paper I will discuss a small, microhistorical event in the history of Shanghai, taking place in the summer of 1882, which doubtless had rather big consequences on the macrohistorical level: the first electrification of the streets of Shanghai by electric lamps. I will take this as an example to illuminate the cultural complexity of this "event" by throwing some light on it from different – political, economic, social and cultural perspectives. The complexity will become lucid through very divergent and often contradictory positions among the social actors involved in this event, and thereby a generally shared historiography about the reasons for the resistance towards this new technology will be contested. I will furthermore argue, that many of the occurrences connected to this event were not at all particular Chinese but part of a common attitude towards this phenomenon in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The paper is concluded with as short – and not too serious – discussion about the nature of this event and its measurable temperature.

When the famous central power station of Thomas Edison was erected in 1882 in New York, and New York's street were brightly lit by the first electric street lamps, the first theater was illuminated by electric light in Munich and electric light was fast becoming universal in theaters, factories, wharves and dockyards in America and Europe, in this year also the streets in the concession of Shanghai saw the first electric lamp posts.

Whereas the introduction of electricity into everyday life is celebrated in European history as a welcomed sign and symbol of the marvels of technology and a successful progress, in China the introduction of this technology was allegedly obstructed by conservative officials, which opposed such a progress because of their stubborn "Confucian", i.e. reactionary convictions. The conventional narrative on the introduction of modern technologies in 19<sup>th</sup> century China goes, that the anti-foreign attitude together with an adversity towards technology of a conservative court-government hindered China's modernisation in the latter half of the

19<sup>th</sup> century. Only a small group of open-minded progressive provincial leaders fought against this conservatism and attempted to overcome China's backwardness.<sup>1</sup> It is obvious that the issue touches upon the problematic of microhistorical events and macrohistorical explanations. In this paper I would like to test these assumptions, by taking a closer look what eventually happened on the microhistorical level in this summer to winter in 1882 in Shanghai.

## 1.

After having purchased a dynamo machine in America, Mr. R. W. Little, the secretary of the new Shanghai Electric Company, had obtained the concessions for electric lamps from the Brush Co. in Ohio, a company with the most advanced technological know how in this section in America. Little installed the first lamps in Shanghai in August 1882 and a month later the *North China Herald* proudly announced,

“the electric light has now been exhibited in Shanghai for nearly a month. ... Judging by the gratifying enthusiasms which the subject has aroused amongst the Chinese, we may expect to see the new light spread throughout the settlement as far as the Company can furnish the necessary power.”<sup>2</sup>

During that period, the show rooms of the new Electric Company and other places like the restaurant and billiard rooms of the Astor House were lit with numerous lights and the brilliant lustre shining through the window is said to have attracted an admiring crowd of spectators who thronged the road until late after midnight. No wonder, also the Chinese entrepreneurs sought to have their shares in this new promising technology. They were eager to invest as shareholders in the new company and also erected lamps on their own compounds and residences. Yet, in contrast to the high expectations of the *North China Herald*, all this quickly met with serious obstacles.

First of all, the Taotai Shao Youlian objected on the general ground that electricity was not safe. In his letter to the Council, he stated, “this electricity disaster (of killing people or burning houses) will happen, if you do not put an end to electricity”.<sup>3</sup> Although the foreigners could enjoy the right of extraterritoriality, the Daotai asserted that Chinese residents in the settlement must follow his order and stop using electricity.<sup>4</sup> Also his subordinate, the Chinese Magistrate Chen, published a proclamation prohibiting the usage of electricity for the Chinese and threatened any native upon whose premises the light might be found burning after three days from date with full penalties of Chinese laws.<sup>5</sup> According to the *Shenbao*, who had also published a report, that the magistrate asked the foreign authorities to check on which Chinese premises the electric light was burning, all Chinese natives in the settlement immediately obeyed to his order.<sup>6</sup> After all, the prohibition was only in practice for some weeks and was lifted already in

December. The "event", we are dealing with here, therefore only encompasses a few chilly autumn months of the long and hot history of Shanghai.

## 2.

The account of these steps taken by the Chinese authorities seems to perfectly accord with the above mentioned narrative that a backward irrationality of Chinese officials was the main obstructions to modernisation and innovation in 19<sup>th</sup> century China. Such a possible "irrational fear" of electricity was yet not a singularly Chinese phenomenon, but also shared by the foreign residents in Shanghai. This explains the very long accounts on the function of the new electric power station and the repeated assertion, that electricity was safer than gas and other lighting technologies.<sup>7</sup> The thesis, that an irrational fear was one motive for obstructing electricity in China was an easily accepted premise because of another prevailing common assumption about the lack of technical knowledge among the Chinese at this time. It is therefore necessary to ask at this point, what an educated Chinese reader could have known about electricity in the 80's of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The first accounts on electricity, telegraphs and streetlamps were provided by missionaries in their periodical publications. Daniel Jerome Macgowan (1814–1893) published an account on the function of the telegraph already in 1851 in his *Zhexue nianjian*<sup>8</sup> and journals as the *Liube congtan* in Shanghai or the *Zhongxi wenjian lu* in Tianjin contained numerous sections on electricity in their reports on Western events, the announcement of new telegraph lines, negotiations on terrestrial cables with foreign countries, or descriptions of exhibitions in Europe like the English Public Science Exhibition in Dublin in 1857.<sup>9</sup> The *Liube congtan* even gives an explanation of the usage and advantage of electricity in his first programmatic statement, which shows the centrality ascribed to this topic.<sup>10</sup>

Knowledge about electric technology circulated in Shanghai since the first decades of foreign presence in Shanghai. Together with his Chinese colleagues Xu Jianyin (1845–1901) or Zhou Xun (1850–1882), John Fryer (1839–1928) had translated treatises on physics by John Tyndall and Henry Noad into Chinese in the Shanghai Arsenal in 1874 and 1881 and also written a special treatise on electricity, the *Dianxue xuzhi* in 1887. Some of these works were reprinted in many editions, for instance the translation of Tyndall's *Notes of a Course of Seven Lectures in Electricity* was reprinted in six editions in the years between 1881 and 1896.<sup>11</sup> We also find essays about the advantage of electricity by reformoriented literati like Wang Tao (1828-1897) in his collection *Yinghuan zazhi*, by Zheng Guanying in his early writings like the *Yiyan* oder in memorials sent to the court by Li Hongzhang.<sup>12</sup>

Moreover, accounts by governmental officials, like Guo Songtao (1818–1891), Liu Xihong oder Zhang Deyi (1847–1915), too, in their official diaries contained numerous passages describing the function of electricity, telegraphs, lamps and other details of the "Er-le-ke-de-li-xi-di" they have witnessed during their stay abroad. Guo Songtao, who used this phonetic transcription, reports about his visits of public physical experiments, the function of the telephone, which was invented only one year before, his inspection of a electric power station

and a factory producing cables, and his large scale purchase of book on questions in physics.<sup>13</sup> Liu Xihong, as another example, explains the differences of morse transmission with copper or iron cables after having visited a telegraph office.<sup>14</sup>

I think, these examples suffice to show, that there was indeed a great interest in this new technology and technical know-how was indeed available at that time already.

### 3.

It seems interesting to note here, that the Daotai Shao Youlian, who had sent the dispatch to the Shanghai Consuls, that electricity was too dangerous, had himself spent several years in Paris and St. Petersburg in the late 1870's. He was therefore regarded at the time as one of the Self-strengthening movement experts and had himself experienced the benefits and relative safeness of electricity. This makes the reason for his obstruction to electricity, the fear of dangerous calamities, rather suspicious and invites to further investigations.

One version assumes, that the Daotai had addressed the Court of Councils in Shanghai upon an order of the Zongli Yamen in Beijing, whereas he personally repudiated this measure in his own private communications.<sup>15</sup> Still, according to another account, the manager Little, after having taken notice of the prohibition, urged the British Minister in Beijing to exercise pressure on the Zongli Yamen, which acceded and thus subsequently the ban on electricity was lifted.<sup>16</sup> This story would fit into the general historiographical narrative that foreign technology was introduced only by means of forceful interventions by the imperialist powers in China. And yet, Little had not only addressed his authorities in Beijing, but also sent a letter to the Chinese newspaper *Shenbao*, in which he explained the benefits of electricity from his point of view, and which was published as a editorial on the first page.<sup>17</sup> He was obviously interested in finding support among the Chinese settlement dwellers. If he were not convinced, that this was at all possible, such a letter to the Chinese daily would have been meaningless. Moreover, the foreign entrepreneurs in Shanghai themselves were not so convinced about the forceful imperialist power in Beijing, but commented on this question

“far removed from contact with their nationals, ..., (they, i.e. the ministers in Beijing) can hardly be expected to take more than an academic interest in the minor troubles of a community anxious only in their eyes to secure a profit from their relations with the Chinese, by fair means or foul. They sit beside their nectar, and in their own good time and that of the Tsunlg-li Yamen will doubtless discuss our grievances; but ... we can hope for little redress in that quarter.”<sup>18</sup>

Conflicts between the foreign entrepreneurship and their representants in Beijing were quite frequent in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Here, the foreign merchants were especially angry about the fact, that they themselves were not informed about any proclamations, negotiations or their outcome in this question, neither from the Chinese nor foreign authorities.

Moreover, that the ban on electricity did not concern the authorities in the French Concession, who had been left uninterfered with made the whole issue even more suspicious to them.

Another version assumed, that not the court government was behind this prohibition, but the governor general Zuo Zongtang was the real source for this manifesto by the Daotai. Accordingly, Zuo, himself known as a reformer, had become the tool of a group of examination candidates, who attempted to gain a special position by disparaging the novel technology.<sup>19</sup>

The speculations continued, and another version explained, that the Daotai Shao, who is credited by the *North China Herald* as a "man of intelligence and culture, (who) is not ... personally under the influence of the ignorant and absurd prejudices he has been forced to avow in his official character"<sup>20</sup>, had acted in this manner just because he had enjoyed the "privilege" to reside in a foreign country and therefore was now especially eager to prove to his superiors that this enforced residence among the "barbarians" had left him uncontaminated.<sup>21</sup> Accordingly, he had taken the *personal* initiative to interfere in this respect and had been even more active than he was expected to be. This assumption, is supported by the statement of the *North China Herald*, which says, that "it is satisfactory to know that the very startling attempts which are have recently been made by the Shao Tao-t'ai to encroach about the liberties in this settlement are likely to be firmly resisted by our representatives here and at Peking."<sup>22</sup> In this connection it is also reported, that this allegedly privately very open and reform minded Daotai had threatened to close down the *Shenbao* in case it presumed to touch upon any political question anymore.<sup>23</sup>

But there are still other explanations, which state that the Daotai was alarmed about the danger of electricity by the Chinese Merchant steam navigation Co., which opposed the introduction of the electric light on the ground that it might blow up the city walls.<sup>24</sup> That the Chinese merchant Steam Navigation Co. should have opposed the introduction of electricity on the grounds of its unsafety seems even more puzzling, given the fact, that we have the technologically most progressive and open-minded merchants assembled in this rather new Company. This would also contradict the reports of the *North China Herald*, which say that the installation of the first electric light in the wharves of this Company – in those parts that were rented by the Electric Light Co. – was warmly welcomed, and that "the captains and others in the employment of this company are unanimously in favour of the electric light."<sup>25</sup>

Instead it seems much more plausible, that the question of economic interest was the real background for their warnings. Electricity of course meant the opening of a new industrial market, and also among the foreign companies a heated debate about the superiority of electricity vs. gas aroused immediately. In fact, the *North China Herald* speaks of a "warfare against electric light" launched by the defendants of the gas lights:

"Just now, as everybody is aware, a battle-royal is being waged between gas and electricity. Each of the combatants has its backers, and in the opinion of many the result is likely to be a drawn game."<sup>26</sup>

The superiority of electricity over earlier lightening technologies was obviously not at all decided at this point and the issue was of such an importance to the Shanghai community, that the *North China Herald* published several articles about Gas and Electricity on its pages. In one of them, O. W. Siemens himself held gas to be the more promising technology for the future.<sup>27</sup> Moreover, also the Municipal Council was not too convinced about the necessity of the installment of these lamps, as it turned down the offers by Little to erect more posts and also opposed his proposal to use a more advanced technology of tower systems instead of single posts, as they employed in America at the time. This discouraging attitude of the Municipal Council was very much regretted by the *North China Herald*, and in her own words also by the majority of the foreign community, and condemned as a sign of their backwardness.<sup>28</sup>

#### 4.

Unfortunately, I am not able to trace down the "true" position and motives of this opalescent Daotai Shao; instead I cited all these different versions in order to show that a simple explanation for the initial prohibition of electricity is more than dubious. Moreover, it shows, that this topic was very apt to be functionalised in different discourses in order to maintain positions rather unconnected to the question of technical details. I will briefly elaborate this in a few examples.

We can still find the general assumption prevalent, that electric lines were not welcome in China, because they disturbed geomantic principles (*fengshui*). Such an explanation again fits into the general assumption about the dominance of superstitious beliefs that were obstructive to technical modernisation.

"To the common Chinese as well as the elite, this image of electrically charged lines did not suggest fortuitous events. Instead, the vision of a telegraph line, with its poles and wires posted across the natural landscape, invoked their apprehension of confronting important supernatural forces."<sup>29</sup>

While it is unquestionable that the *fengshui* arguments had been made in many debates about different technologies in China, the railway, the telegraph or the electric light, an example from a very early discussion in 1864 shows, that it was mainly employed as a rhetoric device and also recognized as such by the British observers.

When the British E.A. Reynold wanted to erect a telegraph line between Shanghai and Pudong, he knew that an official application would most likely be turned down. But he also knew that the Daotai Ding Richang was favourable to this plan. Thus he assumed, the posts would be accepted once they were erected and laid his cables. Yet, the Daotai felt forced to officially order the deinstallment of the equipment. As one man had died - allegedly because of some sickness - somewhere close to one line, he used the pretext of *fengshui*, which had come into disorder and subsequently caused the death of this person. The *North China Herald*



commented this in an ironic tone: ” “To Ting generally has been awarded the credit of discovering, on that occasion, the efficacy of Fung-shuy as an obstacle to foreign innovation.”

Although the rhetoric character of such an argumentation was apparently so obvious to the contemporaries, the argument is still taken very serious until today. Yet, the situation of the local and governmental officials was obviously not as simple, as we could see from the very different and contradictory versions about the real motives of the Daotai Shao.

The topic of electricity in Shanghai was also raised in a very different context with rather different implications. Eventually, we find a letter-to-the editor by a Chinese subject in the concession, who condemned the obstructiveness of the Chinese authorities in this matter and comes to the conclusion that all this is only possible, because the Chinese have no representatives in the Municipal Council:

“Take the electric light question, for instance. If there were Chinese sitting on the Municipal Council, the Taotai could not, consistently with his dignity, put forth objections to electric lighting on account of its dangerous nature, for he must concede that the Chinese who sit with the Municipal body must have indubitable proof of the light being perfectly innocuous before he would vote for its establishment and general use throughout settlement. The voice of the Chinese councillor or councillors would represent of course the voice of the collective Chinese community of Shanghai, and the City magistrates would think twice before opposing the wishes of the Chinese in the Concessions, the greater part of whom is composed of very wealthy merchants from almost every province and a number of expectants of official positions and men of influence at Peking. That the Chinese have an *a priori* right to enter the Municipal Council no one will gainsay, considering that they own half, or more, of all the lands in the Settlement, and bear the main bulk of the taxes. A good honest intelligent Chinese backed by Chinese merchants of high standing and influential position if placed in the Municipal Council would put an effectual stop to further high handed measures from the city officials. Is it not better to take away the so-called representative power from the conservative mandarins, and hand it over to liberal viewed merchants?”<sup>30</sup>

The frequent praise of the electric light as a symbol for enlightenment and civilisation, represented by the British liberal democratic system, is here taken verbatim and connected to the question of Chinese political participation in the foreign concessions. This was quite a touchy issue for the *North China Herald*, and the proposal could not too easily be invalidated. It simply replies, that the idea itself was certainly good, but under the present circumstance just not feasible, because even the most liberal minded merchant could turn out to become just a marionette of the Daotai, by which the conservative forces would gain even more influence.<sup>31</sup>

The *North China Herald*, itself later uses the electric light question as pretext for discussing the constitutional foundations of the settlement. Now, the attempt to prohibit the lights appears to them

”to have been nothing more nor less than an insidious attempt to undermine the autonomy of these settlements. ... If his (i.e. the Daotai) recent attempt to forbid the use of electricity had been successful, it would have been equally open to him to arrest the consumption of gas or kerosene and to compel us to revert to the native dials to which the illumination of the city is to this day confined.”

Of course, such a scenario was greatly exaggerated and only polemics, serving the purpose to give reason for the election of one central authority in the International Concession, which would substitute the institutions of the Court of Consuls and the Municipal Council, struggling in their efforts to combine the wishes and opinions of thirteen nations, and would be provided with much more power and authority in front of the Chinese authorities.<sup>32</sup> The *North China Herald* comes to this conclusion, because it saw the reason for the Daotai’s hesitation to interfere in this matter in the French Concession lying in the fact, that they had such an authoritative representant.

## 5.

Interesting is the simultaneity of all this different arguments and positions. Ambiguous reactions toward the new light in the cities on were neither a peculiar Chinese phenomenon, nor were they only to be found in the political and economic realm. Also on the popular level, we can find two different positions regarding the benefits of this new technology. In extreme, they reflect the double-face of modernity itself, reflected in the two discourses on modernity, on the positive side as a sign of civilisation and progress into a bright future, and on the negative side, as a phenomenon of deviation, decadence and a scenario of horror to mankind. In the discourse on the electric light this is represented in China as in the West in the dichotomical positions, that the light brings enlightenment or moral decay.

Again, back to our local officials in Shanghai whose opaque position in this question is even more puzzling, when we read in the the same article of the *North China Herald* about the prohibition of electricity issued the Chinese Magistrate, the information, that this man,

“whose friendly intercourse with foreigners and foreign ways dates from nearly fourty years back, ... only recently presided a literary party where the theme of the for composition was the beauty of the Electric light.”<sup>33</sup>

Such poems on popular themes, and in our case on the glamour of the electric light, were also frequently to be found in the newspapers of the time, mainly the *Shenbao*, for instance in

the style of the popular bamboo twig poems (*zhuzhici*). In the manner like “Oh give me a day in that far Cathay, when thousand near moons change the night into day!” these poems are representations of the fascination and admiration of this technology, that turned Shanghai into a “nightless city” (*bu ye cheng*). The *topoi* of taking promenades as under the full moon, of tenths of thousands posts rising into the sky, and countless lights that extend the day into the night are repeated again and again:

---d ---A ---d -p -b ---  
 -a -z -K ---q ---A -u ---P --- ] ---

Tausend Laternen im Wasser brillieren,  
 und man geht wie im Vollmond spazieren.  
 Die Straßen der Stadt sind durch Rohre vernetzt:  
 diese nachtlose Stadt ist doch wirklich verhext!

---I -u ---A ---O ---  
 ---q ---A -E -I --- ] ---

Öl braucht man nicht, nur Laternenlicht,  
 Denn Lampen aus Gas beleuchten die Straß‘.  
 wird abends in Shanghai das Licht angemacht:  
 machens tausende Lampen zur “Stadt ohne Nacht”.<sup>34</sup>

The metaphor of a nightless city was not peculiar to Shanghai or China. We find very similar passages on the brilliant sparkling of the lights in the accounts of travellers or official representatives in Europe mentioned above about the lights in the West. Wang Tao describes London as a “nightless city” in 1868 and calls England a country of eternal light (*chang ming zhi guo*) – in an allusion to the usual phrase “civilised country” (*wenming zhi guo*).<sup>35</sup> Also the diplomat Zhang Deyi articulates his fascination about the lights in London, the city which never grows dark (*bu ye*).<sup>36</sup> Moreover, we find very similar observations by foreign authors writing about their fascination on the light in European cities as London, Paris or Berlin.<sup>37</sup> To take the electric light as a symbol for the abandonment of physical time - night and day - in favor of a rational time and to express this miracle in poetic phrases, thus seems to have been a standard shared by many different cultures.

## 7.

That the electric light transforms the physical time of night and day into technical time measurable by the watch instead of the sun, was not only welcomed. The simultaneity of an old poetic past and a new cold technical world is aptly reflected in the following picture in one of the Shanghai illustrated magazines *Tubua Ribao*.

**新舞臺房屋 大改良併添 置機器佈景**

中國戲園形式數百年來未變 改變本舞臺台口改良採歐外 國之規模幸今本園之劇目極 多學士輩當留心計自戊申十 月開幕以來荷蒙諸君踴躍同 登新舞臺其座位之寬敞後線 之正確佈景之美妙莫為戲園 人者之獨為本舞臺之足保 無愧而進步者固已相繼 而前也本舞臺自奉官制焉 非特且求精何以到諸君子之 鑒賞時就年題停演之時將本 舞臺式樣大加修改戲台桌椅 均改為雙料樓下戲座若不改 包箱官廳則高已頗寬其美 觀新舞臺現在日成起工蓋于 庚戌元旦開演所有前次諸位 日本調查之新法快器佈景屆 時亦可造成必期于戲界中故 一新彩物先佈告

**新舞臺謹告**

樓觀滄海日 (一景之圖時)

一華畫

日

說文曰實也太陽之精不虧也。一景之圖時。官書注曰者陽精之宗淮南子天文訓曰實之精者為日。迄於天文學家改求太陽與地相距之數約九千三百萬英里和地球太陽相距之數約小時行三十英里計之車行須三百五十二年始達。又如傳聲機由太陽連地球聲後始達須六十四年而後至。又考太陽之直徑僅六十六萬五千四百英里云。

環球社圖書部代售每本大洋六角

On the left side, we see the quiet scenery of a sunset commented by a line by the Tang poet Song Zhiwen (?–712). On the right side, the sun is reduced to a circle. The text describes the sun as a physical phenomenon, starting with definitions from authoritative classical texts from the *Shijing* or *Shuowen jiezi* and ending in a row of numbers containing astronomical calculations. Such a contrastive presentation of a poetic past and a rational technical present can also be found in several poems.

-u ----- { -A ----- j ----- i ---  
 ----- ~ ----- -A ----- -I -I ----- ] -`

Über dem Huangpu Dämmerungsglut  
 Baumzweige hängen herab in die Flut.  
 Hätte man früher vom Gaslicht gewußt,  
 hätt' nachts kein Öl brennen gemußt.<sup>38</sup>

Before the first electric lights were illuminated it was pretty dark in the Shanghai nights. Gas lamps had at times proved so unefficient, that a frustrated British observer commented,

”that it would be well if the lamp-posts were as visible during the night as they are by day”.<sup>39</sup> Moreover, the street lights were shut after midnight. The manager Little started to change this by introducing a full lightening from dusk to morning, first during fullmoon nights, when the Shanghai sky was especially cloudy, and later every day.<sup>40</sup>

Still, the physical illumination of Shanghai not only restructured concepts of time but also of accessible and inaccessible urban spaces. It privileged certain places, while it marginalised others. A reason, why the Chinese authorities were perhaps also not too happy about the new lights, was the fact, that among the first objects made stand out in the urban landscape of a pretty dark Shanghai were the symbols of the Western military power, as the Margary Memorial and the Taiping Memorial in the Public Garden at the Shanghai Bund.<sup>41</sup> Moreover, the discrepancy between the dark Chinese city and the bright modern settlement became even more lucid.<sup>42</sup>

Besides from privileging certain spaces, it also privileged a certain social stratum. One aspect that was frequently discussed, was therefore the high costs of electricity, which would leave the light in the hands of the wealthy, whereas gas would remain the ”poor man’s friend”, as O.W. Siemens had put it.<sup>43</sup> The *Shenbao* solves this pragmatically: only because it was expensive, it was exciting, *qi*, and gives a nice market oriented explanation about the fascination about the electric light:

”Electricity is in use, only because it is exciting (*qi*) and new (*xin*). Oil is in use because it is widespread and cheap. Exciting things are not cheap. And only because they are not cheap, these things arouses excitement. Cheap things are not exciting, and only because they are not exciting, things become cheap. And the reason, why something is exciting, is that it is new.”<sup>44</sup>

The above mentioned praised extension of the day into the night did have very practical consequences for a large part of the working population as it fostered the expansion of night work in the increasing modern urban institutions and in a growing entertainment industry. With the emergence of a variety of new social roles of night workers, urban reporters, flaneurs and night-revelers the urban night called for new behavioral models in terms of moral standards. Other poems therefore evoke the images of people being perfect Confucians during the day and decadent urbanites at night:

--- --L --- --A --- ~ --- m --- C --- --x  
 --- --s --- --g --- --A --- ] --q --- ] --- --p --- P

Lao Juan war ein Ausbund an sittlicher Tugend,  
 gelehrig, gehorsam seit frühester Jugend,  
 Doch als seine Mutter starb, - wer hätte das gedacht,  
 kauft er sich ein ”Starlet” um Mitternacht.<sup>45</sup>

Also the following story from the *Dianshizhai huabao* has this transformation of moral standard as a theme: A countryman from Fujian came to Hongkong for the first time and, when he could not sleep at night, took a stroll through the lanes in the neighbourhood. Suddenly he peered through a window brightly lid and observed - with abhorrence - two Chinese men molesting a Western women. As he told his friend the next day,

”they were performing all sorts of ignominious acts, thrusting their hands under her skirt, putting their hand up her sleeves and what not. Fearing that I might be caught looking at them, I rushed back”

At this the man’s friend burst out laughing because he could just not believe that this was true. Together they went back to the location, but all they could see was what you see here: A tailor’ s shop where Chinese workers were making dresses in the Western style.<sup>46</sup>



The countryman from Fujian immediately realized his error that he had taken the bamboo manikin for a real women. This example shows the complexity of the cultural transformation in this period, as it reflects which different cultural presumptions prevailed among the Chinese-

se countryman and the modern urbanite, and how these presumptions formed the actual perceptions. It is not of prime importance here, that the country fellow misinterpreted the situation, but that he took for granted, that such a behaviour was at all possible in the city, an option which the urbanite immediately repudiated. Perhaps he also had such an 0 assumption, because it was a Western woman together with Chinese men. But it is more plausible, that the country bumpkin generally not familiar with night work practice, presupposed that all activities in the night were immoral activities, or at least, very private nocturnal activities, and therefore immediately put this interaction in the night into a sexual context.

Nightwork had accordingly to be defended and explained, and this also among the urban readers of the newspapers and illustrated magazines. The last picture here shows, that even the journalists themselves, who introduced and invented a large part of these new models on their pages, were eager to make their own nightwork transparent and free themselves from any suspicion. The central position of the lamp in this picture is self-explaining – it is only the new light that makes this kind of new work for the new urbanites in a modern city possible.



## 8.

Finally the question remains, what this has to do with the general question of the conference. If an event is something, that structures a timeline in a "before" and "after", the electrification of Shanghai was certainly an event. It was not a "hot event", in terms of bringing radical changes to the society, yet it was hot, in a *longue duree* perspective that it brought radical transformations in the course of time. But it was also not "cold" in terms of freezing a status quo. But is a "cold" event thinkable at all, given the definition that an event breaks the time? In our case it would perhaps be more plausible to use this categories on the subjective and individual level, related to personal behaviour, attitudes and presumptions, which perhaps comes closer to the usage of these metaphors by Levi-Strauss or Jan Assmann. "Hot" and "cold" is there always related to cultural interpretation and not to an event or factual situation *per se*.

To simplify the whole thing for the matter of clearness for our purpose: A position is cold, when it opposes change, it is hot, when it fosters change. What should have become evident in this paper and what I have attempted to express with Stephen Greenblatt phrase of the "contingency of social practice", is that hot and cold positions are not too easy to be differentiated but are simulatenously to be found in the very same individual subjects. It is rather the outside temperature that decides the position of the individual: the very same thing is evaluated as good or bad in relation to the pressure under which the evaluator sees himself. Things are heatedly debated when individual interest are negotiated, while they are coolly commented, when the observer does not feel involved.

For a relaxed and cool flaneur in the lanes of Shanghai the electric light is a miracle and can be named as such. Yet it becomes a hot issue, when questions of moral behaviour are at stake. The country bumpkin arrives at Hongkong with such hot expectations that immediately make him associate the brightly lit window with immoral behaviour. Only the experienced urbanite can cool him down and dissipate his fears. The hot desires of the Confucian son can only seek relief at night and he is therefore coolheartedly ridiculed by settlement literati in popular poems. Also the magistrate Chen feels at ease among this literati fellows to incite them to compose poems on the beauty of the electric light, while he is at the same time coldheartened enough to prohibit the very same fellows to enjoythis beauty in practice. Presuming the pressure of his leadership, hotheadedly gives orders which are above the expectations of his superiors who instead are left cold by the issue and lift his ban again.

From this perspective, for the historical interpretator the thermometer becomes an essential tool. The contingency of social practice might lie in the fact, that it was probably hard to predict for all these individual actors in this small event in which hot or cold situation they would suddenly find themselves; and even the brightness of the cool electric light - the first light not producing heat - could not prevent that the fundamentals of this tiptoe walk between the hot and the cold remain mysteriously dark.



## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Representative for such explanations see: Yen-p'ing Hao & Wang Erh-min, "Changing Views of Western Relations, 1840 - 1895", in: Denis Twitchett & John K. Fairbank, *The Cambridge History of China, Vol 11, Late Ch'ing, 1800 - 1911, Pt. 2.*, Taipei: Caves Books, Ltd., 1989, p. 142 - 201.
- <sup>2</sup> "The Electric light in Shanghai", *North China Herald*, 1.9.1882.
- <sup>3</sup> Quoted in Hawks L. Francis Pott, *A Short History of Shanghai: Being an Account of the Growth and Development of the International Settlement*, Shanghai: Kelley & Walsh, 1928, p. 111.
- <sup>4</sup> Leung Yuen-Sang, *The Shanghai Taotai. Linkage Man in a Changing Society 1843 - 90*. Singapore: Singapore Univ. Pr., 1991, p. 78.
- <sup>5</sup> "The Native and the Foreign Authorities in Shanghai", *North China Herald*, 15. 11. 1882; "The Consitution of the Settlement", *North China Herald*, 13.12.1882.
- <sup>6</sup> "Chi cha diandeng", *Shenbao*, 1.11.1882, p.2; "Jinshi diandeng", *Shenbao*, 10.11.1882, p.2.
- <sup>7</sup> "The Electric light in Shanghai", *North China Herald*, 1.9.1882 and "The Electric light in Shanghai", *North China Herald*, 23. 9. 1882. Also the Liuhe Congtan starts his explanations on electricity with the remark, that in the beginning people were frightened by this technology in the West also, but now they acknowledge its advantages as a sign of progress. "Liuhe congtan xiaoyin", *Liube congtan*, Nr. 1, 26. Januar, 1857.
- <sup>8</sup> "The Telegraph in China", *North China Herald*, 15. 3. 1882, S. 277 - 278.
- <sup>9</sup> Z.B. "Hua Ying tongshang shilüe", *Liube congtan*, Nr. 2, 24. Februar 1857; "Taixi xinshi shulüe", *Liube congtan*, Nr. 4, 29. April 1857; "Ying gezhi dagonghui huiyi", *Liube congtan*, Nr. 11, 16. November 1857.
- <sup>10</sup> "Liuhe congtan xiaoyin", *Liube congtan*, Nr. 1, 26. Januar, 1857.
- <sup>11</sup> *Shengxue*, trsl. by Fu Lanya (John Fryer) and Xu Jianyin, Shanghai: Jiangnan zhizaoju, 1874 (Original: John Tyndall, *Sound*); *Dianxue gangmu*, trsl. by Fu Lanya und Zhou Xun, Shanghai: Jiangnan zhizaoju, 1881 (Original: John Tyndall: *Notes of a Course of Seven Lectures in Electricity*). *Dianxue yuanliu*, trsl. by Fu Lanya and Xu Jianyin, Shanghai: Datong shuju, 1888 (Original by Henry Noad, probably: *A Student's textbook of electricity*, London: Lockwood and Co. 1867).
- <sup>12</sup> Examples are quoted in Zhang Zhongli, (ed.), *Jindai Shanghai chengshi yanjiu*, Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1991, p. 243.
- <sup>13</sup> Guo Songtao, *Lundun yu Bali riji*, Reprinted in *Zou xiang shijie congshu*, Changsha: Yuelin chubanshe, 1984, p. 327 - 330.
- <sup>14</sup> Liu Xihong, *Yingyao suoji*, Reprinted in *Zou xiang shijie congshu*, Changsha: Yuelin chubanshe, 1986, p. 91.
- <sup>15</sup> "Official Obstructiveness in the Settlements", *North China Herald*, 27. 12. 1882, p. 689 - 690.
- <sup>16</sup> Leung Yuen-Sang, *The Shanghai Taotai. Linkage Man in a Changing Society 1843 - 90*, p. 78.
- <sup>17</sup> "Libi xianglai shuo", 9.11.1882, p.1.
- <sup>18</sup> "The Native and the Foreign Authorities in Shanghai", *North China Herald*, 15. 11. 1882, S. 522.
- <sup>19</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>20</sup> "Official Obstructiveness in the Settlements", *North China Herald*, 27. 12. 1882, p. 689 - 690.
- <sup>21</sup> "The Native and the Foreign Authorities in Shanghai", *North China Herald*, 15. 11. 1882, S. 522.
- <sup>22</sup> "The Tao-t'ai and the Settlement", *North China Herald*, 29.11. 1882, p. 582.
- <sup>23</sup> It is the same Daotai who had closed down the rather successful semi-official newspaper *Xinbao*.
- <sup>24</sup> "The Tao-t'ai and the Settlement", *North China Herald*, 29. 11. 1882, p. 582.

- <sup>25</sup> "The Electric Light", *North China Herald*, 24. 1. 1883, p. 87-88.
- <sup>26</sup> "Gas vs. Electricity", *North China Herald*, 15.11. 1882.
- <sup>27</sup> "Dr. O.W. Siemens on Electric Lighting", *North China Herald*, 24. 1. 1883, p. 106 -107.
- <sup>28</sup> See the minutes of the Public Meetings of the Municipal Council published in the *North China Herald* on 1.11.1882 and 17.1.1883, resp. "The Electric Light", *North China Herald*, 24.1.1883.
- <sup>29</sup> Erik Baark, *Lightning Wires. The Telegraph and China's Technological Modernization, 1860 - 1890*, Westport, Connecticut & London: Greenwood Press, 1997, p. 71.
- <sup>30</sup> "The Chinese Authorities in Shanghai, - To the Editor of the *North China Daily News*", *North China Herald*, 22. 11. 1882, p. 566.
- <sup>31</sup> "The Tao-t'ai and the Settlement", *North China Herald*, 29. 11. 1882, p. 582.
- <sup>32</sup> "The constitution of the settlement", *North China Herald*, 13.12.1882.
- <sup>33</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>34</sup> See examples in Gu Binqun (ed.), *Shanghai yangchang zhuzhici*, Shanghai: Shanghai shudian chubanshe, 1996. Quoted here: *Shanghai yangchang zhuzhici*, p. 79 - 92, p. 79, published in 1887; and "Chunshenpu zhuzhici", p. 48 - 61, p. 53. The editors assume that the poem was written between 1878 and 1880. See also "Haishang zuzhici", p. 3 - 27, p. 11. This selection was collected by Yuan Zuzhi and contains mainly poems sent in by readers of the *Shenbao*. It was published in 1872 (Ibid. p. 442). Another example on p. 79, was published in 1887 in the *Shenbao*;
- <sup>35</sup> Wang Tao, *Manyou suilu*, Reprinted in *Zou xiang shijie congshu*, Changsha: Yuelin chubanshe, 1982, p. 96.
- <sup>36</sup> Zhang Deyi, *Suisbi Ying E ji*, Reprinted in *Zou xiang shijie congshu*, Changsha: Yuelin chubanshe, 1986, p. 332.
- <sup>37</sup> On the European context see Joachim Schlör, *Nachts in der grossen Stadt. Paris, Berlin, London, 1840 - 1930*, München & Zürich: Artemis & Winkler, 1991; Beate Binder, *Elektrifizierung als Vision. Zur Symbolgeschichte einer Technik im Alltag*, Tübingen: Vereinigung für Volkskunde, 1999.
- <sup>38</sup> Luoru huaguan zhuren, "Chunshenpu zhuzhici", Gu Binqun (ed.), *Shanghai yangchang zhuzhici*, p. 41 - 47, p. 41, published in 1874 in the *Shenbao*.
- <sup>39</sup> G. Lanning & S. Couling, *The History of Shanghai*, Shanghai et.al.: Kelly & Walsh, Ltd., 1921, Reprint: Taipei: Chengwen Publishing Company, 1973, p. 449.
- <sup>40</sup> See the minutes of the Public Meetings of the Municipal Council published in the *North China Herald* on 1.11.1882 and 17.1.1883.
- <sup>41</sup> The first line of fifteen lamps went from the Power station in Nanjing Road to the parts of the wharf of the Chinese Merchants Co. rented by the Electric Light Co. as the farthest place, from there it is returning to the Astor House at the Garden Bridge, runs through the Public Garden, from where it illuminates the Suzhou Road and Consular Compound as well as Peking Road and the Bund and then returned to the Station. "The Electric Light in Shanghai", *North China Herald*, 23.9.1882.
- <sup>42</sup> Already in 1874 the missionary Young Allen had proposed to collect money to erect lamp posts in the Chinese part of the city, but this remained a unsuccessful attempt. "Quan xianchu sheli gandeng shuo", *Wangguo gongbao*, VII: 306 (10. Oktober 1874). p. 84.
- <sup>43</sup> "Gas vs. Electricity", *North China Herald*, 15.11.1882.
- <sup>44</sup> "Lun dianqi deng zhi yong", *Shenbao*, 7.11.1882, p.1.
- <sup>45</sup> Liu Huogong, "Shanghai zhuzhici", Gu Binqun (ed.), *Shanghai yangchang zhuzhici*, p. 242 - 259, p. 242.
- <sup>46</sup> "Much Ado About Nothing", selection from the *Dianshizhai huabao*, trsl. by Yang Qinghua with Don J. Cohn, *Renditions*, Nr. 29

## Writing with Fire

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### PRC Newspaper Making in High Temperature Times

by Nicolai Volland, Heidelberg

*“und schrieb und schrieb an weißer Wand,  
Buchstaben von Feuer und schrieb und schwand”  
“and wrote in letters of red flame,  
and wrote, and vanished the way it came”  
(Heinrich Heine, Belsazar)*

With extraordinarily powerful words, Heinrich Heine in his ballad *Belsazar*<sup>1</sup> has created a mystical and ominous atmosphere, drawing us into the king's palace in ancient Babylon. Three elements stand out in these short lines: one is the fire, expression not just of the impending danger, but also of the extraordinary situation of the unusual event; next, the writing itself: the power of the written word; and, finally, the imminent menace of power bringing about disaster, when the written becomes unintelligible to the audience.

The actuality of these lines written almost 200 years ago is easy to get lost in a society confronted with an ever-growing amount of written and printed information, but is readily understood in a socialist society such as the People's Republic of China (PRC), where the written still assumes and represents a position of direct political power. This power is being acclaimed on notice of exclusivity by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). Power is mediated through institutions of the press, particularly by newspapers. The press, however, finds itself in a precarious position: while its task is the proliferation of unambiguous messages to the audience, the press itself is highly dependent on unambiguous signals from the party leadership. Under routine circumstances, this crucial unambiguity is ensured by a complex, rule-based system. In times of political upheaval, however, communication channels may become dysfunctional and hierarchies brake down. When events are unfolding in a high-temperature mode and decisions are made on an ad hoc basis, newspapers find themselves on totally

unknown terrain. To show, how the heat of historic events affects newspaper making in a socialist country, and how the role of newspapers in turn changes under such circumstances, is the aim of the present paper.

## The Role of the Newspaper in a Socialist Society

Newspapers are undoubtedly one of the key elements that have formed and transformed modernity. Back in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the press became a major institution of what Jürgen Habermas has termed the ‘public sphere.’ In his words, the public sphere is “die Sphäre der zum Publikum versammelten Privatleute;”<sup>2</sup> it was through “public reasoning” in the press, through magazines and newspapers that publicity was able to penetrate the limitations of teahouses and coffee shops in the European cities. The public sphere is thus a space in between the sphere of the state and that of the private individual. While being clearly concerned with public, that is political, matters, the public sphere is basically populated by *privatiers*; it thus ‘sides’ with society against the state. With regard to the twentieth century, Habermas observes the ‘structural transformation’ of the classical bourgeois public sphere, that is, the politicization of the life-world, and, with it, the public sphere. Habermas has not, however, discussed the radicalization of this process: a state actively laying claim to the public sphere and transforming it into its very own property, through political intervention or outright acquisition. Yet this is what has happened in the socialist countries that have emerged in the twentieth century. In the nineteenth century, Hegel and Marx criticized the bourgeois public sphere as an ideology rather than an idea,<sup>3</sup> and thus laid the groundwork for the denunciation of the press as an institution of the suppression of classes by other classes. It is in this argument, that the class character of the institutions of the public sphere, namely of newspapers, is established. This argument has become standard reference in the socialist world: “A newspaper acts as the conveyer of the policy and ideology of one or another class, party, or social group... The Marxist newspaper openly links its activity with the interests of the working class.”<sup>4</sup> So when the state became the state of the working class after the revolution, all class-based institutions, including the press, changed their position in the relationship between state and society. Newspapers remained, after all, an instrument of state-society mediation. But, they sided no longer with society against the state, but rather sided with the party-state. This decisive change affected not only the position of newspapers, but all the more the definition of their role and of their tasks. Were they mainly an instrument of exposing and attacking the bourgeois pre-revolutionary state, newspapers were now declared to be “not only a collective propagandist and a collective agitator, but also a collective organizer.”<sup>5</sup> Newspapers were thus becoming part of the Communist Party’s effort to organize society along socialist lines, a piece in the project of socialist construction.

