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Guest Editor's Foreword

The excavation of numerous tombs in China has brought to light a great quantity of very rich archaeological material that has considerably widened our knowledge of how the “Chinese” viewed the afterlife and their place in the cosmos, and of how their ideas concerning such matters were reflected in their posthumous, subterranean dwellings. At the same time, this wealth of material offers profound insights into earlier socio-political activities, ideological tendencies, and technological achievements. The earliest tombs consisted of no more than a bare and unadorned burial “container,” which provided a physical space for the preservation of an individual’s mortal remains, but by gradually adding objects and pictorial elements, which were painted or carved on the walls and coffins, this space came to be transformed into a vivid and dynamic representation of the philosophical, ideological, religious, and cosmological notions that were prevalent at the time. Both the structure of tombs in ancient China and their furnishings were influenced by the development of various aspects of ritual activities, which would come to play a dominating role in artistic production.

This special issue of the journal *Asian Studies* is dedicated to the meaning and transformation of Chinese funerary art during the Han dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE) and the subsequent Wei Jin Nanbei period (220–581 CE). The “horizontal-pit grave,” which first appeared in the middle Western Han period, marked a departure from the hitherto prevailing design based on a vertical shaft. This new form permitted the development of several burial chambers with distinct functions—a layout that would culminate in large-scale tombs with multiple chambers arranged along a central axis and flanked by side rooms and corridors. Another feature that distinguishes Han tombs from those of earlier periods is the use of brick and stone. The new horizontal-pit graves constructed from these materials provided an ideal substrate for a variety of decorations (stamped, carved or painted). These embellishments, which began to appear together with the new construction technique in the middle Western Han period, achieved their greatest diffusion during the Eastern Han period (25–220 CE). With the rapid outward expansion of the powerful Han state, accompanied as it was by the transfer of government officials and military commanders from the centre to the borderlands, the culture of the Han people, including their burial practices and tomb designs, spread to the frontier regions. As a result of the political and social disorder that characterized the latter years of the Eastern Han period, and which was accelerated by the dynasty’s downfall, the Central Plain was thrust into a state of war and turmoil, provoking even greater migration to the remote border areas in the northwest and northeast, as well as to the southern areas.

As cultural information was carried from the centre to the periphery, and also handed down from one generation to the next, there emerged a “composite” style

of funerary art, in which iconographic features from different regions were combined and the conventional, often stereotypical images of various Han deities and animals were refashioned in response to new regional contexts. The prevalence of non-Han peoples in northern China and the rapid spread of Buddhism also fostered the incorporation of foreign or Buddhist motifs into Han funerary art. This process illustrates how the peripheral regions inherited knowledge from the Chinese central territory, which in turn assimilated new norms and values.

The motifs that have come to light in tomb complexes—on mural paintings, relief carvings, coffins or on burial goods—often tend to be considered in isolation, without taking into account their original context. However, it is only by looking at these motifs within the framework of the whole composition—in particular, by identifying the connections between the pictorial contents of a painted or carved scene and the surrounding architectural elements and burial goods—that one can establish a solid basis for interpretation. Pursuing such a holistic approach, the present issue of *Asian Studies* explores how the choice of material, form, and ornamentation could sometimes determine the iconographic and religious aspects that were given greatest prominence in the construction and interior design of tombs. Although a standard iconography and uniform stylistic features developed in Chinese funerary art over time, regional variations can still be observed: these are the result of “localization” of the original motifs as they acquired various local features. Accordingly, this issue also investigates how motifs were transformed across different artistic media and adapted to meet specific needs at a time when certain beliefs were spreading from the Chinese cultural core to its peripheries.

The issue is divided into three thematic sections. It opens with a section dedicated to the imagery of Fuxi 伏羲 and Nüwa 女媧, two of China's most prominent indigenous deities, who began to be represented widely in funerary art during the Han dynasty, when their mythology was gradually being formulated and their iconography codified. In subsequent centuries, the imagery associated with this primordial couple would come to incorporate various visual elements and compositional styles as it spread to the Chinese borderlands and beyond. This first section focuses on previously unnoticed aspects of the Fuxi-Nüwa imagery and on how these were disseminated during the early imperial and medieval periods. Zhao Jinchao, in her article “Integration and Transformation: A Study of the Sun and the Moon Depicted in the Imagery of Fuxi and Nüwa,” offers an in-depth examination of the links between Fuxi-Nüwa and the sun and the moon during the Han and Wei-Jin periods. The author identifies four primary strategies used by artists to integrate the two celestial bodies into visual images of the divine couple: the sun and the moon side by side with Fuxi and Nüwa; the sun and the moon held by Fuxi and Nüwa in their hands; the sun and the moon in front of the chest of each of them; and the sun above Fuxi and Nüwa with the moon underneath. By

taking a closer look at the dissemination of each of these modes of representation, the author is able to trace systematic links to, and interactions with, regional imagery. In depictions from the early phases of the Fuxi-Nüwa iconography it is not always possible to identify the divine couple unequivocally. This article therefore also engages with the debate over another set of paired deities who are connected closely with the sun and the moon, namely their respective mothers, Xihe 羲和 and Changyi 常儀.

The regional dynamics at work in the diffusion of the Fuxi-Nüwa imagery are further discussed by Nataša Vampelj Suhadolnik in her article “Transmission of Han Pictorial Motifs into the Western Periphery: Fuxi and Nüwa in the Wei-Jin Mural Tombs in the Hexi Corridor,” which looks at representations of the divine couple inside mural tombs from the Wei and Western Jin periods in the Gansu region and compares them with their Han counterparts. By also examining the origins of the migrants to the Hexi Corridor on the basis of historical records, the author investigates the influence of the various regional traditions transmitted through migration from different parts of the central Chinese territory to the western periphery. As shown by this case study, the Shandong regional style became the model for the depiction of Fuxi and Nüwa in the Gansu region, which further developed an iconographic tradition of its own.

The last article in the first section is by Fan Zhang. Entitled “Chinese-Buddhist Encounter: Synthesis of Fuxi-Nüwa and *Cintamani* in Early Medieval Chinese Art,” it focuses on the juxtaposition of the Buddhist magic jewel *cintamani* with the iconographic features of Fuxi and Nüwa in a mural painting inside the tomb of Lady Poduoluo 破多羅 (dated to 435 CE) at Pingcheng (the present-day city of Datong) in Shanxi province. The author shows how the multiple meanings of the *cintamani* (immortality, rebirth after death, guarding of the tomb, and the brightness of Heaven) have been assimilated into the funerary space, in contrast to previous scholarship which interpreted the jewel merely as symbolizing the sun and the moon. It is argued further that this kind of syncretism occurred first in Pingcheng and subsequently influenced artistic production in the Mogao Caves at Dunhuang (specifically in Cave 285, dated to 538). The article thus examines the interactions (in terms of movements of motifs, artisans, artists, and patrons) not only between the central Chinese territory and the border regions, but also between funerary and religious art.

The second section considers various objects and images typically found inside tombs. The opening article by Hau-ling Eileen Lam, “Representation of Heaven and Beyond: The *Bi* Disc Imagery in the Han Burial Context” is the first comprehensive study to appear in any western language on the *bi* 璧 disc images, which were extensively used in Han burials and have come down to us in different material and media. These motifs were depicted in paintings on coffins, funerary

banners, and walls, and they were also engraved on pictorial stones and bricks. The author illuminates the blurred dichotomy between high-ranking tombs and those of commoners, since *bi* disc images were used in both, and raises important questions concerning the connection between the discs' material and shape. For the *bi* disc form was eventually separated from the material originally used (jade) and began to be used as imagery in its own right. After some elaboration it became a symbol of the heavenly gate, an auspicious omen, or simply a repeating pattern that was meant to accompany the deceased in the afterlife. The article reveals the complex dynamics underlying the various pictorial representations of *bi* discs and their meaning in the context of Han burials.

In the second article, "The Meaning of Birds on *Hunping* (Spirit Jars): The Religious Imagination of Second to Fourth Century Jiangnan," Keith Nathaniel Knapp considers why so many birds are depicted on the funerary objects commonly known as *hunping* 魂瓶, or "spirit jars." Even though the extensive use of animal imagery—particularly bird imagery—is one of the most remarkable features of such jars, previous scholarship has been much more concerned with the function of these vessels and with the meaning of the images of Buddha that are also to be found on them. It is generally thought that the birds represent the souls of the departed flying heavenwards; however, such an explanation can hardly account for the large number of bird representations on the jars. Instead, the author ventures an explanation based on the local Jiangnan belief according to which sparrows stole rice from Heaven in order to save mankind from hunger. Birds thus came to be seen as deities associated with grain and fertility, and became a local emblem of good luck for both the dead and the living.

The third and last section moves the discussion beyond the central Chinese territory to the southwest and towards the northern frontier. The opening article, "Cliff Tomb Burial and Decorated Stone Sarcophagi from Sichuan from the Eastern Han Dynasty," deals with a distinctive feature of the southwestern region in early imperial China. The author, Hajni Pejsue Elias, argues that the practice of cliff tomb burial, which experienced a sudden flourishing during the Eastern Han dynasty but petered out by the 3rd century CE, was a response to wider developments. A drive towards frugality in a society that enjoyed relative social and political stability, as well as considerable economic prosperity, was reflected in cliff tomb burial, which was seen as less ostentatious and more intimate. Hence the preference for sharing a single tomb among several family members, and also for decoration on a smaller scale: instead of large pictorial designs on the tomb walls, we find a profusion of motifs adorning the stone sarcophagi. The new layout of cemeteries heralded a shift from the public towards the private, together with a greater emphasis on family ties.

The next article, entitled "Dual Portraits of the Deceased in Yangqiaopan M1, Jingbian, Shaanxi," is by Leslie Wallace, who studies two portraits on the walls of

an Eastern Han tomb, Yangqiaopan M1 楊橋畔, which was excavated near the city of Jingbian in the north of Shaanxi province (part of the Han northern frontier at the time). While the deceased in the first portrait appears in a processional scene on the left front wall and wears the typical clothing of the Han elite, the deceased in the second portrait has quite different facial features and hairstyle, and is represented between his wife and another figure on the top of the rear wall as part of a “spirit seat” (*lingwei* 靈位) composition. Proceeding from the observation that non-Han features are incorporated into the Yangqiaopan murals in a way that differs from other Han tombs—where foreigners are portrayed with stereotypical features, usually in scenes of combat—the author argues that the two frescoes constitute a dual portrait of the deceased, and that they are intended to express different aspects of his social status and identity.

The last article, “The Representation of Military Troops in Pingcheng Tombs and the Private Household Institution of *Buqu* in Practice” by Chin-Yin Tseng, focuses on the armed men who appear, arranged in military formation, in mural paintings and as figurines inside three tombs from the Northern Wei dynasty in the city of Pingcheng. The author points out that such military scenes may not necessarily attest to the tomb owner’s having had a large army at his command; instead, they could conceivably be representing the non-professional soldiers, commonly known as *buqu* 部曲, who made up the private retainer corps of wealthy families. Adopting the well-tried approach of considering material culture within the socio-political context, the author traces the resurgence of this motif in the tombs from the Pingcheng period, and argues that its popularity may have been a response to the Northern Wei’s policy of disbanding tribes.

This special issue of *Asian Studies* is intended to contribute to the field of Chinese funerary art by opening up new angles from which to readdress some of the issues that remain underexplored. I hope that you will enjoy reading it.

Nataša Vampelj Suhadolnik, Guest Editor



Fuxi and Nüwa from Centre to Periphery

Integration and Transformation: A Study of the Sun and the Moon Depicted in the Imagery of Fuxi and Nüwa

*Jinchao ZHAO**

Abstract

The present research focuses on the depiction of the sun and moon in the imagery of Fuxi and Nüwa during the Han and Wei-Jin periods. Through typological and iconographical approaches, it proposes four primary modes in terms of the ways in which the sun and the moon are combined with Fuxi and Nüwa. It contributes to the current field by providing new perspectives for readdressing some issues that remain underexplored. First, it challenges the over-absolute identification of the earliest representation of Fuxi and Nüwa in a pair, and that of Changyi and Xihe, another set of paired deities recorded to be in close relation to the celestial world, in Western Han mural tombs from the Luoyang area, and instead suggests a shift of focus to the recognisable distinctions in visual details, such as the chronological sequence of the application of the first and second modes in the Luoyang Han tomb paintings, and the masculine appearances of both the deities depicted in the Western Han Qianjingtou tomb. Further examinations of the development and dissemination of each mode through the Han and Wei-Jin eras reveals complicated interactions between different regions and exchanges of motif with other forms of imagery. The local tradition of depicting Fuxi and Nüwa, together with that of the depiction of the sun and moon in Nanyang, has been incorporated into the formation of the sun and moon in anthropomorphic representations in the Southwest. Finally, this research proposes that it is more significant to organise the surviving materials through the development and context of each visual element represented in the scene, rather than making an absolute identification based on scattered evidence.

Keywords: Fuxi, Nüwa, the sun and moon, mural tombs, stone sarcophagus

Integracija in transformacija: študija motivov sonca in lune pri upodobitvi Fuxija in Nüwe

Izveček

Pričujoča razprava se osredotoča na motiv sonca in lune pri upodobitvi Fuxija in Nüwe v času dinastij Han in Wei Jin. Na osnovi tipološkega in ikonografskega pristopa predlaga štiri osnovne modele upodobitve sonca in lune v odnosu do Fuxija in Nüwe, s čimer izpostavi

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nove vidike za ponovno prevrednotenje nekaterih nenaslovljenih vprašanj. Najprej postavlja pod vprašaj absolutno identifikacijo najzgodnejše upodobitve Fuxija in Nüwe ter Changyi in Xihe, še enega para božanstev, povezanih z nebeškim svetom, ki jih najdemo v grobnicah s poslikavo v mestu Luoyang iz časa dinastije Zahodni Han. Pri tem predlaga preusmeritev pozornosti na prepoznavne razlike v vizualnih podrobnostih, kot jih lahko zaznamo v kronološkem zaporedju uporabe prvega in drugega modela v grobnicah iz mesta Luoyang ter v bolj možatem videzu obeh božanstev v grobnici Qiangjingtou iz časa Zahodnega Hana. Nadaljnje proučevanje razvoja in širitve posameznih modelov v dinastijah Han in Wei Jin prikaže kompleksne povezave med različnimi regijami ter izmenjave motiva z ostalimi podobami. Lokalna tradicija upodobitve Fuxija in Nüwe skupaj s prikazom sonca in lune iz kraja Nanyang je bila na primer vključena v oblikovanje podobe sonca in lune kot antropomorfične reprezentacije, ki je postala opazna zlasti v jugozahodnem delu kitajskega območja. Pričujoči prispevek v zaključku tudi poudari pomembnost obravnave ohranjene materialne dediščine prek razvoja ter vključitve posameznih vizualnih elementov v celotne prizore in ne zgolj formiranja absolutne identifikacije na podlagi posameznih dokazov.

Ključne besede: Fuxi, Nüwa, sonce in luna, grobnice s poslikavo, kamniti sarkofagi

Introduction

Fuxi 伏羲 and Nüwa 女媧 were among the most prominent deities in Chinese genesis mythology. Fuxi is best known as an ancestor of human beings, and Nüwa is the goddess who created human beings by moulding yellow earth together and patching the broken sky. In visual culture, Fuxi and Nüwa usually appear as a couple with human faces and snake-like bodies that are sometimes intertwined with each other. The couple was frequently depicted on chamber walls of ancestral shrines (Fig. 1), stone sarcophagi (Fig. 2), and the domed ceiling of tombs (Fig. 3) during the Han Dynasty.



Figure 1: Fuxi and Nüwa at the Wu Liang Shrine, Shandong. Second century CE. Eastern Han (After Jiang 2000, fig. 49).



Figure 2: Fuxi and Nüwa on the stone sarcophagus found at Baozishan, Xinjin, Sichuan. Ink rubbing. Second century CE. Eastern Han (After Gao 1998, fig. 202).



Figure 3: Fuxi and the sun on the ceiling of the tomb of Bu Qianqiu, Luoyang, Henan. 86 BCE–49 BCE. Western Han (After Huang 1996, 73).

When it comes to the Wei-Jin 魏晉 tombs dated from the third to fourth centuries CE, the couple frequently appears on the covers of wooden coffins (Fig. 4), or pictorial bricks on tomb walls (Fig. 5). In the Tang Dynasty from the seventh to the ninth centuries, most of the depictions of the couple have been discovered at Turfan 吐魯番 in the Hexi Corridor 河西走廊, in the form of silk paintings that

cover wooden coffins (Fig. 6) (Deng 2010; Chen 2011). The union of Fuxi and Nüwa is considered like a diagram of *yin* 陰 and *yang* 陽, the two universal forces in the cosmology of the time, according to their different genders and the usually intertwined bodies of the couple (Birrell 1993; Lewis 1999, 204; Wu 2012). In addition, the depiction of the sun and moon is generally considered a coherent visual component of the Fuxi and Nüwa imagery, appearing in the shape of round discs that contain a toad in the moon and a three-legged crow in the sun, respectively, since the Han Dynasty (Fig. 2, 3), while an abstract depiction of the sun with radiating beams inside and the moon in the crescent shape became dominant in Tang burial arts of the Hexi Corridor (Fig. 6).



Figure 4: Fuxi and Nüwa depicted on coffin cover from Maozhuangzi, Jiayuguan, Gansu. Third century CE. Wei-Jin period (After Kong 2006, fig. 14).



Figure 5: Pictorial Brick from the Dunhuang Museum. Dunhuang, Gansu. Third century CE. Wei-Jin period (After Dunhuang Municipal Museum 2017, 12).



Figure 6: *Fuxi and Nüwa from Astana, Turfan. Seventh to ninth century CE. Tang dynasty*
(After *The British Museum, Museum no. 1928-1022-0.203*).

However, the sun and moon are not always the standard attributes of Fuxi and Nüwa in the Han Dynasty, and sometimes are instead the compass and square (Fig. 1), which are spread across the country, or the auspicious plant *lingzhi* 靈芝 (Fig. 7), particularly popular in the region of present-day Shandong and Nanyang 南陽 (in today's Southern Henan). How were the pair of the sun and moon integrated into the imagery of Fuxi and Nüwa? What was the specific significance of the sun and moon to Fuxi and Nüwa? And how to perceive the sun and moon in the larger iconographic scheme of the Fuxi and Nüwa? Moreover, how does the combination of the two pairs function in the ritual and burial contexts? These questions remain insufficiently examined in current scholarship.¹

1 Discussion of the connection between the two pair in major scholarships is very brief. There are monographic discussions on the depiction of the sun and the moon as celestial symbols and the two deities as a pair that possesses the power of fertility, but without any focused and thematic study of their connections.



Figure 7: Eastern Han tomb from Xinye Libu, Nanyang. Second century CE. Eastern Han (After Jiang 2001, fig. 58).

Through a thorough examination of the representations of Fuxi and Nüwa and that of the sun and moon from the Han to the Wei-Jin periods, the present essay proposes four primary modes in terms of the ways in which the two pairs are combined. Each mode shows a particular development of the imagery that includes both the pairs in specific historical and regional contexts. In the first mode, the sun and moon appear besides Fuxi and Nüwa (Fig. 3). It is an “archaic” mode that was only found on ceilings of Western Han tombs from the then political and economic centre of the city of Luoyang (in today’s northern Henan), and was not inherited by later traditions. The second mode refers to the arrangement of the sun and moon held in hands by Fuxi and Nüwa respectively. It could be termed “standard,” as it is the most popular mode that has flourished through the long historical course of depicting Fuxi and Nüwa in a pair. In comparison to other modes, it is predominant in Nanyang (Fig. 8) and the Southwest (in today’s Sichuan and Chongqing) (Fig. 2) during the Eastern Han, as well as the Hexi Corridor in the Wei-Jin era (Fig. 5).



Figure 8: Fuxi and Nüwa from Tanghe Huyang, Nanyang, Henan. First century CE. Eastern Han (After Nanyang shi bowuguan 1981, fig.158).

The third mode depicts the sun and moon as embraced in front of the chest of Fuxi and Nüwa. It was applied occasionally during the Han Dynasty in Shandong/Jiangsu (Fig. 9), Nanyang (Fig. 10), and Shaanxi (Fig. 11), but not in the Southwest. During the Wei-Jin period, it became the predominant mode that was depicted on the surface of wooden coffins (Fig. 12) or pictorial bricks used in burials of the Hexi Corridor. Last, the fourth mode depicts the sun above Fuxi and Nüwa while the moon below (Fig. 6), naturally in a vertical setting. Although it was applied primarily to silk paintings found in burials dated to the Tang from the seventh to ninth centuries, later than the time range of the current research, I include it since its prototype already appeared in the Wei-Jin era.

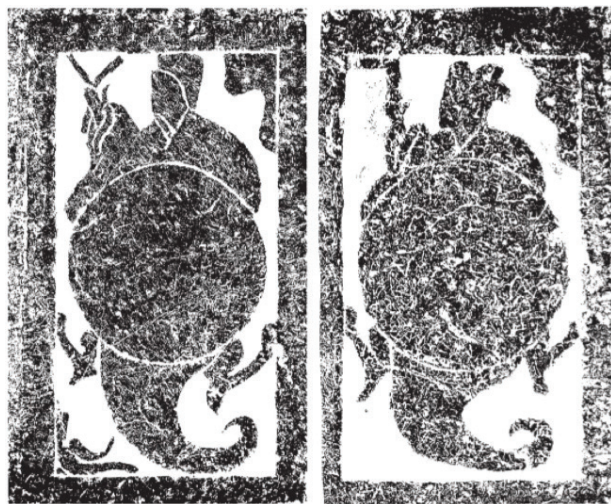


Figure 9: Fuxi and Nüwa from Feixian, Shandong. Second century CE. Eastern Han (After Gao 2001, figs. 89 and 90).



Figure 10: Fuxi and Nüwa from the Pictorial Stone Tomb at Qilin'gang, Nanyang, Henan. Second century CE, Eastern Han (After Huang et al. 2008, fig. 154).



Figure 11: Fuxi and Nüwa embracing the sun and the moon. Han tomb at Dabaodang, Shenmu, Shaanxi. Eastern Han (After Shaanxi sheng kaogu yanjiusuo 1997, figs. 1 and 2).



Figure 12: Fuxi and Nüwa on the coffin cover of the M1 Tomb from Jiayuguan, Gansu. Third century CE. Wei-Jin period (After Zhao 2005, fig. 1).

Further iconographic analysis of the four modes within their contexts sheds light on revising issues remaining unclear in the identification of Fuxi and Nüwa. The two deities depicted in the first and second modes in Luoyang area

appear to be more closely related to the legend of Changyi 常儀 and Xihe 羲和, who were recorded as attendants of the sun and moon, instead of Fuxi and Nüwa. It discloses that the third mode, which has the sun and moon embraced by Fuxi and Nüwa, has exerted influence on the imagery of the sun god 日神 and moon goddess 月神, the anthropomorphic forms of the sun and the moon, in the Southwest region (Fig. 13).

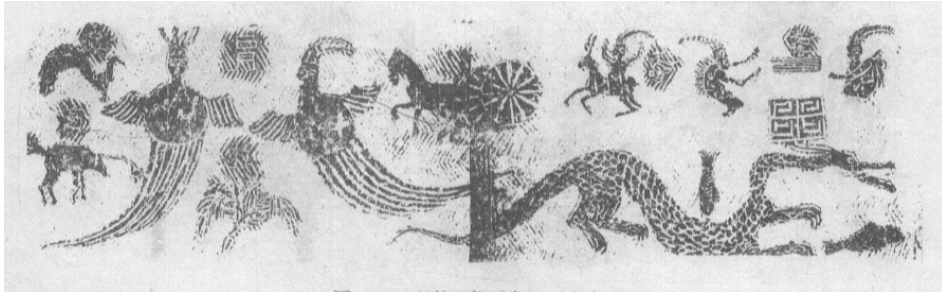


Figure 13: The sun and moon on the no. 3 stone sarcophagus from Guitoushan, Jiayang, Sichuan. Second century CE, Eastern Han (After Neijiang shi wenguansuo 1991, fig. 11).

The Sun and Moon in Literary Traditions

The sun and moon usually appear together as cosmic symbols. They can be further interpreted respectively as representations of the essence of *yang* and *yin* that lay the foundation for the cosmogonic process of the creation of the universe.² The literary description of the sun's relation to *yang* and the moon's relation to *yin* becomes the primary evidence for scholars' interpretation of the integration of the sun and moon into the imagery of Fuxi and Nüwa. Fuxi and Nüwa have been associated with *yang* and *yin* in many sources. In *Huainanzi* 淮南子, it is the union of Fuxi and Nüwa that caused the process of the separation of Heaven and Earth, and thus the separation of *yang* and *yin*. The two deities were also recorded as the gods of the sun and moon, respectively (He 1998, 503–4).

Usually inside the moon is a hare or toad, and inside the sun a bird, or a more detailed three-legged crow. In *Ling xian* 靈憲 (*Spiritual Constitution*), it records that:

日者，陽精之宗，積而成鳥，象鳥而有三趾...月者陰精之宗，積而成獸，象蜎兔。

The sun is the fundamental essence of *yang*. It accumulates into a bird

2 In the third century text *Huainanzi*, it is recorded that 日者，陽之主也...月者，陰之宗也 (The sun is the master of *yang*...The moon is the foundation of *yin*...) (He 1998, 171–72).

that looks like a crow with three legs...The moon is the fundamental essence of *yin*. It accumulates into an animal that looks like a toad or a hare (Liu 1965, 3216).

In some sources, the three-legged crow is recorded as an attendant of Xiwangmu 西王母 (The Queen Mother of the West), without any association with the moon.³ However, in the visual culture since the Western Han, the depiction of a three-legged crow in the sun usually appears in a pair with the moon.

In Between the First and Second Modes: Fuxi and Nüwa, or Changyi and Xihe

Examples that have been traditionally identified as the earliest representations of Fuxi and Nüwa are mural paintings from Han tombs near Luoyang in present-day Henan Province.⁴ This group of murals share some essential characteristics, especially their locations on the central strip of the ceiling or the upper part of the walls in the burial chamber. Fuxi and Nüwa are identified according to their human faces and snake-like bodies, and the incorporation of the sun and moon, which is rendered in the first or second modes of representing the sun and moon as classified in this research. If we examine the chronology of these tombs, it is interesting to notice that mural paintings that applied the first mode are dated to the Western Han period, around the first century BCE, while those applying the second are from the later period (Huang 1996; Yang 2003; He 2001). For instance, the earliest burials, such as Bu Qianqiu 卜千秋 tomb (Fig. 3) and the Qianjingtou 淺井頭 tomb (Fig. 14, 15), applied the first mode, which depicts the sun and moon besides Fuxi and Nüwa, while tombs of the Xin-Mang (Fig. 16) and Eastern Han (Fig. 17, 18) in general adopt the second mode, which has the sun and the moon upheld respectively by Fuxi and Nüwa. It seems quite clear that the first mode was once preferred but later replaced by the second mode in the Luoyang area.

3 In *Shiji*, "Sima Xiangru liezhuan" 史記·司馬相如列傳, ...吾乃今日睹西王母...有三足乌为之使 (...I today saw the Queen Mother of the West...a three-legged crow is at her service...) (Sima 1959, 3060).

4 Around 15 Han tombs with murals have been discovered near Luoyang, the economic, political and cultural center during the Han Dynasty (Luoyang bowuguan 1977; Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan kaogu yanjiusuo and Henan dier gongzuodui 1985; Luoyangshi dier wenwu gongzuodui 1993; Huang 1996; He 2011; Vampelj Suhadolnik 2011).

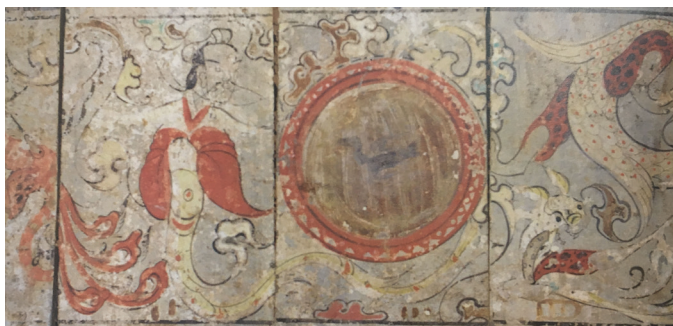


Figure 14: Fuxi and the sun on the ceiling of the Qianjingou tomb, Luoyang, Henan. First century BCE. Western Han (After Huang 1996, 82).



Figure 15: Nüwa on the ceiling of the Qianjingou tomb, Luoyang, Henan. First century BCE. Western Han (After Huang 1996, 85).



Figure 16: Fuxi and Nüwa of the Xincun tomb from Yanshi, Henan. First Century CE. Xin-Mang period (After Huang 1996, 126).



*Figure 17: Changyi on the ceiling of the Daobei shiyouzhan tomb, Luoyang, Henan.
Second century CE. Eastern Han (After Huang 1996, 148).*



*Figure 18: Xibe on the ceiling of the Daobei shiyouzhan tomb, Luoyang, Henan.
Second century CE. Eastern Han (After Huang 1996, 147).*

Nevertheless, this claim requires further discussion as it touches an issue that has been mentioned in some research but not yet addressed in detail: whether it is the

pair of Fuxi and Nüwa, or Changyi and Xihe that are depicted in these tombs. Some research considers the couple depicted in the Xincun 辛村 tomb from the Xin-Mang period (Fig. 16) and the Daobei shiyouzhan 道北石油站 tomb of the Eastern Han in the second mode as Changyi and Xihe (Fig. 17, 18).⁵ In other words, it remains debatable about how to identify Fuxi and Nüwa in their formative stage during the Western Han Dynasty. Usually, figures were identified as Fuxi and Nüwa primarily because of their snake-like bodies, the symmetrical arrangement of them as a pair, or the attendance of the sun and the moon. However, the sun and moon could be associated with Changyi and Xihe, as Fuxi and Nüwa are not the only deities with snake-like bodies. Moreover, in the literary tradition, creatures with snake-like bodies are not explicitly associated with Fuxi and Nüwa. The silk manuscript from Zidanku 子彈庫 mentions that Fuxi looks like a dragon instead of a snake (Hunan sheng bowuguan 1974; Li 1985). *Shanhaijing* 山海經 (*Classics of Mountains and Seas*) records many creatures that feature a human-face and snake-like body. Nüwa and Xihe are just two of the many, and they are not in pair with any other male deities in most of these records (Yuan 1980, 230, 311).

Another issue involved in the identification of Fuxi and Nüwa is the origin of their combination into a couple. Although it was already a convention to render Fuxi and Nüwa as a couple, the origin of their combination remains debatable (Meng 2000; Hunan sheng bowuguan 1974; Li 1985; Liu 2006). According to textual sources, the two deities first appeared in Chinese mythologies compiled during the Warring States period, although remaining independent from each other.⁶ In the third century source *Huainanzi*, the two were mentioned for the first time in the same passage, but there is no particular description of their relationship (Liu 1989). The Eastern Han historian Ban Gu 班固 sees Nüwa as a subordinate official of Fuxi, while Zheng Xuan 鄭玄 raises Nüwa's status to the same of Fuxi, as one of the *sanhuang* 三皇 (Three Sovereigns). Mainstream scholarship on Fuxi and Nüwa usually cites *Huainanzi*, and attributes the combination of the pair to the social and religious transformation that was taking place during the Han Dynasty, which aimed to pair female deities with male companions.⁷ Currently, there

5 In Huang (1996) murals from Bu Qianqiu tomb and Qianjingtuo tomb were identified as showing Fuxi and Nüwa, while the others as Changyi and Xihe. Liu (2006) follows this identification.

6 Fuxi is mentioned primarily in *Zhuangzi* 莊子, *Xunzi* 荀子, *Chuci* 楚辭, and *Zhanguocue* 戰國策. Nüwa appeared in *Shanhaijing* 山海經, *Liji* 禮記, and *Chuci* 楚辭.

7 Regarding how Fuxi and Nüwa were transformed into a pair, various theories have been proposed. The most agreed theory attributes the origin of the two deities' union to the transformation from a matriarchal to patriarchal society. The same transformation happens to Xiwangmu (Queen Mother of the West) as well. Xiwangmu first symbolises eternal happiness in the realm of immortals as an individual goddess, but was later absorbed into the emerging Taoist pantheon and paired with Dongwanggong 東王公 (King Father of the East) (Wu 1989; Yang 1999).

are two main theories concerning the origin of the two deities' combination. The first argues that the two deities did not appear as a couple until the Tang Dynasty. A large number of the supposed depictions of the couple with intertwined snake tails during the Han Dynasty are thus not Fuxi and Nüwa, but merely an anthropomorphic representation of *yin* and *yang*. The second theory pushed the union of the pair back to the Warring States period of the third century BCE, according to passages that mention Fuxi and his wife Nühuang 女皇 (Nüwa) recorded in the Zidanku silk manuscript from a Chu 楚 tomb.

Regarding the current debate on the identification of the two deities, I propose three additional perspectives. The first relies on epigraphical sources while the other two are based on the modes of depicting the sun and moon, as concentrated in this research. The most reliable evidence for iconographic identification actually entails inscriptions. Currently, all of the three Fuxi and Nüwa images bearing epigraphical references to the two deities are dated to the Eastern Han. They were found respectively on a stone sarcophagus from Guitoushan 鬼頭山 at Jianyang 簡陽, Sichuan (Fig. 19), on a pictorial panel from the Wu Liang Shrine 武梁祠 at Jiexiang 嘉祥, Shandong (Fig. 1), and on the ceiling of a tomb from Jingbian 靖邊, Shaanxi (Fig. 20) (Shaanxi sheng kaogu yanjiuyuan 2017). As all inscriptions were dated to the Eastern Han Dynasty, later than the Western Han tomb paintings in the Luoyang area, they are not sufficient to indicate a solid, exclusive connection between snake-like bodies and Fuxi and Nüwa in Luoyang tombs.



Figure 19: Fuxi and Nüwa on the no. 3 sarcophagus of the Guitoushan tomb. Rear end. Jianyang, Sichuan. Second century CE. Eastern Han (After Henan meishu chubanshe 2000, fig. 100).



Figure 20: *Fuxi in the celestial world. Jingbian, Shaanxi. Second century CE. Eastern Han*
(After *Shaanxi sheng wenwu kaogusuo* 2017, fig. 41).

Second, a thorough survey of the depiction of the sun and moon in connection to Fuxi and Nüwa in the Luoyang area indicates that previous scholarship is problematic in terms of distinguishing the imagery of Fuxi and Nüwa from that of Changyi and Xihe. Previous scholarship proposed an exclusive identification of the paired deities in the Bu Qianqiu tomb (Fig. 3), Qianjingtou tomb (Fig. 14, 15), and most of the Eastern Han tombs as Fuxi and Nüwa, while the pair in the Xincun tomb (Fig. 16) and the Daobei shiyouzhan tomb (Fig. 17, 18) were identified as Changyi and Xihe merely because of the distinctive ways how the sun and moon were depicted (Huang 1996). If based on the four modes identified in current research, the supposed Fuxi and Nüwa refers to the first mode while Changyi and Xihe to the second. However, this absolute distinction contradicts the fact that the second mode was also applied in other Luoyang murals that were identified as representations of Fuxi and Nüwa and dated to a period similar to the Xincun tomb and the Daobei shiyouzhan tomb. In addition, the identification in previous studies did not interpret the chronological sequence of the two modes. Why was the pair of Changyi and Xihe depicted later than Fuxi and Nüwa?

Third, previous identifications ignore an element that is essential for an iconographic study: the two deities depicted in murals of the Western Han Qianjingtou tomb are both males, in terms of their plain dresses, bold foreheads and the same hairstyle (Fig. 14, 15), while in the Luoyang Han tomb paintings an ordinary female figure typically wears headdresses and features a hairstyle that symmetrically separates the

bangs into two parts. Thus the current identification of the pair in the Western Han Qianjingtou tomb became problematic, because it is never in doubt that Nüwa is a female goddess. The same problem also appears in the Eastern Han Xincun tomb (Fig. 16), which depicts both the figures wearing an official hat that is only seen on males. Without more evidence for making any further interpretations, definitive answers to the identification issue are perhaps still beyond our reach. However, the notable gender differences discussed above should not be ignored in future research. At the very least, the current evidence suggests that there were two pairs of deities, one pair of a male and a female, while the other of two males, both incorporated the sun and moon in their imagery at the same time.

The Second Mode and its Celestial World: Interpreting Regional Differences in the Depiction of Fuxi and Nüwa during the Eastern Han Dynasty

In the Luoyang area during the Eastern Han Dynasty, it became a standard way to depict a pair of deities in the second mode, which has the sun and moon held upwards by the deities. This mode was also widely applied in other burial centres, including Nanyang (Fig. 8), and the Southwest region (Fig. 2), but not in Shandong/Jiangsu. In the Southwest region, Fuxi and Nüwa are widely depicted on stone sarcophagi, while in Nanyang it is the pictorial stones and bricks that are employed as the primary media. Stone sarcophagi and shrines appeared in China during the period from the second century BCE to the early third century CE in two regions, the Shandong/Jiangsu region on the East Coast and the Southwest region, as an outcome of the transformative wave of the ritual and burial traditions after Emperor Wu's 漢武帝 reformation. During the early stage, images were engraved in thick lines with simple motifs and patterns. Later, more diverse subject matters developed (Jiang 2001; Wu 2012).

In Shandong/Jiangsu, Fuxi and Nüwa in most cases hold a square and compass respectively (Fig. 1). In the Southwest region, Fuxi and Nüwa are primarily depicted in two ways: the first has them hold the sun and moon (Fig. 2), and the second they hold the square and compass in addition to the sun and moon. The first type appears earlier and flourishes in a broader area than the second. It could thus be interpreted that the motif of the square and compass was a later addition to the local tradition of representing Fuxi and Nüwa. The possible source is the Shandong/Jiangsu area, where the square and compass are the dominant motifs employed in the imagery of Fuxi and Nüwa (Fig. 1). The concepts of the square and compass could be associated with the natural forms

of circle and square. In traditional Chinese cosmology the earth was square and the heavens round, and thus Fuxi holds a set square to draw the former, and Nüwa a compass to draw the circle of the Earth (Whitfield and Sims-Williams 2004, 329). Some scholars propose that these symbols were used to represent cosmic order, a link between heaven and earth, and a favourite environment for the deceased (Lewis 1999, 204).

In Nanyang, the couple sometimes holds the sun and moon (Fig. 8), but in most cases both of them hold *lingzhi* (Fig. 7). Since cases from the Southwest region are dated relatively later than those from Shandong/Jiangsu and Nanyang, it is possible that the tradition of depicting the pair of the sun and moon as well as that of the square and compass upheld by Fuxi and Nüwa in the Southwest area is a synthesis of influences from multiple areas, including Luoyang, Shandong/Jiangsu and Nanyang.

How should we perceive the different regional traditions and reconstruct their connections? One angle is to analyse the different cultural information conveyed in pictorial and compositional schemes in each region. No matter whether it is the pair of Fuxi and Nüwa, or Changyi and Xihe, the paired deities with snake-like bodies found in Han tombs from the Luoyang area were interpreted as celestial figures that constitute a heavenly realm. In contrast, the arrangement of the paired deities as part of the celestial world is not prominent in the Shandong and Nanyang areas. The depiction from the Wu Liang shrine in Shandong is located on the second panel of the wall in the second room (Fig. 1). Among Nanyang representations of Fuxi and Nüwa, most are located in the middle part of the vertical slab that supports the structure of stone sarcophagi. The couple is usually arranged above or below door attendants, hunting scenes, or auspicious animals, and sometimes repeatedly appear on one sarcophagus (Fig. 7). Another distinction is the way how the tails of the two deities are arranged. Luoyang tombs tend to have the two separated from each other, while in Shandong/Jiangsu and Nanyang most examples have their tails intertwined. Among Nanyang examples, the couple's tails are intertwined, specially together with the image of *Xuanwu* 玄武, when they were located on the same stone slab (Fig. 7), unless they are separated symmetrically to two door-slabs (Figs. 10). A similar pattern appears in Shandong/Jiangsu area as well (Figs. 1, 9). In brief, a comparison of the location of the paired deities in the Luoyang, Shandong and Nanyang areas reveals two distinctive groups: Luoyang tombs depict the paired deities in a celestial realm together with the sun and moon, while in the Shandong and Nanyang areas the sun and moon are not essential motifs to the imagery of Fuxi and Nüwa, since the couple is not always located in the celestial realm, and there is also the relative popularity of other motifs, including *lingzhi*, the square and compass.

The Third Mode: Incorporating the Shandong and Shaanxi Traditions of Depicting the Square and Compass

As briefly mentioned above, the third mode, which has the sun and the moon embraced by Fuxi and Nüwa respectively, already appeared during the Han Dynasty in Shandong/Jiangsu (Fig. 9), Nanyang (Fig. 10) and Shaanxi (Fig. 11), but never became the dominant mode. When it comes to the Wei-Jin period, the third mode began to replace the second as the most popular one. The majority of Wei-Jin tombs were discovered near the major cities of Dunhuang 敦煌, Jiuquan 酒泉, Jiayuguan 嘉峪關, and Zhangye 張掖. The motifs of Fuxi and Nüwa became more popular in Wei-Jin tombs in comparison to the Han period, but their locations and styles show notable new features. While the Han tombs have the pair depicted on ceilings or upper walls in Luoyang and Shandong/Jiangsu, on the rear end or sides on sarcophagi in the southwest region, and door slabs in Nanyang, the majority of Wei-Jin tombs depict the pair on the inner side of the timber coffin cover (Fig. 12) or pictorial bricks on walls and ceilings (Fig. 5). One theory considers the origin of depicting the pair on coffin covers as a simplification of the practice of covering the coffin lid with *Jingming* 旌銘 (banner) practiced since the pre-Qin period and after (Liu 2006, 147–48).

Among the surviving examples found on coffin covers, the pair is arranged in two basic types: the first type horizontally locates Fuxi and Nüwa on two ends (Fig. 12), and the second depicts the two vertically facing each other (Fig. 4) (Kong and Hou 2006). It is noticeable that for the first type, the overall design of Fuxi and Nüwa recalls the design on ceilings and upper walls in Han tombs from the Luoyang area. An examination of the historical context of Hexi during the Wei-Jin era provides a connection between the two regions: it was from the Western Han period on that a mass migration along with cultural transmission from the Central Plain to the Hexi Corridor took place. However, the Han tradition of applying the first and the second modes to depict the sun and moon was not inherited by these Wei-Jin burials in the horizontal type. The majority applied the third mode of depicting the sun and moon, which has them embraced by Fuxi and Nüwa respectively (Fig. 12). Tombs in the second type, which arrange the two deities on coffin cover vertically, began to employ the fourth mode, which has the sun arranged above the couple with the moon below (Fig. 4). To sum up, it is firstly at the Wei-Jin Hexi Corridor that the fourth mode came into view, while the third mode became predominant.

One possible answer to the appearance of the third mode at Hexi is the movement of immigrants from the Shandong and Shaanxi areas. The Eastern Han case from Shandong (Fig. 9) and that from Shaanxi (Fig. 11) are distinctive from the

one from Nanyang (Fig. 10), as the latter tradition never depicts the square and compass as attributes of the two deities, while the former two areas have the pair of attributes always in together with the sun and moon (Kong and Hou 2006). In Wei-Jin pictorial bricks and coffin paintings, the sun and moon are always in combination with the pair of the square and compass. To push this discovery further, the Shandong tradition exerts a more explicit influence on the Wei-Jin tomb art, since they both depict the two deities with dragon-like bodies, as well as similar ratios regarding the size of the sun and moon and the deities' bodies.

From Nanyang to the Southwest: the Confluence of the Fuxi and Nüwa Imagery and the Formation of the Sun God and Moon Goddess

Besides being depicted in association with the imagery of Fuxi and Nüwa, the sun and moon have already been widely represented in a variegated range of pictorial contexts. An examination of the visual tradition of depicting the two celestial bodies during the Han and Wei-Jin period reveals an idiosyncratic phenomenon in the Southwest: the appearance of the anthropomorphic rendering of the sun and moon as a pair (Fig. 13, 21, 22, 23). A further inquiry indicates that the formation



Figure 21: Sun God and Moon Goddess on No. 4 and No. 5 tomb of Guitoushan, Jianyang, Sichuan. Second century CE. Eastern Han (After Gong 1998, figs. 348 and 349).

of the sun and moon in anthropomorphic representation in the Southwest incorporated two visual traditions: that of Fuxi and Nüwa in local tradition, since the sun and moon appear in anthropomorphic form with a rendering of their heads and faces almost identical to that of Fuxi and Nüwa, and that of the sun and moon in Nanyang, where we see the prototype of the Southwest composition for locating the sun and moon as part of a flying figure's body (Fig. 24 and 25).



Figure 22: Sun God and Moon Goddess from the tomb of Zhaojue Temple, Chengdu, Sichuan. Second century CE. Eastern Han (After Gong 1998, fig. 345).

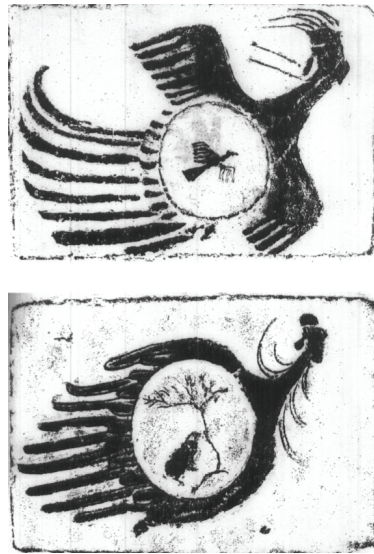


Figure 23: Sun God and Moon Goddess from the tomb of Xinfan, Sichuan. Second century CE. Eastern Han (After Gong 1998, figs. 346 and 347).