The newspapers' new status was characterized in China with the term 'mouthpiece' (*boushe*), literally "throat and tongue." Liu Shaoqi, who later became CCP chairman, introduced this term in China in 1948 in an address to Chinese journalists: "Your pen is the pen of the people, you are the ears and eyes, throat and tongue of the party and the people."<sup>6</sup> This slogan became immensely popular after 1949 and was still in use to define the role of the press in the 1980s.<sup>7</sup> It should be noted, however, that the ambiguity of Liu Shaoqi's lines did not get lost entirely on Chinese newspapers staff, who in 1989 referred to "throat and tongue of the party *and the people*" in their protests.

In practical terms, newspapers were delegated to the propaganda sector in the party's work. The communist parties usually created propaganda departments directly under their central committee to oversee and direct the entire propaganda work under their jurisdiction. Newspapers, with their large circulation and their ability of immediate relation of information of current concern, are a key component in the overall propaganda apparatus.

If newspapers are a key medium for the penetration of society and the dissemination of information carefully considered by the party-state, unambiguity is one of the core principles for newspaper work. The newspaper is speaking on behalf of the party, it expresses the official opinion, the party 'line.' Not only would ambiguous messages in the newspapers undermine the credibility of the party, – is there not one but two parties? has the party lost its direction? doesn't the leadership know what to do? – ambiguity would leave open spaces of interpretation the control of which would lie outside the reaches of party power. While strategic ambiguity of political messages relied by newspapers may be a considered means to create maneuvering space for the party's cadres, it would always be formulated in a way to allow the sophisticated reader a secure guess on the party's basic direction and avoid any hint of ongoing discussions within the leadership or even dissenting opinions. The authoritative leadership that guides the country presents itself in the same unambiguous way in its newspapers. The fight against ambiguity in China, as in other socialist nations, has been comprehensive and reaches down even to the definition of official language. Documents from the 1950s and 1960s reveal Mao Zedong's concern with details in newspaper language: "one single [correct] formulation, and the whole nation will flourish; one single [incorrect] formulation, and the whole nation will decline."<sup>8</sup> In 1955 the chief of the State Press Administration, Hu Qiaomu, regularly summoned young newspaper staff to his office for "breakfast chats" in which he scrutinized newspaper articles of the day before;<sup>9</sup> and the internal propaganda bulletin *Xuanchuan dongtai* in the late 1970s and early 1980s repeatedly denounced articles using 'wrong' or 'inappropriate' language<sup>10</sup> – language that might give wrong impressions of the party's intentions or lead to unsolicited policy interpretations, and thus would undermine the unambiguous authoritative leadership of the party.

Elimination of ambiguity is not just an ambition of the leadership. The media audiences have become used to the press relating unambiguous messages to them for use as guides to action and behavior. Newspaper readers in the PRC have developed sophisticated reading

techniques that allow them to detect even minor nuances in standard texts that might indicate a shift in policy. Such scrutiny of official publications requires a high degree of textual stability and works on the assumption of an unambiguous, intended message of an unambiguous, unified central leadership at the center of every text. The reader in Chinese newspaper theory is identified with “the people,” the generalized object of all the party’s policies.<sup>11</sup> In its effort to educate and lead the people as a whole, the party, the working class’s vanguard, addresses the people by way of the newspaper. Yet newspapers do also have the additional function of measuring the responsiveness of the addressee and communicating opinions and complaints of the people upwards. In this process, the letter-to-the-editor department has a crucial function and works closely with the propaganda departments that are responsible for the dissemination of unambiguous written messages.<sup>12</sup>

The system of encouraging strong belief in the written word as the expression of the politically correct has, on the whole, served socialist countries such as the PRC well in their routine communication with their populations. The political power of the party has been translated directly into discursive power through a hierarchy that has been accepted overwhelmingly by the audiences. However, a communication system based to such high a degree on the precondition of stability and unambiguity becomes a liability in the case when these preconditions do no longer exist, i.e. when dissent within the leadership becomes visible beyond the confines of the inner circles of power. Then, the very same system may contribute to further erosion of the political order and thus turn against those who created it. This is likely to happen in times when the political temperature rises and events get out of hand. Before discussing two such cases in modern Chinese history, let us consider the processes of newspaper making under the ‘normal’ conditions of a temperate climate.

### Socialist Newspaper Production under Normal Circumstances

Newspaper production in the PRC is subject to a very rigorous routine that is established by a framework of rules and prescriptions. While newspaper personnel in non-socialist societies is subject to similar rules, these usually originate from the newspaper leadership’s instructions or from convention, reflecting the ‘private’ capacity of the press in capitalist countries. In China, where the media ‘side’ with the state, it is the state which is responsible for establishing the rules that determine newspaper making.

As most areas of daily life, Chinese newspapers are submitted to the authority of the double hierarchies of party and state. The State Press and Publication Administration (SPPA) is a state body; it answers to the State Council, the Chinese government. The SPPA regulates the business and administrative affairs of the majority of newspapers.<sup>13</sup> The more important source of guidance, however, is the party’s powerful Propaganda Department, a body directly under the CCP Central Committee. It has constant access to the leadership and is therefore regarded

as the locus of authoritative guidance as well as authoritative information. Policies formulated at the party center are communicated to the newspapers by the Propaganda Department directly or via the state-owned New China News Agency. Especially the major national newspapers have very close ties to the Propaganda Department or even the Central Committee, often through personnel appointments: the editor-in-chief or other high officials on their boards may concurrently hold posts in the Propaganda Department or otherwise have direct links to the Propaganda Department; thus, a direct communication channel is vital especially for the major papers so that instructions on policies and latest information can be passed downwards.

Both long-term objectives and day-to-day routines in the newspapers are regulated by strings of hierarchical organization. Immediately after assuming power the CCP started to build up a system of rules that regulated anything from the types and classification of newspapers to their sources of information. The “Decision of the General Press Administration of the Central People’s Government on Improving Newspaper Work” (May 1, 1950), for example, not only established a clear distinction between ‘central’ and ‘regional’ newspapers, but gave detailed instructions concerning newspapers’ content (coverage centered on economic construction), the required professional level of journalists and even their organization.<sup>14</sup> Newspapers were urged, for example, to establish a network of ‘correspondents’ among basic level cadres such as workers and peasants in order to increase their ties with the masses.

Other early instructions established a uniform table of contents for newspapers that was adopted all over the country: major news and the activities of party leaders are to be reported on the first page, economics on page two, other news on page three, and foreign news are usually to be found on the last page. Literature, health information, and other topics were delegated to regular supplements.<sup>15</sup> Regarding the major upheavals that dotted the PRC’s half-century history it is remarkable that most of these early guidelines are firm in place today and enjoy unquestioned validity.

Detailed prescriptions affect even seemingly technical questions such as page layout. In 1997, the *People’s Daily*, the organ of the CCP Central Committee and thus the country’s most important newspaper, published a large illustrated volume entitled *Handbook on the People’s Daily’s Layout*.<sup>16</sup> The volume contains reproductions of *People’s Daily* pages, classified according to important recurring subjects such as party congresses, major celebrations etc., each with a short description, summing up the points that attention should be paid to. The aim of the work, as stated in the foreword, is “to provide our sister publications with reference material” on how to report on major issues.<sup>17</sup> In this way, other newspaper editors may check on how to report on Labor day parades, the party secretary visiting a foreign country, or the death of a politburo member; he may find not just information on how to place arrange articles and photographs, but even recommendations concerning the appropriate typeface.<sup>18</sup> Even layout is thus not left to the editors’ decision, but is subject to instructions that limit ambiguity as far as possible.

Routine life in a Chinese newspaper is characterized by many more guidelines and conventions that govern the daily schedule of newspaper production. On a normal workday, most of the articles are written over the day and finished by 6 p.m. One editor of each department, however, must stay on to around 8 p.m. in case any changes are required. The exception is the department responsible for the front page, which gets active in the evening only. The final layout of the frontpage is often decided not until late in the night, because the recommended headlines are transmitted by the Xinhua news agency at midnight only; this means that Chinese newspapers go considerably later to press than newspapers in western countries. The editor-in-chief must stay in contact with his office until late in the evening; the propaganda department, too, holds constant contact with the major newspapers and gives instructions on issues of importance. The final decision on the front page, and usually for the entire newspaper, rests with the head of the frontpage department, who usually is the vice editor-in-chief and has a night-time working schedule.<sup>19</sup>

A special case of newspaper routine concerns editorial writing. Editorials in Chinese newspapers “do not obtain their authority from their viewpoints, analyses of events, or good writing style, but from their position as a vehicle of command;” they are intended to represent the voice of the leadership and are consequently understood as such.<sup>20</sup> Commentaries and editorials are usually initiated or requested by the party leadership; the request is then communicated to the newspaper, where the editorial is drafted and then sent to the leadership for inspection and revision (alternatively, newspapers may receive finished commentaries written by party leaders with an order for publication, in which case the paper cannot do any changes in the text). Important editorials of the *People's Daily* must be reprinted in full length and without changes in lower level newspapers, thus increasing their prominence and reach. While the newspaper personnel's influence on these items of their paper is particularly limited under normal circumstances, the formulation of editorials has played a key role in times of political upheaval.

## Newspapers and the Event: Two Case Studies

The system of newspaper production is built around the assumption of a unified party leadership sending forth unambiguous information that is communicated downwards to the readers in a hierarchical system. While this system is an idealized structure that does not entirely correspond with reality - newspaper editors at all times have understood to communicate their own messages to the readers or deflect messages they did not agree with<sup>21</sup> – the leverage of editors is small and on the whole the system works well as long as the basic preconditions are intact. When the political temperature rises, however, newspapers find themselves on uncharted terrain: when factional battles break through the confines of the Central Committee, the net of formal and informal communication channels between the press and various government and party agencies and individual leaders turns into a minefield. In



such cases, newspaper editors must interpret confusing and sometimes contradictory pieces of information to formulate a news story they assume might correspond with the party line – whoever may represent this line at any given moment. When the speed of daily life accelerates and politics assumes an ever-more event-like character, unpredictable for any single actor, newspapers, under regular circumstances but a link in the chain of hierarchical communication, the party's 'mouthpiece', become a player on their own account, participating and contributing to the still unfolding event. Two such cases are discussed on the next pages.

### *Newspapers and the Cultural Revolution*

What today is called the 'ten-year disaster' in official CCP terminology, the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), that brought the country to the brink of civil war, actually started off as – the battle over a newspaper article. In 1961, the renowned historian and, concurrently, vice-mayor of Beijing, Wu Han, joined in a trend of writing 'new historical dramas' to criticize present circumstances by analogy with the past.<sup>22</sup> Wu Han's drama *Hai Rui Dismissed From Office*<sup>23</sup> centered on a loyal Ming-dynasty (1368-1644) official who courageously criticized the emperor's wrong-doing and was but one of several Hai Rui plays emerging in the late 1950s and early 1960s. While the mild criticism disguised in the historical analogy was understood by the audiences, the play did never really gain prominence. On November 10, 1965, however, the Shanghai daily *Wenhuibao*, a prominent newspaper of national reach, came up with a fierce attack on Wu Han, denouncing his play as a "poisonous weed" and calling for action against the author.<sup>24</sup> The lengthy and overly scholarly article, containing extensive quotes from Ming dynasty sources, went unnoticed for several days. Only much later, the real background of the article emerged, a story that has been written many times:<sup>25</sup> the article was commissioned by a group of young leftists around Mao's wife Jiang Qing and Shanghai mayor Ke Qingshi, who resented the rather moderate line promoted by the mainstream party faction in Beijing. They decided to vent their frustration in an attack on the Beijing vice-mayor Wu Han by concentrating on his play; several drafts of the article were written clandestinely: only Mao and a small group of Jiang Qing's followers were informed.<sup>26</sup> Drafting of the article took almost half a year, with Mao himself reading and approving the final drafts, the last of which was finally published in the Shanghai *Wenhuibao* – publication would have been impossible in Beijing.

Calls for reprinting the article in the Beijing newspapers soon emerged from the leftist faction; a demand the Beijing-based national newspapers resisted with backing from the mayor of Beijing and other powerful politburo members who had command of the press hierarchy. The editors in Beijing, however, found themselves on the wrong side, when Mao himself urged republication of the article in question and the opponents of the leftists had to give in. The article finally appeared, after a delay of almost three weeks in *Beijing Daily*, the organ of the Beijing party municipal committee, and *People's Daily*, the country's most authoritative newspaper.<sup>27</sup> The starting shoot for the Cultural Revolution had been fired and the way it was

fired gave a strong hint to the perilous position in which newspaper personnel would find themselves in the later, ever heavier clashes between emerging factions within the party leadership that no longer spoke with a unified voice, but sent out conflicting messages that left the editors to decide on their own how to interpret the signals reaching them.

Even in the case of the article attacking Wu Han, the signs were not yet pointing unambiguously toward conflict. While the CCP propaganda department and the Beijing municipal government corrected their earlier position, they tried to limit the impact of the article by advising the editors of *People's Daily* to publish the article only with an introductory note that tried to limit the discussion to the academic field and to play down the political character of the affair.<sup>28</sup> Carefully worded, the note argued that the debate would “involve the problem of how to deal with historical characters and plays, what viewpoint should be adopted in the study of history and what form of art should be used to reflect historical characters and events”, and invited “readers among historians, philosophers, and writers and artists” to “participate in this debate.”<sup>29</sup> It was this introductory note that provided the leftist faction around Jiang Qing with additional firepower: soon after they went on to attack the Beijing municipal committee, accusing it of trying to cover up the ‘crimes’ committed by Wu Han and resisting Mao’s orders, thus gradually widening the scope of attack. What began as a seemingly academic discussion emerged to be a battle over the control of the country’s newspapers, the prime institutions of propaganda in the socialist public sphere. The newspaper staff themselves were understandably the first to be caught in the crossfire: those editors found ‘guilty’ of relying on the orders of their superiors in the information channel were the first to be punished. In late May 1966, Mao approved the decision to send a ‘working group’ to *People's Daily* and the Xinhua news agency to reshuffle their leadership and temporarily take over direct control of day-to-day affairs. *People's Daily* was thus taken over by the leftists on the evening of May 31.<sup>30</sup> *People's Daily*, the country’s leading newspaper, however, emerged from the struggle with its reputation and standing badly damaged.

In the summer of 1966, when the temperatures rose and with them the political temperature, Mao finally decided to push the lingering conflict between him and his perceived opponents to the brink. The way in which he did so is revealing for the situation of the press in these days of accelerating dynamic. On August 5, Mao came out with a wall-poster, entitled “Bombard the Headquarters – My Big-Character-Poster,” to endorse the informal Red Guard groups of middle and high school students that had sprung up in the past weeks.<sup>31</sup> Mao’s wall-poster was consequently widely published and served to encourage the leftist faction in their assault on the central party leadership. In a considered move, Mao did not use the main medium employed for mass propaganda under normal circumstances, the newspapers; rather, by sending out his message through the medium of the rapidly evolving event, the wall-poster, he placed himself over the formal system of communication. When he sidelined the party organization by encouraging the Red Guards, he also sidelined the official party press.

Mao signaled that politics was shifting into a different gear, moving at a higher pitch. In the event that was about to start, the roles of all players were to undergo momentous changes.

The party newspapers had been a central player in the early stages of the movement. The editors of the major newspapers had acted and reacted in the ways they were used to, their behavior was that of routine times: flexing to authority and transmitting the messages that were reaching them through the formal channels. Their ability to satisfy the wishes of the Chairman Mao, however, was reduced by the fact that they were unable – as was anybody else at that point of time – to detect that the party authorities were not speaking the same language as Mao; unambiguity got lost. Watching the newspapers' behavior, who were in fact acting according to the rules, Mao got convinced that the propaganda apparatus was slow and reluctant to support his line and finally decided to rely no longer on these formal channels of information flow. His wall-paper signaled to the country that Chinese politics were preparing for a real revolution; in the revolutionary event, organizational lines that had characterized the life of the Chinese people to this point could no longer be counted on.

By sidelining, at this crucial point, the newspapers, the centerpiece of the of the propaganda apparatus, Mao demolished the authority of the newspapers (and of the formally written, in general) to a large degree. The breakdown of their authority in the coming months was indeed dramatic, when across the country hundreds of newspapers and almost all other publications were closed down.<sup>32</sup> Throughout the early years of the Cultural Revolution, only a handful of newspapers continued publication. They derived their authority not from their formal status in the socialist system, but from their closeness to Mao; their authority was in fact his. For the smaller newspapers, mostly organs of the provincial party committees, the blow was particularly serious. Most of them virtually ceased to function as independent papers and filled their pages with citations from Mao, jubilant images and pictures provided by the Xinhua news agency, and, mostly, reprints of articles and editorials from the “two papers and one magazine.” What was not reprinted was copied almost word by word. The only publications to preserve authority throughout the Cultural Revolution were indeed the *People's Daily*, the *Liberation Army Daily*, and the *Red Flag* magazine (even the latter closed down for several months in 1968), the “two papers and one magazine.” After their reorganization in the summer of 1966, they had the closest connections to Mao and the new ‘Cultural Revolution Small Group’ around Jiang Qing and were thus able to draw on the personal authority of these highest leaders, as opposed to the formal organizational authority that had characterized the press system before the Cultural Revolution.

The newspapers were dealt a final blow in January 1967, bringing down the shell of what had remained of the papers' prestige. On January 3, a coalition of radical leftist Red Guard organizations stormed the building of the Shanghai *Wenhuibao*, the paper that had published the first attack on Mao's opponents. They forced the newspaper leadership to resign and replaced them with their own people in what became known as the first “power seizure” of the Cultural Revolution.<sup>33</sup> The next day, *Wenhuibao* appeared with a new ‘revolutionary out-

fit:’ the carefully calligraphed words “Wenhuibao” that had been the proud of the paper for more than twenty-five years, had been replaced by a big square type font. Only two items appeared on the frontpage, both with headlines in overdimensional red letters. The first was a 1957 editorial from *People’s Daily* written by Mao himself, criticizing bourgeois tendencies at *Wenhuibao*. The second item was entitled “Letter to the readers by the *Wenhuibao*’s ‘One spark can start a prairie fire’<sup>34</sup> revolutionary rebel department” in which the new power-holders of the paper proclaimed their “revolutionary action” and promised a thorough shake-up of *Wenhuibao*, in order to publish a “revolutionary newspaper.”

Other Shanghai newspapers followed the example of *Wenhuibao* suit. Only a day later, on January 5, *Liberation Daily*, formerly the organ of the Shanghai CCP Party Committee announced its own power seizure and declared to submit no longer to the municipal party committee. Other newspapers and all kinds of organizations as well as enterprises and factories were consequently taken over by “revolutionary rebels;” the power seizures meant the replacement of the official head by the leaders of the rebel organizations. Thus, *Wenhuibao* had fired the starting shot for what became known as the “Shanghai storm” and was the most turbulent period of the Cultural Revolution.

All over the country self-declared rebels started seizing power from the formal authorities. The temperature had reached boiling point and history was “happening,” forces unleashed, unable to be controlled by anyone involved. While this “January storm” fundamentally reshaped the political landscape, it meant the total breakdown of the newspapers’ world, a crushing defeat for the “throat and tongue of the party.” Their institutional structure was lying in shambles, their authority was damaged when credibility became a question of factional alliance. Most papers were closed and the few that remained were no longer the authoritative institutions speaking on behalf of the party but were reduced to mere appendices on the Cultural Revolution Small Group. Gone, too, were knowledge and professionalism with the majority of editors and writers denounced, demoted, imprisoned or sent to the countryside. The few personnel that remained were able to produce not more than dull, monotonous repetitions of revolutionary slogans. The newspapers had played a key role in the first months of the movement; little more than a year later they had become casualties of the heat of the event and had all but ceased to be self-conscious political actors in Chinese politics.

### *Newspapers and the June Fourth, 1989, Democracy Movement*

After the end of the Cultural Revolution, in the late 1970s and early 1980s, the institutional structure of the state was rebuilt: organizations that had ceased to exist were reestablished, bureaucracies revived and procedural routine was brought back to all levels of government and administration - including the press and media apparatus. In the 1980s, newspapers regained their status and authority as a mediating institution in between state and society, so that in 1985 Hu Yaobang, CCP general secretary and Deng Xiaoping’s designated successor, could publicly reiterate the credo of the newspapers being the “throat and tongue of the

party.”<sup>35</sup> Not only was the reconstruction of the press and media sector a great success; publications of all kinds expanded far beyond pre-Cultural Revolution levels in quantity and reach and made forays into new territory such as entertainment.<sup>36</sup>

The mid and late 1980s have become known for the liberal intellectual climate and the astonishing depth of the discussions taking place among the Chinese intelligentsia.<sup>37</sup> The state withdrew from many areas of social life not directly related to politics. The blooming of entertainment, fashion and colors notwithstanding, however, the basic tenets of the socialist state remained unchanged. This holds true especially for the media sector. While newspapers, radio stations and TV were given green light to attract audiences by almost every means they thought necessary, the basic “mouthpiece” character of the press was never revoked.<sup>38</sup>

In the atmosphere of the late 1980s, however, calls from different social strata were getting louder that economic reform should be accompanied by political reform and that the Chinese people should be given increased leverage over their rulers.<sup>39</sup> Student demonstrations erupted in 1986 and again in 1988. In 1989, finally, the death of former party secretary Hu Yaobang, who been held in high esteem by the Chinese people even after his dismissal in late 1986, triggered the series of events that led to the dramatic Democracy Movement and the bloody crackdown on June 4, 1989.

Hu Yaobang died on April 15, 1989. Within days, small numbers of students posted wallpapers commemorating Hu, but also asking questions: why had Hu been removed in 1986? Why hadn't he been rehabilitated? On April 23, a paradox situation evolved: while inside the 'Great Hall of the People' China's political elite attended the official mourning ceremony for Hu, outside the hall, on Tiananmen Square, almost 100,000 students peacefully held their own ceremony. TV broadcast the official event live, but the press was silent on the students' activity. Only three days later did the official press react, albeit in an unexpected manner: on April 26, *People's Daily* published an extremely harsh editorial that condemned the demonstrations on Tiananmen square as a “planned complott” and “turmoil” created “by a very small number of people with ulterior motives.” It urged the readers to take “a clear-cut stand against turmoil” and against people who “hurl invectives and attack party and state leaders; they openly violated the constitution and incited opposition to the leadership of the Communist Party and the socialist system.”<sup>40</sup> The editorial's aggressive tone stood in marked contrast to the rather conciliatory tones of a few days earlier. The students who had regarded their demonstrations as an expression of patriotic behavior felt insulted and reacted with angry protests.

The consequential April 26 editorial had not been written by *People's Daily* staff, as later emerged. It was based on an internal speech by Deng Xiaoping, discussing how to deal with the student demonstrations.<sup>41</sup> The editors of *People's Daily* were forced to print the editorial, that was also broadcast over television, without any amendments. They had no choice but to act as the party's mouthpiece and complying with the instructions handed down to them in the chain of command. The political temperature was still cool enough to allow the newspapers to work in the framework of bureaucratic routine, but the atmosphere was heating up rapidly.

The April 26 editorial proved to be a watershed in the entire democracy movement. A day later, thousands of students marched in protest to Tiananmen square and demanded to be recognized as patriotic; they wanted the government to step back from its hardline position and to apologize for the harsh tone of the editorial. The editorial thus had the adverse effect that the positions of both sides became entrenched and the hardliners in both the camps of the students and the government were strengthened, leading to a stalemate.

Another event of spring 1989 involving the press was instrumental in radicalizing the demands the students confronted the government with: the closure of the *World Economic Herald*, a Shanghai-based weekly newspaper with a strong reputation for its liberal standpoint.<sup>42</sup> When the editors prepared the issue for April 23, they decided to include contributions by a number of eminent intellectuals commemorating the deceased Hu Yaobang. Censors from the Shanghai CCP Propaganda Department, however, found offending passages in some of the articles and ordered amendments, a demand that was refused by the paper's editor-in-chief, who saw himself acting in line with the signals coming from Beijing. During the following stalemate, a small number of the original issue was distributed, further enraging the authorities. The revised issue appeared finally with a four-day delay, time enough, however, to direct public attention to the ongoing struggle at the newspaper. A work team was sent to the paper from Beijing and its popular editor-in-chief was dismissed from office. Further editions of the newspaper were stalled by the continuing stalemate between the work group and the paper's staff, angered over the sacking of their head. The *Herald's* last issue appeared on May 15, after which it was indeterminately closed down by the Shanghai authorities. By this time, the *World Economic Herald* affair had drawn the spotlights of the international press and was widely discussed in Shanghai and Beijing, further aggravating the students' anger and leading to ever louder demands for press freedom. The temperature had reached boiling point.

While heated discussions were already taking place within the newspaper offices prior to April 26, the media had so far behaved loyal to the state and in line with their mouthpiece function, minor expressions of dissent notwithstanding.<sup>43</sup> This changed in the last days of April when Zhao Ziyang, the CCP general secretary, returned to China from a state visit to North Korea and distanced himself publicly from the April 26 editorial. He reiterated this point a few days later in an address to the Asian Development Bank meeting on May 4. The political center ceased to be speaking with a single, unambiguous voice; the existence of differences of opinion within the leadership surfaced. Politics rapidly lost any degree of predictability and what happened both within the Zhongnanhai leadership compound and on the streets around Tiananmen Square took on an event-like character.

In this situation, behavior of the Chinese newspapers changed rapidly. With their rule-based environment losing credibility, the editorial staff recognized the opportunity to react favorably to Zhao Ziyang's rather conciliatory line and started reporting on the ever increasing demonstrations in Beijing. Newspapers all over the country joined such lone voices as the *Science and Technology Daily* that had been the first to give coverage to the students' mourning

ceremony on Tiananmen square.<sup>44</sup> The papers started reporting the events in Beijing on April 29, when the state-owned TV station broadcast a meeting between state leaders and the students.<sup>45</sup> In the two weeks after Zhao Ziyang's May 4 speech, the newspapers felt, to their own astonishment, that they could report almost freely on the situation without anybody effectively interfering; the propaganda apparatus seemed paralyzed. In the absence of unambiguous information reaching them from above, the papers had to take their own decisions. Chinese newspapers in this two-week period found themselves in a state of suspense and reported on the movement virtually free of any constraint; a period that later was characterized as a short time of press freedom. A rallying point for the press was the hunger strike that more than three thousand students announced on May 13 to give substance to their demands. The newspapers used the opportunity of state leaders such as Zhao Ziyang and Li Peng visiting hospitals and urging the students to end their strike for a tremendous increase in coverage of the movement. On May 18, almost the entire front page of *People's Daily* was filled with articles on the hunger strike,<sup>46</sup> accompanied by pictures of the students and their demonstrations; the newspaper now printed openly the students' catalog of demands. Clearly distinguishable on some of the newspaper pictures of this and the two days thereafter were the banners of the demonstrators demanding democratization and acknowledgment for their movement. This kind of coverage had been unthinkable just a few weeks earlier and signaled strongly the breakdown of the formal communication and propaganda system, caused by the rift within the central leadership.

It was only a step from sympathetic reporting to active participation in the movement: in the heat of early May, Beijing newspaper staff went on a soul searching journey in an effort to redefine their role and their responsibility towards society. They felt that they identified with many of the students' demands and that they had much to gain from a permanent change of their situation.

On April 30, staff from the *Asia-Pacific Economic Times*, a minor Guangzhou based paper, organized the first journalists' meeting at their Beijing offices.<sup>47</sup> The discussions led to the participation of about two hundred journalists in a large demonstration on May 4, the first time something like this happened in PRC history. An increasing number of journalists joined further demonstrations over the next days, publicly expressing their solidarity with the students on the square. Journalists were carrying banners with the names of their institutions saying "Don't force us to spread rumors,' 'Our pens cannot write what we want to write,' 'I love free press,' and 'Free minds, free press.'"<sup>48</sup>

The journalists went further on May 9 with a petition to the central leadership signed by more than 1000 journalists from thirty news units. The petition demanded a dialogue between journalists and government on various issues of press reform.<sup>49</sup> In the coming two weeks, more petitions were sent to the leaders. An open letter dated May 18 intervened on behalf of the students: "we hope that [CCP] general secretary Zhao Ziyang and Premier Li Peng will go to see the hunger-striking students in Tiananmen square and meet their reasonable demands.

The central authorities should hold a genuine dialogue participated in by responsible persons of the [CCP] Central Committee and the State Council.”<sup>50</sup> The letter was signed by journalists from such prestigious institutions as *People's Daily*, *China Youth News*, and China Central Television.

Newspaper personnel had joined the ranks of the protesters; from bystanders they had become active players in the movement. Under the high temperature circumstances of spring 1989, the role of the newspapers had indeed changed significantly. When the party center no longer produced unambiguous messages to instruct the media, the journalists had chosen to join the liberal faction that seemed to stand for a conciliatory approach. Thus they had influenced the movement not just by their participation, but even more by providing the students with a platform of publicity: the demonstrations were read and seen on TV all over the country and beyond China's borders.<sup>51</sup> With the help of the media, the event had moved beyond the confines of the capital and had reached audiences on a global scale.

Consequently, regaining control of the media was a top priority for the CCP leaders trying to find a solution for the explosive situation: in mid-May power seemed to slip away from the party. An “Emergency Period Propaganda Working Group” set up immediately after the declaration of martial law in Beijing on May 20 led the effort to get the media tone down their coverage.<sup>52</sup> Most newspapers compromised and shifted to more subtle means of reporting, but refused to comply entirely with the orders. Not until early June had the government, dominated by hardliners since the purge of Zhao Ziyang on the eve of the declaration of martial law, come to terms with the media and had restored the “mouthpiece of the party.” When the crackdown happened on June 4, the state media described the movement monotonously as a “counterrevolutionary rebellion.” The heat of the movement had given way to a frosty winter.

In the aftermath of June 4, the CCP set out to clean up the ranks of the newspaper personnel, to punish all those who had voiced dissenting opinions (i.e. opinions dissenting from those of the hardline faction) during the movement, and to ensure that the media and propaganda apparatus would not again defy their roles in the future. For this larger goal, a broad campaign of ideological education and indoctrination was set in motion in late 1989 that lasted all through 1990.<sup>53</sup> As an immediate measure, a large number of journalists and newspaper staff were dismissed from their posts, demoted or forced to retire.<sup>54</sup> Some were sent to prison, such as the publisher and the executive editor of *Economic Weekly*; others managed to flee abroad.<sup>55</sup> A particularly heavy price paid *People's Daily*. As the organ of the CCP Central Committee, the leaders were particularly angry about its involvement in the democracy movement; almost the entire newspaper leadership was replaced: the director, the editor-in-chief, three deputy chief editors, three department chiefs and many more high-ranking personnel of *People's Daily* were dismissed.<sup>56</sup> Aim of these heavy-handed measures was, of course, to restore the hierarchical rule-based environment of the propaganda apparatus and to force the newspapers to accept the role once more that it was assigned by the party: the mouthpiece.



## Conclusion: Newspapers and Heat

In his fascinating balled, Heinrich Heine demonstrates the extraordinary and mysterious power of the written word in times when history is moving with a high pitch; a power that becomes dangerous: the writing of fire devours Belsazar, the one who had provoked it. In socialist societies, power holders know very well about the discursive power of the written word and provide carefully for the writers' brush to serve their purposes. In China and other socialist nations, journalists were educated to cooperate with the regime; the press was turned into a tool of the party's propaganda apparatus, prepared to transmit to its audiences unambiguous messages it had received from the political center. The manipulation and control of the public sphere has been an important element in the major edifice of consolidation, legitimization and exercise of power. Central feature of the socialist press system has been its subordination in a hierarchically organized communications system, dependent on unambiguous messages emanating from above. The price the media institutions such as the newspapers pay in this setting is the loss of autonomy. Under routine circumstances, the product of the enormous argumentative power of the media on the one side and their lack of experience with independent responsibility on the other has served the socialist state well.

History, however, does not move in a linear fashion. Long times of stability and institutionalized routine can be interrupted by short times of violent, high-pitched cataclysms in which the temperature rises to the boiling point and the predictability of events fades. Under these circumstances, the foundations on which the carefully constructed edifice of the socialist propaganda apparatus is built, cease to exist, crucial lines of communication brake down and the very special nature of the media turns from an asset into a liability.<sup>57</sup> The People's Republic of China has witnessed two such events in the course of its history.

Our investigation into the Cultural Revolution and the 1989 Democracy Movement has demonstrated the profound impact that media institutions such as the newspapers have on the evolving event. In the 1960s, the media shaped the nature of an evolving conflict early on when they served as the battleground for the emerging factions in their struggle for political power. As they remained unresponsive to the calls for change voiced by the radical leftists, the newspapers acquired the role of a 'conservative' bulwark; consequently, the sidelining and destruction of the media's authority was of profound symbolical importance in the accelerating conflict.

In 1989, two incidents involving the media became turning points for the nature of the movement; they were catalysts responsible for the radicalization of the demands of players in both camps, that of the hardliners in the government and that of the students. In May, by the intensive media coverage a circle was set in motion in which the students recognized the effects of publicity given to their demonstrations and especially the hunger strike in early May, while the media felt compelled to increase their coverage of the events that were escalating, thus further encouraging the students. Media coverage allowed the movement to mobilize millions of citizens in the capital: workers, entrepreneurs, and government employees, and

carried the pictures of Tiananmen Square to places all over the country and abroad, thus significantly widening the scope as well as the impact of the entire movement. In both cases, the media, being suddenly freed of their normal time constraints, had a profound impact and helped shaping the course of events.

At the same time, the event taking place had an equally significant impact on the media, bringing disaster to the newspapers and the other media. Both in the Cultural Revolution and in 1989, newspaper editors were caught on the wrong side of history and suffered heavily, albeit for different reasons. In the Cultural Revolution, newspapers were not fast enough to adopt to a changing political climate and remained in their established roles. Thus, they were seen as unresponsive by those actors who had taken the initiative in the event and were sidelined and punished. In 1989, Chinese newspaper editors did about the opposite thing: they interpreted the ambiguous messages reaching them in their own way and became involved early in the movement; they played a role that the government, when it regained control of the situation, regarded as betrayal. Accordingly, the sanctions for the newspapers were draconian.

The reasons for both the media's impact on the event as well as for the consequences the events harbored for the media, must be seen in their status and their function within the socialist system, functions distinctly different from those of the media in western societies. As 'mouthpiece of the party,' Chinese newspapers, although occupying a position in between government and society, must side with the party while disclaiming the autonomy and independence that characterize western media. Thus, when the political climate is heating up, their writing becomes a writing of fire, potentially dangerous to those on whose behalf they were supposed to write, but eventually burning themselves.

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> See Manfred Windfuhr (ed.). *Heinrich Heine. Historisch-kritische Gesamtausgabe der Werke*. Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 1975, vol. I/1, p. 93-95. Engl. translation taken from Louis Untermeyer (trsl.). *Poems of Heinrich Heine*. New York: Limited Editions Club, 1957, p. 29.

<sup>2</sup> Jürgen Habermas. *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit. Untersuchungen zu einer Kategorie der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft*. Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1990, 2nd ed. Engl. *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*. Cambridge, Ma.: MIT Press, 1989. References in this paper refer to the German edition, here p. 86.

<sup>3</sup> See Habermas, *Strukturwandel*, ch. 4, esp. §14.

<sup>4</sup> See *Great Soviet Encyclopedia. A Translation of the Third Edition*. New York: Macmillan, 1973, vol. 5, p. 300-01 (entry 'newspaper').

<sup>5</sup> Lenin, cited after *GSE*, vol. 5, p. 302.

<sup>6</sup> See "Dui Huabei jizhetuan de tanhua" (dated Oct. 2, 1948) in *Liu Shaoqi xuanji*. Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1981, vol. 1, p. 396-407, here p. 404. Trsl. in *Selected Works of Liu Shaoqi*. Beijing:

Foreign Languages Press, 1984. While the metaphor “throat and tongue” has been in use in Chinese for a long time, it seems to have been introduced in the sense of “mouthpiece” or “megaphone” only by the CCP, probably with reference to the Russian words ‘rupor’ (megaphone, mouthpiece) and ‘golos’ (voice), used in a similar fashion.

<sup>7</sup> See CCP general secretary Hu Yaobang’s speech of Feb. 8, 1985: “Guanyu dang de xinwen gongzuo” in *Zhongguo xinwen nianjian* 1985, p. 1-10, here p. 1. Trsl. in Brantley Womack (ed.). *Media and the Chinese Public. A Survey of the Beijing Media Audience*. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1986.

<sup>8</sup> From Mao’s “talk at the Hangzhou Conference” (11 May 1963), cited after Michael Schoenhals. *Doing Things With Words in Chinese Politics. Five Studies*. Berkeley: Institute of Asian Studies, University of California, 1992, p. 3. Chapters one and two of this volume deal extensively with language and terminology issues.

<sup>9</sup> These ‘breakfast chats’ were deemed important enough to be collected and published in a volume entitled *Tantan baozhi gongzuo*. n.p., 1978. See also Schoenhals. *Doing Things with Words*, ch. 4.

<sup>10</sup> See, for example, *Xuanchuan dongtai xuanbianben* 1979. Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 1981, p. 2, 36, 64, 65. On *Xuanchuan dongtai* see also Michael Schoenhals (ed.). Selections from *Propaganda Trends, Organ of the CCP Central Propaganda Department* in *Chinese Law and Government*, vol. 24.4 (Winter 1991/92).

<sup>11</sup> See the entries on pages 133-136 (chapter “correspondence and contact with the readers”) in Yu Jiahong et al (ed.). *Xinwenxue cidian*. Hangzhou: Zhejiang renmin chubanshe, 1988.

<sup>12</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> See Nicolai Volland. *Control of Publishing in the People’s Republic of China*. MA thesis, unpubl., 2001, ch. 2.

<sup>14</sup> In Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan xinwen yanjiusuo (ed.). *Zhongguo gongchandang xinwen gongzuo wenjian huibian*. Beijing: Xinhua chubanshe, 1980 (neibu faxing), vol. 2, p. 75-76.

<sup>15</sup> No formal guideline laying down this prescription is known to me; however, starting from Nov. 26, 1949, *People’s Daily* shifted its international news section without any announcement from the third to the fourth page, an arrangement that has been standard ever since. Other newspapers followed suit.

<sup>16</sup> Renmin ribao bianjibu (ed.). *Renmin ribao banmian beiyao*. Beijing: Renmin ribao chubanshe, 1997.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. (i).

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

<sup>19</sup> Personal communication with a senior editor of a major Chinese newspaper, Heidelberg.

<sup>20</sup> See the insightful article by Wu Guoguang, a former head of the *People’s Daily’s* commentary department in *China Quarterly* 137 (March 1994), p. 194-211, from which the following paragraph draws heavily. The quote is from p. 195.

<sup>21</sup> see Wu Guoguang. “Command Communication,” p. 208-210.

<sup>22</sup> The ‘New Historical Drama’ emerged in the late 1950s with some of China’s most famous playwrights, such as Guo Moruo and Tian Han, turning to this medium. See Rudolf G. Wagner. *The Contemporary Chinese Historical Drama: Four Studies*. Berkeley, Ca.: University of California Press, 1990.

<sup>23</sup> English translation in Clive Ansley. *The Heresy of Wu Han. His Play ‘Hai Jui’s Dismissal’ and its Role in China’s Cultural Revolution*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971.

<sup>24</sup> *Wenhuibao*, Nov. 10, 1965; translated in *Current Background* 783 (March 21, 1966), p. 1-18.

<sup>25</sup> See Ansley. *The Heresy of Wu Han*; Hong Yung Lee. *The Politics of the Chinese Cultural Revolution. A Case Study*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978, ch. 1; Merle Goldman. *China’s Intellectuals. Advise and Dissent*. Cambridge, Ma.: Harvard University Press, 1981, p. 117-24; Roderick MacFarquhar. *The Origins of the Cultural Revolution, 3. The Coming of Cataclysm, 1961-1966*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1997, p. 439-47; among others. For a particularly detailed account

see *Wenhuibao baoshi yanjiushi* (ed.). *Wenhuibao shilüe, 1949.6-1966.5*. Shanghai: Wenhui chubanshe, 1997, p. 315-330.

<sup>26</sup> See MacFarquhar. *Origins*, 3, p. 439-47.

<sup>27</sup> *Beijing ribao*, Nov. 29, 1965, and *Renmin ribao*, Nov. 30, 1965.

<sup>28</sup> For the leftist viewpoint see *Renmin ribao wuchan jieji gemingpai*, Shoudu xinwen pipan lianluozhan (ed.) *Xinwen zhanxian liang tiao luxian douzhenqiang dashiji, 1948-1966*. N.p., n.d., p. 30-31.

<sup>29</sup> *Current Background* 783 (March 21, 1966), p. 1.

<sup>30</sup> For Mao's approval see *Mao Zedong jianguo yilai wengao*. Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian chubanshe, 1998, vol. 12, p. 61. Wu Lengxi, editor in chief of *People's Daily*, concurrently serving as vice-head of the CCP Central Committee's Propaganda Department and a member of the 'Cultural Revolution Small Group' (led by Beijing mayor Peng Zhen), was dismissed from all his posts at the newspaper in the night of May 31, 1966, and was soon thereafter denounced as a revisionist. It was the well-known leftist Chen Boda who was put in charge of *People's Daily*. See the account in Li Zhuang. *Renmin ribao fengyu sishi nian*. Beijing: Renmin ribao chubanshe, 1993, p. 267-71. See also *Liang tiao luxian*, p. 35.

<sup>31</sup> See *People's Daily*, Aug. 5, 1967; translated in Harold C. Hinton (ed.). *The People's Republic of China, 1949-1979: a Documentary Survey*. Wilmington, DW: Scholarly Resources, Inc., 1980, v. 3, p. 1553.

<sup>32</sup> Compare the numbers of newspapers in the PRC:

Year	1950	1965	1966	1967	1978	1989
Number of newspapers	140	343	49	43	253	1618

Source: Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan xinwen yanjiusuo, Zhongguo xinwen xuehui lianhehui (ed.) *Zhongguo xinwen nianjian, 1990*. Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 1991, p. 5-6.