Figure 24: *The sun and the moon from Nanyang, Henan. Second century CE. Eastern Han (After Wang and Shan 1990, fig. 280).*

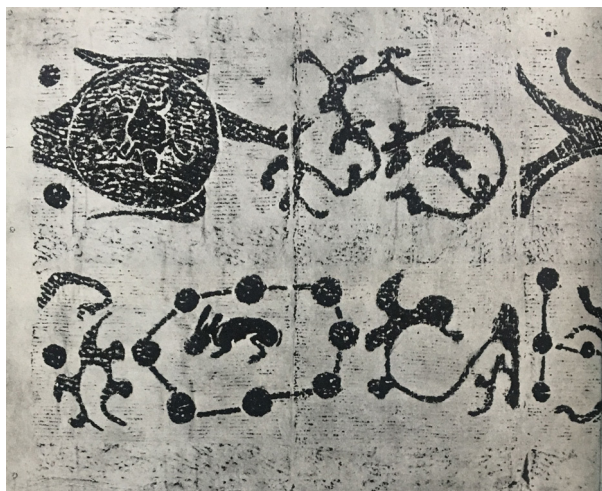


Figure 25: *The moon disc embraced by a bird. Nanyang, Henan. Second century CE. Eastern Han (After Wang and Shan 1990, fig. 275).*

The No. 3 sarcophagus from Guitoushan 鬼頭山, Jianyang 簡陽, discussed above, and which depicts Fuxi and Nüwa with inscriptions (Fig. 19), has its right and left sides carved. Its left side shows two flying figures with human-faces but bird-like bodies (Fig. 13). The left deity has its torso formed in the shape of the sun and the right deity in the shape of the moon. Surviving inscriptions between the two figures reveal that they are *Ri* 日 and *Yue* 月. Similar depictions of the sun and the moon have been found on the two other stone sarcophagi from Guitoushan (Fig. 21), as well as on a number of others from the Southwest, such as the Eastern Han tomb at the Temple of Zhaojue 昭覺寺 in Chengdu (Fig. 22), and the brick tomb from Xindu 新都, Xinfan 新繁 (Fig. 23). All of these examples depict the moon and sun as part of the bodies of figures that have human faces with

bird-like bodies. In addition, they appear with explicit gender differences: the sun god features a mountain-shaped crown and the moon goddess has a feather-like headdress. The Xinfan case (Fig. 23) depicts a bird inside the orb-shaped body of the sun and a toad in that of the moon. The Guitoushan case (Fig. 21) follows the same manner, although rendered relatively roughly. The Zhaojue case (Fig. 22) merely adorns the sun god with a bird, and also varies from the other cases in terms of the difference in size between the sun and moon.

It is interesting that this anthropomorphic representation of the sun and moon is not applied in any other sites, but only in the Southwest. Even more notable is that their facial features and headdresses are treated exactly the same as those of Fuxi and Nüwa: the mountain-shaped crown for the male, while a feather-like headdress for the female. One may argue that a similar treatment of the paired deities is also identifiable in the case of Dongwanggong (King Father of the East) and Xiwangmu (Queen Mother of the West). However, the Dongwanggong was not seen in the southwest during the Han period. Furthermore, the sun and moon appear in a pair since the beginning, while Dongwanggong was a later creation for making a couple with Xiwangmu, the long-existing deity that has a specific significance in Chinese mythology and already had a long history of transformation by the Eastern Han, when Dongwanggong was created (Wu 1989, 108–41; Gong 1998, 345–77). Thus the tradition of depicting Fuxi and Nüwa is more likely the source for the formation of the sun and moon in an anthropomorphic couple.

To examine the current argument, I further explored the tradition of depicting the sun and moon in other areas during the Han Dynasty, and found that the Nanyang area shares a similar composition with the Southwest, which renders the sun and moon as part of the bodies of flying figures. The majority of the Nanyang examples show the sun depicted as embraced by a bird, while the moon appears just like an ordinary disc within which is a toad or hare (Fig. 24). But it is notable that the moon disc with a toad was gradually transformed into part of a flying bird, in symmetry with the sun-bird. The bird is very likely the crow that is conventionally depicted within the sun. The way that the bird is depicted is no different from the three-legged crow represented within the sun disc from the Han Dynasty.

Now if we turn to the tradition of representing the sun and moon in anthropomorphic form in the Southwest (Figs. 13, 21, 22, 23), the composition and iconography are no different from the Nanyang tradition (Fig. 25), except for their human faces. In other words, the practice of depicting the sun and moon embraced or as part of the bodies of a bird already became popular in the early Eastern Han Dynasty in Nanyang. As it turns to the later Eastern Han, the Nanyang tradition, together with the already established tradition that depicts Fuxi and Nüwa in a

gender-discernible pair, provided sources for the creation of the anthropomorphic representation of the sun and moon in the Southwest. Nevertheless, it is difficult to reach any absolute conclusions with regard to the motivation for the creation of the anthropomorphic sun and moon, just like the long-debating issue regarding the creation of the anthropomorphic Buddha images. This requires further research on the overall historical, cultural, and visual landscape of the Southwest during the Han Dynasty.

Eastern Han Nanyang: Fuxi and Nüwa as Representatives of Fertility

As indicated above, the sun and moon were never the dominant attributes in the Nanyang depiction of Fuxi and Nüwa, but developed more extensively as celestial orbs that usually appear amidst constellation diagrams. Derivative but necessary to address, through the examination of the essential features of the Fuxi and Nüwa imagery created in different regions during the Han Dynasty, it is explicit that the tradition of the Nanyang area is much more distinctive and diverse than that of other regions. In addition to the preference for *lingzhi* in Nanyang, another trait is the incorporation of *Xuanwu* (Dark Warrior) in the imagery of Fuxi and Nüwa. *Xuanwu* is one of the four mythological animals that are typically termed *Sishen* 四神 (four deities), each guarding one of the four cosmic directions and four seasons (He 1998, 183–88; Wang 1995). They are *Qinglong* 青龍 (blue dragon), *Baihu* 白虎 (white tiger), *Zhuque* 朱雀 (red bird), and *Xuanwu* 玄武 (Dark Warrior). *Xuanwu* is the guardian of the north, the utmost point of the *yin*. On the pictorial stone slab from Xinye 新野 Lihu 禮湖 at Nanyang, Fuxi and Nüwa are located facing each other with their bodies intertwined over a *Xuanwu* at the bottom. It is identifiable through the inscription above it, and its appearance in the conventional rendering of a *Xuanwu* as a tortoise encircled by a snake (Fig. 7). Xinye Lihu is not the first case of representing *Xuanwu* together with Fuxi and Nüwa in Nanyang, but the combination is not standardised. On another pillar from the same tomb, the paired deities are represented in a way that is same but without *Xuanwu*.

It is clear that *Xuanwu*'s natural connection to the north and the winter does not constitute a satisfactory answer here. The location of the configuration in the Xinye Lihu tomb of Nanyang has no directional reference, but instead as one of a group of motifs on one stone slab. The current identification tends to explain the appearance of *Xuanwu* as a counterpart of a Giant figure which forms another tradition of the genesis mythology and fertility (Wang 1990). Even without

referring to the Giant figure, it is also legitimate to perceive the connection between *Xuanwu* and fertility according to *Xuanwu*'s trait of representing *yin*. In addition, both visual and textual traditions reveal that *Xuanwu* has not been fixed as one of the *Sishen* until the late Eastern Han. A more conservative interpretation of the combination of *Xuanwu* with Fuxi and Nüwa is the snake part of *Xuanwu*'s iconography. In extant depictions of *Xuanwu* in combination with Fuxi and Nüwa, the snake part of the *Xuanwu* is at the same time the lower body of the two deities. Thus it is this resemblance makes it possible to have *Xuanwu* visually connected with other snake- or dragon-like creatures.

The Development of the Fourth Mode in the Hexi Corridor Since the Wei-Jin Era

Finally, the fourth mode depicts the sun above Fuxi and Nüwa with the moon below (Fig. 4, 6), naturally in a vertical setting. Although most surviving materials showing this mode are silk or hemp paintings and banners found in Turfan burials dated to the Tang Dynasty from the sixth to seventh centuries (Fig. 6), the prototype of the fourth mode already appeared in the Wei-Jin era, from the third to fifth centuries, on the coffin covers in Jiayuguan burials (Fig. 4).

Considering the focus of this article is the period between Han and Wei-Jin, I will not delve into the discussion regarding the formation nor the function of the fourth mode in Tang funerary paintings (Stein 1928; Xinjiang Weiwuer zizhiqu bowuguan 1972; Uyeno 1974; Whitfield 1985; Chen 2001). But it is worth presenting several discoveries based on a preliminary comparison of the fourth mode between the Wei-Jin example and the successive Tang paintings.

First is the distinction in the overall setting of the painting between Wei-Jin Jiayuguan and Tang Turfan. In the Wei-Jin case (Fig. 4), the two deities are surrounded by mountain ranges, which on two sides have peaks facing outwards, while a group of Tang banners fill the surrounding space with scattered constellation diagrams (Fig. 6). The Tang banners' interest in celestial symbols also shows in the way that the sun and moon discs were rendered abstractly: the sun appears with radiating beams inside and moon in the crescent shape. Furthermore, some even have the orbs surrounded by a ring of stars.

Second is the replacement of the traditional rendering of the two deities' head-dresses with a new mode in Tang banners. The Wei-Jin example inherited the convention of rendering Fuxi with a mountain-shaped hat and Nüwa with a crown, while in all of the Tang paintings Fuxi began to feature an ordinary official cap, while Nüwa a plain knot. Both the figures appeared more human-like, in

comparison to the divine treatment of their predecessors from the Han to Wei-Jin. In addition, they dress in short pleated tunics.

The third discovery is regarding the origin of the vertical arrangement of the sun above with the moon below. One may argue that this type is done to deal with the limitations of the chamber or the silk banner's elongated rectangular shape, although I believe that it is not sufficient to attribute the motivation to spatial concerns alone. Here I come up with a hypothesis that the arrangement of the sun and moon on the ends of a vertical space in the fourth mode might be related to the tradition of representing the sun god and wind goddess at the two ends of the central strip on the ceiling in Buddhist cave-temples at Kizil, which is on the northern branch of the Silk Road. But a concrete conclusion requires a further examination of cave-temple arts before making any further arguments. This hypothesis is also based on the importance of celestial symbols for both the Turfan silk paintings and the central strip paintings in Buddhist cave-temples (Ma 1996; Zhu 2003). In brief, the Tang silk paintings show a clear departure from the traditional depiction of Fuxi and Nüwa, however they have certainly been influenced by the Wei-Jin conventions due to the same way in which they render the sun and moon in the fourth mode.

Conclusion

Instead of proposing an integrated narrative of the evolutionary history of the Fuxi and Nüwa imagery, this research starts with a pre-iconographic study of the visual materials that we have at hand. Putting the primary emphasis on the description and classification of the Fuxi and Nüwa imagery in terms of how the sun and moon are incorporated, I identified four primary modes and discussed their historical and regional features. Further examination and analysis of each mode contributed to the current field by providing new perspectives for readdressing some issues that remain underexplored, and bringing back to the field several pictorial traditions that should not be neglected in the study of the Fuxi and Nüwa worship.

This study challenges the over-absolute identification of the earliest representation of Fuxi and Nüwa in a pair, and that of Changyi and Xihe, another set of paired deities recorded to be in close relation to the celestial world, in Western Han mural tombs from the Luoyang area. The relatively late date of the Eastern Han, when the earliest epigraphical texts referring to Fuxi and Nüwa and other textual and historical sources were dated to, leave open the question as to when Fuxi and Nüwa were formed into a pair, and when they were represented together with the sun and moon, and this thus requires further research. Instead of identifying the paired deities with snake-bodies as Fuxi and Nüwa, or Changyi and Xihe,

based on undemonstrated distinctions in visual or textual traditions, the present research suggests a shift of focus to the recognisable distinctions in visual details. These differences include the shift from depicting the sun and moon in the first mode to the second upon the beginning of the Eastern Han, and the masculine appearances of both the deities depicted in the Western Han Qianjingtou tomb.

Second, regional variations significantly portray the development of each mode. While the first mode was only seen in the Luoyang area, the second mode prevails in the entire northern areas during the Han Dynasty, and kept on flourishing during the Wei-Jin era. The third mode appeared in the Eastern Han, but did not flourish until the Wei-Jin era in Hexi. Although its origin cannot be absolutely ascertained, its noticeable co-existence with the pair of the compass and square alludes to its close connection to the tradition of Shandong and Shaanxi. The fourth mode was not seen beyond the territory of the Hexi Corridor, from its appearance in Wei-Jin era and its later flourishing in funerary banners during the Tang Dynasty. Further examinations reveal more complicated interactions between different regions and exchanges of motifs with other imagery. The local tradition of depicting Fuxi and Nüwa, together with that of the depiction of the sun and moon in Nanyang, has been incorporated with the formation of the sun and moon in the anthropomorphic representations seen in the southwest.

Finally, a thematic research is defined by information retrieved from materials, rather than the use of a later-created terminology. Instead of making absolute identifications, it is more significant to organise the surviving materials through detailed examinations of each visual element. In addition, an iconographic study of images without the consideration of their original contexts will muddy the waters with its over-imposed set of classifications.

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Transmission of Han Pictorial Motifs into the Western Periphery: Fuxi and Nüwa in the Wei-Jin Mural Tombs in the Hexi Corridor*

Nataša VAMPELJ SUHADOLNIK**

Abstract

This paper examines the ways in which Fuxi and Nüwa were depicted inside the mural tombs of the Wei-Jin dynasties along the Hexi Corridor as compared to their Han counterparts from the Central Plains. Pursuing typological, stylistic, and iconographic approaches, it investigates how the western periphery inherited the knowledge of the divine pair and further discusses the transition of the iconographic and stylistic design of both deities from the Han (206 BCE–220 CE) to the Wei and Western Jin dynasties (220–316). Furthermore, examining the origins of the migrants on the basis of historical records, it also attempts to discuss the possible regional connections and migration from different parts of the Chinese central territory to the western periphery.

On the basis of these approaches, it reveals that the depiction of Fuxi and Nüwa in Gansu area was modelled on the Shandong regional pattern and further evolved into a unique pattern formed by an iconographic conglomeration of all attributes and other physical characteristics. Accordingly, the Shandong region style not only spread to surrounding areas in the central Chinese territory but even to the more remote border regions, where it became the model for funerary art motifs.

Key Words: Fuxi, Nüwa, the sun, the moon, a try square, a pair of compasses, Han Dynasty, Wei-Jin period, Shandong, migration

Prenos slikovnih motivov na zahodno periferijo: Fuxi in Nüwa v grobnicah s poslikavo iz obdobja Wei Jin na območju prehoda Hexi

Izvilleček

Pričujoči prispevek v primerjalni perspektivi obravnava upodobitev Fuxija in Nüwe v grobnicah s poslikavo iz časa dinastij Wei in Zahodni Jin (220–316) iz province Gansu

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(območje prehoda Hexi) v odnosu do njune upodobitve v grobnicah s poslikavo iz časa dinastije Han (206 pr. n. št.–220 n. št.) v osrednjem kitajskem območju. Na osnovi tipoloških, stilističnih in ikonografskih pristopov proučuje, kako je zahodna periferija podedovala znanje o božanskem paru, ter prikaže prenos ikonografske in stilistične zasnove obeh božanstev iz dinastije Han v dinastiji Wei in Zahodni Jin. Prispevek nadalje s pomočjo zgodovinskih virov raziskuje izvore migrantov ter poskuša prikazati možne regionalne povezave in migracije iz različnih delov osrednje kitajske planjave na zahodno periferijo.

Z uporabo teh pristopov se je pokazalo, da sta bili podobi Fuxija in Nüwe iz province Gansu oblikovani na osnovi regionalnega modela iz območja Shandong. V provinci Gansu sta se nato nadalje razvili v edinstveni ikonografski model, sestavljen iz različnih atributov in ostalih fizičnih karakteristik. Skladno s tem se regionalni model območja Shandong ni širil le v sosednja območja, temveč tudi v bolj oddaljene obmejne kraje, kjer je postal tipični model grobnim motivom.

Ključne besede: Fuxi, Nüwa, sonce, luna, tesarjev kotnik, šestilo, dinastija Han, obdobje Wei Jin, Shandong, migracije

Introduction

In the textual sources, Fuxi 伏羲 and Nüwa 女媧 are represented as the greatest primaeval cosmogonic deities, who created the first human beings from a pre-existent substance and guide the world to civilizational achievements. While Nüwa appears as a goddess who contributes to the formation of the cosmic-natural order by “patching up the azure sky and chopping off the legs of a giant turtle to set up the four poles”¹ (He 1998, 479) and plays a part in the birth of the human race, Fuxi is shown as a type of legendary ancestor who guides the human world and gives instruction concerning a variety of advanced solutions to social and philosophical problems. As creators of humankind and human society, they also appear to be instrumental in establishing the state of marriage.

With the appearance of the so-called “horizontal-pit grave” fashioned from bricks and/or stones from the middle Western Han period (206 BCE–9 CE) onwards, the two deities began to be depicted on the surface of the underground chamber walls, on ceilings, on stone sarcophagi, and on the walls of offering shrines built above the ground. The images could be carved in stone or brick or painted on the surfaces of the walls. The two deities are both depicted as hybrid figures with a human face/head and snake-like body, generally holding the sun or the moon, a try square or a pair of compasses or, alternatively, a plant recognizable as being a

1 *Huainanzi* 淮南子, the second century compendium of essays in the sixth chapter records: 女媧五色石以補蒼天，斷鯀足以立四極 (He 1998, 479).

longevity mushroom *lingzhi* 靈芝. In some tombs, the inscriptions next to these images define the divine hybrid creatures as Fuxi and Nüwa,² thus providing reliable evidence for their identification;³ nevertheless, in the early phases of their appearance their identification is not universally regarded as beyond doubt.⁴

Even though the transmission of knowledge, ideas, and technological innovations can be traced back some millennia to the initial waves of migration, the more systematic transmission of Han intangible and tangible heritage began with the migration of Han people to remote border regions under the expansionist policy of the Han Wudi 漢武帝 (r. 141–87 BCE) and then under the first Eastern Han emperors. The establishment of official outposts in border territory resulted in the transfer of numerous officials and military commanders to new positions in these remote locations. The loss of imperial authority and thus of the central government powers, which was followed by several natural disasters and the Yellow Turban Rebellion during the Eastern Han dynasty (25–220), plunged the Central Plain into a state of war and disorder, causing even greater migration to the remote border territories after the collapse of the Han dynasty, especially to the Liaoning and Gansu areas.

One consequence of this massive migration was the transmission of elements of Han culture such as its burial customs, including the construction of the tombs and pictorial decorations, which began to flourish again with the onset of economic stability. The architectural structure and the pictorial design of Han and Wei Jin tombs in the Gansu region confirm such influences. The majority of the tombs are built of small bricks and consist of between one and three chambers, usually square, with vaulted ceilings and accompanied by side rooms up to four in number.⁵ As such, they reflect the Han tomb architectural structure from the Central Plain, even though some local characteristics were also incorporated into the architectural design. One of the most distinctive features is the so-called *zhao-bi* 照壁 wall, a tall screen wall or gate tower positioned above the tomb gate and built of small bricks and decorated with carved or painted images. Pictorial motifs also more or less follow the pictorial repertoire from the central region of the Chinese territory and depict motifs from the celestial and terrestrial worlds: various divine creatures, beasts, and birds, the Four Divine Animals, guardians and auspicious omens, everyday activities (scenes of feasting, banquets, kitchen work, farming, hunting, and sericulture) domestic animals, and the tomb's occupants.

2 For the few examples of Fuxi and Nüwa in tombs defined by inscriptions, see Wang (2018, 104–6).

3 There are also abundant textual sources attributing human heads/faces and snake/dragon-like bodies to Fuxi and Nüwa.

4 See Wu 1995; He 2001, 62–63; Wang 2018, 104; see also Zhao 2019.

5 For a detailed analysis of tomb structure in Gansu region see Zheng (2002, 46–56).

Many scholars have noted such connections between the two regions, revealed through the iconographic and stylistic analysis of murals and further confirmed by the historical facts of migration waves to the western periphery.⁶ On the basis of the work of these scholars, the present article aims to put forward the analytical method of a Fuxi and Nüwa case-study in order to further discuss the possible regional connections and address issues related to the relationship between the centre and the periphery.

We will therefore examine the depiction of Fuxi and Nüwa in the Wei 魏 (220–265) and Western Jin periods 西晉 (265–316) mural tombs in Gansu, comparing them with their Han counterparts. Applying typological, stylistic, and iconographic approaches, we will investigate how the western periphery inherited knowledge of the divine pair and further discuss the transition of the iconographic and stylistic design of the two deities from the Han to the Wei and Western Jin dynasties. Furthermore, by examining the origins of the migrants on the basis of the textual sources, we will investigate the influence of the various regional traditions transmitted through migration from different parts of central Chinese territory to the western periphery. As these two research approaches are mutually complementary, they allow a more comprehensive understanding of the transmission process in the historical development and thus of the transmission to the western periphery of the mythological conception of symmetrically arranged deities, their physical appearance and visual qualities, and their attributes. Within that context, we will also address issues related to the relationships between the centre and the periphery, reveal to what extent the Han image of the two deities was incorporated into the western local heritage, and endeavour to interpret the particular characteristics evident in the artistic and symbolic representations of Fuxi and Nüwa, and thus the modification of the divine couple in terms of local patronage along the Hexi Corridor.

We will begin with a general description of Fuxi and Nüwa in Gansu Wei-Jin mural tombs, providing detailed information on their physical appearance, number, and location; this will be followed by an account of the depiction of the two deities in Han art, and of the transmission of iconographic and stylistic features from central plains to the western periphery. We will argue that depiction of Fuxi

6 While most of the archaeological reports have briefly noted the connections with the Han motifs in the central region, a more general approach has been taken by Zheng Yan (2002), who conducted a systematic in-depth analysis in which he not only demonstrates the continuation of Han heritage in the Hexi corridor during the Wei-Jin period but also shows the extension of Han influence through the Hexi region to the foreign bordering lands in what is currently Xinjiang, and its reverse influence back to Central Plain during the time of the Northern dynasties. Lin Shaoxiong (1999) also observed that the style of Han pictorial bricks in Gansu continues in the Wei-Jin mural tombs. Furthermore, He Xilin (2001) discussed the influence of Han mural paintings on mural tombs in the western and eastern border regions from the Han and Wei Jin Nanbei periods. See also Sun Yan (2011) and Guo Yongli (2012).

and Nüwa in the Gansu area was modelled on the Shandong regional pattern and further evolved into a unique pattern based on an iconographic conglomeration of all attributes and other physical characteristics. Finally, we will focus on the migration process as revealed by textual sources, in order to support the arguments presented in the iconographic and stylistic analysis.

Fuxi and Nüwa in the Gansu Wei-Jin Mural Tombs

Distribution of the Fuxi Nüwa Tombs

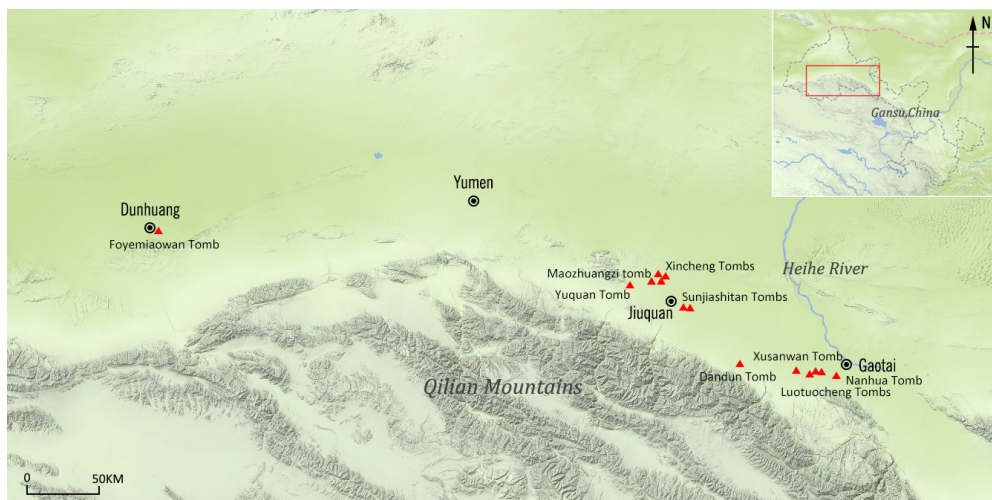
Wei and Western Jin tombs with murals in the province of Gansu are found in four main areas, which were all new settlements established by the Western Han after the Xiongnu 匈奴 were driven from the Hexi Corridor: Jiuquan 酒泉/Jiayuguan 嘉峪關, Dunhuang 敦煌, Wuwei 武威, and Zhangye 張掖. The tombs are distributed over the vast area from Wuwei in the east to Dunhuang in the west, with the majority of tombs having been discovered near the cities of Jiuquan/Jiayuguan and Dunhuang.⁷

Fuxi and Nüwa appear in 14 tombs dated to the Wei and Western Jin periods (Table 1).⁸ Even though Wei-Jin mural tombs in Gansu province are situated in the vast region extending around 800 kilometres from the southeast to the northwest in the Hexi Corridor, the distribution of the “Fuxi Nüwa tombs” clearly indicate that there was a preference for these two images in the cities of Jiayuguan and Gaotai located in the middle region of the Hexi Corridor (Map 1). There are eight tombs with Fuxi Nüwa depictions in the vicinity of Jiayuguan/Jiuquan, five in Gaotai city, and just one in Dunhuang.⁹ Not a single such tomb has been discovered south of Gaotai.

7 For a list of unearthened mural tombs from the Wei and Western Jin periods in the Hexi region, see Zheng 2002, 44–45; Guo 2012, 1–9; Sun 2011, 7–9, see also Vampelj Suhadolnik 2014, 46–48. They are mainly concentrated in Dunhuang 敦煌, Guazhou 瓜州, Jiayuguan 嘉峪關, Jiuquan 酒泉, Gaotai 高台, Minle 民樂, Yongchang 永昌 and other places. In addition to tombs, several individual bricks with painted motifs have also been unearthened at different graveyards. They belonged to various different tombs which have been severely damaged or destroyed, with only some bricks being preserved.

8 Some scholars would argue that the depiction of a figure with three human upper part bodies and a serpentine tail on the ceiling of the Baguiying 八卦營 Tomb M2 in Minle county 民樂縣 in Gansu is also Nüwa (Shi 2006, 34) or Fuxi (Cheng et al. 2014, 12). The imagery is distinctive to majority of Fuxi Nüwa images not only in Gansu, but also in other more central regions. It could hardly be seen as three bodies on one serpentine tail. Furthermore, the usual attributes do not appear around the three-headed creature in Baguiying tomb. Therefore, this could not be Fuxi or Nüwa and most probably represents another divine creature riding a dragon.

9 From the slightly later period of Qian Liang 前涼 (314–376), there is another one example of Fuxi and Nüwa on the ceiling (*zaojing* 藻井) in the Foyemiaowan tomb in Dunhuang (see Guo 2012, 2).

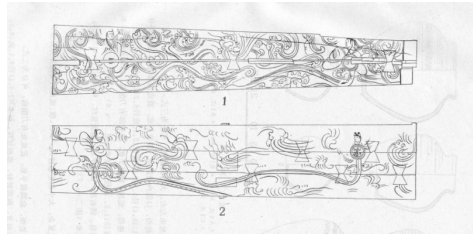


Map 1: Distribution of Fuxi Nüwa tombs in Gansu area (author: Shan Siwei, Wuhan University).

Location of Fuxi Nüwa Images in the Tombs

Most of the depictions show Fuxi Nüwa as a symmetrically arranged divine couple (17 examples). With regard to the location of their depiction, it is essential to point out that 14 out of 17 Fuxi Nüwa depictions appear on the inner side of the wooden coffin cover (Fig. 1). Except for the vertical image on the coffin cover from the town of Nanhua in Gaotai, all the remaining examples are from the Jiayuguan/Jiuquan area. Apart from the images found on coffin covers, only three are to be found on chamber walls: one example adorns the caisson ceiling (*zaojing* 藻井) of the middle room in Kushiukou Tomb M1 in Luotuocheng, Gaotai; another decorates the eastern wall of the second chamber in the Luotuocheng Tomb M2; and the third appears on the upper part of the *zhaobi* wall in the Foyemiaowan Tomb M1 in Dunhuang.¹⁰ In addition to the 17 images of symmetrically arranged pairs, four individual images of Fuxi or Nüwa have been found on separate bricks. While two Fuxi bricks and one Nüwa brick come from the Luotuocheng tomb in the southwestern district (Gaotai) (Fig. 2), one brick with Nüwa comes from the Xusanwan grave complex in the Tomb 1999Q3 (Gaotai), from the front room according to Guo (2012, 56–57). Owing to grave-robbing and the tomb's destruction the exact position of these bricks remains unknown, but we can certainly assume that they were part of the decoration on the four walls of the grave chambers and were also most probably arranged in pairs, as representations of the divine couple.

¹⁰ See also note 9.



a



b1



b2



c1



c2

Figure 1: Fuxi and Nüwa on the coffin covers

a) Fuxi and Nüwa, Xincheng Tomb M1, Jiayuguan, Gansu. 1: male coffin, 2: female coffin (After Gansu sheng wenwudui et al. 1985, 23).

b) Fuxi and Nüwa, Xincheng Tomb M13, Jiayuguan, Gansu. 1: male coffin, 2: female coffin (After Wang 2013, 60).

c) Fuxi and Nüwa, Sunjiashitan Tomb M3, Jiuquan, Gansu. 1: male coffin, 2: female coffin (After Gansu sheng wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo 2017, 28).



Figure 2: Nüwa, Luotuocheng tomb in the southwest area, Gaotai, Gansu (After Shi 1999, 14).

Three Types of Fuxi Nüwa Depiction in Gansu

With regard to their pictorial composition, the depictions of Fuxi and Nüwa in the Gansu region can be classified in accordance with three types. The first type is characteristic of the horizontal composition on the coffin covers and is the most



3a



3b

Figure 3: Fuxi and Nüwa in vertical composition

- a) Fuxi and Nüwa, Maozhuangzi Tomb, Jiayuguan, Gansu (After Kong et al. 2006, 81).
 b) Fuxi and Nüwa, Gaotai 2003 GNM10 Tomb, Gaotai, Gansu (After Gansu sheng wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo 2005, 28).

popular one, being commonly found in the Jiayuguan region. In most cases, Fuxi and Nüwa are depicted among swirling clouds with long serpentine tails, stretching out towards each other and placed on both sides of the coffin cover (Fig. 1). There seems to be no specific rule regarding their tails, which are sometimes interlaced and sometimes not.

The second type is associated with vertical composition, in which the two deities are portrayed close together with their faces turned to each other and with intertwined tails. While the elongated form of the coffin cover most probably determined the horizontal composition, it also provided a framework for further attempts to depict them in the vertical; accordingly, two examples of the second type are found on coffin covers (Maozhuangzi Tomb in Jiayuguan, Gaotai 2003 GNM10 Tomb) (Fig. 3). This manner of vertical depiction is also seen on the *zaojing* ceiling in Gaotai (Kushuikou M1 Tomb, Luotuocheng).

The third type is related to compositions featuring the two deities but depicted individually on separate bricks. One such example is the depiction of Xiwangmu 西王母 flanked by Fuxi and Nüwa at the top of the *zhaobi* wall in Dunhuang (Fig. 4). Three separate bricks from Luotuocheng Tomb M2 (Fig. 2) and one Nüwa brick from Xusanwan 1999Q3 Tomb (Fig. 5) also belong to this type. Although the bricks were most probably part of a coherent compositional structure either vertical or horizontal, their physical appearance differs slightly from the rest of the depictions, and thus could easily be classified as a separate type. The main difference is seen in the location of the two celestial bodies: while in all other examples the sun and the moon are portrayed in front of the chest, on the bricks from Luotuocheng Tomb M2 both figures grasp the celestial bodies with their hands, and in the Xusanwan Tomb the moon is situated next to Nüwa, who has now assumed a fully human image. Furthermore, particular focus has been put on the legs, which have become larger and more dynamic, thus imbuing the images with a sense of movement.

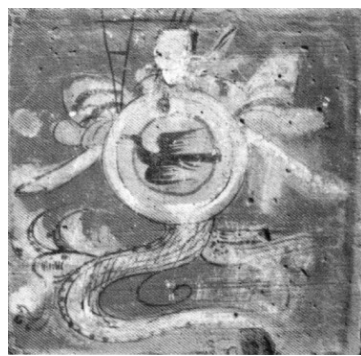
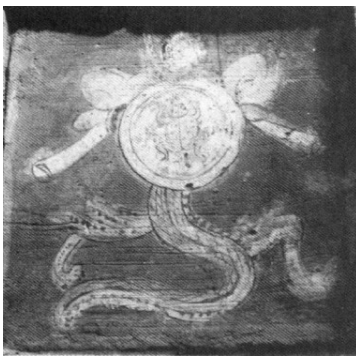


Figure 4: Fuxi and Nüwa at the top of the *zhaobi* wall, Foyemiaowan Tomb M1, Dunhuang, Gansu (After Yin 2008, 99).



Figure 5: Nüwa, Xusanwan 1999Q3 Tomb, Gaotai, Gansu (After Guo 2012, 183).

General Characteristics

Both deities are depicted as snake-bodied figures with a human upper body; they are shown holding a try square and a pair of compasses and with the sun and the moon in front of the chest, emphasized by the images of the bird and toad. In all but one example, Fuxi is shown with a three-peaked cap, also called a “mountain-like hat” (*shanzixing* 山字形), which evolved into one of the most typical characteristics of Fuxi in the Gansu region. Nüwa, by contrast, has her hair elegantly arranged in various hairstyles characteristic of Han women. Both deities are dressed in garments with wide sleeves, reflecting a typical Han clothing style also commonly seen in Han pictorial art. Furthermore, they are often portrayed with legs ending in tiger’s paws. Hence, the basic characteristics of the Fuxi Nüwa image in Gansu can be outlined as follows: a) the sun and the moon in front of the chest; b) a try square or a pair of compasses in one hand; c) legs terminating in tiger’s paws; d) a three-peaked cap for Fuxi; and e) wings, but not in all cases.

This brief description of the deities’ physical appearances and attributes clearly shows how strongly they are linked to the Han tradition from the Central Plain. Therefore, in order to further discuss the transmission of the iconographic and stylistic design from Han to the Wei Jin dynasties in the western periphery, let us first examine their Han counterparts.

Table 1: List of Fuxi Nirva tombs in the Gansu region

No.	Tomb / Excavation time	City	Location / Number	Objects	Composition / (not) intertwined tails	Dating	Source
1	Xincheng Tomb M1 嘉峪关新城M1墓 1972	Jiayuguan	Coffin cover (2)	Round objects	Horizontal; not intertwined	Wei and early Western Jin	Gansu sheng wenwudui et al. 1985, 18, 23
2	Xincheng Tomb M13 嘉峪关新城M13墓 1979	Jiayuguan	Coffin cover (2)	Sun and moon + try square and pair of compasses	Horizontal; not intertwined	Wei and Western Jin	Jiayuguan shi wenwu guanlisuo 1982, 12
3	Xincheng Tomb in south grave area, 1998 嘉峪关新城南墓區墓	Jiayuguan	Coffin cover (1)	Sun and moon + try square and pair of compasses	Horizontal; intertwined	Wei Jin	Wang 2013, 60
4	Maozhuangzi tomb 毛莊子墓 2002	Jiayuguan	Coffin cover (2)	Male coffin: sun and moon Female coffin: try square and pair of compasses, below stars with the sun above and the moon below	Horizontal; intertwined Vertical; intertwined	Wei and early Western Jin	Kong et al. 2006, 76–77, 81
5	Yuquan Tomb M2 峪泉鎮墓 2011	Jiayuguan	Coffin cover (30 cm of upper part) (1)	Try square and pair of compasses (the sun and the moon due to damage unknown)	Horizontal, unknown owing to damage	Wei Jin	Wang 2013, 61
6	Dandanzitan Tomb 酒泉單墩子灘墓 1983/1988	Jiuquan	Coffin cover (1)	Sun and moon + try square and pair of compasses	Horizontal; not intertwined	Wei and Western Jin	Yue et al. 2003, 48; Jiuquan shi bowuguan 1998, 52
7	Sunjiashitan Tomb M1 孫家石灘墓 2005	Jiuquan	Coffin cover (2)	Sun and moon + try square and pair of compasses	Horizontal; intertwined	Wei Jin	Gansu sheng wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo 2017, 22–23, 25–26

No.	Tomb / Excavation time	City	Location / Number	Objects	Composition / (not) intertwined tails	Dating	Source
8	Sunjiashitan Tomb M3 孫家石灘墓 2005	Jiuquan	Coffin cover (2)	Sun and moon + try square and pair of compasses	Horizontal; intertwined (1), not intertwined (1)	Wei Jin	Gansu sheng wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo 2017, 25, 27-28
9	Gaotai 2003 GNMI0, Nanhua 高台2003GNMI0墓(南華) 2003	Gaotai	Coffin cover (1)	Sun and moon + try square and pair of compasses (?)	Vertical; intertwined	Wei and early Western Jin	Gansu sheng wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo 2005, 18, 28
10	Kushuikou M1 Tomb, Luotuocheng 苦水口M1墓(駱駝城) 1999	Gaotai	Zaojing ceiling (front room) (1)	Sun and moon + try square and pair of compasses	Vertical; intertwined	Wei and early Western Jin	Guo 2012, 55, 182-83
11	Luotuocheng Tomb in the southwest area 駱駝城墓西南地區 1994	Gaotai	Three bricks (front or middle room)	Sun and moon + try square and pair of compasses	Individual bricks; not intertwined	Wei and Western Jin	Shi 1997, 45, 48
12	Luotuocheng Tomb M2 駱駝城M2墓 2001	Gaotai	Eastern wall of the second room	Sun and moon + try square and pair of compasses	Horizontal	Wei and Western Jin	Gansu sheng wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo 2003, 47
13	Xusanwan 1999Q3 Tomb 許三灣墓群1999Q3 1999	Gaotai	One brick (front room)	Nüwa with a try square and the moon with a toad (human image)	One brick	Wei and early Western Jin	Guo 2012, 56-57, 183-84
14	Foyemiaowan tomb M1 佛爺廟灣墓M1 1991	Dunhuang	Zhaobi wall (at the top) (1)	Sun and moon + try square and pair of compasses	Two bricks, between Xiwangmu; not intertwined	Early Western Jin	Yin 2008, 98-99, 102-3, 105

The Iconographic and Stylistic Features of Fuxi and Nüwa in Han

Although the standard iconographical and visual mode of the two deities' representation that developed over time—with a human head and snake-like body, and holding specific objects in their hands—provides a structural framework that facilitates their identification, clear variations can be observed in their regional depictions. These were determined by geographical and chronological development, thus resulting in the evolution of the motif with its various local features.

On the basis of general classification and the typological approach, the Fuxi Nüwa motif can be categorized in two ways. While the first categorization is based on the physical appearance of their snake-like lower body, the second typifies the motif according to the attributes they usually hold in their hands. In the first approach, Fuxi and Nüwa can be divided into two types: a) individual figures arranged as a symmetrical pair; b) double figures depicted with intertwined snake-like bodies. In the late Western Han mural tombs in the Luoyang region, Fuxi and Nüwa are generally depicted as individual figures with long serpentine tails, each one occupying one of the two sides of the central ridge of the tomb chamber (Fig. 6). The type without interlacing tails is also seen, for example, on the pictorial stone from Tengzhou 滕州 in Shandong from the same period (Lai 2000, fig. 193). It was only from the middle period of Eastern Han dynasty onwards that the tails started to intertwine, with one of the best examples being seen in the depictions of the Shandong Wu Liang shrine 武梁祠 (Fig. 7). As well as being found in the Shandong/Jiangsu region, intertwined tails can also be commonly seen in Nanyang 南陽 in the present-day southern Henan and Sichuan regions; in the northern Henan and Shaanxi regions, by contrast, they are rarely depicted with intertwined tails. In the second approach, based on the standard attributes that they hold in their hands, Fuxi and Nüwa can be classified into four types: a)



Figure 6: Fuxi and Nüwa, Bu Qianqiu Tomb, Luoyang, Henan (After Huang 1996, 73).

Fuxi and Nüwa with the sun and the moon; b) Fuxi and Nüwa with a try square and a pair of compasses; c) Fuxi and Nüwa with the sun and the moon and a try square and a pair of compasses; and d) Fuxi and Nüwa with the auspicious longevity plant *lingzhi*.



Figure 7: Fuxi and Nüwa, Wu Liang shrine, Shandong (After Jiang 2000, fig. 49).

The first type of Fuxi and Nüwa, that is to say, with the sun and the moon, first appears in mural tombs of the Luoyang region in the period from the late Western Han to the early Eastern Han (Fig. 6). Furthermore, it can be also found in the area of Nanyang, and in the Shandong/Jiangsu, northern Shaanxi, and Sichuan/Chongqing regions. As demonstrated by Wang Yu (2018, 112), the motif appears to have spread from Luoyang to the southern Shandong and northern Jiangsu regions, as well as to northern Shaanxi and the more distant Sichuan/Chongqing regions, where it became particularly widespread during the later Eastern Han. The second type of Fuxi and Nüwa, with a try square and a pair of compasses, appears only in southern Shandong (Fig. 7), and only to a small extent. The third type, which is a combination of the first two types, must have developed in Shandong, as both the heavenly bodies and also the geometrical instruments are found separately linked to Fuxi and Nüwa (Fig. 8). It is most likely that the newly coined iconographic feature spread to distant regions of Sichuan/Chongqing, where it adorned the rear side of stone sarcophagi in the later Eastern Han period. As such, it further influenced the embellishment of stone sarcophagi in northern parts of Yunnan and Guizhou (Wang 2018, 111). The last type depicts Fuxi and Nüwa with the longevity mushroom *lingzhi* and is most frequently found in Nanyang. While some examples in Sichuan/Chongqing also bear a certain resemblance to *lingzhi*, others are found with forms that are mostly unrecognizable.

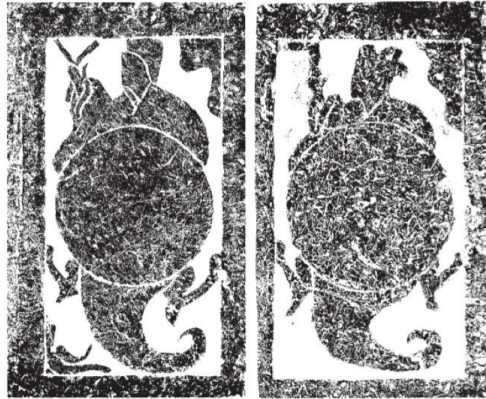


Figure 8: *Fuxi and Nüwa, Pictorial stones from Panjiatuan, Fei County, Shandong*
(After Jiao 2000, figs. 89 and 90).

Although the iconography of Fuxi and Nüwa is dominated by their attributes, a closer look reveals regional variations in their physical appearance. These secondary characteristics can be observed in the different shapes of the lower serpentine body, the appearance of the legs and wings, and the variations in the hats and hairstyles. A strong emphasis on the depiction of a thick lower serpentine body is evident in the Shandong region, which in some cases also witnessed the appearance of short legs along the upper part of the serpentine body (Figs. 8 and 14). In Henan Nanyang, the lower part is gradually transformed into a thinner winding tail with a particular emphasis on the legs, which become more massive and longer and take the form of three-toed animal paws and thus start to resemble the body of the dragon (Fig. 9). In northern Shaanxi, in the Dabaodang Tomb 大保當 dated to Eastern Han, this evolution extends to the legs gradually transforming into almost anthropomorphic form, leaving only the paws in the animal form, while the linkage to the snake image is transferred to a thin tail coming out of the legs (Fig. 10). Although such anthropomorphic imagery can also be seen in Sichuan,¹¹ an overview of other examples reveals a completely different development in southwestern China, where the craftsmen paid much more attention to presenting the serpentine tail, which extends into extremely thin interweaving tails, while the legs were significantly reduced (Fig. 11). All these variations reflect

11 Another interesting discovery is the stone sarcophagus from the Bishan Mandongpo Tomb M1 (璧山區蠻洞坡崖墓M1) in Chongqing with anthropomorphic images of both deities carved on the back of the stone sarcophagus. The linkage to serpentine imagery is revealed through two snakes heading towards the crotches of both deities (Lin et al. 2018). The image has been generally interpreted as a symbolic representation of reproduction and the wish of the tomb's owner for the prosperity of his descendants (Jia 2018, 42–44; Li 2011, 153).

the regional understanding of the origins of the couple and their connection with the animal world of the snake or dragon.



Figure 9: Fuxi and Nüwa, Qilin'gang Tomb, Nanyang, Henan (After Huang et al. 2008, 125).



Figure 10: Fuxi and Nüwa, Shenmu Dabaodang Tomb, Shaanxi (After Shaanxi sheng kaogu yanjiusuo et al. 2001, plate 9).



11a



11b

Figure 11: Fuxi and Nüwa, Sichuan:

- a) *Rear side of stone sarcophagus no. 4, Hejiang Zhangjiagou Tomb M2, Sichuan
(After Gao 2000, fig. 180).*
- b) *Rear side of stone sarcophagus in Xinsheng Tomb M1, Pi County, Sichuan
(After Gao 2000, fig. 127).*

Another secondary characteristic that developed in the two deities' early evolutionary phase relates to their wings, which range from feathered wings protruding from their backs to more stylistically designed smaller quills emerging from their shoulders. One of the earliest examples is to be found in the late Western Han Xin'an 新安 Tomb from Luoyang (Fig. 12), depicted in the same compositional manner as the famous ones in the Luoyang Bu Qianqiu 卜千秋墓 and Qianjingtou 淺井頭墓 Tombs. Within the horizontal composition of the celestial kingdom on the central flat part of the ceiling, Fuxi and Nüwa stretch out their long snake-like tails to embrace disks which enclose a three-legged bird and a toad signifying the sun and the moon respectively. Although Fuxi and Nüwa are depicted without wings in the Bu Qianqiu and Qianjingtou Tombs, in the Xin'an tomb the large feathered wings spreading from the back have become one of the most representative elements, which in their later development become a more common part of the iconographical image, although less frequently found than the legs.

While the appearance of the wings has been interpreted as the remnant of the mythological paradigm that connected Fuxi to the Dongyi 東夷 tribe with a bird as their totemic identity (Li 1988, 41), other scholars believe that the phenomenon of feathering is not an isolated feature in Han art, as was the case with the image of the Queen Mother of the West (Xiwangmu 西王母) and King Father of the East (Dongwanggong 東王公) at approximately the same time (Yang 1999, 70; Li 2011, 14). The addition of wings as a new element in the physical appearance of already existing mythological images would thus

correlate with the widespread notions of immortality and the immortal worlds. Immortals, who constitute an essential thread in Han funerary art, are likewise portrayed as feathered figures with dragon or snake tails, floating among clouds or climbing on mountains. The search for immortality reached its climax during the Han dynasty; by the middle of the Eastern Han dynasty, immortals were frequently found on ceilings, on pillars, or around doorways in the four main areas of tomb-relief production: Shandong/Jiangsu; Nanyang, province of Henan; Sichuan; and Shaanxi/Shanxi (Wallace 2011, 73). Fuxi and Nüwa in Han art are generally found among the motifs of the celestial world and are thus often flanked by immortals amidst cloudscaapes. Furthermore, examination of philosophical and mythological-literary sources has revealed a gradual transformation of the mythological images of Fuxi and Nüwa towards more abstract ideas of natural philosophy, in connection with which the divine pair represents the embodiment of the *yin yang* 陰陽 cosmic forces; as such, by weaving the warp and woof of the cosmos, they significantly contribute to the perpetual creation of the harmonic relations inside the cosmic visualization where the deceased could attain immortality.¹² As such, their linkage to various notions of immortality and immortals is seen in visual and textual sources, and could further explain the “featherization” of the two deities.

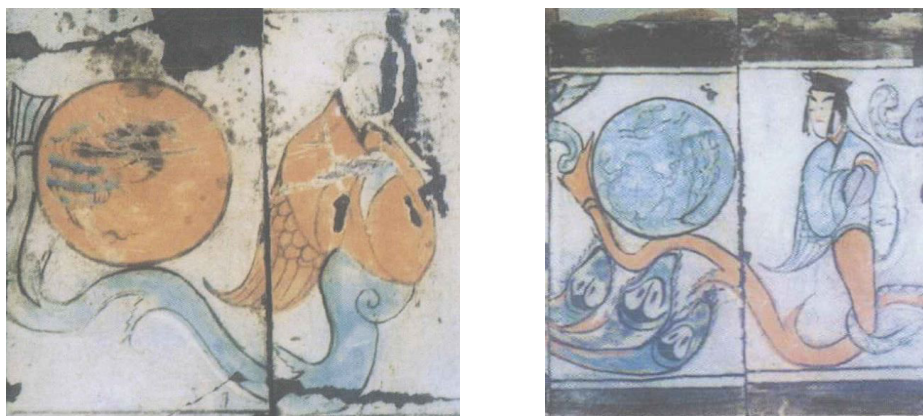


Figure 12: *Fuxi and Nüwa, Xin'an Tomb, Luoyang, Henan (After Shen 2006, 50).*

Although a single iconographic model was formed during the Han dynasty, variations in the representation of the secondary characteristics reflect not only the regional comprehension of the image and its requirements, but also variations

12 Symbolic interpretation of Han funerary art confirms the imbuing of these motifs with the theory of *yin yang wuxing* 陰陽五行, as already noted by Cheng Te-kun (Cheng 1957, 180). See also He 2002, 126–32; Wu 1987 and 1989; Vampelj Suhadolnik 2011.

observed within the same area. Such variations reflect the extreme adaptability of the motif, the self-consciousness of the Han artists in their representations and, furthermore, a vast repertoire of secondary characteristics to be selected by the artists and the tomb's owner. As such, the motif further reflects flexibility in the comprehension of the mythical creatures linked to the heavenly and immortal world and thus the overlapping of diverse notions or systems without distinct demarcations.

The Transmission of Iconographic and Stylistic Features from the Central Plains to the Western Periphery

The hybrid image of Fuxi and Nüwa not only continues to be present in the funerary art of the Gansu region in the period of the Wei and Western Jin dynasties but the popularity of the two deities even increases in comparison to their Han counterparts in the mural tombs. In 14 out of 31 Wei and Western Jin mural tombs in Gansu province,¹³ as many as 17 images of the divine pair and 4 individual images on separate bricks can be counted. In addition to these depictions on coffin covers and walls, visual representations of Fuxi Nüwa are also found on other materials such as pottery and hemp fabrics. The popularity of these images is clearly attested by a grey pottery pot decorated with the interlaced serpentine bodies and the images of the sun and the moon discovered by the Gansu Wuwei museum in 1982 (He 2001, 53) and by a piece of badly damaged hemp fabric with Fuxi and Nüwa excavated from Yuquan Tomb M2 (Wang 2013, 61).

Although Fuxi and Nüwa are generally characterized as being amongst the most common motifs found in Han grave art, they actually appear in only eight out of around seventy Han mural tombs:¹⁴ Bu Qianqiu Tomb 卜千秋, Qianjingtou Tomb 淺井頭, Xin'an Tomb 新安, Shaogou Tomb M61 燒溝, Yanshi Xincun Tomb 偃師

13 See note 7.

14 He Xilin (2001) in his statistical data listed 56 Han dynasty mural tombs that had been excavated by the end of the 20th century. Huang Peixian (2008) added another nine tombs, mostly new excavations since 2000. To this list, we should also add: a tomb in Yuncheng Wanrong County, Shanxi (2004, 山西運城萬榮縣壁畫墓) (Ding 2004), three Eastern Han tombs with murals, in Nanjiao street, Liaoyang (2004, 遼寧遼陽南郊街東漢壁畫墓); however, only one tomb (M1) contains more elaborate painted designs, while the other two tombs (M2 and M3) present only clouds and geometrical patterns (see Liaoning sheng wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo 2008), a Western Han tomb with murals in Cuizhuyuan, Xi'an (2008, 西安曲江翠竹園西漢壁畫墓) (Xi'an shi wenwu baohu kaogusuo 2010), and Qushuhao Tomb from Jingbian county in Shaanxi (2015, 陝西靖邊縣楊橋畔渠數壕東漢壁畫墓) (Shaanxi sheng kaogu yuanjiuyuan 2017). See also Vampelj Suhadolnik 2014, 42–44.

辛村, Beijiao shiyouzhan Tomb 北郊石油站 (all in Luoyang), Houyinshan Tomb¹⁵ 後銀山 (in Liangshan 梁山, Shandong), and Qushuhao Tomb 渠数壕 in the county of Jingbian 靖邊 in Shaanxi.¹⁶ Most of them are located in the city of Luoyang and are dated as originating from the late Western Han to the early Eastern Han period. The basic characteristics of their depiction can be summarized as follows: a) half human and half serpent figures; b) closely linked to the sun with a crow and moon with a toad;¹⁷ c) tails not intertwined; d) both either on the ceiling or upper part of the walls; and e) in juxtaposition with various spiritual creatures.

Objects in Fuxi Nüwa's Hands and Differences with Han Mural Tombs

While the sun and the moon are the predominant attributes in Han mural tombs, in the Gansu area their dominance is diminished by the presence of the other two attributes: a try square and a pair of compasses. The artisans commonly depicted the divine couple embracing the sun with a bird and the moon with a toad in front of their chests and each holding the square or the compasses in their other hand.¹⁸ Furthermore, after having never been depicted with interlaced tails in Han mural tombs, in the Gansu region their tails started to intertwine. However, these two

15 There is only one image with snake-like tail depicted on the western wall of the front room; however, the inscription Fuxi 伏羲 clearly defined the image as the Chinese indigenous deity Fuxi (Guan 1955, 44).

16 In a recently excavated tomb (2015) in Shaanxi, Fuxi and Nüwa appear among a rich depiction of the celestial world with an accurate astronomical chart with four palaces (*sigong* 四宫) and twenty-eight lunar lodges (*ershiba xiu* 二十八宿), depicted on the dome-shaped vault. The inscriptions Fuxi 伏羲 and Nüwa 女娲 at the top of the heads of two images with human upper part and long curving tail with black dots leave no doubts about the identification of both figures (Shaanxi sheng kaogu yuanjiuyuan 2017, 22).

17 Except for the depiction in the Qushuhao Tomb, in which the divine couple is paired with both attributes (the sun/moon and the try square/compasses) and the image with snake-like tail in the Houyinshan Tomb in Shandong without any objects in hands, but by inscription clearly defined as Fuxi (Guan 1955, 44); in all other examples, Fuxi and Nüwa are portrayed only with the sun and the moon. They either embrace them with their long tails or grasp them in hands.

18 The only exceptions are depictions on the female and male coffins in the Xincheng Tomb M1 and on the male coffin in the Maozhuangzi Tomb, both in Jiayuguan, where they are depicted only with the round discs in front of the chest. According to the excavation report on the Xincheng tombs, the two discs most probably represent the sun and the moon; however, the images inside the discs have been damaged and could not be clearly recognizable (Gansu sheng wenwudui et al. 1985, 18). The sun and the moon on the male coffin in the Maozhuangzi Tomb are also extremely simplified with few lines and hardly recognizable; however a part of their imagery remains, while a try square and a pair of compasses entirely disappear from their iconography. Furthermore, on individual bricks, Fuxi and Nüwa hold the sun and the moon in their hands and not in front of the stomach, while on the female coffin in the Maozhuangzi tomb the sun and the moon are portrayed below both deities as part of the larger stellar composition.

features were surely not a Gansu innovation, as they are also commonly seen in Han pictorial stone and brick tombs, indicating that a strong influence must have come from the carved images on stones and bricks. The most famous Han example comes from the western wall of the Wu Liang shrine in Shandong province, where Fuxi and Nüwa are part of a series of portraits of ancient sovereigns (Fig. 7). They are depicted with interlocking serpentine lower bodies, which are covered with scales. The figure on the right, clearly designated as Fuxi by the inscription, raises a try square with his right hand. Owing to the damage to the left-hand side of the image it is not possible to see the pair of compasses, which however is clearly depicted on other similar figures discovered at the Wu family shrines at the same location.

With regard to the geometrical tools designed to facilitate the drawing of straight lines and circles, *Huainanzi* records (He 1998, 158–59): “The east is wood. Its god is Tai Hao. His assistant is Gou Mang. He grasps the compass and governs spring.”¹⁹ The Eastern Han commentator Gao You 高誘 continues with an explanation, namely, that the god Tai Hao was the cognomen for Fuxi. Tai Hao is thus the main deity of the east, assisted by Gou Mang, who holds the compass and governs springs. As discussed by Wu Hung (1989, 160–61), Fuxi appears as the instructor and leader of the human race, as a kind of an interjacent figure between the divine and the human sphere, transferring cosmic patterns to human society. With numerous advanced inventions, he led people from a state of unconsciousness to an era of greater progress and better life. He taught them how to make a variety of tools and instruments, invented nets and showed them the arts of fishing and hunting, created the first records, defined the calendar system, invented the first musical instruments, and according to one version even invented fire. Among all these merits, the invention of divination through the Eight Trigrams (*bagua* 八卦) brought him the greatest glory and the most fulsome praise from later authors. This being the case, a try square in his hand symbolizes his ability to regulate the world.

By contrast, according to the sixth chapter of the *Huainanzi* (He 1998, 479), the goddess Nüwa repaired cosmic damage by patching the blue sky with gemstones of five colours and by using the legs of a giant turtle to replace the damaged pillars, thus rescuing the world and the entire cosmos from ruin. Accordingly, the pair of the compasses in her hand was presumably intended to symbolize her saving role in the heavens. The fact the two deities often hold devices used for the drawing and designing of straight lines or square and round forms thus constitutes a further allusion to their role in the creation of cosmic space—a round heaven and a square earth—and to their domination over both cosmic domains. While this

19 東方，木也，其帝太皞，其佐句芒，執規而治春。The English translation is from Major (1993, 70).

textual tradition would lead one to expect the try square to be attributed to Fuxi and the pair of compasses to Nüwa, *Huainanzi* assigns the compasses to Fuxi to enable him to govern the eastern part of the sky and control the wooden phase. This kind of interchangeability is also present in their visual representation, where Fuxi and Nüwa take turns holding the pair of compasses and the try square, as is the case in Han art and consistently continues to be so in the province of Gansu.²⁰

Shandong Regional Style and its Influence

Both the new features (a try square / a pair of compasses and the interlacement of their tails) commonly seen in Gansu (as compared to their Han counterparts from Luoyang) had already evolved in the Shandong area during the Eastern Han dynasty and spread to surrounding areas. Xin Lixang (2000), in his comprehensive work on Han pictorial stones, has discussed their cross-regional influence and developmental pattern. He categorized the manufacturing of pictorial stones in terms of five regions,²¹ among which, in late Eastern Han, the Shandong region style was the most influential and spread to a large geographical region stretching from western Shanxi and northern Shaanxi to south of the Changjiang River. On this basis, I would argue that the Shandong regional style also spread to the western periphery and became the model for the depiction of Fuxi and Nüwa in the Gansu region, where it further evolved into a unique pattern of iconographic collections of all attributes and other physical features, as seen in local variations which were likewise mostly influenced by the Shandong pattern in late Eastern Han.

Although the first horizontal type in Gansu region can be easily associated with the horizontal depiction of the heavenly kingdom in the Luoyang tombs in the late Western Han and Xin Mang periods, the attributes and physical features distinguish them from the Luoyang depictions. While in Luoyang the sun and the moon are portrayed as two separate objects next to Fuxi in Nüwa, in Gansu they are integrated into the consistent image of the divine couple by being given a fixed position in front of the chest, with the deities being seen grasping a try square or a pair of compasses. This combined iconographical imagery did not appear in

20 In ten examples, Fuxi is associated with a pair of compasses, while in six examples he holds a try square. The intertwined image of both deities in the 2003 GNM10 Tomb in Gaotai portrayed on the inner side of the coffin cover was substantially subjected to stylization. The snake-like body and objects in their hands are presented merely with a flow of strokes, which might represent the geometrical tools, the longevity plant *lingzhi* or even some other unrecognizable objects. The object in Nuwa's hand slightly resembles the pair of compasses; thus, considering the fact that in all other examples they hold the pair of compasses and try square, I have interpreted them as geometrical tools as well.

21 The five regions are: Shandong and neighbouring regions, Southwestern Henan with Nanyang as its centre, Northern Shaanxi and Western Shanxi, Sichuan and Northern Yunnan, and Luoyang with its surroundings (Xin 2000, 13–15).

Luoyang but, as discussed earlier, most probably evolved in the Shandong region before spreading to other Chinese territories (Wang 2018, 110). It became particularly widespread on the rear of stone sarcophagi in the Sichuan and Chongqing regions. However, in Sichuan the sun and the moon are not portrayed in front of the chest, but are generally lifted up with the hands, while the try square and pair of compasses would often take different forms such as a long stick, knife or flag, or other mostly unrecognizable forms (Figs. 11 and 13). In addition, the practice of depicting the two deities, which are repeatedly seen leaning against each other, embracing or even kissing, with longer and thinner tails as compared with other regional variations clearly reflects the fact that the Sichuan style deviated from the standard scheme and continued to present highly distinctive local characteristics not seen in the Gansu region.

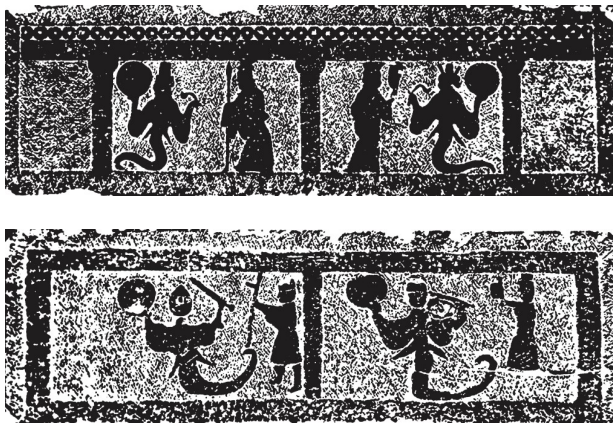


Figure 13: Fuxi and Nüwa on the stone sarcophagus, Bishan, Chongqing, Sichuan
(After Wang 2018, 111, figs. 4 and 5).

By contrast, examples from the Shandong region from the late Eastern Han feature almost the same compositional scheme, iconographic elements, and physical characteristics as in Gansu; see, for example, Fuxi Nüwa on the *zaojing* in the rear chamber of the Panjiatuan Tomb 潘家疃 from Fei 费 County (Fig. 8), on pillars in the Wubaizhuang Tomb 吳白莊 in Linyi 臨沂 district (Fig. 14), and on the pictorial stone unearthed from the Shandong Linyi Automobil Technical School 臨沂汽車技校 (Fig. 15). In all these examples, Fuxi and Nüwa embrace the sun and the moon in front of their chests and hold either a try square or a pair of compasses in one of their hands. This was clearly inherited in the western periphery and is in evidence in nearly all Fuxi-Nüwa images.²² Even though the position of

22 See also note 18.

the sun and the moon varies in Han depictions,²³ in Gansu the location of the sun and the moon is fixed to the same position in front of the chest. The only exception is the third type of four individual images, as discussed above.



Figure 14: Fuxi and Nüwa, Wubaizhuang Tomb, Linyi, Shandong
(After Jiao 2000, left: fig. 19, right: fig. 23).



Figure 15: Fuxi, pictorial stone unearthed from Linyi Automobile Technical School, Shandong
(After Jiao 2000, 39).

23 The deities variously embrace them with their longish snake-like tail, hold them in their hands at both sides, raise them above their heads, or embrace them in front of the chest. For further discussion on different arrangements of the sun and the moon next to Fuxi-Nüwa image see Zhao (2019).

Furthermore, similarity in the composition of intertwined serpentine tails can be observed between the vertical composition of Fuxi and Nüwa on the female coffin cover in the Maozhuangzi Tomb in Jiayuguan (Fig. 3a) and on the Wu Liang wall carvings (Fig. 7). Shown with a stylishly shaped face, pointed eyebrows, and moustache in the form of a *ba* 八 character, Fuxi turns towards Nüwa, who is portrayed with elegant curves suggesting the roundness of her feminine face. They both wear short robes with wide sleeves and, just like their counterparts in Wu Liang shrine, grasp a try square and a pair of compasses. Further resemblance is apparent in their lower serpentine tails, which are in both cases covered by scales. It is as if the craftsmen in Gansu were very familiar with this pattern in Shandong and attempted to realize the same composition, iconography, and style on the coffin cover, with the only difference being the shape of Fuxi's cap.

A particularly strong resemblance—in compositional scheme and physical appearance—can also be observed between the Wubaizhuang Tomb in Linyi, Shandong (Fig. 14) and the depiction of Fuxi and Nüwa on the *zaojing* of Kushuikou Tomb M1 in Luotuocheng in Gansu (Fig. 16). This time, even the caps on the heads are similar, as in Wubaizhuang Tomb Fuxi is wearing the three-peaked hat. This could confirm that the shape of the Fuxi's hat in Gansu also originated in the Shandong/Jiangsu and surrounding areas and subsequently spread to Gansu, Sichuan and other remote areas. Not only do both figures accord iconographically, but their similarity is also reflected in the compositional design. With their right hands they grasp a pair of compasses in a similar manner, while the sun rises from the waists in just the same way. At the same time, the legs take the form of tiger paws; which are accorded greater importance and developed more elaborately in the Gansu area.



Figure 16: Fuxi and Nüwa, Kushuikou Tomb M1 in Luotuocheng, Gaotai, Gansu (After Guo 2012, 183).

Development of a Unique Pattern in the Gansu Region

This visual correlation confirms that the figures of Fuxi and Nüwa in the Gansu area inherited the classical Shandong pattern—the sun and the moon in front of the chest, one holding a try square and the other a pair of compasses, the three-peaked hat on Fuxi and tiger’s paws on both—and that this was further elaborated into a unique pattern distinctive to the Gansu region. While in the Shandong region the three-peaked hat and the tiger’s paws do not appear consistently—even in the same tomb the artisans do not follow the same depiction style, see for example the depiction of Fuxi with legs and Nüwa without in the Wubaizhuang Tomb in Shandong (Fig. 14)—in the Gansu region the tiger’s paw and the three-peaked hat became a common feature in all three types of depiction.

Except for two vertical compositions (one on the female coffin cover in the Maozhuangzi Tomb, and the other in 2003 GNM10 Tomb in Gaotai, also on the coffin cover) and three examples in the horizontal composition in the Sunjiashitan Tomb, all other examples feature the two legs extended to either side of the serpentine body. If the visual effect in Jiayuguan is still focused on the winding serpentine tail, in vertical depictions in Gaotai (Figs. 2 and 16) legs that were previously shorter have been transformed into stronger limbs with vertical stripes on them, further emphasizing the similarity with tiger’s paws. Two paws, one outstretched and the other with the heel raised from the ground, create a sense of movement that is especially discernible in the third type of Fuxi Nüwa image in Gansu. This kind of feeling of movement cannot be traced back to the conventional representations of Fuxi and Nüwa in Han and must have been the result of adaptation to the construction style of brick tombs in Gansu.

During the Eastern Han Fuxi was commonly shown wearing a cap in the form of a *jinxianguan* 進賢冠, a formal headdress usually worn by officials (Li 2011, 152), also seen in the Wu Liang shrine. In Gansu, the cap had the shape of a three-peaked mountain—the so-called “mountain-like hat” (*shanzixing guan* 山字形冠) with three peaks protruding above the head. In the course of time it evolved into the most recognizable feature of Fuxi in the western periphery.²⁴ Wu Hung (1989, 118–19) has discussed the Han understanding of the Kunlun mountain 崑崙山, its visual and textual description in the form of three peaks, and its connection with Xiwangmu, the greatest deity of the immortal Western paradise. In the East Sea, a similar notion was extended to the Sanshen mountain 三神山, which was composed of three peaks: Fanghu 方壺, Yingzhou 瀛洲, and Penglai 蓬萊. Some scholars therefore believe that the source of the mountain-like hat on the mythological

24 It appears in all but one case, seen in the image of Fuxi in the Xincheng Tomb M1, Jiayuguan.

figures²⁵ must be related to the legend of the Kunlun and Sanshen Mountains, and must thus symbolize the immortal fairyland (He 2008). This would perfectly correspond to the funerary context of Fuxi's frequent depiction among swirling clouds on coffin covers in the Gansu region. On the contrary, on the wall carvings in the Wu Liang shrine, Fuxi and Nüwa are depicted among eleven ancient sovereigns. Fuxi appears at the beginning as the first leader and as a kind of instructor for all other rulers and for all humankind. Therefore, the official crown is more appropriate for this role as it further confirms his leading role in the human world.

As argued, the Gansu Fuxi Nüwa image was patterned on the Shandong model, but it also embraced other certain elements and concepts drawn together during Han and thus evolved its own unique pattern. One such element is also that of wings (Fig. 1c), which appear in some cases in Gansu but are rarely seen in Shandong. An iconographic conglomeration of all attributes thus developed into a single image, which became a unique regional pattern representative of the multi-dynamic processes of cultural transmission. Mass migration from various parts of the Chinese territory to the Hexi corridor at the end of the Han dynasty led to the transmission of local versions of individual cultural ideas and customs through various channels. Various forms of cultural information transfer that took place vertically between generations (parent-offspring relationship), horizontally between members of the same generation, and obliquely via the various mechanisms of social learning led to a specifically “unique pattern of cumulative cultural evolution” (Tomasello 2009, 45).²⁶ Turning to the visual vocabulary and iconographic representations, such a unique pattern is hence reflected in a combined canonized representation of the two indigenous deities made up of all the individual visual attributes which appear separately in Han art in regional variations. In the theory of cultural transmission known as “heterogeneity” (polymorphism) (Cavalli-Sforza et al. 1982, 20), in the context of visual vocabulary we may justifiably talk of iconographic polymorphism, as clearly evidenced by the case study of Fuxi and Nüwa in the Gansu region. To further strengthen our arguments, we should also look into the migration processes during and after the Han dynasty.

Migration and Regional Connections

Hanshu 漢書 (*History of the Western Han*) records the Chinese military achievements “west of the [Yellow] river” (Hexi 河西) against Xiongnu and the gradual establishment of four new commanderies in what is now the province of Gansu: Jiuquan, the first to be established, was followed by Zhang Ye, Dunhuang, and

25 During the Eastern Han with the formation of the Xiwangmu's counterpart, the mountain-like hat is often associated with Dongwangong.

26 For the theory of cultural transmission see Schönplflug (2009) and Cavalli-Sforza et al. (1982).

Wuwei.²⁷ These four commanderies later developed into flourishing centres and became some of the most desired destinations for refugees seeking to escape decades of disorder, calamities, and famine towards the end of the Han dynasty and after its collapse.

There were two massive waves of migration to the Hexi Corridor. The first was part of the expansionist strategy policy of Han Wudi (r. 141–87 BCE) in accordance with the principle “move people to fill in”²⁸ (徙民以實之), that is to say, to fill the empty frontier commanderies in order to open up new lands and expand the irrigation system. These four commanderies primarily functioned as the basis for further military operations in the west with the specific aim of diminishing the power of Xiongnu by “cutting off their right arm”²⁹ and thus separating the powerful Qiang tribe of the Chuo Qiang 婁羌 from the Xiongnu. The “Treatise of Geography” in *Hanshu* further elucidates the Han purpose of splitting the southern Qiang tribe from Xiongnu and informs us about the new settlers arriving in the western area. They were poor lower-class people from the Guandong 關東 region, mainly persons who had committed crimes of excessive revenge or had little or no filial obedience.³⁰ Although it was not mandatory to move to the western area, they were encouraged to do so by being granted noble titles and a certain degree of financial support granted (Sun 2011, 133). Dispatching warriors to serve in distant expeditions, where they were required to farm the conquered land to provide food for the army and to expand the agricultural land in the famous *tuntian* 屯田 state-promoted system, additionally increased the number of Han immigrants, whose population rose to 280,211 immigrants registered in 71,270 households by the end of the Western Han.³¹ Although the population statistics in *Hanshu* are most likely incomplete and exclude provisional military officials, soldiers, prisoners, and some other ordinary inhabitants, the high number clearly testifies to the high proportion of residents resulting from the migration policy. It is also clearly noted that people migrated from the Guandong region, which historically refers to the region east of Hangu pass 函谷關 and Yao mountain 嶠山 located in what is now the city of Lingbao 靈寶市 in between the cities of Luoyang and Xi’an and extending over much of what are now the provinces of Shanxi, Henan, Hebei, and Shandong.

27 See, for example “Wudi ji” 武帝記 (“Annals of Emperor Wu”), “Dili zhi” 地理志 (“Treatise on Geography”), and “Xiyu zhuan” 西域傳 (“Records of the Western Regions”) of the *Hanshu*.

28 *Hanshu*, “Wudi ji” 武帝記 (“Annals of Emperor Wu”): 乃分武威、酒泉地置張掖、敦煌郡，徙民以實之 (Ban 1962, 189).

29 *Hanshu*, “Wei Xian zhuan” 韋賢傳 (“Biography of Wei Xian”): 起敦煌、酒泉、張掖，以高婁羌，裂匈奴之右肩 (Ban 1962, 3126).

30 *Hanshu*, “Dili zhi” 地理志 (“Treatise of Geography”): 自武威以西，本匈奴昆邪王、休屠王地，武帝時攘之，初置四郡，以通西域，高絕南羌、匈奴。其民或以關東下貧，或以報怨過當，或以諍逆亡道，家屬徙焉 (Ban 1962, 1644–45).

31 *Hanshu*, “Dili zhi” (Ban 1962, 1612–14).

The second large wave of migration came during the turmoil towards the end of the Han dynasty and after the Yongjia disorder 永嘉之亂 (310–312). This time the migration process was not organized and initiated by the government but, rather, was a spontaneous phenomenon resulting from war, destruction, and hunger forcing people to search for better living conditions. In addition to migrating to the south in search of new abodes, these people also saw a logical alternative in the western periphery, which with its long migration history was already a region with stable economic and cultural foundations. Moreover, the migrants were not solely military officials, generals, soldiers, prisoners, or people of lower social status: on the contrary, the inner core of the migration populace was formed by wealthy and influential families. Once they had settled down, members of their families were appointed to official positions at various levels. The relevant official records of the time, which abound in high praise for these regions, indicate that cultural and social activities were carried on at a high level in the western territory.³²

Sun Yan (2011, 137–38), in research on the Han and Jin family background from the Hexi corridor, shows that the western nobility engaged in a wide range of the academic and scholarly activities; during the Wei-Jin periods, this ennobled class consisted of the descendants of officials or criminals from the first wave of migrations who had settled in this area and became local aristocrats and influential persons, and of wealthy recent immigrants who had migrated to escape the political instability in their home country after the Han. They were mostly engaged in the study of Confucian classics and their commentaries and apocryphal text tradition, and thus had a good command of classics and history. Moreover, some of them—members of Suo 索 and Fan 汎 families—also studied astronomy, divination, calendar-making, and cosmology based on the cosmic forces *yin* and *yang*, incantation and magic. Their scholarly engagement clearly reflects their intellectual tendencies, which were founded on the Western Han scholarly tradition of *yin yang wuxing* 陰陽五行 cosmology and related issues in the central plain. Such cosmological notions and ideas were transmitted to the funerary context of the time and were continued in the western periphery. To return to the subject of the present article, one of the common motifs with which they attempted to embody the universal pair of *yin yang* was the depiction of Fuxi and Nüwa and their attributes, the popularity of which (as demonstrated earlier) was increasing in the west. The popularity of these figures and the iconographic conglomeration of all their attributes into a single image not only suggest that they had a role related to the afterlife, but also indicates the desire of migrants to maintain close contact with their traditional culture, transmitted vertically through several generations

32 See *Hanshu*, “Dili zhi”; *Hou Hanshu* 後漢書 (*Book of the Later Han*), “Kong Feng zhuan” 孔奮傳 (“Biography of Kong Fen”); *Weishu* 魏書 (*History of the Northern Wei*), “Hu Sou zhuan” 胡叟傳 (“Biography of Hu Sou”).

and horizontally among peers who might have just recently migrated from the Guandong region to the west.

The lack of evidence regarding the more precise origins of the migrants makes it difficult to entirely reconstruct the migration waves, but biographies of influential persons in official historical records sometimes reveal ancestral lineage of wealthy and influential local clans in the Hexi corridor, such as the Yang 楊 of Huayin³³ 華陰 (modern city of Weinan 渭南 in Shaanxi), the Duan 段 of Tianshui³⁴ 天水 from southeastern Gansu, the Dou 竇 of Fufeng³⁵ 扶風 in northwestern Shaanxi, or the Yin 陰 of Nanyang³⁶ 南陽 in southern Henan, to mention only a few. Furthermore, some of the Dunhuang manuscripts discovered in the Dunhuang library cave in the early 20th century also record prominent local clans and their genealogies, such as the the Zhai 翟 of Dunhuang, the Yin 陰 of Wuwei, the Suo 索 of Julu 巨鹿 and the Zhang 張 of Qinghe 清河 (both from modern Xingtai city 邢台 in southern Hebei), the Yan 閻 of Taiyuan 太原 (modern Taiyuan in central Shanxi), the Cao 曹 of Qiaojun 譙郡 (modern Bozhou 亳州 in northwestern Anhui), the Fan 汎 of Jibei 濟北 (modern Shandong).³⁷ Therefore, on the basis of these documents it can be seen that the majority of the migrants came from the Guanzhong 關中 plain and the Guandong 關東 region, that is from the surroundings of these areas in what is now Tianshui in the easternmost part of Gansu, the cities of Baoji (Fufeng), Xianyang, Xi'an, and Weinan (Hua Yin) in Shaanxi, from Taiyuan in central Shanxi, Xingtai in southern Hebei, Nanyang (Xinye) in southern Henan, and Bozhou and other places in northern Anhui, and also from western Shandong, at that time under the jurisdiction of the Jibei commandery. In addition to having arrived from the surrounding areas of the Han capitals Chang'an and Luoyang, it is evident that many migrants not only came from the provinces bordering the Shandong province but also directly from it.

Of particular interest are the Fan 汎 and Zhang 張 families from Dunhuang and Wuwei respectively. The ancestors of both families can be traced back to the surroundings of what is now Shandong province. In Dunhuang manuscript S1889, "Dunhuang Fanshi renwu zhuan" 敦煌汎氏人物傳 ("The Genealogy of the Fan Clan of Dunhuang"), we find that the Fan clan arrived in Dunhuang from Luxian

33 See *Hanshu*, "Yang Yun zhuan" 楊惲傳 ("Biography of Yang Yun").

34 See *Hou Hanshu*, "Duan Jiong zhuan" 段熲傳 ("Biography of Duan Jiong").

35 See *Hou Hanshu*, "Dou Rong zhuan" 竇融傳 ("Biography of Dou Rong").

36 See *Jinshu* 晉書 (*Book of Jin*), "Liang Wuzhao wang Li Xuansheng zhuan" 涼武昭王李玄盛傳 ("Biography of Li Xuansheng, king Wuzhao of Liang").

37 For the introduction to Dunhuang manuscripts and its local prominent clans see Jiang (1992). For the analysis of the Han and Jin family background see also Sun (2011, 132–46).

盧縣 of Jibei 濟北 in 28 BCE.³⁸ Jibei was a regional commandery with its seat at Lu, which historically denotes the area to the northeast of present-day Pingyin County 平陰縣, south of Changqing 長清, located to the southwest of what is now the city of Jinan 濟南, the capital of Shandong province (Xiong 2017, 292). A group of Western Han Jibei royal tombs have been found in the vicinity of the Jinan city in the Changqing district,³⁹ reflecting the rich history of the Han Jibei kingdom/commandery in this region.

The lineage of the prominent statesman and governor of Liangzhou Zhang Gui 張軌 (215–314) also originates in the vicinity of the Shandong area. According to his biography in *Jinshu*, he was from Wushi 烏氏 in Anding 安定 (modern Pingliang 平涼, Gansu) and was the seventeenth-generation descendant of the Western Han Changshan Jing king Zhang Er 常山景王張耳.⁴⁰ His father was Zhang Wen 張溫, who was an official at the court notable for having been responsible for “sumptuous repasts”. The *Shiliuguo Chunqiu* 十六春秋國別傳 provides even richer information about his ancestors. His grandfather is supposed to have been Zhang Lie 張烈, who was prefect of the county magistracy in Waihuang⁴¹ 外黃, which is now Minquan County 民權縣 northwest of Shangqiu 商丘, bordering on Shandong province to the east.⁴²

If this is correct, the cases of the Fan and Zhang Gui families manifest the dynamic regional connections between the central territory of what is now in the provinces of Shandong and eastern Henan and the western periphery in the Gansu region. As they possessed a mastery of the classical Confucian learning and practised the virtue of filial piety, both of which were passed on from generation to generation, they must certainly have been aware of the trends in the artistic and architectural design of that region’s tombs, which were thus further transmitted to the west and expanded into the local funerary customs. In addition, many migrants came from the immediate surrounding areas, which in the late Eastern Han were already under the influence of the Shandong production of carved pictorial stones and their iconographic-stylistic design. The unique pattern of Fuxi and Nüwa based on the Shandong model is hence a logical continuation of such migration flows.

38 自濟北盧縣，徙居敦煌，代代相生遂為敦煌望族 (Yang 1997, 159). See also Lin et al. 2009, 53.

39 For the archaeological report see Shandong daxue kaoguxi et al. 1997.

40 *Jinshu*, “Zhang Gui zhuan” 張軌傳 (“Biography of Zhang Gui”): 張軌字士彥，安定烏氏人，漢常山景王耳十七代孫也 ... 父溫，為太官令 (Fang 1974, 2221).

41 *Shiliuguo Chunqiu biezhuàn* 十六春秋國別傳, “Qian Liang lu” 前涼錄 (“Records of Former Liang”): 張軌，字士彥，安定烏氏人，漢常山王耳十七世孫。祖烈，魏外黃令，父溫，太官令。(Chinese text project).

42 *Henan tongjian* 河南通鑑, Xihan 西漢 (2001).

Distinction between the Centre and Western Periphery

Finally, the distinctions between the centre and western periphery in the appearance of the two deities' images should not be left unmentioned. The strategic position of the Hexi district not only produced a lively artistic exchange between central China and Gansu province, but also accounts for its role as a major gateway between China and the Central Asian regions. In her research on early Buddhist art in China and Central Asia, Marlyn Martin Rhie (1999) shows a close connection between this region and foreign states, especially in the years 265–290, which is known to be the most prosperous period of the unified Western Jin Dynasty. Such foreign influences can be seen in the Maozhuangzi Tomb (male coffin cover) and Sunjiashitan Tomb (female coffin cover), both in Jiayuguan. Iconographic components of Fuxi Nüwa imagery are the same as in all other examples, the main distinction appearing in the depiction of their face characteristics and cloths. The large eyes clearly indicate that some foreign influences must have been at work. Furthermore, the abundance of folds in the Maozhuangzi Tomb hints at the drapery formulation known from Buddhist art.

While in two examples foreign influences have come to bear on the stylistic design of the divine couple, the main difference is not seen in the depiction but, rather, in the change of location. During the Han dynasty, Fuxi and Nüwa are generally depicted on the ceiling and upper parts of the walls or on the main and side pillars of the tomb's door. In Gansu, 14 out of 17 Fuxi-Nüwa depictions appear on the inner side of the wooden coffin cover. This location seems to have been particularly popular in the Jiayuguan/Jiuquan region, as all but one appear in this district. In a slightly later period, in the Gaotai region around 160 km to the east of Jiayuguan, the divine couple returns to the chamber walls. The occurrence of Fuxi and Nüwa on the coffin cover can be traced back to the middle period of the Eastern Han Dynasty onwards, being particularly abundant in Sichuan region, mostly on the rear side of the stone sarcophagi.⁴³ However, their appearance differs considerably from the depictions in the Gansu province, and at the same time repeatedly hints at showing intimacy, which can hardly be perceived in the Gansu representations.

It is furthermore interesting to notice that the motifs that are related to the immortal paradise and the journey of the soul were moved to the *zhaobi* wall, while the motifs whose role was to weave the net of the cosmos and other observable celestial bodies who would contribute to the creation of the outer cosmos moved nearer to the body of a deceased and, to be more specific, to the coffin cover. In addition to Fuxi and Nüwa, Xiwangmu and Dongwangong, that is to say, another divine pair commonly seen in Han art representing *yin* and *yang* forces, also appear on the coffin cover. Examples can be seen in the Xincheng Tombs M6 and

43 For the cliff tombs and decorated stone sarcophagi from Sichuan see Elias (2019).

M13.⁴⁴ Moreover, in the Sunjiashitan Tomb M3 孫家石灘 in Jiuquan from the early Western Jin period we can even see the depiction of stars, the sun, and the moon on the inner side of the coffin cover (Gansu sheng wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo 2005, 32). What does this change mean? Does it reflect a different understanding of roles of the two deities and thus of the entire cosmic representation? While the symbolic representation of these images is beyond the scope of this paper, the subject certainly needs further examination.

Conclusion

This case study of Fuxi and Nüwa in the Wei and Western Jin mural tombs in the Gansu area, based on comparative iconographic-stylistic analysis and textual research into the origins of the migrants, reveals a unique pattern based on an iconographic conglomeration of all attributes and other physical characteristics, which was gradually built on the understanding of images by the migrants and their descendants from Shandong and surrounding regions from central plains. The general characteristics of Fuxi-Nüwa image in the Gansu region are therefore the sun with a bird and the moon with a toad in front of their chests, a try square and a pair of compasses in one of their hands, the three-peaked hat on Fuxi's head, tiger's paws, and in some examples wings. This being the case, they show a close connection with the compositional, iconographic and stylistic design of Fuxi and Nüwa in the Shandong area and neighbouring countries.

The Shandong influence is certainly not an isolated phenomenon. It is also revealed in many other scenes and motifs in tombs such as the harvest, piles of grains, resting cows and bulls, or depictions of the tomb's owner. As Zheng Yan (2002, 163) has already observed, similar depictions of the harvest scene or farming and the depiction of tomb's owner are seen in the Shandong Yi'nán tomb discovered in 1954 in the village of Beizhai 北寨 and Dunhuang Foyemiaowan Tomb M37. Auspicious omens arranged in nine layers of four images on the *zhao-bi* wall in Foyemiaowan Tomb M133 are also well represented on the ceiling of the Wu Liang shrine in Shandong, while the frequent depiction of figures with an ox or cock head and human body in the Xincheng and Foyemiaowan tombs can likewise be traced back to the southwest region of Shandong (Zheng 2002, 162). This gives further evidence for the spreading of the Shandong pattern not only to surrounding provinces but also to the more remote borders, as has been clearly revealed by the case study of Fuxi and Nüwa.

44 For Xincheng Tomb M1 see the archaeological report on eight Xincheng tombs in Jiayuguan (Gansu sheng wenwudui et al. 1985, 18, 23), for Xincheng Tomb M13 see the archaeological report on tombs nos. 12 and 13 (Jiayuguan shi wenwu guanlisuo 1982, 12).

Furthermore, the transfer process in which the cultural information was carried geographically from centre to periphery, and also handed down from one generation to the next, lead to emergence of a “composite” style of both indigenous deities, which apart from typical Shandong elements also incorporated other regional variations (wings, larger legs, tiger’s paws). The image of Fuxi and Nüwa, based on the Shandong model, thus evolved into an iconographic tradition of its own.

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Chinese-Buddhist Encounter: Synthesis of Fuxi-Nüwa and *Cintamani* in Early Medieval Chinese Art*

Fan ZHANG**

Abstract

The standard pictorial formula of Fuxi and Nüwa, a pair of indigenous Chinese deities, started to absorb new motifs from Buddhist art during the early medieval period when Buddhism became more prominent in China. In this paper, I focus on the juxtaposition of Fuxi-Nüwa and *cintamani*, a magic Buddhist jewel, depicted on the ceiling of the corridor in the tomb of Lady Poduoluo, Pingcheng, Shanxi (435 CE). Through a detailed visual analysis, I explain the multiple meanings embedded in the combination of the Chinese mythological figures with the Buddhist symbol in the funerary space, thus challenging the previous studies that understand *cintamani* only as a substitute for the sun and moon. This paper furthers the discussion on the hybrid image by investigating the mural painting on the ceiling of Mogao Cave 285 in Dunhuang. Despite their different spatial and temporal contexts, both the tomb of Lady Poduoluo and Mogao Cave 285 present a similar pictorial formula, featuring the hybridization of *cintamani* and the Fuxi-Nuwa pair. This phenomenon invites us to explore the transmission of such motifs. I, therefore, situate the production of the syncretic scheme of Fuxi-Nüwa with *cintamani* within a broader historical context and examine the artistic exchange between Pingcheng and Dunhuang by tracing the movements of images, artisans, and patrons in early medieval China.

Keywords: Fuxi-Nüwa, *cintamani*, mural painting, hybridity, cultural exchange

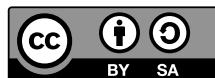
Kitajsko-budistično srečanje: sinteza Fuxija in Nüwe s kamnom *cintamani* v zgodnji kitajski srednjeveški umetnosti

Izvleček

Standardna slikovna formula upodobitve Fuxija in Nüwe, dveh kitajskih avtohtonih božanstev, je začela vsrkavati nove motive iz budistične umetnosti v obdobju Wei Jin

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Nanbei, ko je budizem postal bolj prepoznaven na Kitajskem. V pričujočem prispevku se osredotočam na jukstapozicijo Fuxija in Nüwe z magičnim budističnim draguljem – kamnom *cintamani*, naslikanima na stropu hodnika v grobnici Gospe Poduoluo v mestu Pingcheng v provinci Shanxi (iz leta 435). S pomočjo podrobne vizualne analize razložim večpomenskost upodobitve, ki se odraža v kombinaciji kitajskih mitoloških figur z budističnim simbolom v kontekstu grobnega prostora, pri čemer postavljam pod vprašaj pretekle študije, ki interpretirajo *cintamani* kot zamenjavo za sonce in luno. V nadaljevanju se diskusija razširi na raziskovanje upodobitve na stropu budistične jame Mogao št. 285 v kraju Dunhuang. Čeprav gre za različne prostorske in časovne kontekste, tako grobnica Gospe Poduoluo kot budistična jama Mogao št. 285 prikazujeta podobno slikovno upodobitev, ki se kaže skozi hibridizacijo Fuxija in Nüwe ter kamna *cintamani*. Ta pojav nas nadalje vodi v raziskovanje prenosa tovrstnih motivov, pri čemer umestim produkcijo sinkretične sheme Fuxija in Nüwe s kamnom *cintamani* v okvir širšega zgodovinskega konteksta in na osnovi prenosa motivov in migracije obrtnikov ter mecenov raziskujem umetniške izmenjave med krajema Pingcheng in Dunhuang v obdobju Wei Jin Nanbei.

Ključne besede: Fuxi in Nüwa, kamen *cintamani*, stensko slikarstvo, hibridnost, kulturna izmenjava

As Buddhism gradually became established in China, it encountered and engaged with local beliefs in various ways during the early medieval period. This process impacted concepts of the afterlife and inspired novel visual vocabularies in Chinese art. In this paper, I focus on the hybrid image of Fuxi-Nüwa 伏羲女媧, a pair of Chinese indigenous deities, and *cintamani* 摩尼寶珠, a magical Buddhist jewel. The synthesis of Fuxi-Nüwa and *cintamani* is a new design in mural paintings produced in the fifth and sixth centuries. Through a contextualized analysis of the hybrid image in its architectural space and historical background, I hope to shed light on encounters and interactions between Buddhism and local Chinese beliefs during the early medieval period.

The example that will be highlighted in this article is from the tomb of Lady Poduoluo 破多羅 in Pingcheng 平城, modern-day Datong 大同 in Shanxi Province. Dated to 435 CE, the tomb of Lady Poduoluo offers the earliest visual evidence to date regarding the synthesis of *cintamani* and Fuxi-Nüwa. Situating *cintamani* in the funerary space, this paper explores how the Buddhist symbol was incorporated into a myriad of Chinese iconographies. I argue that the juxtaposition of Fuxi-Nüwa with *cintamani* embodies multiple layers of meaning and fulfils different functions in the burial context, including the pursuit of immortality, rebirth after death, protection of the funerary space, and signifying the brightness of Heaven.

This paper extends the discussion focused on tombs to imagery found in Buddhist cave temples by investigating the mural painting on the ceiling of Mogao Cave

285 (538 CE). Similar to the Poduoluo mural, Mogao Cave 285 presents the juxtaposition of Fuxi-Nüwa with *cintamani*. Through a comparative reading of the hybridization of the image of *cintamani* with the depiction of Fuxi-Nüwa in these two separate spatial and temporal contexts, I elucidate the second dimension of the Chinese-Buddhist encounter—the fluidity of the boundary between the funerary and Buddhist art. Lastly, I trace the movement of the *cintamani* motif along with the movement of people, in the hope of explaining how the innovative design of Fuxi-Nüwa with *cintamani* migrated from Pingcheng to Dunhuang.

Fuxi-Nüwa and *Cintamani* in the Tomb of Lady Poduoluo

The tomb of Lady Poduoluo is located in the eastern suburb of the city of Datong, a neighbourhood that has a concentration of Northern Wei burials.¹ Inscriptions written on fragments of a lacquered coffin retrieved from the grave help archaeologists to date this tomb to 435 CE. This dating makes the tomb of Lady Poduoluo the earliest mural tomb of the Northern Wei period (386–534 CE) excavated thus far (Datongshi kaogu yanjiusuo 2006, 4–24). The inscription identifies the tomb occupant as “Lady Poduoluo” *Poduoluo taifuren* 破多羅太夫人.² Lady Poduoluo, as indicated by her family name, was from the Poduoluo tribe, a Xianbei 鮮卑 group centred in the county of Gaoping 高平 near modern-day Guyuan 固原, Ningxia. After the Northern Wei annexed this region, the Poduoluo tribe was relocated to Pingcheng in the early fifth century. The inscription also mentions prestigious positions held by her son at the Northern Wei court, suggesting Lady Poduoluo was a Xianbei aristocratic woman. Some scholars even speculated that Lady Poduoluo was a kinswoman of the tribe leader Muiyiyu 木易於 (Yin 2006, 344–57).