<sup>33</sup> For accounts of the "January storm" see Vivienne B. Shue. "Shanghai after the January storm" in East Asian Research Center, Harvard University (ed.). *The Cultural Revolution in the Provinces*. Cambridge, Ma.: Harvard University Press, 1971; Neale Hunter. *Shanghai Journal. An Eyewitness Account of the Cultural Revolution*. New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1969, chs. 10-11; Gao Gao, Yan Jiaqi. *Wenhua dageming shi nian shi*. Tianjin: Tianjin renmin chubanshe, 1988, p. 437-42, among others.

<sup>34</sup> An allusion to a 1930 Mao speech of the same name.

<sup>35</sup> See Hu Yaobang. "Guanyu dang de xinwen gongzuo" (see n. 7 above).

<sup>36</sup> See the statistics in note 32 above.

<sup>37</sup> On this era see especially Merle Goldman. *Sowing the Seeds of Democracy in China. Political Reform in the Deng Xiaoping Era*. Cambridge, Ma.: Harvard University Press, 1994.

<sup>38</sup> This point has become even clearer in the 1990s, when the media were put under much stronger control than before and the state defended its claim with increasingly aggressive methods.

<sup>39</sup> See Goldman. *Sowing the Seeds of Democracy*.

<sup>40</sup> Translation in Michel Oksenberg, Lawrence R. Sullivan, Marc Lambert (ed.). *Beijing Spring, 1989: Confrontation and Conflict: The Basic Documents*. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1990, p. 206-08.

<sup>41</sup> See Li Demin. "Pinglun de xuanti" in *Xinwen zhanxian* 1990.3, p. 8-9, here p. 8; and Gao Di. "Jianchi dangbao de dangxing yuanze" in *Xinwen zhanxian* 1990.1, p. 3-6, here p. 4.

<sup>42</sup> The most coherent account of the *World Economic Herald* affair is Kate Wright. "The Political Fortunes of Shanghai's 'World Economic Herald'" in *Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs* 23, Jan. 1990, p. 121-32. See also Allison Liu Jernow (ed.). 'Don't Force Us to Lie.' *The Struggle of Chinese Journalists in the Reform Era*. New York: Committee to Protect Journalists, 1993, ch. 2.

<sup>43</sup> The *China Women's Daily* (*Zhongguo funü bao*) was the only newspaper reporting the massive April 27 demonstration. See Jernow. 'Don't Force Us to Lie', p. 54. On the coverage of the student demonstrations before April 26 by the *Science and Technology Daily* (*Keji Ribao*) see below.

<sup>44</sup> See Jernow. 'Don't Force Us to Lie', p. 52-54.

<sup>45</sup> See Linda Jakobson. “‘Lies in Ink, Truth in Blood.’ The Role and Impact of the Chinese Media During the Beijing Spring of ’89;” discussion paper D-6, August 1990, of the Joan Shorenstein Barone Center, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, published at <http://www.nmis.org/Gate/themes/liesink.html>; here see the section “Media Coverage, Part 2.”

<sup>46</sup> A short article in the lower right corner reminded readers that Michail Gorbachev was continuing his state visit to Beijing - a visit that had been scheduled to be the major political event in that month.

<sup>47</sup> Jernow. *‘Don’t Force Us to Lie’*, p. 54-59; see also Jakobson. “Lies in Ink, Truth in Blood.”

<sup>48</sup> Jernow. *‘Don’t Force Us to Lie’*, p. 56.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid. I have been unable to locate this document.

<sup>50</sup> Translated in Oksenberg et al. *Beijing Spring*, p. 283-84. A similar open letter is found in *ibid.*, p. 284-85.

<sup>51</sup> See especially Jakobson. “Lies in Ink” on the importance of this point.

<sup>52</sup> Jernow. *‘Don’t Force Us to Lie’*, p. 59.

<sup>53</sup> These efforts are documented in such internal publications as Zhonggong zhongyang xuanchuanbu bangongting (ed.). *Dang de xuanchuan gongzuo huiyi gaikuang wenxian, 1951-1992*. Beijing: Zhongyang dangxiao chubanshe, 1994; and Zhonggong zhongyang xuanchuanbu bangongting, Zhongyang dang’anguan (ed.) *Zhongguo gongchandang xuanchuan gongzuo wenxian xuanbian*. Beijing: Xuexi chubanshe, 1996, v.4. For an account of the continuing crackdown on the media see Daniel C. Lynch. *After the Propaganda State. Media, Politics, and ‘Thought Work’ in Reformed China*. Stanford, Ca.: Stanford University Press, 1999, ch. 6.

<sup>54</sup> See the extensive list in the Appendix to Jernow. *‘Don’t Force Us to Lie’*.

<sup>55</sup> Wu Guoguang, formerly chief of *People’s Daily’s* Editorial Department went to the U.S. and was granted a fellowship at Harvard University.

<sup>56</sup> Jernow. *‘Don’t Force Us to Lie’*, p. 139.

<sup>57</sup> The role of Western and domestic media in the breakdown of socialism in eastern Europe in 1989 and 1990 has been noted many times.



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## Der Schreckensmann

### German Melancholy and Chinese Restlessness: Ye Shengtao's Novel *Ni Huanzhi*

by Wolfgang Kubin, Bonn

*This world – a gate  
To myriad deserts dumb and hoar!  
Who lost through fate  
What thou hast lost, shall rest no more.*  
Friedrich Nietzsche<sup>1</sup>

In grappling with the difficult topic of modernity – that is with the task of determining its features in its respective contexts – the use of place names have provided a helpful means of differentiation. One speaks, for example, of the »Berlin modernity«<sup>2</sup> or of the »Munich modernity«<sup>3</sup>, or even of the »Vienna modernity«<sup>4</sup>. Each case involves a different modernity, that is each emphasizes differing criteria in its assessment. In the same way it is possible to speak not only of a Japanese modernity<sup>5</sup>, but also of a Peking or a Shanghai modernity, depending upon the point of view. With regard to Peking one would have to turn to Peking University and the wide circle around Cai Yuanpei (1868-1940), thereby reducing the focus to the rebels of the cultural and national revival movement of May 4th, 1919. With Shanghai the perspective shifts to the artistic salons and cafés of the avant-garde and is limited solely to the aesthetic aspect.<sup>6</sup>

The American scholar Leo Ou-fan Lee deserves the credit for having pointed out the different conception of modernity in China.<sup>7</sup> \$\$\$As the West began to distance itself from the notion of modernity as evolution, rationality, and progress in order to subscribe to pessimism, to antagonism towards civilization, and, especially in philosophy and art, even to an irrationalism, in China, the discovery of the occidental 19th century, seen as a stronghold of

science and technology, freedom and democracy was bearing its first fruits. \$\$\$ Rather than succumbing to a »fright of science« (*szientifisches Erschrecken*)<sup>8</sup> as did their Western counterparts, Chinese intellectuals regarded the adoption and development of Western (natural) science as the only way forward for their motherland. They were principally concerned with China's fate; their »obsession with China« (C.T. Hsia) left relatively little room for self-discovery or for new explorations of the individual and the subjective dimension of man independent of national and patriotic interests. However, their indigenous hopes were ill-founded, for as their still naïve consciousness recognized the dissonance between fanciful ideas and political realities, Chinese modernity began to draw nearer to Western modernity in at least one respect: on the level of coming to terms with disappointment. In the 1920s, two concepts from the Western history of ideas became of central importance, »boredom« (*wuliao* 无聊) and »melancholy« (*youyuzheng* 幽郁症) and both of them restricted the freedom of movement purportedly just acquired by the iconoclasts of 1919.

It is above all the novel which took on the task of depicting the predicament of the modern hero. Because narrative art superseded poetry as the most important literary genre it meant that China at the time of the May Fourth movement came into step with trends in world literature, but also—at least formally—it caught up with the international aestheticism of modern times. It is indeed highly revealing that all that the early, pre-communist Georg Lukács (1885–1971) identified as signs of modernity in his brilliant and still pertinent *Theorie des Romans* (Theory of the Novel, 1920)<sup>9</sup> also applies to one of the earliest examples of the modern Chinese novel, namely *Ni Huanzhi* 倪環志 (1928)<sup>10</sup> by Ye Shengtao 葉聖陶 (1894–1990, also known as Ye Shaojun 葉紹鈞). At the end of totality, that is, at the end of a *Lebensimmanenz des Sinnes* ('meaning as immanent to life'), man becomes both a seeker and a wanderer. In his alienation from God (*Gottesvergessenheit*), in his transcendental homelessness, he begins to regard himself, together with his whole existence, as a problem.

Looking at China one could interpret things in the following manner: In 1911 the fall of the imperial house and the severing of the classical educational tradition brought about a »loss of totality« that neither allowed the individual to be subsumed into the whole nor enabled the incursions from without to be incorporated into an inner harmony (*be* 不). Everything became fragmentary, so that to the individual who felt himself uprooted much appeared inconsequential (*wuliao*). The fragility of human existence was depicted with powerful and symbolic profundity by Lu Xun 魯迅 (1881–1936) in his second collection of stories (1924–1926). The work *Panghuang* 彷徨 describes the condition of a man who is going somewhere but he does not know where, since in the end he no longer belongs anywhere. The involuntary and hesitant journey here takes on a spiritual quality; it replaces the traditional journey which, however much lamented over, hardly deserves to be thought of as an expression of a complete loss of meaning insofar as it remains anchored to the »outside« world.<sup>11</sup>

The concept of »modern homelessness« refers to a fundamental and irreconcilable discrepancy between imagined and actual reality, to which the modern man reacts in panic.



He knows that he can no longer live in the »here and now« to his satisfaction and fulfilment; that »time«, since the Renaissance and the era of burgeoning industrialization conceived as linear, threatens to slip by irretrievably, un-lived or – because of its utter dreariness – unlivable; that the memory of bygone possibilities and erstwhile hopes makes the present hollow; that the melancholy arising from a reflection upon the disparity between being and wanting, between experience (the present) and expectation (the future) results in a dichotomy of body and mind. He therefore inscribes the emblem of utopia on his unfurled banner – movement (travel, activity) at all costs<sup>12</sup> – in the hope that the inner emptiness that turns into deadly boredom<sup>13</sup> will come to an end at some point in the future.<sup>13</sup>

The fact that the phenomenon, as analyzed by Georg Lukács on the basis of the Western novel, is not exclusively a German one may be problematic. Here the subject matter is, however, the German-Chinese literary interplay. It would nevertheless be wrong to want to delimit the sense of »interplay« in an overly simplistic and unequivocal manner. Although melancholy, as an indicator of modernity, is a German phenomenon,<sup>14</sup> and although the example of Werther has borne rich fruits in China since the May Fourth movement,<sup>15</sup> it remains still just an emblem, and furthermore an emblem that should not be regarded separately from the entirety of Western culture. Within international Chinese studies little attention has been paid either to this sign in its entire context or to signs of a similar kind, so that until now many works of Chinese modernity have yet to be decoded. Lu Xun's foreword to his first collection of stories, which appeared with the cryptic title *Naban* 呐喊, is one of many possible examples. The title, as well as the famous parable of the sleeping people and of the light of knowledge, can easily be traced back to Greek philosophy and Persian religion.<sup>16</sup> But this is a digression from the main subject of investigation. The main significance is the conjecture that, up until now, the few modern Chinese texts that have served as objects of thoroughgoing study and interpretation, have proved to be »key texts« pivotal not only for an understanding of China, but also for a general understanding of the human mind in the 20th century.

With the adoption of Western science and especially with the reception of Marxism in China at the outset to the 1920s, a transformation of the consciousness of time began to take place, the traditional cyclical conception was gradually replaced by a linear one. In this way a vast vista into the future was revealed which overtook the traditional chronological calculation based on 60-year cycles.<sup>17</sup> Time thus became a long-term venture to be filled up both theoretically and practically. Only a few of the May Fourth rebels were able to do this; all too often they merely managed to populate the future with images and chase about from one to the other. In short: their great aspirations, not schooled and tempered in the throes of reality, soon proved to be inappropriate. German researchers of melancholy have employed the term »bogyman« (*Schreckensmann*)<sup>18</sup> to signify the figure of the young man who is prepared to resort even to violent means in order to save the world of his imaginative creation. This term can be traced back to the novel *Anton Reiser* (1785–90) by Karl Philipp Moritz (1756–93) where we find the following passage:

The bogeyman is a potential perpetrator of violence. He is the aggressive shadow of the hypochondriachal suicide candidate and fights the powers of suppression and fear with the same weapon. [...]. The little bogeyman appears as the prophet of general disruptions, and hopes for the wholly other (ganz anderer). The bogeyman is the dark brother of the aspirer, he demonstrates the energies of rebellion [...].<sup>19</sup>

Ye Shengtao, who has unjustifiably received too little attention as a writer, in his novel *Ni Huanzhi* provided his restless contemporaries with a comparable representative character, the teacher *Ni Huanzhi* – a character which has hitherto been hardly acclaimed.<sup>20</sup> Neither C.T. Hsia,<sup>21</sup> Jaroslav Prusek,<sup>22</sup> nor Marston Anderson<sup>23</sup> arrive at even a rudimentary insight into the actual meaning of this novel, a meaning which lies within the ironic treatment of the contemporary, but still influential *Zeitgeist* as well as in the masterful discovery of a connection between revolution and melancholy.

This autobiographical novel is set in the period between 1916 and 1927 and can be divided into two parts. The initial 18 chapters take place in the countryside where the young teacher Ni Huanzhi, together with other zealots, tries to reform the educational system. His efforts fail and the failure is linked to his inner restlessness rather than to outer obstacles. The pedagogic aspirations of the author, Ye Shengtao, can still be seen on the memorial tombstone found in the grounds of the former Buddhist temple in Luzhi, near Suzhou. The second part of the novel, chapters 19 to 30, is set in Shanghai, mainly during the stormy years 1924–1927. Here, following the events of the May Fourth movement, the protagonist hoped to realize his revolutionary ideals. The author similarly tried to solve his actual life problems in Shanghai at that time.

From a literary standpoint the second part of the novel has many weaknesses. It is set against the backdrop of political turbulence as the Guomindang, strengthened by its alliance with the communists, sought to unify China in the course of its Northern military campaign. However, following the victorious march into Shanghai, where it was hailed by all sides, it perpetrated a massacre against holders of dissenting views, especially against the youth and members of the Chinese Communist Party. Although he threw himself willingly and dauntlessly into battle, Ni Huanzhi died in the course of events. If this second part of the novel is read as a parody of the contemporary revolutionaries' self-image, it can then be redeemed as a »critical reflexion« on the times. Its lack of form and structure could also be accepted, for the disregard of plot is one of the features of the modern novel.<sup>24</sup> If on the other hand this part is taken at face value and interpreted »materialistically«, then one inevitably comes to see it as nothing but a mawkish and shoddy product of the revolution. It is perhaps just this difficulty in the reading that has hampered a proper assessment of the novel. The sickness of the youth, which Ye Shengtao depicts masterfully in the first part, is the subject of the proceeding discussion. In the figure of Ni Huanzhi, Ye draws a picture of the modern man in a changed and changing

world. The life of the protesting youth does not find a new, fortified meaning ensuing the dissolution of the old order. His life is a depiction or a self-portrayal of actors on the stage of life. The metaphor of human existence as theatre, which recurs repeatedly throughout the novel, is a reference to the origins of art or of life itself. In all cultures theatre stems from the »sacred«, from the dance on sacred grounds, and has cosmological significance. With every new quest for meaning, Ni Huanzhi's dance constantly changes its surroundings and signals the rupture not only of the once fundamental unity, but also of each of the short-lived ones: the chronicle of failure follows a course from community (school) through coupledness (marriage with Jin Peizhang — — — ) to the collective (revolution). It comes to an end at the point where the Chinese *intelligentsia* began to re-formulate their position: the program of self-redemption is to be understood less as the autonomy of the individual and increasingly as the salvation of the motherland (guojia — — a).

In both cases the conviction that a future happiness in the outward sense may be realized is an important premise. The traditional Chinese culture only knew a happiness in the immediately given. The turning away from »being« (being happy) to »becoming« (becoming happy) bears a twofold implication: firstly, the conviction in the basic imperfection of existence that must be radically re-newed and, secondly, the expectation of the »new« that is not only recognizable, but that could definitively remedy the deficiencies of the present. This new world could, however, only arise and be sustained through terror. During the 20th century China tried out both experiments and, fortunately, failed in both instances.

The arrival and recognition of the »new« are highly problematical matters. The new was a favourite metaphor in the jargon of the May Fourth movement and is treated with almost hyperbolic irony by the novel's narrator in emulation of Lu Xun: »a new education! a new life!« (E 112, C 103, G 121),<sup>25</sup> »a new world« (E 121, C 110, G 130), a »new youth«, »new teaching aids«, »new ideas« (E 143, C 131, G 154). The new still appears without being perceived, namely when it requires its subsequent natural development or when it is not anticipated as that which only it can be. In both cases, though, there soon arises a wearisome boredom,<sup>26</sup> a sibling, as it were, of a melancholy which can only be palliated by the succession of continually new events. Everything appears pale, so that despite the eager expectations of the youth, even all novelties seem prosaic and common.

The narrator shines forth most brilliantly in those passages where he reflects upon the inappropriateness of the goals and aspirations moving the times. He ruminates over youthfulness, over his own youth, and the memories thereof produce a sense of distance out of which irony becomes possible. He knows that the characters who are always carrying on about the adjective »new« will fail in the end. They will be slane not only from the supposed »old«, upon which everything new is founded (E 113, C 103, G 121), but also, and perhaps more conclusively, from the exhaustion of all their resources of meaning. The hero Ni Huanzhi is a living symbol for the ongoing loss of meaning; every sense of purpose that life provides him with is destroyed by his inner emptiness. He reasons this out as follows:

It is the same with everything; when you look at it from a distance you see a glorious dazzling splendour, but as soon as you come near to it you can find that the splendour has mysteriously faded away. (E 240; cf. C 224, G 265)

Allowing himself be pulled along by the »light of hope« (*xiwang de guangzhao* — — — — —), one of the many *Leitmotives* in the novel, Ni Huanzhi should, according to his name (*huan*: 'iridescent'), also be a bearer of light. Yet over and over again he gives in to another important *Leitmotiv*: darkness. His failure finally becomes especially apparent as he tries out the last option to overcome his depression (also a *Leitmotiv*) and takes on the guise of the ardent soldier in the political struggles, just as Lord Byron had once done long before.

That which at the beginning of the novel was merely posturing – wanting to hold a »flag, a bomb, a gun« (E 17, C 15, G 21) to welcome the fomenting revolution of 1911 – now becomes bitterly earnest. The *Leitmotiv* of hatred has developed into physical violence.

The future (»Ah, the future!«; E 190, C 174, G 205) and the *vita nova* that was then continuously celebrated, find their most conspicuous end in the mad combatant Ni Huanzhi, who was both prophet and prattler, actor and spectator at the same time. The »new« does indeed come to life, but hardly anybody has the time to give it the attention its appearance and development require. On the one hand there are the students in the countryside, who, unable to summon up the patience to await the ripening of the seeds in the fallow fields (since Lu Xun symbolic for China), finally give in to boredom (E 154, C 142, G 167). On the other hand there is the hero and his pregnant wife. Confronted now with a truly »new life«, with the very symbol of their uprising and symbol of the May Fourth Movement (Lu Xun: »save the children!«), this being perhaps the most important *Leitmotiv* of the novel, they react in a way committed to the supposed revolutionary spirit that Ding Ling —B— (1904–86) later threw into a critical light. While the expectant mother begins to hate the fruit of her womb and wishes to destroy it, the hero fears the political regression of his partner and the narrowness of his home now draped with diapers (E 206-08, C 189-91, G 223-25). He is soon to turn his back on wife and child and discover the unity of revolution and sexuality in the city-bred Miss Jin —. His commentary on his previous life is short and concise:

It's enough that we're together. As for the new home, it's just what you called it in your letter – a nest, nothing more than a nest for sheltering in and sleeping in, like those of the birds and beasts. (E 239; cf. C 224, G 264)

Ni Huanzhi brings to an abrupt close that which was opened with the motto »time cannot deceive us« (E 192, C 176, G 207). Perhaps the times really do lack the ability to deceive, but man himself certainly does have this ability, especially when he, like Ni Huanzhi, is merely capable of perceiving the outer appearance of things and never their inner essence.

Ye Shengtao is rightly known as an author of compassion. With his proclivity for the *rôle* of compassionate novelist, he is an exception in the Chinese literature of the twentieth century. Today Ye Shengtao deserves renewed and deepened attention. In this context the conclusion to *Ni Huanzhi* is especially worthy of consideration. Rather than simply avoiding the host of problems posed in the course of events, the narrator uses the erstwhile friend and colleague, the teacher Jiang Bingru 姜秉儒, to illustrate that only continued work on a small scale, and the care and affection for children, can establish a truly new and viable pathway ahead. In Ye Shengtao's indirect critique of the prevailing spirit of his times, which valued education only as an education to revolution, two important thoughts come together: the Goethean maxim of overcoming pain through work and Lu Xun's call to »save the children«.

*Translated from German by Sebastian Gault*

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## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> »Der Freigeist. Abschied«, in *Sämtliche Werke*, ed. Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari (München: dtv / Berlin: de Gruyter, 1980), 11: 329.-R.D.F.
- <sup>2</sup> Jürgen Schütte, Peter Sprengel (eds.), *Die Berliner Moderne 1885-1914* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1987).
- <sup>3</sup> Walter Schmitz (ed.), *Die Münchner Moderne. Die literarische Szene in der »Kunststadt« um die Jahrhundertwende* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1990).
- <sup>4</sup> Dagmar Lorenz: *Wiener Moderne* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1995).
- <sup>5</sup> Cf. Irene Hardach-Pinke (ed.), *Japan—eine andere Moderne* (Tübingen: Konkursbuch, s.a. [ca 198\$]).
- <sup>6</sup> Concerning the subject of Shanghai and its form of modernism, there is an excellent, albeit unpublished dissertation, Heinrich Otmar Frühauf, »Urban Exoticism in Modern Chinese Literature 1910-1933«, Ph.D. thesis Chicago 1990. The ideas presented there have partly been summarized in the following studies by Frühauf: »Das Fremde im Eigenen, das Eigene im Fremden. Exotische Ästhetik am Beispiel Paris/Shanghai,« in *minima sinica* 1/1989, 1-38, and the brochure: *Sehnsüchte unter sich: Literarischer Exotismus in Ost und West* (Tokyo: OAG, 1988. OAG Aktuell; 33).
- <sup>7</sup> Leo Ou-fan Lee, »Literary Trends I: The Quest for Modernity, 1895-1927«, in *Cambridge History of China*, vol. 12, part 1: *Republican China*, ed. by John K. Fairbank (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 21987), 451f, 499-504.
- <sup>8</sup> Cf. Wolfgang Frühwald's highly elucidating study *Der Zerfall des Individuums* (Heidelberg: Müller, 1993. *Heidelberger Universitätsreden*; 3) discussing »\$\$\$« in literature.
- <sup>9</sup> German translation by Helmut Liebermann with Yä Scheng-tau, *Die Flut des Tjiäntang*, (Berlin: Rütten & Loening, 1962). The translation is probably based on A.C. Barnes' English version, see Yeh Sheng-tao, *Schoolmaster Ni Huan-chih* (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1978; reprint of the 1958 edition). For the Chinese text see the authorized version in thirty chapters (Beijing: Renmin wuxue chubanshe, 1978).
- <sup>10</sup> Georg Lukács, *Die Theorie des Romans. Ein geschichtsphilosophischer Versuch über die Formen der großen Epik* (Neuwied und Berlin: Luchterhand, 1971. SL; 36). 11 Regarding the history of the notion of »journeying« in Chinese thought see Wolfgang Bauer: »Die Unbehaustheit des Wanderers und der Aufbruch in eine bessere Welt. Die Reise als Ausdruck von Hoffnung und Verzweiflung in der

Kultur Chinas«, in *Wanderungen*, ed. by Fritz Graf and Erik Hornung (München: Fink, 1995. Eranos. Neue Folge; 3), 15-54.

<sup>12</sup> Concerning the relation between the novel, melancholy and movement see Ulrich Breuer, *Melancholie und Reise. Studien zur Archäologie des Individuellen im deutschen Roman des 16.-18. Jahrhunderts* (Münster etc.: Lit, 1994. Facies Nigra 2).

<sup>13</sup> Within the scope of research dealing with the theme of »melancholy« much attention has been devoted to the notion of boredom (*ennui*, chin. *wuliao*). The presentation above owes a number of its certain insights to Martina Kessel's concise introduction, »Jeder Augenblick hat seine Sichel«. »Langeweile und der Verlust der Zeit«, in *Obsessionen. Beherrschende Gedanken im wissenschaftlichen Zeitalter*, ed. by Michael Jeismann, Frankfurt: Suhrkamp 1995. es NF; 902), 257-271.

<sup>14</sup> Ludger Heidbrink, *Melancholie und Moderne. Zur Kritik der historischen Verzweiflung* (München: Fink, 1994), 18-19, and Breuer, *Melancholie und Reise*, 6-7.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. also Barbara Ascher, »Aspekte der Werther-Rezeption in China«, in *Goethe und China - China und Goethe*, ed. by Günther Depton and Adrian Hsia (Bern etc.: Peter Lang, 1985. euro-sinica; 1), 139-153.

<sup>16</sup> Peter Sloterdijk, *Weltfremdheit* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1993. es NF 781) develops in Chapter 8 (»Wie rühren wir an den Schlaf der Welt? Vermutungen über das Erwachen«, 344-366) the historical consciousness of the concepts of sleep, the roll of light and the meaning of awakening with special reference to the figures of Heraclitus and Zarathustra.

<sup>17</sup> The issue is, of course, more complicated than its brief mention here may suggest. For a more in-depth treatment see my essay »Zeitbewußtsein und Subjektivität. Zum Problem der Epochenschwelle in China und dem Abendland«, in *Idealismus mit Folgen. Die Epochenschwelle um 1800 in Kunst und Geisteswissenschaften. Festschrift zum 65. Geburtstag von Otto Pöggeler*, ed. by Hans-Jürgen Gawoll and Christoph Jamme (München: Fink, 1994), 325-336.

<sup>18</sup> Lothar Müller, *Die kranke Seele und das Licht der Erkenntnis. Karl Philipp Moritz' Anton Reiser* (Frankfurt: Athenäum, 1987), 395-397.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid*, 395, 397.

<sup>20</sup> The woeful entry on »The Novel« by V.F. Sorokin in the first volume of *A Selective Guide to Chinese Literature 1900-1949*, ed. by Milena Dolezelová-Velingerová (Leiden: Brill, 1988), 199-200, is symptomatic of this lack of indepth research on Ye Shengtao.

<sup>21</sup> C.T. Hsia, *A History of Modern Chinese Fiction* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 21971), 57-71. The author, however, did recognize the aspect of melancholy! See 65.

<sup>22</sup> Jaroslav Prusek »Yeh Shao-chün and Anton Chekhov [1970]«, in Jaroslav Prusek, *The Lyrical and the Epic. Studies of Modern Chinese Literature*, ed. by Leo Ou-fan Lee (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1980, 178-194.

<sup>23</sup> Marston Anderson: *The Limits of Realism. Chinese Fiction in the Revolutionary Period* (Berkeley, Ca.: University of California Press, 1990), 109-118.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Lukács: *Theorie des Romans*, 99; Prusek »Yeh Shao-chün«, 192.

<sup>25</sup> Letters with numbers used hereafter refer to the page numbers in the English (E), Chinese (C) and German (G) versions of Ni Huanzhi, respectively.-R.D.F.

<sup>26</sup> Martin Doehlemann, *Langeweile? Deutung eines verbreiteten Phänomens* (Frankfurt:: Suhrkamp, 1991. es NF; 641) distinguishes between four types of boredom: situative boredom (waiting for something), wearied boredom (a sense of lacking something), existential boredom (waiting itself) and creative boredom. In our case the second conception appears to be the one which predominates: the waiting for a an event in the midst of subjectively felt banalities.

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## Huang Ren (1863–1913)

### The Eccentric who Discovered *Belles Lettres* for Chinese Literature

by Milena Dolezelova-Velingerova, Toronto

Traditional Chinese literary theories did not provide much space for the discussion on the aesthetic aspects of the artefact for one simple reason – there was no need for it. As well known, one of the fundamental tenets of traditional Chinese poetics rested in the belief that beauty of the artefact is coterminous with the harmony between the Cosmos and the Man and it was this idea that fostered the ubiquitous edifying function of Chinese art and literature. The link between Cosmos and the artist taken as generally valid for all arts naturally strengthened the unity and power of Chinese culture. At the same time, however, the traditional concept of beauty kept in thrall the creativity and originality of the artist – the individual creator was expected to bring in harmony the artistic organisation of his own work with the laws believed to govern the Cosmos.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, along the rapid rise of Chinese urban culture in China's East Coast cities, the idea that Cosmos presides over the individual artist's creativity was found quickly untenable. The dissatisfaction with the age-old traditional aesthetics was initiated by a handful of Chinese scholars who, unlike the majority of his colleagues, took a serious interest in learning this or that foreign language. In turn, this knowledge provoked the study of firsthand sources in German aesthetic philosophy (Schopenhauer, Kant, Hegel, Nietzsche, Kirchmann) and late nineteenth-century British aestheticism and this activity led again to theoretical writings by Chinese scholars on their own. During the short period of ten years, from around 1904 to 1916, several thinkers of no small stature (Wang Guowei, Huang Ren, Xu Nianci, Lu Xun, Zhou Zuoren, Guan Daru, and Lü Simian) wrote fundamental studies in which human creativity was interpreted in a way radically different from writing of the previous centuries. Whereas previously Chinese art and literature were understood as the artist's understanding and expression of the moral Way of Life (*Wen yi zai Dao*), now the artistic

creativity and the aesthetic aspect of the artefact were explained as originating from the intellectual energies and emotional experiences of the Man himself.

This paper will focus on Huang Ren (1863–1913), nowadays the least known among the Chinese literary theoreticians mentioned above. During his lifetime, Huang, a journalist, literary theoretician, literary historian as well as one of the earliest modern Chinese encyclopaedists, was a foremost figure of the Chinese cultural scene at the beginning of the twentieth century. That his contemporaries called him often a <qi ren> – „an extraordinary man,“ an „eccentric“ – had much to do with what they considered being Huang’s weird lifestyle and prodigious talents. Not only that Huang smoked English pipe instead of the opium pipe, but he also replaced the commonly used brush by a fountain pen. Huang’s peculiar manner of work raised, too, his colleagues’ eyebrows. Rather than writing his works on his own while sitting and using a brush, Huang hired a scribe to whom he, while standing and puffing his pipe, dictated his essays and other writings. Those writings were no less out-of-ordinary than the manner by which they were created. They included not only numerous journalistic articles and literary essays, but also such masterworks as the <History of Chinese Literature> (Zhongguo wenxue shi) of 1904 – the first history of Chinese literature written by a Chinese scholar – and the <New General Encyclopaedic Dictionary (Potong baike da cidian) of 1911, representing one of the earliest modern Chinese reference work.

The nonconformist ideas and concepts expounded in Huang’s works have, however, remained largely unrecognised because of persistent inaccessibility of Huang’s works. For reasons not yet fully understood, most of Huang’s writings fell in oblivion shortly after his untimely death in 1913 and his name was not even mentioned in any modern Chinese cultural history well up to 1989. This inauspicious situation has, however, recently changed. In 1998 three Introductory Chapters of Huang’s <History> – the essential source for Huang’s study of late nineteenth-century British aestheticism and his search for the definition of the substance of literature – were reprinted as a part of a new monograph title <Huang Ren: His Biography and his Selected Works> (Huang Ren: Pingzhuan, Zuopin xuan). Perhaps equally important for the recovery of Huang’s views was my recent accidental find, at the University of Toronto library, of Huang Ren’s <New General Encyclopaedic Dictionary>.

The substantial expansion of firsthand materials has permitted me a new evaluation of Huang’s work. Whereas previously Huang’s ideas were studied on the basis of a relatively small portion of his work – the articles published from 1907 to 1908 in the <Forest of Fiction (Xiaoshuo lin),> the literary journal co-founded by Huang in 1907 – a possibility now opened to see the scholar’s ideas within the space of his whole life and therefore also in its development. My presentation here will be focused on the early creative period in Huang’s life from 1901 to 1904, because this was the time of Huang’s pursuit of the identity of literature. This Huang’s search is also a precious testimony how difficult it was to accommodate new cultural concepts in the millennia-old Chinese culture.



## The Pursuit of the Identity of Literature

Like some of his illustrious contemporaries and collaborators, such as Zeng Pu (1872–1935) and Xu Nianci (1875–1908), Huang was a native of Changshu in Southern Chinese province Zhejiang and the name given to him by his father was Zhenyuan. In middle age he changed his name (ming) to Ren, thus becoming Huang Ren, „Yellow man,“ probably in order to display his loyalty to the yellow race. In his own lifetime, however, he was better known by one of his studio names, Huang Moxi, which interestingly enough comprises two meanings both encapsulating Huang’s lifetime goals and aims. Taken literally, the name could mean „Huang in Touch with the West,“ which well corresponds to the fact that he was proficient in English and was very well informed about the cultural situation in contemporary Europe. Another meaning of his name gives a clue as to what Huang saw as his life’s mission – long before Huang chose it for his studio name, „Moxi“ had been the established transliteration of the name of the Biblical Moses, the spiritual leader of yet another oppressed people.

Little is known about Huang Moxi’s own childhood and schooling. At the age of sixteen, he earned the degree of <xiucaib>, but was essentially a self-taught scholar. In 1901, at the age of thirty-five, he was appointed a professor of Chinese literature at Dong Wu daxue, presently Suzhou University, one of the newly established private universities in China. The foundation of private universities, frequently established by Presbyterian and Protestant missionaries, was a part of an extensive reform of Chinese education system found totally inadequate after the disastrous defeat of Chinese navy in Sino-Japanese war of 1895. The Chinese Court, assisted by Japanese specialists, proceeded with various kinds of reforms and it was during this process that new subjects of „new learning,“ such as political science, humanities, natural sciences, agronomy, industrial studies, business and medicine, were introduced at the national as well as the private universities. Among the new subjects was also the history of Chinese literature that began to be taught at the newly reformed Peking Institute of Education (Jing shi daxue tang), today’s Peking University, and at some private universities at China’s East Coast.

When Huang Ren assumed in 1901 his teaching position of Chinese literature at the University of Eastern Wu Region in Hangzhou, the course of his life changed forever. The university was established by an American missionary, known to me so far only by his Chinese name Sun Yuewen and it was probably this missionary who taught Huang English. Proficiency in English turned later much instrumental for Huang’s advanced literary studies and his discovery of contemporary British literary scholarship. While appointed as a teacher of Chinese literature Huang was also called to task to produce a textbook for the new course and it was this task that provoked Huang’s pursuit of the question „What is literature?“ The textbook, reproduced by a mimeograph around 1904, was not circulated in the bookstores and was shortly after Huang’s demise in 1913 entirely forgotten. It was only in 1989 that its title reappeared in Chen Yudang’s <Catalogue of Chinese Literary Histories>.

Interpreted in the context of contemporary Chinese language, the title of Huang’s textbook – <Zhongguo wenxue shi> – is of course pretty much straightforward. Clearly, it means „history

of Chinese literature,“ while the compound <wenxue> is automatically associated with the meaning of „belles lettres.“ At the beginning of the twentieth century this was, however, not the case. For at that time <wenxue> had four largely different meanings. First, the compound was understood with the meaning „cultural erudition,“ harking back as far as to the <Analects> (Lunyu XI, 2), where the two self-standing words <wen> and <xue> describe the learnedness of some Confucius’ disciples. Further, the term <wenxue> was reintroduced as a graphic loan from Japanese language in connection with the education reform. In this context <wenxue> designated a new subject in reformed higher level institutions and meant „humanities,“ a field which embraced various subjects of study, such as exegeses of script and prosody, stylistics and creative writing, moral mission of literature, etc. The term <wenxue> reintroduced as a graphic loan from Japanese <bungaku> had, however, yet another, new meaning and this is the one which has been retained by the word until now. It designates literary texts with aesthetic value.

As Huang wrote in the third introductory chapter to <History of Chinese Literature,> specifically in the section „Definition of Literature“ (Wenxue dingyi), he found the vagueness of literary concepts and terminology in Chinese traditional poetics rather irritating, because the same terms were used throughout the ages constantly changing their meanings. This was also the case with the terms <wen> and <wenxue>. It was for this reason that Huang began to look outside the sphere of Chinese culture in order to understand the concept of literature more clearly and it was at this point that Huang embarked on his studies of the Western concept of „literature.“

Upon learning that the English word „literature“ originated in Latin, Huang embarked in the reading of Roman rhetoricians, such as Tacitus, Quintilianus, and Cicero. But when their works did not clearly answer Huang’s question „What is literature?“ Huang turned his attention to contemporary, late nineteenth century British literary criticism. In the same section as quoted above – „Definition of Literature“ – Huang enumerated the names of leading British scholars, with whose works Huang became familiarised. The names remained, however, mute for a long time. This was partly because the text of Huang’s <History> was previous inaccessible, partly none of the scholars who had the access to the book did take the trouble to match Huang’s idiosyncratic transliteration with the actual spelling of the English names. Yet when, after some struggle, I finally identified these English names, Huang’s discourses yielded a pleiade of illustrious British literary scholars, including such names as Matthew Arnold, Walter Pater, Thomas de Quincey, Thomas Macaulay, Hutcheson Macaulay Posnett, John Morley, Charles Kingsley, Edmund Gosse, and others.

Huang was apparently overwhelmed by the British scholars’ matter-of-fact statements about inherent superiority of imaginative and emotive literature and about the necessity of aesthetic beauty in a literary work. But he was also obviously discontent that the critics’ interest was focused mostly on poetry and that they really did not even touch the problem which he himself considered cardinal: what are those criteria that identify literature in We-

stern cultures. Eventually, Huang found what he himself defined as „brand new“ and „most lucid explanation of literature“ while reading <The Short History of English Literature> published in 1897 by Edmund Gosse. His <History> is an account of English literature from Chaucer to the early Victorian era (1840-1870), encompassing various literary genres, such as poetry, drama and fiction, as well as critical and theoretical essays, literary historiography, discussions on Bible, diary notes, etc.

Gosse's <History> apparently greatly assisted Huang to delineate the concept of literature of his own. He arrived to recognition that the English term „literature“ should be understood in two, broad and more narrow, meanings. As Huang put it, in its broad meaning the term encompasses all writings produced by a particular nation, so that these writings could be designated as „national literature“ (guomin wenxue). As for the concept of literature in its narrow sense, Huang comprehends <wenxue> as those works which exhibit special qualities, including, as Huang put it, the ability of literature of a „creative act“ (zuo wu). He explained this „creative act“ in the following way when he wrote:

„Although it is said that literature transmits moral teaching, it also awakes in our thought emotions and imagination, even to the point that instilling delight, emotions and imagination in our mind becomes the main objective of literature... Thus, <wenxue> is an indivisible part of fine arts (<meishu>) which, together with painting, music and sculpture, is engaged in description of emotions (Tang and Tu, eds. 1998:68).

Huang Ren did not make the final step to delineate belles lettres as a special category that is different from other writings by virtue of aesthetic value. To him, „it is not the form, but the special quality which defines literature“ (Tang and Tu, eds. 1998:69). In this way, Huang like Gosse, considers „Shakespeare's dramas, Kelly's <History of French Revolution>, and Kingsley and Macauley's essays to be on equal footing.“ But Huang's statement that „the primary objective of literature is aesthetic delight, although literature may also disseminate a doctrine“ (ibid.) was, in his time, a very strong nonconformist proclamation. Although it was declared without much ado, the proclamation in fact separated the traditional, cosmological understanding of literature from the modern, secular concept of literature created by man. In my view Huang Ren therefore deserves to be called the pioneer of modern Chinese aesthetics.

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# The Writing of the *Xici Zhuan* and the Making of the *Yijing*

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by Ed Shaughnessy, Chicago

The discovery and publication of the Mawangdui 马王堆 manuscript of the *Yijing* 易经, including a text of its most famous canonical commentary, the *Xici zhuan* 系辞 or *Tradition of the Appended Statements*,<sup>1</sup> has reopened in China an old debate over the authorship and philosophical orientation of the *Xici*: whether it is Confucian (whether written by Confucius himself or not), or whether – and to what extent – it preserves elements more properly called Daoist. Already in the Song dynasty, Ouyang Xiu 欧阳修 (1007–1072) had argued that the *Xici* could not have been written by Confucius himself (and, indeed, that it could not have been written by any single individual),<sup>2</sup> while Su Shi 苏轼 (1037–1101) criticized some of his contemporaries for using Daoist ideas to explain the text (even while making full use of them himself).<sup>3</sup> The notion that the *Xici* reflects a Daoist orientation became especially prevalent early in the twentieth century, taken up by such outstanding scholars of Chinese intellectual history as Feng Youlan 冯友兰 (1895–1990), Gu Jiegang 顾颉刚 (1893–1980), Qian Mu 钱穆 (1895–), and Hou Wailu 侯外庐 (1896–), as well as by Joseph Needham (1900–199 ) in the West.<sup>4</sup> With the discovery of the Mawangdui manuscript of the *Xici*, a manuscript which contains certain significant variations from the received *Xici*, this view has recently been vigorously restated, first by Chen Guying 陈国莹,<sup>5</sup> and then by various of his students, including most importantly Wang Baoxuan 王葆玄.<sup>6</sup> It has been countered, also very vigorously, by Liao Mingchun 廖明春.<sup>7</sup>

I do not propose here to give a *compte rendu* of this debate.<sup>8</sup> For the purposes of the analysis that I will present below, it will suffice to note that the Mawangdui manuscript of the *Xici* lacks several chapters found in the received text: A8 (the so-called "Da yan" or "Great Development" chapter), much of B4, and all of B5 through B8.<sup>9</sup> According to Wang Baoxuan, these are precisely the chapters of the extant text that present most clearly a "Confucian"

bias. In the Mawangdui manuscript, these chapters are instead found in two other texts: "Yi zhi yi" 易知義 (The Properties of the *Changes*) and "Yao" 要 (The Essentials), both of which, according to Wang, are thoroughly Confucian in nature.<sup>10</sup> That these chapters were eventually incorporated into the final text of the *Xici* would require, according to this view, that the text of the *Xici* underwent a final redaction sometime after the date of the Mawangdui manuscript (approximately 190 B.C.), and that it was this final redaction that gave the text its "Confucian" overlay.

While I do not find Wang's arguments regarding putative "Daoist" and "Confucian" editors persuasive, I do think he is right to see in the differences between the Mawangdui manuscript and the received text of the *Xici* evidence of different layers of composition or redaction. That this insight was prompted by the appearance of the Mawangdui manuscript shows yet again the importance of paleographic discoveries in rethinking the development of the early Chinese literary tradition, including even a text as central to it as the *Xici zhuàn*. Nevertheless, I think that the received text of the *Xici* provides evidence in itself of different layers of redaction or composition, a view that Willard Peterson had anticipated several years before the Mawangdui manuscript was published.

My view is that the "Commentary on the Attached Verbalizations" is not the product of a single act of creation, whether by an author or compiler, but was accumulated over a certain period, beginning approximately a generation before the Ch'in dynasty was proclaimed and hardening by the first century B.C. into the form that was taught by Fei Chih and later engraved on the stone tablets.<sup>11</sup>

Unfortunately, Peterson did not attempt to substantiate his view, merely citing a general statement by Gu Jiegang regarding the date of all of the canonical *Yijing* commentaries, a statement that owed, moreover, more to Gu's iconoclastic bias than to any real scholarship.<sup>12</sup> I also find it difficult to follow the further conclusion Peterson drew from this multi-layered redaction.

While recognizing that the "Commentary" is a patchwork which was subject to a continuing process of reworking even after it began to be transmitted in written form, I would also emphasize that it does present a coherent intellectual position. As I shall try to show, it is not a random miscellany of scraps about an old divination text, but is a subtly presented selection of statements intended to convey a particular world view.<sup>13</sup>

In his very fine study of the *Xici*, Peterson did indeed go on to show a coherent reading of the text, but one wonders whether the coherence owes more to the reading than to the text.

Like Peterson and Wang Baoxuan, I too perceive different strata within the *Xici*. However, unlike Peterson, I perceive in these strata very different points of view with respect to the text to which they purport to be a commentary, the *Yi* or *Changes*. On the other hand, unlike Wang and other scholars engaged in the recent debate in China, I am not much concerned with whether these points of view can be characterized as Confucian or Daoist. I am suspicious of the subjectivity almost inherently involved in analyzing texts according to presumed philosophical perspectives (however they might be labeled), and have sought instead to find more objectively demonstrable evidence of different authorial hands, and believe that I can isolate at least two and probably three distinct strata on the basis of their grammatical constructions.

I begin my analysis of the text by ruling out the chapters that are not found in the Mawangdui manuscript. These too may have been part of some earlier version of the *Xici*, but since our earliest witness to the text does not include them, it seems prudent here to consider them separately.<sup>14</sup> Of the remaining chapters, I detect three very different styles of writing. The first, which certainly includes chapters A1, A4,<sup>15</sup> and A5, is written almost exclusively in what Rudolf Wagner has termed Interlocking Parallel Style;<sup>16</sup> it is very tightly argued, and uses a recurrent set of vocabulary focusing on how it is through "ease" (*yi* 一) and "simplicity" (*jian* 一), which are the generative qualities of *Qian* 一 and *Kun* 一, that "virtue" (*de* 一) and "achievement" (*ye* 一) are produced. The second style of writing, which certainly includes chapters A2-3, A9, A12, B1, B3, and B9, and probably A10 and A11, is written in large part in equational sentences (i.e., the standard declarative form of classical Chinese: Noun Noun 一); it is overwhelmingly concerned with describing the *Yi* as a divination text, and thus recurrently uses the terms "alternation" (*bian* 一), "penetration" (*tong* 一), "prognostication" (*zhan* 一), and especially "image" (*xiang* 一), and through these introduces a notion of thought and language within which the *Yi* serves as a meta-text that transcends the limitations of ordinary fixed writing (it is ironic that it presents this very subtle argument about language in a somewhat disjointed and relatively pedestrian style).<sup>17</sup> A third distinct stratum, which, however, I will not discuss in this study, includes chapters A6 and A7, B2, and B4; of all of the chapters of the *Xici*, it is the one tied most explicitly to the text of the *Yi*, providing comments on individual line statements or explaining the significance of individual hexagram pictures, the comments put in the words of Confucius (*zi yue* 一).<sup>18</sup> In this it is quite similar to portions of the "Wenyan" 一 (Patterned Speech) commentary to the *Yi jing*, or the Mawangdui commentary "Yi zhi yi," or, in more general terms, to the "Zi yi" 一 (The Black Jacket) and related chapters of the *Li ji* 一 (Record of Rites).

Since the argument I am making regarding different strata in the text depends on a close analysis of the text, demonstration will require quotation of fairly extended passages in both the original and in translation. Since the translation is intended to display formal aspects of the text, I will strive to make it rigorously literal, even at the expense of whatever eloquence I might otherwise be able to bring to it (a loss to be felt especially in the case of chapter A1,

which is quite eloquent in the original). I do hope, however, that such literalness will not come at the expense of clarity, since these translated passages will also provide the evidence for the conceptual differences that I perceive between the two strata that I will discuss. Since these conceptual differences have a secondary place in my argument, and since I am confident that they are reasonably evident in any reading of the text, except in those few cases where my translation diverges radically from the traditional interpretation I will forego detailed textual or commentarial notes.

### The First Stratum: Argument and Context

The first stratum includes the famous chapter A1 which begins "Heaven being venerable and earth base, *Qian* and *Kun* are settled" (*tian zun di bei, qian kun ding yi* 天—L—a—A—A—[—w—o—). As noted above, it is written overwhelmingly in Interlocking Parallel Style, presenting a tightly developed argument with three main theses: that the world, both natural and human, is made up of differences, which in crude terms break down to opposites; that the world achieves its unique efficacy by constantly changing, each change being produced by the union of the two opposites and in turn producing a result, thus serving to create the world anew, allowing it to be fruitful and permanent; and that the *Yi* is the intellectual key that allows man to realize his place in the world.<sup>19</sup> The paradigmatic opposites of the *Yi* are *Qian* 天 and *Kun* 地, the "pure" trigrams and hexagrams (i.e., made up of all yang or all yin lines) that are considered in the *Yi jing* tradition to be the father and mother of all the other trigrams and hexagrams.<sup>20</sup> The relationship between *Qian* and *Kun* is so central to this stratum that as an independent text it might well be identified as the *Qian Kun zhuan* 天—[—地—.

天—L—a—A—A—[—w—o—C Heaven being venerable and earth base,*Qian* and *Kun* are settled.

地—H—A—Q—o—C The base and high being arrayed, the noble and mean are positioned.

动—R—A—X—o—C Motion and rest having constancy, the hard and soft are separated.

类—H—E—A—H—s—A—N—o—C The regions being gathered according to category, and things being divided according to groups, the lucky and ominous are generated.

象—b—H—A—b—a—A—o—C In the heavens completing images, and on earth completing forms, alternations and transformations are apparent.

—O—G—A This is why



<p>---X---A -K-----R</p>	<p>the hard and soft join each other, and the eight trigrams stir each other.</p>
<p>-----H-p-^-A -----H---B-A</p>	<p>Drum them with thunder and lightning; moisten them with wind and rain,</p>
<p>-----B---A -@-H-@--- -C</p>	<p>The sun and moon move in cycles, once cold once hot.</p>
<p>---D---k-A -[ -D---k-A</p>	<p>The way of <i>Qian</i> completes the male, the way of <i>Kun</i> completes the female.</p>
<p>-----j-l-A -[ -@-----C</p>	<p><i>Qian</i> knows the great beginning, <i>Kun</i> does the completing of things.<sup>21</sup></p>
<p>---H-----A -[ -H-----C</p>	<p><i>Qian</i> through exchange knows; <i>Kun</i> through its opening is capable.<sup>22</sup></p>
<p>---h-----A ---h---q-C</p>	<p>Exchanging it is easy to know;<sup>23</sup> open it is easy to follow.</p>
<p>-----h-----A ---q-h---\ -C</p>	<p>Being easy to know there is closeness; being easy to follow there is accomplishment.</p>
<p>-----h-i-[ -A ---\-h-i-j-C</p>	<p>There being closeness it can be long-lived; there being accomplishment it can be great.</p>
<p>-i-[ -h---H---w-A-i-j-h---H---~ -C</p>	<p>Being long-lived it is the virtue of the worthy man; being great it is the patrimony of the worthy man.</p>
<p>-----U---z-o-o-C</p>	<p>Through exchange and the opening the order of all under heaven is obtained.</p>
<p>---U---z-o-----G-----o-C</p>	<p>The order of all under heaven being obtained, one completes his position in its midst.</p>

While the translation given here derives from a more explicitly sexual interpretation of the chapter than will be found elsewhere, I do not think it is at all radical to consider the main theme of the chapter to be the union of *Qian* and *Kun* – male and female, and that this union produces a "result" (*gong* - \), termed euphemistically the "virtue" (*de* - w) of being long-lived (*jiu* - [) and the "patrimony" (*ye* - ~) being great (*da* - j),<sup>24</sup> that is, I believe, simply the procreation of life. This entails a radical optimism both in the goodness of the natural world and also about man's ability to partake in that goodness. Indeed, according to my understanding of this portion of the text, simply by reproducing themselves men and women participate in the changes of the world and thus fulfill their basic responsibility in life.

This theme is maintained throughout all of what I perceive to be the first stratum of the *Xici*. Chapter A4 includes the succinct definition "one yin and one yang is what is called the Way" (*yi yin yi yang zhi wei dao* -@---@-----D), while chapter A5, which might be considered to be the conclusion to this stratum, begins with three other related definitions: "richly having it is called the great achievement" (*fu you zhi wei da ye* -I-----j-~), "daily renewing it is called full virtue" (*ri xin zhi wei sheng de* ---s-----w), and "generating life is called Change" (*sheng sheng zhi wei yi* -----). It then proceeds through a graphic description of sexual union and concludes, after recalling from chapter A1 that the *Changes* (or, perhaps, simply change) moves in the midst of these opposites, that "to create the inner-nature and to maintain it and to maintain it again is what is called the gate of the property of the Way" (*cheng xing cun cun, dao yi zhi men* -----s-s-A-D-q-----). This is, to be sure, a radical distillation of the theme of these chapters. Moreover, it does not do any justice to the intricacy with which the theme is interwoven through them (in part by way of recurrent vocabulary, acting almost like notes of music). Indeed, I suspect that the Interlocking Parallel Style in which this stratum is written was meant to be a conscious instantiation of the theme: positing two complementary natures, the union of which produces (*gu* -G or *shi gu* -O-G, "therefore" or "this is why") something new. I hope that the following translation of just chapter A5 will serve to demonstrate further the style of this author.

-----A -----A  
 ---U-----P-t-H-P-~-A  
 ---w-j-~-o-v-C

Manifested in humaneness, and stored in use,  
 Encouraging the ten-thousand things  
 and yet not sharing the troubles of the sage,  
 the full virtue and great achievement is perfect  
 indeed!

-I-----j-~-A  
 ---s-----w-C  
 -----A

Richly having it is called the great achievement;  
 Daily renewing it is called full virtue;  
 Generating life is called Change.

---H-----A  
 ---k-----[-A  
 -----e-C

Completing images is called *Qian*;  
 Imitating patterns is called *Kun*;  
 Going to the limits of numbers to know what is  
 to come is called prognosticating;  
 Penetrating alternations is called affairs;  
 The unfathomableness of yin and yang is called  
 spirituality.

-q-----A  
 -----C

-----s-o-j-o-C

The *Changes* is vast indeed, great indeed.

<p>-H---G---h---m-A          -H---G---h-R-----A          -H---G---a-----h---o-C</p>	<p>In speaking in terms of the distant, it is not repelled;          in speaking in terms of the near, it is quiescent and upright;          in speaking in terms of what is between heaven and earth, it is complete.</p>
<p>-----A ---R- ]-M-A ----- ]---A          -O-H-j---j-C          ----[-A ---R- ]---A ----- ]-P-A          -O-H-s---j-C</p>	<p>As for <i>Qian</i>, in quiescence it is curved, in motion it is straight;          this is how greatness is generated by it.          As for <i>Kun</i>, in quiescence it is shut, in motion it is open;          this is how vastness is generated by it.<sup>25</sup></p>
<p>-s-j-t---a-A          ----q-t- ---A          -----q-t-----A          -----t---w-C</p>	<p>Vast and great it matches heaven and earth;          Alternating and penetrating it matches the four seasons;          The propriety of the yin and yang matches the sun and moon;          The goodness of exchange and openness matches perfect virtue.</p>
<p>-l---R -----o-G-C          -----A-t-H---H-R-w---s-~- ]-C          ---R-----A -R-----A ---k-a-C          ---a- ]-----G-----o-C          -----s-s-A -D-q-----C</p>	<p>The Master said: "Isn't the <i>Changes</i> perfect!"          As for the <i>Changes</i>, it is that by which the sages raise virtue on high and make achievements vast.          Knowing the heights and embodying the lowly, the heights imitate heaven and the lowly is patterned on earth.          Heaven and earth gives it place and the <i>Changes</i> moves in their midst;          Completing the inner-nature and preserving it over and over again, it is the gate to the propriety of the way.</p>

At least in this core portion of this first stratum, there is very little mention of any ethical notions; simply participating in the life of the world is regarded as good. It is doubtless this attitude toward the natural world that has led some to characterize the *Xici* as a "Daoist" text. On the other hand, this sort of optimism with respect to the nature of the world is by no means uncharacteristic of texts usually considered to be Confucian. It underscores, for instance,

theories of the transformative effects of music, as seen in the "Yue ji" 乐记 (Record of music) chapter of the *Li ji* 礼记 (Record of ritual).

-----a-----M- ]-A -----a----- ]-C -M-A -G-----F ----A  
-G-s-----O-C

Music is the harmony of heaven and earth, and ritual is the sequence of heaven and earth. Being harmonious therefore the hundred beings all transform, and being in sequence therefore the groups of beings are all differentiated.<sup>26</sup>

Even if the author of the "Yue ji" were not to go on to paraphrase the opening chapter of the *Xici*, it would still be clear that these arguments share the *Xici*'s notion that man and the universe are on a par and that things are both differentiated and also harmonious. But the connection between the two texts becomes unmistakable in the next passage of the "Yue ji":

---L-a---A -g---w-o-C -----H---A -Q-----o-C ---R---` -A  
-p-j---o-C ---H---E-A ---H-s---A -h---R---P-o-C -b-----H-A  
-b-a-----F -p---h-----a---O- ]-C -a---W---A -----U---A  
-----A ---a-----F -----H-p-^--A -----H---B-A  
-----H-|---A-----H-----A-----j-C-p---h-----a---M- ]-C

As heaven is lofty and earth base, ruler and minister are settled. Base and high being ranked, noble and mean are positioned. Motion and stillness having constancy, the small and great are differentiated.

The regions being grouped by category, and beings being divided by type, then natures and fates are not the same. In heaven there form images and on earth there form shapes; in this way then ritual is the differentiation of heaven and earth.

The earthly vapor rises up, while the heavenly vapor descends. The yin and yang join each other, and heaven and earth stir each other. Drumming them with thunder and lightning, and rousing them with the wind and rain, moving them with the four seasons, and brightening them with the sun and moon, the hundred transformations all arise in it. In this way then music is the harmony of heaven and earth.<sup>27</sup>

In addition perhaps to suggesting a process by which Confucian thinkers undertook appropriation of the *Xici*, this "Yue ji" passage is important too for helping to establish the date of the earliest stratum of the *Xici*. The *Li ji* is notoriously difficult to date. It almost surely was not put into final form until well into the Han dynasty. On the other hand, it surely also includes much earlier material, as demonstrated in the preceding chapter in the case of the "Zi yi" 子衣 or "Black Jacket," the discovery of which among the Guodian 郭店 manuscripts goes far toward substantiating its traditional attribution to Zi Si 子思, the grandson of Confucius. The "Yue ji" is traditionally attributed to Gongsun Nizi 公孫尼子, supposed to

have been a contemporary of Zi Si. While there are also other traditions and especially other viewpoints regarding the authorship of the text, it seems likely that it dates to the mid-Warring States period, no later than about 300 B.C.<sup>28</sup> And since at least the lengthy passage of it quoted above seems clearly to be drawing from the opening of the *Xici*, it is reasonable to conclude that at least that opening – and indeed the entirety of what I perceive to be the first stratum of the *Xici* – were in circulation in the fourth century B.C.

### The Second Stratum: Divination as a Language of Change

What I perceive to be the second stratum of the *Xici* is striking for its insistence on defining terms by way of equational sentences (i.e., sentences of the type Noun Noun = ] ) and for its preoccupation with divination. Thus, chapter A2, the first chapter in the received text that exhibits these features, includes a chain of definitions regarding terms occurring in or associated with the *Yi jing*, before introducing the divinatory use of the text by the noble man (*junzi* =g-1), and then concluding with a quotation from the text:

- N—A —o—H— ]—C      ”Auspicious” and ”ominous” are images of gain and loss;
- [ —A —~—H— ]—C      ”regret” and ”distress” are images of sorrow and concern;
- A —i—h—H— ]—C      alternation and transformation are images of advance and retreat;
- X—A — ]—H— ]—C      the hard and soft are images of day and night;
- A —T—D— ]—C      and the motion of the six lines is the way of the three extremes.
  
- O—G—g—l—~—w—A— ]—C      This is why that in which the noble man resides and takes comfort is the sequence of the *Changes*,
- A— ]—C      and that which he manipulates and takes pleasure in is the statements of the lines.
- O—G—g—l—~—h—[ —H— ]—C      This is why when the noble man resides he views its images and manipulates its statements,
- h—[ —e—C      and when he moves he views its alternations and manipulates its prognostications.
  
- O—H—@—A—N—A—L—Q— ]—C      Thus, ”From heaven blessing it, auspicious, there is nothing not beneficial.”

Chapter A3 continues all of these features both formally and conceptually:

-----G-H--- ]-C

-----G----- ]-C

-N-----G-----o- ]-C

---[ -----G---p--- ]-C

-L-S-----L- ]-C

-O-G-C-Q-----s-G---C

---p-j---s-G---C

---N-----s-G---C

-~---[ ---s-G---C

- \_L-S---s-G---C

-O-G-----j-p-A

-----I---C

--- ]---U-----C

The Judgments are what speak of images.

The Line Statements are what speak of alternations.

"Auspicious" and "ominous" are what speak of loss and gain.

"Regret" and "distress" are what speak of small blemishes.

"No trouble" is what is good at repairing mistakes.

This is why what arrays the honored and mean resides in position;

what equalizes the small and great resides in the hexagrams;

what distinguishes "auspicious" and "ominous" resides in the statements;

what worries over "regret" and "distress" resides in the interstices;

and what shakes up "no trouble" resides in "regret."

This is why of hexagrams there are great and small,

and of statements there are dangerous and easy.

As for statements, each points to where it goes.<sup>29</sup>

The final chapter of what has traditionally been identified as the first half of the *Xici* (i.e., the *Shang zhuan* -W---) presents something of a conclusion to this stratum,<sup>30</sup> providing an ethical rationalization for this interest in divination. Another series of definitions comprises the central portion of this chapter, A12. This series begins with a definition of the Way or *dao* as "that which is above forms" (*xing er shang* -----W) as opposed to "implements" (*qi* ---) that are "that which is below forms" (*xing er xia* -----U), apparently the *locus classicus* for these expressions that would come to be so important in later Chinese metaphysics. It then moves through such terms as *hua* ---, "transformation," *bian* ---, "alternation," and *tong* =q, "penetration," that are central to describing the dynamic nature of the *Yijing*, before returning to the word *xiang* =H, "image," with which this stratum started in chapter A2, and

then coming finally to the "appending of statements" (*xi ci* 繫辭), another term also found in chapter A2 and which came to be the name for the entire text.<sup>31</sup>

<p>—O—G—W—D—A          —U—A          —A          —q—A          — —U—~—C          —O—G—H—t—H—H—U—A          —e—H—y—C          —O—G—H—C          —t—H—H—U—A          —[— —q—H—A          —j—H—_—N—C          —O—G—C</p>	<p>This is why what is above forms is called the Way, and what is below forms is called implements. To snip a transformation is called an alternation;<sup>32</sup> To push and put it into motion is called penetration; and to raise it up and distribute it to the people under heaven is called service and achievement.<sup>33</sup></p> <p>This is why images are what the sages use to display the vestiges under heaven, and imitating them in their shape and form give image to the properties of things; this is why they are called images. The sages use them to display the movements of all under heaven, and observe their convergence and penetration in order to give motion to their canons and rituals, and append statements to them in order to decide their auspiciousness and ominousness; this is why they are called lines.</p>
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Divination is crucial to the author of this stratum of the *Xici* not, I think, because he was interested in divination *per se*,<sup>34</sup> but rather because it is his contention that it is the *Yijing*'s use in divination that makes it unique within the entire textual tradition of ancient China (the *dian li* 典利, "canons and rituals" of the final sentence here). Like other texts, the *Yijing* is constituted of pictures (*gua* 卦) and statements (*yao* 爻 or *ci* 辭). But unlike other texts, which are fixed for all time, the *Yijing* is dynamic, is alive, changing with each new use, each new reading. Divination is what puts the text into motion, causing it to "transform," to "alternate" and to "penetrate," making its images changeable. This argument, implied in the passages already translated above, is made explicit in a passage at the beginning of this chapter A12. It is in the form of a dialog between Confucius and some unidentified interlocutor:

—l—R—A—N—C  
 —M—h—t—H—N—A—i—G—C

- l --- R - t - H --- H - H --- N - A - ] --- H --- A --- j - H --- A  
 --- q --- H --- Q - C  
 --- R --- H --- C

The Master said: "Writing does not fully express speech, and speech does not fully express thought."

"This being so, then can the thoughts of the sages not be seen?"

The Master said: "The sages established images in order to express fully their ideas, and set up hexagrams in order to express fully the characteristics (of things), appended statements to them in order to express fully their words, (alternated and penetrated=) caused them to change in order to express fully their benefit, and drummed them and danced them in order to express fully their spirit."

In making this argument, the author of this second stratum of the *Xici* was participating in a debate about the nature of language and writing that, based on the evidence currently available, seems to have emerged within a decade or so of 300 B.C. and then became quite ubiquitous by the middle of the following century. In the *Mengzi* -s-1, of the last decades of the fourth century B.C., one finds a statement suggesting that the writings of antiquity are sufficient to put one on intimate terms with their writers.

- s - l --- U --- R - @ - m --- h - A --- @ - m --- h - F - @ --- h - A  
 --- @ --- h - F --- U --- h - A --- U --- h - C  
 - H --- U --- h --- A - S - | --- j --- H - C - | --- A --- A  
 --- H - i - G - H - O - H --- @ - ] - A - O - | --- ] - C

Mengzi addressed Wan Zhang saying: "A fine gentleman of a single town may befriend another fine gentleman of a single town; a fine gentleman of a single state may befriend another fine gentleman of a single state; and a fine gentleman of the world may befriend another fine gentleman of the world. But if befriending another fine gentleman of the world is not yet sufficient, then one can still assay the men of antiquity. By chanting their poetry and reading their writings, is it possible for one not to know them as men? In this way, by assaying their times, one can still befriend them."<sup>35</sup>

In the nearly contemporary *Zhuangzi* --- 1, on the other hand, we find numerous passages arguing the contrary, that writing is but a fossilized vestige of an earlier intellectual moment. Particularly relevant to the relationship between "thought" (*yi* -N), "speech" (*yan* ---) and "writing" (*shu* ---) in the above passage from the *Xici* is the *Zhuangzi*'s well known analogy between speech and fishtraps and rabbit snares.



-----H-b-----A-o-----C-----H-b-----A-o-----  
 ---C---H-b-N-A-o-N-----C-^w-o-----H---  
 -P-----v-C

The fishtrap exists for the sake of fish; once you have gotten the fish, you can forget the fishtrap. The snare exists for the sake of the rabbit; once you have gotten the rabbit, you can forget the snare. Speech exists for the sake of the idea; once you have gotten the idea, you can forget the speech. Where can I find someone who has forgotten speech, so that I might speak with him?<sup>36</sup>

This passage explicitly points only to the incommensurability of thought and speech. However, Zhuangzi’s tongue-in-cheek conclusion to the passage recognizes that speech is in some sense “alive,” that being able to speak with someone allows the sort of interaction that can render thought intelligible.<sup>37</sup> Other passages of the *Zhuangzi* make clear that writing, on the other hand, does not share this flexibility; once something is written, it is fixed in place, and thus becomes “dead.” For instance, consider this apocryphal dialog between Confucius and Laozi ---l found in the “Tian yun” ---B chapter.

---l---C---R-C-v-----K---g-A---H---[-o-C-E---G-o-C  
 -H-l---C-Q-G-g-----D-----P-l-----A-@-g-L---\_-----o-C  
 - - - H - - - - - ] - A - D - - - - - H - - - l - - - R  
 ---o-l-----J-v-@---g-]-C-----g-A-----]-C -Z---  
 ---H---v-I---l-----S---]-C-----i-----X-----Z-i-v-I

Confucius said to Lao Dan: “I have put in order the six classics, the *Poetry, Documents, Ritual, Music, Changes, and Spring and Autumn*, considering myself that I have done so for a long time and that I know well their reasons? Having sought out seventy-two lords, I have discoursed on the way of the former kings and the footprints of (dukes of) Zhou and Shao, but it has gone so far that not a single lord has accepted what I have had to say. Is the difficulty in persuading people because of the difficulty in understanding the Way?”

Laozi said: “Fortunately for you you have not met with a lord who puts in order the age. The six classics are the old footprints of the former kings; how could they be what made the footprints? What you are now speaking about is nothing more than footprints. Footprints are what are produced by shoes; how could they be the shoes?”<sup>38</sup>

In a related chapter, the “Tian dao” ---D, which Chen Guying and others have seen as closely related with the *Xici*,<sup>39</sup> the same attitude toward writing is stated in a more systematic fashion.

---@---Q-D---A---]-C---L-y-C-y---Q-]-C-y---Q  
 ---A-N-]-C-N-----H-C-N-----H---A---i-H-----]-C---@  
 -]-Q-----C-@---Q---v-A-----Q-]-C-----Q-D---Q-]-C  
 -G---i---A---P---]-C---i-D---A-W-P-n-]-C-d

---A -@ -H -H ---W -n ---A -H -o ---C ---W -n -G  
 ---H -o ---A -h ---A ---A ---@ -Z ---  
 -v-C

The way that is valued by the world is writing. Writing is nothing more than language (or: writing does not surpass language). Language has something of value. What is valued in language is ideas. Ideas have that which they follow. That which ideas follow cannot be transmitted through speech. And yet because the world values speech it transmits writings. Although the world values them, they are not worth being valued. What is considered as valuable about them is not their value. Therefore, what you can see when you look at something is shape and color; what you can hear when you listen to something is words and sound. What a pity that people of the world take shape and color, words and sounds to be sufficient to get the characteristics of that (i.e., the Dao or Way). Since shape and color, words and sounds are certainly insufficient to get the characteristics of that, then the one who knows does not speak, and the one who speaks does not know, yet does the world record this!<sup>40</sup>

The conclusion of this passage – “the one who knows does not speak, and the one who speaks does not know” (*zhizhe bu yan, yanzhe bu zhi* ---A ---) – clearly alludes to the *Laozi*, famous for the notion that language is an insufficient medium to transmit understanding of the Way. Thus, the usual interpretation of the famous first sentence of the *Laozi*, *dao ke dao, fei chang dao* <sup>1</sup>D-i-D-A-D---D, is “the way that can be spoken of is not the eternal way.” However, it is interesting to note that another text probably also written in the third century B.C., the *Wenzi* ㄨㄥㄣ, <sup>41</sup> offers a very different interpretation. In the context of a discussion of laws needing to change with the times – the political corollary of this linguistic debate – the *Wenzi* quotes this line with the sense: “A way that is able to be the Way is not a constant way,” meaning that it must constantly change to adapt to new situations; as soon as a way has any fixed characteristic, it becomes finite. For the same reason, the *Wenzi* goes on to say that “a (name=) word that is able to be the (Name=) Word is not stored in writings”; once it is written down, it becomes fixed, and thus dead.

-e -Q ---A ---k -j -F -e -P ---A ---` -U-C -G -t -H -k  
 -P ---A ---P -U ---A ---A ---A -k ---O-A -U - ] ---y-C  
 -G ---j ---i -D-A ---` -U ---h - ]-C -w ---Y -D ---  
 ---F -D ---Y -o ---H ---C -o ---H ---A ---  
 - ]-C -G ---D -i -D-A -D -` -D - ]-F -W -i -W-A -D -` -W - ]---C

If you are to benefit the people, you do not necessarily have to take antiquity as a law; if you are to be well-rounded in affairs, you do not necessarily have to follow the customary. Therefore, the laws of the sages changed with the times and their rituals transformed with the customs. Clothing and tools, laws, measures, statutes and ordinances were each based on what was appropriate

for it. Therefore, changing the ancient cannot yet be rejected, and following the customary is not yet sufficient. Reciting the books of the former kings is not as good as hearing their speech; hearing their speech is not as good as getting the reason why they spoke. Getting the reason why they spoke, it is a speech that cannot be spoken. Therefore, "a way that is able to be the Way is not a constant way."<sup>42</sup>

As one final example of this attitude toward writing, let me cite what is usually regarded as the earliest commentary on the *Laozi*, the "Yu Lao" chapter of the *Han Feizi*. Ironically, Han Feizi was a stutterer and was forced by this circumstance to put his philosophy into writing to have it accepted at the court of King Zheng of Qin, better known by his subsequent title of Qin Shi huangdi. In the anecdote, the protagonist is so persuaded of the uselessness of his books that he burns them and then dances on them – a perhaps chilling presentiment of the "burning of the books" that Li Si, a onetime classmate of Han Fei, proposed in a memorial to the Qin court in 213, just twenty years after Li had engineered Han Fei's own suicide there.

t A } P C R ] C A  
 L ` C ] C A C  
 l W t H  
 O ] I ? C G H A  
 z H C

Wang Shou was walking along carrying books, and saw Xu Feng on the road to Zhou. Feng said: "Service is doing, and doing is born from timeliness; one who knows timeliness is without any constant service. Books are words, and words are born from knowing; one who knows does not store books. Now why do you alone walk along carrying them?" With this Wang Shou accordingly burned his books and danced on them. Therefore, the knowing don't use word-talk to teach, and the wise don't store books.<sup>43</sup>

After this somewhat lengthy detour through the linguistic turns of the third century B.C., let us now return to the *Xici*. The author of what I perceive to be the second stratum of the text seems to accept the *Zhuangzi's* notion of the fixed nature of books. However, he does not accept that this pertains to the *Yi*. For him the *Yi* is a book of a very different sort, made up not of written words but rather of changing – and thus living – images. That is why in Confucius's riposte to his interlocutor, after noting that the sages established the images and hexagrams and appended statements to them, they then "(alternated and penetrated=) caused them to change in order to express fully their benefit, and drummed them and danced them in order to express fully their spirit." This too, I would suggest, is why the author of this stratum of the *Xici* insists on the divinatory nature of the *Yi*: if one simply reads it, it is dead just like any other book of wisdom; but if one uses it in divination, setting its changes in motion, then it comes alive, changing so as to comment on each new situation addressed to it. Just as the author of

the first stratum of the *Xici* regarded the human sexual act as the paradigmatic manifestation of man's participation in the generation of the world, similarly for the author of the second stratum the interaction between the user of the *Yi* and the *Yi* itself results in a constant process of recreation, but this time the recreation is that of the text.

## Conclusion

The final redaction of the *Xici* was certainly more complex than this two-stage process on which I have focused in this study. As I have noted in passing above, the *Xici* also contains other chapters, several (A6, A7, B2, B4) with a distinct, third authorial hand that are found already in the Mawangdui manuscript of the *Xici*. In addition, I suspect that the several chapters found in the Mawangdui text "Yi zhi yi" and now found in the second section of the *Xici* (i.e., i.e., B4-B8) were doubtless added to the text sometime during the Han dynasty. Finally, I suspect that the "Da yan" chapter was added independently, also sometime during the Han dynasty but well after the time of the Mawangdui manuscript. A fuller study of the redaction of the *Xici zhuan* would attempt to account for all of these portions of the text. Nevertheless, I think it was the authors of the two strata studied here who made the *Xici* the all-encompassing statement that it is.

The first of the two strata that I have identified suggested that the *Yi* or *Changes* could serve as the necessary ontological linkage between the processes of the natural world and the human community, while the second stratum might be said to have supplied the epistemological basis whereby the text could provide readers with an intelligible but never fixed meaning. I suspect that this second stratum postdates the first. Not only does it take up philosophical concerns that seem to belong to a somewhat later period (as I have tried to demonstrate), but, perhaps even more important, it seems to show an awareness of the other section. For example, as discussed above, chapter A12 is an ideal example of this stratum, including the crucial passage about the unique textual nature of the *Yi*. The chapter begins in the fashion typical of this stratum with a series of definitions, including *bian*, "alternation," and *tong*, "penetration," words seen consistently throughout the stratum. The last of the definitions of this paragraph introduces a term new to it, *shi ye* 事業, "service and achievement," the second word of which seems to be an appropriation of the word *ye* that features so prominently in the first stratum (where I translated it as "patrimony"), even if the sense in which the word is defined seems somewhat different.<sup>44</sup>

—O—G—W—D—A  
 —U—A  
 —A

This is why what is above forms is called the Way,  
 and what is below forms is called implements.  
 To snip a transformation is called an  
 alternation;<sup>45</sup>

<p>—————q—A</p> <p>—   —————U—————~—C</p>	<p>To push and put it into motion is called penetration;</p> <p>and to raise it up and distribute it to the people under heaven is called service and achievement.</p>
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An even clearer example of such appropriation is to be seen in chapter B9, the final chapter of the entire text and another clear example of the second stratum:

----- A ----- U ----- ] - F - w ----- H ----- I - C ----- [ - A  
 -----U----- ] - F - w ----- H ----- C

*Qian* is the most vigorous thing under heaven; its virtue moves constantly with ease in order to know of danger. *Kun* is the most compliant thing under heaven; its virtue moves constantly with simplicity in order to know of obstructions.

The two sentences both begin with the equational format of the second stratum, and the linkage in the first sentence between *yi* —, "ease," and *xian* —I, "danger," recalls a formulation seen earlier in chapter A3 of the same second stratum (*gua you da xiao, ci you xian yi* ——— j - p - A ——— I —, "of hexagrams there are great and small, and of statements there are dangerous and easy"). On the other hand, the pairing of *yi* — and *jian* —, "simple," is an obvious quotation of the pairing of these terms in chapter A1 of the first stratum, even if (perhaps especially since) the meanings of both words again appear to be used in senses different from those in the first stratum. The pairing of these words would appear to be unique within the philosophical expression of early China; their use in the first and last chapters of the *Xici* can only be seen as an intratextual reference – and it seems clear to me that the direction of reference is from what I have termed the first stratum to that of the second. <sup>46</sup>

It is perhaps appropriate that what I have termed the first stratum, the core concern of which is the constant production and reproduction of the world – both natural and human, should have generated a second (and, doubtless, third and fourth) attempt to explicate the process of the *Yi* or change. It is perhaps also appropriate that the second stratum, which I have argued is concerned primarily with questions of epistemology – how can we define the terms of the *Yi* or *Changes* and how is it that they differ from normal language in being ultimately undefinable, should signal its knowledge of the earlier stratum, and doing so with definitions that re-define some of its core terms. Together, these authors of the *Xici* crafted a pair of philosophical statements that transformed the *Zhou Yi* from a divination manual into the *I Ching* (*Yi jing*), the first of all of China's classics.

## Notes

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\* The substance of this paper, first entitled "The Authorial Context of the *Yijing's Xici Zhuan*," was presented to the Conference on Intellectual Lineages in Ancient China, University of Pennsylvania, 27 September 1997, and then in a revised form and with the revised title "The Ever-Changing Text: The Making of the *Tradition of the Appended Statements* and the Making of the *Yijing*," was presented as the Herrlee G. Creel Memorial Lecture at the University of Chicago, 29 May 1998. I also presented it in a Chinese version, entitled "Xici zhuan de bianzuan" 系辞传之编撰, at the conference celebrating the centennial of Peking University, Beijing, 5 May 1999; this Chinese version has been published, under that title, in in *Wenhua de yizeng: Hanxue yanjiu guoji buiyi lunwenji; Zhaxue juan* 文化之绎证：汉学研究的国际会议论文集；哲学卷，ed. Beijing daxue Zhongguo chuantong wenhua yanjiu zhongxin (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2000), pp. 262-7; and under the title "Boshu Xici zhuan de bianzuan" 帛书系辞传之编撰, in *Daojia wenhua yanjiu* 道家文化研究 18 (2000): 371-81.

<sup>1</sup> For an introduction in English to this discovery, including a complete translation of the manuscript, see Edward L. Shaughnessy, *I Ching: The Classic of Changes, The First English Translation of the Newly Discovered Second-Century B.C. Mawangdui Texts* (New York: Ballantine, 1996).

<sup>2</sup> For Ouyang's most developed statement regarding the *Xici*, see his "Yi tongzi wen" 易童子文 (Ouyang Yongshu ji 欧阳永叔集 [Guoxue jiben congshu ed.], 9.62-7), which begins: "(The *Xici*) ... is a mass of sayings jumbled and confused and is not even the words of a single individual. Those who studied the *Changes* in antiquity selected (quotations) at random to support their teachings, but the teachings were not of a single school. For this reason some are the same, some are different, some right, some wrong. What they chose not being to the point, it ended up harming the classic and confusing the ages—and yet they were appended to the sagely classic, and their transmission has already been long, and no one has been able to discern whence they came or to discriminate what is authentic or artificial about them" (9.62). For discussions in English of Ouyang's views on the *Xici*, see Iulian K. Shchutskii, *Researches on the I Ching* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1979), pp. 65-71; Kidder Smith, Jr., Peter K. Bol, Joseph A. Adler, and Don J. Wyatt, *Sung Dynasty Uses of the I Ching* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990), pp. 26-42.

<sup>3</sup> Willard J. Peterson, "Making Connections: 'Commentary on the Attached Verbalizations' of the *Book of Change*," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 42.1 (1982): 79. Much of Su's commentary on the *Xici* focuses on the meaning of *dao*, often put in terms familiar from the *Laozi* and *Zhuangzi*. Indeed, whereas he explicitly criticizes Mengzi for not understanding human nature, on the same page he explicitly extolled Laozi's understanding of the nature of the *dao* (*Su Shi Yi zhuan* 7.159-60). For a study of Su's views of the *Yijing*, including especially the *Xici*, see Kidder Smith, Jr., Peter K. Bol, Joseph A. Adler, and Don J. Wyatt, *Sung Dynasty Uses of the I Ching* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990), pp. 56-99.

<sup>4</sup> For mention of these scholars' views on the *Xici zhuan*, see Willard J. Peterson, "Making Connections: 'Commentary on the Attached Verbalizations' of the *Book of Change*," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 42.1 (1982): 76-7.

<sup>5</sup> For his first published statement of this view, see Chen Guying, "Yi zhuan Xici suo shou Laozi sixiang yingxiang – Jianlun Yi zhuan nai Daojia xitong zhi zuo" 易传系辞所受老子思想影响——兼论易传乃道家系统之作, *Zhaxue yanjiu* 哲学研究 1989.1: 34-42, 54; for a more developed

statement, see Chen Guying, *Yi zhuan yu Daojia sixiang* (Taipei: Taiwan Shangwu yinshuguan, 1994), esp. 163-243.

<sup>6</sup> See Wang Baoxuan, "Cong Mawangdui boshu ben kan *Xici* yu Laozi xuepai de guanxi" (1992): 175-87; "Boshu *Xici* yu Zhanguo Qin Han Daojia *Yi* xue" (1993): 73-88.

<sup>7</sup> See Liao Mingchun, "Lun boshu *Xici* yu jinben *Xici* de guanxi" (1993): 133-43.

<sup>8</sup> For an overview of it, see Edward L. Shaughnessy, "A First Reading of the Mawangdui *Yijing* Manuscript," *Early China* 19 (1994): 47-73.

<sup>9</sup> There are two different enumerations of chapters (*zhang*<sup>31</sup>) within the *Xici* in customary use: that of the *Zhou Yi zheng yi* of Kong Yingda (574-648), and that of the *Zhou Yi ben yi* of Zhu Xi (1130-1200). Here and throughout this paper (with one exception, for which see n. 00), I follow the chapters as given in the earlier of these two sources, "A" indicating the first or *shang*, and "B" the second or *xia*. The chapters missing from the Mawangdui manuscript correspond in Zhu Xi's numbering to chapters A9, much of B5, and B6 through B11.

<sup>10</sup> For translations of these texts, see Shaughnessy, *I Ching: The Classic of Changes*, pp. 213-34 and 235-44.

<sup>11</sup> Peterson, "Making Connections," p. 77.

<sup>12</sup> Gu Jiegang, "Zhou Yi gua yao ci zhong de gushi" (1931; rpt. Shanghai: Shanghai Guji chubanshe, 1982), p. 25. Gu explicitly notes that by "*Yi zhuan*", he intends not a single text but all of what are referred to as the "Ten Wings."

<sup>13</sup> Peterson, "Making Connections," p. 77.