The tomb of Lady Poduoluo is a single chamber brick tomb covered with mural paintings on the four walls, the ceiling, and the corridor (Fig. 1).³ The rear wall of the tomb chamber is reserved for the most significant image of the tomb—highly formalized portraits of Lady Poduoluo and her husband. Centred on the deceased’s portrait, murals at the lower level of the burial chamber depict scenes of

1 The tomb of Lady Poduoluo was excavated in 2005 and details of the tomb were published in 2006, see Datong shi kaogu yanjiusuo (2006). For the distribution of Northern Wei burials in Datong, see Cao (2016).

2 The inscription was first published in the archaeological report, see Datong shi kaogu yanjiusuo (2006). Zhao Ruimin and Liu Junxi analyzed the inscription in detail, see Zhao and Liu (2006). Yin Xian and Lin Sheng-chih also offered insightful readings of the inscription, see Yin (2006) and Lin (2012).

3 For a study of mural paintings in Lady Poduoluo’s tomb, see Seo (2011) and Lin (2012).

various topics, including food preparation, banquets, and ceremonial processions. The upper part of the chamber wall is occupied by a row of mythological animals. Across from the rear wall presenting the couple's portrait is the corridor leading to the tomb entrance. The hybrid image of Fuxi-Nüwa together with *cintamani* (Fig. 2), the focus of this article, is painted on the ceiling of the corridor.

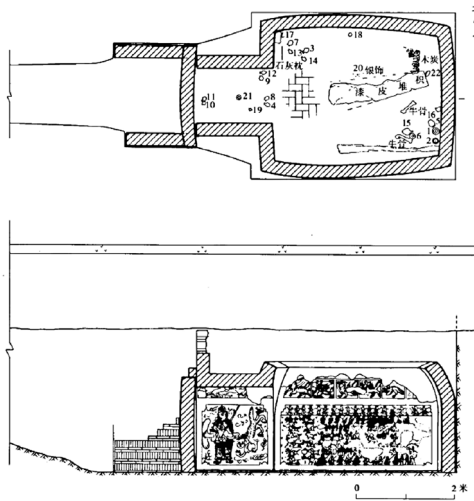


Figure 1: Plan and section view of the tomb of Lady Poduoluo, Datong, Shanxi (After *Datong shi kaogu yanjiusuo* 2006, fig. 3).



Figure 2: Fuxi-Nüwa with *cintamani*, ceiling of the corridor, tomb of Lady Poduoluo, Datong, Shanxi (After *Datong shi kaogu yanjiusuo* 2006, fig. 46).

In the tomb of Lady Poduoluo, Fuxi and Nüwa are represented as half-human and half-snake. Both have square faces and wear floral headdresses. They each join

hands, which are concealed in their sleeves. Their human bodies are facing toward each other, while their serpentine tails, covered with scales, are twisted into three circles. The lower left part of their intertwined tails was already deteriorated upon excavation. Ink was used to outline their human bodies and snake tails, the folds of clothes, and scales on the tails; red pigment was employed to accentuate the contour of the two mythological figures and add more volume to the flat surface.

The way in which Fuxi and Nüwa are depicted in the tomb of Lady Poduoluo follows the iconography of the couple deity that had been codified during the Han dynasty. *Liezi* 列子, a text composed no later than the beginning of the first century CE, mentions that Fuxi and Nüwa feature “a snake body and a human face, an ox head and a tiger nose. [They] have a non-human form, but possess the virtue of the Great Divine” (Zhang 1992, 27). Accordingly, in Han pictorial art, Fuxi and Nüwa are usually represented as a pair featuring a human body and a serpentine tail. One of the best-known examples is the mural painting from the Bu Qianqiu 卜千秋 tomb in Luoyang, Henan (Luoyang bowuguan 1977, 1–12). The two deities occupy two ends of the profusely decorated ridge of the tomb chamber: Fuxi stands next to a disk encircling a three-leg bird, which signifies the sun; Nüwa is next to a circle with a toad and a tree, referring to the moon (Fig. 3). A more common composition of Fuxi-Nüwa presents the couple with intertwined tails. This type of representation is found on carvings inside the Wu Liang Shrine (Fig. 4) (Wu 1989, 245–48). Fuxi on the right is holding a carpenter’s square in his hand, indicating his power of creating the order of the human world. A little boy is situated between Fuxi and Nüwa, denoting their symbolism of fertility.



Figure 3: Fuxi and Nüwa, tomb of Bu Qianqiu, Luoyang, Henan
(After Luoyang bowuguan 1977, plate 1).



Figure 4: Fuxi-Nüwa, Wu Liang Shrine, Jiaxiang, Shandong (After Wu 1989, fig. 109a).

While the representation of Fuxi and Nüwa in the tomb of Lady Poduoluo inherits the classical human-body-and-serpent-tail form, common attributes of the couple deity during the Han dynasty—the square, the sun, and the moon—are not included in the fifth-century depiction of Fuxi and Nüwa.⁴ Instead, the tomb of Lady Poduoluo incorporates *cintamani*, a Buddhist jewel, into the established pictorial paradigm of the Chinese deities. The Sanskrit word *Cintāmaṇi* is composed of two parts *cintā* and *maṇi*—meaning thought and jewel, respectively (Monier-Williams 1979, 398, 774). It refers to a gem believed to grant all the desires of its possessor.

The *cintamani* in the tomb of Lady Poduoluo is considered to be the first time in the history of Chinese art that the Buddhist jewel entered into the mortuary space. It is also the first time that the canonical composition of Fuxi and Nüwa, a pair of indigenous Chinese deities, was juxtaposed with a Buddhist element. Prior to the fifth century, *cintamani* was mostly depicted in Buddhist cave temples, such as the Kizil 克孜爾 Caves in Xinjiang (Beijing daxue kaogu xuexi 1997, 84–85), Bingling-si 炳靈寺 (Dong 1986, 148–58), and Jinta-si 金塔寺 (Gansu sheng wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo 1987, 3–6) in the Hexi 河西 Corridor. An example from the funerary context that predates the Poduoluo *cintamani* is the Northern Liang votive stupa dedicated by Gao Shanmu 高善穆 in 428 CE to his deceased parents and discovered near Dunhuang 敦煌 (Wang 1977, 179–88). Appearing on the bottom register of the votive stupa, the *cintamani* is held by a haloed figure

4 It is to be noted that during the Wei-Jin period, the Fuxi-Nüwa image was almost absent in China proper, but appeared in the Hexi Corridor. The present paper emphasizes on comparing and contrasting the Fuxi-Nüwa images of the Han dynasty and those of the Northern Wei. The iconographical development of Fuxi-Nüwa images during the transitional period and how it relates to the Northern Wei examples is worthy of further research.

coupled with one of the Eight Trigrams, thus indicating a convergence of Buddhist practice, filial piety, and Daoism (Yin 2000; Abe 2002).

The significance of the combination of Fuxi-Nüwa with *cintamani* in the tomb of Lady Poduoluo is, therefore, worthy of special attention. Current scholarship usually understands *cintamani* as a substitution for the sun and moon, which often appear together with Fuxi-Nüwa in Han Dynasty art, and thus signifying the brightness of Heaven (Lin 2008; Seo 2011). This reading, albeit reasonable, is far from satisfying. First and foremost, this interpretation is based on the conventional association of Fuxi and Nüwa with the sun and moon, which is only one of many variations of the Fuxi-Nüwa iconography. A simplified understanding of Fuxi and Nüwa hinders us from a multi-faceted reading of its alignment with the Buddhist jewel. Secondly, most scholars fail to pay enough attention to the form of *cintamani* itself, which, as I will demonstrate later, is hybridized with the indigenous Chinese magic fungus and lotus flower. Lastly, the current study barely discusses the context of this image as situated both in the corridor and within the tomb. The combination of *cintamani* with Fuxi-Nüwa is more than a representation of Heaven, as previous studies have suggested; rather, it is embedded with multiple layers of meaning.

In what follows, I will explore the possible connotations of the hybrid images and explain how its use fits into the mortuary context. To do so, I will start with the form of *cintamani* to elucidate the possible connotations of the Buddhist jewel to explain how it is blended into the pair of Fuxi and Nüwa. This paper further contextualizes the hybrid image in the space of the corridor as well as within the tomb to understand its symbolic meaning in the overall pictorial programme. Lastly, I will shift my focus from the tomb of Poduoluo to Mogao Cave 285 in Dunhuang, which also contains a syncretic design of Fuxi-Nüwa and *cintamani*. In turning to Dunhuang, I address the transmission of the motif across the boundary between funerary and religious art, as well as show the artistic exchanges that existed between the Northern Wei capital Pingcheng and the Hexi Corridor.

Four Meanings of the Hybrid Image

To better understand how and why Fuxi-Nüwa and *cintamani* were combined in the funerary space, we first need to investigate the form of the Buddhist jewel. The *cintamani* depicted in the Poduoluo tomb is composed of three parts: a hexagonal core, flames that form the silhouette of an almond, and an S-shaped vegetal stem with a trifurcated end (Fig. 5). Buddhist sutras barely mention the morphology of *cintamani*. The depiction of *cintamani* as a hexagonal jewel surrounded by flames

and growing from a stem is thus more of an artistic creation than a visual translation of the scriptural texts. However, the representation of the *cintamani* in the tomb of Lady Poduoluo was not an entirely new invention; rather, it represents a synthesis of pictorial elements from earlier artistic traditions. The artists who executed the Poduoluo tomb mural deliberately appropriated visual language from the Han Dynasty and the Hexi Corridor to create a Buddhist symbol that best facilitated the deceased's goal for the afterlife.



Figure 5: *Cintamani*, tomb of Lady Poduoluo, Datong, Shanxi
(After Datong shi kaogu yanjiusuo 2006, fig. 46).

The design of the Poduoluo *cintamani* as a diamond core surrounded by an almond-shaped flame can be traced back to Jinta-si near Zhangye 張掖, Gansu. In the Western Cave of Jinta-si, the Buddhist jewel occupies the prestigious position at the top of the niche hosting the main religious icon on the central pillar. The Jinta-si *cintamani* is sculpted into a hexagonal core emanating lights and flames (Fig. 6). The core is painted in blue; an “X” in the centre divides the core into four sections and accentuates the angularity of the diamond core. The curving lines of the flames create a soft contour, contrasting with the core's sharpness. The precise dating of Jinta-si is still under debate, but it is generally believed that both the eastern and the western caves of Jinta-si were first constructed during the Northern Liang period (397–439 CE), and they may have been an imperial project sponsored by the Juqu 沮渠 family, considering the close proximity of these cave temples to the lineage hometown of the Northern Liang royal clan (Gansu sheng wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo 1987, 20). Inheriting the basic form of the *cintamani* in Jinta-si, the Poduoluo *cintamani* keeps the

diamond core and the almond-shaped flame; however, the overall shape of the Buddhist jewel has become slender and elongated.



Figure 6: *Cintamani*, Jinta-si, Zhangye, Gansu (Photo by author).

The most significant change the Poduoluo *cintamani* makes to its predecessor is the adding of an S-shaped stem with a trifurcated end. This S-shaped stem resembles the stem of *lingzhi* 靈芝 or *zhicao* 芝草, a magic fungus or a magic herb popular during the Han Dynasty. *Lingzhi* was often associated with the immortal world: not only do texts abound with records of *lingzhi*'s magical power to elongate life, visual evidence also reveals a close association of the magic fungus with immortality (Wang 2012, 84–87). For example, a pictorial brick from Xinfan 新繁, Sichuan depicts a hare holding a plant and attending to the Queen Mother of the West, the supreme goddess of the immortal world (Fig. 7) (Lim 1987, 34). The plant held by the hare bears three mushroom-shaped caps. A description of *zhicao* in *Lunheng* 論衡, an encyclopaedic collection of beliefs about Chinese religion and folklore, mentions that the herb “carries three leaves on one stem,” lending support to the reading of the plant in the Xinfan brick as *zhichao* (Wang 2017, 1214). The lower part of the Poduoluo *cintamani* is similar to the curving stem and trifurcated ends of the magic fungus on the Han pictorial brick. Most likely, the artist of the Poduoluo tomb is making a reference to the magic herb in depicting the Buddhist jewel in such a manner.



Figure 7: A hare holding the magic fungus, pictorial brick, Xin'an, Sichuan (After Lim 1987, 34).

The conflation of the *cintamani* and the magic fungus is related to the supernatural power they share. People of the Han Dynasty believed that the magic fungus could assist them in obtaining longevity and achieving immortality. *Lunheng*, composed by Wang Chong 王充, states: “*Zhicao* can extend life; it is what the immortals eat” (Wang 2017, 844, 1214). Ge Hong 葛洪, in his alchemical writing, *Baopuzi* 抱朴子, categorized various kinds of fungi and elaborated on their different efficacies with regard to extending life (Ge 1985, 186–97). As for *cintamani*, Buddhist texts describe its ability to cure all kinds of diseases. The most detailed account can be found in the *Mahāprajñāpāramitā-sāstra* (*Commentary on the Great Perfection of Wisdom* 大智度論), translated and introduced into China by Kumārajīva in the early fifth century. This text claims that *cintamani* can immediately cure people from diseases resulting from both cold and heat, from the poison of vipers, and from pain afflicting eyes and skin (T1509.25.0477a21–b03). The incredible functions of *cintamani* described in Buddhist texts can be traced to Vedic scriptures, which had already elaborated on the magical power of the *mani* jewel in the first millennium BCE. Nagara Gyoko’s study of *mani* in Vedic texts notes that the Atharvaveda specified that *mani* can help prolong life (Nagara 1986, 1–18). Adding a vegetal stem that recalls the magic fungus helps to communicate the magic power of the Buddhist jewel—especially for those who were not familiar with *cintamani*, which was a newly introduced religious symbol. Interpreting *cintamani* as a hybrid with the magic fungus indicates the good wish to heal the deceased and to prolong life. Moreover, conflating the two objects together—the magic fungus from the indigenous Chinese tradition and *cintamani* from the Buddhist tradition—also reinforces the efficacy of the hybrid jewel.

This first reading of *cintamani* as a synthesis with the magic fungus helps explain its juxtaposition of Fuxi-Nüwa. An established design during Eastern Han, the combination of Fuxi-Nüwa and the magic fungus together allude to longevity and immortality—the ultimate goals the Han Chinese would pursue in the afterlife. On a pictorial stone from Nanyang 南陽, the pair of deities join their hands together and hold a magic fungus between them (Fig. 8) (Xu 2012, 268). The synthesis of *cintamani* with Fuxi-Nüwa in the tomb of Poduoluo is a continuation of this composition, but substitutes the magic fungus with a syncretistic design of the *cintamani*. The new form of *cintamani* as a hybrid of the flaming jewel and a vegetal stem transforms the Buddhist jewel into a symbol that is more understandable and approachable for the Chinese audience. Moreover, combining the hybrid *cintamani* with Fuxi-Nüwa further localizes the Buddhist icon within the Chinese conception of the afterlife.

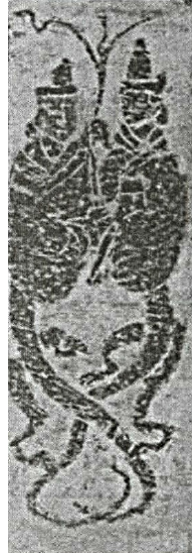


Figure 8: Fuxi and Nüwa holding the magic fungus, rubbing of the pictorial stone, Nanyang, Henan (After Xu 2012, fig. 1029).

However, evoking the magic fungus is not the only reference the vegetal stem could make. The second interpretation of the *cintamani* concerns the Buddhist idea of the afterlife. The S-shaped stem of the *cintamani* also resembles that of a lotus flower, an embodiment of “rebirth by transformation” in the Buddha land. It is believed that once the deceased is reborn in the Buddha land, he or she can escape the endless cycle of death and birth, thus enjoying an eternity of joy. The

idea of rebirth by transformation is usually translated as a small figure emerging from a lotus flower in pictorial art. In Yungang Cave 18, such an image is carved on the southern wall (Fig. 9) (Yoshimura 1983, 38–41). The long curving stem attached to the two lotus seats is similar to that of the Poduoluo *cintamani*. The conflation between lotus and *cintamani* became more apparent in the sixth century around the Luoyang area. Instead of using a stem to hint at the lotus flower, the image of *cintamani* produced in Luoyang makes a more direct reference to the lotus by introducing lotus petals to support the flaming jewel (Fig. 10). I will return to changes in *cintamani*'s iconography in Luoyang and explain how this is connected with the *cintamani* images produced in the Mogao Caves in the next section of the paper.



Figure 9: Rebirth from lotus flower, Yungang Cave 18, Datong, Shanxi
(After Yoshimura 1983, fig. 27B).



Figure 10: *Cintamani* synthesized with lotus flower, rubbing of the cover of Gou Jing' epitaph
(After Shi 1998, fig. 6).

Reading *cintamani* as a hybridity with the lotus, the symbol of rebirth, is compatible with the meaning of Fuxi and Nüwa, who are first and foremost creation gods. Based on Chinese mythology, Fuxi and Nüwa were initially independent of each

other: Fuxi, the male god, is associated with the formation of human civilization; Nüwa, the female deity, is responsible for the creation of the natural world (Li 2011, 140–61). During the Han Dynasty they were coupled as a unit, featuring separate human bodies with serpentine tails twisted together. This new way of pairing transforms the union of Fuxi and Nüwa into a symbol of fertility and life as well as an expression of the embodiment of the two cosmic forces, *yin* and *yang* (Tseng 2011, 290–95). In the above-mentioned example of Fuxi-Nüwa in the Wu Liang Shrine, a baby appears between the deities, signifying a new life created by the couple. In the Poduoluo tomb, the *cintamani*, positioned in the centre just above the union of Fuxi and Nüwa—the same position as the newborn baby in the Wu Liang Shrine—can be interpreted as the creation of this couple.

Furthermore, the overall pictorial programme in the tomb of Lady Poduoluo is gender-divided, thus reinforcing the notion of *yin-yang* and the creation of life. Centred on the portraiture of Lady Poduoluo and her husband, a group of maids are depicted on the lady's side and male servants on the husband's. Gender differentiation continues to the upper register of the northern and southern walls. The northern wall that is closer to Lady Poduoluo has a row of women featuring square faces, flaring dresses, and flying ribbons around their bodies. Near the husband, the upper register of the southern wall depicts a row of male servants walking in procession. The separation of men and women finally merges on the ceiling of the corridor, which presents the union of Fuxi and Nüwa, symbolizing the combined cosmic forces of *yin* and *yang*. Situated between the couple, the *cintamani* hybridized with the lotus flower indicates the creation of a new life. The joining of Fuxi-Nüwa on the corridor ceiling appears along the axis of the tomb and echoes the portraits of the Poduoluo couple on the rear wall. Thus, in this second reading, the combination of *cintamani* and Fuxi-Nüwa signifies the source of life.

Interpretations of *cintamani* as a magic fungus and as a lotus flower point to different concepts of the afterlife: the magic fungus represents the pursuit of longevity and obtaining immortality in the immortal world; the lotus flower is associated with rebirth in the Buddha land. However, the two concepts do not contradict each other; rather, they provide options in the afterlife. The two different ways to deal with death maximize positive outcomes for the tomb occupant. The pragmatic design of *cintamani* combined with the magic fungus and the lotus flower allows the tomb occupant to choose what best suits him or her. Chinese and Buddhist ideas about death indeed merged as expressed in the hybrid symbolism of *cintamani* with both the magic fungus and lotus flower.

The third reading regarding the combination of *cintamani* with Fuxi-Nüwa can be sought out in the context of the corridor, a transitional space between the tomb

entrance and the burial chamber. The corridor attached to the burial chamber is 1.6m long and 1.4m wide; it is topped by an arched roof 1.8m above the ground. On the western end of the corridor, a brick wall is built to conceal the burial space, separating the tomb chamber and the corridor from the sloping passageway of more than 10m long. Because the corridor demarcates and announces the beginning of the sacred mortuary sphere, it warrants special security concerns.

Murals that cover the corridor signify the protective function of this transitional space. On each of the sidewalls of the corridor there is a guardian figure accompanied by a furious-looking hybrid creature. The warrior-like guardians are fully armed. They both have big eyes, protruding noses, and pointed jaws. The guardian on the northern side, holding a shield in the right hand and a sword in the left, faces the chamber. His counterpart on the southern side faces the entrance. Grasping a sword in one hand with his other hand down at his side, this figure is in a posture that decisively shuts out anyone approaching the funerary space. The hybrid monsters—an animal body with a long tail and a human face—also create a formidable atmosphere. Such monstrous creatures are found in several other Northern Wei tombs and might be the predecessors of tomb guardians *zhenmushou* 鎮墓獸 popular in Tang tombs (Dien 1991, 48–49; Lin 2012, 22–25). Two more door guardians are depicted inside the chamber on the western wall flanking the entrance. Each of door guardians holds a spear and a shield, fulfilling their duty to protect the tomb.

Along with the guardian figures and creatures, Fuxi-Nüwa with *cintamani* adds to the protective force of the corridor complex. Fuxi and Nüwa in the Poduoluo tomb have their own hands joined together and concealed in wide sleeves, a posture that is usually associated with door attendants showing respect. In the Han Dynasty, the mythological couple had already served as protectors (Guo 2007, 132–34). Take the Tomb no. 11 at Dabaodang 大保當, Shenmu 神木 for example: Fuxi and Nüwa stand firmly on two sides of the stone door, guarding the entrance to the funerary space (Fig. 11) (Shaanxisheng kaogu yanjiusuo 2001). Dragons and tigers, two of the directional animals, are aligned with Fuxi-Nüwa flanking the gateway of the Dabaodang tomb. The composition of a slender animal next to Fuxi-Nüwa is also visible in Lady Poduoluo's tomb. Even though the right side of the ceiling is partly damaged, it is safe to imagine that two directional animals would have stood on the outer side of Fuxi and Nüwa, reinforcing their protective force. The *cintamani* also plays a role in protecting the tomb. In his study of the *mani* jewel, Nagara points out that the *mani* had an apotropaic meaning and functioned as a talisman (Nagara 1986, 6). Situated amid images bearing protective meanings, the hybrid image of Fuxi-Nüwa and *cintamani* contributes its own combined effort to guard the tomb.



Figure 11: Fuxi and Nüwa with directional animals, Tomb no. 11 at Dabaodang, Shenmu, Shanxi (After Shaanxi sheng kaogu yanjiusuo 2000, plates 60 and 66).

Lastly, I return to the traditional reading of *cintamani* as a substitution for the sun and moon signifying the luminous Heaven. As previous studies suggest, the appearance of *cintamani* situated between Fuxi and Nüwa replaced the celestial bodies in the Poduoluo tomb. Accounts in Buddhist scriptures lend support to this hypothesis. The *Avatamsaka Sūtra* (*Flower Garland Sutra* 華嚴經) praises the fluorescence of *cintamani* that lights up the ten directions and all heavenly halls (T0278.09.0573c17–c22). Here, I hope to add one more piece of evidence by situating the depiction of *cintamani* and Fuxi-Nüwa in the overall pictorial program.

The ceiling of the corridor, where the Buddhist jewel is depicted, is a continuation of the upper register of mural paintings in the main chamber, which belongs to the heavenly realm. The murals in the chamber are divided into two sections: the lower part features secular scenes, such as banquets and processions; the upper part is reserved for the celestial sphere. A row of mythological animals at the bottom of the domed ceiling encircles the four sides, but only the northern wall has been preserved. Above the row of animals we would expect to find a representation of Heaven. However, this area had been destroyed before the excavation and is now lost to us. The location of Fuxi-Nüwa and *cintamani* on the ceiling is at the same level as the row of mythological animals, thus creating a continuous flow of imagery from the corridor to the chamber that denotes the otherworldly space.

To sum up, the juxtaposition of Fuxi-Nüwa with *cintamani* in the Poduoluo tomb played multiple roles within a hybrid scheme. First, *cintamani* was merged with the magic fungus and integrated into the immortal world with Fuxi-Nüwa. Second, it blended with the lotus flower to signify the creation of life and provide the hope of rebirth for the deceased. Third, the Buddhist jewel also substitutes for the sun and moon in the conventional Fuxi-Nüwa image to light up the darkness of the underground. Situated in the corridor, Fuxi-Nüwa and *cintamani* protect the mortuary space together with other guardian figures. Moreover, their position on the ceiling ensured Fuxi-Nüwa and *cintamani* as part of the heavenly sphere of the whole tomb.

From Tomb to Cave, From Pingcheng to Dunhuang

The hybrid scheme of *cintamani* together with Fuxi-Nüwa, first seen in the Poduoluo tomb in 435 CE, reappears one hundred years later in Mogao Cave 285, which is dated by two inscriptions to 538 and 539 CE (Fig. 12). Scholars working on Dunhuang usually celebrate Cave 285 for its innovative pictorial programme that synthesized various cultural traditions (Duan 1995, 11–21). Yet few have noticed the resemblance between the ceiling of Cave 285 and mural paintings in Pingcheng. It is widely accepted that Buddhism's transmission into China followed an eastbound route from Xinjiang through the Hexi Corridor and into northern China;⁵ the construction of the Yungang Grottoes 雲崗石窟 also benefited from Buddhist remains in the Hexi region as well as immigrant artisans and monks from Hexi (Soper 1958, 148–49; Jin 2002, 28–33). In what follows, I explain how the hybrid scheme of *cintamani* and Fuxi-Nüwa in Mogao Cave 285 owe credit to the artistic production in Pingcheng. Furthermore, I use this as an example to showcase the western-bound movement of visual elements that adds another dimension to the conventional eastward spread of Buddhism and Buddhist art.

To begin with, the location and composition of *cintamani* with Fuxi-Nüwa in Mogao Cave 285 resembles that in the Poduoluo tomb. As discussed earlier, the syncretic scheme of *cintamani* with Fuxi-Nüwa is located on the ceiling of the corridor in the Poduoluo tomb, constituting part of the heavenly realm. Comparably, in Mogao Cave 285, the hybrid image is depicted on the pyramid ceiling of the cave temple, which also belongs to the celestial sphere. On the eastern and

5 The southern route of the spread of Buddhism has also been extensively studied. Because Pingcheng and Dunhuang are not part of the southern route, this paper does not include the material from the south into discussion.



Figure 12: *Fuxi-Nüwa with cintamani, eastern slope of the ceiling, Mogao Cave 285, Dunhuang, Gansu (After Dunhuang yanjiuyuan 1995, fig. 143).*

southern slope of the pyramid ceiling, the Buddhist jewel appears at the centre and is flanked by figures on two sides—a composition similar to the one seen in the Poduoluo tomb.

Secondly, the form of the *cintamani* in Mogao Cave 285 was inspired by images of *cintamani* from Pingcheng. The Dunhuang *cintamani* features a hexagonal core and almond-contoured flames, characteristics that are already visible in the tomb of Lady Poduoluo. But unlike the Poduoluo *cintamani*, the flames that surround the core in the Dunhuang *cintamani* are represented in a more decorative and patterned way with busy curving lines, as opposed to the more realistic flames of the Poduoluo *cintamani*. Another element that distinguishes the Dunhuang *cintamani* from that in the Poduoluo tomb is the addition of a plate supported by lotus petals underneath the Buddhist jewel. Moreover, the single stem from which the *cintamani* grows in the Poduoluo tomb is depicted more exuberantly in Dunhuang Cave 285; hill-shaped patterns in blue and black emanate out from the stem all the way up to the flames of the Buddhist jewel.

The elements that differentiate the *cintamani* in Mogao Cave 285 from that in the Poduoluo tomb, however, are not new inventions in Dunhuang. They can still find predecessors in the Pingcheng area. The plate that supports the Buddhist jewel, which is visible in the Dunhuang mural but missing in the Poduoluo tomb, is commonly seen in the Yungang Grottoes. In Yungang Cave 9, for example, four *apsaras* hold a hexagonal *cintamani* resting on a plate on the ceiling of the corridor that links

the ante and rear chambers (Fig. 13) (Mizuno and Nagahiro 1951). The wavy lines filling in the almond-shaped flames also foresee the representation of flames of the Dunhuang *cintamani*. Moreover, both Yungang and Dunhuang examples feature the peculiar oblique lines that help join the flames and plate together.



Figure 13: *Apsaras holding cintamani, Yungang Cave 9, Datong, Shanxi*
(After Mizuno and Nagahiro 1951, plate 38B).

The influence of Pingcheng on Dunhuang is not only visible in the form of the *cintamani*. It is also evident in the representation of Fuxi-Nüwa on the eastern slope of the cave ceiling. The numinous couple in Mogao Cave 285 features common attributes of Fuxi-Nüwa, including human heads, serpent tails, their holding a carpenter's square and compass in their hands and embracing the sun and the moon to their chests.⁶ However, unlike the canonical depictions of Fuxi and Nüwa, the two deities have feet, one bending forward, the other stretching out, as if leaping forward. Their flying ribbons and leaping legs create a sense of movement, which is missing from conventional representations of Fuxi and Nüwa. Intriguingly, these characteristics find parallels on the Zhijiapu 智家堡 sarcophagus discovered in Pingcheng (Fig. 14) (Wang and Liu 2001, 40–51). Moving toward the centre, the two flying figures depicted on the interior of the Zhijiapu sarcophagus have almost identical poses to those of Fuxi and Nüwa in Mogao Cave 285. The waving banners held in their hands are blowing backward, echoing the flying ribbons of the couple deity. In this way, Fuxi and Nüwa in Mogao Cave 285 can be interpreted as a hybridization of the traditional iconography of the progenitor gods and the spirit figures with legs on the Zhijiapu sarcophagus.

6 Most scholars identify the two figures as Fuxi and Nüwa, see Duan (1995, 11–21). However, some scholars suggest they should be understood as bodhisattvas in this context, see He (1987, 1–13).

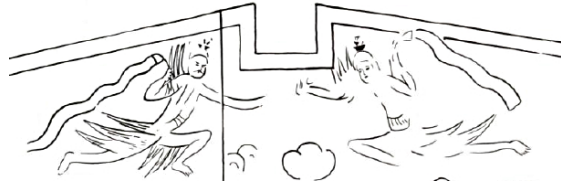


Figure 14: Spirit figures, Zhijiapu sarcophagus, Datong, Shanxi (After Wang and Liu 2001, fig. 8).

The similarities between Mogao Cave 285 and the Pingcheng materials, including the tomb of Lady Poduoluo, the Yungang Grottoes, and the Zhijiapu sarcophagus, indicate the possible transmission of artistic production from Pingcheng to Dunhuang. It is widely accepted that Buddhism, as well as Buddhist art, came from India via Xinjiang, and that it moved eastward through the Hexi Corridor and then into northern China. But once Buddhism took hold in China, it developed locally; artistic production in new Buddhist centres in northern China also started to inspire regions that had received Buddhism earlier. As Su Bai has noted, the construction of early Buddhist caves in Dunhuang was under the influence of Buddhist art from the east (Su 1996b, 214–25). Yagi Haruo's study on the chronology of the cave temples in the Hexi Corridor, which, he argues, date to the late fifth century, casts further doubt on the assumption that Hexi cave temples were constructed earlier than—and thus influenced—the Yungang Grottoes (Yagi 1997, 1–41). The material regarding *cintamani* lends further support to the eastern route, which complicated the western route and created a more dynamic network of transmission via the movement of people and images.

Yet the transmission of the *cintamani* with Fuxi-Nüwa composition from Pingcheng to Dunhuang did not follow a simple and direct route. It could take various paths, even a detour to Luoyang. As mentioned above, one aspect that differentiates the Buddhist jewel in Mogao Cave 285 from the Pingcheng examples is the floral style of the Dunhuang *cintamani*. When analysing the Poduoluo *cintamani*, I have pointed out its possible relationship with the lotus flower and that the full intermingling of the lotus motif and *cintamani* took place in Luoyang. An early attempt to combine lotus petals with *cintamani* can be found in the Guyang Cave of the Longmen Grottoes (Fig. 15), where a pedestal made of lotus petals replaced the plain plate that was popular in Yungang. The new floral paradigm of *cintamani* further developed by incorporating more lotus petals into the design of the Buddhist jewel. The highly ornate cover of Gou Jing's 苟景 epitaph is such an example (Fig. 10) (Shi 1998, 21–29). This became the standardized version of the Luoyang *cintamani*, which later exerted a great influence on the depiction of the Buddhist jewel during the Eastern Wei and the Northern Qi (Lin 2019, 146–50).

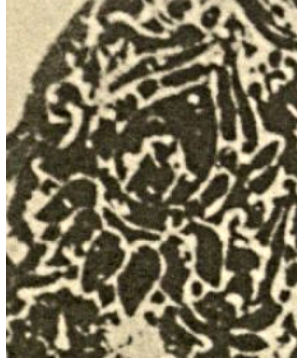


Figure 15: *Cintamani*, Guyang Cave, Longmen Grottoes, Luoyang, Henan
(After Yu and Luo 1985, fig. 24).

The Dunhuang *cintamani* combines the diamond core, a supporting plate, and lotus petals. As such, it is a synthesis of the Pingcheng and Luoyang paradigms. The convergence of characteristics from two regions of northern China in an outpost on the western fringe of the Northern Wei territory can find echoes in the movement of people. The key figure that can be traced via textual evidence is Yuan Rong 元荣, a member of the Northern Wei royal family who was appointed as the governor of the Guazhou 瓜州 in 525 CE and the possible sponsor of Mogao Cave 285 (Su 1996a, 219). Yuan Rong was probably born in Pingcheng before 488 CE.⁷ He later moved to Luoyang when Emperor Xiaowen 孝文 designated the city as the new capital in 494 CE. Having lived in both Pingcheng and Luoyang and taken office in Dunhuang, Yuan Rong and people who had a similar migration experience were capable of synthesizing different artistic traditions and creating something extraordinarily innovative. As a member of the royal house and a high-ranking official, Yuan Rong was likely to have a large entourage, including artisans, accompanying him when he relocated from Pingcheng to Luoyang and later to Dunhuang. The artisans who had access to visual knowledge of the artistic production in the two Northern Wei capitals played a significant role in mobilizing images and appropriating earlier pictorial languages to design the ceiling of Mogao Cave 285. The migration of patrons and artisans during the fifth and sixth centuries facilitated the cultural exchanges among different regions and contribute to artistic innovations.

7 The epitaph of Yuan's younger sister, Yuan Huaguang 元華光, states that she died at the age of thirty-seven in 525 CE. Therefore, the younger sister was born in 488 CE, and Yuan must be born earlier than his younger sister and thus before the relocation of the capital. For Yuan Huaguang's epitaph, see Zhao (1956, 165–66).

Conclusion

In the era of Buddhism's expansion in China, ideas as well as visual languages of death from both Buddhist and indigenous Chinese traditions coexisted. Artists were able to appropriate pictorial elements from both contexts and synthesize them. By focusing on the syncretistic design of Fuxi-Nüwa and *cintamani*, this paper explains that the hybrid motif was created by combining the Buddhist jewel, magical fungus, and lotus together. I further articulate multiple meanings embedded in the hybrid scheme, including the search for immortality, rebirth in the Buddha land, safeguarding the tomb, and illuminating the darkness.

The Chinese-Buddhist encounter is also manifested in the fluid boundary between funerary and Buddhist art. The fact that the syncretic design of Fuxi-Nüwa and *cintamani* appears in both a tomb and a cave temple indicates the boundary between the mortuary and religious sphere was not clearly divided. The fluidity between funerary and Buddhist art during the early medieval period has been subject to a number of significant studies in recent years, such as Lin Sheng-chih's work on Pingcheng materials (Lin 2019, 111–58) and Jie Shi's study on the Dengxian tomb (Shi 2014, 363–403). This research on the hybrid image of Fuxi-Nüwa with *cintamani* and its back-and-forth movement between Buddhist and funerary space adds to the current discussion. Moreover, this hybrid image migrated across time and space. The migration of the image and the evolving iconography of *cintamani* from the Jinta-si cave temple, to the Poduoluo tomb, the Yungang and Longmen Grottoes, and the Mogao Caves illustrate extensive dialogues and exchanges among the Hexi region, Pingcheng, and Luoyang throughout the troubled but innovative early medieval period in the history of China.

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Meaning of Bi Disc and Hunping Spirit Jar

Representation of Heaven and Beyond: The *Bi* Disc Imagery in the Han Burial Context

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Abstract

The *bi* (“disc”) is an object that was originally made from jade, and became an independent motif that appeared widely in different pictorial materials during Han times. The *bi* disc is considered one of the earliest jade forms, and has been used for ritual purposes or as an ornament from the Neolithic period until today. This paper focuses on the Han Dynasty (202 BCE–220 CE), a period in which jade *bi* discs were extensively used and placed in burials of different ranks. Present finds show that images of *bi* discs also appeared widely in Han burials, in which they were depicted on coffins, funerary banners covering coffins, and mural paintings, and were also engraved on pictorial stones and pictorial bricks, these practices becoming more ubiquitous in the later Han period. By studying various images of *bi* discs in different burials throughout the Han period, this paper will explore the development and significance of different pictorial representations of *bi* disc in Han burial context, and also attempt to reveal the rich content and thoughts embedded in the form of *bi* discs during this period of time.

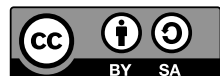
Keywords: *bi* disc, imagery, pictorial representation, heaven, Han Dynasty

Upodobitev Neba: podoba diska *bi* v grobnem kontekstu dinastije Han

Izvilleček

Bi (»disk«) je predmet, ki je bil prvotno narejen iz žada, pozneje je postal samostojen motiv ter se je pogosto pojavljal v različnih slikovnih podobah v času dinastije Han (202 pr. n. št.–220 n. št.). Disk *bi* velja za eno izmed zgodnjih oblik žada, ki se je uporabljala za obredne namene ali kot okras od neolitika pa vse do danes. Pričujoči članek se osredotoča na obdobje dinastije Han, v katerem so se diski *bi* uporabljali v velikem obsegu in različnih oblikah znotraj grobne komore. Opazimo jih lahko na krstah, na pogrebnih praporjih, ki so prekrivali krste, v grobnih poslikavah in tudi kot rezbarije na kamnitih in opečnatih zidakih. Vse te prakse so postale še posebej razširjene v pozni dinastiji Han. S pomočjo raziskav upodobitev diska *bi* v različnih tipih pogrebov skozi celotno obdobje dinastije Han bo članek prikazal razvoj in pomen različnih slikovnih

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upodobitev tega diska v grobnem kontekstu dinastije Han ter razkril bogato vsebino in ideje, ki se kažejo v upodobitvah diska *bi* v tem obdobju.

Ključne besede: disk *bi*, podoba, slikarske upodobitve, Nebo, dinastija Han

Introduction

There is much rich and vivid imagery in Han burials, particularly when sarcophagi and stone-chambered tombs were introduced in the middle and late Western Han periods, and became ubiquitous in the Eastern Han. The image of a *bi* 璧 disc was among one of the most frequent motifs in Han burials, and was a unique motif in that its original counterpart—jade *bi* discs—were also commonly used and placed in tombs.

The *bi* disc is a very old jade form used from the Neolithic period until today. Interestingly, the appearance of *bi* discs is not necessarily associated with the original material of jade. Finds to date demonstrate that there were different versions of *bi* discs that have appeared throughout history. During the Han Dynasty (202 BCE–220 CE), the mortuary use of *bi* discs was widely distributed in both high ranking and modest cemeteries, and a wide range of materials such as glass, clay, wood, and so on, were used for manufacturing *bi* discs, in addition to jade. Ultimately, the representation of *bi* discs depicted in mural paintings, inscribed on stone, or impressed on bricks—a way of presenting the form or image detached from the jade material—became the most prevalent presentation mode of *bi* discs during later Han times.

Although the form of *bi* discs has remained unchanged throughout the ages, the presentation and signification of this form has kept evolving and was enriched as the context of usage and the perception of the materiality of the object changed. Research on *bi* discs in Western Han noble tombs found that non-jade *bi* discs did not necessarily serve as less precious versions of jade originals, and that the use of non-jade discs was not simply driven by the availability of jade (Lam 2018). But there remain limited in-depth discussions about the pictorial representation of *bi* discs in Han burials. By adopting typological and iconographical approaches, this paper focuses on various pictorial representations of *bi* discs in Han burials, a rather under researched area, and seek to chart the development of the motif of *bi* discs and untangle the rich signification embedded in its shape.

The *bi* disc images appeared in both high-ranking elite and ordinary tombs, this paper will first give an overview of the distribution and development of the use of the motif throughout Han times, so as to highlight major features and contexts.

It will then examine the images of *bi* discs in Eastern and Southern elite tombs in the early Han by looking at the placement and the way these images appeared in these two regions, so as to address the origins of different practices. Finally, this paper will discuss the images of *bi* discs in ordinary tombs, particularly in the Eastern Han period, to explore the development and connections with the early Han noble tombs, as well as the vibrant significations of the *bi* disc form that developed during this time.

An Overview of *Bi* Disc Imagery in Han Mortuaries

The earliest *bi* disc images appeared no later than the Warring States period and became less common after the Eastern Han dynasty. When compared with jade *bi* discs, the images appeared much later and lasted for a shorter period of time. In fact, the discoveries of *bi* disc images prior to the Han period are very few and restricted to Hunan province (Chu area of the time); to date, only three examples are known from modest burials at Changsha 長沙, with *bi* disc images all appearing as openwork decorative design on *lingchuang* 簀床 (“wooden bed”) (Hunan 1963b, 169; Zhongguo 1957, 22, 63). By the time of the Western Han (202 BCE–8 CE), *bi* disc images were presented in a far more extensive range of materials or media; besides on wooden beds, the *bi* disc motif was painted on lacquer coffins, lacquer screens, silk funerary banners, mural paintings, and inscribed on the walls of wooden chambers, pictorial stones and bricks (Table 2). Geographically, the adoption of *bi* disc image was expanded slightly in the Western Han; during the early Western Han, *bi* disc images were very rare and only found in Hunan and Jiangsu provinces, and all of them were found in high ranking elite tombs, including the princely tomb at Shizishan 獅子山, Xuzhou 徐州 city, Jiangsu, and tombs at Mawangdui 馬王堆, and Changsha city, in Hunan. At sites dating between the middle and late Western Han, *bi* disc images also have been discovered in Henan and Shangdong provinces, but predominately in small and medium tombs. Surprisingly, there have been no *bi* disc images found in burials in Hunan province after the middle of the Western Han. (Table 1) “A pair of dragons or mythical animals pass through a *bi* disc 二龍/二獸穿璧” and “a *bi* disc suspended by two crossing ropes 穿璧紋” are the two most frequent motifs during the early Western Han, with the patterns becoming more diverse from the late Western Han.

Table 1: Distribution of bi disc images in Han Dynasty burials¹

Date	Location/ no.												
	An-hui	Gan-su	He-nan	Hu-nan	Inner Mongolia	Jiang-su	Sha-anxi	Shan-dong	Shan-xi	Sichuan/Chong-qing	Zhe-jiang	un-known	Total
Early W. Han	-	-	-	7	-	1	-	-	-	-	-		8
Mid W. Han	-	-	5	1	-	3	-	4	-	-	-		13
Late W. Han	-	-	5	-	-	-	-	14	-	-	-		19
Subtotal: W. Han	-	-	10	8	-	4	-	18	-	-	-		40
Xin Dynasty	-	-	2	-	-	-	9	3	-	-	-		14
E. Han	5	1	13	-	1	12	33	35	2	33	3	1	143
Total	5	1	27	8	1	16	42	56	2	33	3	1	197

Table 2: Statistics on bi disc images on different media in Han burials (*ibid.*)

Date	Medium										Total no.
	Jade coffin	Lacquer coffin/screen	Lingchuang "wooden bed"	Mural painting	Pictorial brick	Pictorial stone	Sarcophagus	Silk funerary banner	Wooden chamber		
Early W. Han	1	5						2			8
Mid W. Han			1	2	2	1	4		3		13
Late W. Han				2	3	1	13				19
Subtotal: W. Han	1	5	1	4	5	2	17	2	3		40
Xin Dynasty				2	9	1	2				14
E. Han				2	26	99	16				143
Total	1	5	1	8	40	102	35	2	3		197

1 The statistics are based on the following sources: Li et al. 1995; Liu 1988; Luoyang 2010; Huang 2012; Neimenggu 1978; Ouyang 2001; Pan 1983; Sichuan 2016; Xu 2012; Zhao 1992; Zhongguo 1957; Yu and Jiang 2000; Yu and Lai 2000; Yu and Jiao 2000; Tang et al. 2000a; Tang et al. 2000b.

By the time of the Eastern Han, *bi* disc images were much more widely distributed. Besides Henan, Jiangsu, and Shandong, *bi* disc images have also been found in tombs in Anhui, Chongqing, Gansu, Inner Mongolia, Shaanxi, Shanxi, Sichuan, and Zhejiang provinces. Table 1 shows that a total of 143 examples of Eastern Han *bi* disc images have been discovered to date, which is three times more than the number of images found in Western Han tombs. Interestingly, most of the *bi* discs are on sarcophagi, walls of pictorial stone-chambered tombs and pictorial bricks, with no images yet found on wooden beds, lacquer coffins, screen and silk banners from this period. (Table 2) Moreover, Eastern Han *bi* disc images show a wider range of themes or scenes, which reveals the rich significations embedded in the pictorial form of *bi* discs during this period. This will be further examined in the following discussions.

Jade *Bi* Discs Before and During Han

Undoubtedly, jade *bi* discs are the original source of the *bi* disc imagery. Long before *bi* disc images appeared in burials, jade *bi* discs were placed around the deceased in eastern China, and this was a long practice that can be traced back to the Liangzhu 良渚 culture (ca. 4000–2,500 BCE) of the late Neolithic. There were impressive numbers of jade *bi* discs, placed together with *congs* 琮, and other jade objects in burials of the Liangzhu, which primarily came from the lower Yangtze River area (Li 2008, 282–83). For example, in tomb no. 3 at Sidun 寺墩, Changzhou 常州 city, Jiangsu, the deceased was covered with over a hundred jade objects, among which there were 24 jade *bi* discs (Nanjing 1984). This practice is in accordance with an early statement about *bi* discs in *Zhouli* 周禮 (*Rites of the Zhou*), a well-known early Chinese text that was compiled during the Warring States period (ca. 403–221 BCE): “*Bi* discs and *cong* are arranged for the burial of deceased (疏璧、琮，以斂屍)” (Zheng 2009, 35). The use of jade *bi* discs diminished when the Liangzhu culture disappeared (Rawson 1995, 130–31). Then in the later Eastern Zhou period (late fifth century BCE), in the region of the state of Chu 楚國, a substantial number of large jade discs were found placed upon the deceased in tombs in present-day Anhui, Henan and Hubei. This phenomenon has been interpreted as a revival or continuation of the Neolithic period, and also a key stage toward adopting the *bi* disc as a mortuary ritual in an effort to protect the body, a significant belief that was widespread in the Han era (*ibid.*, 248).