<sup>14</sup> I have elsewhere suggested (Edward L. Shaughnessy, "The Composition of the *Zhouyi*" [Ph.D. Diss.: Stanford University, 1983], 83-95) that the "Da yan" chapter presents a method of divination inconsistent with the earliest descriptions of divination with the *Zhou Yi* (i.e., those in the *Zuo zhuan*); that it is not included – anywhere – in the Mawangdui manuscript would seem to suggest that it is a later intrusion into the text. Chapters B5-B7 are consistent among themselves, but different from either of the other strata that I detect within the *Xici*; it seems appropriate that they are found in the "Yi zhi yi" text of the Mawangdui manuscript.

<sup>15</sup> The one place where I would diverge from the chapter divisions of the *Zhou Yi zheng yi*, and would accept the emendation of Zhu Xi, comes between chapters A3 and A4. In the *Zhou Yi zheng yi*, the following three sentences are attached to the end of chapter A3

-----P-----a-----A-----G-----a-----D-----C The *Changes* are on a level with heaven and earth, therefore they are able completely to assay the way of heaven and earth.

-----H-----[-----A-----H-----a-----z-----C Looking up to observe the markings of heaven and looking down to examine the order of earth,

-----O-----G-----G-----C this is why it knows the reasons for darkness and brightness.

-----I-----A-----G-----C Tracing the beginning and returning to the end, therefore it knows the explanations of death and life.

even though they have nothing to do with the preceding lines of chapter A3 (whether in terms of content or style) but instead are parallel with the following lines of A4:

-----A-----A Seminal fluids and vapor make up things, and wandering souls make up alternations,

-----O-----G-----C this is why it knows the shapes and appearances of ghosts and spirits.

<sup>16</sup> For this term, see Rudolf G. Wagner, "Interlocking Parallel Style: Laozi and Wang Bi," *Asiatische Studien/Études Asiatiques* 34, 1 (1980): 18-58.

<sup>17</sup> I should note that this analysis does not include the following chapters: A8, A10, A11, B2, B5, which display neither pronounced Inter-locking Parallel Style nor a preponderance of equational sentences. Of these chapters, A8 and B5 display similar exegetical styles with respect to individual line statements of the *Zhou Yi*, and the other three chapters perhaps have similar overall structures. However, the final attribution of these chapters to either of the two strata I am proposing, or to yet another stratum, must await further analysis.

<sup>18</sup> Chapter A6 is perhaps the best example of this stratum. Like the second stratum mentioned just above, it too focuses on the role of language, but in this case the concern seems to be with ethics rather than epistemology. An introductory passage to the chapter concludes "Only after deliberating does one speak, and only after consulting does one move – deliberating and consulting in order to complete its alternations and transformations (*ni zhi er hou yan, yi zhi er hou dong, ni yi yi cheng qi bian hua* -----A -----A -----H-----). It then presents a series of quotations of line statements from the *Zhou Yi*, beginning with the Nine in the Second line of Zhongfu ☰☱. hexagram (#61):

—b—b—A —l—M—F —n—A —^—P—C

"A crane calls in the shade, Its child harmonizes with it; We have a fine chalice, I will drain it with you,"

which is provided with a quotation from Confucius (*Zi yue* —l—) stressing the necessary effect that one's speech has on others, concluding "Speech and action are the means by which the noble man moves heaven and earth; can one not be cautious about them!" (*yan xing, junzi zhi suoyi dong tian di ye; ke bu shen bu* -----A —g—l-----H-----a —]—F —i—V—G). Other statements in this chapter attributed to Confucius and stressing the importance of speech include "Words of the same heart, their fragrance is like an orchid's" (*tong xin zhi yan, qi xiu ru lan* —P-----A -----p—) and "As for whence disorder is generated, words and conversation are the stages" (*luan zhi suo sheng ye, yan yu yi wei jie* -----]—A —y—H-----).

Although it is of course possible that the shared interest in "speech" reflects some connection between this stratum and what I have termed the second stratum of the *Xici*, the dramatic difference in format between the two strata leads me to doubt this. Neither am I prepared to venture any hypothesis concerning the date of composition of this third stratum, or the date of its inclusion in the *Xici*. The format in which it is written, with a quotation of a canonical source followed by a comment by Confucius, seems to have been used consistently from the mid-Warring States period (fourth century B.C.) through the early Western Han (second century B.C.). Since this stratum is included in the Mawangdui manuscript of the *Yi jing*, it certainly predates the Han. I suspect that at least its original composition predates also that of the second stratum, but I have no way to demonstrate this. Therefore, I have chosen in this study to focus on the first two strata, about which I think I can say something.

<sup>19</sup> The theses that I describe here are similar to the four propositions that Willard Peterson detected in the *Xici*: that the *Yi* duplicates the universe, that the processes of change within the universe are intelligible to and enactable by humans, that we can know this by way of the *Yi*, and that the *Yi* is the best vehicle for knowing this; Peterson, "Making Connections," 85-110. I find the last two of his propositions more or less redundant; and for the second I would stress the ability of humans to enact, rather than to know, the processes of change within the world.

<sup>20</sup> I should point out here that instead of *Qian* and *Kun*, the etymologies of which are obscure, the Mawangdui manuscript reads the names of the two pure *Yi* hexagrams as *Jian* —, "linchpin," and *Chuan* —t, "river" (which, however, is perhaps to be understood as the unelaborated form of *shun* —, "compliant"). I have suggested in a conference presentation that the manuscript's readings seem to derive from characterizations of the male and female genitalia, and thus are probably to be



preferred over the traditional readings; "The Key and the Flow: Drying Out the Wet Woman of the *yijing's Xici Zhuan*," paper presented to the annual meeting of the Association for Asian Studies, Honolulu, Hawaii, 11 April 1996. While these sexual connotations are certainly consistent with the theme of this first stratum of the *Xici*, since this study is in large part an analysis of the received text of the *Xici* I here maintain the traditional readings.

<sup>21</sup> Zhu Xi's note to this line is relevant to the interpretation that I am presenting here. After having noted in the preceding line that the mention of "male" and "female" is "a further illustration of the *Yi's* appearance in concrete form" (*you ming Yi zhi xian yu shi ti zhe* 曰明也之顯於時體也), he says here:

—Z————\_————A———p——C—j—————A——I———C

As a general rule, of all beings that belong to the yin and yang, none is not like this: generally, the yang precedes and the yin follows, the yang gives and the yin receives.

<sup>22</sup> My translation here is indubitably unprecedented, and calls for more than just a brief note. It is based to some extent on the variorum *jian* —, "crack, interstice, opening," for *jian* —, "simple," found in the Mawangdui manuscript. *Jian* —, "crack, interstice, opening," is of course the protograph for *jian* —, "simple," and could be a meaningless graphic variant. However, as Zhu Xi notes about this context (see n. 21 above), the "male" and "female" of this passage are the concrete instantiations of *Qian* and *Kun*, yin and yang, and so it seems reasonable to find some concrete meaning for the terms here. Support for my interpretation is found in the word that I translate "capable": *neng* —, which could, I believe, equally well be translated "pregnant" (in the physiological sense as well in the extended sense of latent capacity). *Neng* is routinely glossed in early dictionaries and commentaries with the word *ren*, whether written — or —, which means "to bear; to harbor within." I think it is important that *ren* —, a cognate word written with the "female" signific, is the standard word for physical pregnancy. This being so, I would suggest that my interpretation of it being through the "opening," i.e., the vaginal canal, that the female becomes pregnant, and thus "makes completed beings," makes far better sense than the various discussions of "simplicity" one usually finds with respect to this line.

I should go on to offer, though I do so with less confidence, a similar explanation of the preceding clause, *Qian* through exchange knows" (*Qian yi yi zhi* —H—). The original graphic form of *yi* —, "to change," depicts liquid spilling or being poured out of a vessel: xx (for this form of the graph, see the early Western Zhou *De ding* —w— inscription; *Yin Zhou jinwen jicheng* —P— [Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1986-1994], #2405); the standard early form of the graph, xx, is surely a simplification of this fuller form), whence both the general meaning "to change" and the closely associated meaning "to award, to bestow" (i.e., *xi* — or *ci* —). Needless to say, it is liquid spilling from the male member that initiates the female's pregnancy.

<sup>23</sup> The two words *yi*, "change, exchange," and *yi*, "easy," here written with the same graph —, are disambiguated in the Mawangdui manuscript of the *Xici*, being written as —; see Shaughnessy, *I Ching, The Classic of Changes*, p. 188 and 325 n. 5.

<sup>24</sup> *Ye* —, usually translated as "achievement," is a term that entails not just a one-time event but rather an on-going result. Steven Owen has defined it cogently: "*yeb* is 'patrimony,' something one stores up and transmits to one's posterity; it is a term used for capital, property, learning, merit (the accumulated merit, *yeb*, of an official might be passed on to his children and increased or dissipated by their own acts). In later ages *yeb* is Buddhist *karma*, an accumulation of good or evil deeds that determines one's next life"; *Readings in Chinese Literary Thought* (Cambridge, Mass.: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1992), pp. 68-9.

<sup>25</sup> For a discussion of this reading, see Xia Hanyi —L—t—i (Edward L. Shaughnessy), "Shuo Qian zhuan zhi Kun xi pi xiang yi" —M— —[ —P—H—N, *Wenshi* —v 30 (1988), p. 24. It seems to me that most of the imagery of these lines is quite straight-forward (though nowhere, with the exception

noted in the paragraph below, understood quite so straightforwardly in the *Yi jing* commentarial tradition), with only the description of the penis at rest as being *zhuan* ㄹ, "concentrated," apparently anomalous. In my article, I noted that the Tang dynasty (618-907) *Jingdian shiwen* ㄱ----- gives as a variorum here the word *tuan* ㄹ (i.e., *zhuan* with the addition of a "hand" signfic), "to roll with the hand," or, as defined by the *Shuo wen jie zi* ----- ㄹ, "circular." That this variorum is to be preferred would now seem to be assured by the Mawangdui manuscript version of the *Xici*, which reads here *juan* ㄹ, "curled"; see Shaughnessy, *I Ching: The Classic of Changes*, p. 193, 327 n. 35. As just mentioned, in my article I noted that I had been unable to find in the commentarial literature on the *Yi jing* any similar interpretation of this passage. However, I have since found the same terms used, quite consciously alluding to this passage it would seem, in a description of coitus in the *Can tong qi* -----P----- (The concordance of the three samenesses); see *Zhou Yi Can tong qi kao yi* -----P----- (Wuqiubei zhai *Yi jing jicheng* ed.), 18b (p. 46). These come in the context of a description of the beginning of life, progressing through the union of yin and yang, and ending finally in the maturation of the body. The explicit allusion reads as follows:

ㄹ -----A-----X-----C -----A -----y-C -[-R-----A -----D----f-C  
 -----I-----h-A -X-----H-----C-E-----C-----A -K-k-----~A -k-----k-----A -----A  
 -h-----w-----C

At this time, the emotions bring together the yin and yang. *Qian* being in motion is straight; the *qi* expands and the semen flows. *Kun* being at rest is closed; it is the sanctum of the Way. The hard acts and then retreats, the soft transforms through wetness. Nine circulations and seven turnabouts, eight returns and six stops. The male is white and the female red. When metal and fire take hold of each other, water settles fire.

<sup>26</sup> *Li ji Zheng zhu*, 11.10b.

<sup>27</sup> *Li ji Zheng zhu*, 11.11b-12a.

<sup>28</sup> Since at least the time of Shen Yue ㄹ (441-513), the "Yue ji" has been ascribed to Gongsun Nizi, said to have been a second-generation disciple of Confucius. The "Yiwen zhi" ----- chapter of the *Han shu* ㄹ (Zhonghua shuju ed., 30.1725) mentions a *Gongsun Nizi* ----- ]----- ㄹ, while the *Yi lin* ㄹ of Ma Zong ----- (d. 823) quotes, among other passages ascribed there to the *Gongsun Nizi* ----- which apparently was still extant in Tang times, a passage identical to one found in the present "Yue ji." On the other hand, there is also an argument traceable to Kong Yingda -----o-F (574-648) attributing the "Yue ji" to Liu De ㄹ, the Han Prince Xian of Hejian ㄹ (d. 129 B.C.). Perhaps the best evidence for an early date for the "Yue ji" is the appearance of several of its passages in the "Yue lun" ----- chapter of the *Xunzi* ----- ㄹ, in contexts where it seems clear that Xunzi is quoting them as canonical briefs against Mohist critiques of music. For a judicious treatment of the "Yue ji" and the context of its composition, concluding that most of the text should indeed date to the mid-Warring States period, see Scott Cook, "Yue Ji -----o – Record of Music: Introduction, Translation, Notes, and Commentary," *Asian Music* 26/2 (1995): 1-96.

<sup>29</sup> As noted above (n. 00), I break the chapter here in accordance with the chapter divisions of Zhu Xi. *The Zhou Yi zheng yi* text of this chapter continues for another three sentences, but since they are parallel in both structure and content with the opening sentences of chapter A4 it seems clear that they belong there.

<sup>30</sup> I mean this only in terms of the logic of the argument, since most of the second half of the *Xici* (especially chapters B1, B3, and B9) shares all the same features of this stratum.

<sup>31</sup> The term *xi ci* occurs a total of six times in the text (once each in chapters A2, A6, A11 and B1, and twice in A12), each of them in contexts unmistakably of this second stratum.

<sup>32</sup> My understanding of this difficult sentence is that whereas "transformation" (*bua* ㄹ) is an on-going process, an "alternation" (*bian* ㄹ) entails a momentary change between two extremes (in the case of the *Yi*, from yin to yang or vice versa), the isolation of these moments producing apparent

differences. To "cut" (*cai* 切) a transformation means to stop its process, such that a different appearance analogous to that of an alternation.

<sup>33</sup> Note that the word *ye* 猷 here, especially as paired as a compound with *shi* 猷, "service," is clearly used in a different sense from that of the first stratum (where I translated it as "patrimony"); to underscore this difference, I here translate it as "achievement."

<sup>34</sup> As noted above (see, especially, n. 00), chapter A8 of the received *Xici*, the so-called "Da yan" 大衍 (Great Development) chapter, which provides a technical description of how at least one type of divination with the *Yi* was performed, is not included in the Mawangdui manuscript of the *Yijing*. I suspect that it is in fact a late insertion into the text.

<sup>35</sup> *Mengzi* 5B/8.

<sup>36</sup> *Zhuangzi* (Sibu beiyao ed.), 9.6a. The famous essay by Wang Bi 王弼 ] (226-249), "Ming xiang" 明象 (Illustrating Images), one chapter of his *Zhou Yi lüeli* 周易略例 (General principles of the *Zhou Changes*) develops these two passages from the *Xici* and the *Zhuangzi* in an interesting way. He begins with the *Xici*'s positive notion about the possibility for "images" (*xiang* 象) and "words" (*yan* 言) to be dynamic, but then dismisses this in favor of the *Zhuangzi*'s negative view. Since the most frequently cited translations of this essay (those of Hellmut Wilhelm, *Eight Lectures on the I Ching* [Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1960], pp. 87-8, and Richard John Lynn, *The Classic of Changes: A New Translation of the I Ching as Interpreted by Wang Bi* [New York: Columbia University Press, 1994], pp. 31-2) are both flawed in significant ways, it seems worthwhile retranslating the essay in its entirety here.

Images put forth ideas; words illustrate images. For fully expressing ideas, there is nothing like images; for fully expressing images, there is nothing like words. Words are generated from images, therefore one can follow words in order to view images; images are generated from ideas, therefore one can follow images in order to view ideas. Ideas are fully expressed by images, and images are made apparent by words. Therefore, words being that which is used to illustrate images, when you have gotten the image forget the word; images being that which preserve the ideas, when you have gotten the ideas forget the image. This is just the same as the use of the snare residing with the rabbit, so that when you have gotten the rabbit you forget the snare, and the use of the trap residing with the fish, so that when you have gotten the fish you forget the trap. This being so, words are the snare of images, and images are the trap of ideas. This is why one who preserves the words is one who has not gotten the images, and one who preserves the images is one who has not gotten the ideas. Images are generated from ideas, but by preserving the image in them, what one preserves is then not its image; words are generated from images, but by preserving the words in them, what one preserves is then not its word. This being so, then one who has forgotten images is one who has gotten the idea, and one who has forgotten words is one who has gotten the image. Getting the idea resides in forgetting images, and getting the image resides in forgetting words. Therefore, they establish images in order to express fully ideas, and yet the images can be forgotten; they doubled the pictures in order to express fully the situation, and yet the pictures can be forgotten. This is why to make contact with the category one can employ its image, and to match its idea one can employ its proof. If the idea resides in "vigor," what need is there for a "horse"; if the category resides in "compliance," what need is there for a "cow"? If the Line Statement matches "compliance," what need is there for *Kun* then to be a "cow"; if the meaning responds to "vigor," what need is there for *Qian* to be a "horse"? And yet there being those who fix the "horse" in *Qian*, and who quoting texts and citing hexagrams have the "horse" but not *Qian*, then false theories flood out such that it is difficult to keep track of them. If internal trigrams do not suffice, then they move on to hexagram changes, and if the change still doesn't suffice, they push on to the Five Phases. Once the root has been lost, then the cleverness becomes ever more extreme. Even if by chance there is a match, yet if the meaning has nothing from which it draws, this is just due to



Laozi said: "The generator of affairs moves in response to alternations; alternations are generated in time, and those who know the time have no constant motion. Therefore, 'The Way that can be the Way is not a constant way; the name that can be the name is not a constant name.' Writing is what is generated by words, and words come out of wisdom. That the wise do not know is because it is not a constant way; the name that can be the name is not what is stored in writings.

<sup>43</sup> *Han Feizi* (Sibu beiyao ed.), 7.4a, incorporating the textual emendations suggested at Chen Qiyou [--- \_], *Han Feizi jishi* [---D-1---] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1958), pp. 405-6.

<sup>44</sup> As we have seen, the first stratum is concerned with the long-term propagation of life, such that *ye* has almost a technical sense of that which is bequeathed to posterity (see especially n. 24). On the other hand, the point here in A12 seems to be on the effect on the contemporary world, such that the more general "achievement" better represents its meaning.

<sup>45</sup> My understanding of this difficult sentence is that whereas "transformation" (*bua* [---]) is an on-going process, an "alternation" (*bian* [---]) entails a momentary change between two extremes (in the case of the *Yi*, from yin to yang or vice versa), the isolation of these moments producing apparent differences. To "cut" (*cai* [---]) a transformation means to stop its process, such that a different appearance analogous to that of an alternation.

<sup>46</sup> There may also be intrusions of one stratum into the other. For example, chapter A5, which for the most part is a clear example of the first stratum, begins with a definition (*yi yin yi yang zhi wei dao* [---@---@---D, "one yin and one yang is what is called the way") and then continues with an equational sentence (*ji zhi zhe shan ye, cheng zhi zhe xing ye* [---~---] [---A---], "what continues it is goodness, and what completes it is the inner-nature") that seems also to be very much out of context. Similarly, later in this chapter (A5), there are five phrases that superficially continue the same style of definition (something is called X), but which are not in Interlocking Parallel Style and which introduce terms from the second stratum:

[---H---]	What completes images is called <i>Qian</i> ;
[---k---]	what imitates and takes as a model is called earth;
[---e---]	what goes to the end of numbers and knows what is to come is called prognostication;
[---q---]	what penetrates alternations is called affairs;
[---] [---]	and what is incommensurate with yin and yang is called spirituality.

The suggestion in the last line of this passage that "spirituality" (*shen* [---]) is a mysterious process, beyond the ken of the natural world, seems also to be a notion foreign to the author of the first stratum.



# —The Event of Poetic Boredom or the Skill of Repetition? The “Nine Laments“ by Liu Xiang

by Michael Schimmelpfennig, Heidelberg

One way of applying the notion of “hot” and “cold” to a poem is by measuring the impact, its introduction into literati circles had, and, the position it attained in the view of the literati of subsequent dynasties. Accordingly, the *Lisao* as the first poem of the *Songs of Chu* would be a “very hot” poem. The fact that scholars and commoners down to our present time repeatedly employ it for a variety of reasons is one indicator for the correctness of this assumption.

While we can't say when exactly the poem became known to a wider audience, its appearance must have created quite a stir. The *Lisao* was the first poem in an entirely new poetic form. And it was the first poem explicitly linked to a particular author. This author by the name of Qu Yuan makes himself known by presenting a somewhat veiled account of his personal experiences as a minister at the court of Chu. At the same time the poem both appears as a “historical” document of the author's remonstrance against the unjust treatment by his king and as the announcement of his own suicide, supposed to be understood as the ultimate form of protest and the utmost expression of his integrity and loyalty to the king.

During the first centuries of its history the poem repeatedly emitted its “heat”: From the beginning the *Lisao* was considered by some to be one of the most personal and sublime expressions of integrity. Others, while admitting the literary quality of the work, regarded it as exaggerated and deemed its outcome, namely the suicide of its protagonist instead of his choosing a better ruler or retirement, an expression of utmost foolishness. The poem thus repeatedly caused fierce debates among adherents and opponents that lead to the writing of comments and commentaries of various forms. The *Lisao* even initiated the first production of counterpoems. Furthermore, the *Lisao* seems to have at least a share in triggering the development of the new genre of rhapsodic poetry (*fu*), a poetic tradition that continued to be practiced throughout dynastic history. Finally the poem initiated a cult-transformation, turning,

what might have formerly been a sacrifice against the vicissitudes of a river-god into the well known dragonboat-festival, a food sacrifice for the lost soul of the drowned poet Qu Yuan practiced annually until the present day.

Some of the after-effects of the poems "hot" advent can be observed when the *Lisao* becomes the model poem for the honest and loyal minister who out of envy falls victim to slander by fellow officials and is rejected or even banished to some distant region. The poem thus served as an immediately understood formula of protest by officials who shared the same fate throughout dynastic history. References to the *Lisao* marked occasions of unjust rule or signaled times of oppression.

Of course, even in China poems rarely disseminated such a "heat". This will become obvious especially with one of the two examples, introduced in the following paper. Both the rhapsody "Manifest my intention" (*Xianzhi fu*) by Feng Yan (ca. 1- ca. 76 AD) and the "Nine laments" (*Jiu tan*) attributed to Liu Xiang (77-6 BC) were triggered by the event of the *Lisao*. While the former may by itself have caused another though minor historical event, the latter, with regard to the distinction between "hot" and "cold" poetry made above, on first glance seems to be one of the best examples of "ice-cold" poetry. In other words, while the former succeeded in keeping at least a tiny degree of the events warmth, the latter for a variety of reasons failed to do so.

What follows is an exemplary examination of two different outcomes of the "*Lisao* event" within the same genre of rhapsodic poetry at roughly the same time. Aside from poetic aspects the survey will highlight some preconditions that are necessary for our own evaluation of such poetry.

### Feng Yan's rhapsody "Manifest my intention" (*Xian zhi fu*)

According to his biography in the *Annals of the later Han-dynasty* Feng Yan (ca. 1 - ca. 76) was an extremely gifted official who had been able to recite the *Book of Songs* at the age of nine and was familiar with all that was important to read at the age of twenty. Since he hesitated too long in leaving the usurper Wang Mang to follow the founder of the Eastern Han, he could not gain Guang Wudi's full trust. In his following career he repeatedly had to face slander by enemies from older times and due to his connection to some officials accused and punished for forming a clique he just escaped prison and chose to retire. At the end of the Jianwu-Period (56. A.D.) he handed in a self-justification (*zichen*) that didn't lead to his reinstatement at court. As a consequence he composed the rhapsody "Manifest my intention" (*Xian zhi fu*), consisting of a treatise of himself (*zi lun*) and a long poem of 130 lines in the metre of the *Lisao*. According to the biography "to manifest one's intention means to illumine one's feelings reformed by critique or habitual practice and to make evident one's deepest and hidden thoughts."



Risking the dismay of the audience, I will not go into further detail here. Suffice it to say that the voluminous poem draws from a variety of sources, that it is linked by verbatim quotations to the *Songs of Chu*, especially the *Lisao*, and that it is also a demonstration of its authors intimate knowledge of the Five Classics and early Daoist texts. What is even more important is the fact, that the biography of Feng Yan provides us with an example of a practice clearly triggered through the appearance of the *Lisao*.

Feng Yan emulated Qu Yuan by handing in a justification at court hoping to regain his former position. His biography continues that even under the following emperor Ming Feng was rejected several times on the ground that his writings transgressed the truth. Exactly the same argument was used by critics of the *Lisao* like Yang Xiong or Ban Gu. Here we have an indicator that his poem stored a remainder of the heat once emitted by the *Lisao*.

Luckily, Feng Yan did not kill himself. Instead he retired to the Northern region and married another wife.

### Liu Xiang's "Nine Laments" (Jiu tan)

The "Nine laments" today form the 16th chapter of the Anthology of the *Songs of Chu* in the edition with the commentary by Wang Yi. Since the introduction of Wang Yi states that Liu Xiang was the editor of the *Songs of Chu*, tradition maintained that either Liu Xiang himself or Wang Yi added Liu's poems to round up the anthology. Yet, the *Annals of the Sui and the Tang dynasty* suggest instead that the corpus of the *Chuci* during these two dynasties consisted of only 12 chapters, excluding, among others, chapter 16, the poems by Liu Xiang. This view is supported by other sources. They indicate that an anthology of the *Songs of Chu* consisting of 17 chapters existed for the first time in the 10th century AD. The poems of Liu Xiang thus most probably are a later addition and their exact origin is unknown.

Zhu Xi, who in the late 11th century created his own collection of the *Chuci* with annotations (*Chuci ji zhu*), even removed the "Jiu Tan" together with most of the other chapters containing material attributed to other Han-dynasty poets since he considered most of these poems to be shallow imitations. The effect of his redaction can be observed in most modern editions of the *Chuci*. Their authors do not include any of the later chapters in their editions. Consequently the research done on these sections is very limited.

Looking at the form and the content of the "Nine laments", the poems clearly present themselves as poetical works triggered by the event of the *Lisao*. But even if we assume that the attribution to Liu Xiang is correct, hardly anything can be said about the purpose or the impact of his poetry.

When David Hawkes rendered the poems into English for the first time, he provided the context in which these poems were supposedly written by linking them to the biography of Liu Xiang. Accordingly Liu Xiang lived through the time of the weak emperor Yuan where some clans of maternal relatives of the imperial family took over control of the government with the

help of the eunuchs Hong Gong and Shi Xian. These men not only succeeded in stripping Liu Xiang of rank and office for 15 years, they also drove several of Liu's friends to commit suicide. From the biography, according to Hawkes, it can be seen "that the folly of princes and the evil power of flatterers against which the Sao poets so often declaimed were to him no mere figure but a burning reality." Even though he supports his claim with the very important remark that the words of "Jiu tan" can be found paralleled frequently in Liu Xiang's memorials to the throne, an inner contradiction of the translator can be felt when he continues by saying: "However, though "Jiu tan" was undoubtedly written with passionate feeling, I doubt whether many people read it nowadays for enjoyment. Liu Xiang is perhaps too learned a writer to be enjoyable, and he cannot always escape the charge of dullness." Still, David Hawkes "prefers to believe that Liu Xiang wrote these poems during the bitter years out of office when his friends and patrons were being undermined and destroyed by the hostile clique, surrounding the emperor Yuan."

Contrary to the rhapsody by Feng Yan that is neatly embedded in the context of his own biography, the "Jiu Tan" do lack this context and thus make any judgement regarding these poems very difficult. Let's take a look at the second poem "Leaving the world" (*li shi*) in the rendering by David Hawkes:

The Loved one does not know me, the Loved one hears me not, I went to the Loved one's fathers and spoke to the Loved one's ghosts.  
The Loved one turned himself from me, but lend ear to the flatterer. I made heaven and earth bear witness, and the four seasons testify.  
I commanded the sun and moon to shine on me a little longer, and held the dippers handle as pledge of my good faith. I appointed Shi Kuang to sound the truth of my words, and ordered Gao Yao to listen as his assessor.  
 I was given, by shell-crack, the name of True Exemplar, and by yarrow stalks, the title of Divine Balance. The lofty virtues I had in my youth already, I strengthened and refined when I grew to manhood.  
 I would not follow the halting gait of the vulgar: I made my direction straight and was faithful to my purpose, not taking my line of the true to follow the crooked, or humbling my pure mind in my daily dealings.  
 My actions were as true as flawless jade is, as I followed in the tracks of the chariot of state. But the crowd made dark the light with their sycophancies and the chariot of state was overturned in the murk.

The poems are modelled on some works contained in the fourth chapter of the *Songs of Chu*, the "Jiu zhang". They consist of a longer part in the meter of the *Lisao* and a concluding arrangement (*luan*) in a different meter. The poems are written as a direct speech of the poet in the first person, whom the listener or reader immediately identifies with Qu Yuan, and only on second thought discerns the actual author. Liu Xiang's principal technique is to combine

quotations (underlined) with reformulations (dotted lines) and thereby to create variations on topics and themes of the *Lisao* and other poems contained in the *Chuci*. What is striking about this technique of variation is the fact that while each line appears to be pieced together from other poems contained in the *Chuci*, the majority of the expressions employed cannot be found in any other of the *Chuci* poems. The poet recreates most of the terminology used in the *Chuci* with the help of other words and combines these with a few explicit quotations of key-terms within the poems attributed to Qu Yuan.

A reader only slightly familiar with verses from the *Songs of Chu* will, on the basis of Hawkes translation, start to sort out the different origins of the poems components. The poem begins dramatically with a repeated variation on Qu Yuan's final exclamation of the *Lisao* "in this state there are no [true] men, no one who knows me." The exclamation is followed by a statement on the kings behavior and the poets attempt to obtain witnesses guaranteeing the truth of his following self discription, all themes repeatedly occurring in the *Lisao* and other *Chuci* poems. The accompanying self-description is itself an abbreviated variation of Qu Yuan's autobiographical introduction of the *Lisao*, leading over to the equally well known theme of the endangered state-carriage.

What will have become obvious by this comparative summary is that approaching the poem as a mere patchwork of references, without any idea of its context of creation, only reveals a clumsy mix of variegated repetitions, no matter how ingenious the individual terms were composed. Yet, this is exactly what Hawkes does in his translation. He approaches the "Jiu tan" with the *Lisao* and other poems in mind, considering lines, constructed in a similar fashion, to be replays of the verses of the poet of Chu. Another problem connected with his approach is that his elegant rendering does not do justice to his own premises, namely, the historical context, he considered the poems to be written in. Suppose that Liu Xiang really created these poems as a critique of emperor Yuan and his court and be a bit more true to the original, and the first lines of this poem would read as follows:

—F—h———^———A—F—h———^—D—C—N—F—h———A——F—h———C  
 —F—h———^—P——A—Y———H———C—E——W———Y——A———|——C  
 —————A——n—H———C——v—m———A—R—S———C  
 ---X—W-----h---A---o-r---F---C. . .

Devine [king] Huai, his not recognizing me, Devine [king] Huai, his not listening to me, [makes me] approach the exalted ancestors of Devine [king] Huai and lay my plaint before the ghosts and spirits of Devine [king] Huai:

Devine [king] Huai never met with me, but he [only] listened to the flattering words of his wife. My statements were handed up to assist in [matters of] heaven and earth, and they contained additional evidence on [occurrences] during the four seasons. I pointed out the days and the months to increase [the statements] clarity and I held fast to the northern dipper to substantiate their correctness.

I set up Shi Kuang to let him correct my spoken words and ordered Gao Yao and made him listen together with him. They called my designations correct and measured, since they were brought forth with the help of omen interpretation and they said, my words were efficacious and balanced since they were issued employing yarrow stalks. ...

The Chinese characters Hawkes left out in his translation are underlined, the loose translation of Liu Xiang's ingenious emperor designation is marked by a dotted line. A close comparison will additionally reveal obvious flaws in Hawkes translation. It seems though that David Hawkes was perfectly right in suggesting the context. Moreover, his discovery of parallels between expressions used within Liu Xiang's memorials and the "Jiu tan", was a first and important step in validating the relation between the poems and their author.

Read before the background provided by the biography of Liu Xiang the above poem sets in with a criticism of an emperor who rather listens to the ladies surrounding him, than to the honest council by his loyal subject Liu Xiang. And it continues by saying, that Liu Xiang did his utmost to render his petitions clear and to get them through to his ruler.

Suddenly we can understand the reasons why Liu Xiang employed such difficult techniques to create a seemingly boring poetical surface. He thereby succeeded to furnish verses that look like lines from other *Chuci* poems with his own meaning. At the same time this meaning is veiled through the established reading-patterns, with which readers of the *Chuci* would approach these texts. Therefore, to understand the inner meaning of his poems one has to rid oneself of reading habits necessary for the understanding of earlier *Chuci* poetry. Only then the skill of Liu Xiang's repetition becomes manifest and poetry, considered "ice-cold" before, becomes pretty "hot".

Both the rhapsody "*Manifest my intention*" and the example from the "Nine laments" represent outcomes initiated by the event of the *Lisao*. Since we don't know of the immediate effect, the *Lisao* caused, when it reached its first audience, its event may be described by the image of a stone, dropped into the completely flat, still and cold surface of a pond. The waves emitted from time to time move reed stalks, ducks, drifting leaves and pieces of wood. And this is where the analogy ends somehow: while the effects caused by the movement are linked to the event, its outcomes can be very different.





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## Event and Interpretation

### A Medical Comment<sup>1</sup>

by Barbara Volkmar, Freiburg

Historians and physicians may have much more in common than at first sight is realized – at least in pre-modern times. For centuries, traditional Chinese physicians have been the experts of the regular and the irregular, the cold and the hot. Being a physician myself and working in the field of Chinese medical history, I'd like to present to you some logical features of a set of premodern theories dealing with events and their interpretation.

There is a completely different concept of explanation to be found in the ancient theories compared to modern ones – a difference which can maybe be expressed by the headwords “explaining based on interpretation, vs. explaining based on analysis”. This difference as to how to explain, corresponds to a different understanding of what is to be explained – which is, in the end, the whole world. In modern thought, there is the well-known split between subject and object, nature and mind/ society/ history. This split, of course, arises from the concept of nature as a subject of natural science, provoking questions as to what relations hold between the spheres of the mental/ social/ historical on the one hand, and nature on the other. Now there is no such concept of nature in premodern thinking, and hence no such split. From the modern point of view, this could be seen as unknowingly leading to a sort of “historization (or socialization or mentalization) of nature”. At first sight, this might be considered as quite an appealing all-comprising formula to cover the logic of pre-modern theories of the world. However, in Chinese classics, there is no mythological tradition, revelation, or attempt to metaphysically prove any act of creation by a personal creator. So, whatever subjects or subjective driving forces behind natural or historical events are thought of, they need no learning and will have no history themselves.

Obviously the ancient theorists I am dealing with, did not see any possibility within their explanations to fall back on something like intentions behind the world, at least not intentions such as derived from purposes, experience, knowledge or memory. However, there is no logical

necessity which prevented them from assuming (as was done in many ancient medical theories) that if not intentions or an actor, there are motives (or instincts) controlling the world – the world or its parts here being conceived of not as a set of things but rather of processes with intermittent temporary stops. Speaking of motives as explanatory categories behind such processes (or states, when temporarily stopped) involves at least two remarkable logical features:

1. Instead of being direct causes, motives rather are tendencies or general types of change, which can express or realize themselves in a great variety of processes. This feature guarantees the flexibility and universal applicability of motive-based explanations on anything of any kind.
2. Motives, at least if thought of as gathered and united within the limits of a personality, or character, occur in a finite number (especially, if they are designed as being unalterable, because all forms of learning, or changing the underlying personality by experience have been ruled out). So they are easy to be used as a set of principles for explanatory reductions of the complexity of our experiences.

The advantage of the latter feature even can be increased, when in some way or another it is shown that the motive-like entities or qualities involved originate from exhaustively subdividing the entire conceptual space containing them, without leaving any gap. This step, if it is done in a convincing fashion, guarantees an a priori completeness of the explanatory categories which leads to the expectation before all practical attempts, that there is no real change or process in the world which cannot be subsumed to one of the explanatory categories. If the original subdivision does not generate a satisfying richness of the explanatory motive-set, there is a possibility to repeat the operation as often as you want.

Perhaps, there is no better way to exhaustively carry out an enumeration of explanatory elements of the motive kind, than by a series of repeated binary distinctions, which are based on a sufficiently abstract pair of changing types, determining the change of two basic qualities into each other, and hence allowing interpretations as to what motives could be generated by blending together the two starting-qualities in different portions or levels of subdivision. However, there are other possible ways of designing such exhaustive starting sets of changing types, with more or less convincing appeal.

The postulate of an exhaustive and closed finite set of explanatory changing-types immediately leads to the consequence that they must form a system of cycles, because if there were types where the second state would find no partner type of change to start where the former ended, more and more processes would end by that step. Since the changing qualities can be distributed in space, filling tightly adjacent spaces, many cycles can move and thus fill the entire space of the world. If there is a multitude of cycling qualities which can exist at the same places at the same time, then a variety of different cycles can result, penetrating each



other and thus generating even more mixtures of qualities due to different phases of cycles which are not synchronized with each other.

The very idea of neighboring cycles leads to the problem of possible uncontrolled influencing of each other by interference, leading to positive feedback until self-destruction, or complete fading by neutralizing each other. So you would have to introduce some quantitative principles of self-regulation, providing for sufficient counter-balance to external causes of excessive increases or fading processes. So there is hope for protection against any possibly catastrophic excess, be it in nature, society, or within the human body.

Now, it would be absurd to assume that stability should apply to everything with the exception of human beings. For us no less than for every other sentient being, the idea of being stable has a close relation to the idea of being in an orderly and good condition. That is why the idea of the world as being stable – at least in the long run – implies as a consequence, that it must also be basically good for us in all relevant aspects.

So far, I have presented a first outline of how to construct explanations according to the motive-type. However, there are still gaps to fill. Remember, that our basic principles have been defined in terms of types of change. To convincingly prove in one way or another, that these changing-types must somehow apply to any possible event, is not sufficient, if you are not able to demonstrate, at least in principle, that and how exactly they could apply.

The difference between premodern concepts and modern scientific ones is, that the modern ones are derived by abstraction from facts, even at the expense that there might be no types or concepts or laws at all. Premodern science is in the opposite situation, because (be it by proof, tradition or intuition), it just has the “right” concepts (the changing types), in addition to the facts. So the only experiments premodern science has to carry out, consist in attempts to guess how the facts (i.e. real processes) could go with the apriori known types. There is no doubt that complete matching can be accomplished – at least in principle. This activity which may infinitely go on to get closer to the ultimate truth, is called interpretation. (There is no telling when this activity comes to an end, because there are no general rules how to do it.)

Until now, the achievements of the theory only refer to events which are already known. The last step to perfect applicability in space and time, hereby satisfying every remaining practical need, is to enable the theory to classify what is not yet known, such as future events, or events happening in places you have no access to, like the inner parts of the human body. So, once a basic framework design of changing qualities has been adopted, you only have to look for events matching the structure of the supposed framework events. In some sense, there must be masses of such sets, because the basic changing-types have simple logical features which are easy to be met by many sorts of entities. The only additional hypothesis necessary to take it for granted that such sets of “signs” or symptoms or omnia exist, is to assume some sort of response or resonance. That means that the basic changing-processes respond or resound as it were within every combination of entities which is apt to represent and hence

repeat and show the basic constellation. So any such constellation would do the job as well as any other. The only difference will be in degrees of subtlety and refinement.

A lot of interpretation is to be done on the level of guessing by signs what is present but hidden in space (like the body states), or in time (like the future states), and will happen and go on if there is no acting on it. (Similarly, signs can tell you what has to be done.) The use of signs in medical therapy or divination will even double the need for interpretation. In a first step of interpretation, you choose a possible set of entities as possible signs. These hypothetical signs must prove their aptitude to represent the underlying motive-structure in their actual use, but whether this use is correct, depends on interpretation again.

There is a sphere in daily life which can be seen as a perfect match of this hermeneutic method: The understanding by empathy of the changing emotions and motives of a person, telling what's going on emotionally within that person by means of external signs within his or her face or the movements of the body, and to try to influence, stir up or calm down his or her feelings, and bring them back to a regular state, paying attention to the well-known phases of better or worse feelings, and the peculiarities of his or her character etc.

The so-called "motive-type" of describing the world can be understood as an attempt to treat the world or parts of it like a person in the disguise of bodies of various shapes, who has some more or less complex and subtle needs and inner feelings, expressed by physiognomy and unaimed behavior, but no understanding, memory, knowledge, or language. Nevertheless, this person is understandable in principle by adequately subtle empathy, and when correctly understood, even can be influenced by you in your favor, because basically, his or her needs meet your abilities and will never demand too much. It depends all on your empathy and preparedness for patient understanding.

With a picture like this in mind, you live in a closed but nevertheless almost infinitely diverse world, allowing for a never-ending variety of possible biographies, full of chances and experiences of far more than "ten thousand things" of all kind. This world is fortified not by the walls of dogmatic belief, but by a vast *glacis* of an infinity of possible interpreting to be continued in all directions where irritating evidence could come from. In a world like this, there is nothing to fear, in principle, but much to hope. It is an emotionally warm place to live in, allowing for endeavors of any degree of historical heat you want. There is only one feeling to be cooled down in this world: The wish to explain and learn something really new. Because whatever explanation or learning could achieve, is just present – and already known. At least in principle.

## Note

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1 This paper results from numerous discussions with HC Guth.

# – Remembering and Forgetting the Twenty-One Demands

## A Case Study in Manipulation of National Memory

by Paul Cohen, Harvard

Chinese over the past century have referred endlessly to the humiliations their country experienced at the hands of foreign imperialism beginning with the Opium War (1839–1842) and in the early decades of the Republican period (1912–) even established national humiliation days (*guochi ri*) to mark the anniversaries of these painful episodes. This concern with national humiliation is well known. Much less familiar is the sense of anxiety that has surfaced periodically over the Chinese people's tendency to forget past humiliations. This process of forgetting took different forms in different periods. I would like, in this paper, to look at it as it manifested itself in the early Republican era, focusing in particular on the Twenty-One Demands of 1915 – a high-temperature event that promptly resulted in the establishment of China's first (and for several years its only) national humiliation days.