During the Western Han, the belief in the preservative powers of jade was supported in various classical texts,² and this has been further reinforced by the archaeological evidence that jade objects, including jade *bi* discs, were placed in the innermost layer of the noble burials in rock-cut cave tombs. For example, the intact rock-cut tombs of the King of Zhongshan 中山 in Mancheng 滿城, Hebei province (Zhongguo 1980), and the King of Nanyue 南越 in Guangzhou, Guangdong province (Guangzhou 1991a), both yielded a considerable amount of jade *bi* discs, which were used to cover the corpses of nobles before they wore jade suits. In fact, except for the tombs of the King of Nanyue, these Western Han noble rock-cut tombs are primarily located in eastern China, and among these jade, particularly jade *bi* discs, were continuously in favour with the elite and believed to be one of the most significant jade objects to protect a dead body.

Bi Disc Images in the Eastern Noble Rock-cut Tomb: Close Association with Jade

There is an exceptional case that *bi* disc images were inscribed on the jade slabs of a jade coffin, which were discovered in the Western Han rock-cut tomb of the King of Chu, at Shizishan (c.175–154 BCE), Xuzhou, Jiangsu province (Wei 1998) (Fig. 1). In this tomb, 29 jade *bi* discs were also discovered and placed close to the jade coffin and the corpse. In fact, besides being placed on corpses, jade *bi* discs were also commonly used to decorate both jade and wooden coffins of the elite tombs in the Eastern China during the Western Han (Chen et al. 2012, 14). For example, in the rock-cut tomb of Dou Wan 竇綰, Queen of Zhongshan (c.118–104 BCE), Mancheng, Hebei province, and in the tomb of the Queen of Jiangdou 江都 (c.129–127 BCE), Dayunshan 大雲山, Jiangsu, both jade suits and jade coffins were discovered, and the jade coffins were inlaid with a number of jade *bi* discs (Zhongguo 1980, fig. 177; Nanjing 2013). In addition, the jade *bi* discs found in the rock-cut tomb of Chu King at Beidongshan 北洞山 (c.140–118 BCE), Xuzhou city, Jiangsu, were also believed to have been attached to the coffin (Wang

2 For example, 1. *Huainan Wanbi shu* 淮南萬畢術, attributed to Liu An 劉安 (ca. 180–22 BCE) said: “burying stones at the four corners of the house would prevent it from being disturbed by ghosts (埋石四隅, 家無鬼)” (Lin 2004, 334); 2. the “Biography of Wang Mang” 王莽傳 in the *Hanshu* 漢書, mentions that a piece of excellent jade could cure a wound; 3. the *Hou Hanshu* (後漢書) (ca. 398–445 CE), a “Biography of Liu Penzi” 劉盆子傳 records that the bodies of Empress Lü 呂后 and other nobles placed in jade shrouds from the imperial mausoleums of the Western Han were all well preserved and still looked lifelike nearly 200 years later when the Vermilion Eyebrows Soldier 赤眉軍 dug out the tombs (Lin 2004, 334).

2017; Ge 2018). The findings at Shizishan were remarkable, as the *bi* discs were carved as images, instead of being separate *bi* disc objects, and these images were inscribed on jade—the material initially used to manufacture *bi* discs. This practice possibly was a timesaving way to represent the actual jade *bi* discs attached on coffins.

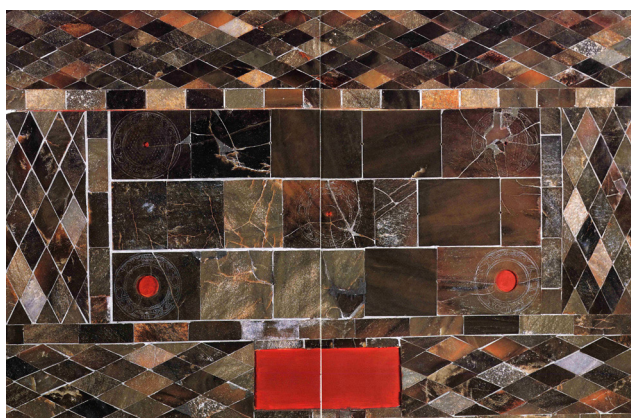


Figure 1: Jade coffin from the tomb of the King of Chu at Shizishan, Xuzhou, Jiangsu, early Western Han (After Zhongguo et al. 2005, 322–23).

There were another two discoveries of *bi* disc images, slightly later than those discovered in Shizishan, and both were found in the rock-cut tomb of the King of Liang at Shiyuan 柿園 (c. 136–118 BCE), Mangdangshan 芒碭山, Yongcheng 永城 county, Henan. Unfortunately, this tomb was severely looted, and some jade suit plaques were the only jade objects found in the main chamber (Henan et al. 2001, 231). The two discoveries of jade images in this tomb are different from those at Shizishan and were not inscribed on jade material. One of the discoveries is a repetitive pattern of *bi* discs suspended by two crossing ropes, and this is used as a decorative border pattern framing the mural paintings of dragons and other mythical animals on the ceiling, southern and western walls of the main chamber (ibid., 115–20). Another *bi* disc image was inscribed on the stepping stones of the lavatory, located at the very south-eastern corner that is far from the main chamber, which is a motif of “a *bi* disc suspended by two crossing ropes” (Fig. 2a).³ Given this is the only discovery to date, the reason and exact meaning of placing the motif on these lavatory stones remain unresolved,

3 The motifs of a bird above three trees and a house above a tree are inscribed on the top of the *bi* disc images on the right and left stepping stones, respectively.

but one possible functional purpose of the pattern is to make the stepping stone less slippery.



Figure 2a: Bi disc images inscribed on the right stepping stone of the lavatory, tomb of the King of Liang, at Shiyuan, Henan, mid-Western Han (After Henan et al. 2001, 98, fig. 40.1).

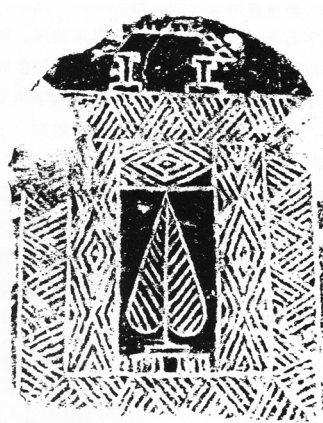


Figure 2b: Images inscribed on the left stepping stone of the lavatory, tomb of the King of Liang, at Shiyuan, Henan, mid-Western Han (After Henan et al. 2001, 98, fig. 40.2).

The placement of the *bi* disc images in a rock-cut noble tomb context, although the quantity is limited, shows a pattern that the *bi* disc images appeared very close to the tomb owner, like those in the tomb of the King of Chu at Shizishan, which were inscribed on jade; while the *bi* disc images on materials other than jade, such as the mural depictions and stone engravings discovered in the tomb of the King of Liang at Shiyuan, were not placed near to the deceased. As discussed in the previous section, under the deep-rooted beliefs about jade developed in the Han era, particularly among the nobles, jade was regarded as a distinctive material possessing magical properties, and thought to be efficacious to ward off demons and prevent the body from decomposition, therefore jade objects were always placed in the innermost layer of a body's wrappings to encase the corpse. This explains the reason why only *bi* disc images on jade were placed near the deceased, and those depicted or inscribed on non-jade materials were not put close to the body, as they were not considered to be able to protect the deceased to the same extent, but likely served a decorative or more functional purpose. In addition, the arrangement of *bi* disc images further reveals that the image itself was not seen as able to protect the tomb owner against harm from demon and decomposition, but rather the jade itself had these properties. In other words, as long as the *bi* disc was made or of inscribed on jade it would be effective, and thus there were 29 jade *bi* discs along with *bi* disc images on a jade coffin in the main chamber of the Shizishan tomb. This is also further proven by jade *bi* discs in other noble tombs that were broken into small pieces to be placed on the deceased (Chen 2012; Xi'an 2003), or cut as plaques for to be jade coffin inlays, burial suits (Gu 2005b, 77; Guangzhou 1991a, 364; Xuzhou 2003), and jade pillow inlays (Chen, 2012; Zhongguo 1980, fig. 177; Zhongguo 2005, 332–35). As long as an object is from a jade *bi* disc, even the form is incomplete, it was still strong enough to safeguard the deceased. In short, for the purpose of ensuring protection and preservation of the dead, jade itself had precedence over the shape of a *bi* disc in these noble rock-cut tombs in the eastern region.

***Bi* Disc Depiction in Southern Elite Burial: A Detached Shape**

In contrast to the noble rock-cut tombs, the *bi* disc images in the high status tombs of the southern region of early Western Han were depicted on non-jade material and placed very close to the deceased. For example, in the intact tomb no. 1 of Lady Dai 軫 at Mawangdui,⁴ there were *bi* disc depictions on the lacquered wooden coffin (Fig. 3) and a funerary banner (Fig. 4) that was placed on the innermost coffin

4 It is a vertical earth pit tomb. Lady Dai died several years after 168 BCE.

(Hunan et al. 1973a). Intriguingly, the high ranking early Western Han tombs in the southern region in fact yielded very few jade items. For example, tomb no. 2 of Marquis Dai at Mawangdui (Hunan et al. 2004) and the tomb of the King of Changsha at Shazitang (Hunan 1963a) only have one jade disc placed close to the deceased; or they are even absent of jade, like the intact tomb of Lady Dai and another intact tomb no. 3 of Marquis Dai's son at Mawangdui (Hunan et al. 2004).⁵ But the rich and luxurious objects, such as exquisite lacquerware, textiles, etc., unearthed in these elite tombs and some low ranking graves in the same area that also yielded jade *bi* discs reveal that neither a shortage of jade in the region nor economic considerations were the critical reasons for the absence of jade *bi* discs and jade objects in these elite tombs (Hubei 1976; Changsha 1986). Another possibility is that the region did not have such a strong belief in the supernatural attributes of jade as did the eastern part of the state at that time. This is shown in the way they preserved the deceased in the tomb of Lady Dai and the son of Marquis Dai, where both corpses were covered with multiple layers of luxurious garments instead of layers of jade. In addition, the same tomb placed peach wood figurines rather than jade in the coffins to ward off evil.⁶



Figure 3: The pictorial image of *bi* disc on the southern panel of the coffin from the tomb of Lady Dai at Mawangdui, Hunan, Western Han (After Hunan et al. 1973a, fig. 24).

- 5 The intact tomb of Lady Dai at Mawangdui did not hold any jade discs and jade objects, even the disc placed closest to the tomb owner that was hung from top of the head panel of the inner coffin was made of lacquer (Hunan 1973a, 36–37, fig. 36).
- 6 In tomb no. 1 of Lady Dai, 36 peach wood figurines were placed between the coffins and on the inner coffin to ward off evil (Hunan et al. 1973a). Meanwhile, in tomb no. 3 of the Marquis Dai's son at Mawangdui, two peach wood figurines were also found between the inner coffin and middle coffin (Hunan et al. 2004, 179). A written reference to this practice can be found in the Qin bamboo slips called *rishu* 日書, that were excavated at Shuihudin 睡虎地, Hubei province. They mention that “peach wood” and white stones could ward off evil (Liu 1994, 257).

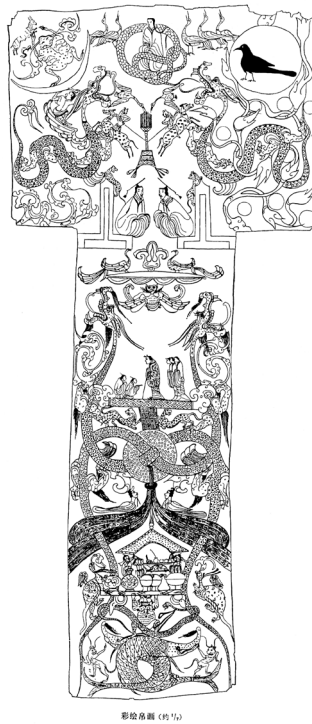


Figure 4: The funerary banner from the tomb of Lady Dai at Ma'wangdui, Hunan, Western Han (After Hunan et al. 1973a, fig. 83).

Research also suggests that a disconnection between the shape of *bi* disc and its original jade material may possibly have already appeared in the Warring States period (cf. Lam 2018). Three *lingchuang*, a wooden board placed on the bottom of the coffin for holding the deceased, were unearthed in small Warring States tombs in the Southern Chu area, today Changde 常德 and Changsha in Hunan, on which were engraved with openwork designs of a *bi* disc motif interlocked with simplified dragon pattern (Hunan 1963b; Zhongguo 1957). In addition, some modest tombs in Hubei and Hunan with no jade held *bi* discs made of alternative materials, such as wood, which were decorated with floral or geometrical patterns, typical motifs on lacquerware at that time (Yunmeng 1981, 55–57).⁷ The very different selections of materials, decoration and method of presentation for the *bi* disc showed no attempt

⁷ For example, a Warring States tomb no. 7 and Qin Tomb no. 9 at Shuihudi, in Yunmeng 雲夢, Hubei, yielded two and four wooden *bi* discs respectively. They were painted and lacquered on one side with floral or geometrical patterns (Yunmeng 1981, 55–57).

in these cases to maintain the appearance of jade. These are early examples of the form of the *bi* disc being disconnected from the original jade material in the southern region, and demonstrate the association between jade and *bi* discs in the southern region was not as strong as it was in the eastern areas.

However, the *bi* discs became essential burial items in the region, regardless of rank;⁸ and hanging or placing a *bi* disc at the head of the deceased was a ubiquitous practice in this southern region that began no later than the Warring States period.⁹ Scholars have provided detailed discussions and relate the source of the practice to the long standing custom to perforate a hole in burial containers (cf. Wu 2011; Huang 2001, 63), for example, the perforated ceramic urns of the Yangshao 仰韶 culture (c. 5000–3000 BCE);¹⁰ and in the early Warring States period tomb of the Marquis Yi of Zeng 曾侯乙 at Leigudun 擂鼓墩, Hubei, the ornate painted outer coffin has a rectangular opening on the foot panel (Hubei 1989, 9–55).¹¹ It was generally believed that such holes were made to allow the soul of the deceased to freely move in and out of the burial containers (cf. Li 1976; Li 2012; Wu 2011). Although many ordinary tombs in the Southern region during Han times continued to adopt glass or talc discs as inferior versions of jade discs, the high-status tombs developed a very different approach, and depiction became favoured. In the jade-absent tomb of Lady Dai at Mawangdui, paintings of *bi* discs are repeated in different places—on the funerary banner that covered the inner coffin, the southern panel of the coffin, and a panel in the northern compartment (Hunan 1973a). Wu Hung suggests that the northern compartment was a setting

8 For discoveries of *bi* discs from the ordinary burials in the region, see Changsha 1986; Fu 1999; Hubei 1976; Hunan 1957.

9 For example, in the Warring States Chu tomb no. 2 of a *dafu* 大夫 ranking official at Baoshan 包山, Jingmen 荊門 city, Hubei, a jade *bi* disc was hung by ropes from the top of head panel of the inner coffin (Hubei 1991, 61–68); another two Chu tombs at the same site of Baoshan, tombs no. 4 and no. 5, both had a jade disc buried near the head of the deceased (ibid., 286–318); a Chu tomb no. 406 at Changsha city, Hunan had a jade *bi* disc placed between the head panels of the inner and outer coffins (Zhongguo 1957, 26, fig. 22); a number of medium to small tombs in Changsha city had a talc *bi* disc placed vertically inside or outside the head panels of the coffins (ibid., 65–66); and several medium to small tombs at Zhaojiahu 趙家湖, Dangyang 當陽, Hubei, a jade or agate *bi* disc was placed near the head of the deceased (Hubei 1992), etc.

10 This is the earliest finding to date which shows that burial containers possess perforations, with a hole being very common on the cover or at the bottom of ceramic urns (Xu 1989, 334).

11 Besides, on the coffin of the tomb owner there are depictions of a window-like pattern on the foot panel and on the side panel there are guardians. In the same tomb, the coffins of the attendants or sacrifices also have a similar window-like pattern either on the head panel or foot panel (Hubei 1989, 9–55). In addition, each chamber room is connected with a door hole opening (ibid., 14), so as to allow the soul of the deceased to enter and exit from the coffins and also roam around different rooms within the burial (Wu 2011).

that served as the afterlife dwelling space for Lady Dai, and the panel placed at the far west in this space signified the throne for and presence of Lady Dai (Wu 2011, 59–61).¹² Similarly, in another jade-absent noble tomb of Marquis Dai's son at Mawangdui, images of *bi* discs were also depicted on the funerary banner and a panel in the northern compartment (Hunan et al. 2004). Another nearby tomb at Shazitang also has depictions of *bi* discs on the northern panel and on the cover of the outer coffin (Hunan 1963b).

These pictorial versions of *bi* discs were generally presented as suspended by two crossing ropes, or in a scene showing a pair of mythical animals such as dragons passing through a suspended disc. Evidently, this motif echoed the contemporaneous custom of hanging or placing *bi* discs in a funerary context, particularly those depicted on the head or foot panels of the coffin; meanwhile, the contents were substantially enriched and embodied by adding the elaborate mythical animals in the pictorial images. Although the precise meaning of this iconography is still subject to debate, different scholars have suggested it probably refers to the transition of the soul of the deceased ascending to an eternal otherworld (Erickson 2010; Loewe 1979: 17–59; Wu 1992). The pictorial presentation of *bi* discs appeared repeatedly on items that were placed in close proximity to the tomb owners. On the one hand that indicates the region did not have a strong belief in the preservative quality of jade, as seen in the eastern region;¹³ on the other hand, it reveals that the nobles of this region felt that the image of a *bi* disc alone was efficacious and also a more desirable method to protect and assist the deceased in afterlife (Lin 2004, 328; Thorp 1979, 79).

12 Wu Hung used the tomb of Lady Dai as an example, and suggested that, on the one hand, from the setting in the north compartment, we can assume the tomb beneath the earth is the dwelling place for the *po* 魄 ('spirit') of the deceased, and on the other, particularly the depictions on the coffin and the funerary banner, the *hun* 魂 ('soul') of the tomb owner would leave the tomb and transit to the eternal otherworld (Wu 2011, 59–61). This situation echoes the statement documented in the "Jiao-Ritual Sacrificial Animals (Jiao tesheng 郊特牲)" of the *Records of Ritual (Liji, 禮記)*, "The *hun* soul pneuma returns to the heaven, and the *po* spirit form returns to the earth (魂氣歸於天, 形魄歸於地)" (Csikszentmihaly 2006, 117).

13 In fact, the nobles in the eastern region probably shared similar beliefs with regard to the form of the *bi* disc as the southern elites, but they selected an alternative way to present its presence which still served the same purpose. For example, the noble rock-cut tombs also placed a jade *bi* disc at the head of the deceased, but the jade *bi* disc was included at the top of headgear and become part of a jade burial suit (for examples see Guangzhou 1991a). Likewise, in the tomb of Liu Sheng, Prince of Zhongshan, a rock-cut tomb at Mancheng, an ornate jade *bi* disc embellished with a pair of dragons was placed on the inner coffin (Zhongguo 1980, 133, 135), this jade *bi* disc echoes the motif that was depicted on the coffins and funerary banners in the Southern noble tombs (Gu 2005a, 190). The persistent adoption of jade for *bi* disc presentation reinforces the strong belief in this material as seen in the noble tombs in the eastern region, very different to the practice in the southern region.

According to the textual documentation pictorial coffins became a standard burial ritual for aristocrats during the Eastern Han period, and *bi* discs are one of the significant motifs painted on coffins. In the “Record of Rites” in *Hou Hanshu* (後漢書·禮儀志) it is written:

……東園祕器……畫日、月、鳥、龜、龍、虎、連璧、……

Dongyuan miqi (imperial coffin), ...on which painted sun, moon, bird, turtle, dragon, tiger, joint *bi* discs, ... (Fan 1965, 3141)

However, apart from the discoveries of early Western Han noble tombs in the southern region, objects with *bi* disc depictions have not yet been found in other contemporaneous nor later noble tombs.

Bi Disc Images in Ordinary Tombs: A Hybrid Continuity

The *bi* disc images discovered from the early Western Han were primarily unearthed in high status burials of the eastern rock-cut tombs and the southern earth pit tombs. Although relatively few of these images have been found in these elite tombs to date, they are significant examples, showing these two areas both regarded *bi* disc as essential burial objects that were placed close to the deceased, but with very different choices of presentation that reveal their divergent interpretations and emphases with regard to the *bi* disc form and its original material of jade. The different practices of adopting *bi* disc images in the two regions' elite tombs, in fact, had certain influences on and became references for the development of *bi* disc images that flourished among ordinary tombs in later Han times.

Between the middle and late Western Han periods, *bi* disc images became less common in elite tombs and began to appear in ordinary graves located in the eastern region, mainly in Henan, Jiangsu and Shandong provinces (Table 1). In the meantime, sarcophagi, a new type of coffin made of stone, were also introduced in the east coast area, and Zheng Yan noted these were not high-status burials, and the tomb owners were no more than ordinary wealthy landowners (Zheng 2012, 65, 69). Given this background of changes, sarcophagi unearthed in the Shandong area contain the largest number of *bi* disc image found from the time (Tables 1, 2). The adoption of stone in ordinary tombs in the eastern region to replace wood to make coffins was not a coincidence, but probably related to the prevalent rock-cut noble tombs in the east, which showed a strong belief in the preservative attribute

of jade and stone.¹⁴ However, the *bi* disc imagery engraved on sarcophagi was perhaps not influenced by the eastern noble tombs. As nearly all of the *bi* disc images on sarcophagi are shown suspended by two crossing ropes (Figs. 5, 6, 7), this suspended *bi* disc motif is reminiscent of the prevalent practice of hanging a *bi* disc at head of the deceased in the southern Chu region, and this was also a common motif depicted on the burial objects, including wooden coffins, in southern elite tombs, only which were usually depicted more delicately. In contrast, in the eastern noble tombs, jade *bi* discs were more often used and attached to the coffin, and these were fixed by gilt bronze nails rather than hanging down by ropes, and the disc images inscribed on the jade coffin at Shizishan also do not have two crossing line passing through them. In addition, Zheng Yan notes that Chu culture in the southern region had an impact on the funerary practices of the eastern area of the state, which is further proven by funerary banners, a typical burial item in the Chu region, that were unearthed in different high-ranking Western Han tombs at Linyi, Shandong (Linyi 1977; Zheng 2012, 69). Altogether, the practice of engraving disc images on the sarcophagi developed during this period are a hybrid imitation or continuity of the elite tombs in the east and south: the choice of stone for the coffin was possibly an inferior simulation of a jade coffin or rock-cut structure in the eastern region, but more importantly these ordinary tombs and the noble rock-cut tombs shared the belief in the immortality of stone. Meanwhile, the inscribed disc images are likely imitating and developed from the practice of hanging a *bi* disc and the depiction of *bi* disc on coffin in the southern Chu tombs.

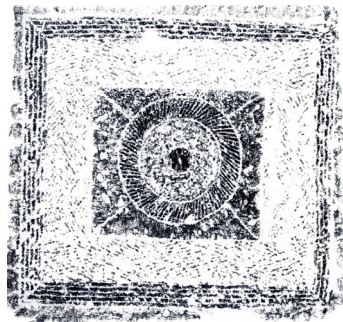


Figure 5a: *Bi* disc image on the north panel of a sarcophagus, unearthed at Qingyunshan, Shandong, mid-Western Han (After Yu and Jiang 2000, 73).

14 For a detailed discussion on the significance of stone for funerary architectural building see Wu 1997. Wu Hung relates the popular rock-cut tombs in the east coast and the prevalence of sarcophagi in the eastern region and later in Sichuan area (that accompanied by the popularity of cliff tombs) to the introduction of Buddhism and Indian culture (Wu 2012, 210). While Jessica Rawson suggests the noble rock-cut tombs were derived from Western Asia via intermediaries in Central Asia or Siberia (Rawson 1999).

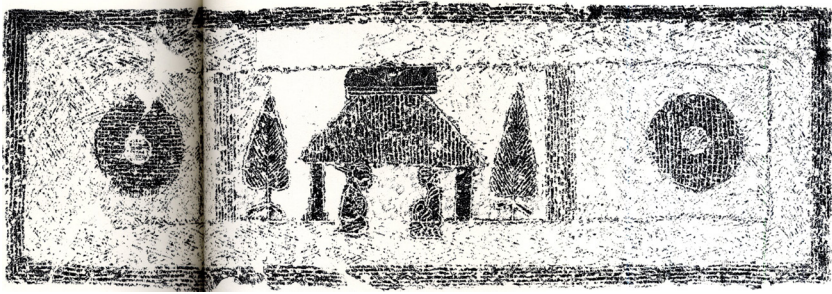


Figure 5b: Images on the east panel of a sarcophagus, unearthed at Qingyunshan, Shandong, mid-Western Han (After Yu and Jiang 2000, 72–73).

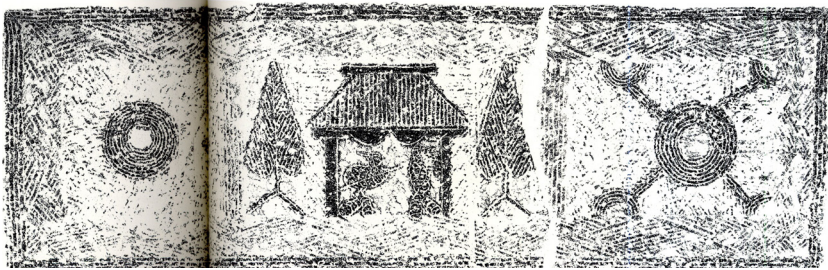


Figure 5c: Images on the west panel of a sarcophagus, unearthed at Qingyunshan, Shandong, mid-Western Han (After Yu and Jiang 2000, 72–73).

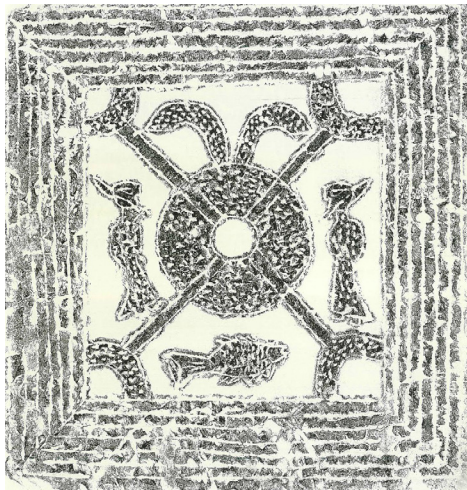


Figure 6: Bi disc image on a sarcophagus, unearthed at Tengzhou, Shandong, mid-Western Han (After Yu and Lai 2000, 176).



Figure 7: Images on the east panel of a sarcophagus, unearthed at Qishan, Pei county, Xuzhou city, Jiangsu, early Eastern Han (Tang et al. 2000a, 3).

It is intriguing that the motif of *bi* disc images found at Shiyuan, Henan, a mid-Western Han noble rock-cut tomb, inscribed on the lavatory stepping stones is very similar to those engraved on the sarcophagi in Shandong (Figs. 5, 6, 7). In fact, besides *bi* discs, the motifs of evergreen trees, a house and a bird on the stepping stone were also motifs that often appeared together with *bi* discs on contemporaneous sarcophagi (cf. Yu and Jiang 2000, 72–73) (Figs. 2a, 2b), all these motifs symbolised longevity and related to a belief in the afterlife.¹⁵ In addition, the images on the lavatory stone and those on the sarcophagi were both engraved in a rather primitive style—objects made of geometrical shapes and adopting parallel lines chiselled in different directions to form a hatched background on unpolished stone (Zheng 2012, 68) (Figs. 2, 5), though there are nuanced differences due to the different skills of the stonemasons. These similarities, however, do not suggest the engraving in Shiyuan is the original source of the *bi* disc images on the sarcophagi in Shandong, as the Shiyuan’s carving did not predate the images on sarcophagi. In fact, as discussed in earlier in this paper, the images appeared in the lavatory, a remote location from the main chamber, demonstrating that the motif did not have any great significance for the deceased, but possibly served a functional (non-slip) or decorative purpose. The use of rock inscribed with similar motifs but adopted differently in different ranking burial contexts—in the lavatory for nobles, while for other on the coffin—on the one hand reveals the different economic status between the nobles and ordinary people (even the rich). It also indicates the prevalence of *bi* disc motifs together with images of a house and evergreen trees during this time, and also suggests that perhaps similar stone engraving sketches were used for the burials for people of different social statuses.

15 For a discussion on the symbolic meanings of tree and bird motifs on the Han pictorial stones, see Zhang (2012).

By the Eastern Han, the *bi* disc motif was still commonly seen on sarcophagi, but there was also a rapid increase in its use on pictorial stones (Table 2), and in addition to Shandong, Henan and Jiangsu, Shaanxi and Sichuan provinces have also seen many such discoveries (Table 1). This is coincident with the development that stone-chambered tombs became prevalent, particularly in today's Shandong, Shaanxi and Sichuan provinces, and many of the stone-chambered tombs are cliff tombs that have sarcophagi. The stone-chambered tombs are possibly derived from the eastern elite rock-cut tombs that shifted from the vertical to lateral plane, but on a smaller scale and as an imitation of an ordinary house with an architectural structure in the interior. With these changes, the tombs have a more spacious interior with larger surface for engraving, and the content of the motifs used during the Eastern Han also became more diverse and complicated. While *bi* discs remained one of the most common motifs, it more often appeared in a repeated manner (Figs. 8, 9) and accompanied by different immortals or in an immortal scene, for example, Xiwangmu 西王母 (the Queen Mother of the West), Dongwanggong 東王公 (the King Father of the East), two winged immortals playing chess, etc. This was particularly common in Shaanxi and Sichuan provinces, where some stone-chambered tombs bear inscriptions saying “a ten-thousand-year chamber home (萬歲室宅)” (Li et al. 1995, 493, 610, 612), “stone chamber which prolongs life (延年石室)” (Wu 2000, 84, fig. 10), “...to meet immortal friends (會仙友)” (ibid., 84, fig. 11), etc. Wu Hung suggests these inscriptions reveal the Taoist ideal of immortality (ibid., 83), and this also indicates these tombs were regarded as the eternal home for the tomb occupant to stay with the immortals. Therefore, the motifs, including *bi* discs engraved in the tombs, were altogether constructing the immortal heavenly world.

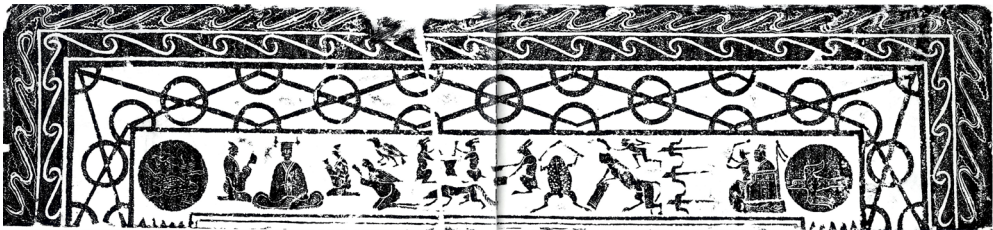


Figure 8: A scene of Dongwanggong and Xiwangmu with immortals and mythical animals surrounded by a strip of pattern of “a bi disc suspended by two crossing ropes” on a pictorial stone lintel, unearthed at Suide county, Shaanxi (After Tang et al. 2000b, 114–15).



Figure 9: A scene of two winged immortals holding lingzhi in their hands and a lingzhi grows in between them, flanked by a repeated pattern of bi discs on a sarcophagus, unearthed at Gubexiang of Changning county, Sichuan (After Gao et al. 2000, 82–83).

Significations of *Bi* Disc Representation in Ordinary Tombs

Bi discs were a motif that was continuously and widely adopted in ordinary tombs in different regions between the mid-Western Han and Eastern Han periods (Table 1), even with the diverse tomb styles (for example, mural tomb, stone-chambered tombs, etc.) that were developed and prevalent among small to medium sized graves in different areas during this time (Erickson 2010; Liu 2015, 149–59). Therefore, *bi* disc images have been found in various media, including mural paintings, engravings on sarcophagus, pictorial stones and pictorial bricks (Table 2). But these different pictorial representations of *bi* discs indeed bore common connotations, which can be summarized as follows.

Symbol of Heaven and Divinity

The motif of dragons or mythical animals passing through *bi* discs (or flanking a *bi* disc) is one of the most common images of *bi* disc, which resembles and is also a continuation of the images on the coffin panel of Lady Dai at Mawangdui and the tomb of the King of Changsha at Shazitang. However, this type of *bi* disc image in ordinary tombs was usually painted on the ceiling of the tomb or engraved on the tomb stone lintel instead of on the coffin. For example, a mural painting discovered at tomb CM1231 in the Qianjingtou village 淺井頭, Luoyang (Lu 1993); another mural painting at tomb in Jingyuan 金谷園, also in Luoyang (Fig. 10); pictorial bricks at tomb M36 in Erdaoyuan 二道原, Xianyang 咸陽, Shaanxi province (Xianyang 2012); a pictorial brick at Fanji 樊集, Xinye 新野, Henan (Fig. 11), etc. In fact, not only *bi* disc images, but

also many celestial images, including the sun, moon, stars, clouds, Nüwa, Fuxi, the four cardinal animals (dragon, tiger, bird, and tortoise), etc., also frequently appeared on the ceiling, such as the ceiling painting in Tomb 61 in Shaogou 燒溝, Luoyang (Henan 1964), tomb CM1231 in Qianjingtou, Luoyang (Lu 1993). This reveals that *bi* discs were regarded as part of the celestial realm at the time. The earliest relevant textual support for this belief can be traced back to a statement about *bi* discs in the *Rites of the Zhou* (*Zhouli* 周禮), a well-known early Chinese text that was compiled during the Warring States period (ca. 403–221 BCE):

以玉作六器，以禮天地四方。以蒼璧禮天，以黃琮禮地……

Jade is made into six (ceremonial) objects to worship heaven, earth and the four directions. Greenish *bi* discs are used for worshipping Heaven; yellowish *cong* is used for worshipping the Earth...(Zheng 2009, 15)

Moreover, the Eastern Han scholar Zheng Xuan 鄭玄 adds the following footnotes to the statements about *bi* discs from the *Rites of the Zhou*, “...the *bi* disc is ring-shaped to represent Heaven (璧圓象天)”; and “(the burial) including a *bi* disc and *cong* communicated with Heaven and Earth (疏璧琮者，通於天地).” (Zheng 2009, 15) These texts reflect a contemporaneous perception about *bi* disc, particularly in a burial context. Moreover, a passage on the *biyong* 辟雍 (the Jade Disc Moat) in the *Proceedings of the White Tiger Hall* (*Baihu tong* 白虎通) provides further information of contemporary thinking about the symbolic meanings of *bi* discs, “Why does the Son of Heaven erect a *biyong*? ... *Bi* means “jade disc”; it imitates the roundness of the jade disc, which models itself on Heaven (天子立辟雍何?辟者，璧也，象璧圓又以法天).” (Tjan 1949, 488) These



Figure 10: A mural painting of four *bi* discs and two dragons at a mural tomb in Jingyuan, Henan, Xin dynasty (After Luoyang et al. 2010, 155).



Figure 11: Rubbing of a pictorial brick of two dragons intersecting and passing through the hole of a *bi* disc, unearthed at Fanji, Xinye county, Henan, Han dynasty
(After Henan et al. 2012, 124).

narrations show that the deep-seated thought about *bi* disc has a close association with the heaven or even was regarded as heaven representation.

In a late Western Han tomb, Tomb no. 61 in Luoyang, another presentation of *bi* disc images reveals a clearer contemporaneous interpretation of the object. On the reverse side of the partition unit pediment facing the rear chamber there are five *bi* discs above a narrow-open gate, and two winged dragons with winged riders flanking the gate (Fig. 12). Another side of the pediment has depictions of different mythical animals and immortals, and the celestial images on the ceiling behind can be seen through the open crack of the gate (Chaves 1968). Similar arrangements of five *bi* disc images were also discovered in the tomb of Lou Rui 婁睿, a later tomb of Northern Qi 北齊 period at Wangguocun 王郭村, Taiyuan 太原, Shanxi (Tao 1992).¹⁶ In the context of Tomb 61 in Luoyang, the corpses of a couple were placed in the rear chamber, and therefore the images on the pediment that faces the rear chamber were regarded as a scene depicting the tomb owners being guided by dragons and immortals through the doorway to reach the realm of Heaven above. Some scholars suggest the open gate represents the Gate of Heaven,¹⁷ and the five *bi* discs arranged above the doorway embody the round Heaven, so that the entire pediment depiction is a representation of the imaginary scene of the Gate of Heaven (cf. Tseng 2011, 205–33; Wu 2011).¹⁸ The idea that *bi* discs are associated with the Gate of Heaven was reinforced by the finding of

16 Differently, the imageries of *bi* discs in this tomb are depicted on the entrance gate of the tomb.

17 For further discussions on the significations of the motifs of ajar doorway and half-open door, cf. Chaves 1968, 19–20; Tseng 2012.

18 The combination of the ideas of *bi* disc and gate also resonates with the Gate with *Bi* Discs (*bi men* 璧門) in the Jianzhang Palace in Chang'an, which Emperor Wu construct to entice immortals to visit. The gate, located in the southern part of the palace complex, and which was very well known, so that the artisans at the time appropriated it to stand for the gate of Heaven in the funerary context (Tseng 2011, 206–7).

a pictorial brick unearthed in Xinzheng, Henan, which is impressed with a motif of a double-story structure *que* 闕 gate-pillar with two *bi* discs hanging from the lintel, and the word *tianmen* 天門 (“The Gate of Heaven”) inscribed on it (Xue 1993, 19). Several circular gilt bronze plaques which are affixed to wooden coffins, discovered in Wushan 巫山, Sichuan and Wudou 武都, and Gansu, all bear the motif of a *bi* disc placed between a gate-pillar, and each of which also has the inscription of *tianmen* “The Gate of Heaven” (Huo 2017; Li 2015) (Fig. 13). The inscriptions ostensibly tell us that a *bi* disc together with the entire scene represent “The Gate of Heaven.” According to the “Record of Rites and Music” in *Hanshu* (漢書·禮樂志), when passing through the “The Gate of Heaven,” one will arrive at Kunlun, the place for immortals.¹⁹ An image of a double-plank gate with a *bi* disc on each plank and an upward-pointed arrow above the *bi* disc was engraved on the head panel of a sarcophagus discovered in the Eastern Han Tomb M12 at Longcheng 龍城, Anhui. It is suggested that the *bi*-disc decorated gate is regarded as “The Gate of Heaven,” and the arrow signifies the direction one needs to go to Heaven (Anhui 2013, 31). Another exceptional example is in the cliff tomb at Changning 長寧, Sichuan, on the relief image on the frame of the tomb gate, a winged dragon holding a rope-tied *bi* disc, flying toward a gate-pillar, with the words *shenyu* 神玉 (“divine jade”) inscribed next to the *bi* disc (Luo 2005). To emphasize the divine quality of the *bi* disc image, along with the presence of a dragon and gate-pillar—a picture of the “Gate of the Heaven” is constructed to represent the afterlife journey of the deceased ascending to Heaven. From different finds of *bi* disc images in ordinary Han tombs, it can be concluded that *bi* discs were one of the significant images serving as a symbol guiding the afterlife journey, and also signified the destination (“The Gate of the Heaven”) for the deceased to aim for.



Figure 12: *The partition unit pediment (facing the rear chamber side), in Tomb no. 61 in Luoyang, late Western Han (After Luoyang et al. 2010, 62).*

19 Original text records in the *Record of Rites and Music* in *Hanshu* (漢書·禮樂志): “Flags of the deities, passed through the Gate of Heaven, and thousands of chariots [that carry the deities], gathered at the *Kunlun* (神之旂，過天門，車千乘，敦昆侖)” (Ban 1962, 1066).



Figure 13: Gilt bronze plaque, unearthed at Wushan, Sichuan, Eastern Han
(After Zhongqing et al 1998, 78–79).

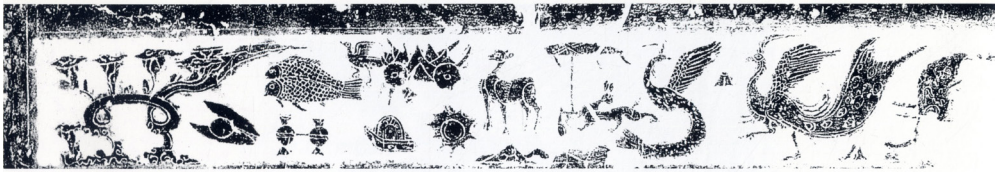


Figure 14: Details of the pictorial stone of auspicious omens in a tomb at Haining, Zhejiang,
Eastern Han (After Tang et al. 2000a, 169).

As Auspicious Omen

Bi discs also appeared as auspicious omens in tombs. To date, there are two such findings, one is on the pictorial stone in the Eastern Han tomb in Haining 海寧, Zhejiang (Pan 1983, 17, fig. 47) (Fig. 14), and another on the mural painting in an Eastern Han tomb in Helinge'er, Inner Mongolia (Neimenggu 1978). For the depiction in Helinge'er, the *bi* disc image bears inscriptions that likely read [*biliu*]*li* [璧流]離(离) (“glass *bi* disc”), but the inscription has been severely damaged, and only the last word “*li*” can be recognized.²⁰ A similar image has been also found in the famous Wu Liang Shrine 武梁祠,²¹ a cartouche inscribed next to that *bi* disc image provides its comprehensive meaning, “The *Bi* Disc of Glass. It arrives when a ruler does not dissemble his faults (璧流離，王者不隱過則至).” (Wu 1989, 240). Auspicious omen images became ubiquitous during the Han regime, regarded as a tangible sign of Heaven’s mandate, conveying

20 Each of the auspicious omens in this tomb bears an inscription that records the name of the object (Neimenggu 1978, 34).

21 Wu Liang Shrine, located in the site of the Wu cemetery at Jiexiang county, Shandong.

Heaven's will and mood to the human world. The development and meaning of auspicious omens are not the focus of discussion here, but the concern is that when *bi* discs served as an auspicious omen and appeared in the burial context its purpose was supposed to be celestial rather than political, as with those recorded in the historical texts (cf. Wu 1989, 76–87; Tseng 2011, 101–32). And therefore, both the *bi* disc omen images found in burials do not bear detailed cartouche inscriptions, like those in the Wu Liang Shrine,²² but rather are presented in a diagrammatic format and appeared on the top of the wall. These *bi* disc images in the ordinary tomb context were regarded as one of the auspicious omens to represent and convey good will to the deceased, and this also reveals that *bi* discs were thought to be endowed with a strong association with Heaven, particularly during the later Han time.

Repetitive Pattern

The motif of “a *bi* disc suspended by crossing ropes” frequently appeared on the exterior surfaces of sarcophagi in Shandong during the middle to late Western Han, such as the images on the panels of sarcophagi discovered at Qingyunshan 慶雲山 in Linyi 臨沂 (Yu and Jiang 2000, 73) (Figs. 5a, 6), and Tengzhou 滕州, Shandong (Yu and Lai 2000, 176) (Fig. 11b). The engravings of *bi* disc images on these sarcophagi bear a resemblance to the elaborate depictions of *bi* discs on the lacquered wood coffins in the Western Han noble tombs of the Southern region (Fig. 3), or perhaps they also signified the long-standing ritual practice of placing (or hanging) an actual *bi* disc at the head of the deceased, as the inscribed *bi* disc images are mainly on the head or foot panels of the sarcophagus, but these images were more crudely made as inferior imitations (Zheng 2012). During the Eastern Han period, the motif of “a *bi* disc suspended by crossing ropes” was even more ubiquitous, but was presented in a repetitive manner. In the meantime,

22 Wu Hung found that the omen images on the Wu Liang Shrine are the only known omen catalogues engraved on Eastern Han shrines. He suggests such an unusual and unconventional presentation of the omen images on the Wu Liang Shrine is related to the special identities of its owner, Wu Liang, who is a scholar belonging to the New Script School and also a member of a political group called the “retired worthies”. When access to official positions for retired worthies became more restricted during the Eastern Han, they (retired worthies/ Confucian scholars) were more keen to use omens to express their political ideals and criticisms, and Wu Hung points out that the omen images on the Wu Liang Shrine are examples representing the political criticisms of the retired worthies during Wu Liang’s time (for a detailed discussion, see Wu 1989, 96–107). Differently, there are no evidences showing that the tomb owners of the discussed tombs in Haining and Horing are a member of the retired worthies, but they seem to be a wealthy commoner and a regional official respectively (Pan 1983; Neimenggu 1978).

because pictorial stone-chambered tombs and brick-chambered tombs began to be favoured in the Eastern Han time, the motif usually appeared as border strips pattern, surrounding the inner or lower tier of different scenes depicted along the pillars and lintels of tomb chambers. For example, the depictions on the lintels and pillars in the tomb at Suide 綏德 in Shaanxi (Fig. 8), and Dangchaxiang 黨岔鄉, Hengshan 橫山, and Shaanxi (Fig. 15). For some cases, the repetitive pattern of *bi* discs served as a background decoration that fully filled the empty space of a thematic scene, such as the pictorial stone collected in Juning 睢寧 county, Jiangsu (Fig. 16a); a pictorial stone collected in Jiawang 賈汪, Xuzhou, Jiangsu (Fig. 16b); a pictorial stone discovered at Qianliangtai 前涼臺, Zhucheng 諸城, Shandong (Yu and Jiao 2000, 126), etc. Some pictorial stones and pictorial bricks were entirely engraved with repetitive pattern of *bi* discs without any narrative purpose, but purely as a design pattern. This can be seen on a pictorial stone unearthed at Miaoshan 苗山, Jiangsu (Fig. 17); the pictorial bricks found at Xinye 新野 (Lu 2012), and Deng 鄧 county (Nanyang 2012), in Henan, etc. When the *bi* disc images developed into a repetitive pattern, the intricate significations of the image became unclear and difficult to distinguish, and they perhaps only served a decorative purpose.

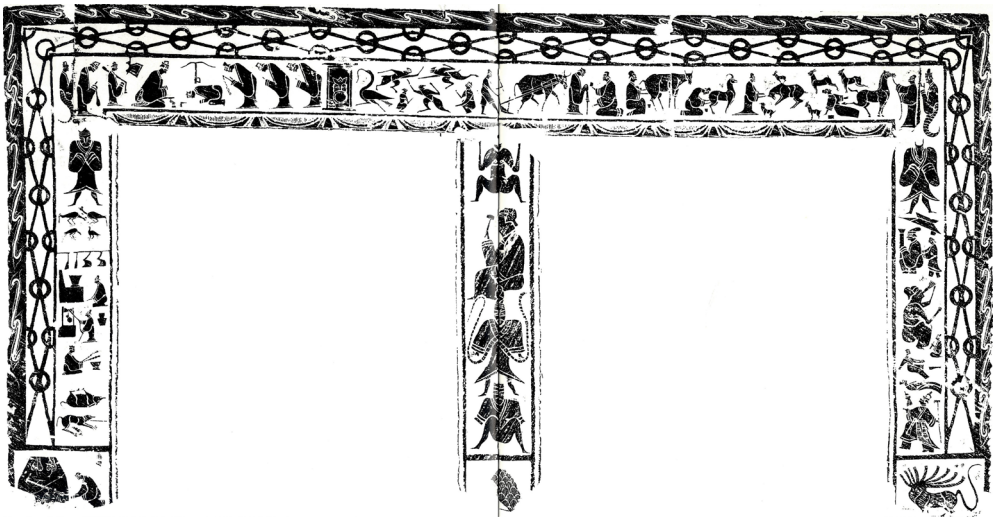


Figure 15: Repetitive pattern of *bi* discs on pictorial stones, unearthed at the tomb in Dangchaxiang, Shaanxi, Eastern Han (After Tang et al. 2000b, 174–75).

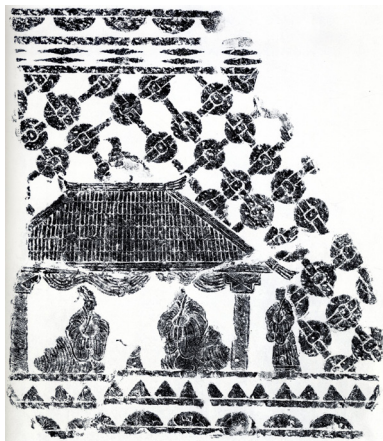


Figure 16a: Repetitive pattern of bi discs on a pictorial stone, collected at Juning county, Jiangsu, Eastern Han (After Tang et al. 2000a, 94).



Figure 16b: Repetitive pattern of bi discs on a pictorial stone (offering table), collected at Jiarwang, Jiangsu, Eastern Han (After Tang et al. 2000a, 67).

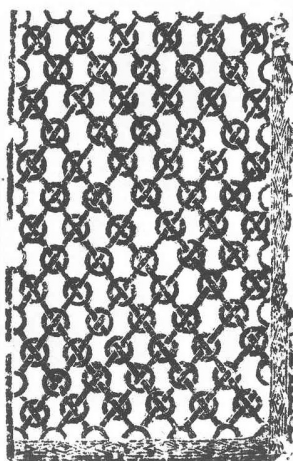


Figure 17: A pictorial stone unearthed at Miaoshan, Jiangsu, Eastern Han (After Ouyang 2001, 107, fig. 138).

Conclusion

Bi disc images in early Western Han burials predominantly appeared in elite tombs in Hunan, part of the former Chu area. These early images of *bi* discs were primarily painted on lacquer wooden coffins or funerary banners that both were placed in the immediate proximity of the corpse. These depictions related to the practice of placing a *bi* disc near the head of the deceased in this region, and the belief that the soul of the deceased was led to an eternal other-world by passing through the opening on the disc. Nonetheless, *bi* disc images were seldom found in tombs of the southern region thereafter, and there is no substantial evidence found to date that could fully explain this situation. One of the possible reasons is objects with paintings were difficult to preserve, and also a painted coffin was a prestigious burial rite for aristocrats, which was prohibited for commoners to adopt, and most ordinary tombs in the area continued placing inferior versions of *bi* disc, such as talc or glass discs, rather than the image form, to substitute for a jade *bi* disc (Fu 1999).

At the same time, although *bi* discs were very often used in those elite rock-cut tombs found in the eastern region (Jiangsu, Shangdong, Hebei, etc.) to protect the corpses, depictions of *bi* discs were seldom adopted, as these do not seem to have been as trusted as the jade objects. Interestingly, the ordinary tombs in the eastern region, i.e. today's Shandong and Henan, were keen on replicating the southern region practice of using *bi* disc images in burials that started from the middle of the Western Han, and rest of the region, e.g. Sichuan, Shannxi, Jiangsu, and Anhui, also followed the practice in the later Han time. But they modified the forms of presentation; instead of painting *bi* disc images on lacquer wood coffins and funerary banners, they were either depicted as mural paintings, or inscribed on the sarcophagi, the walls of stone-chambered tombs or pictorial brick-chambered tombs, and the use of *bi* disc depictions in burials diminished after the Eastern Han period. These changes were in accordance with the fashion of elite tomb structure shifting from the vertical to horizontal plane during the period, particularly when rock-cut tombs were favoured in eastern China (cf. Rawson 1999; Zheng 2012). The ordinary tombs imitated the structure of the elite tombs, and also shared the belief that jade and stone possess a protective power for the deceased. The ordinary people could not afford to use jade coffins and build enormous rock-cut tombs, but sarcophagi and stone-chambered tombs were adopted as simulations of these.

On the one hand, this imitative practice in the ordinary tombs, revealed that the protective purpose was no longer sustained by the *bi* disc image, but the sarcophagi and stone-chambered tombs continued to bear the same function; on the other

hand, under the new tomb design (in the horizontal plane), the grave was regarded as a model of spacious living houses, while it also served as a miniature of the universe; therefore, the grave ceiling usually signified the celestial realm. *Bi* disc images were often arranged on the ceiling in juxtaposition with immortal images, or laid above the entrance of a tomb, so as to represent the heavenly world or the presence of the Gate of Heaven—through which the soul of the deceased could reach the destination of the otherworld to rest eternally.

When the form of *bi* disc was separated from the jade material, and appeared individually as an image, the content and significations of the *bi* disc were able to be further developed and enriched on the basis of the depiction that has been found in the southern region elite burials of the early Western Han. The symbolic meaning of the form was advanced separate from the original object, and it became a symbol of the Gate of Heaven, an auspicious omen and even a motif in a repetitive pattern that often accompanied vivid, imaginative scenes of immortal life, which experienced an entirely different trajectory from the jade *bi* disc object, and also reveals the complex idea associated with *bi* discs during this period of time.

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The Meaning of Birds on *Hunping* (Spirit Jars): The Religious Imagination of Second to Fourth Century Jiangnan

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Abstract

More than 200 heavily decorated jars with five mouths, which are commonly known as *hunping* and date from the second to the early fourth centuries, have been excavated from tombs in Jiangnan. Remarkably, each of these vessels is unique in appearance. One of their most notable features is that they are adorned with figures of many animals. Of these, the most numerous are birds. This paper endeavours to discover why artisans put so many birds on these vessels. Although many analysts believe the birds are the souls of the departed flying to the heavens, that does not explain why there are so many. This paper contends that the answer lies in local Jiangnan legends and beliefs, in which sparrows stole rice from Heaven and introduced its cultivation to humans. Birds thereby were seen as grain and fertility gods and thus emblems of good fortune for both the dead and the living.

Keywords: *hunping* (spirit jars), *wulianguan* (five-linked jars), bird-fields, grain-gods, Mt. Kunlun

Pomen ptic na posodi *hunping*: religiozna imaginacija v Jiangnanu med 2. in 4. stoletjem

Izvleček

V grobnicah iz območja Jiangnan je bilo izkopanih več kot 200 intenzivno okrašenih posod – vrčev s petimi odprtiniami iz obdobja med 2. in zgodnjim 4. stoletjem, ki so običajno poimenovani z izrazom *hunping*. Izpostaviti velja dejstvo, da je zunanja oblika vsakega od teh vrčev unikatna. Za vse pa je značilno, da vsebujejo podobe mnogih živali. Pri tem so najštevilnejše podobe ptic. Pričujoči članek se ukvarja z vprašanjem o tem, zakaj so avtorji teh podob na vrčih upodobili toliko ptic. Četudi mnogi analitiki menijo, da so ptice simbol duše, ki po smrti poleti v nebo, pa to še vedno ne odgovori na vprašanje, zakaj jih je tako veliko. Članek izhaja iz predpostavke, da je to morda povezano z lokalnimi legendami iz območja Jiangnan in verovanji, ki govore o tem, da naj bi

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vrabci Nebu ukradli riž in ga podarili ljudem, da so ga ti lahko začeli pridelovati. Zato so bile ptice dojete kot božanstva zrnja in plodnosti, ki prinašajo srečo in blagostanje tako živim kot mrtvim.

Ključne besede: *hunping* (posoda duše), *wulianguan* (vrči s petimi odprtini), ptice-polja, božanstva zrnja, gora Kunlun

One of the most captivating and fascinating artefacts found in China has to be what are commonly called *hunping* 魂瓶 (spirit jars). *Hunping* are pottery jars that have five mouths, with four smaller ones surrounding a larger central one. What makes these jars particularly distinctive is that their sides and tops abound with ceramic figurines of animals, people, and architectural structures. Making them even more remarkable is the fact that more than 200 have been excavated, and no two have been found exactly alike.¹ They have no practical use and were made strictly as a grave good (Abe 2002, 60). They were only manufactured for two hundred years, from the later part of the Eastern Han (25–220 CE) until the end of the Western Jin (265–317). Furthermore, one finds them solely in the Jiangnan area of southern China, most particularly in the modern provinces of Zhejiang and Jiangsu. In addition to their physical distinctiveness, the jars are mysterious because it seems no contemporary text identifies them or explains their function. We only know about them through archaeology. Indeed, since there is no contemporary written description of these vessels, we do not even know their proper name. The multiple terms now used for this type of vessel reflect scholars' assumptions about their use or are descriptive in nature: *wulianguan* 五聯罐 (five-linked jar), *duisuguan* 堆塑罐 (figured-jar), *gucangguan* 穀倉罐 (granary jar), and *hunping* (spirit or soul jar). Japanese scholars usually label them *shiniteiko* 神亭壺 "spirit pavilion jar." Albert Dien contends that, when they first emerged in the Eastern Han, these types of jars were called *ling* 靈 "numinous" or "spiritually" efficacious."² For simplicity's sake, I will refer to these jars by their most commonly used name of *hunping*.

Purpose of *Hunping*

As some of these terms indicate, a majority of scholars believe that these vessels were literally abodes for the spirits of the dead that were entrapped within the tomb. It

1 For a relatively complete listing of extant spirit jars, see Kaneko (2008, 34–42).

2 One vessel with an inscription has an indistinct character that a Chinese archaeologist has identified as *ling*. Another jar's inscription clearly uses the word *ling*, which leads Dien to this conclusion (see Dien 2001, 510, 519–20). This does not seem to be enough evidence, though, that these vessels were called *ling*.

is well-known that pre-modern Chinese believed that microcosms of whole worlds could be found or conjured in small, enclosed places or things.³ Hence, one can easily believe that the souls of the dead were meant to take up residence in these containers that magically reproduced an ideal world stretching from Heaven to Earth. Kominami Ichirō has argued that the five jars on top of the vessel's base represent the Five Sacred Mountains (*wuyue* 五嶽), with the middle, larger jar being Mt. Kunlun 崑崙山, which is the centre of the world. The jar thus facilitates the *hun*'s 魂 (cloudy soul) ascension to *tian* 天 (Heaven). (Kominami 1993, 229–30) Tao Siyan believes that the jars represent the five islands of immortality that are described in the *Liezi* 列子 (Tao 1993, 26–29). *Hunping* have three levels, with the bottom one, the main body of the jar, corresponding to the earth. Artisans frequently decorated the main body of the jars with images of reptiles, sea creatures, and fish—sometimes their heads are protruding from holes in the sides of the jar (Fig. 1). This leads a number of researchers to believe that the main body of the jar represents the Yellow Springs (*Huangquan* 黃泉), where the *po* 魄 (earthly) soul of the dead would reside.⁴ The *hunping*'s middle section corresponds to the human realm that has four pillars that connect it to the Heavens, which is where the birds are flying to (Tong 2003, 32–33). According to Kominami, the human figures on the vessel are conducting a funeral that welcomes the dead spirit to Heaven (Kominami 1989, 179–81). Due to the many images of Buddha that grace the upper third of the jar, other specialists believe that the top section of the vessels represents a Buddhist paradise. Li Gang argues that the central jar represents a stupa, while the four other smaller jars represent the Four Directions (Li 1991, 79–80). As the constructed name *gucangguan* indicates, other scholars believe these jars were in fact granaries that would forever nourish the souls of the departed.⁵ Some researchers believe that the animals, humans, and buildings on top of the spirit jars depict manors and activities associated with them (Tong 2004, 137–43; Dien 2001, 522–23). Other analysts think the vessels are connected with the product of unconventional “burials of summoned souls” (*zhaohun zang* 招魂葬), which were rituals conducted to settle the souls of the departed whose bodies could not be

3 For a detailed exploration of this idea, see Stein (1987, 49–113).

4 For example, see Xun and Zhu (2010, 87–88).

5 Dien provides five reasons why it makes sense to view these vessels as granaries meant to feed the dead: 1) The five-linked jars in Guangzhou, which perhaps inspired the *hunping*, had remnants of possible fruit offerings. 2) Carbonised rice grains were found in a Three Kingdoms *hunping* found in Fujian, 3) one Wu period *hunping* from Shaoxing has the words “Flying deer and five sorts” (*fei lu wu zhong* 飛鹿五種) painted on it. The “five sorts” might mean the five types of grain, bags of which were sometimes placed in tombs to feed the dead. 4) A spirit jar from Jiangning, Jiangsu, dated to 280, has under its roof-shaped lid, a model of a lower and upper millstones. 5) There is no other way to explain the large number of birds and rats on the vessels (see Dien 2001, 521–22). Abe notes that another Jiangning tomb, dated to 272 to 274, contained grain (see Abe 2002, 78). It should be noted, though, that there are extremely few examples of spirit jars that contain anything.

recovered (Ho 1961, 32–33; Wu 1986, 287–90).⁶ In other words, these jars were used to house the souls of missing northern Chinese whose bodies could not be retrieved. In stark contrast, Stanley Abe does not think the *hunping* were meant to house the *hun*; instead, they were funerary objects that were primarily meant to benefit the living rather than the dead (Abe 2002, 92–93).



Figure 1: Wu state celadon *hunping* excavated in Ningbo. Stored at the Ningbo Municipal Museum (Photo by Author).



Figure 2: Eastern Han “five-linked jar.” Stored at the Ningbo Municipal Museum (Photo by Author).

No matter what their function, one of the most remarkable aspects of these jars is the large number of animals used to decorate each jar. Students of the *hunping* often

6 However, the spirit jars do not appear in the tombs of northern emigres, but that of local magnates. Stan Abe points out that, in an Eastern Jin court debate over these burials, the soul is supposed to be called back to a “spirit seat” (*lingzuo* 靈座) or a *hun*-soul hall (*hunping* 魂堂). He believes these are the names that *hunping* were called (see Abe 2002, 90). We can neither be sure that these references refer to *hunping*, which were no longer produced in the Eastern Jin, nor that this is what southerners in the Eastern Han, Wu, and Western Jin called them.

remark on this fact, but pay only cursory attention to them. The function of the jars and the presence of images of Buddha have attracted much more concern. But why did the makers of these vessels want animals on these jars? And why these particular animals? Did the presence of animals on these vessels change over time? Depictions of animals are much more prominent on Eastern Han and Wu state (220–280) *hunping*, and much less common on Western Jin jars. In this paper, I will briefly discuss the types of animals that appeared on *hunping*, the location of the animals on the jars, and their gradual disappearance. Since birds are the most numerous animals on the jars and are continuously present on them, they will be my primary focus. Even though most scholars believe the birds on spirit jars represent the *hun*-soul of the deceased, it is much more likely that they depict the local Jiangnan belief that birds are responsible for rice farming; hence, their presence is meant to bring good luck to both the living and the dead. In other words, the jars manifest Jiangnan local religious beliefs, in which birds were particularly significant.

Development and Location of the *Hunping*

Before beginning our discussion on animals, we need to talk about the history of these jars in terms of time, place, and development. Pottery vessels with a central mouth surrounded by four other jars began to appear in the second century CE. Scholars usually label these pitchers as *wulianguan* “five-linked jars.” The earliest ones, which probably appeared during the first hundred years of the Eastern Han, were not decorated (Fig. 2) (see Tong 2004, 55–56; Kominami 1993, 235). Undecorated *wulianguan* continued to be produced into the Wu state period (Fig. 3). By the mid-Eastern Han, however, small sculptures of reptiles, birds, and bears appear on the shoulder of the main pot (Fig. 4). Artisans began adding human figurines at the end of the Eastern Han (Figs. 5 and 6). Kominami notes that the earliest *wulianguan* were gourd-shaped (ibid., 229–30). In the mid-third century, artisans started fashioning these jars in a different way: on top of the main jar they put a horizontal platform, which allowed them to add more figures and even architectural elements (Figs. 7 and 8). Tong Tao points out that, 1) this innovation made it so that the viewer would no longer view the vessel as a whole, but gaze at its distinct sections; 2) since the middle jar mouth was no longer open, each of the jar mouths could be transformed into buildings (Tong 2004, 57). For Tong this is the point where the *wulianguan* becomes a *hunping*. Tong points out that the majority of *wulianguan* and *hunping* were made in the vicinity of present-day Shaoxing, Zhejiang, and were Yue-ware (Yueyao 越窯). A smaller number of these vessels were created near Nanjing and only began appearing in the mid-third century. Their design was heavily influenced by Shaoxing pots.



Figure 3: Wu state “five-linked jar” from the fertilizer factory site in Gaochun County, Jiangsu. Stored at the Zhenjiang Museum (Photo by Author).



Figure 4: Eastern Han “five-linked jar” with animals. Stored at the Shanghai Museum (Photo by Author).

Other important aspects of the *hunping* are their dates and geographical extent. Kikuchi Dai has provided us with the most complete listing of these jars. He notes that there are 46 *hunping* that can be dated, either because they have a figurine of an inscribed stele or because other materials found in the same tomb are dated. The earliest *hunping* that comes from a dated context is from 103 CE, while the latest is from 322. Of these dated spirit jars most are from the Western Jin (27), closely followed by those dating to the Wu state (15). Kikuchi lists a total of 162 undated *hunping*. By far the greatest number have been unearthed in Zhejiang, with Jiangsu having the second most. A small number of the vessels have been found in Anhui, Fujian, and Jiangxi (Kikuchi 2001, 32–48). More specifically, archaeologists have found the majority of the jars either in northeast Zhejiang or southern Jiangsu (Zhao 2016, 64). *Hunping* are found in larger, richer tombs that belonged to members of local magnate families (Dien 2001, 522). No matter how many coffins a tomb may contain, there is nearly always just one *hunping* per tomb (Abe 2002, 91).



Figure 5: Wu state five-linked jar. Stored at the Nanjing Museum (Photo by Author).



Figure 6: Wu state celadon jar unearthed in Wuyi County, Zhejiang. Stored at the Shanghai Museum (Photo by Author).



Figure 7: Wu state green ware hunping. Excavated at the Daotushan site in Shaoxing. Stored at the Shaoxing Museum (Photo by Author).



Figure 8: Wu state green ware *hunping* unearthed at Nanjing's Jiangning Shangfang site. Stored at the Nanjing Six Dynasties Museum (Photo by Author).

Animals on the *Hunping* and Changes over Time

What animals appear on the *hunping*? The animals can be divided into two large categories: natural and supernatural ones. The supernatural animals include dragons, phoenixes, *qilin* 麒麟, *pushou* 鋪首 (door-knocker beast), *tianlu* 天祿 (heavenly emoluments beasts), the vermilion bird, the single-hearted double bird, etc. There are many types of natural animals on the jars, such as dogs, sheep, bears, rats, flying birds, turtles, monkeys, lions, deer, pigs, chickens, snakes, slugs, crabs, fish, and lizards.⁷ The first animals that appeared on the Eastern Han *hunping* were fish, lizards, dogs, silkworms, lions, and bears, which appear to be feeding themselves, although Dien thinks many of these “bears” look more like rats (Fig. 9) (Dien 2001, 514). The Wu period *hunping* are teeming with animals. Below the horizontal platform on the body of the main jar, there are numerous reptiles, fish, and crustaceans, which interestingly do not appear on the *wulianguan*. Oftentimes, they are moving towards or popping out of holes that perforate the pot's main body. Sometimes monkeys appear here as well. The only reptiles ever seen above the horizontal platform are tortoises, which carry stele on their backs.

The animals that appear above the horizontal platform are both wild and domestic. The creatures at the upper reaches of the jars are usually only birds. Auspicious animals appear both below the horizontal platform and above it. By the Western Jin, reptiles and aquatic animals on the walls of the main pot were gradually replaced by auspicious creatures and horse riders. Holes in the side of the main body of the jar become less frequent as well (Fig. 10). Although birds remain numerous on Western

7 For a listing of the animals found on the jars, see Zhou (2000, 100–1).

Jin *hunping*, other animals, with the exception of bears, largely disappear (Fig. 11). As for the bears, they are often transformed into supports for structures (Fig. 12) and displaced by increasing numbers of Buddha statues and architectural elements (Fig. 13). Song Bosong and Yuan Shengwen provide a chart that lists the decorations for 36 *hunping* from the Wu Kingdom and the Western Jin. Wu *hunping* usually only have one or two Buddha statues—a jar dating to 276 and unearthed at Jiangsu’s Jintan Tangwang site is the exception with seven. In contrast, Western Jin *hunping* often have more than four Buddha images—a *hunping* unearthed at Nanjing’s Ganjiagang gaochang site has 20. Similarly, the number of supernatural beasts also increases sharply on Western Jin jars. (Song and Yuan 2004, 57–60) In short, it seems that by the Western Jin real animals, except for birds, had lost most of their importance on the jars. The artisans’ decorations instead show the increasing prominence of Buddhism and supernatural beasts. Perhaps this came with the frequent contact with Luoyang, where Buddhism had already gained a strong foothold.

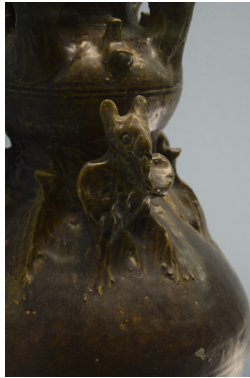


Figure 9: Close-up of Eastern Han “five-linked jar” with animals.
Stored at the Shanghai Museum (Photo by Author).



Figure 10: A Western Jin spirit jar unearthed in Ningbo, Zhejiang.
Stored at the Ningbo Municipal Museum (Photo by Author).



Figure 11: Western Jin green ware hunping dated to 294. Unearthed at in Jurong city at the Stone Lion Commune. Stored at the Nanjing Museum (Photo by Author).



Figure 12: Western Jin celadon hunping. Unearth at Ganjiaxiang, Nanjing. Stored at the Nanjing Municipal Museum (Photo by Author).

An Abundance of Birds

Without doubt the most common spirit jar animals, natural or supernatural, are birds, which are either shown flying up the central top jar, perched on the edge of each of the top five jar mouths peering inside, or sitting on the eaves of buildings looking outwards. Although Dien points out that birds do not appear on the earliest *hunping* (Dien 2001, 514), they soon become a notable presence on nearly all subsequent jars. Indeed, if a jar only has one kind of animal it will be a bird, and many *hunping* have them in an abundance (Fig. 14). Looking at Song and Yuan's analysis of the decorative figures of 36 Wu kingdom and Western Jin spirit jars, birds appear on 25. There are a total of 514 birds on those 25 jars, which means on the average each has 20. One

Wu kingdom jar has 66 and a Western Jin one has 58. Fewer Western Jin jars have birds; they tend to be less numerous than those on their Wu state counterparts (Song and Yuan 2004, 57–60). Only one of the 25 jars has just one bird. Why are there so many birds on these jars? What are they meant to signify?



Figure 13: Western Jin red hunping unearthed at the Jiangning Suoye site in Nanjing. Stored at the Nanjing Municipal Museum (Photo by Author).



Figure 14: Western Jin hunping excavated in Ningbo. Stored at the Ningbo Municipal Museum (Photo by Author).

Scholars have put forward a number of reasons for the appearance of birds on the jars. Many specialists believe that, since birds are equally at home on the ground and in the skies, they appear on the jars to enable the *hun* spirit to reach the heavens. Kominami, for example, has argued that the birds are the departed's *hun* soul. He

notes that anecdotes from this period indicate that, before it became an ancestor, the soul of the dead sometimes became a bird. To buttress this assertion he relates a tale found in the fifth-century *Hou Hanshu* 後漢書 (*History of the Later Han*) about Yang Zhen 楊震 (d. 124) who was wrongfully driven to suicide. When the newly installed Emperor reburied Yang with honour, a large bird came before the coffin, mourned extravagantly, and soaked the ground with tears. Once the funeral was completed, it left. Kominami believes this bird was obviously Yang Zhen's *hun* soul. Hence the birds attached to the *hunping* represent the soul of the departed as it attempts to enter the spirit jar's body, which is the abode of the ancestors. This is why the birds are always facing the jar and usually perched on jar mouths. He notes only the latest jars feature birds who are looking outwards (Kominami 1993, 277–78). Zhou Mei believes that people of ancient southeast China had a natural admiration for birds, which are overwhelming benign, have beautiful feathers, sing delightful songs, and like humans get up with the rising sun and rest as it sets. When slash and burn agriculture was in practice, birds were also cherished because they fertilized the land with their droppings, which is why Jiangnan had what was called *niaotian* 鳥田 (bird fields). The many birds on the *hunping* reflect local respect for birds and the belief that their help was needed to ascend to the heavens (Zhou 2000, 101). Zhao Shuyi underscores that, beginning with the Neolithic Hemudi Culture, the Wu-Yue region had long venerated birds and viewed them as spiritual beings. Since the top part of the vessels symbolize the heavenly world while the main jar is the temporary abode of the dead, the birds who fly up to perch on the jar's top are helpers who assist the *hun* to ascend to paradise (Zhao 2016, 64–65). Que Yanjun and Jiang Yuanqiao think that, since Xiwangmu 西王母 (the Mother Goddess of the West) had three blue-green birds that brought her food and served as her messengers, the birds on the *hunping* were meant to not only escort the *hun* to her home on Mt. Kunlun, but also represent both Xiwangmu and her paradise (Que and Jiang 2007, 83–84). Since Li Gang believes that *hunping* were inspired by Buddhist ideas, he maintains that the birds are pigeons, which Persians used to deliver messages over long distances. He also states that, in some Buddhist *jataka* tales, the Buddha becomes a pigeon, and thus the birds are symbolic of Buddhism (Li 1991, 80).

All of these explanations are intriguing and suggestive. But to what degree do they actually explain the presence of the birds? A nagging question is why are there so many birds on the jars? If the birds are the *hun* soul of the departed, why are there more than one? Kominami is correct that early medieval people believed that the *hun* might turn into a bird, as seen in the tale of Yang Zhen's burial. Nevertheless, as that story indicates, it was believed that the *hun* would become one bird. In an early medieval narrative about the filial son Bo Qi 伯奇, his wronged *hun* soul also transforms into a single bird (Knapp 2012, 129–32). In other words,

Kominami's explanation cannot account for why there are multiple birds. Similarly, if birds symbolize messengers that show the departed the way to the heavens, why are they also found decorating other grave goods? A candlestick excavated in 1937 in Shangyu 上虞, Zhejiang, has the same motif of multiple birds flying upwards (Yun 1993, plates #33 & 166). Obviously, the birds are not leading the *hun* soul into the candlestick. Likewise, a Wu kingdom model stove, which is dated to 272 and was unearthed in Nanjing, is decorated with the common *hunping* motifs of pavilions with birds flying up them (Figs. 15 and 16) (Nanjing shi bowuguan 2004, 335–37). Obviously, these decorative motifs are not intrinsic to the *hunping* and probably do not symbolize the Queen Mother of the West or the *hun* entering paradise. As such, what do these bird motifs mean?



Figures 15 and 16: Wu state pottery stove.

Stored at the Nanjing Municipal Museum (After Nanjing shi bowuguan 2004, 335, 337).

Birds as Jiangnan Emblems of Good Fortune

It might be helpful to look at local traditions about birds in the southern Jiangsu and northern Zhejiang area. What we find is that numerous regions within Jiangnan have myths about the instrumental role that birds played in the introduction of rice agriculture. As a result, birds are held in high esteem and are frequently the recipients of rituals that express gratitude. In the Jiangnan area, this admiration for birds has a long history; it is already evident in the archaeological remains of both the Hemudu and Liangzhu cultures. (Childs-Johnson 2012, 2–16) In various places in Zhejiang province, scholars have collected different versions of a legend in which sparrows play a key role in introducing rice agriculture. Although the details differ, the broad parameters of the legend remain the same: soon after humans were created, they were starving because of a lack of food. Rice was the food of the gods that could only be found in the Heavens. Aware of the human's dire situation and taking pity on them, sparrows flew up to the Heavens to obtain or steal the rice, which they brought down to the Earth. Rats helped complete the job by distributing the seeds (Chen 2003, 4–10). As a result, the natives of these areas regarded sparrows as grain deities and honoured them with sacrifices of rice. Until the 1950s, some villages would stage a festival in their honour on the nineteenth day of the second month—each family would cook up a dish of rice with vegetables, which was called *baijiafan* 百家飯 (rice of the hundred families), *bainiaofan* 百鳥飯 (rice of the hundred birds), or *maniaofan* 麻鳥飯 (sparrow rice) and would then scatter it on rooftops or fields. The purpose of doing so was to thank the birds for bringing grain into this world (*ibid.*, 14–17). Dien observes that many of the earliest decorated *hunping* have animals that are often identified as bears, but look more like rats. Perhaps these figures are the divine rats of legend who helped the swallows distribute rice seeds. A Wu kingdom *hunping* at the Six Dynasties Museum in Nanjing prominently features a rat (Fig. 17).

Since the residents of Jiangnan viewed sparrows as grain gods, they were also associated with human fertility. Jiangnan people often call swallows *majiangdiao* 麻將鳥 (*majiang* in the Wu dialect means sparrow). *Niao* in this case is pronounced *diao*, which is the same sound used to designate the male reproductive organ. In other words, the birds were called “swallow penises.” In some areas of Zhejiang, there was a ritual in which a childless married couple on the night of the nineteenth day of the second month would first pray before an altar to the *songgushen* 送谷神 (God Who Delivers Grain), who was probably a swallow. The husband would then go out to catch a male sparrow. After cooking it, the couple would again kowtow and pray before the altar. Only then would the husband consume the sparrow (*ibid.*, 18–19). The Tang Dynasty (618–907)

doctor, Chen Zangqi 陳藏器 (681–757), in his *Bencaoshiyi* 本草拾遺 (*Supplement to Materia Medica*), notes that, “If in the second month of winter you eat it [sparrows], it will make the penis rise, which will allow the birth of children” (ibid., 18). Clearly, this proves that sparrows were associated with male fertility as early as the Tang.



Figure 16: Wu state hunping. Excavated from Shangfang, Nanjing. Stored at Nanjing's Six Dynasties Museum (Photo by Author).

But how far do these local Jiangnan beliefs about sparrows bestowing rice to humans go back in time? The connection between birds and rice agriculture in Jiangnan can be pushed even earlier than the Tang Dynasty. Han texts often mention that the Jiangnan area had *niaotian* (bird fields). This term seems to refer to the fact that, in the early period when slash and burn agriculture was prevalent, people relied on birds to distribute seeds and eat pests. The first century CE *Yue jue shu* 越絕書 (*The Book of the Glory of Yue*) tells us that, “The coastal people of Dayue 大越 (the Shaoxing region) are unique in their development of ‘bird fields’... Since he (the Sage king Yu 禹) did not have a way to repay the people for their hard work, he taught the people to have bird fields (*jiaomin wu tian* 教民鳥田)”⁸ (Liu and Chen 1994, 10.31.) One could also translate this last passage as “he taught people how to bird the fields”. In other words, Yu taught people how to make use of ground inadvertently prepared for agriculture through the natural activities of birds, or how to actively use birds to aid

8 The translation is from Milburn (2010, 224–25).

in rice-farming.⁹ The Eastern Han Dynasty *Wu-Yue chungiu* 吳越春秋 (*The Annals of Wu and Yue*) also informs us that birds were active in preparing fields for agriculture:

[When Yu the Great governed Kuaiji 會稽] phoenixes perched in the trees, *Luan* 鸞 birds nested inside buildings, unicorns paced in the courtyard, and the hundred birds farmed in the marshes ... Heaven praised Yu's virtue and rewarded his achievements, by making the hundred birds return to work the fields on the behalf of people. (Liu and Chen 1994, 6.29)

This long passage underscores the active contribution that birds were thought to have made to Jiangnan agriculture. The author directly says the birds were *dian* 佃 “farming” the fields on people's behalf. In debunking the idea that birds and elephants intentionally helped people engage in rice agriculture, Wang Chong (27–97) who was from Kuaiji (Shaoxing) provides us with a natural explanation for why people of the area thought in this way:

The facts are that Cangwu 蒼梧 was a country where elephants abound, and that in Kuaiji hosts of birds used to alight... The nature of Heaven and Earth finds expression in the doings of birds and beasts. Elephants stamp the ground on their own accord, and so do birds pick out plants. When the earth has been thus pounded, and the weeds are destroyed, it looks like a tilled field, and when the soil has been loosened and the clods have been turned, man can forthwith proceed to plant. (Liu and Chen 1996, 48; Forke 1962, 2: 247)

Here Wang says that birds inadvertently help farmers by eating the remains of old crops. While taking the time to refute this belief in two places of his work, he nevertheless underscores how much the people of Jiangnan associated birds with agriculture.

It is thereby my belief that the motif of multiple birds on the spirit jars has nothing to do with guiding the *hun* to the Heavens. For the residents of Jiangnan, the image of birds flying up and resting on the lips of jars, which might contain grain, reminded them of their belief that birds delivered grains to the Earth by bringing it from the sky. The idea of many birds bringing grain from the sky also indicates agricultural abundance. Since sparrows were associated with fertility, the many

9 In recent years, to limit their use of pesticides, some farmers in Japan, China, Thailand and South Korea have employed ducks in their rice fields to eat weeds, insects, and snails. See Pere_Chapi 2018 and RighteousLiving40 2013.

birds also conveyed the idea of human fecundity too. In other words, for Jiangnan people, the image of numerous birds was a sign of good fortune—an abundance of both rice and children. This is the reason why we find this motif on other objects as well, such as candlesticks and model stoves.

Auspicious Inscriptions on Miniature Stele

Looking at the inscriptions found on miniature stele, which decorate a number of spirit jars, reinforces the idea that the primary function of these jars was to bring good luck to the living descendants of the dead. The earliest jar, which dates to 260 CE and was unearthed at Xiaoshan 蕭山, Shaoxing, reads,

永安三年時富且洋[祥]宜公卿子孫壽命長千億萬歲未見英[殃].

In the time of the third year of Yong'an, wealth and happiness, may there be dukes and lords, many sons and grandsons, long life, and may there be no misfortune for a thousand [times] a hundred thousand, and ten-thousand years (Dien 2001, 518–19).

Another inscribed stele on a Western Jin spirit jar reveals similar sentiments,

出始寧用此X女X宜子孫作吏高遷眾無稽

Produced in Shining; use this X woman X, may there [continue to] be sons and grandsons, hold offices which are high, and have promotions that are multitudinous without limit (ibid., 518–20).

Most of the other inscriptions are much shorter than these and convey much the same content. What these inscriptions clearly indicate is that the jars are meant to bring good fortune to living descendants. Obviously, the *hunping* in some way placates the dead; consequently, they will bring blessings to their living descendants (Tao 1993, 28–29). In other words, the jars are meant to bring good luck and therefore the jar's figures, including all of the animals, must all be auspicious signs. Hence the numerous birds flying up to the heavens and snacking on grains could well be a sign of continued wealth, prosperity, and numerous heirs.

Conclusion

This essay has endeavoured to demonstrate that spirit jars are incredibly rich and captivating artefacts, which reveal to us much about the religious beliefs of second

to fourth century inhabitants of the Jiangnan region. As many scholars have suggested, the spirit jars could well convey how these people conceived of paradise or the afterlife. What has caught my interest are the tremendous number of animals and types of beasts populating these jars. Artisans attached images and figurines of animals on the *hunping*, particularly in the late Eastern Han and the Wu state period. Then, in the Western Jin, the animals largely disappear as decorations, with the exception of birds and bears. This suggests that late Eastern Han and Wu state people could not envision a happy future without a world teeming with animals. Western Jin jars, in contrast, have many more decorations consisting of Buddhas and auspicious animals, which seems to indicate that they envisioned an afterlife that was more fantastic and less pedestrian.

One of the most remarkable characteristics of the spirit jars is the large number of birds that artisans placed on them. Although scholars have offered a number of different reasons for their presence, I believe that they are best explained by looking at local beliefs. The Jiangnan area has long had a myth in which sparrows save humanity by stealing rice from Heaven and bring its cultivation to Earth. As a consequence, until the 1950s, many places in Jiangnan celebrated a festival in the second month where they fed rice to sparrows. Although we cannot trace this myth back to early medieval times, we do know that Han texts refer to bird-fields (*niaotian*), which credit the animals with helping farmers grow rice. Due to these beliefs, the large number of birds on spirit jars are probably a local Jiangnan emblem of good luck. Having many birds on grave goods will lead to good harvests and many descendants. Rather than spirit guides, they are tokens of good fortune.

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*Tomb Iconography in the Territory between the
Southwestern and Northern Frontiers during
the Eastern Han and Northern Wei Periods*

Cliff Tomb Burial and Decorated Stone Sarcophagi from Sichuan from the Eastern Han Dynasty

*Hajni Pejsue ELIAS**

Abstract

Cliff tombs and decorated stone sarcophagi from the Eastern Han period have been found in especially large numbers in Sichuan. The sudden rise of cliff tomb burial in the southwest and its decline by the 3rd century CE suggests that it was a trend that answered a particular call in a specific period. Their geographical concentration and use in a period of general social and political stability and economic prosperity in the region point to a distinctive new development in burial custom. Cliff tomb burial represented a fundamental shift in artistic and communicative objectives and a modification in cemetery layout. After examining cliff tombs found in Hejiang county, Sichuan, and especially the iconography and meaning of images carved on stone sarcophagi found therein, the paper suggests a number of possible reasons for the rise of cliff tomb burial, including a wish to eschew the ostentation associated with funereal practice at the time.

Keywords: Eastern Han, cliff tombs, stone sarcophagi, tomb decoration, southwest China

Skalne grobnice in okrašeni kamniti sarkofagi iz province Sichuan iz obdobja dinastije Vzhodni Han

Izvleček

V provinci Sichuan je bilo odkritih veliko skalnih grobnic in okrašenih kamnitih sarkofagov iz dinastije Vzhodni Han. Nenadni pojav skalnih grobnic na jugozahodu in upad teh v 3. stoletju kažeta, da je šlo za težnjo, ki je zadostila posebnim zahtevam v tem specifičnem obdobju. Njihova geografska zgoščenost in uporaba v obdobju splošne družbene in politične stabilnosti ter gospodarske blaginje v regiji kažeta na povsem nov razvoj v pogrebnih običajih. Skalne grobnice tako predstavljajo temeljno spremembo v umetniških in komunikacijskih težnjah ter spremembo v načrtu pokopališč. Po proučitvi skalnih grobnic, najdenih v okrožju Hejiang v provinci Sichuan, in zlasti ikonografije in pomena podob, izklesanih na kamnitih sarkofagih znotraj grobnic, prispevek predstavi več možnih razlogov za porast skalnih pokopov, med katerimi izpostavi predvsem težnjo po izogibanju pompozemu razkazovanju, ki je bilo povezano s takratno pogrebno prakso.

Ključne besede: Vzhodni Han, skalne grobnice, kamniti sarkofagi, dekoracija grobnic, jugozahodna Kitajska

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Introduction

To date, tens of thousands of cliff tombs from the Eastern Han period (25–220 CE) have been discovered, primarily located in the Sichuan Basin, along the Yangtze river and its larger tributaries, the Min 岷, Tuo 沱 and Fu Rivers 涪江. The sudden emergence of cliff tombs and their proliferation during the first and second centuries CE confirm their importance in the region's funerary customs. Their concentration in geography and time points to a distinctive new development in burial practice. The popularity of cliff tomb burial in the southwest appears to have coincided with a period of relative social and political stability and great economic prosperity. From textual sources it is evident that there was a wish, on the part of some, for moderation and frugality in a society that was becoming increasingly aware of its unnecessary extravagance.¹ This paper argues that this wish for more frugal ways of life is reflected in the region's cliff tomb burial practice in which not one, but several family members were buried together in a single tomb. Cliff tomb decoration was also sparser than that seen in contemporaneous chamber tombs, which in many instances display pictorial brick tiles and stone reliefs throughout the interior of the tomb space. Furthermore, cliff tombs represented a change in the layout of cemeteries and in the location where funerary rites and ancestral sacrifices were conducted. Therefore, cliff tomb burial was not a more ordinary or economical version of entombment for the poorer section of the population, as suggested by some scholars, but a distinct type of burial that became widely used by the inhabitants of the southwest, including those with considerable means (Luo 2002; Xuan 2015; Xie 2000).² The sudden rise of cliff tomb burial in large numbers in the 1st century CE, and its decline by the 3rd century suggests that it was a trend that answered a particular call during a specific period. While burial practices changed in other regions of the Eastern Han Empire, this paper cannot examine all of these developments but focuses on the southwest where this phenomenon is found. Further study might show how other regions adjusted burial practices in response to their changing political and social circumstances.

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- 1 The increasing visibility and excessive display of elaborate ritual procedures and practices of the Ruists led thinkers like Wang Chong 王充 to advocate frugality and criticise extravagance and conspicuous consumption, especially in relation to the increasingly complex and costly funerary displays of their time. Wang questioned the necessity for lavish burials, along with the belief in the existence of ghosts and *shen* 神, which drove people to indecent behaviours. He dedicates whole chapters in the *Lunheng* 論衡 to challenge what he termed as false and nonsensical notions of his day. See *Lunheng jiaoshi* 論衡校釋 (*Critical Explanation of the Balanced Discussions*) (Wang 1990, 62: “Lun si” 論死; 63: “Si wei” 死偽 and 64: “Ji yao” 紀妖).
 - 2 Xie (2000, 18–25) also proposes that inscriptions found in cliff tombs are generally short in content and crude in style, confirming the ordinary nature of cliff tomb burial.

Overview of the Southwest's Early Burial Practices

Archaeological discoveries have shed light on early burial customs in the southwest. Stone coffins placed in stone-lined pits, belonging to the “cist tomb culture” of the Neolithic period, have been unearthed in the upper Min River valley which scholars have identified as affiliated with the Shu 蜀 peoples and their burial culture (Orioli 1994; Xu 1995). Another type of burial practice came to light with the discovery of graves containing wooden, boat-shape coffins (Mengoni 2004). Dated to the fifth to the fourth centuries BCE, these coffins have been ascribed by scholars as belonging to the Ba 巴 peoples of the southwest (Sage 1992).³ By the third and second centuries BCE, wooden encasements placed in simple rectangular pits became the most widespread form of burial in the region, while boat coffins gradually disappeared (Mengoni 2004, 54). From the Western Han (206 BCE–9 CE) to the beginning of the Eastern Han period, traditional vertical shaft pits were superseded by brick and stone chamber tombs, and from the second half of the Eastern Han period there was a substantial decrease in the number of chamber tombs, with cliff tombs established as the predominant tomb type in Sichuan (Sichuan sheng wenwu kaogu yanjiuyuan 2014). Cheng Te-k'un (1908–2001), an archaeologist and curator of the West China University Museum at Chengdu in the 1930s, suggested that cliff tombs evolved from brick chamber tombs and represented a new burial custom which gradually gained popularity in the Eastern Han and came to dominate the region's burial practice (Cheng 1957). Wu Hung supports Cheng's findings and draws our attention to cliff tombs as representative of the zenith of Sichuan tomb art and architecture (Wu 1987, 94). In summary, scholars are generally in agreement that cliff tombs are distinct to the southwest, and that this type of burial practice became standard and the prevalent form of burial in the region by the Eastern Han dynasty.

Distribution of Cliff Tombs and Decorated Stone Sarcophagi in the Southwest

The majority of decorated stone sarcophagi from the Eastern Han period are found in Sichuan, with a small number from the area occupied by present-day Guizhou 貴州 and Chongqing 重慶 (Gao 2011). This finding suggests that by the first and second centuries CE, decorated stone sarcophagi were primarily

3 The historical references to the region of present day Sichuan province and Chongqing Municipality for the period between the fifth and second centuries BCE mention two ancient states: Shu and Ba. Archaeological material dated from the Han period, especially if excavated from funerary contexts, has thus generally been grouped and interpreted under the labels Ba culture, Shu culture or Ba-Shu culture. These terms have strong cultural and ethnic connotations (see Mengoni 2004, 52).

employed in the southwest where cliff tombs became the preferred means of burial, as mentioned above (Erickson 2003, 405). The main locations of cliff tombs where stone sarcophagi have been found in the southwest are along the hill-sides of the upper Yangtze river in the Chuanxi plain 川西平原 near Leshan 樂山 and Pengshan 彭山 counties; along the Yangtze and its larger tributaries, the Min and Tuo rivers located in the Chengdu plain; and along the Fu and Yangtze river valleys near Luzhou city 蘆州 and Hejiang 合江 county (Luo 2000, 47) (Map 1).



Map 1: Distribution of Eastern Han Dynasty cliff tombs and stone sarcophagi excavated in Sichuan (Luo 2000, 47).

Regarding the size and layout of the tombs, they vary in scale, with some containing a single shallow burial chamber of a few metres in length, while others, extending over tens of meters into the mountain side, are constructed with multiple chambers to accommodate numerous coffins. They are usually laid out in groups, resembling a small cemetery, with tombs positioned next to each other horizontally, and forming several layers vertically along the upper reaches of the hills and mountain sides (Wu 2000, 79).

Cliff Tombs at Hejiang County

In order to understand the general layout of cliff tombs and how they may have been used, let us take a closer look at examples discovered at Hejiang county. Situated along the upper Yangtze river, Hejiang county has one of the largest number of cliff tombs as well as decorated stone sarcophagi in Sichuan discovered to date. Over 1,250 cliff tomb cemetery complexes have been found in the county, predominantly along the banks of the Yangtze, the Chishui 赤水 and the Xishui 習水 rivers. There are more than 50 cliff tomb complexes which hold ten or more tombs (Figs. 1a, 1b).⁴



Figures 1a, 1b: Cliff tombs at Hejiang county, Sichuan (Photos by Author).

4 This information was obtained from a personal interview with the Hejiang County Han Dynasty Pictorial Stone Sarcophagi Museum (*Hejiang xian Handai huaxiang shiguan bowuguan* 合江縣漢代畫像石棺博物館) director, Zhang Caixiu 張采秀, during field trip conducted at the museum in May, 2016.

For entombing the dead, coffins made in wood, earthenware and stone were placed in them, although today we only have a small number of earthenware coffins and almost no wooden coffins are left intact. Due to the durability of their material, stone sarcophagi have survived in the largest numbers and are therefore, alongside *mingqi* 明器 objects, the primary material culture for the study of cliff tomb burial in the region. On average, stone sarcophagi weigh around 1–1.5 tons, and are approximately 2.25 metres in length, 0.66 metres in height and 0.62 metres in width. The Hejiang County Han Dynasty Pictorial Stone Sarcophagi Museum alone holds over 60 decorated stone sarcophagi in its collection (Gao 2002, 6).