The Twenty-One Demands, presented by Tokyo in secret on January 18, 1915, were originally divided into five groups, the fifth of which if acceded to would have required the virtual transfer of Chinese sovereignty to Japan. As a result of intense Chinese opposition and international pressure Japan eventually withdrew the fifth group. It presented the remaining demands in the form of an ultimatum on May 7, and on May 9 the Yuan Shikai government in Beijing capitulated.<sup>1</sup>

The Chinese press began reporting the Twenty-One Demands in late January 1915. The next several months were marked by telegrams of protest, boycotts against Japanese goods, mass rallies and petitions in Shanghai and other cities, and the establishment of a National Salvation Fund, to which Chinese of all social strata contributed.<sup>2</sup> It did not take long in this heated atmosphere for the Japanese demands to begin to be portrayed as a „national humiliation“ or *guochi*. May 7 and May 9 were enshrined as „National Humiliation Days,“ to be commemorated annually,<sup>3</sup> and the slogan „Do Not Forget the National Humiliation“ (*wuwang guochi*) was disseminated all over the country.<sup>4</sup>

Within a few months, however, the immediate and direct expressions of Chinese defiance had run out of steam. The protest rallies and petitions soon ceased. The anti-Japanese boycott declined in effectiveness after July. Fund-raising petered out over the summer. And by September, the press, which had played a vital part in arousing the ire of the urban populace, stopped discussing *guochi* altogether and moved on to other things.<sup>5</sup>

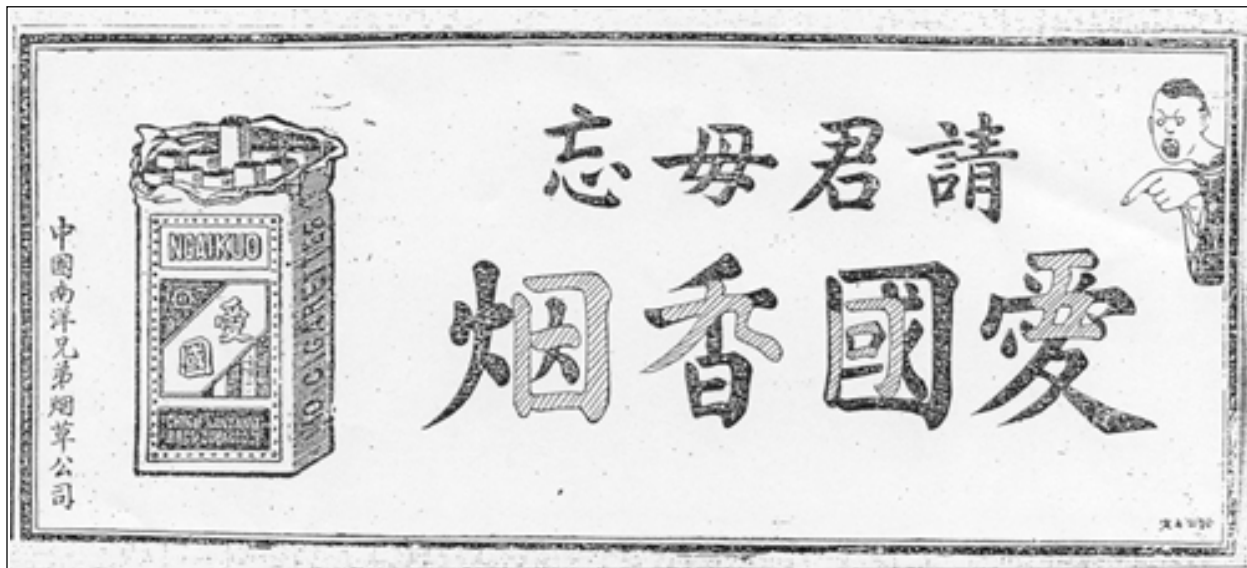
In explanation of this palpable weakening of Chinese resistance, contemporaries pointed to the traditional political apathy and poor memories of the Chinese people, their „precious ‘ability to forget,’“ in Lu Xun’s memorable phrase.<sup>6</sup> Even prior to the Japanese ultimatum, the editor and future publisher Zhang Xichen (1889–1969), echoing the persistent foreign reproach that the people of China were „without feeling“ and „forgetful,“ warned that when people had short memories they were unable to „remember tomorrow the humiliations and burdens of today,“ as a result of which the humiliations multiplied daily and the burdens became ever more onerous.<sup>7</sup> In the immediate aftermath of the ultimatum Ge Gongzhen (1890–1935) and other columnists, sounding the same theme, warned of the serious problem Chinese had with remembering, their stubborn tendency, as soon as things got a little better, to erase from their minds the humiliating experience they had just been through.<sup>8</sup> A gentleman in Beijing, addressing the problem more idiosyncratically, made a collection of newspaper articles bemoaning the situation in 1915 and promised that if by May 7 of the following year the newspapers did not shed tears over the national humiliation, he would shed tears over the newspapers.<sup>9</sup>

What does all this anxiety about Chinese forgetting mean? Did people like Zhang Xichen and Ge Gongzhen who complained about Chinese forgetfulness think that their compatriots would *literally* forget the Twenty-One Demands? Clearly not. My sense is that what they were worried about was the content – and the quality – of the remembering. As it turned out, in the years after 1915, the social, political, and even economic landscape of China was literally saturated with reminders of the Twenty-One Demands. But, apart from an inevitable anesthetization or numbing resulting from overexposure,<sup>10</sup> the remembering of the Demands in annual anniversary observances, all too often, was accompanied by a distortion – manipulation might be the more accurate term – of the nature and import of what was to be remembered to the point where, arguably, it became a kind of „forgetting.“ This process of „forgetting“ took a number of forms during the years from 1915 to the outbreak of fighting between China and Japan in the 1930s, at which point the issue of national humiliation was superceded by that of national survival.<sup>11</sup> One form that it took might be termed „displacement,“ in the sense of the transfer of emotion associated with the original event to matters of more current concern that might or might not be related. This was seen most typically in the actions taken by students on subsequent anniversaries of the May 1915 events. Sometimes these actions were directly connected with Sino-Japanese relations, as in the case of the celebrated May Fourth Movement of 1919.<sup>12</sup> But it was also possible for the symbolic space of May 7 (or 9) to be used to energize or validate student actions over issues that had

little if anything to do with Japan. This was clearly illustrated in the serious demonstrations that took place in Beijing (and, to a lesser extent, other cities) on May 7, 1925. The background in this instance consisted in growing student unhappiness over the educational policies of the acting Minister of Education, Zhang Shizhao. When, on May 6, the Ministry of Education issued an order banning student commemoration of the May 7 anniversary, students in the capital were outraged and, „transferring their anger“ (*qiannu*) to Zhang, stormed his residence and caused extensive damage before finally being brought under control by the police.<sup>13</sup>

As the anniversaries of the Twenty-One Demands piled up, the memory of them also became subject to a certain amount of commercial exploitation. Even prior to the first anniversary, companies had begun the practice of using the symbolism of 5–9 (May 9) in the names of tobacco, silk, and other products in order to discourage Chinese from buying Japanese goods (and, of course, at the same time encourage them to buy their own).<sup>14</sup> Throughout the 1920s and on into the 1930s the newspaper *Shenbao* ran ads linking the May 9 anniversary with everything from cigarettes and wine to towels, machinery, parasols, watches, straw hats, silk stockings, cotton cloth, tooth powder, and banking services. In an ad that appeared on May 9, 1920 a savings and deposit association urged readers to save and not squander their resources, as one way of wiping out the national humiliation.<sup>15</sup> A domestic products company announced in the May 8, 1924 issue that, by clipping and bringing in its ad, prospective customers, beginning on the following day (National Humiliation Day), would be able to purchase a whole range of top-brand products at wholesale prices.<sup>16</sup> Items were periodically promoted under the heading „May 9 National Humiliation Souvenirs.“<sup>17</sup> In May 1925, on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the Demands, *Shenbao* ran an ad for „National Humiliation Towels,“ the text of which maintained that, in their daily use of the towels to wash their faces, Chinese would be reminded of the need to wipe clean the national humiliation.<sup>18</sup> Another ad that played on the dual meanings of *xue* („to wipe clean“ and „to whiten“) and also on the homophones *chi* (humiliation) and *chi* (teeth) was one for a toothpowder called Xuechifen (powder for whitening the teeth), which appeared on May 9, 1931. „When you use Xuechifen each morning to brush your teeth,“ the ad declared, „you will naturally associate this in your mind with the great ‘national humiliation’ and ponder ways to wipe it clean.“<sup>19</sup>

Perhaps the most outrageous of the *Shenbao* ads was one for Golden Dragon cigarettes, a brand manufactured by the Nanyang Brothers Tobacco Company, which appeared in 1925 and 1926. The ad asked people not to forget May 9. It explicitly identified the smoking of Golden Dragon as a patriotic act. An inset showed a group of people standing under a tree on the branches of which were hung strips of paper with *guochi* written on them. The ad even incorporated an image of a modern-day Goujian seated uncomfortably on a pile of brushwood and holding a gall bladder up to his mouth, the allusion being to the late Spring and Autumn period story of Goujian, King of Yue, who after being defeated in battle by his rival, the king of Wu, hung a gall bladder over his bed and tasted gall in everything he ate and drank, in order that the memory of his humiliation – and his resolve to avenge it – would never dim.<sup>20</sup>



Advertisement for Patriotic (Aiguo) Cigarettes. Placed by the manufacturer, the Nanyang Brothers Tobacco Company, the ad superimposes the characters for „May 9“ over those for „Patriotic Cigarettes,“ so that the opening injunction („Please, Sir, do not forget“) applies to both. *Shenbao*, May 9 and May 10, 1924.

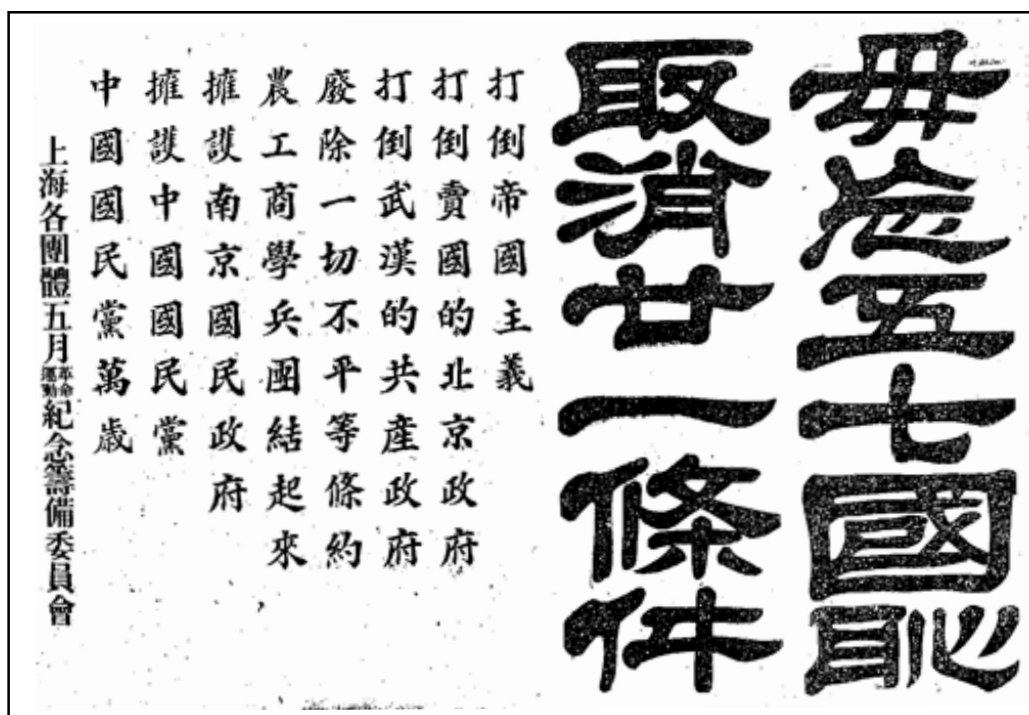
There may have been a degree of patriotic sentiment behind advertisements of this sort, and certainly, as was clearly revealed in the aftermath of the terrorist attack in New York City on September 11, 2001, there was nothing peculiarly Chinese about the tendency to exploit painful memories for individual or corporate advantage.<sup>21</sup> It is undeniable, nevertheless, that whatever patriotism may have informed the *Shenbao* ads, it took a clear second place to economic self-interest.

Political self-interest also played an important part in reframing the memory of past humiliation. Although my focus here has been on how the Twenty-One Demands, in particular, were remembered, in the context of the mounting anti-imperialist sentiment of the 1920s, the anniversaries of May 7 and 9 were soon joined by a profusion of other national humiliation anniversary days.<sup>22</sup> Initially, the observance of these days was decentralized and followed no set pattern. Schools and businesses would often close for the day, flags were flown at half-mast, banqueting and other forms of entertainment were curtailed, notices with slogans written on them were displayed in shop windows, schools held assemblies at which speeches were given explaining the origins and meaning of the anniversary, and students sang national humiliation songs (*guochi ge*)<sup>23</sup> and paraded through city streets passing out leaflets and urging citizens “not to forget the national humiliation.”<sup>24</sup>

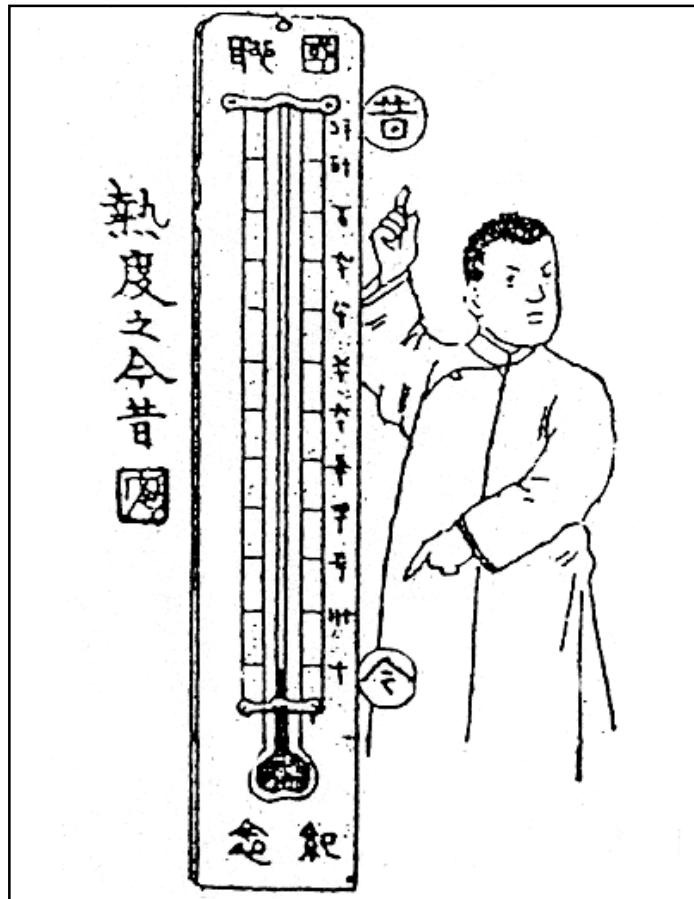
With the Guomindang’s attainment of national power in 1927, however, the process of commemorating national humiliation days underwent an abrupt and decisive change. The party promoted these days assiduously, periodically issuing detailed instructions on how they were to be observed in schools, factories, offices, army units, party branches, and other organizations. According to one set of instructions, anniversary meetings were to begin at 7 a.m. and last for one hour. After the singing of the party anthem, everyone was to bow three

times before the party flag, the national flag, and the portrait of Sun Yat-sen. This was to be followed by a reading of Sun's deathbed testament, five minutes of silence, and finally a lecture on the subject of the anniversary, which was to adhere closely to the propaganda points supplied by the Party Central Committee. There were to be no street demonstrations.<sup>25</sup>

With some variation in detail, this was the format that was followed in the observance of the May 7 and 9 national humiliation days from 1927 on. There are a number of points to be made concerning it. First, the Guomindang now stage-managed the entire commemorative process, rendering it far less free-form, far more formulaic, than in the pre-1927 years. Second, the contents of the speeches and slogans central to the process focused at least as much on inciting hatred of the Communists (and the USSR) and inculcating allegiance to the Nanjing government, the Guomindang, and its Sun Yat-sen-centered reading of Republican history as on reminding the Chinese people of the events of May 1915 and promoting anti-Japanese feeling.<sup>26</sup> Only by acceptance of the Guomindang's own agenda, it was clearly insinuated, would China succeed in wiping out the humiliations of the past. Third, as suggested by the ban on street demonstrations and the heightened security procedures now generally put into effect on National Humiliation Day anniversaries, Guomindang-managed commemorative activities were geared not only to arousing patriotic sentiment but also to bringing such sentiment under tight official control, so as to keep it from causing problems for the state.<sup>27</sup>



*Guomindang Notice of May 7, 1927. In large characters on the right-hand side, the notice states: „Do not forget the May 7 national humiliation. Abolish the Twenty-One Demands.“ The text on the left, incorporating the Guomindang's agenda in the period immediately following its establishment of control over Chinese Shanghai in April 1927, calls upon the Chinese people to, among other things, overthrow the traitorous Beijing (warlord) government, overthrow the Communist government, support the National government in Nanjing, and support the Guomindang. Shenbao, May 7, 1927.*



*Measuring Heat of National Humiliation Anniversary Observance. Published on the seventh anniversary of China's acceptance of the Japanese ultimatum, this cartoon dramatizes the cooling of concern over time. Shenbay, May 9, 1922.*

Over the years, memory of the Twenty-One Demands was also weakened, unavoidably, by a process of routinization or repetition overload. Formulaic allusions to the humiliations of 1915 were encountered everywhere in urban China – on stamps, wall posters, stationary, in newspaper ads, playbills, school texts – raising the danger that people would become desensitized to the original hurt, that the very reminders with which they were inundated in their daily lives would numb them into forgetfulness. Even prior to the assumption of Guomindang control, there are indications that the yearly anniversary observances, while providing an opportunity for emotional venting, had begun to function less as true vehicles for the recalling of the Twenty-One Demands than as a disguised form of forgetting. Time and again, Chinese commentators, internalizing a criticism originally voiced by foreigners, complained that their compatriots had “an enthusiasm for things that only lasted five minutes” (*wu fenzhong zhi redu*).<sup>28</sup> “The commemoration of May 7,” wrote an editorialist in May 1925 in the widely read weekly *Guowen zhoubao*, “has become a spent force in recent years, like a shot of morphine the efficacy of which progressively diminishes the longer the elapsed time since the date of the shot.”<sup>29</sup> Writing at the same time, another commentator, Wu Songgao, deplored the apathy (*mamu*) that was ubiquitous both within the government and among the



people and observed caustically that although the latter got all worked up and indulged in much cursing and scolding at the annual national humiliation meetings and took part in listless campaigns against Japanese products, when it came to building up the real strength of the nation or to developing their knowledge and understanding of current affairs, they were shamefully remiss.<sup>30</sup>

Let me conclude with a few general observations. When we think of anniversaries, we tend to have in mind temporal markers that appear with precise regularity year in and year out. Anniversaries are tied to specific past events, and one of the things we do when they make their annual appearance is reflect on the meaning of those past events in the present. This is the situation in the abstract. The actuality is, however, more complicated. One complicating factor is that anniversary observances sometimes become so repetitive and formulaic that, instead of serving as meaningful reminders of past events, they foster a kind of forgetfulness with respect to those events. This is something that often happened in the 1920s and 1930s in regard to the Twenty-One Demands in China. But, as we have seen, it is not all that happened. Anniversaries of the events of May 1915 also created a charged space which different societal groupings – business, political, student – were able to manipulate for their own purposes. There was nothing especially unusual about this. Anniversaries everywhere create opportunities for people in the present to push agendas that have only the most tenuous links to the events the anniversaries are supposed to commemorate.<sup>31</sup> But it is a stunning fact, nevertheless, in that occasions that are supposed to be all about remembering, instead, become prime vehicles for forgetting.

Anniversaries, even of such individual events as birthdays, weddings, and deaths, are a quintessentially social form of remembering. As such, it would be hazardous to assume that the kinds of forgetting they embody are the same as the kinds of forgetting encountered in individual memory.<sup>32</sup> Still, whether we are talking about social or individual memory, public or private, our basic operating assumption must be that memory is fragile, uncertain, malleable. For historians (at least serious ones) this weakness of memory is a terrible thing, something that we war against and try in every way available to us to counter or offset. But for societies and individuals it is different. For societies and individuals memory's fallibility affords a golden opportunity for re-imagining and recreating the past, for mythologizing it, consciously or unconsciously, in any of a thousand ways, to make it square more closely with the needs and aspirations of the present.<sup>33</sup> It is this process, on the societal side, that I have sought to illustrate (and hopefully illuminate) in my presentation today.

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> On the relationship of Chinese nationalism to the Twenty-One Demands, see Zhitian Luo, „National Humiliation and National Assertion: The Chinese Response to the Twenty-One Demands,“ *Modern Asian Studies* 27.2 (1993): 297-319. The Japanese side of the Twenty-One Demands is dealt with in Marius B. Jansen, *Japan and China: From War to Peace, 1894-1972* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1975), pp. 209-223; for Yuan Shikai's response, see Ernest P. Young, *The Presidency of Yuan Shikai: Liberalism and Dictatorship in Early Republican China* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1977), pp. 186-192.

<sup>2</sup> For detailed accounts see Luo, „National Humiliation and National Assertion,“ pp. 300-309; Karl G. Gerth, „Consumption as Resistance: The National Products Movement and Anti-Japanese Boycotts in Modern China,“ in Harald Fuess, ed., *The Japanese Empire in East Asia and Its Postwar Legacy* (München: Ludicium Verlag, 1998), pp. 132-142.

<sup>3</sup> Actually, the situation was more complicated than this. Although eventually a multiplicity of national humiliation days were recognized and observed in China, initially there was only one National Humiliation Day, sometimes identified as May 7, sometimes as May 9. As an illustration of the confusion, in the aftermath of the acceptance of the Japanese ultimatum, in circular telegrams, the Educational Association (Jiaoyu lianhe hui) announced its decision to commemorate the national humiliation annually on May 9, while the Beijing Chamber of Commerce fixed May 7 as the date of annual commemoration. Both telegrams may be found in *Guochi* (National humiliation), No. 1 (June 1915): 4-6 (*jizai*); see also *Shibao*, May 16, 1915, p. 2. The confusion between May 7 and 9 has been explained in various ways. Gerth asserts that May 7 was the focus of commemoration in North China, May 9 in the South, and sees this as symptomatic of China's political fragmentation at the time („Consumption as Resistance,“ pp. 133-134 n36). Luo sees the confusion over the two dates as relating more closely to the degree to which people blamed the Yuan Shikai regime as well as the Japanese. Those whose animus was directed mainly or exclusively at the Japanese favored the May 7 date, while those whose focus was on the culpability of the Yuan government in accepting the demands favored May 9 („National Humiliation and National Assertion,“ pp. 310-311). In the end, the ambiguity appears never to have been dispelled. In the days following the student demonstrations of May 4, 1919 in Beijing, for example, both May 7 and 9 were identified as national humiliation anniversary days in Shanghai. See *Shenbao*, May 6, 1919, pp. 1, 10; May 7, 1919, pp. 1, 3, 10; May 8, 1919, pp. 1, 10-11. Both dates were also referred to as national humiliation anniversary days in May 1927, after the establishment of Guomindang control in Shanghai and other cities. See *Shenbao*, May 7, 1927, pp. 5-6; May 8, 1927, pp. 4-5; May 10, 1927, pp. 13-14; May 11, 1927, p. 5.

<sup>4</sup> Zhichishe, comp., *Guochi*, n.d., reprinted in Shen Yunlong, ed., *Jindai Zhongguo shiliao congkan* (Historical materials on modern China series), 3 *bian* 23 *ji*, volume 227 (Taipei: Wenhai chubanshe, 1987?), p. 16 (*Wu yue jiu ri hou zhi quanguo yuqing*). See also Chow Tse-tung, *The May Fourth Movement: Intellectual Revolution in Modern China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1960), p. 22; Min-ch'ien T. Z. Tyau, *China Awakened* (New York: Macmillan, 1922), p. 141.

<sup>5</sup> Luo, „National Humiliation and National Assertion,“ pp. 305-309, 312-314. Symbolic of the general weakening of concern a magazine entitled *Guochi*, the sole purpose of which was to promote awareness of the national humiliation, ceased publication after the appearance of its first issue in June. For an articulation of the magazine's purpose see „Ben she jian ze“ (Publisher's brief statement of principles)

(inside front cover) and „*Guochi* chushi tebie guanggao“ (Special advertisement on the occasion of *Guochi*'s initial appearance) (inside back cover).

<sup>6</sup> In his discussion of Ah Q's reaction to being beaten over the head by a man he had just insulted, Lu wrote: „As far as Ah Q could remember, this was the second humiliation of his life. Fortunately after the thwacking stopped it seemed to him that the matter was closed, and he even felt somewhat relieved. Moreover, the precious 'ability to forget' handed down by his ancestors stood him in good stead. He walked slowly away and by the time he was approaching the wineshop door he felt quite happy again.“ *The True Story of Ah Q*, in Lu Hsun [Xun], *Selected Works of Lu Hsun*, 4 volumes (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1956), 1:92.

<sup>7</sup> Xuecun [Zhang Xichen], „Renru fuzhong“ (Enduring humiliations and shouldering burdens), *Dongfang zazhi* 12.4 (April 1, 1915): 15. The phrase *renru fuzhong* often carries the meaning „to endure humiliation for the sake of accomplishing some larger purpose (or mission or task).“ Here *renru* and *fuzhong* are coequal in value.

<sup>8</sup> Xiao, „Jinggao wu jianwang zhi guoren“ (A respectful warning to my forgetful compatriots), *Shibao*, May 10, 1915, p. 2; Gongzhen [Ge Gongzhen], „Wuwang ci ci zhi chiru“ (Do not forget the present humiliation), *ibid.*, p. 8; Yiming, „Guomin yongyong zhi xin jinian“ (A permanent new anniversary for the Chinese people), *ibid.*, May 11, 1915, p. 1. One columnist likened the sudden mood changes of the Chinese public to the wind, which when active was capable of destroying everything in its path but when inactive left no trace of its ever having even existed. Leng, „Feng“ (The wind), *Shenbao*, June 28, 1915, p. 2.

<sup>9</sup> Luo, „National Humiliation and National Assertion,“ pp. 313-314; the man in question, Ding Yihua, asserted that the thing he most feared was his compatriots' predilection for abruptly switching from tears to laughter as soon as a crisis had passed. *Shenbao*, May 17, 1915, p. 6.

<sup>10</sup> What I have in mind here is similar to, but not the same as, the polarity Hue-Tam Ho Tai establishes between hyper-mnemosiis and willed amnesia. In the context of recent Vietnamese history, with particular reference to „totalitarian commemoration,“ Tai defines „hyper-mnemosiis“ as „the intensive, even obsessive, effort to keep . . . [the past] at the forefront of consciousness, to shape it and to exploit it for a variety of purposes.“ In these circumstances, she argues, „forgetting may be the only escape from the tyranny of enforced memory.“ The hyper-mnemosiis portion of Tai's analysis seems to me eminently applicable in the Republican Chinese case. The forgetting that took place in China, however, was not a „willed“ form of resistance to state coercion but, rather, I would argue, an instinctive psychological response to an overload of identical or near-identical stimuli in the environment. See Tai's „Introduction: Situating Memory,“ in Hue-Tam Ho Tai, ed., *The Country of Memory: Remaking the Past in Late Socialist Vietnam* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).

<sup>11</sup> According to an editorialist writing in May 1933, in the growing crisis then enveloping China, the May 7 anniversary had become all but meaningless. Pu (pseud.), „Wuqi guochi' yu guochi de jianglai“ (The May 7 national humiliation and the future of national humiliation), *Shenbao*, May 7, 1933, p. 1 (Shanghai supplement). For the similar comment of Wang Yunsheng two years later, see n. 30 below. On May 7, 1940 the Nationalist government in Chongqing officially abolished the May 9 National Humiliation Day anniversary on the grounds that in the context of all-out war against Japan, it had been overtaken by the anniversary of July 7, the date on which the Sino-Japanese War began, and was no longer meaningful. See the editorial (unsigned) „Feizhi wujiu jinian de yiyi“ (The meaning of the abolition of the May 9 anniversary), *Shenbao*, May 8, 1940, p. 4. See also *ibid.*, May 9, 1940, p. 7. The growing meaninglessness of „May 9“ is also pointed out in an editorial of the previous year (also unsigned): „Cong 'Ershiyi tiao' dao 'Dongya xin zhixu'“ (From the „Twenty-One Demands“ to the „New Order in East Asia“), *ibid.*, May 9, 1939, p. 4.

<sup>12</sup> The May Fourth Movement – the student-led demonstrations that began in Beijing on May 4, 1919 in protest against the failure of the Versailles peace conference to transfer control of Shandong from

Japan back to China – had originally been planned for May 7 („National Humiliation Day“) and, in the view of some, took much of its animus from the „continuing indignation“ aroused by the Twenty-One Demands. Chow, *The May Fourth Movement*, p. 99; Chow cites the similar view of Paul Reinsch (ibid.). One Shanghai editorialist even suggested on May 5 that, if the news from Versailles turned out to be accurate, China would be in the position of commemorating a double national humiliation (*guochi zhi shuang jinian*). Mo (pseud.), „Shandong wenti jinghao“ (Warning of possible bad news on the Shandong question), *Shenbao*, May 5, 1919, p. 7. At this point in time (at least in Shanghai) there was no such thing as the „May Fourth Movement.“ The focus in the press was on the betrayal of Chinese interests at Versailles, which was consistently portrayed as a „national humiliation.“ This was also the view of 25,000 Beijing students, who on May 6 published a circular telegram calling on all Chinese citizens to hold national humiliation anniversary meetings on May 7 and „join in the common effort to guard against this desperate situation.“ Ibid., May 6, 1919, p. 3; see also ibid., May 6, 1919, p. 10; May 7, 1919, pp. 1, 10; May 8, 1919, pp. 10-11; May 9, 1919, pp. 10-11; May 10, 1919, pp. 10-11; May 11, 1919, p. 7. On May 9 (the National Humiliation Day date generally observed in Shanghai), a *Shenbao* editorialist wrote that „this year we have a second national humiliation and an anniversary greater than any we have had since we started observing national humiliation days.“ Yong (pseud.), „Guochi“ (National humiliation), *Shenbao*, May 9, 1919, p. 11. For another instance of plans for the May 7 anniversary (this one consisting of preparations by educators and other civic leaders in Shanghai for a „citizens' assembly“ on this date) feeding into the May Fourth Movement, see Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom, *Student Protests in Twentieth-Century China: The View from Shanghai* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991), p. 52. For illustrations of seals that circulated during the May Fourth Movement, inscribed with such slogans as „Save the nation, wipe clean the humiliation“ (*jiuguo xuechi*) and „An admonition to our countrymen, do not forget the national humiliation“ (*jinggao tongbao wuwang guochi*), see Liu Jisheng, ed., *Guochi fen* (Indignation over national humiliation) (Jinan: Jinan chubanshe, 1990), p. 177.

<sup>13</sup> Biography of Chang Shih-chao [Zhang Shizhao], in Howard L. Boorman, ed., *Biographical Dictionary of Republican China*, 4 vols. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1967-1971), 1:107 (the date of May 7, 1926 given for the student rising is incorrect); Lengguan [Wu Songgao], „Duiyu wuqi Beijing xuechao zhi ganxiang“ (Reflections on the May 7 student upheaval in Beijing), *Guowen zhoubao* 2.18 (May 17, 1925): 2; Gongzhan, „Guo neiwai yizhoujian dashi ji“ (A record of the week's important events at home and abroad), ibid., p. 26; Yanyan, „Wuqi xuechao zahua“ (Random thoughts on the May 7 student upheaval), ibid., p. 28. See also Harriet C. Mills, „Lu Xun: Literature and Revolution – from Mara to Marx,“ in Merle Goldman, ed., *Modern Chinese Literature in the May Fourth Era* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1977), pp. 201-202; Xu Guangping letter to Lu Xun, May 9, 1925, in Lu Xun, *Lu Xun quanji* (The complete writings of Lu Xun), 16 volumes (Beijing: Renmin wenzue chubanshe, 1995), 11:70-72; *North-China Herald and Supreme Court and Consular Gazette*, May 16, 1925, p. 270. On the student actions of May 7, 1925 in Shanghai, see Barry Keenan, *The Dewey Experiment in China: Educational Reform and Political Power in the Early Republic* (Cambridge: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University), 1977), pp. 94-95. A similar pattern of student upheaval took place in May 1920 at a female normal school in Beijing. The students requested permission to have the day off from classes on May 7. When the principal refused their request on the ground that the Ministry of Education had issued orders forbidding it, the students, enraged, issued a public statement, in response to which the principal locked them in their classrooms. *Shenbao*, May 11, 1920, p. 6.

<sup>14</sup> Gerth, „Consumption as Resistance,“ pp. 136-137. Gerth (ibid.) reports an ad for „5-9 Brand Cigarettes.“

<sup>15</sup> *Shenbao*, May 9, 1920, p. 1 (Sunday Supplement).

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., May 8, 1924, p. 8.

<sup>17</sup> See, for example, ibid., May 9, 1924, p. 3; May 9, 1925, p. 1.

<sup>18</sup> Slightly different versions of the ad are in *ibid.*, May 7, 1925, p. 13, and May 9, 1925, p. 13.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, May 9, 1931, p. 11.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, May 7, 1925, p. 12; May 8, 1925, p. 12; May 9, 1925, p. 12; May 10, 1925, p. 18; May 11, 1925, p. 17; May 9, 1926, p. 19. During the 1920s and 1930s the story of Goujian was alluded to with such frequency in materials relating to *guochi* that it would not be going too far to view it as a paradigmatic narrative for how Chinese should respond to foreign imperialism. On Nanyang's incorporation of patriotic material in its advertising, see Sherman Cochran, *Big Business in China: Sino-Foreign Rivalry in the Cigarette Industry, 1890-1930* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980). Henrietta Harrison observes that after Sun Yat-sen's death, Zhongshan became a popular brand name and ads identifying the purchase of Zhongshan products as an expression of patriotism were common. See her *The Making of the Republican Citizen: Political Ceremonies and Symbols in China, 1911-1929* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 147-148; also *ibid.*, pp. 182-184.

<sup>21</sup> Almost immediately after the attack, people were turning a profit by peddling World Trade Center T-shirts – \$5.50 for one that showed the towers and an American flag waving (Adam Gopnik, „Urban Renewal,“ *New Yorker*, October 1, 2001, p. 66) – and in the ensuing days and weeks numerous corporations took out full-page notices in the *New York Times* that were both patriotic and self-serving. See, for example, the message published by Verizon in the September 23, 2001 issue, p. A17. Entitled „Let Freedom Ring,“ it begins „Never before did a phone ringing sound so good as it did last week in lower Manhattan. And never before did the ringing of the opening bell sound as triumphant as on Monday morning at the Stock Exchange.“ It then goes on to detail the „crucial“ role „thousands of Verizon employees“ played in enabling these and other things to happen.

<sup>22</sup> The Guomindang in 1928 published an official list of twenty-six such days, indicating for each the date of the original humiliation, its causes, the adverse consequences for China, and the foreign country involved. The list is in the front matter of Liang Xin, *Guochi shiyao*, pp. 1-6. It was apparently first issued by the Ministry of the Interior. See Xu Guozhen, *Jin bainian waijiao shibai shi* (A history of the foreign affairs defeats of the past hundred years) (Shanghai: Shijie shuju, 1929), pp. 203-205.

<sup>23</sup> For an example, see *Shenbao*, May 6, 1934, p. 15.

<sup>24</sup> For examples of activities relating to the anniversaries of the Twenty-One Demands in Shanghai, Beijing, Nanjing, and other cities, see *Shenbao*, May 10, 1917, p. 10; May 11, 1917, p. 10; May 10, 1918, p. 10; May 11, 1918, p. 11; May 7, 1919, pp. 3, 10; May 8, 1919, pp. 6-7, 10-11; May 9, 1919, pp. 10-11; May 10, 1919, pp. 10-11; May 11, 1919, pp. 7, 10; May 9, 1925, pp. 1, 13.

<sup>25</sup> These instructions, which were adopted by the Guomindang Central Committee on April 19, 1929, are found in *Chongbian riyong baike quanshu* (New edition of encyclopedia for everyday use) (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1934), pp. 5792-5793. I am grateful to Rudolf Wagner for bringing this source to my attention. For another set of official guidelines, written mainly for government workers and covering not only national humiliation anniversary days but other anniversaries as well, see *Gezhong jinianri shilüe* (A concise history of the various commemoration days), compiled and printed by the Political Training Department of the Nanchang Field Headquarters of the Head of the Military Affairs Commission of the National Government (Guomin zhengfu junshi weiyuanhui weiyuanzhang Nanchang xingying zhengzhi xunlian chu) (1932?). The front matter of this manual (pp. 1-9) discusses in fairly general terms the meaning, origin, and value of anniversaries, as well as the rituals and educational activities that should accompany them. I am indebted to Vivian Wagner for making a copy of this source available to me. See also Harrison, *The Making of the Republican Citizen*, p. 187.

<sup>26</sup> Other strategies used by the Guomindang to place itself and Sun Yat-sen at the center of China's modern history are detailed in Harrison, *The Making of the Republican Citizen*, pp. 151-164, and Robert Culp, „'China – The Land and Its People': Fashioning Identity in Secondary School History Textbooks, 1911-37,“ *Twentieth-Century China* 26.2 (April 2001): 40-47.

<sup>27</sup> For detailed information on Guomindang-managed commemorative activities (pertaining mainly but not exclusively to the May 9 anniversary) in Shanghai and other cities, see *Shenbao*, May 10, 1927, pp. 13-14; May 9, 1928, p. 8; May 10, 1928, pp. 6, 13; May 5, 1929, p. 13; May 10, 1929, p. 6; May 10, 1931, p. 13; May 6, 1933, p. 8; May 9, 1933, p. 8; May 10, 1933, pp. 6, 8.

<sup>28</sup> One individual, writing on the sixth anniversary of China's acceptance of the Twenty-One Demands, feared that in his own day there were Chinese who didn't even remember the date of the May 9 national humiliation and suggested that it was not at all unjust that his compatriots were „scorned by others for being coldly indifferent and having an enthusiasm for things that only lasted five minutes.“ The point of marking the May 9 anniversary and holding commemorative meetings, he went on, was to keep people from forgetting this great national humiliation and to arouse them to exert themselves to wipe it clean, following the example of Goujian's lying on brushwood and tasting gall. But, instead, in six years' time the anniversary of May 9 had come to be observed as a happy occasion, as if it were China's National Day. It was time, therefore, to abandon the National Humiliation Day entirely and establish in its stead an Avenge Humiliation Day (*xuechi ri*). Zuming (pseud.), „Guochi jinianri ganyan“ (Thoughts on National Humiliation Day), *Shenbao*, May 9, 1921, p. 18. For other complaints about the short-lived nature of Chinese enthusiasm or fervor, see *ibid.*, May 9, 1922, p. 17 (cartoon); Cao Wenhai, „Wujiu gantan“ (Thoughts on May 9), *ibid.*, May 8, 1924, p. 17; Song (pseud.), „Guochi ri de jingyu“ (Words of warning on National Humiliation Day), *ibid.*, May 9, 1924, p. 18; Feng Shuren, „Wu fenzhong redu de fenxi“ (An analysis of enthusiasm that only lasts five minutes), *ibid.*; Li Dichen, „Xuechi“ (Avening humiliation), *ibid.*, May 10, 1928, p. 17; *ibid.*, May 10, 1931, p. 13.

<sup>29</sup> Yanyan, „Wuqi xuechao zahua,“ p. 28. The growing meaninglessness of the May 7 (or 9) anniversary observances is also noted in Na (pseud.), „Wujiu jinian“ (The May 9 anniversary), *Shenbao*, May 9, 1921, p. 11; Zuming (pseud.), „Guochi jinianri ganyan“; Wu Lingyuan, „Guochi jinianri xiaoyan“ (Trifling thoughts on the anniversary of the National Humiliation), *Shenbao*, May 9, 1922, p. 17; Cao Wenhai, „Wujiu gantan“; Song (pseud.), „Guochi ri de jingyu“; Ji Lüshui (pseud.), „Sangxin bingkuang zhi guochi ri ji“ (An account of an absurd National Humiliation Day), *Shenbao*, May 9, 1924, p. 18; Yaochang (pseud.), „Wuhu guochi ri na tian“ (Alas, that National Humiliation Day), *ibid.*, May 9, 1928, p. 21; Li Dichen, „Xuechi“; Nian (pseud.), „Di ershi ci guochi jinian“ (The twentieth anniversary of the National Humiliation), *Shenbao*, May 9, 1935, p. 5; Da haizi (pseud.), „Guochi jinian“ (Commemorating the National Humiliation), *ibid.*, May 9, 1937, p. 18.

<sup>30</sup> Lengguan [Wu Songgao], „Wujiu jinian zhi yizhong ganxiang“ (A reflection on the anniversary of May 9), *Guowen zhoubao* 2.17 (May 10, 1925): 3; see also Bulei [Chen Bulei], „Wujiu jinian“ (The anniversary of May 9), *ibid.*, 3.17 (May 9, 1926): 1. A similar concern was voiced a decade later, in May 1935, by Wang Yunsheng, soon to be named editor of the leading newspaper *Dagongbao* and a knowledgeable student of Japanese affairs. Wang bemoaned the deepening crisis in Sino-Japanese relations – Japan's seizure of Manchuria had taken place in the fall of 1931 and Japanese pressure in North China was building rapidly – and wondered whether the situation had not already moved beyond considerations of national humiliation to touch on the very survival of China as a nation. „Every Chinese primary student knows that May 9 is National Humiliation Commemoration Day,“ he wrote, „but there are a great many Chinese citizens who do not appreciate the seriousness of the current national crisis and their responsibility to do something about it. This is a new national humiliation and also a great crisis.“ [Wang] Yunsheng, „Guochi“ (National humiliation), *ibid.* 12.18 (May 13, 1935): 1 (*yizhou jianping*). See also Congyu [Fan Zhongyun], „Guochi jinian yu Zhong-Ri jiaoshe“ (The anniversary of the national humiliation and Sino-Japanese negotiations), *Dongfang zazhi* 21.10 (May 25, 1924): 1-2 (*shishi shuping*).