The proliferation of cliff tomb burials and the use of stone sarcophagi in Hejiang county appear to be closely connected to its geography, economic wealth and political importance, which developed as early as the Western Han period. Hejiang county, known in ancient times as Fu county 苻縣, was established in 115 BCE (Li 1989, 33.2788; Ban 1962, 28A.1599). It first became prominent when the Han envoy, Tang Meng 唐蒙, was appointed to lead a military force of 1,000 soldiers and over 10,000 porters out of the county to visit the Marquis of Yelang 夜郎, Duotong 多同 (Sima 1959, 116.2994). According to Sima Qian's account, Tang Meng presented Duotong with generous gifts and, pronouncing the might and virtue of the Han Dynasty, urged him to permit officials to be sent to the area. Everyone in Yelang was keen to obtain silk from the Han, and Duotong, considering that the road between his territory and the Han Empire was too steep and perilous to be kept open for long, agreed to listen to Tang's demands. Tang then returned to the capital to report on his mission. As a result, a commandery was established in the area and conscripts from Ba and Shu were sent out to work on its roads, extending them through Po 僂 in the direction of the Zangke 牂柯 River (Sima 1959, 116.2994; Wade 2009, 188). Thus, Fu county's position as a military and economic centre of strategic importance to the Han government is evident from early records.

One of the most important cliff tomb complexes in Hejiang is located near the small town of Fubaozhen 福寶鎮, known as the Gaocun cliff tomb (Gaocun yamu 高村崖墓) complex. This complex or cemetery contains 205 independent tombs carved into the side of a hill covering an area of approximately 850 metres in length. The majority of the tombs are small in scale, primarily containing a single chamber with a dome-shaped ceiling. Those that are accessible from the road without climbing are built at the end of a narrow tomb passage carved into the face of the cliff.⁵ Each passage, called the tomb road (*mudao* 墓道), leads

5 Information was obtained from the archives of the Hejiang County Han Dynasty Pictorial Stone Sarcophagi Museum (*Hejiang xian Handai huaxiang shiguan bowuguan* 合江縣漢代畫像石棺博物館) and from personal experience during field trip conducted at Gaocun in May, 2016.

to the primary entrance of the tomb known as the tomb gate (*mumen* 墓門). Through the tomb gate one enters the main chamber (*mushi* 墓室), which may contain a single chamber or have further niche openings in the side and back walls (*bikan* 壁龕). The main chamber, which is usually the largest space in the tomb, contains the area known as the front room (*qianshi* 前室), or sacrificial chamber (*xiangtang* 享堂) (Wen 1955), where the ceiling is built slightly higher to allow a more comfortable standing space for people to conduct rituals and to offer sacrifices (Huo 2008, 297). Sacrificial chambers are known from chamber tombs where an altar was set for conducting rituals and sacrifices to the dead in the front section of the tomb space. Some of the cliff tombs also contain a “kitchen” area with a stove and shelves carved as part of the tomb wall. The addition of such *prima facie* practical and utilitarian spaces substantiates the equivalence of the tombs with a home (Erickson 2003, 414–15) (Figs. 2a, 2b). The interiors of the tombs were generally left plain, but some have been found decorated with simple carved pictorial friezes above built-in architectural structures, such as beds, couches and cliff sarcophagi (Figs. 3a, 3b).



Figures 2a, 2b: Interior of a cliff tomb, Gaocun, Sichuan (Photos by Author).



Figures 3a, 3b: Interior wall decoration in a cliff tomb, Gaocun, Sichuan (Photos by Author).

There are no traces of wall hangings or wall paintings apart from somewhat crudely painted architectural beams and structures, which suggest that hanging decoration, if it existed, may have perished or been plundered over time. Since, however, there are no markings or obvious means of fixing to be seen on the walls of the tombs, it is unlikely that hangings were an aspect of the tombs' interior decoration (Nylan and Loewe 2010, 88).⁶ It is worth noting that the walls of cliff tombs were carved in a particular manner whereby the stone was chiselled out with well-defined thick lines extending from top to bottom, left to right, often in a horizontal, vertical or diagonal lines, creating distinct patterns on the surface of the stone that left it rough to the touch. Cliff tomb walls are rarely smooth, and to paint any decoration on such an uneven surface would have been a challenge and aesthetically not very pleasing (Figs. 4a, 4b).

The decoration found in larger cliff tombs is simple and modest compared to that found in some of the region's chamber tombs, where fired pictorial brick tiles and larger blocks of stone relief carvings were placed on the smooth surface of the walls for decoration, and often not only in one area but throughout the tomb's interior space.⁷ Cliff tombs contained, as did chamber tombs, *mingqi* in the form

6 Nylan and Loewe 2010, 88, also mention that chamber tombs were often decorated with fabric, presumably made of silk, hanging on the walls of principal chambers.

7 See for example the chamber tomb unearthed at Yangzishan 揚子山, located in the suburb of Chengdu city, that was decorated with a series of pictorial brick tiles and stone reliefs throughout its interior. For a full excavation report on the Yangzishan tomb see Yu 1955.

of pottery figurines of humans and domestic animals, pots and vessels of various shapes, architectural models of granaries, buildings and farm enclosures, a common practice in burial throughout the empire.



Figures 4a, 4b: Interior of a cliff tomb, Gaocun, Sichuan (Photos by Author).

The layout of cliff tomb complexes differs significantly from that of chamber burial cemeteries from the same period. Eastern Han cemeteries with a vertical shaft pit and chamber tombs were customarily demarcated by walls, moats, mounds or stone markers as a separate bordered space. They resembled large rectangular parks with the location often determined through divination (Barshier 2014, 292). Known as funerary parks (*zangyuan* 葬園), the tombs of several families were placed in areas separated by clearly marked moats. Liu Xixiang, in his report on a Han cemetery excavated at Xinxiang 新鄉 in Henan province, notes how the cemetery itself was divided into a number of “districts,” each of which contained an independent family cemetery within the larger park (Liu 2007, 46–9). Burial sites within the cemetery were marked by a tumulus above each tomb. Leading to the tumuli were pathways called the spirit path (*shendao* 神道) that were marked by a pair of gate towers or *que* 闕. Visitors or family members of the deceased embarked on the spirit path that led them through the gate towers, after which they encountered a number of stone sculptures in

the form of guardian animals. Following the path, they would come to a stele (or two stelae) erected in front of an ancestral shrine (*zongmiao* 宗廟), with the tumulus behind it (Wu 1995, 189–250). Cliff tomb burials showed a marked change in the layout of the Eastern Han cemetery. Compared to burial complexes that housed the spirit path, *que*, ancestral stele, shrine and the mound, cliff tomb cemeteries appear to have lacked much of these accompanying public monuments and spaces. Firstly, there is no marked boundary around the cemetery site, nor any spirit road lined up with stone sculptures leading to the tombs. The lack of *que* leading to the cliff tomb is mentioned in a commemorative stele erected for the “filial and incorrupt (*xiaolian* 孝廉)” official Liu Min 柳敏 (fl. 146 CE) which is worth examining in more detail. The eulogy section of the stele reads as follows:

山陵玄室，[X]斯邦兮。先人修質，尚約清兮。汶飭不雕，隩處臧兮。季子信舊，帶樹松兮。僑俗追歿，激[X]揚兮。亡而像存，樂嘉靈兮。宗子於集，啻其鳴兮。四祀[X]嘗，不廢荒兮。⁸

The mountain tomb is a dark room,⁹ [X] this is [now his] country ah! [His] ancestors cultivated plainness and gave precedence to restraint and clarity ah!¹⁰ Patterns are orderly and [there is] no carving, [everything is] concealed in the cave ah! [His] youngest brother faithful to old tradition [buried him under a] belt of trees and pines ah! [He] rose above custom pursuing [it to the] end, and [thus] surges [X] [how] exalting ah! [Although] he has perished, yet his image remains, [we] rejoice in his auspicious spirit ah! His ancestors and sons have gathered here, keeyeh-keeyeh they cry ah! The four sacrificial [offerings] have been tasted, nothing has been omitted and neglected ah! (Gao 1990, 69)

Liu Min’s final resting place is described as a dark room in a mountain surrounded by trees and pines, suggesting that we are looking at a cliff tomb burial. The interior of the tomb is concealed in a cave that bears no decoration. We are also told that his ancestors cultivated austerity and gave precedence to moderation. Liu was buried in a manner that conformed with his family’s wish for a burial that was not only simple but also fulfilled the necessary requirements, with nothing omitted that would help his spirit remain auspicious. In an earlier section, the text

8 [X] represents characters that are undecipherable due to damage to the stone.

9 Nylan and Vankeerberghen (2015, 404–5, 551) mention *xuanshi* 玄室 as a grave, a hidden and recessed room suitable for storing treasures or a dark meditation chamber.

10 I have translated *zhi* 質 as “plainness” as I believe in this context its meaning gives priority to simplicity that is in sharp contrast with adornments and trappings. For a discussion on the different interpretations of *zhi* and its usage with *wen* 文, see Loewe (2011, 275–86).

on the stele describes Liu as a person who was honest, measured and frugal, and a man who encouraged his sons and grandsons to follow in this custom. His final resting place was a hall with no ornament and magnificence, and his grave had no ancestral stele marking its location (堂無文麗, 墓無碑誌). As mentioned earlier, the path leading to his tomb had no remains of a *que* (行無遺闕), which confirms the lack of monuments leading up to the tomb. Thus, Liu Min's stele, which was erected sometime after his death in commemoration of his official service, affirms intentional moderation and restraint from display and extravagance as a style of burial in the region, and celebrates a preference for frugality and moderation in accordance with the family's traditions.

Stelae positioned in front of shrines appear to have been omitted altogether, although sometimes replaced by inscriptions carved on the tomb walls or on the entrance gates. Compared to ancestral stele inscriptions, those found in cliff tombs are concise, with the majority containing only a few characters (Gao 1990, 18; Davis 2015, 177–80). Although the tomb interior included a special area for conducting funerary rites as found in chamber tombs, the nature of that space within the tomb is generally very limited in both area and height and not conducive to a sizeable gathering. It was almost physically impossible to accommodate more than a few people, let alone groups or crowds in cliff tombs, which suggests that ceremonies at such tomb sites must have been more intimate affairs (Fe 1965, 62.2067; Asselin 2010, 249).¹¹ Where funerary rites were conducted for cliff tomb burials remains unanswered, although it is noteworthy that any substantial ceremony must have taken place significantly removed from the tomb site itself.

Cliff tombs also reflect a new development in grave construction. To keep the tomb dry, it was necessary to build drainage to allow water which would accumulate in the excavated cave to flow out. Tomb builders found a solution to the problem that was possible with cliff tombs but not with chamber tombs, whereby a drainage system was built into the tomb that comprised a horizontal stone base with several meters of pottery pipes that drew water from the interior of the tomb to the tomb passage outside. To this day we can see this kind of built-in drainage system with the original Han pipes clearly visible and intact, protruding at the entrance (Figs. 5a, 5b).

11 The *Hou Hanshu* 後漢書 (*Book of the Later Han*) (Fan 1965, 62.2067) records the biography of Chen Shi 陳寔 (104–186 CE) who was buried in a chamber tomb and was mourned by thirty thousand people in attendance. Asselin (2010, 249) notes that funerals of officials, patrons and teachers in the late Eastern Han attracted hundreds, if not thousands of people, and participation in the funerary rites was at once an act of filial piety as well as a political one that demonstrated one's commitment to the policies or teachings of the departed.



Figures 5a, 5b: Cliff tomb drainage pipes, Pengshan, Sichuan (Photos by Author).

Cliff Tomb Decoration

As mentioned earlier, cliff tombs were generally left undecorated or with some minimal decoration placed at the entrance or tomb gate (Figs. 6a, 6b).



Figures 6a, 6b: Cliff tomb gates, Pengshan, Sichuan (Photos by Author).

Carvings with auspicious connotations such as rams, fish, plants, animals, birds, *que*, Xiwangmu's *sheng* 勝 head-dress¹² and images of human musicians were carved on, above or to the side of tomb gates that were fashioned to imitate wooden architectural structures. We also find depictions of intimacy, such as the remarkable carving of a seated naked couple, embracing and kissing, formerly on the lintel of the gate to tomb number 550 at Zhaizishan 寨子山, given the title “Picture of Secret Play” (“Mìxì tu 秘戲圖”) by scholars (Fig. 7), and another depicting a fully clothed couple embracing and kissing, carved on a lintel at the entrance gate of a cliff tomb at Leshan (Fig. 8) (Lim 1987, 127).¹³ These images are significant for their explicit sexual context, and as such are considered special to the art of Sichuan. Lucy Lim (*ibid.*) notes how some of the most surprising finds amongst Sichuan's material culture are representations of intimacy. She further suggests that Han reliefs seem to epitomise the Sichuan artists' open and honest acceptance of life in its various aspects and the joy they took in human relationships. Scenes of such intimate nature are explained by Wu Hung to be linked to Xiwangmu, who was closely associated with fertility and the practice of the Daoist sexual arts (Wu 2000, 89). While the meaning of intimate scenes placed above entrances of cliff tombs, and also found on stone sarcophagi, remains difficult to establish with certainty, it may be suggested that they are linked to the notion of sexual union and fertility.



Figure 7: Cliff tomb lintel carving of “Picture of Secret Play”, Pengshan, Sichuan (After Lim 1987, 131).

- 12 Xiwangmu 西王母 is typically depicted wearing her victory crown known as *dai sheng* 戴勝 or *sheng* 勝 over her hair. Depictions of the *sheng* in tomb art are known to represent Xiwangmu.
- 13 The relief carving of the “Picture of Secret Play” is now housed in the Beijing Palace Museum (see Lim 1987, 131).



Figure 8: Cliff tomb lintel carving of couple embraced and kissing, Leshan, Sichuan (After Lim 1987, 130).

Decorative Themes Found on Stone Sarcophagi

In contrast to the lack of decoration of the walls, the inclusion of rich imagery on stone sarcophagi and the hundreds of burial objects placed in the tombs suggest that there was a continued desire to furnish tombs, although perhaps in a modified manner. The typical layout and iconography of decorative themes found on stone sarcophagi can give us an insight into the thinking about the transition in death to the afterlife at the time they were made. Pictorial carvings on stone sarcophagi were placed on the external faces and on the cover, and never in the interior. Artisans used a number of carving techniques, which included varying levels of low, high and circular reliefs on the flat and vaulted surfaces. Low relief carving incorporated delicate sunken lines for details such as facial expressions, clothing and architectural components. Outlines of the main motifs were accentuated with deeper lines in high relief which give an effect of three-dimensionality, as well as spaciousness and lightness to the design. The background was usually left plain or was densely carved with diagonal lines in high relief, similar to the effect and finish seen on the walls of cliff tombs. The prominent lines on the sarcophagi created a distinct background setting within the framework that give weight to the main pictorial theme. The arrangement of the decoration on the sarcophagi generally adheres to the following rules: one end of the coffin typically carries images that represent the entrance into the other realm with the picture of the *que*, the symbol of the gateway (Figs. 9a, 9b, 9c). If one end was the entrance then we may assume that the other end of the sarcophagus portrays the other realm, the abode of Fuxi

伏羲 and Nüwa 女媧, who feature prominently together with propitious symbols and animals (Figs. 10a, 10b, 10c).¹⁴



Figures 9a, 9b, 9c: Stone sarcophagi decorated with que, Hejiang and Lushan counties, Sichuan (Photos by Author).



Figures 10a, 10b, 10c: Stone sarcophagi decorated with Fuxi and Nüwa, Hejiang and Lushan counties, Sichuan (Photos by Author).

Decoration on the sides of the coffin, sometimes divided into different levels and bearing a more complex pictorial programme, shows what appears to be the beginning of the deceased's journey in the lower section, and the continuation

14 See Tseng (2011, 285–90) for a detailed explanation on the representation of Fuxi and Nüwa in Han material culture. See also Powers (1991, 113–17) on the stylistic development, and the classical versus the analytical approach to depictions of Fuxi and Nüwa in Sichuan and North China.

of that journey, but now perhaps in the other realm, on the upper division (Huo 2008, 303). The pictorial iconography of the coffin appears to have been independent of its surroundings, unlike the complex pictorial programmes placed across the walls of chamber tombs, where different images were connected across the tomb space. Images found on stone sarcophagi are often scenes of everyday life activity; well-known historical figures and stories; images of auspicious and mythological importance; mansions and architectural structures; and motifs and patterns of purely ornamental nature (Luo 2000, 38–43; Gao 2011, 7–14) (Figs. 11,12).



Figure 11: Stone sarcophagus decorated with a banquet scene, Pi county, Sichuan (Photo by Author).



Figure 12: Stone sarcophagus decorated with the mythological tale of "Playing with Monkeys," Xinjin county, Sichuan (Photo by Author).

One of the most important deities associated with the world of the immortals, and as such most frequently depicted on stone sarcophagi, is Xiwangmu. Depictions of her are abundant, and even when she does not appear as a carved image, she is often represented by her attribute, the *sheng* (Figs. 13, 14). In the Han mind, Xiwangmu dwelt in heaven, dominated other spirits, controlled access to immortality and promised ecstatic flight through space (Cahill 1993, 31). On depictions of Xiwangmu in cliff tombs David Yu notes the “cave” being significant to the theme of journey and passage. The Chinese word for caves is “*dong* 洞” which conveys the meaning of “*tong* 通” to pass through or to connect. Mountains have passes and cave-like recesses which one journeys through to reach the land of the immortals and the habitat of Xiwangmu (Yu 1986, 15).¹⁵ The significance of Xiwangmu is also related to the origins of cliff tomb burials and their connection with the local Daoist movement of the “Way of the Five Pecks of Rice,” or the Wudoumi Dao 五斗米道 (Wu 2000). Depictions of large mansions also feature prominently on stone sarcophagi, such as the example from a cliff tomb at Zhangjiakou 張家口, which shows a single architectural structure, with a slightly ajar front-entrance and two figures standing on the side (Fig. 15). We can also find carvings of buildings on stilts which appear to represent the southwest’s distinct local architecture (Fig. 16).



Figure 13: Stone sarcophagus decorated with Xiwangmu, Hejiang, Sichuan (Photo by Author).

15 See *Jiyun* 集韻 (*Assembled Rhymes*) (Ding 1927–1935, 7.2; “Qu sheng. Song yun” 去聲 . 送韻) where *tong* 洞 is explained as a variant for *tong* 通, meaning to penetrate or pass through.



Figure 14: Rubbing of stone sarcophagus decorated with Xiwangmu's sheng, Luzhou, Sichuan (After Gao 2011, 332).



Figure 15: Stone sarcophagus decorated with a large mansion and figures, Zhangjiakou, Hejiang, Sichuan (Photo by Author).



Figure 16: Stone sarcophagus decorated with a single building on stilts, Luzhou, Sichuan (Photo by Author).

The question of why buildings were carved on sarcophagi when the tomb itself, with its architectural structures, already represented a home, as believed by scholars, needs to be addressed. The images of buildings may have served to highlight the function of the sarcophagus itself as the new dwelling of the deceased in his or her afterlife, rather than the tomb, as suggested by some scholars (Wu 2010; Rawson 1999; Nylan 2006). Bearing this in mind, the *que* positioned at the head of the coffin symbolises the entrance upon death into another place of being, perhaps the heavenly domain. Furthermore, if the coffin, with its mansion, represented the deceased's transition to and dwelling in the other world, then the tomb, which belonged to the family or lineage, with its homelike features, may have functioned as a communal space that provided everyone with a secure arena or shelter, but was not the designated abode of any specific person in the family. The buildings on the sarcophagi are typically depicted as large mansions, appearing to represent a wealthy and comfortable life. This may be associated with the region's prosperity at the time or perhaps with the wish, on the part of the family, for a comfortable existence for the deceased in his or her afterlife.

In summary, depictions of local buildings as well as mythological figures, such as Xiwangmu, Fuxi and Nüwa, provided representations appropriate to people's final resting place and transition to the afterlife. Both Michael Loewe and Mu-chou Poo mention how early writings devoted little attention and speculation to describing life after death. Comparing Confucian, Mohist and Daoist texts, Poo notes that a common feature that emerges is a reticence to debate post-mortem existence and whether or not there is life after death, or what that afterlife may be (Loewe 1994, 115; Poo 1990, 38). In her study of mourning in the Eastern Han, Miranda Brown also suggests that people perhaps focused on the experience of loss because the life to come was not celebrated at the time. Eulogists whose writings are found on stelae questioned outright whether personal survival after death was possible, though they did believe that the dead lived on in communal memory as moral exemplars (Brown 2007, 17). Another view suggests that perhaps death was not seen as final, and a post-death journey of the soul was indeed a possibility. The goal of ascending to the heavens could be realised with the aid of mountains, animal vehicles, specific deities and auspicious surroundings (Erickson 1994, 18). Whatever death may have meant for people at the time, it is clear that certain ideas, left unarticulated in writing because of their inherent elusiveness, were nevertheless imaginatively expressed and alluded to in pictorial form on the sarcophagi of the period.

Possible Reasons for the Shift in Burial Practice and Tomb Decoration

Scholars have noted the lack of decoration on cliff tomb walls in contrast to the intricate carvings found on stone sarcophagi within the tombs. Luo Erhu suggests

that because sarcophagi already relayed images, there was no need to repeat these on the walls. He further proposes that decorated stone sarcophagi, as opposed to those made of other materials, may have been reserved for the head of the family, or the most eminent member buried in the tomb (Luo 2002, 49). His conclusion is based on the examination of the fourteen sarcophagi found in a multi-chamber cliff tomb at Tianhuishan 天回山 near Chengdu. Amongst the coffins, eleven are made of earthenware, one of brick and two of stone. Of the two stone coffins, one was built on a platform chiselled out of the wall and left undecorated, while the other is finely carved on one side with a picture of a large mansion and with figures and animals on the other. The front of the coffin is carved with the *que* motif, while the head bears the outlines of an unfinished building suggesting that the decoration may not have been completed in time for the burial (Luo 2002). It may also suggest that the period between coffining and the internment ceremony may have become shorter than originally thought.¹⁶ The Tianhuishan stone sarcophagus' lid is made in the shape of a gabled roof, consistent with the notion that the coffin represents a home or dwelling.¹⁷ Inside the coffin a gilded iron book knife was found with an inscription attributing its manufacture to the Guanghan workshop (*Guanghan gongguan* 廣漢工官). This workshop was responsible for the production of luxury goods of tribute for the Eastern Han court. It is an important find that confirms the high status and eminence of the deceased placed in the coffin, and supports Luo's suggestion that the deceased was possibly the head of an extensive clan (*ibid.*). The differences found between decorated and non-decorated coffins, as evident from the Tianhuishan cliff tomb burial, suggests that there was a hierarchy established within the tomb and those of importance were buried in distinctly decorated and more lavish coffins.

Erickson has also noted the general scarcity of any decoration found in cliff tombs compared to those in chamber tombs. She suggests that this is because the images placed in chamber tombs were sculpted or moulded on panels outside the tomb and then installed. By contrast, images in cliff tombs were carved directly into the living rock (Erickson 2003, 434). While this explanation may present a practical reason for the scarcity of tomb wall decoration, it does not explain the artistic or communicative objectives behind this fundamental shift.

Bearing the above mentioned studies in mind, we suggest two possible explanations for the change in the decorative practices that have been observed. The first

16 This contradicts Miranda Brown's suggestion that many members of the Han elite were in no great hurry to bury their dead, since they presumably were not eager to separate their deceased loved ones from the living. She further notes that the internment ceremony was often put off from several months to even several years (see Brown 2007, 16). In the southwest, however, it appears that burial of the dead was seen as a priority, even if the decoration of the coffin was not completed.

17 During my fieldwork in Hejiang and Pengshan counties, I found that about one third of the stone sarcophagi had lids shaped after garbled roofs.

addresses the question as to who commissioned the making of the tomb. The housing of several coffins in one tomb and its re-opening, perhaps not only once but on several occasions at different periods, suggests that tombs came to cater to the needs of the family or lineage rather than a single individual, and the building of tombs must have become a family responsibility expanding over a number of generations. If we regard the interior of the tomb as a communal “family” space, as suggested earlier, with less emphasis on the individual, the coffin may have become the main carrier of personal memorial and identity, as well as the means of the deceased’s transition to and dwelling place in the afterlife. Decoration placed on the walls of chamber tombs would have related to the burial chamber as a whole and addressed a wider audience, which included the mourners gathered at the time of burial, while decoration on the sarcophagus had a more personal connotation, and as such was directly linked to the deceased. This suggestion is supported by social developments of the Eastern Han period, when we see the rise of major lineages or great families who became influential on a regional level (Lewis 2007, 121). Mark Lewis equates the emergence of these locally powerful families with the decline of the central court, and the consequent shift of authority from the capital to the regions. He notes that much of the history of the Eastern Han is, accordingly, the history of lineages and factions with regional power bases (*ibid.*, 24). Patricia Ebrey explains that on the one hand, these lineages were established by local leaders who earned the respect of their contemporaries for gathering together a loyal following and using it to administer a locality with justice, efficiency and generosity. On the other hand, they were also recognised as being a threat to the effective control of centrally authorised officials (Ebrey 1986, 630). The use of cliff tomb complexes, which may have been employed over several generations, is consistent with the increased visibility and self-awareness of such lineages during a period of relative economic and political stability.

Another explanation for the shift in the decorative practice may be due to a wish for more moderate display in burial matters in a society that enjoyed great economic wealth and prosperity. A preference for thrift and restraint is expressed in the two commemorative stelae dedicated to Shu Commandery 蜀郡 governors, Li 李 and Pei 裴, dated to 133 CE and 144 CE, respectively. According to the stela inscriptions, the two governors encouraged society to pursue a prudent and less lavish lifestyle (Elias 2018). An ancestral stele erected for the Ba commandery 巴郡 *xiaolian* Liu Min, mentioned earlier, also affirms intentional moderation and restraint from display and extravagance as a style of burial, and celebrates a preference for frugality and moderation in accordance with the Liu family’s traditions (*ibid.*, 139–41). This type of motive may have been a factor in the shift towards the use of cliff tomb burials in a region which was inherently more modest in appearance, rather than the use of extensive cemetery layouts of chamber tomb burials. A drive for less lavish display may well have encouraged people to

reassess the levels of display in their burial practices. Whether a sarcophagus was intricately or sparsely decorated, a considerable level of expertise was required in its making, which was undoubtedly time consuming and certainly more costly than the production of a wooden or earthenware coffin. Thus a seemingly more modest and understated form of burial was probably not without considerable cost. The objective may have been to avoid ostentatious display rather than reduce costs, since the overriding purpose was to perform the correct funerary procedures for the deceased.

Conclusion

Examination of the images found in cliff tombs and on stone sarcophagi reveals that decoration on the latter appears to have served as the primary visual enhancement placed in the interior of the cliff tomb, at times in combination with limited architectural structures and burial furnishings. Although carvings with auspicious connotations were placed at the exterior of tomb gates, inside the tomb walls were usually left plain or only minimally decorated. This decorative scheme represents a shift from what we see in chamber tombs from the southwest, where pictorial images were placed on the walls, either carved in stone or made of fired earth in the form of moulded brick tiles that appear to have been produced in large quantities, as we see from the many extant examples today.

The change in the decorative scheme between chamber tombs and cliff tombs suggests that there was a shift in burial custom, in the target audience of mourners and, perhaps most importantly, in the establishment of the tomb as a communal space for the family or lineage rather than the final resting place of only one deceased person. While decoration placed on the walls of chamber tombs, which in many instances extended from the entrance through the main chamber and even to the rear chambers, took the entire tomb space as its canvas, that found in cliff tombs was inherently more modest and simple. Decorative themes placed on stone sarcophagi are individual, with no two coffins ever the same, suggesting a personalised choice that was more likely to have been directly connected to the deceased. We also observed the distinctly regional nature of images carved on sarcophagi. This is in sharp contrast with the many pictorial brick tiles found in tombs, that appear to have been mass produced with the use of the same mould, thus resulting in identical images placed in different tombs. The prevalence of depictions on the sarcophagi of buildings, gateways and the image of a half-open door embody representations of a final ideal dwelling and indicate an understanding of death as a threshold to another realm. In this context, stone sarcophagi in cliff tombs may have symbolised the new heavenly residence of the departed, while the tomb as a whole functioned as a shared burial space for the family or lineage.

Another important observation made regarding the development of cliff tomb burials is the change in the layout of the cemetery which differed significantly from that of the established chamber burial cemeteries of the Eastern Han period. The absence of public monuments leading to the tombs, such as the walls, moats, spirit path, stone markers, stelae, mounds and shrines, must have made cliff tomb internment a different undertaking from earlier traditions. We see no evidence of shrines in the immediate vicinity nor remains of any above ground structures that may have been linked to the tombs. This reflects a shift in the function of cemeteries from being social or public arenas towards private spaces that focussed primarily on the deceased and their family members. Cliff tomb burials came to represent an important adaptation in how society in the southwest became more focused on the family or lineage in its greater surroundings. The burial of not only several family members but even different generations in one tomb or tomb complex is another new development in Eastern Han funerary practice. The layout and construction of cliff tombs confirm this trend, and affirm the rise and power of the lineage, especially in the southwest.

Cliff tomb burials developed during a period in the southwest's history when it experienced relative social and political stability and great economic prosperity. Early texts describe the southwest as well irrigated and containing rich soil that produced abundant food, making it one of the wealthiest regions in the empire at the time. Its established waterways and roads, as we read in the *Shiji* 史記, made it a centre of trade between the West and Central Plains (Sima 1959, 116.2994). Economic wealth and general social stability helped create a conducive environment for the development of cliff tomb construction and its prolific use in this period. An analysis of the principle locations of cliff tomb developments in Sichuan shows that they served the population centred in its largest cities located within a short travelling distance, such as the Shu commandery capital of Chengdu and the Ba commandery capital of Jiangzhou 江州 (present-day Chongqing city), on the banks of the Yangtze.

We have also seen evidence of a wish for moderation and frugality in a society that was criticised by its own people for unnecessary extravagance. Frugality and restraint were reflected in a burial custom that was less showy and more family orientated and personal, yet had all the ritual elements required in a proper funeral. In its more modest presentation cliff tomb burials may have been a reaction to the increasingly lavish funerary customs that came to prevail in the wider empire, especially in the Central Plains. Furthermore, its sudden rise in the Eastern Han period and decline by the 3rd century CE suggest that it was a trend that answered a particular call at a specific period.

Due to the scarcity of supporting material many questions regarding the origins and rise of cliff tomb burial practice and the use of decorated stone sarcophagi

remain difficult to answer. For example, the identity of the majority of those buried in cliff tombs is unknown, nor do we know how the funeral protocol for cliff tomb burial was conducted. Limited space for public gatherings at the cliff tomb cemetery does not mean that mourning and rituals were not conducted, but they may have been shifted elsewhere. However, cliff tombs and decorated stone sarcophagi were clearly a distinctive feature of the southwest in early Imperial China.

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Dual Portraits of the Deceased in Yangqiaopan M1, Jingbian, Shaanxi

Leslie WALLACE*

Abstract

Murals decorating an Eastern Han tomb excavated in Jingbian, Shaanxi include two large-scale representations of the deceased who appears in a processional scene on the left front wall of the tomb wearing typical Han elite dress, and then again on the rear wall in a regional version of a spirit seat (*lingwei*) composition, clean-shaven and donning a hair-style uncommon in Han mortuary art. This paper considers these depictions in terms of Han pictorial conventions and argues that they are dual portraits of the deceased in which different attributes of his political, social, and cultural identity are stressed.

Keywords: Han tomb murals, Han northern frontier, portraiture, processional scene, spirit seat (*lingwei*)

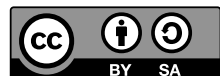
Dvojni portret umrlega v grobnici Yangqiaopan M1 v mestu Jingbian v provinci Shaanxi

Izvleček

Stenske poslikave v grobnici iz dinastije Vzhodni Han, ki so jo izkopali v mestu Jingbian v provinci Shaanxi, vključujejo dve večji upodobitvi pokojnika. Prva se pojavi v procesiji na levi strani prednjega zidu in prikazuje pokojnika, oblečenega v tipična hanska oblačila višjega sloja, druga pa je vidna na zadnji steni, kjer je pokojnik prikazan v lokalni varianti t. i. sedeža duše (*lingwei*). Tu je upodobljen s sveže obrito brado in nenavadno pričesko, kar se razlikuje od ostalih pričesk v hanski grobni umetnosti. Pričujoči prispevek proučuje te upodobitve v okviru običajnega slikovnega gradiva dinastije Han in trdi, da poslikavi prikazujeta dvojni portret pokojnega z namenom prikazovanja različnih lastnosti njegove politične, družbene in kulturne identitete.

Ključne besede: poslikave v grobnicah iz dinastije Han, severna meja v dinastiji Han, portreti, prizori sprevodov, sedež duše

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Since their discovery in the 1970s, the second century CE murals decorating a tomb in Helinge'er 和林格爾, Inner Mongolia have often been referenced in studies of Han visual and material culture.¹ Through a series of processional scenes and depictions of cities where the deceased held office, the murals highlight the career of a high ranking Han official stationed along the northern frontier with one scene depicting the local population of the city of Ningcheng lined up neatly in rows, a mass of typecast “barbarians” (Fig. 1).

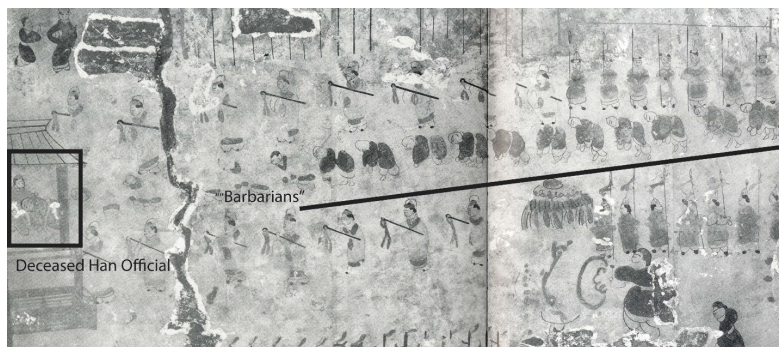


Figure 1: Detail of the city of Ningcheng with “barbarians” submitting to the deceased, Helinge'er, Inner Mongolia (After Nei Menggu wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo 2007, 134–35).

Other murals in first and second century CE tombs discovered in the past decades across northern Shaanxi and south central Inner Mongolia complicate this simplistic rendering of life along the Han northern frontier. Although the preservation of murals in each tomb varies and no inscriptions remain allowing us to identify the official rank and status of the tomb occupants, the size of these tombs suggests the burials of low-level elites. Each tomb has a unique pictorial program largely composed of scenes common in the interior of the Han Empire, but sometimes with significant combinations and modifications.²

This paper will focus on two representations of the deceased in one of these tombs—Yangqiaopan 楊橋畔 M1, a back to back double-chambered, barrel

1 Helinge'er is a large brick tomb with three main chambers running front to back from east to west. Two smaller chambers are attached to the north and south sides of the front chamber and another smaller chamber is attached to the south side of the middle chamber. The tomb is decorated throughout by paintings that run from the floor to the apex of the ceiling and the imagery in the front and middle chambers focuses on the career of the deceased. For an overview of the tomb and its imagery see Berger (1980, 220–32), Bulling (1977/78, 79–103), and Nei Menggu wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo (2007). For a detailed study of the iconography of this tomb see James (1980).

2 For a general introduction to these tombs see Huang (2008, 104–19).

vaulted tomb constructed of grey bricks excavated in Jingbian 靖邊, Shaanxi in 2005 (Fig. 2).³

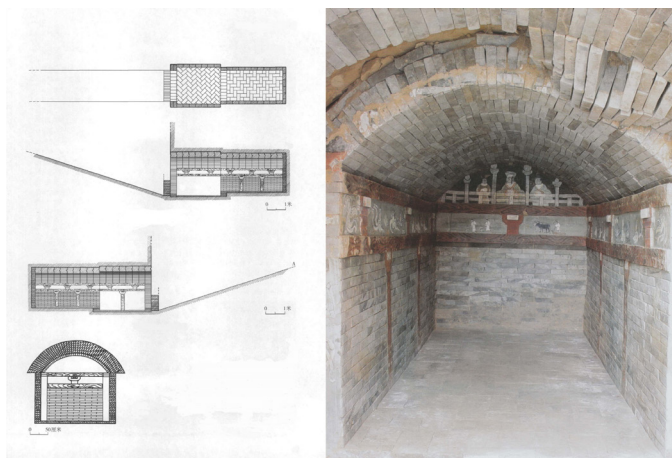


Figure 2: Diagram and photograph of the rear room of Yangqiaopan M1, Jingbian, Shaanxi (After Shaanxi sheng kaogu yanjiuyuan et al. 2009, figs. 2–5; Shaanxi sheng kaogu yanjiuyuan 2009, 82).

Tomb murals decorate the right, left, and rear walls of both chambers as well as a narrow portion of the wall facing the tomb doorway created by the difference in size in the front and rear chambers. Timber architecture is simulated throughout by painted wooden pillars, brackets, and timber beams. One distinctive element of the pictorial program of this tomb is that it features two large-scale representations of the deceased—one on the left wall of the front chamber and one on the rear wall of the rear chamber, but in each composition the man is depicted with different facial features, hairstyles, and forms of headdress.⁴ After an overview of the conventions of representing individuals in Han mortuary art and related methodological problems, I will focus on each of these depictions in turn, and then consider them as a dual portrait of the deceased in which different attributes of his political, social, and cultural identity are stressed.

3 For an overview of the tomb, a diagram, and photographs see Shaanxi sheng kaogu yanjiuyuan (2009, 80–113) and Shaanxi sheng kaogu yanjiuyuan et al. (2009).

4 Although Han tombs decorated with murals and reliefs often contain multiple representations of the deceased, who is either depicted outright or whose presence is suggested by other elements in the composition, Yangqiaopan M1's pictorial program is only one of two tombs excavated so far that contains this combination of two large-scale representations of the deceased. The other tomb that has similar paired representations of the deceased is Haotan 郝灘 M1, Dingbian 定邊, Shaanxi, whose pictorial program is also discussed in what follows.

Han Portraits

In early China, representations of the deceased first appear on silk banners associated with a posthumous ascent/journey during the late third and second centuries BCE, the most famous of which is the silk funerary banner recovered from Mawangdui 馬王堆 Tomb 1 (ca. 168 BCE). By the first and second centuries CE, the deceased is represented in tombs and aboveground mortuary shrines doing everyday things, like enjoying a banquet or managing their estate. Regardless of the composition, format, and medium, these depictions often lack the elements of individualisation commonly associated with portraiture today⁵ and instead were standardised, with information pertinent to the person's identity communicated (much as it would have been in life), through details of dress, gesture, pose, interaction with other figures, and the position of scenes within larger compositions. Often with the aid of inscriptions, generic exemplary types were converted into representations of individuals, which highlighted a person's rank and social status, providing emulative models for the viewer and solidifying the social order and the individual's place within it.⁶ As is the case of the representations of the deceased in Yangqiaopan M1, details in dress and hairstyle often communicated the most important and defining aspects of identity.

Based on their intentional lack of mimesis or individualisation, the generic character of depictions of the deceased in Han tombs have led some scholars to reject outright the idea that they are "true portraits." For example, regarding a "portrait in a true sense," Max Loehr writes, "What counts is the convincing, lifelike expression, the expression of the human face rather than that attained through gesture, pose or action" (Loehr 1960, 214).⁷ In a more recent survey of the development of Chinese portraiture, Dorothy C.Y. Ching is more noncommittal, stressing that portraiture evolved from, "physical approximations to more detailed likenesses," and that, "while the genre of portraiture emerges before Han times (third century BCE), it is not always clear if surviving works would have been identified as belonging to that genre" (Ching 2016, 139). Such comments suggest the intellectual baggage that comes with this term and its association in traditional art historical scholarship with Renaissance ideas of the role of mimesis and humanistic individualism.⁸ As we shall

5 For a review of these associations and general definitions, see West (2004, 21–41).

6 See Spiro (1991, 14–21) and Vinograd (1992, 20–21). For other studies focused on or touching upon Han portraiture see Bush and Shih (2012); Ching (2016); Lancman (1966); Loehr (1960); Murray (2007, 27–36); Seckel (1993); Shan (1987), Nagahiro (1965 and 1984); and Zheng (2000).

7 For similar views see Seckel (1993) and Shan (1987).

8 Wu Hung (2009, 21) does not reject the classification of Han representations of the deceased as portraits, but does stress two drawbacks of integrating Han posthumous portraits into the larger genre: 1) in general studies of portraiture, posthumous portraits lose their original ritual setting and visual logic, and 2) when representations of the deceased are studied as portraits, scholars run the risk of overlooking other ways in which the deceased may be represented in the tomb.

see, the dual representations of the deceased in Yangqiaopan M1 further challenge traditional ideas of portraiture by not only representing the deceased as idealised, but based on the pictorial conventions noted above as two “different” people, or rather, as I will argue, two different social versions of the same man.

The Processional Scene

Standing in the doorway of the tomb, the deceased first appears on the left wall of the front room in Yangqiaopan M1, riding in a *zhaochē* 輶車, a type of carriage with an umbrella-shaped canopy with dangling tassels reserved for high officials (Lim 1987, 116) (Fig. 3).



Figure 3: Two images of the processional scene depicted on the left wall of the front chamber of Yangqiaopan M1, Jingbian, Shaanxi (After Shaanxi sheng kaogu yanjiuyuan 2009, 96 and 102).

He wears a black rectangular hat and sports a thin moustache. A rider precedes him wearing a green tunic and white baggy pants. The details of the rider’s face are no longer clear, but he wears a high headdress with two extensions that frame his face. Behind the carriage a woman walks who is probably a female servant, holding an embroidered bag draped over her arms. Above the large mural are several smaller scenes. The one closest to the doorway is too damaged to reconstruct, but

the other three depict two figural scenes, and a man riding in a cloud chariot.⁹ All of the figures on the left wall, including the members of the processional scene, face outward toward the door of the tomb.

Processional scenes are common in Eastern Han tombs decorated with murals and carved stone reliefs, where the deceased may or may not appear as part of a larger procession of chariots and mounted riders.¹⁰ They can be divided into three general types. The first depicts quotidian imagery of a chariot or groups of chariots and riders that represent the rank and status of the deceased and/or may depict important events in his life. One of the most famous examples of this type of procession scene are the murals mentioned at the beginning of this paper in the tomb at Helinge'er, in which the deceased's official career and rise in rank are indicated by inscriptions as well as ever larger groups of horses and riders. This imagery is based on a complex system of carriages where the shape of the carriage and the scale of the procession were determined by rank. Typically the person who held the highest rank rode in the middle of the procession (Lim 1987, 116–17; Powers 1992, 323; and Wu 1998, 22).¹¹ Many variations on this theme exist—from the dynamic processional scenes that appear in the murals decorating the tomb at Helinge'er to the more static representations that appear on tombs and shrines decorated with carved reliefs in Shandong, such as the those that appear in the Wu Family Shrines.¹²

9 The archaeological report identifies the first group of figures as illustrating the story of the wife of Qiu Hu 秋胡, a moral exemplar whose story appears in the *Lienü zhuan* 列女傳 (*Biographies of Exemplary Women*, ca. 18 BCE) and is also depicted in other examples of Han mortuary art. See Shaanxi sheng kaogu yanjiuyuan et al. (2009, 41) and for an overview of other representations of the story of the wife of Qiu Hu see Wu (1987, 77–78). The story of Confucius, Laozi, and the child prodigy, Xiang Tuo 項橐, another figural grouping depicted in Han murals and stone reliefs also appears on the right wall of the tomb. See Shaanxi sheng kaogu yanjiu yuan (2009, 82). For other depictions of Confucius, Laozi, and Xiang Tuo, see Nylan (2005). The inclusion of such “Confucian”/historically-themed subject matter is not common in Han tomb murals or reliefs in northern Shaanxi and south central Inner Mongolia, and potentially adds another layer to the political, social, and cultural affiliations depicted in these reliefs.

10 For a list of tombs decorated with murals that depict quotidian (vs. immortal) procession scenes (車馬出行 *chē mǎ chū xíng*) see Yi (2010). As Yi (*ibid.*, 13) notes, the chariot processions in the tombs excavated at Yangqiaopan and Haotan are representative of murals excavated in Shaanxi and south central Inner Mongolia, however they are the only two tombs to date in which the processional occupies such a large space in the overall pictorial program.

11 For a detailed study of carriages as markers of emblems and status see Hayashi (1966). For a similar chariot scene carved on stone reliefs in Sichuan see Yu (1987).

12 These combine homage and processional scenes in the format of a central pavilion with archer and horse beneath a tree and a chariot procession. The identification of the central figure in the pavilion scene and the overall interpretations of this scene are contested. For a review of the interpretations of the central homage scene and its various elements see Wu (1989, 196–213) and Thompson (2005).

Two other major types of processional scenes are found in Eastern Han tombs. Some tombs and stone sarcophagi are decorated with processions that at first glance seem similar to the first type outlined above, but can be differentiated from the rank and status processional scenes by the distinctive shape of the carriage included, which would have been used to transport the deceased to the tomb (Wu 1998).¹³ More common are scenes that depict afterlife journeys with figures riding on or in chariots pulled by real or fantastic animals. An example of this type of procession appears in the murals decorating the right wall of the front chamber of Yangqiaopan M1, where an entourage of cloud chariots pulled by tigers, snakes, and other creatures glide across the tomb wall.

The chariot preceded by a horseback rider and followed by the women on foot depicted on the left wall of the front room of Yangqiaopan M1 clearly falls into the first type of processional scene that represents the rank and status of the deceased. Although lacking the dynamic nature of the processional scenes in the murals at Helinge'er or the exacting cartouches identifying the rank of members of chariot processions in the carvings that decorate the Wu Family Shrines, the composition and function of the processional scene in Yangqiaopan M1 is distilled into its most basic components, and amplified via its size respective to the tomb's overall pictorial program. This amplification may have been a regional development, as another Han tomb excavated nearby in 2003 in Haotan 郝灘, Dingbian 定邊, Shaanxi, contains a similar large-scale composition. The tomb in Haotan is a double-chambered brick tomb composed of one large chamber and a small side chamber, with murals decorating only the large chamber (Shaanxi sheng kaogu yanjiu suo et al. 2004; Shanxi sheng kaogu yanjiuyuan 2009, 47–79) (Fig. 4).

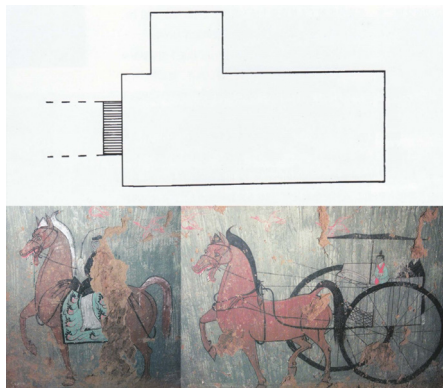


Figure 4: Diagram of Haotan M1 and processional scene depicted on the left wall of the tomb, Dingbian, Shaanxi (After Shaanxi sheng kaogu yanjiuyuan 2009, 66–67).