<sup>31</sup> For further thoughts on anniversaries, see Paul A. Cohen, *History in Three Keys: The Boxers as Event, Experience, and Myth* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), pp. 219-221.

<sup>32</sup> See, for example, Daniel L. Schacter, *Searching for Memory: The Brain, the Mind, and the Past* (New York: Basic Books, 1996).

<sup>33</sup> In the case of individuals, I refer to this process in *History in Three Keys* (pp. ) as autobiographical mythologization. The process is wonderfully evoked in Barbara Myerhoff, *Number Our Days* ( ), pp.





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# A Fire and its Causes

## Eunuchs and the Making of (Event) History in China

by Barbara Mittler, Heidelberg

This paper consists of three parts:

1. A lengthy introduction which presents a HOT EVENT, a palace fire in 1923, and a problem with it: why was it "obviously" the eunuch's fault?

2. The main body which contextualizes the derogatory discourse about eunuch involvement in the fire in 1923 by comparing it with writings on eunuchs throughout Chinese history. It shows that HOT EVENTS featuring SIGNIFICANT MEN were the fuel that kept the engine of Chinese history writing running. It also shows that with the establishment of new systems of history writing the temperature of HOT EVENTS immediately cools down while the importance of SIGNIFICANT MEN diminishes.

3. A short conclusion which presents some thoughts about the real and imagined powers of eunuchs as marginal figures in Chinese society and the relationship of these powers with the type of discourse used to describe them.

### 1. Setting the Scene: A Fire and its Causes

One evening in June 1923 Henry (the last emperor of China and his wife) Elizabeth were endeavouring to find a breath of cool air on the verandah of their apartment, when a eunuch came running to let them know the "Palace of Established Happiness" was in flames.<sup>1</sup>

This is the beginning of Henry McAleavy's retelling of the great fire taking place on June 27th, 1923 behind the closed gates of the Forbidden City which since the proclamation of the Chinese Republic in January 1912 had remained the permanent residence of the former emperor. Apart from the historical and architectural value of the buildings destroyed, the



*Site of the Palace of Established Happiness after the fire.*

material losses were enormous. The number of articles saved (387) compared unfavourably to those totally destroyed by the fire (6643).<sup>2</sup>

In his autobiography, the emperor declares that "the best way to describe the damage done by this fire is to tell the story of the disposal of the heap of ashes that remained" for some 17.000 ounces of melted gold alone were gathered from these ashes.<sup>3</sup> Obviously, the damage had been great, but who was responsible for the fire? The emperor had been quick to decide that the plot cleared by the fire would be ideal for a tennis court—for years now he had dreamed of setting one up for himself so that his British Tutor, Reginald Johnston could teach him to play.<sup>4</sup> This, however, should not be taken to mean that the emperor himself had plotted the fire in order to find a space to get his physical exercise.<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, "black looks were (indeed) cast" at him if for completely different reasons. McAleavy explains:

Members of the household grumbled that if (Pu Yi) had not been so infatuated with Harold Lloyd, the fire would never have happened. According to this opinion, it was a fault in the wiring of the (private) cinema (recently set up for the emperor) that had started the trouble.

McAleavy then continues with a completely different theory as to the causes of the fire, however. In one point – the quality of the ashes – this second story clashes significantly with the emperor's own description, a contradiction, which has never changed the ways in which the history of this event would be written, however. McAleavy reports:

... in a day or two another tale began to get about. Had such a quantity of valuables really been lost in the flames? Some ... melted remains were found in the ashes, but too few to justify such a prodigious assessment of damage. What if the bulk of the treasure had been removed before the fire broke out? The eunuchs had had free access to all the rooms, and there was only their word for what had happened. If there had been any pilfering, the disaster had occurred very opportunely, for the emperor had just begun to take an inventory and must soon have discovered the thefts.<sup>6</sup>

The question of how much could be found in the remaining ashes is never taken up in latter discussions of the event. But the assumption that the eunuchs must have committed arson in order to cover up thefts was the one tale which would be accepted as the unquestioned and unquestionable Truth within a short while. Memoirs and newspapers no matter whether foreign or Chinese were unanimous in their support of this theory.<sup>7</sup>

The immediate result of this interpretation of the incident was earth-shaking: Pu Yi decided – probably at the suggestion of his British tutor – to bring to an end a tradition which went back four millennia in Chinese history.<sup>8</sup> A mere fortnight after the fire, on July 15, 1923, an edict was issued, banishing all eunuchs from the Forbidden City.

Now, it was just as easy to gather public opinion to topple the well-established institution of eunuchdom as it had been to manufacture the Truth of eunuch theft and arson in the "Palace of Established Happiness." This was due to the fact that historical precedent – arguably one of the most powerful authorities within the Chinese cultural context – more than supported the likelihood of eunuch involvement in such affairs – thus it was only considered fair that they should finally be punished for what they had done for centuries already.

One event that had taken place only two years earlier, after the death of one of the consorts of the Tongzhi emperor (1862–1875), was cited as supporting evidence: apparently, it was no sooner that the consort had ceased to breathe that her eunuchs proceeded to strip her palace of its treasures.<sup>9</sup> Similar cases were well-known: the *Mingshi* relates that fires broke out frequently in store houses under the supervision of eunuchs, presumably to cover up thefts.<sup>10</sup> Examples such as these – of which plenty can be found in the dynastic histories – explain why the eunuchs appeared to be the most likely culprits for such deeds even as late as 1923. Eunuch-bashing after 1923 was supported by a history of a good four millennia. But never before had eunuch-bashing actually led to the abolishment of eunuchdom as an institution.

## 2. Creating the Discourse: A History of Eunuch-Bashing

This main part of this paper will discuss the last official occasion of eunuch-bashing by analyzing the media-response to the eunuch dismissal in 1923. It considers the particular discourse surrounding these events within the context of the general discourse of eunuch-

bashing in Chinese historical writings. I will argue (A Discourse of Eunuchs in Power) that in 1923 as in many earlier incidences in Chinese history, eunuchs, precisely because their roles challenged and threatened established notions of morality and gender, were attributed with many more powers than they actually had.

In a second step, the particular discourse surrounding the events in 1923 will be considered within the context of later descriptions of eunuchs. Eunuch-bashing in 1923 is at the same time similar and different from earlier eunuch-bashing precisely because in 1923 the institution of palace-eunuchs comes to an official end. Thus, eunuchs lose their potential to acquire power. Immediately upon this turn of events, a humanitarian factor begins to play a role in debates on them. I will argue (A Discourse of Eunuchs out of Power) that as their roles challenged but no longer threatened established notions of morality and gender, eunuchs were now considered completely powerless. Accordingly, they were no longer maligned but pitied.

### *1: A Discourse of Eunuchs in Power*

The first news-report in the Shanghai Daily *Shenbao* dealing with the dismissal of eunuchs appears two days after the event (17.7.1923). The reasons for the dismissal given are: eunuch thefts and the recent fire in the palace. A few days later (SB 20.7.1923), a longer article appears.<sup>11</sup> The eunuchs are described as abominable creatures – half man, half woman (—b—k—k—l). They are portrayed as a cliquish bad lot, always out to make a personal profit.<sup>12</sup> It is alleged that they have frequently committed pilferings, taking palace antiques and selling them to local merchants. In the most elaborate article dealing with the case,<sup>13</sup> this kind of general condemnation appears as a repeated flourish. It begins with the pompous statement: "The foul debauchery of the Qing eunuchs is known all over the world" and gives two reasons for the dismissal of the eunuchs: the robberies and fire, and their "lewd behaviour."

These two points, profiteering and sexual debauchery are key features in the stock inventory of eunuch-bashing in the Chinese dynastic histories. Time and again eunuchs are described as having accumulated legendary fortunes.<sup>14</sup> To what extent the stories and figures accompanying them were simply fabricated can no longer be verified today. Even more dubious is the factuality of eunuch proclivity to sex – especially in view of the fact that castration in the Chinese case actually meant the removal of both scrotum and penis. Nevertheless, eunuch's alleged sexual activities abound in the chapters on eunuchs in the dynastic histories.<sup>15</sup> Although these histories usually base their statements on individual examples of eunuch depravity, eunuch-bashing is always directed against the collective: it does not allow for individual fates, nor less for individual goodness in eunuchs—one evil eunuch proves all eunuchs evil.

The two faults discussed here are primary vices within the Confucian canon. An accomplished man (the Confucian —g—l) had no interest in private profit but thought of the common good. Moreover, an accomplished man practiced restraint (jie — ), especially when it came to sexual matters. He abhorred lewdness (yin — ], for he knew that all excess would



*A young eunuch.*

lead to chaos. Man was the microcosm that functioned just like the macrocosm. Accordingly, a man's lack of restrained behaviour could lead to the downfall of a country. To accuse eunuchs of these faults was to attribute to them enormous powers: thus, they were blamed for having caused, time and again in Chinese history, the downfall of the imperial houses they served.

It was easy to blame the eunuchs, marginal existences within the Chinese universe: through emasculation, they had given up their means to procreate and to continue the family line, thus committing the most heinous unfilial act.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, eunuchs formed a distinctive and largely invisible group. Thus, little understood and little known, they were attributed – in the minds of a great many who may never have seen a eunuch – with many more powers than they actually had.<sup>17</sup>

Indeed, their marginality was considered their greatest asset: only a sexless being could live and work so close to the emperor. From the point of view of the officials, then, eunuchs were direct rivals in the battle over an emperor's favour. This is perhaps the most important reason for eunuch-bashing in the dynastic histories. Chinese history writing was essentially a discourse of self-defense. The dynastic histories were written by eunuch-hating mandarins, and thus, it is not surprising that they were interested in the eunuchs only in so far as they could be declared state enemies.

Thus, eunuchs have become crucial elements in the construction of the cyclical order of Chinese dynastic history writing: each dynasty starts with a period of great flourish and restoration (during which eunuchs have no part to play) and ends in depravity and decline (as eunuchs thrive). With the eunuchs as whipping boys, many other historical factors that may also have caused the fall of dynasties could be neglected. This version of Chinese history typically allows not for the slandered eunuch's voice, and thus there is little dissent. It is significant, however, that the *Shiji*, which would become the prototype for dynastic history writing, was in fact composed by none other than a eunuch. Yet, he himself did not accept this fate.<sup>18</sup> Sima Qian (145–86 v. Chr.) always considered himself a cut above other eunuchs.<sup>19</sup> To the end of his life, he insisted that he had been castrated innocently.<sup>20</sup> And therefore, he engaged – quite openly – in defamations of eunuchs.<sup>21</sup> A eunuch thus set the pattern for eunuch-bashing in the dynastic histories to come.

While time and again throughout Chinese history, the officials had pleaded with their emperors to restrict the eunuchs's powers, none ever asked for the complete abolishment of the institution.<sup>22</sup> Eunuchs were needed for keeping up the cyclical order of history. Their viciousness, their lechery and most of all their responsibility for the fall of so many dynasties is perhaps more than just a "figment of the imagination," yet it was primarily discussed for one particular purpose: the formal logic of cyclical history writing required a number of black sheep to explain the decline of each of the dynasties.

Thus, only when the cyclical order of history became obsolete was it possible to make away, for ever, with eunuchdom. It is no coincidence, that a foreign tutor has been associated with putting this idea into emperor Pu Yi's head, for this possibility opened up due to the influence of foreign "intruders" in China. At the moment when the cyclical order of history made way to linear historical evolution eunuchs were no longer needed as scapegoats and could be portrayed, at least in part, with sympathy.

## *2: A Discourse of Eunuchs out of Power*

The new discourse on eunuchs thus begins at the point of their dismissal in 1923. The act of dismissal was a HOT EVENT par excellence: it may have been of short duration but it had a high and lasting impact, leaving society fundamentally transformed. It constituted a violent break with long-standing established order, and was carried by a set of new rules and ideals: those of a "Chinese modernity." These new ideals are captured characteristically in the media response to the events: for some of the same newspaper articles complaining about eunuch profiteering and eunuch debauchery also include passages that strike an entirely different note and find words of empathy for the eunuchs.<sup>23</sup> These articles are often – at least in part – written from the point of view of the eunuchs, sympathizing with their plight, calling their dismissal an "earth-shattering event,"<sup>24</sup> and pitying them.<sup>25</sup> Surely, "if one talks about humanism, there must be humanism for everyone," even for eunuchs, one article demands.<sup>26</sup>

Accordingly, the media are eager to mention that Republican officials suggested measures of relief.<sup>27</sup> It is stated repeatedly that the Republic had "always supported" a slow phasing out of eunuchdom which is condemned as a cruel institution.<sup>28</sup>

It is this "enlightened" rhetoric which determines discussions of the eunuch institution from this point onwards. In this rhetoric, foreign values that have been internalized by all "modern Chinese"<sup>29</sup> play an important role.<sup>30</sup> Accordingly, in order to regain its place among the "civilized nations," China must quickly abandon the cruel eunuch system. A rather radical version of this view is given by Bo Yang, a Taiwanese cultural critic in the 1980s:

I don't recall which clever ancient Chinese gentleman it was who spawned that magnificent conception, the eunuch.... Such a brilliant invention! Chinese emperors were enthralled by their eunuchs, and thus they became one of those venerable Chinese institutions that survived for thousands of years. Alas! Confucius said, 'Be benevolent', and Mencius said, 'Be righteous'. I hate to bring it up, but it seems to me that chopping off a man's penis is neither benevolent nor righteous. The odd thing is that throughout the centuries, not a single enlightened Chinese sage ... ever suggested that there was anything improper about reducing healthy young men to eunuchs.<sup>31</sup>

Bo Yang's verdict, too, condemns the brutality and immorality of the eunuch system. He styles the eunuchs into pitiable young men deprived of their most precious possession. He sympathizes with their plight and their suffering through the ages. Precisely this kind of humanist gesture also recurs in Tian Zhuangzhuang's recent cinematographic depiction of Li Lianying, Cixi's (in-)famous eunuch. The film is an obvious critique of the "feudal" imperial system, rather than a critique of Li Lianying, the eunuch.<sup>32</sup> In fact, it makes a point of showing his individual suffering.

Of course, this is not the only way of describing eunuchs after 1923. Egon Erwin Kisch, in a chapter of his reportage novel *China geheim*<sup>33</sup> provides another typical view of this "curious" Chinese institution. He describes an afternoon stroll through the streets of Beijing in the early 1930s, when he suddenly comes across a group of old women. Kisch is bewildered by the fact that these women are wearing blue trousers but no shirts, their breasts hanging shamelessly. He observes how shrill their voices are and is finally much confused by a strange scene: one of the women turns around and urinates, standing up, as men do. It is at this moment that Kisch understands that he is facing a group of eunuchs.<sup>34</sup>

The description of a bunch of harmless little old women clashes significantly with the following paragraphs in which Kisch describes the dubious roles that palace eunuchs had played in Chinese history.<sup>35</sup> He suggests that everybody hated them, but his own depiction is completely incongruous with this judgement. His portrayal of eunuchs is an incredulous account of their misdeeds which all but ridicules both those that had created the discourse and those that featured in it.

In the same vein, Lao She's 1940s play *Chaguan* (Teahouse) contains a rather cynical description of a rich eunuch and his fate. The eunuch is reduced to a caricature invoking the infamous lore of eunuchdom before its abolition. He is ridiculed and despised for his behaviour in the first act (set in 1898), but rehabilitated after his brutal death at the hand of his own relatives in the second act (set in the Republic). This playful depiction again shows how the eunuch – when out of power – could be laughed at and commiserated at the same time. This is quite obviously no longer the discourse created by a rival group. At the point when eunuchs lose their potential to power, the discourse describing them immediately changes in character, no longer maligned, they become objects of compassion and derision.

### 3. Imagining the Power: A Study in Empowering Impotence

Next to women, eunuchs are arguably the most reviled group in Chinese historical writing.<sup>36</sup> The fact that they have been blamed in exactly the same way for millennia should alert the reader, however. Could it mean that they never actually did commit the deeds they were accused of? Why is it that the eunuchs have been so maligned? It was the purpose of this paper to show that an entire group was here made responsible for the faults of one or two of their kind and that this was done with spite and with method. Indeed, many or most of the slanderous attributes for "the eunuchs" were nothing but a sign of their rivals's fears rather than their own tangible qualities. The constant repetition of stories about vicious eunuchs does not record their powers, but creates them. Their lack of a position within Confucian society made them into SIGNIFICANT MEN, but only as perfect whipping boys and useful tools in the writing of cyclical history.

This paper attempted to present a backward reading of eunuchs in Chinese history. It is my contention that the very representation of them as marginal characters engenders their strength. Through the act of castration, eunuchs became outcasts. Through the act of castration, they also gained a potential for power which let the imaginations of their rivals run high. Their very impotence was seen to be empowering.<sup>37</sup>

The eunuchs's free access to the imperial seraglio made them conversant with all the gossip and intrigue that went on among the palace women. They were informed about the emperor's moods, foibles and preferences. Thus, a eunuch could indeed be much closer to the emperor than the ministers of state and other high officials who as a rule saw the emperor only during audiences or important ceremonies. Hence, the emperor might entrust one of the eunuchs with a confidential mission, or show another important state papers. Eunuchs did have the potential to usurp the management of affairs of state.<sup>38</sup>

On the other hand, most eunuchs had only undergone a rather rudimentary education, the greatest number of them were simple slaves of the imperial entourage who "did their jobs"—from cutting hair to preserving dried fruits.<sup>39</sup> Only a select few actually served the emperor.<sup>40</sup> All others probably did as best as they could in serving his entourage, leading



everything but exciting – and probably perfectly innocent – lives. Only a handful out of the thousands who had inhabited the imperial palaces for centuries would eventually become names in the history books (but these few would then serve to revile all others): the hidden, or imagined powers of the eunuchs were always greater than their real ones. Only thus could a group of mean palace servants which the eunuchs really were become SIGNIFICANT MEN involved in HOT EVENTS, determining the making of Chinese history.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Henry McAleavy *A Dream of Tartary. The Origins and Misfortunes of Henry P'u Yi*, London 1963, 133-134.

<sup>2</sup> The lost treasures included 2685 gold Buddhas; 1157 pictures, mainly Buddhist; 1675 Buddhist altar-ornaments of gold; 435 articles of porcelain, jade and bronze, including pieces of the Zhou, Tang, Song and Yuan periods; thousands of books; and 31 boxes containing sables and imperial robes. For these figures cf. Reginald F. Johnston *Twilight in the Forbidden City*, New York 1934, 335-336.

<sup>3</sup> *The Last Manchu. The Autobiography of Henry Pu Yi, Last Emperor of China* (Paul Kramer Ed.) London 1967, 115.

<sup>4</sup> *The Last Manchu. The Autobiography of Henry Pu Yi, Last Emperor of China* (Paul Kramer Ed.) London 1967, 115: "At that time I had been looking for a cleared space for a tennis court where Johnston could teach me to play. ... The space left by the fire would, I thought, suit this purpose perfectly, so I ordered the Household Department to clean it up."

<sup>5</sup> Complaints about the claustrophobic nature of the Forbidden City and its negative effects on Pu Yi's constitution are everpresent in the imperial tutors' memoirs (cf. Reginald F. Johnston *Twilight in the Forbidden City*, New York 1934).

<sup>6</sup> Henry McAleavy *A Dream of Tartary. The Origins and Misfortunes of Henry P'u Yi*, London 1963, 133-134.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. for instance this description in Johnston *Twilight*, 336/337: "The great fire in the Forbidden City naturally caused excitement in Peking, and the general belief which found full expression in the Chinese press was that it had been caused by eunuchs who dreaded the imminent discovery of their malpractices. The following is an example of the statements which appeared in the local newspapers and were allowed by the Nei Wu Fu to go uncontradicted.

'Peking, June 29: – It now appears that an inventory of the property in the buildings of the Forbidden City destroyed by fire on Wednesday had actually been started. A close tabulation of the treasures had been ordered by the young emperor and two rooms had been gone over when the fire occurred. This strengthens the view taken that culprits who had been gradually denuding the palaces of the property saw that they would soon be caught and adopted this desperate measure of covering their tracks.'

<sup>8</sup> Shang oracle bones already contain the title "huanguan 旱—x."

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Reginald F. Johnston *Twilight in the Forbidden City*, New York 1934, 269. Cf. also 288/89, giving a citation from a letter by Johnston (June 8th 1922): "A second reason for urgency, from the emperor's point of view, is his majesty's growing disgust with the corruption which he knows is rife throughout the palace. He has himself spoken to me with intense irritation ... of cases of unblushing robbery,

bribery and falsification of accounts, of thefts of palace treasures.... He has told me with horror of how the eunuchs attached to the palace of Chuang Ho, the imperial consort who died last year, struggled with one another for the treasures stolen from the very chamber in which the deceased princess lay in state; with even greater indignation he has told me of how, when he wished to make an example of these ruffians, he had to stay his hand owing to the solid wall of opposition raised against him by princes, ministers and, of course, the whole fraternity of eunuchs."

<sup>10</sup> Cf. *Mingshi* 304-305 "Huanguan zhuan."

<sup>11</sup> SB 20.7.1923 "M-c-j - - - - -."

<sup>12</sup> For a long discussion on the Confucian abhorrence of private profit (p-Q) cf. Barbara Mittler *A Newspaper for China? Power, Identity and Change in the Shanghai News-Media*, forthcoming Cambridge Mass. 2002, Chapter 2.

<sup>13</sup> SB 23.7.1923 "M-c-X-v - - - - - ]."

<sup>14</sup> Andi ascended the throne at the age of 10. His reign was therefore determined by the regency of empress dowager Deng (died 121). Cf. *Hou Hanshu* 78, and Ch'ü T'ung-tsu *Han Social Structure*, Seattle 1972.

<sup>15</sup> Eunuch lechery is not restricted to the Chinese cultural sphere, even more so, because castration practices were different in other countries. For testimony of alleged eunuch lechery cf. for instance Lukian "Der Eunuch oder Der Philosoph ohne Geschlecht" in: *Lukian. Werke in drei Bänden* (Jürgen Werner & Herbert Greiner-Mai eds.) Berlin 1981, 113-119, esp. 116 and Terenz "Eunuchus (Der Eunuch)" in: Plautus/Terenz *Antike Komödien in zwei Bänden* (Walther Ludwig ed.) vol.2, Zürich 1974, 1094-1143, esp. Act IV Scene 3, 1121: Pythia: "Ich habe wohl gehört, sie seien unmäßig auf die Frauen erpicht, vermögen aber nichts; indes an sowas hätt ich nie gedacht; ich hätte sonst ihn eingesperrt, ihm nicht das Mädchen anvertraut" as well as the recent film *Farinelli*.

<sup>16</sup> Sima Qian's letter to Ren An (*Hanshu* 62) in which he declines an offer to take part in official life again, because of his ugly fate as a eunuch, castrated for punishment, shows quite impressively the great despair that this condition could cause in a Chinese citizen: "Wenn ich mich selbst betrachte, so muß ich erkennen, daß ich mit meinem verstümmelten Körper im Schmutz dahinvegetiere und bei jeder Gelegenheit meine Verbrechen vor mir sehe. Wollte ich jemandem zunutze sein, so würde das für ihn zum Schaden umschlagen. ... Keine Tat, so weiß man doch, ist verwerflicher, als Schande über die Vorfahren zu bringen, und kein Schimpf größer als die Palaststrafe c-D. Und doch war es nur so mir in Anbetracht des großen Werkes, das von meinem Vater auf mich übergegangen war, vergönnt, für mehr als zwanzig Jahre weiter unter dem Kaiser zu dienen. Doch früher hatte ich wenigstens einen festen Platz unter den niedrigeren Beamten... Wenn ich schon damals nicht in der Lage war, größere Vorschläge anzubringen oder eine meiner Ideen loszuwerden, wie könnte ich dann heute, da ich nicht mehr viel besser bin als ein Sklave, der die Straßen kehrt, da ich verstümmelt und herabgestuft bin, tief unter die niedrigsten und banalsten Diener des Palastes, wie könnte ich da noch mein Haupt erheben, stolzen Blickes um mich schauen und über Recht und Unrecht diskutieren." (The translation follows Wolfgang Bauer *Das Antlitz Chinas. Die Autobiographische Selbstdarstellung in der chinesischen Literatur von ihren Anfängen bis heute*, München 1990, 84)

<sup>17</sup> The astonishing number of fictional writings on eunuchs and their activities supports this point. Cf. a recent presentation at the ICAS 2 conference in Berlin, August 9-12, 2001 by Laura Wu "Vernacular Historical Novels on Dynastic Transitions in the 17th Century: The Wei Zhongxian Series."

<sup>18</sup> Sima Qian's schizophrenic attitude towards his own eunuchdom becomes particularly evident in his letter to a friend, Ren An - - -w. This letter is translated in full in Bauer *Antlitz Chinas*, 84-89 (for an English translation cf. Burton Watson *Ssu-ma Ch'ien. Grand Historian of China*, New York 1958, 57-69). Cf. also Ulrike Jugel *Politische Funktion und soziale Stellung der Eunuchen zur späteren Hanzeit (25-220 n. Chr.)*, Wiesbaden 1976, 221ff.

<sup>19</sup> This is why he complains of his humiliation at the end of his letter: "Es fällt nicht leicht, tief unten weiter zu vegetieren, während dort oben die Grüppchen weiter ihr Ränkespiel treiben. Wegen meiner offenen Rede ist mir dieses Unglück in all seiner Gewalt widerfahren, so daß ich selbst in meinem Heimatdorf verurteilt und verlacht werde und Schmutz und Schande über meine Vorfahren gebracht habe. Mit was für einem Gesicht kann ich wohl noch das Grab meiner Eltern besuchen? Selbst wenn hundert Generationen darüber hingehen, meine Schande wird nur immer noch größer werden. Dies sind die Gedanken, die mich neunmal am Tage bedrängen. Sitze ich zuhause, so überfällt mich die Unruhe, als hätte ich etwas verloren, und gehe ich aus, so weiß ich nicht, wohin ich eigentlich wandle. Ununterbrochen muß ich über meine Schändung nachgrübeln, der Schweiß tritt immer wieder hervor auf meinem Rücken und benetzt mir die Gewänder. Ich bin nicht mehr besser als ein Sklave in den Frauengemächern." (Bauer *Antlitz*, 87). This passage already betrays that Sima is convinced to be a cut above those "Slaves in the boudoirs." The same impression can also be gained from an earlier passage in his letter: "Obwohl ich vielleicht schwach und ängstlich bin und auf schamlose Weise mein Leben zu verlängern scheine, weiß ich doch sehr wohl zu unterscheiden, ob man ein Amt übernehmen oder ablehnen muß. Hätte ich wohl sonst die Schande mitgemacht, durch den Schmutz gezogen und in Fesseln gelegt zu werden? Selbst der niedrigste Sklave oder die armseligste Magd bringt es über sich, den Strick zu nehmen, warum hätte ausgerechnet ich mich nicht dazu durchringen sollen?" (Bauer *Antlitz*, 86). It is clear that he feels himself to be more worthy than those other eunuchs. He only seemingly admits that castration has put him into the lowest category of mankind. This is clear in the final passage which states confidently: "Nun, der Grund, warum ich es nicht ablehne, alle diese Schändlichkeiten auf mich zu nehmen und ein Leben in Ekel und Schande weiterzuführen, besteht darin, daß (ich fürchte, Ideen in meinem innersten Herzen zu tragen, die ich noch nicht ganz in Worte zu fassen vermochte, daß) ich mich des Gedankens schäme, meine Schriften könnten nach meinem Tode der Nachwelt nicht bekannt werden." (Bauer *Antlitz*, 86) What he means by this becomes clear in the following paragraph in which he compares himself and his project (not quite modestly enough, perhaps) with a number of other important names and works from Chinese history: "Unzählig sind die Männer des Altertums, die reich und adlig waren, und deren Namen trotzdem vergangen und vergessen sind. Nur die, die voll Energie und Entschlossenheit waren, bleiben in der Erinnerung aufbewahrt. ... als Konfuzius in tiefster Verzweiflung war, schrieb er die Frühlings- und Herbstannalen, als Qu Yuan in die Verbannung geschickt wurde, verfaßte er sein Gedicht über die Begegnung mit dem Leid, ... Die meisten Gedichte im Buch der Lieder kamen dadurch zustande, daß die Heiligen und Weisen ihren Zorn und ihre Enttäuschung in sie hinfließen ließen. Alle diese Männer hatten einen bohrenden Schmerz in ihrem Herzen, weil sie nicht das hatten durchsetzen können, was ihrem "Weg" entsprochen hätte. Deshalb schrieben sie über vergangene Geschehnisse, um auf solche Weise ihre Gedanken künftigen Generationen weiterzuvermitteln. Auch ich habe mich nun erküht nicht etwa bescheiden zu bleiben, sondern habe mich völlig dem vielleicht nutzlosen Schreiben hingegeben." (Bauer *Antlitz*, 86/87). Sima ends his letter in the hope that after his death he will be righted: "Selbst, wenn ich darauf aus wäre... in wohlgesetzten Worten mich aus meiner Schuld herauszuwinden, so würde das doch alles nichts nützen. Bei den normalen Menschen fände ich doch kein Vertrauen, ich würde mir nur Schande einhandeln. Worauf ich hoffe ist, daß nach dem Tage meines Todes recht und Unrecht ihre Klärung finden werden." (Bauer *Antlitz*, 87)

<sup>20</sup> For his elaborate self-defense cf. Bauer *Antlitz*, 85-87. Sima Qian made the "mistake" of defending his friend the Han-General Li Ling 李陵 who had been defeated by the Mongols and then defected in fear of Han Wudi's brutal punishment. Sima Qian is given the choice of capital punishment or castration. He opts for castration out of filial piety, as he says in his letter to Ren An: he feels obliged to finish his father's work, the history of China which is going to be known as the *Shiji*.

<sup>21</sup> A typical example for Sima Qian's eunuch-bashing are his gloating and malicious remarks at the end of chapter 6 on the death of Qin Shi Huangdi's favourite eunuch Zhao Gao 赵高. *Shiji* 6 Edouard Chavannes *Les Mémoires historiques de Se-Ma Tsién*, 4 vols. Paris 1895-1905, vol. 2, 246.

<sup>22</sup> J.O.P. Bland and E. Backhouse *China under the Empress Dowager*, London 1910 quote a first memorial from 1901 which almost demands the abolishment of the eunuch institution.

<sup>23</sup> The unknown source is cited in McAleavy *Dream of Tartary*, 136. He finds that "such protests were rare." My reading of the *Shenbao*, however, suggests otherwise and indeed puts enlightened outrage at the institution of eunuchs and criticism of harsh treatment of the dismissed eunuchs in one and the same category. McAleavy rightly states (136): "For the first and last time in their association P'u Yi and Johnston had done something of which the country as a whole could approve," but in the humanist manner from which the arguments were made this meant both the condemnation of the institution of the eunuchs and the embracements of the poor dismissed individuals who only happened to be eunuchs by bad chance.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. SB 23.7.1923 "M-c-X-v - - - - - ]."

<sup>25</sup> The quote is taken from SB 21.7.1923 "M-c-X-v-I - - - - -x ." For a similar description cf. SB 20.7.1923 "M-c-j - - - - - ."

<sup>26</sup> Cf. SB 20.7.1923 "M-c-j - - - - - ."

<sup>27</sup> Cf. e.g. Cf. SB 23.7.1923 "M-c-X-v - - - - - ]."

<sup>28</sup> SB 20.7.1923 "M-c-j - - - - - ." even begins with the following sentence: "The institution of eunuchs is most terrible and immoral."

<sup>29</sup> Johnston reports (*Twilight*, 338): "I had often discussed the eunuch-system with him, and he was aware that it was regarded by the Western world as a relic of barbarism." (my emphasis).

<sup>30</sup> Already in 1901 in "Tao Mo, the Viceroy of Canton"'s memorial mentioned in Bland/Backhouse *China under the Empress Dowager* this foreign evaluation is mentioned.

<sup>31</sup> Bo Yang *The Ugly Chinaman and the Crisis of Chinese Culture* (Don J. Cohn & Jing Qing Ed./Tr.), St. Leonards 1992, 63/64.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. -J- Jiao Xiongbing " - - - - -y - - - - -d -@" in: Jiao Xiongbing -j- - - - - ^, Taipei 1991, 3.

<sup>33</sup> Egon Erwin Kisch *China geheim. Eine illustrierte literarische Reportage*, Westberlin 1986: "Zufälliger Besuch bei Eunuchen" (65-72). The original appeared in 1932, translated by Zhou Yibo as -K-. I thank R. G. Wagner for mentioning this text to me!

<sup>34</sup> The original reads: (68) Die Menschen, die uns entgegenkamen, sahen einander in befremdlicher Weise ähnlich. Mit jeder neuen Begegnung wirkte diese Gemeinsamkeit stärker, und schließlich wurde sie unheimlich.

Es waren durchweg alte Frauen, offenbar Arbeiterinnen des Gutshofs, die einen führten Vieh an der Leine, die andern trugen Säcke huckpack oder kamen mit Rechen und Heugabel vorbei. Sie hatten dunkelblaue Hosen an, wie es bei den arbeitenden Frauen hierzulande Sitte ist, jedoch waren, allem Gebrauch zuwider, ihre Oberkörper nackt, die Brüste hingen schamlos herab.

Die Matronen sprachen miteinander, und obwohl sie nicht schrien, klang ihre Stimme schrill...

Alle Arbeit leisteten die alten Frauen. Locker wackelte ihr Kinn im Kiefergelenk. Kahlgeschoren der Kopf, nur auf dem Scheitel ein "Dutt," ein so dünnes, so graues Büschel Haare, daß es das vorgeschrittene Alter der Trägerin verriet. Von Gebrechlichkeit war nichts zu bemerken, alle packten ihre Arbeit wacker an.

Plötzlich überraschte und verwirrte uns eine Kleinigkeit und brachte uns dennoch im gleichen Moment die Spur einer Aufklärung: eine der Frauen, uns abgekehrt, verrichtet stehend ihre Notdurft, stehend, wie es Männer tun.

"Wem gehört dieses Gut?" fragten wir eine andere Alte, die mit den jappenden Hunden bereits eine geraume Weile um uns herumschlich. Sie trat näher. "Wir sind kaiserliche Hofbeamte, und das ist unser Kloster."

Nun begriffen wir vollends. Ohne zu wissen oder zu wollen, waren wir in das Altersheim der Eunuchen geraten.

...Wir starrten die Leute an. Vor fünf Minuten hatten wir sie als Frauen angesehen, dann schienen sie uns Männer zu sein, jetzt wußten wir, was sie waren.”

<sup>35</sup> The original reads: (68) ”Diese und ihresgleiche hatten im kaiserlichen China von eh und je die tragende Rolle als Günstlinge und Begünstiger gespielt, waren Staatsmänner, Ratgeber, Drahtzieher, Intriganten gewesen, Kuppler für die Paläste und Henker für die Hütten.

Die Eunuchen schraubten das Maß der Tribute an ungemünztem Gold, gegossenen Taels, gestickten Drachengewändern und bemalter Tributseide so hoch hinauf, daß sich die Provinzen auflehnten. Die Eunuchen führten durch Staatsstreich oder Giftmord das Ende von Dynastien herbei, um besser zahlenden Herren auf den Thron zu helfen. Die Eunuchen verwendeten das für den Bau der Kriegflotte bestimmte Geld für den Bau des Pekinger Sommerpalastes, und der Krieg gegen Japan wurde 1895 verloren.

Fünf Jahre später bedrohten Reformbestrebungen die Stellung der kastrierten Schranzen. Rasch bemächtigten sie sich der Boxersekte und nährten planmäßig den Glauben des Kaiserhofs, daß die Boxer kugelfest und überhaupt unverwundbar seien. Unter diesem Einfluß unterstützte die Kaiserin den aussichtslosen Aufstand gegen die Fremden. Aber als die Bewegung zusammenbrach, war kein Eunuch auf der langen Liste derjenigen, deren öffentliche Hinrichtung die europäischen Großmächte rachschnaubend-blutrünstig forderten—die gelben Höflinge und die weißen Diplomaten hatten sich zu verständigen gewußt.

Einmütig war der Haß des Volkes gegen die Palast-Eunuchen, die einander innerlich und äußerlich glichen wie ein Ei dem andern, sofern dieser Vergleich hier am Platz ist. Man haßte sie mehr als Kaiser und Prinzen, als Konkubinen und Mandarine, und viele Denkschriften der ”Zensoren”, der im Land verteilten beamteten Horchposten, verlangten die Beseitigung der höfischen Eunuchen, wörtlich: ”der verschnittenen Kerzen im Schatten des Thrones.”

... An der Institution selbst konnte nichts geändert werden, man bedurfte erprobt fähiger, beweisbar unfähiger Hüter des Serails, sonst hätten sich angesichts des Erbfolgeprinzips Kaiserinnen und Konkubinen zwecks Kinderkriegens aller erreichbaren Mannspersonen bedient. Kastraten standen Wache vor dem Kaiserlichen Frauenzimmer und hüteten ihrer Herren eheliche Ehre. Wenn aber ein Haremswächter einem fremden Schlüssel zu öffnen erlaubte, dann war die daraufhin entstehende Kaiserinmutter mitsamt ihrem Sprößling in seiner gierigen Macht.”

<sup>36</sup> Indeed, women and eunuchs are criticized side by side in Ode 264 from the *Shijing*:

A clever man builds strong ramparts,  
 A clever woman overthrows them.  
 Beautiful is the clever wife,  
 But her heart as cruel as that of the owl.  
 Women with long tongues  
 Are harbingers of evil,  
 Disasters are not sent down from heaven,  
 They originate in wives.  
 These two can neither be taught nor led:  
 Wives and eunuchs.  
 When they start slandering people.  
 At first the ruler does not hide them,  
 He even says: They can go nowhere,  
 What evil could they do?  
 But they are like merchants selling at triple profit.  
 All those wiles are known to the wise,  
 They do not let wives meddle in public affairs,  
 And keep them to their spinning and weaving.

The poem allegedly alludes to Zhou Dynasty King You and his love for Baosi (8th century BC). Cf. James Legge *Chinese Classics*, vol 4 (*Shijing*), Hong Kong 1960, 559ff.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. Gary Taylor *Castration. An Abbreviated History of Western Manhood*, New York 2000, 45.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. R. H. van Gulik *Sexual Life in Ancient China. A preliminary survey of Chinese sex and society from ca. 1500 BC till 1644 AD*, Leiden 1974, 256.

<sup>39</sup> For a listing of these jobs cf. *The Last Manchu. The Autobiography of Henry Pu Yi, Last Emperor of China* (Paul Kramer, ed.) London 1967, 59: "The duties of the eunuchs were very broad. Besides taking care of my food and daily wants, handling the umbrellas, carrying heaters and other such tasks, their duties, according to the Palace Regulations, included: transmitting imperial edicts; presenting high officials for audiences; receiving memorials; handling the documents of the various government departments; receiving money sent from treasuries outside the palace; managing fire prevention; filing my documents; tending antiques, scrolls, robes, belts, guns, bows and arrows; taking care of the ancient bronzes; guarding the awards to be presented to high officials and the yellow belts to be bestowed on meritorious functionaries; preserving the dried fruits and sweetmeats; fetching the imperial physicians for treatment of persons in the various palaces; obtaining construction materials to be used in the palae by outside builders; safekeeping the edicts handed down by my imperial ancestors; burning incense and candles in front of my ancestral portraits; checking the comings and goings of persons entering and leaving the various departments within the Forbidden City; keeping the rosters of the Palace Guards and the registers of the Hanlin academicians; safekeeping the imperial seals; recording the actions of my daily life; flogging offending eunuchs and maidservants; feeding the various living animals in the palace; tending the gardens; checking the accuracy of the clocks; cutting my hair; preparing the herb medicines; performing in palace shows; acting as Taoist monks in the city temple; and substituting for the emperor as lamas in the Yung Ho Kung, the temple reserved for visiting dignitaries and lamas from Tibet."

<sup>40</sup> Cf. Johnston *Twilight*, 174/175 who talks about the eunuchs in Pu Yi's palace: "Some were the personal attendants and chairbearers of the emperor and the four dowagers, others were in charge of the various palace-buildings and responsible for the safe-keeping of their contents, others performed more or less menial duties. Those of the highest grade were yu-ch'ien T'ai-chien – Eunuchs of the Presence – who had the honour of serving the Son of Heaven himself. The different grades were kept strictly apart from one another."

# The Cultural Revolution and the Cultural Revolution Museum

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## What is the Correct Memory?

by Cathy V. Yeh, Heidelberg

### Introduction: The Power Structure of Memory

The Chinese Cultural Revolution which involved society as a whole and went on for more than ten years (official dates: 1966–1976) can be regarded in every respect as a historical „high temperature“ event, to use Rudolf Wagner’s term.<sup>1</sup> It showed a violent break with established order; a suspension of rituals and roles governing every day life; and, as high temperature events are periods where familiar role models are no longer operative, a highly conscious performative acting out of new roles ensued. After the event ended, society had undergone a radical transformation. As its aftermath, there is the so-called „collective memory.“ I will focus my talk today on this issue of event-memory. The question is, how the memories of such particular high-temperature historical events are structured.

Early in the 1980s, the Chinese state and Party leadership under Deng Xiaoping declared the Cultural Revolution (hereafter CR) a closed and out-of-bounds topic; the decision came after an official Party resolution had been passed on the evaluation of the different phases of PRC history including the CR.<sup>2</sup> According to this Resolution, the CR had been total national calamity resulting from the conspiracy of a number of leading Party cadres. After this no further public discussion on the issue was permitted. Prior to this the state-run newspapers had published stories to denounce the CR such as the one about the cruel death of Zhang Zhixin who questioned the politics of Mao’s hand-picked successor Lin Biao, silencing in the process other points of views, and structuring public opinion and articulation. Thus the CR as a national experience was frozen in place. As a momentous historical event, however, it smoldered on in people’s memory. In the words of Jan Assmann: „Events’ do not only happen, they acquire their qualities including ‘heat’ by being remembered.”<sup>3</sup> Yet, this „heat“ brought on by memory was channeled by the state away from politics toward economics. It

became the invisible fuel driving the entire economic and political reform movement of the ensuing years. In this manner the „heat“ generated by the way in which the CR was remembered could not be individualized. Under the great umbrella of „national calamity“ each individual was required to find his or her own solace. In this power structure of memory, the decision made by the Party/state overrides all other dissenting voices and in the process buries the legitimacy and even authenticity of individual memory.

The question of who had the authority to remember and what was to be remembered came into sharp focus when a proposal for a Cultural Revolution Museum to be established was aired in 1985 by the famous writer Ba Jin. It was motivated by the fear that since the state had made the CR a non-topic, the people would forget what had happened. The aim of the CR Museum was didactic with all the foreshortening such didactic packaging brings, namely to remind people in concrete terms what a national catastrophe the CR had been. This orientation of the planned museum included a foregone message: suffering and brutality was the main legacy of the CR as a national catastrophe. The planned museum thus reinforced the authority of the state over memory by promising to make visible and concrete the very message what hitherto only carried by the dry words of a Party Resolution. It never considered a possible and legitimate tension between authority of the Party and state over memory, and the right of individuals to their own memory even if this should not fit the Party Resolution, and therefore it never challenged either this authority of the Party and state, nor the content of the Resolution..

I once questioned this narrow interpretation of the CR in this museum (which eventually took on the form of an on-line museum because it could not be realized in the PRC), by asking one of the organizers what would happen if an individual regarded the CR differently from this point of view and have a positive memory of certain events and of certain periods of their life during the CR; would the museum consider to house such memories? The reaction was vehement, my question and the sentiments behind it were considered perfectly beyond the pale of legitimate discussion.

It is not surprising that it is in the interest of the state to unify and perhaps sterilize the memory of such a violent period of history where the very right of state power was challenged, and where large parts of the population played a variety of often very active roles that were self-assumed rather than imposed; what is surprising, however, is the willingness of individuals to subsume their own experience under the Party/state master narrative in interpreting their life in the CR. The right to interpret one's own memory becomes a question of power exercised and accepted.



## Collective Versus Individual Memory

Of particular interest here is that what happens when the individual is given the chance to "remember;" what is the outcome?

The state's monopoly over CR memory was technically broken (or abandoned) in 1993 with a wave of literature on the CR and in particular on the historical experience of youths with school education, „zhiqing“ (short for educated youth), going to the Chinese countryside for longer stretches of time between 1968 and 1980. This body of literature became so massive that it is referred to nowadays as „zhiqing wenxue“ or „Educated youth literature.“ Among these texts published by various publishing houses throughout the country were large amounts of reminiscences and collections of diaries written during the CR.

The drive behind this turnabout was a generation that by now had moved to the levers of power in society and seemed determined to reassert a right to tell their own story. It was the generation decried in writings directly after the CR as the „huidiao de yidao“ or the ruined generation; the CR, the story then went, had robbed them of their chance of education and thus of their future. In form, with their inserted historical photographs and documents, these are individual reminiscences or selections of letters and diaries by individuals from that period. In addition there were quite a few fictionalized accounts.

In the preface to some of these collections, we find a strong sense of nostalgia, and a romantic collective self-portrait. The editor, for example, of one of these collections, *Looking back at the Yellow Earth: Reportage on Beijing Youths who went down to the countryside of Yan'an*, writes: „Twenty years ago, tens of thousands of Beijing youths departed with the thunderous noise of musical instruments and shouting voices from the Beijing train station for that great land of the Sanbei plateau where thousands of years of Chinese civilization had left their mark, and with difficulty they took the first step towards entering society.“ After describing the significance of this experience, he summarized it thus: „This is a story of hardship and glory. Contained in that hardship are the sorrows and the happiness of parting and reuniting; inherited from that glory are heart-braking emotions.“<sup>4</sup>

The effort to preserve individual experience was also made on another front. There have been efforts by individual writers to break through the silence imposed by the state on the CR past. Among them the most notable is that by Feng Jicai. From 1986 on, Feng had continuously published stories based on interviews with different individuals on their life during the CR. Later in 1991, these stories were collected into a volume entitled: *One Hundred Persons' Ten Years*.<sup>5</sup> Sharing Ba Jin's concerns, Feng, an accomplished writer himself, decided to ignore the ban on writing on the CR. As he puts it „In the heart of a writer, that which is greater than hate is love, that which is greater than the past is the future. Yet [Ba Jin] saw before all of us who are younger that if Chinese is to truly march forward it must never cast aside this cultural and political monster, the CR. Although the CR has been politically put to death, its spirit has not been vanquished. As long as the soil on which it found life in the first place is not completely removed, no one can promise that it will never repeat itself.“ Thus motivated by a sense of

historical responsibility to keep the memory of CR history alive so that it could be consciously rejected by later generations, Feng devoted himself to „rediscovering“ its history as experienced by individuals.

The publication of all these works opened a new horizon; individual voices were now heard as they told their particular story in published form. The result, however, is rather surprising, and even disappointing. What should have been works testifying to the complexity of the event and the diversity of individual experiences and way to handle them, presented a new phenomenon: the experiences narrated by individuals are highly unified.

Let me take two very different kinds of collections as examples. First a collection entitled: *The Equation Formula for Youth: Personal Narrative of Fifty Beijing Female Students who Went to the Countryside*. As the title suggest, the volume consists of personal reminiscences of fifty women who were by now in their late 30s and early 40s, narrating their experience of going to the countryside. The unified aspect of these narratives first shows up in the descriptions of their emotional condition and later growth. Their story might differ in some details but it is clearly based on a shared experience. Almost all stories consist of a positive presentation of this period of their lives; even when narrating extremely difficult situations, there is a dominating sense of loving care in these narratives. It is through this hardship that one for the first time learned to know the country and its people, learned to know life. Thus the second unifying aspect of the stories is the nostalgia for the idealism of youth, for being young, pure, and idealistic. It is a youth gloriously filled with longing, confusion, hardship, and dreams. Reading these stories it becomes clear that the conditions into which the lives of these youths were inscribed were unified, and thus their reactions as youths from the city were also similar. The narrators evoked and embraced the preciousness of a shared experience. It could now be considered precious because for all of them it had ended some twenty years ago. As most of them are now in leading positions in society in the capital city where they had grown up, they had the leeway to look back to that period with longing and a sense of innocent pleasure.

The uniformity exhibited in the volume has an emotional as well as a structural base. This structural base is the form of narrative itself. After telling how different authors of the volume had already had lot of trying experiences before going to the countryside, the editor of one of these volume exclaimed in some frustration that the content of these manuscripts had a lot of overlap and repetition. „Some authors did not hand in their manuscript as they had promised, others who did, sent pieces that were [in terms of content] very pedestrian; consciously or unconsciously [they have] concealed what was the most moving part of their story. ... Stories on paper, far from the story in our hearts!“<sup>6</sup> Somehow the very process of writing down stories of one's life, appears to cripple the stories and unify them to such a degree that even the editors themselves expressed dismay. As one of them points out, each story begins with the scene at the train station as the students were taking leave, but stunningly, each of the authors insists that she did not shed tears as all the others did. In frustration, this editor suggests as the only solution to cut all the beginnings.

The second case is Feng Jikai's *One Hundred Persons' Ten Years*. Unlike the example above, this is a highly conscious, highly constructed literary enterprise. The author makes it very clear that the stories chosen and rewritten for the volume were based on their uniqueness, the character of the narrator, and the significance of the experience. As literary products the stories had to have tales and the storyteller had to have the ability not only to tell his tale but also to offer complex emotional responses to them. „Therefore, I paid a lot of attention to the question whether the narrator had the ability to think independently, had a special story and a singular experience; plus – unique details. Without vivid and unique details the character will not be alive. In this case all the interviews would be like a person's diary, without reading value.“<sup>7</sup>

The volume proves that the author held on to his position. Each story is extremely dramatic, with heart-rending details of political injustices and personal suffering. The overall tone of the book is to denounce the CR through this method of exposé.

Yet, as much as those stories differ from each other, with some taking place in a factory or a school in the city, others in the countryside, involving workers, students, peasants, doctors, house wives, or writers etc., they in fact end up telling the same story and present a unified picture of unjust persecution and suffering by the innocent.

On the surface the two works discussed here as examples are very different both in orientation and sentiment with one offering a romantization of a period of life spent in the countryside by these youths, and the other a bitter expose of the evil of brute force unleashed during the CR, they are, nonetheless, similar in that they are constructed as a form of collective memory with individual stories not deviating from a unified vision of the CR.

These works imply the existence of a master narrative. In the case of the educated youths they appear to submit to an unseen but all present generational narrative. And for Feng's stories, it is clear that the „national catastrophe“ framework informs all details.

### „Temperature“ and Memory

I would like to come back to the issue of the CR museum. As Feng Jikai's work demonstrates, individual memory can be extremely precise and distinct, while its overall interpretation remains preset by the larger agenda. When stories resemble each other as in the other example, the collective narrative gives individual memory its orientation and validity. This is the first point.

Under the present political structure of the PRC, it is exceedingly difficult to develop other possible interpretations of individual experience and memory. For example, I remember very well that in 1969 a group of us met regularly and discussed politics, and ended up questioning the validity of socialism and of Mao's own pronouncements. This memory has no possibility of being made public in a meaningful manner in the PRC at present. What a museum devoted to the CR collects and preserves will determine how history shall see and remember us. Under the present situation what should such a museum collect and exhibit? In my opinion,

the responsibility of such a museum should be to strive not so much for „telling the truth“ but to preserve diversity, to let different understandings be established so that different histories may talk back to each other. This is my second point.

Finally, is there such a thing as the correct memory of the CR? What might this look like? A collection of mosaic diversity does not equate historical truth. But because at present where there is no possibility for an open discussion on this complex and momentous event, keeping personal memory alive is crucial. This is where a CR museum could truly make a contribution.

We have seen a certain diversification of memory. In the mental horizon of the young generation who grew up during the CR, this was hot normality, not something trivial and transitional with an inevitable end. In 1993 when their voices broke through the unified political interpretation of the CR, they only replaced it with another unified „collective memory of a particular generation.“

A particular feature of high-temperature events is a breakdown of the neat walls separating different spheres of life and different interpretive communities, and a momentary melting and a fusion of many particular lives and fates into a strongly unified collective experience; the unifying pressure then becomes too large to be broken, the focal point is so large (entire society; a whole race) the reaction of all individuals inevitably coheres in some basic manner; under such condition is individual memory possible? And is it meaningful? As society tries to cope with such gigantic shifts in social order and values, the reaction towards, and interpretation of, this condition predetermines our memory in a collective manner. High temperature events presuppose collective action and response, thus their memory remains within this initial structure. And as a form of collective consciousness, it shifts with time. Even when it subdivides, as does the memory of the educated youth, it remains collective.

Within a culture and political system which places very little value on individual experience and its memory, the question is not just one of the powers-that-be arrogating the tutelage over collective memory to themselves, but also one of the individuals' relationship to their own authenticity and memory.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Rudolf Wagner, „The Handy Burden of the Chinese Past,“ paper given at the conference ‘Rethinking Cultural Revolution Culture’, Feb. 2000, Heidelberg.

<sup>2</sup> „Resolution on Certain Questions in the History of Our Party since the Founding of the People’s Republic of China, „ adopted June 27, 1981.

<sup>3</sup> Jan Assmann,

<sup>4</sup> *Huishou huang tudi: Beijing zhiqing Yan’an chadui jishi* (Looking back at the Yellow Earth: Reportage on Beijing youths who went to the countryside of Yan’an). Shenyang: Shenyang chubanshe, 1993.

<sup>5</sup> Feng Jikai, *Yi bai ge ren de shi nian* (One hundred persons’ ten years). Nanjing: Jiangsu wenyi chubanshe, 1991.

<sup>6</sup> ?

<sup>7</sup> Feng Jikai, pp. 414-415.



# — Is 20<sup>th</sup> Century Chinese History an Unending Disaster?

by Susanne Weigelin-Schwiedrzik, Heidelberg

In 1999, the People's Republic of China commemorated its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. As we know from the former Soviet Union and the Eastern European countries big anniversaries are not always conducive to the stabilization of a regime, and one would expect the regime to meticulously design a propaganda plan including not only all kinds of festivities and rallies, but also books and exhibitions propagating the "master narrative" of how the People's Republic of China was founded and had developed ever since. As a matter of fact, the festivities were quite pompous, and books were published in great numbers, but the "master narrative" did not really come out as "convincing" as Chinese readers would have expected it to be (Kirby 2001). Instead, the Propaganda Department of the CCP's Central Committee allowed the country's most prestigious paper "The People's Daily" to conduct a poll together with the Xin Hua News Agency and the Beijing Daily in order to find out what intellectuals including academics, artists, writers, teachers, journalists etc. regarded as the ten most important events of 20<sup>th</sup> century Chinese history (Luo Bing 2000).

## The Ten Most Important Events in 20<sup>th</sup> Century Chinese History

According to a Hong Kong report, the outcome of the survey was devastating for the CCP leadership. Among the ten most important events of 20<sup>th</sup> century Chinese history the two events ranking at the top of the list were the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976) and the Great Leap Forward including the Great Famine (1957–1961) (see appendix I). These two events are not only regarded by the party leadership and the majority of the population as major drawbacks in the course of the country's attempt to modernize itself. They are also interpreted as signs of inner party struggle and major policy mistakes claiming a death toll of estimated 35 mill. in the case of the Great Famine (1959–1961) (Teiwes and Sun 1999) and of 4,32 mill. in the case of the Cultural Revolution (Luo Bing 2000, this number has been circulating as the official

number for the last two years). To put these two events at the very top of the list means reinterpreting the "revolutionary history" of China's 20<sup>th</sup> century and reinterpreting the role of the CCP in China's modern history. No wonder that the CCP leadership was instantaneously informed of the outcome of the poll with Jiang Zemin giving orders not to publish the results.

Looking at the rest of the list, we find more "negatively" connotated events which are all linked to the Cultural Revolution. The fifth and six position in the list is occupied by the deaths of former President Liu Shaoqi who died as the consequence of maltreatment during the Cultural Revolution and of Lin Biao who is said to have died as designated successor of Mao Zedong in a plain crash in 1971 in the wake of his coup d'état (Teiwes 1996, Jin Qiu 1999). In between, on position two and three we find the Xinhai Revolution of 1911 and the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, two events that still seem to have a positive connotation of success. Mostly positively connotated are also events like the first successful ignition of the atomic bomb in China (1961) as well as the demonstrations against the "Gang of Four" in 1976 and the CCP's Central Committee's decision on the policy of reform and opening in 1978. The War Against Japan is mentioned in the list on the eighth position, but the way the Hong Kong report interprets it (and we can only hope that this interpretation reflects the shared understanding of the intellectuals involved in the survey) is quite different from the traditional interpretation as it does not stress the victory over Japan but the death toll of more than 35 mill. people (Luo Bing 2000, for a lower estimate see also Eastman 1986, 587). All in all, the list of events mentioned among the ten most important incidents of 20<sup>th</sup> century Chinese history gives an ambivalent picture of failures and successes, especially if seen in the chronological order of events (see appendix II), and the fact that Jiang Zemin would not allow for it to be published can only be understood if seen against the "traditional" or "officially propagated" list of events relevant for the interpretation of the Chinese Revolution in the 20<sup>th</sup> century (appendix III).

This list, of course, is packed with events of "positive" connotation. These are the highlights of the historical process, and even if mistakes, drawbacks or problems are addressed in the narrative, they mostly fulfil the task of putting the successes and victories in an even better light. All successes are the outcome of fierce fighting against enemies situated outside China or outside the CCP. But they are also the result of criticizing "false" tendencies inside the party and overcoming the lack of experience and knowledge among the party leaders. Up until the early nineteen nineties, students in primary and secondary schools as well as in the universities were told to look at China's history during the 20<sup>th</sup> century with pride and optimism. The basic idea of the textbooks they had to read was to convince them that only the revolution under the leadership of the CCP could "save" China and make it as rich and strong as those countries from the West, which had humiliated China since the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Even though the party was said to be China's saviour, the textbooks admitted mistakes during the period up until 1935, and to a certain degree even later, interpreting them as signs of lacking experience on the side of the party leadership as well as part of the so called "two line struggle"



reflecting the class struggle the party was surrounded by. The founding of the PRC which up until the late nineteen seventies often stood at the end of the "master narrative" marked the victory of the revolution and the beginning of the glorious undertaking of "socialist construction" in China (Weigelin-Schwiedrzik 1984, 1987, 1991).

The fact that millions of people had to die during the uninterrupted revolution starting with the Xinhai Revolution (1911) and the fall of the Qing dynasty in 1912, leading to the founding of the PRC and still going on under Mao's leadership, was hardly mentioned (Weigelin-Schwiedrzik 1998). Economic losses accompanying the years of war with internal and external enemies were not talked about. The "master narrative" had to be a success story for the sake of legitimising the CCP's claim for power as well as Mao Zedong's uncontested leadership over the party. The story was dull, though, as the details of the events were not revealed. No heroes and no victims, no joy and no grief shined through the lines. The history of the Chinese revolution was Mao Zedong Thought, and Mao Zedong Thought was the history of the revolution, no room for anything else.

### Party Historiography in the PRC

The Communist Party had surrounded itself by a field of party historiographers that made sure the message would be reiterated and refined at all levels and in all regions of China. Nobody except for a small group of first rank party historiographers was ever allowed to go into the archives to find out more about the details of the party's glorious victory, and even hitherto published materials such as party papers and propaganda materials were only shown to professors for party history at China's leading universities who had to fulfil the task of writing new textbooks on party history every once in a while (Weigelin-Schwiedrzik 1987). Even though the party had gone through major "line struggles" since the days of the Yan'an Rectification Movement when the basic interpretations of party history had been nailed down no major changes were made and the "master narrative" of the Chinese revolution preserved as a "sacred text" complementing the four volumes of Mao Zedong's texts published in the fifties and sixties (Martin 1982). When the universities were reopened after the first half of the Cultural Revolution, the obligatory classes on party history were reintroduced and new books distributed among the students. But to everybody's great astonishment, these books did not have a new story to tell and still obeyed in most parts to the party resolution passed in 1945 (Weigelin-Schwiedrzik 1984).

The history books published on the occasion of the PRC's fiftieth anniversary look very different from what we were used to. Of course, they are not party history, but national history (*guoshi*) which means that they belong to a different genre that by itself suggests a different format of presentation. But the obvious difference of presentation is not only due to a very traditionally minded approach to what it means to write history from a state's and nation's point of view instead of from the party's point of departure. Much in contrast to the volumes on party history these new volumes on 50 years of PRC history are not aimed at establishing an

overall interpretation of the party's effort to consolidate its power and develop the country, but focus on presenting facts and figures on quite a number of different aspects of state building. On the top of that, they tend to divide the history of the country since 1949 into different sub histories including economic and demographic histories as well as histories of the cities and the countryside and histories of the different regions of the PRC (Kirby 2001). While this might not astonish those familiar with traditional Chinese historiography, the fact that there is no master narrative on how to understand 50 years of PRC history should not only be traced back to the traditional point of view saying that the history of a dynasty can only be written after its fall. The CCP is most obviously not prepared to believe in the finite nature of its own regime and should be expected to leave no room for speculations on its history waiting to be written by those who will eventually replace it. There must be other reasons for the propaganda machinery keeping such a low profile on questions of the nation's and the country's history on the occasion of the PRC's fiftieth anniversary. The reason as we see it today is as simple as it can be: the history of the PRC started deconstructing itself even before it was ever written, and even though the master narrative of China's revolutionary century remained mostly unchanged until the nineteen eighties it had already started crumbling some twenty years earlier.

### Deconstructing the Hermetic System of Historiography in the PRC

The first and in some sense most important blow of long lasting effects against the hermetic system of party historiography was the Cultural Revolution. The fact that long acclaimed leaders of the Chinese revolution were suddenly said to be traitors was not the only, and maybe not even the most devastating blow. More important is the fact that Red Guards were able to storm archives and read the files of party members with details on party history they had never heard about. The clear picture of what was conceived to be right and wrong, good and bad became blurred and the story about the revolution under the leadership of Mao Zedong Thought questionable once enthusiastic youngsters were confronted with the ambiguity of life as it was reflected in the files of their teachers and superiors and revealed in their confessions. The hermetic story on the Party's history that had purposely been held rough and undetailed had fulfilled its task quite successfully as long as the system was hermetic enough to prevent any details to leak out. The Cultural Revolution destroyed this system and with it the credibility of party historiography.

That is why, after the end of the Cultural Revolution the party not only had to take the lead in reorganizing society, but also in rewriting its own history. The 1981 resolution on "Some Questions Concerning the History of the Party since the Founding of the PRC" (Renmin Ribao 1981) left the pre 1949 history mostly untouched, but lacking the "guidance" of Mao Zedong Thought as a help in interpreting the post 49 period it did not have a theoretical framework at its disposal for the interpretation and evaluation of what had happened since 1949. Instead it tried to reconcile the party with its own history leaving it ashamed at its horrendous mistakes

and eager to show that it could do better. The rewriting of party and PRC history that started in this context was the de-Maofication of party history. Much in accord with Max Weber's theories on post-revolutionary leadership, legitimacy was shifted from the one party leader to the collective of party leaders and thus the party saved from its own mistakes by making its beloved leader responsible for most of them (Weigelin-Schwiedrzik 1984).

But official party historiography could not go far enough in filling the many voids that it had left open to imagination. Deng Xiaoping, as a matter of fact, reiterated the basic principle of writing party history by stating that it had to be short. And the party resolution passed in June 1981 has not encouraged official party historians to go into great detail when writing post-49 history. But if the historian does not paint the picture of the past with some detail, he invites his readers to fill the blank spots he leaves open with the kind of imagination they develop on the basis of their personal everyday experiences. The unofficial historiography that developed during the nineteen eighties was invented by journalists from the Red Guard generation who not only used their imagination to draw their picture of the past, but also recurred to what they had found in the files during the early days of the Cultural Revolution. Having gone through uncountable sessions in which traitors had to confess their sins they knew whom they had to ask to get information on the past that the official historians were neither able nor allowed to convey. They subverted the system of party historiography by recurring to oral history as a major means of collecting information on the past, and they spread the suspicion that all readers of official party historiography had been told in the past was nothing but lies (Barmé 1991). As a result of unofficial historiography breaking the "taboos of party history" and taking up whatever people wanted to know about as their topics of research China's 20<sup>th</sup> century's history developed into a major topic of discussion while at the same time universities closed their classes on "revolutionary history" as a result of lacking interest on the side of the students.

Another factor that pushed the debate on post-49 history into a central position was the rehabilitation campaign that started shortly after Mao's death and the fall of the Gang of Four. During the process of investigation that accompanied the rehabilitations many incidents of recent Chinese history reaching back not only to the Cultural Revolution but also to the late fifties with its campaigns against rightists in and outside the party were discussed in public with the immediate siblings of victims from the Cultural Revolution serving as major witnesses (For an interesting selection of these writings see: Zhou Ming 1986 as well as the magazine *Yanhuang Chunqiu*, see Mazur 1999). The writing of the history of the Cultural Revolution has ever since been a major concern. But it is not a centralized process of history writing as we would expect it to be. Instead, friends, comrades and siblings of the victims write the victims' perspective; the Red Guards, often victims and culprits at the same time, write the Red Guards' perspective. Clients having lost their patrons in the party leadership write to mourn their death and reactivate their relationship or else to accuse those who were responsible on the other side of the political spectrum. Official party historiography somehow seems to refuse giving an

official version of what happened during the years 1966–1976, and stays mostly silent. Party leaders stress the necessity to forget about the "old bills" that have not yet been paid and try to direct people's attention to the future. But the past, especially the many campaigns since the founding of the PRC, is still haunting quite a number of leading cadres and their siblings, which is why they insist on writing about the Cultural Revolution and all the other humiliating experiences they had to go through even though belonging to the political elite of the PRC (Mazur 1999). One of the reasons why Jiang Zemin abolished the publication of the above mentioned results from the poll might be that he sensed the danger of a missing official narrative on the Cultural Revolution in times when people regard this as the most important event of China's history on the 20<sup>th</sup> century and when publications related to the event but beyond the control of the CCP reach the book market in enormous numbers.

The accounts of the Cultural Revolution in their diversified perspective have also been instrumental in awakening the interest in a new way of writing history as a story. This interest came up in the early nineteen eighties and the fact that Chinese readers show their support for this new way of writing history by their buying decisions has contributed a lot to the growing impact of non official historiography as compared to the vanishing interest in official historiography.

In this context, the event itself is the most subverting factor. As long as official historiography was tied into a system of "shi" and "lun", of historical facts serving the plausibilization of historical theories (Weigelin-Schwiedrzik 1988, 1996, 2001b), the sheer quantity of facts conveyed in history books – and with it the much debated question of the length of a history book – was a crucial factor by itself. In order for the hermetic system of party historiography to survive, only a limited number of facts could be allowed to be included into the text, others had to be tabooed because they could not fulfil the task of plausibilizing Mao-Zedong-Thought, or else had to be excluded because they were too sensitive to the ever changing power structure inside the Communist Party. As soon as alternative channels of gathering and distributing information are established, the number of facts allowed to enter the writing of history cannot be limited any more. The old system of interpretation is destroyed because "facts" and "theories" do not go together any more, leaving readers with the feeling that earlier versions of the historical narrative cannot be trusted as their theoretical framework was not backed by the facts. In other words: The growing number of events included into the writing of history has destroyed the system of party historiography just as much as the shift of ideological orientation within the party leadership compelling party historiography to rewrite the role of Mao Zedong in the course of the Chinese revolution.

At this point the master narrative of the Chinese Revolution had already crumbled into bits and pieces. The hitherto inseparable connection between the theory of the Chinese Revolution and its "concrete practice" had been dissolved and the format of party historiography lost its plausibility. This is where new forms of history writing entered the field (Barmé 1991, Weigelin-Schwiedrzik 1999). Accompanying the hermetic system of "facts" and "theories"

the so called "zhang jie" system used to be the dominant form of history writing in China (Moloughney 2001). Originally imported from Japan at the end of the last century, the "zhang jie" system is a system dominated by historical theory and interpretation in which the argument is systematically propelled moving from the most abstract level of theory via the medium level of interpretation to the concrete level of the historical events selected to demonstrate the plausibility of the argument. The "zhang jie style" master narrative never was a master narrative in the sense most readers of Western historiography would expect it to be. The persuasiveness of the argument did not rely on the historian bestowing the chain of events related to a certain time period, a certain place and a discrete number of people involved with meaning by arranging them into the form of a story; the persuasiveness of the argument relied on the logical relationship between "facts" and "theories". Unofficial historiography had already taken first steps to overcome the "zhang-jie"-format and had gained much applause from their readers for writing history into a story. But their stories were confined to single aspects of the grand narrative, they never intended to rewrite the "master narrative" as a whole.

### Literature As a Field of Historiographical Exploration

Instead writers from the school of "new historicism" like Mo Yan and Yu Hua have contributed to the rewriting of history by means of literature (Weigelin-Schwiedrzik 1998, 2001). They invented both a new form and a new contents. What is evolving in China today is the combination of history and story to replace the "zhang jie" format with its combination of history and theory. And the fact that this new way of writing history has become so prominent during the last years is due to the deconstruction of the master narrative including the theoretical framework that had so far formed the basis of historical interpretation. With no theoretical framework around, the only way history can be bestowed with meaning is by writing it into a story. And writing a story means giving the dynamic of the events highest priority as they and only they can carry the message the historian wants to convey. Mo Yan's story on the "Hong Gaoliang Clan" is – as we know from interviews with him – a conscious effort at deconstructing official historiography and replacing it by a narrative which is based – as he puts it – on the local experience instead of the centralized perspective as well as on oral recollections instead of history books and archives (Riemenschnitter 2001). The story he tells is not the story of a glorious revolution which with its victory overcomes the necessity of bloodshed and opens the gate for a bright and peaceful future. The story he tells is the story of unending, sense- and meaningless violence the motor of which is not the political strategy of some party neither the theories of some leader. It is revenge that makes people go into one battle after the other, and it is the fight for power that gives their revenge a political connotation sometimes. That is why one victory leads to the next battle just as one defeat is the beginning of the next fight. The sufferings people go through in this unending, ever repeating brutality is overwhelming and makes yet another round of suffering ever so plausible. Mo Yan tells us that what Fairbank calls the "century of revolution" (Fairbank 1986) is but a century of bloodshed. It is a

century that has cost many people's lives and has not helped China to escape from poverty, war and suppression.

Mo Yan writes a history of meaningless fighting into a story, and other writers grouped under the name of "new historicism" (*xin lishi zhuyi*) do the same. There is no theoretical framework in China available which could replace the system of "shi" and "lun" based on Mao Zedong Thought. So literature becomes the field where alternative interpretations can emerge and try out the boundaries of what is possible and acceptable. Yu Hua's story "Life" is written in a much more realistic style than Mo Yan's, and it does not go so far as to deconstruct "national" history by writing the "untypical" highly particular history of a certain region in Shandong as Mo Yan prefers to do. But it conveys the same message of meaninglessness, of despair and of failure. The only reason why his protagonist can convince himself of the necessity to go on living is that he survives every round of manslaughter that he has to go through. Yu Hua picks all the events that official historiography mark as the highlights of 20<sup>th</sup> century Chinese history for his story, but he gives them another meaning as he looks at them from the participants' perspective. And the participants going through civil and national wars are first and foremost confronted with suffering, they do not know while fighting is still going on whether it will lead to victory or defeat, and even if they are told later on by the historians that the suffering was worth the victory they can still not forget the kind of disaster they had to go through. This side of China's history in the 20<sup>th</sup> century has so far been neglected, and the fact that historiography was unable to integrate this perspective into its narrative is maybe the most important reason why there is no master narrative on 20<sup>th</sup> century Chinese history any more.

### History, Memory and Trauma

Ban Wang goes a step further than Mo Yan in focusing on the traumatic character of events in China's history of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. For him, a traumatic experience is an experience you cannot put into words, it as an experience of contingency and meaninglessness that cannot be integrated into personal life stories, not to speak of collectively accepted narratives. But people who have gone through this kind of experience still feel the need to communicate them, they want to share their experience especially after a certain period of time in which they usually prefer to stay silent about what they have gone through. In this situation, so Ban Wang, film serves as an adequate instrument to translate these experiences into images and thereby find a way to communicate them without having to explain them (Ban Wang 1999).

Ban Wang analyses several films to exemplify his theses and show how traumatic experiences are being communicated by images. He also draws our attention to the fact that even in times when the official master narrative still met with wide acceptance in mainland China, some films allowed for the participants' perspective to be presented and even though their direct aim was to stir up patriotic passion, behind the story of heroes and victories, traces of the traumatic history seep or break through (Ban Wang ,36). This, maybe, is the only

space the Communist Party of China and its system of party historiography left open for the remembrance of suffering that so many Chinese have had in their minds.

For Ban Wang, trauma as something inexplicable, gives rise to the symbolic, and even though the symbolic cannot fully explain the meaning of the traumatic event, it can at least make it comparable. By making it comparable the symbolic adds to the process of detraumatization which Ban Wang sees as a necessary precondition to get rid of the compulsion to repeatedly suffer under or participate in traumatic events. While European theoreticians hesitate to force detraumatization on people and speculate on the possibility to live with the trauma in one's mind (Rüsen 2000, Weigelin-Schwiedrzik 1998, 2000), Ban Wang, Mo Yan and Yu Hua reflect on the repetitiveness of the trauma and on revenge as a form of detraumatization in which overcoming one trauma is the beginning of the next one.

## Conclusion

Mo Yan's way of writing 20<sup>th</sup> century Chinese history into a story is clearly an avantgarde approach that most Chinese intellectuals are not ready to accept. Yu Hua's perspective is maybe closer to what those intellectuals wanted to express when they participated in selecting the ten most important events of 20<sup>th</sup> century Chinese history. While Mo Yan's has already paid his farewell to revolution (*gaobie geming*, see Li Zehou 1995), the poll shows that others do not believe in the master narrative as presented by official historiography any more, but they also do not go so far as see 20<sup>th</sup> century Chinese history as an unending disaster. Their opinions are ambivalent, and if seen in a chronological order, they see hope and success at the beginning of the century, failure and defeat in the Maoist era from the late fifties to the seventies and more hope by the end of the century. If seen in this light, the outcome of the poll is pretty much in accord with the books that came out at the occasion of the PRC's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. They, too, try to stress that the early years of the People's Republic were successful just as the years since Mao's death in 1976 have brought progress to China (Kirby 2001), which all in all conveys the message that the bloodshed both before and after 1949 has at least helped the good days for China's masses to come.

The fact, however, that Chinese readers of history books are turning their backs on the official format of history writing shows that their doubts go farther. They are in the midst of a deep crisis of historiography in which personal experiences do not go with what official historiography would like to propagate as the master narrative, in which the "facts" leaking out of the hermetic system of "shi" and "lun" have subverted the theoretical framework and in which the political strategies of the party leadership add to delegitimizing Mao as the overall leader of the revolution opening up a bright future for China. In this situation, literature and film become the most important field of historiography. They can respond to the deep going crisis of official history writing because they not only convey an alternative message, but can also offer alternative forms and symbols of giving meaning to the past.

## Appendix I

List of the 10 most important events of 20<sup>th</sup> century Chinese history ( according to: Luo Bing 2000)

Event	Death Toll/Relevance	Pos/Neg
1. The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (1966–1976)	Death toll: 4.32 mill. Big Economic losses	neg.
2. The Great Leap Forward	Death toll: 35.31 mill. Big economic losses	neg.
3. The Fall of the Qing Dynasty		(pos.)
4. The Founding of the People's Republic of China	End of GMD-Regime	pos.
5. The Death of Liu Shaoqi as a Consequence of the Cultural Revolution on November 12, 1969	The first and biggest historical injustice	neg.
6. The Plane Crash of the Designated Mao-Successor Lin Biao on September 13, 1971		(neg.)
7. The Successful Ignition of the Chinese Atomic Bomb on October 16, 1964	Big breakthrough against the atomic monopoly of US and SU	pos.
8. The Anti-Japanese-War (1937–1945)	Death toll: 32 mill. Big economic losses	neg.
9. The Resolution of the 3rd Plenary of the 11th CC of the CCP on Reform and Opening	Change of focus from „Two line struggle“ to economic construction	pos.
10. Demonstrations against the „Gang of Four“ in 1976	End of despotic regime	pos.



## Appendix II

List of events in chronological order ( according to: Luo Bing 2000)

Event	Death Toll/Relevance	Pos/Neg
3. The Fall of the Qing Dynasty		(pos.)
8. The Anti-Japanese-War (1937–1945)	Death toll: 32 mill. Big economic losses	neg.
4. The Founding of the People's Republic of China	End of GMD-Regime	pos.
2. The Great Leap Forward	Death toll: 35.31 mill. Big economic losses	neg.
7. The Successful Ignition of the Chinese Atomic Bomb on October 16, 1964	Big breakthrough against the atomic monopoly of US and SU	pos.
1. The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (1966–1976)	Death toll: 4.32 mill. Big Economic losses	neg.
5. The Death of Liu Shaoqi as a Consequence of the Cultural Revolution on November 12, 1969	The first and biggest historical injustice	neg.
6. The Plane Crash of the Designated Mao-Successor Lin Biao on September 13, 1971		(neg.)
10. Demonstrations against the „Gang of Four“ in 1976	End of despotic regime	pos.
9. The Resolution of the 3rd Plenary of the 11th CC of the CCP on Reform and Opening	Change of focus from „Two line struggle“ to economic construction	pos.

## Appendix III

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List of the major events of the Chinese Revolution (according to Hu Hua1979)

Event	Death Toll/Relevance	Pos/Neg
2. Founding of the CCP (1921)	Begin of Chinese Revolution	pos.
3. First United Front with GMD (1924)	Unification of the country	pos.
4. Defeat of the Revolution (1927)	End of United Front	neg.
5. Long March (1934/35)	End of inner-party opportunism and persecution by GMD troops	pos.
6. Second United Front (1937)	Begin of war of resistance against Japan	pos.
7. Victory of the war against Japan (1945)	Victory over Japan	pos.
8. Founding of the PRC (1949)	Victory over GMD	pos.
9. Great Leap Forward (1957–1959)	China finds its own way for socialist construction	pos.
10. Great Proletarian Cultural revolution (1966–1976)	China overcomes Revisionism	pos.

## Appendix IV

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Birthday Songs

Mein kleiner grüner Kaktus

1.

Die Acht'zger ging'n zur Neige, der Rudolf plötzlich stand  
Hollari, Hollari, Hollaro  
Mit Koffer und mit Fliege, am schoenen Neckarstrand  
Hollari, Hollari, Hollaro

Da war ein Institut, dem ging es so gut nicht  
Doch Rudolf kam und sprach: „Es werde Licht, Licht, Licht!“

Drum singen wir nun heute, der Rudolf lebe hoch,  
Hollari, Hollari, Hollaro

2.

Die Ärmel hochgekrempelet, die Bücher angeschafft  
Hollari, Hollari, Hollaro  
Neu definiert wird hier nun, was Chinawissenschaft  
Hollari, Hollari, Hollaro

Und kam mal ein Student, der kennt den Laozi nicht  
Macht Rudolf klar „das ist jetzt ihre Pflicht, Pflicht, Pflicht!“

Drum singen wir nun heute, der Rudolf lebe hoch,  
Hollari, Hollari, Hollaro

SOLO

Chines'sche Zeichen  
kaum zu vergleichen,  
Dichter, Denker und schöne Missetaten (i.e. Kurtisanen)  
Parallelsätze,  
antike Schätze,  
das soll man alles, und mehr, wissen.

3.

Ein kleiner grüner Kaktus steht o'm am Seminar  
Hollari Hollari Hollaro  
Da frag'n sich die Studenten: „Was macht denn der wohl da?“  
Hollari Hollari Hollaro

Ja wenn denn so ein Wicht, was Ungelehrtes spricht,  
holt Rudolf seinen Kaktus und der sticht, sticht, sticht.

Und dennoch sing'n wir heute, der Rudolf lebe hoch,  
Hollari, Hollari, Hollaro

4.

Denn neben alten Schriften, ist Rudolf auch versiert  
Hollari, Hollari, Hollaro  
In allem und in jedem, was China heut passiert  
Hollari, Hollari, Hollaro

Ob Kunst ob Lit'ratur, sein Wort das hat Gewicht  
Debatten ohne Rudolf gibt es nicht, nicht, nicht!

Drum singen wir nun heute, der Rudolf lebe hoch,  
Hollari, Hollari, Hollaro

SOLO

Bis nachts um viere  
schreibt er Papiere  
an Direktor'n und Exzellenzen,  
“Her mit der Kohle,  
dem Volk zum Wohle“  
Das wird man ihm wohl kaum vergessen.



5.

Ob Zettelkataloge, ob Büchersignatur

Hollari, Hollari, Hollaro

Was nicht paßt in'n Computer, das ist Makulatur

Hollari, Hollari, Hollaro

Der Bibliothekar, der flieht bald nach Cornell

Bis dort tönt Rudolfs Ruf „Ersatz! Und schnell, schnell, schnell“

Drum singen wir nun heute, der Rudolf lebe hoch,

Hollari, Hollari, Hollaro

*Dichter:**Martin Gieselmann, Frieda Schimmelpfennig*

Dongfang hong

-F - - - -

UNISONO:

Dongfang Hong

-F - - - -

Taiyang sheng

- - - - -

Zhongguo chuliaoge

- - - - -X -F - -

Mao Zedong

- - -A -F

Ta wei renmin

-L - - -H - -

mou xinfu

- - - - -

Hu'er heiyo

-I -I -y -r

Ta shi renmin da jiuxing.

-L -O -H - - - -j - - -P -C

CHORSATZ :

1.

Dongfang Hong

-F - - - -

Taiyang sheng

- - - - -

Bolin chuliaoge

-f -L -X -F - -

Wagena

- - - - -

Ta wei xuesheng

-L - - - - -

Mou xinfu

- - - - -

Hu'er Heiyo

-I -I -y -r

Ta shi xueshu da jiuxing.

-L -O - - -N -j - - -P

2.

Wagena	-----
Zhi you ta	-u --- -L
Ta shi women di	-L -O --- ---
dailuren	-a --- -H
Weiliao jianshe Zhongwenxi	--- -F --- ] --- -t
Hu'er Heiyo	-I -I -y -r
Lingdao women xiang qian jin	----- -V -e -i

3.

Tushuguan	----- ]
Xiang taiyang	-----
Zhaodao nali	-----
Nali liang	----- -G
Nali youliao (Haidebao) tushuguan	----- -F --- -w --- --- ]
Hu'er Heiyo	-I -I -y -r
Nali xueshu de jiefang.	----- -N -w ---

UNISONO:

Dongfang Hong	-F ---
Taiyang sheng	-----
Bolin chuliaoge	-f -L -X -F ---
Wagena	-----
Ta wei xuesheng	-L --- ---
Mou xinfu	-----
Hu'er Heiyo	-I -I -y -r
Ta shi xueshu da jiuxing.	-L -O --- -N -j --- -P -C

*Dichter:**Susanne Weigelin-Schwiedrzik, Barbara Mittler*