13 For a rubbing of this stone see Gao (2000, fig. 55).

In this tomb the deceased also appears in an official carriage and is accompanied by his wife; the pair are preceded by a rider. As in the case of the murals in Yangqiaopan M1, the processional scene in Haotan M1 also occupies a larger portion of the overall pictorial program and takes up the entire left wall of the tomb between the entrance to the small side chamber and the rear wall.¹⁴

The Spirit Seat

The second large-scale representation of the deceased in Yangqiaopan M1 appears on the top of rear wall of the rear chamber where the deceased is depicted between his wife and another figure on the left (Fig. 5).



Figure 5: Detail of the portrait of the deceased on the rear wall of Yangqiaopan M1, Jingbian, Shaanxi (After Shaanxi sheng kaogu yanjiuyuan 2009, 111).

All three figures are painted in three-quarter view and have their hands in their sleeves drawn to their chests in a gesture of respect (*gongshou* 拱手). The deceased and his wife wear white tunics drawn across their chests with orange trim. The wife's hair is drawn high atop her head and the man's hair may be styled in the same fashion, but this area of the mural is damaged. The man has long tendrils that hang down on either side of his clean-shaven face. The attendant on the left

14 A second Eastern Han tomb painted with murals excavated in Yangqiaopan in 2015 also includes a similar simplified and amplified variation of the chariot procession scene on the northern wall of its front room, but does not include a large-scale portrait of the deceased on its rear wall. See Shaanxi sheng kaogu yanjiuyuan et al. (2017).

is dressed in a tunic that is not drawn across the chest, and wears a black hat or has his hair piled on top of his head decorated with a feather. All three figures stand behind a balustrade. The deceased and his wife look toward the left wall and the attendant glances toward the couple. Below these three figures are two agricultural scenes.

This depiction of the deceased on the rear wall of Yangqiaopan M1 is a variation of a type of posthumous portrait that gained popularity in the late Eastern Han and developed out of earlier displays of mortuary goods representing the spirit seat (*lingwei* 靈位) of the deceased that enabled him/her to see, eat, and smell in their afterlife existence (Wu 2009 and 2010, 68–84).¹⁵ Based on Han mortuary rituals, early spirit seats were three-dimensional representations where the space in front of a screen or beneath a canopy was left empty, as is the case of the empty couch in the northern chamber of Mawangdui Tomb 1. In some first and second century CE tombs the spirit seat continued to be left blank, but in others the deceased is represented figuratively, such as in the tomb excavated at Anping 安平, Hebei (176 CE), where a portrait of the deceased with a retinue of officials appears in the room to the right of the main chamber.¹⁶

Another look at the murals decorating the rear wall of the main chamber in Haotan M1 suggests that the depiction of the deceased on the rear wall of Yangqiaopan M1 may be a regional variation on the spirit seat composition. In the tomb in Haotan, and in the same position on the rear wall, the deceased and his wife are depicted in three-quarter view turned slightly toward one another, also with their hands inside their sleeves drawn to their chests (Fig. 6).

15 This type of posthumous portrait continued to be popular in periods after the Han dynasty (see Hong 2014).

16 Unlike the representation of the deceased in Yangqiaopan M1, most first and second century CE figurative and non-figurative spirit seats appear to the side of the front chamber of the tomb away from the rear chamber where the coffin was placed. An example of a second century tomb with a non-figurative spirit seat is Dahuting 打虎亭 M1, Zhengzhou 鄭州, Henan, which included a low table beneath a tent on a stone platform at the right end of the main chamber (Wu 2009 and 2010, 68–84). For more on Dahuting M1 see Henan sheng wenwu yanjiusuo and An Jianhuai (1993) and Pirazzoli-t'Serstevens (2010). For the Anping tomb see Hebei sheng wenwu yanjiusuo (1990) and Hsu (2004). In terms of layout and iconography, the composition and placement of the deceased's portrait in the rear wall of the rear chamber in Yangqiaopan M1 shares more similarities with much later sixth century posthumous portraits where the deceased is depicted on the northern wall of single-chambered tombs with elongated passageways. In these tombs the deceased—a male, female, or a couple—is depicted frontally facing the doorway to the tomb, beneath a canopy enjoying food and drink served by servants as can be seen in the tomb of Xu Xianxiu 徐顯秀 (d. 571 CE), excavated in Taiyuan 太原, Shanxi. Interestingly, the individualisation seen in these later portraits (in this particular example, Xu Xianxiu wears a fur coat) may also be anticipated in the representation of the deceased in Yangqiaopan M1. See Wu (2009, 30–33). For more on Xu Xianxiu's tomb see Taiyuan shi wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo (2005) and Lingley (2014).



Figure 6: Detail of the portrait of the deceased on the rear wall of Haotan M1, Dingbian, Shaanxi (After Shanxi sheng kaogu yanjiuyuan 2010, fig. 5).

Below them is a walled compound and agricultural and hunting scenes. The similar compositions of the rear wall of Yangqiaopan M1 and Haotan M1 suggests a modified form of other Han spirit seat representations, with the agricultural and hunting scenes in Haotan M1 and agricultural scenes in Yangqiaopan M1, suggesting ancestral sacrifices offered in perpetuity, and the agricultural estate the deceased might enjoy in the afterlife.

Dual Portraits

The shared aspects of the pictorial program of Yangqiaopan M1 and Haotan M1, tombs which both contain similar large-scale representations of the deceased on the rear and left walls, suggest these images were dual representations of the deceased expressing different aspects of their social status and identity. A comparison of these representations of the deceased in both tombs also highlights the ways in which the depiction of the deceased on the rear wall of Yangqiaopan M1 differs from other first- and second-century CE representations of Han elite males.

If we first look at the depictions of the deceased riding a chariot on the left walls of both tombs, the imagery is strikingly similar (Figs. 3 and 4). Sadly, the part of the mural depicting the man's face has been damaged in Haotan M1, but overall it is most likely that, like his compatriot in Yangqiaopan M1, he was depicted, as most Han elite males were, wearing a squared off black hat with a thin moustache. This is indeed how the deceased appears on the rear wall of Haotan M1, beside his wife above their afterlife estate (Fig. 6). In Haotan M1, the agricultural estate

below the couple on the rear wall, and the status-defining processional scene so common in other tombs, clearly expresses their actual or desired status as part of the Han elite using visual imagery common in Han mortuary art.

Similar desires form the backbone of the dual portraits of the deceased in Yangqiaopan M1, but the differences in the details of costume, dress, and hairstyle suggests a more complicated set of social identities and alliances. In the front room the deceased first appears in the processional scene wearing the same hat and dress as the man depicted in Haotan M1, which, as previously stated, commonly appears in Han visual representations of elite males across media (Fig. 3). But his companions in this scene are a curious bunch. Is the female behind him his wife? A servant? What exactly is she carrying? Perhaps more significantly, the rider who leads the procession wears a tall hat that leans slightly to the front and has extensions framing his face, a headdress not represented in other Han tomb murals, stone reliefs, or figurines.

When we return to the representation of the deceased on the rear wall, differences with the portrayal of Han elite males in other tombs is even more drastic (Fig. 5). First and foremost, here the deceased is clean-shaven and has long tendrils hanging down on either side of his face standing in stark contrast to the standard black scholar's cap and thin moustaches donned by Han elite males in many tombs. The dress and hairstyle/headdress of the man on the left in this image is also suspect. The man does not wear the standard Han tunic that is drawn across the chest and is secured by a belt, and the feather in his hat/hairstyle is also uncommon in other first- and second-century CE tombs (Wallace 2019). Combined with the unique hat of the rider in the procession in the front room, this mix of unfamiliar clothing and hairstyles in general suggests the multicultural world of the Han northern frontier, and may be related to the Han practice of incorporating foreign groups into their armies.¹⁷ More importantly, the more exotic representation of the deceased on the rear wall of the tomb, combined with the familiar representation of the deceased on the left wall in the front room, shows a skilful manipulation of details in dress and hairstyles that may have appealed to different social and/or cultural groups living in the region.

Conclusion

Whether or not the murals depicted in Yangqiaopan M1 reflect what life was like on the ground for the deceased, they do show the conscious choice by the patrons

17 For the practice of employing foreign soldiers in Han armies and/or the Han policy of "Using Foreigners to Control Foreigners (*Yi Yi zhi Yi* 以夷制夷)" see Hong (1958), Shangguan Xuzhi (2006), and Xing (1973).

of this tomb—whether it be the deceased or the deceased’s family—to choose imagery very different from that of the deceased official buried in the Eastern Han tomb at Helinge’er.¹⁸ Rather than a figure on a high dais separated from the local population, with rows of bowing “barbarians” (see Fig. 1)—non-Han hairstyles and dress, and by extension foreign groups and/or customs, are incorporated into the murals in Yangqiaopan M1 in a way that is uncommon in other Han tombs where foreigners are typically portrayed with stereotypical features and/or in scenes of combat and submission.¹⁹ Instead in Yangqiaopan M1 we find figures wearing foreign dress and hairstyles depicted both in the procession scene on the left wall of the front chamber, and also joining the deceased in the spirit seat portrait on the rear wall. The representation of the deceased on the rear wall takes this a step further and here the deceased himself dons a foreign hairstyle.

It is tempting to analyse these murals in terms of a Hu-Han dichotomy, identifying the deceased as being Xiongnu 匈奴 or some other group described in historical texts, as has been done in the case of another Han tomb in the region, Fenghuangshan 鳳凰山 M1, which also incorporates figures wearing non-Han hairstyles and dress (Ma 2003 and Zhang 2000).²⁰ But I would suggest it is more useful to think of the two representations of the deceased in Yangqiaopan M1 as a skilful handling of multiple social, cultural, and political identities and as an appeal to different groups along the Han northern frontier. Although we may not be able to establish a one-to-one correlation between the hairstyle and dress of these figures and groups mentioned in Han texts (a methodology which is in itself dubious at best), the dual representations of the deceased in Yangqiaopan M1 are striking in the way in which the man is depicted spanning both worlds, or rather occupying the space in-between. Imagery of figures wearing different hairstyles and dress, seen by those taking part in funerary rituals, could be just as socially and/or politically charged as the scenes of filial piety or historical exemplars chosen in other areas.²¹ In this tomb, as in other tombs in the region, this visual strategy may have been used to appeal to or engender a sense of solidarity among competing groups navigating the borderlands of the Han northern frontier.

18 Although these murals were intended first and foremost to create a microcosm for the deceased, the denizens in the afterlife were not their only intended viewers, and those participating in the funeral would have also seen the decoration of the tombs. As Miranda Brown (2007) has shown, Eastern Han funerals were important venues for public display, providing the opportunity for mourners and attendees to strengthen existing social networks and relationships.

19 For studies on the depiction of foreigners in Han mortuary art, see Xing (2000 and 2005), Zheng (1998), and Zhu (2017).

20 For an alternate interpretation of this imagery that rejects this binary analysis, see Wallace (2019).

21 For examples of scholars that have analysed the political and social implications of the imagery decorating Han tombs and mortuary shrines, see Powers (1992) and Wu (1989).

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The Representation of Military Troops in Pingcheng Tombs and the Private Household Institution of *Buqu* in Practice

Chin-Yin TSENG*

Abstract

In Northern Wei tombs of the Pingcheng period (398–494 CE), we notice a recurrence of the depiction of armed men in both mural paintings and tomb figurines, not in combat but positioned in formation. Consisting of infantry soldiers alongside light and heavy cavalry accompanied by flag bearers, such a military scene presents itself as a point of interest amidst the rest of the funerary setting. Is this supposed to be an indication that the tomb occupant had indeed commanded such an impressive set of troops in life? Or had the families commissioned this theme as part of the tomb repertoire simply in hopes of providing protection over the deceased in their life after death? If we set the examination of this type of image against textual history, the household institution of *buqu* retainers that began as early as the Xin (“New”) Dynasty (9–23 CE) and was codified in the Tang Dynasty (618–907 CE), serving as private retainer corps of armed men to powerful families, appears to be the type of social institution reified in the archaeological materials mentioned above. The large-scale appearance of these military troops inside Pingcheng period tombs might even suggest that with the “tribal policy” in place, the Han Chinese practice of keeping *buqu* retainers became a convenient method for the Tuoba to manage recently conquered tribal confederations, shifting clan loyalty based on bloodline to household loyalty based on the *buqu* institution, one with a long social tradition in Chinese history.

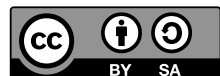
Keywords: Northern Wei, Pingcheng, *buqu*, armed retainers, tribal policy

Prikaz vojaških enot v grobnicah iz mesta Pingcheng in institucija privatne družinske vojske *buqu* v praksi

Izvleček

V grobnicah dinastije Severni Wei iz časa t. i. obdobja Pingcheng (398–494 n. št.) opazimo ponavljajoči se motiv upodobitve oboroženih mož na stenskih poslikavah in nagrobnih figurah, ki niso upodobljeni sredi boja, temveč v formaciji. Ti vojaški prizori, ki prikazujejo pehoto skupaj z lahko in težko konjenico ob spremljavi zastavonoš, se

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kažejo kot osrednji motiv v sklopu upodobitve pogrebne obreda. Ali to nakazuje, da je pokopani za časa življenja zares poveljeval tako impresivni množici vojakov? Ali so nemara družine naročile tak motiv kot del grobniškega repertoarja preprosto v upanju, da bi zaščitile pokojnega v njegovem posmrtnem življenju? Če se lotimo proučevanja te vrste podob v luči tekstovnega zgodovinskega gradiva, lahko vidimo, da je bila institucija družinskih vojaških podanikov *buqu*, ki se je začela že vsaj za časa dinastije Xin (9–23 n. št.), nato kodificirana za časa dinastije Tang (618–907 n. št.) in je služila kot sistem privatnih enot oboroženih podanikov mogočnih družin, vrsta družbene institucije, ki je potrjena v prej omenjenem arheološkem gradivu. Obsežne upodobitve teh vojaških sil v grobnicah iz obdobja Pingcheng nemara celo nakazujejo, da je v okviru izvajanja t. i. plemenske politike praksa vzdrževanja podanikov *buqu* hanskih Kitajcev postala priročna metoda za ljudstvo Tuoba pri upravljanju nedavno osvojenih plemenskih konfederacij, s premikom klanske zvestobe, temelječe na krvi, na zvestobo družini, temelječi na instituciji *buqu* z dolgo družbeno tradicijo v kitajski zgodovini.

Ključne besede: Severni Wei, Pingcheng, *buqu*, oboroženi podaniki, plemenska politika

Introduction

A visual motif found in Northern Wei Pingcheng period tombs (398–494 CE) is the depiction of armoured and armed men positioned in formation as a part of the application of the funerary repertoire. This visual motif can be identified in the tombs of Shaling 沙嶺 M7 (Fig. 1) (Datong shi kaogu yanjiusuo 2006), Yanbei shiyuan 雁北師院 M5 (Fig. 2) (Datong shi kaogu yanjiusuo 2008), and Sima Jinlong 司馬金龍 (Fig. 3) (Shanxi sheng Datong shi bowuguan et al. 1972), taking form as either a mural painting or clay figurine set.

Portraying an entourage of armed men as a part of the visual repertoire surrounding the tomb space of the deceased has had a long tradition in Chinese funerary art. This type of portrayal produced a variety of thematic subjects that emerged as early as the Han Dynasty, on carved pictorial stones and moulded pictorial bricks, including the “outing scene” (*chuxing tu* 出行圖), “battle scene” (*zhanzheng tu* 戰爭圖), and “hunting scene” (*shoulie tu* 狩獵圖). In the Han funerary repertoire, we see motifs of the “outing scene” with ox cart and saddled horse, “battle scene” with armed men in combat, and “hunting scene” with men on horseback equipped with bow and arrow galloping in the hills. However, in the Pingcheng tombs, what we see is a new type of representation for the depiction of armed men, exhibiting the funerary military set in a rather extraordinary manner.

While traditional funerary thematic subjects to be found as early as the Han Dynasty continued strongly into the Northern Wei Pingcheng tombs as popular motifs, what we see here on the Shaling north wall does not quite conform to any of the above thematic renditions. These armoured and armed assemblages

found within the Pingcheng tombs are always positioned in formation, but not engaged in combat. They consist of the full range of infantry soldiers, light and heavy cavalry, accompanied by flag bearers as well as other members of the procession to produce the full effect of pomp and circumstance. One might even say that these troops, in the way they were represented, either in painting or in sculpture, appear to be more ceremonial than martial. Most importantly, it is interesting to note that such a type of military set does not necessarily correspond with the tomb occupant's position in court as one who may have commanded such an impressive army.

The fact remains that Northern Wei Pingcheng tombs do not contain any textual evidence to suggest precisely what these visual motifs intend to represent. One could choose to interpret the mural subject on the Shaling north wall as a grandiose rendition of the traditional "outing scene". Nonetheless, this paper aims at placing the appearance of this mural image together with the intriguing sets of clay figurines found in the tombs of Sima Jinlong and Song Shaozu 宋紹祖 (Yanbei shiyuan M5) as indicative of a social phenomenon that had re-emerged to be picked up in the Pingcheng period.

Rather than interpreting the military entourage as representing the tomb occupants' official capacity in court, it could be more enlightening if we are to treat it as an icon of the scale of household befitting the deceased in their lifetime. This paper explores how this specific representation of armoured and armed men in formation during this time period could very well represent a social institution that was part of the practice of the Nanbei chao (420–589 CE)—private household bound retainers, also known as *buqu* 部曲.

Tomb Assemblages

Within the Pingcheng period tombs, such a set of military assemblage is most distinctly observed in Shaling M7 (dated to 435 CE, mural on north wall), Yanbei shiyuan M5 (dated to 477, clay figurines), and the tomb of Sima Jinlong (dated to 484, clay figurines). Appearing either as painted images or clay figurines, this specific visual motif exists in different variations while having shared characteristic features, particularly in the types of military categories included in the set, as well as in the representation of their respective headgear and apparel down to the finer details. In fact, the two sets of clay figurines appear very much as if the troops had marched right out of the north wall of Shaling M7, transforming a two-dimensional mural image into sets of vivid three-dimensional figurines.



Figure 1: Mural on the north wall of Shaling M7, Shanxi (After *Datong shi kaogu yanjiusuo* 2006, 19).

Shaling M7, identified by a piece of inscribed lacquer fragment, has been attributed to the mother of a Xianbei general by the clan name of Poduoluo, buried in 435 CE. The aforementioned type of military entourage is depicted across the north wall of Shaling M7, which takes up approximately 6.43 m² of wall space. At first sight, the mural appears to have merged what would have been either a hunting or military combat scene on a Han stone relief or on a Wei-Jin brick mural into a military procession. The military entourage depicted on the north wall consists of flag bearers, foot soldiers with long spears and bows and arrows, as well as light and heavy cavalry. The military group is enhanced with marching musicians and acrobatic performers, giving the scene an air of pomp and circumstance.

At the centre of this composition, led up front by scouts on horseback, is a canopied horse-drawn carriage. It is because of this horse-drawn carriage that the excavation report continues to refer to this visual representation as a “carriage and horse outing scene” (*chema chuxing tu* 車馬出行圖), and other authors who wrote about this mural image also classified it either as “carriage and horse guards of honour outing scene” (*chema yizhang chuxing tu* 車馬儀仗出行圖) (Tao 2013), “outing scene” (*chuxing tu* 出行圖) (Zhang 2017), or “imperial procession scene” (*lubu tu* 鹵簿圖) (Wei 2017). Clearly, all these thematic descriptions focus on the horse-drawn carriage as the central element of a processional outing, and these are simply different terms for describing, at different levels of ceremonial complexity and the scale of entourage involved, an activity that the deceased would have engaged in, in everyday life.

The head of a male figure appears just above the carriage under the canopy, depicted on the north wall of Shaling M7, which suggests that he takes up the central

position within this entourage. Seeing that the tomb occupant has been identified as Lady Poduoluo, whose son was a Northern Wei general, it is very easy to make the leap in logic that this military entourage was depicted to represent the status of her son in the Northern Wei court, an outing scene together with the army he commanded in an official capacity. While this may very well be a valid interpretation, one question remains: why depict an activity that was not necessarily a central aspect of Lady Poduoluo's life, but that of her son? Or, perhaps this motif deserves an alternative interpretation, one that stems from the everyday activities within the household of the deceased, rather than as a marker of the official capacity once held by the deceased.

It thus may be more beneficial for the purpose of this paper if we shift our emphasis from necessarily labelling the type of activity depicted to exploring the nature of the relationship between these armed men and the tomb occupant. The sheer number of armed and armoured men, including those in heavy armour, marching in a disciplined manner, makes this image a clear deviation from all existing conventional motifs involving military men as an entourage for the tomb occupant. The question remains: who are these people, as armed troops, accompanying the tomb occupant into eternity?

The role of such a set of armed troops in a Pingcheng funerary setting is even more intriguing when represented by the more than hundred pieces of clay figurines found in the tombs of Song Shaozu (Yanbei shiyuan M5) and Sima Jinlong. As tomb assemblages reflect actual practices of daily life, by having these figurines of armed troops included in their life after death, what would the tomb occupant, or those making this decision, have intended for the figurines to duplicate from their life above ground?

Yanbei shiyuan M5 is attributed to the Regional Inspector of Youzhou 幽州 who was also the Duke of Dunhuang, Song Shaozu, and his wife, dated to 477. It contains a set of 113 pieces of clay figurines, of which the large military assemblage makes up a great majority of the entire set. Consisting of light armoured and heavy armoured cavalry as well as foot soldiers and flag bearers, these warriors appear to have stepped out of the mural painting across the north wall of Shaling M7. A common feature shared by the mural and the clay figurines is the attention to detail in the representation of the individuals involved, especially when it comes to the variety of headgear and apparel worn by each soldier, depending on the role they perform in the military assemblage.

Clay figurines and models, just like pictorial stones, were applied in Chinese burials as an aspect of the funerary repertoire that accompanied the tomb occupants. Figurine attendants, models of granaries, as well as everyday objects, all made of

clay, were to be found in tombs as early as the Warring States period (476–221 BCE). By the Northern Wei period, while the notion of clay figurines is nothing out of the ordinary as a category of funerary goods, it is the prominence given to the military roles in the figurine sets of Song Shaozu and Sima Jinlong that makes them intriguing. Represented either on horseback or on foot, these warrior figurines in full armour remind us of the famous Terracotta Warriors of the First Emperor Qin Shihuang 秦始皇 (259–210 BCE) at Lishan 驪山, and those of the Han Emperor Jingdi 景帝 (188–141 BCE) at Yangling 陽陵, bearing close resemblance to the former in the intricacy with which the minute details of the soldiers' apparel and armour were shaped out of clay, and to the latter in their diminutive stature.

This knowledge presents us with an oddity. In the Han Dynasty, from which only a handful of princely tombs have been discovered that contain miniature terracotta warriors, Song Shaozu's warrior figurines appear to be a transgression upon sumptuary protocol, a diversion from contemporary funerary practice. Despite the prominent social status of the Dunhuang Song clan, and the fact that many of its high members held military appointments either as commanders or strategists (Shi 1991), the fact remains that the display of such a troop of miniature warrior figurines was not a common funerary practice for military men in the period leading up to this time, as demonstrated by the lack of miniature figurine troops in Hexi tombs of the Wei-Jin period. Furthermore, despite the prominence of the Song family in the Dunhuang locality, Song Shaozu remains a member of the Northern Wei court who is not even mentioned in the *Book of Wei* (*Weishu* 魏書). All of these are reasons to suggest that Song Shaozu's clay figurine troops did not necessarily exist as a marker of an imperial commander of such a troop.

Surprisingly, or perhaps not so, Yanbei shiyuan M5 is not the only example of such a tomb from the Pingcheng period. Another one dated a few years later (484 CE), attributed to Sima Jinlong, also contains a similar set of miniature clay warrior figurines (122 on foot and 88 mounted on horse). Sima Jinlong was the son of Sima Chuzhi 司馬楚之, a side-line descendant of the royal Sima clan of the Eastern Jin who sought refuge in the North to escape from Liu Song's persecution of the Jin Sima clan, and married the Henei Princess of the Tuoba Northern Wei.

Like his father, Sima Jinlong served in the Northern Wei court, yet unlike his father, Sima Jinlong was never a true military man. Earlier in his career, he served as the commander of the Yunzhong garrison (*yunzhong zhenjiang* 雲中鎮將), and was in fact the local governor of the Yunzhong garrison, a mid-level civil-military administrator in nature. At the highest point of his official career,

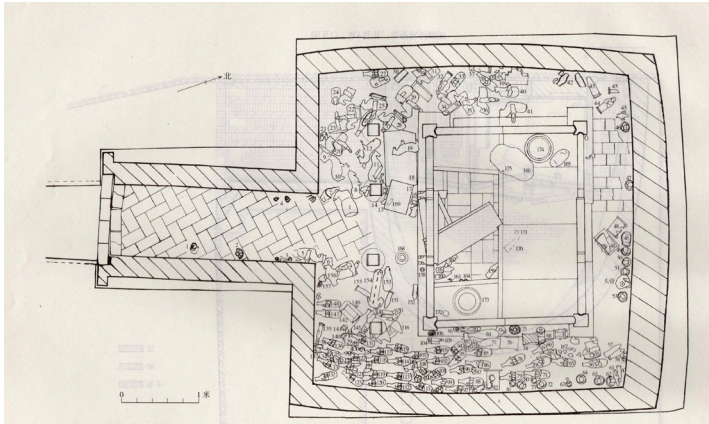


Figure 2: Section view of Yanbei shiyuan M5 tomb chamber with indications of the clay figurine distribution, Shanxi (After Datong shi kaogu yanjiusuo 2008, 74).

Sima Jinlong was appointed Palace Attendant (*shizhong* 侍中) and conferred on a brevet rank of Grand General for Pacifying the West (*zhenxi dajiangjun* 鎮西大將軍). As such, it would be inappropriate for a civil official such as Sima Jinlong himself to expect to command and/or to be protected by Northern Wei military troops for all eternity. To attribute the appearance of these military figurines to Sima Jinlong's father, who had served his career as a military man, is also problematic, as such an official command of Northern Wei troops was certainly not hereditary, even less conceivable as part of the sumptuary protocol for funerary rites.

Even so, a discussion of whether or not Song Shaozu or Sima Jinlong's official career merited the application of such a funerary setting is a distraction from the issue at hand. To have what only appeared in the highest-ranking imperial tombs of the Qin and Han Dynasties, unaccounted for in the Wei-Jin tombs, yet found in two Pingcheng tombs, is clearly a funerary phenomenon worth discussing as a possible reflection of Northern Wei socio-historical changes. The particularity of the armed clay figurines in the Northern Wei Pingcheng period tombs is most significant when we observe the lack of these figurines even in later Luoyang period tombs attributed to Northern Wei Emperor Xuanwu 宣武 (Yuan Ke 元恪, 499–515) (Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan kaogu yanjiusuo et al. 1994) and the last emperor of the Northern Wei, Emperor Jiemin 節閔帝 (Yuan Gong 元恭, r. 531–532) (Liu 2014).

Though both tombs had been disturbed by tomb robbers, with no textual evidence remaining, the scale and layout of the tomb burials all suggest that the

tomb occupants were related to the Imperial Court. Nonetheless, what is left of the clay figurine sets suggest that heavy and light cavalry may have not been included in the original repertoire. In what appears to be Emperor Jiemin's burial at Beimang Mountain 北邙山, his set of clay figurines consist of civil bureaucrats, and what appears to be guards of honour, horses and camels; unfortunately, only the heads of three civil bureaucrats remain intact, so not much more information could be gathered from the rest. As for the remains of the clay figurines in what scholars have attributed to be Emperor Xuanwu's Jing Mausoleum 北魏宣武帝景陵, also without textual evidence, only fragments of animal models are found, too fragmented that one could only make out the shapes of hogs and dogs. The lack of any sign of a fighting force represented in these two imperial burials makes their appearance in the tombs of Song Shaozu and Sima Jinlong even more intriguing.

Recalling Erwin Panofsky's dualistic perception of funerary art as reflecting prospective and retrospective concerns (1964, 10), the appearance of armoured and armed men could easily suggest to the viewer that they were intended for the protection of the deceased, either in this life or the next. However, if there is no indication that the tomb occupants had necessarily commanded such an impressive military force in their lifetime, and considering that figurines of guardian beasts and guardian warriors already exist for the actual protection of the cave space, what would such a military assemblage intend to represent in the life of a Northern Wei Pingcheng household? This leaves us to consider whether such an armed figurine assemblage could have other social interpretations besides that indicative of an eternal army commanded by a sovereign or royal prince.

This very question guides the following enquiry, as this paper sets forth to examine the historical context for such a visual motif would exist in the first place as a separate category apart from other large-scale narratives of armed and armoured men in action. When we set these archaeological materials against textual history, the social institution of *buqu* retainers serving as private retainer corps of armed men to powerful families, might be just what the visual motif intends to re-enact.

Buqu Retainers

The original meaning of *buqu*, as it first appeared in historical texts, referred to an official institutional method of organising military troops into regular units that started in the Western Han (202 BCE–9 CE) (Graff 2002, 38–39; Lewis 2009, 58). Going back to the dynastic histories, in the *Book of Later Han* (*Hou Hanshu* 後漢書), the chapter on “Hundred Officials,” it is said that:

其領軍皆有部曲。大將軍營五部，部校尉一人，比二千石。軍司馬一人，比千石。部下有曲，曲有軍候一人，比六百石。曲下有屯，屯長一人，比二百石。(Fan 1965, 3564)

[As for generals,] each army they lead has *bu* and *qu*. For the Great General [’s army], each *ying* has five *bu*, and each *bu* has one man as *xiaowei*, [an official] ranking at two thousand piculs, and one man as *junsima*, [an official] ranking at one thousand piculs. Under each *bu* there is a *qu*, and each *qu* has one man as *junhou*, [an official] ranking at six hundred piculs. Under each *qu* there is a *tun*, and each *tun* has one man as *tunzhang*, [an official] ranking at two hundred piculs.¹

By the time of the Eastern Han, the meaning of *buqu* as a designation for an official military institution took a turn (Ke 1963), mostly as a result of the social turbulence in the interim period between the Western and Eastern Han, known as the Xin (“New”) Dynasty (9–23 CE), a short-lived dynasty established by Wang Mang. During this period, amidst chaos and disorder, regional strongmen and landowners emerged to gain social and political influence. In order to protect their own assets, these powerful landowning families took up the practice of arming their clansmen, retainers, followers, and dependents of the household. What may have begun as a measure for estate protection in times of disorder, eventually turned into the militarisation and institutionalisation of private fighting forces at the command of powerful households.

As early as the Xin Dynasty, these militarised retainers of private households, who would have normally conducted work on estate production in times of peace, came to be known as *buqu*. Though in the following Eastern Han period (25–220 CE) the practice was more discreet in nature and had not become an actual form of household institution until the end of the Eastern Han with the Yellow Turban Rebellion and the ensuing fragmentation of society caused by the warlords. Peasants whose lives were upended by constant warfare sought refuge in armed estates. In turn, they became new additions to the armed forces of these households, and the growing number required these households to adopt the practice of militarising retainers in order to institutionalise their large following.

It is important to point out that *buqu*, though of a private nature, should not be used interchangeably with the notion of “private military soldiers” (*sibing* 私兵), who were professional soldiers loyal to an individual instead of the state. I would argue against the statement that in the Eastern Han *buqu* were soldiers

1 Translations of primary texts into English are all done by the author.

who developed close ties with the generals and landed magnates, making them “private troops” (Lewis 2009, 58). *Buqu* were by no means professional soldiers. The notion of *buqu* focuses on a type of medieval social identity, that of being one of the “unworthy populations” (*jianmin* 賤民). Combat was just one of the functions assumed by *buqu* on the estates. In peaceful times, *buqu* were never disengaged from their primary duty as production forces on an estate, and only served as an armed force during particular periods of disorder.

In the post-Han, Wei-Jin Nanbei period (220–589 CE), as a result of warfare and social instability, the main source of recruitment for *buqu* originally relied on clansmen at its core, which later extended outward to other types of retainers, including pupils and followers of these families, public recruits, and other servile dependents bestowed by the emperor (Wang 2004). Amidst the turmoil of 311 CE in Luoyang, the Jin statesman Zu Ti led his clansmen to seek refuge in Huaisi (present day Xuzhou, Jiangsu province), only to later return north with his household *buqu* and new recruits to take back Yuzhou (most of present day Henan province) in 317 CE. It is stated in the *Book of Jin* (*Jinshu* 晉書), in the “Biography of Zu Ti”:

及京師大亂，逖率親黨數百家避地淮泗。以所乘車馬載同行老疾，躬身徒步，藥物衣糧與眾共之，又多權謀，是以少長咸宗之。(Fang 1974, 1694)

Upon the huge turmoil in the capital, [Zu] Ti led several hundred confidante households to seek refuge in Huaisi. [He] used his own carriage to take the elderly and the sick who travelled with him, personally walked [alongside], and shared [his] medicines, clothing, and food with the masses. [Zu Ti was] also very tactical, therefore the elderly and the young all made him their clan head.

時帝方拓定江南，未遑北伐，逖進說……帝乃以逖為奮威將軍，給千人廩，布三千匹，不給鎧仗，使自招募。仍將本流徙部曲百余家渡江。(Fang 1974, 1694–95)

At the time, the emperor had just pacified the region south of the [Yangzi] River, with no time to spare for a northward combat. [Zu] Ti presented [his proposal to the emperor] ... The emperor made Ti the General of Might and Power, gave [him] grain for a thousand men and three thousand bolts of cloth. [The emperor] did not provide [Ti with] armour and arms, and made [Ti] conduct self-recruitment. Even so, [Ti] still crossed the [Yangzi] river with his own *buqu* and other scattered *buqu* forces, adding up to more than hundreds of households.

In battle, *buqu* served as estate armed men; in times of peace, they were treated as similar to *dianke* 佃客, client farmers. The formation of *buqu* forces was most active in times when military activities were most frequent. The scale of one's *buqu* determined one's potential power, easily exceeding thousands. Remarking on the fighting power held by the dominant households of Wu during the Three Kingdoms period (220–280 CE), Deng Ai, general of the Wei, reported to his lord on the state of affairs in Wu after Sun Quan had passed away. In the *Records of the Three Kingdoms* (*Sanguozhi* 三國志), "Biography of Deng Ai," ("Deng Ai zhuan" 鄧艾傳) it is said that:

吳名宗大族，皆有部曲，阻兵仗勢，足以建命。(Chen 1959, 777)

The elite lineages and great clans of Wu all have *buqu*, with fighting forces to rely upon, sufficient for establishing the [heavenly] mandate.

The same was true later in Nanbei chao. In the *Book of Chen* (*Chenshu* 陳書), "Biography of Lu Guangda" ("Lu Guangda zhuan" 魯廣達傳) it is said that in the southern state of Chen:

江表將帥，各領部曲，動以千數，而魯氏尤多。(Yao 1972, 418)

The generals and commanders south of the Yangzi River, each led their own *buqu* [forces], often thousands in number, of which the Lu family had the most.

The nature of a *buqu* with its own individual allegiance, and as privately-owned by individual households, derived from the fact that the related individuals were mostly privately recruited by, or attached themselves to, estates of land owners and strongmen. Such a practice of hereditary allegiance finds basis in the Three Kingdoms period, when the state of Wu practiced a hereditary institution for the position of the commanding officers in the military, to enforce the generational subsidiary relationship between the commanding officers and their soldiers (Tao 1933).

The private nature of *buqu* had strong fiscal impacts. Of the Sixteen Kingdoms (306–439 CE), Li Xiong of Cheng Han stipulated that the *buqu* of Fan Changsheng's household were not to be taxed by the state. Instead, tax levied from Fan Changsheng's *buqu* should go into his own household income.

後蜀李雄自稱益州牧，既克成都，以山西范長生岩居穴處，求道養志，欲迎立為君而臣之，長生固辭。及雄稱僭成都王，長生自山西乘素輿詣成都。雄迎之於門，執版延坐，拜丞相，尊曰範賢。長生勸雄稱尊號，雄於是僭即帝位，加長生為天地大師，封西山侯，複其部曲，不豫軍征，租稅一入其家。(Wang 2006, *juan* 228, 2559)

Li Xiong of Later Shu made himself regional governor of Yizhou. Having conquered Chengdu, [Li Xiong] wanted to make Fan Changsheng the new ruler, he who had resided in a mountain cave in Shanxi to practice the way of Dao and to cultivate his resolution. [Li Xiong] himself [would also] submit to Changsheng's rule. Changsheng persistently declined [this offer]. When Xiong usurped for himself the title King of Chengdu, Changsheng arrived in Chengdu from Shanxi in a white carriage. Xiong welcomed him at the gate, held the official tablet in hand and invited him to his seat, made him the prime minister, and respectfully called him Fan the Sage. Changsheng persuaded Xiong to assume the ultimate title, therefore Xiong usurped the emperor's position, and added to Changsheng's title, Master of Heaven and Earth, as well as Duke of West Mountain. Changsheng's *buqu* forces were resumed, not to be taxed by the military, but all levied tax would go to his own household.

Though in this case the tax exemption benefit enjoyed by Fan Changsheng's *buqu* was a privilege granted to his household by Li Xiong, in the Wei-Jin Nanbei period, institutions such as "tax-free fields allocated to non-relative clients in a household" (*zhantian yinke zhi* 占田蔭客制) of the Western Jin or "equal-field system" (*juntian zhi* 均田制) of the Northern Wei all stipulated that the powerful families could retain dependent peasants who were not required to be taxed by the state. As such, these private estates grew larger and wealthier, which gave them more resources to grant protection over their dependents.

Against this socio-historical context, I will now turn to how the practice of maintaining *buqu* retainers who served as fighting forces of large estates and elite households as early as the Han was most likely picked up by the Tuoba in dealing with the ramifications of the Northern Wei tribal policy. With the disbandment of tribes, the Tuoba wanted to check the power of tribal leaders by severing traditional clan ties while still allowing them to maintain a decent following, one that would be bound by another form of loyalty other than bloodline. Incidentally, the *buqu* household retainer system was well suited as an answer to the tribal policy. One can even say that the Tuoba had either consciously or subconsciously steered the elite households toward adopting the *buqu* institution, making it a significant presence in Northern Wei society, so much so that *buqu* re-emerged as a dominant subject to be applied as a funerary motif in the Pingcheng elite tombs.

Buqu and the Northern Wei Tribal Policy

The Northern Wei tribal policy “to disband and to send away the tribes” (*lisan buluo* 離散部落), was put in motion early on in the dynasty’s formative period. It served the purpose of strengthening the hold of the state, at the expense of sovereignty granted to the different pastoral confederations within the Northern Wei realm, consisting of the original tribes who followed the Tuoba in their conquests, surrendered tribes, and conquered tribes. The various pastoral tribes disbanded into a multitude of small groups, as tribal leaders became local officials directly governed by the state and with the responsibilities for fulfilling their conscript and taxation duties. The tribal policy, gradually enforced through each and every Northern Wei military conquest, did not force pastoralists to adopt a settled agricultural lifestyle. Rather, in diminishing the authority of pastoral elites, it provided for the necessary conditions, a prerequisite, to facilitate the Northern Wei social transformation from a tribal confederation into a feudal monarchy. As every social change requires a transition, the appearance of what clearly represents *buqu* retainers in Pingcheng period tombs demonstrates that the *buqu* household institution was a convenient alternative for the Tuoba to adopt in the process of executing their tribal policy, exchanging loyalty to blood for loyalty to the master of the household.

This is not to say that the Northern Wei tribal policy directly led to the rising prominence of *buqu* as a funerary motif in the Pingcheng period, or that when tribal leaders had their native groups disbanded they turned to retaining *buqu* as an alternative measure. This paper is simply pointing out that social changes may have been a factor in the resurgence of a motif that had a long history in traditional Han funerary repertoire, but had previously not enjoyed a strong presence. Moreover, it is precisely the fact that *buqu* retainers had been a Han social institution of the large estate households that its appearance as a funerary motif in Han Chinese tombs would have been nothing out of the ordinary, whereas the Tuoba elites would have been viewed as grafting one social institution (*buqu*) onto the other (tribal ties) to fulfil similar functions.

Much of the social history of everyday life medieval China, namely the Wei-Jin Nanbei period, remains unclear to us. Partly due to social disorder, and partly due to the lack of textual sources characteristic of that period. As a result, without other historical sources to corroborate with the dynastic history, we remain uncertain as to how many of the policies mentioned in passing were actually carried out in reality, including the Northern Wei tribal policy. Only three textual accounts in the *Book of Wei* mention this social institutional change, though each used a different terminology, which suggests that the tribal policy had taken effect gradually and case by case, rather than executed as one specific mandate.

凡此四方諸部，歲時朝貢，登國初，太祖散諸部落，始同為編民。(Wei 1974, *juan* 113, 3014)

Any of which of the many tribes from the four directions who paid tribute to court each year, in the beginning of the Dengguo reign, Taizu² disbanded the many tribes, and for the first time treated as registered commoners.

(賀)訥從太祖平中原，拜安遠將軍。其後離散諸部，分土定居，不聽遷徙，其君長大人皆同編戶。訥以元舅，甚見尊重，然無統領。以壽終於家。(Wei 1974, *juan* 83, 1812)

[He] Ne followed Taizu in pacifying the central plains, [for which] he was made General of Pacifying Afar. Afterwards, the many tribes were disbanded, land allocated for the settlement [of tribesmen], who were not allowed to migrate to other places. The tribal leaders were made into registered commoners. Ne, as the older brother of Taizu's wife, was well respected, but still was without those to lead. He died at an old age in his household.

太祖時，分散諸部，唯高車以類粗獷，不任役使，故得別為部落。(Wei 1974, *juan* 103, 2309)

During the time of Taizu, the many tribes were disbanded. Only the Gaoche tribe, due to its boorish nature, did not allow itself to be commanded [by others], and had to be allowed to exist separately as a tribe.

According to these three *Weishu* passages, we can say for certain that the tribal policy was initiated in the early days of Tuoba Gui's 拓拔珪 reign, in the formative period of Northern Wei state building, with the earliest account pointing it to the beginning of the Dengguo reign 登國 (386–396). Nonetheless, the vagueness and inconsistency in the language adopted regarding this tribal policy led historians to different interpretations in understanding the actual time of execution of this policy, pushing it till after the Tuoba conquest of Yan 燕 (~397) (Tang 2000, 196), or even later during the Huangshi reign 皇始 (396–398) of Emperor Daowu 道武帝 (Koga 1991), as well as the scope of disbandment that this policy actually entailed (Tian 1997; Li 1990).

One main issue regarding the tribal policy that has yet to be resolved is how literally one should interpret the accounts in reference to the notion of “disbandment”, and if the policy had indeed collapsed the original tribal hierarchy and made all

2 Emperor Daowu, Tuoba Gui, r. 386–409.

tribal leaders and tribesmen equals as registered commoners of the Northern Wei. Scholars who held the latter view to be true include Tang Changru and Tian Yuqing. In his study of the Helan tribes, Tian leaned towards treating the policy as a complete disbandment of the tribes, that tribal leaders, together with all or parts of their tribes, gave up tribal privileges to become registered commoners (1997). Tang pointed out that “the disbandment of tribes forced elites and commoners to become independent registered households, which, needless to say, facilitated the wiping out of the already diminishing social institution of clanship” (2000, 196). Departing from this perspective, it is natural for one to make the logical connection that the disbandment of tribes meant an end to all tribes, and that the continued existence of certain tribal leaders suggested that these particular tribes simply had not yet been disbanded. These scholars had arrived at this conclusion most likely based on their interpretation of the *Weishu* passage taken from the “Biography of He Ne,” (“He Ne zhuan” 賀訥傳) stating that “Ne, as the older brother of Taizu’s wife, was well respected, but still was without those to lead” (Wei 1974, *juan* 83, 1812).

On the other hand, Yang Enyu’s interpretation of a much more “limited” policy in scope appears to be more plausible, especially considering how early on the “disbandment of tribes” was mentioned in Northern Wei state-building, it is hard to believe that the Tuoba would have gone for such a drastic and total change in reducing the power and authority of their fellow tribal confederation leaders (Yang 2006). The main intent behind this policy was to remove the privileges previously enjoyed by the various tribal leaders, denying them the opportunity to rebuild their power base so as to become competing powers against the Tuoba (Tian 2003, 89). Returning to the “Biography of He Ne,” before the statement that Ne “was without those to lead,” the same passage also states:

其先世為軍長，四方附國者數十部。(Wei 1974, 1812)

His ancestors were confederation leaders, who had tens of tribal states from the four directions dependent upon them.

With this in mind, one might interpret the statement that Ne “was without those to lead” to mean that he was no longer the chief of the confederation, like his ancestors were, and not that he had no tribesmen who followed him and remained at his command. Indeed, following the disbandment of the Helan tribes, it is stated in the *Weishu* that it was the tribal leaders who were registered into commoners. This suggests that the disbandment policy broke down previously large confederations into much smaller units, whose tribal leaders became registered commoners of the Northern Wei, and the tribesmen who followed them remained at the command of the leader (Mou 2017, 1). Such a policy for disposing of the conquered

takes precedence from the Zhou's (1046–256 BCE) practice of dividing up the Shang (1600–1046 BCE) clansmen of the Ji surname, using each clan as a single unit, with the original head of the clan still leading this single unit under their own management (He 1982, 2).

Here, one might consider an alternative possibility for the dominance enjoyed by the *buqu* motif in Pingcheng period tombs, placing a strong emphasis on the presence of the large-scale fighting forces. With the tribal policy in place in the early Pingcheng period, the disbandment of the tribes severed the loyalty between clansmen based on blood ties, and this relationship between masters and their fighting forces was necessarily and ultimately transformed into a new type of loyalty, the household retainer-based system that found its form in *buqu*. In a way, one can even say that through enforcing the tribal policy, the Tuoba rulers had consciously or subconsciously opted to fall in line with the *buqu* social establishment, one with deep roots in Chinese society, which conveniently allowed for the social traditions of the Xianbei and those of the Han Chinese to merge together.

Often in the Northern Wei, *buqu* were treated as a sign of one's ownership, or lack of, political capital. Following their masters in political loyalty, as we can see in the two examples between Northern Wei and the southern state of Song.

昶于彭城奔虜，部曲皆散，文和獨送至界上。(Xiao 1972, *juan* 27, 512)

When [Liu] Chang [of the Song] surrendered to the Tuoba in Pengcheng, [his] *buqu* forces all scattered. Only [the master of records of the Lord Yiyang's expedition to the north, Wang] Wenhe, he alone accompanied [Chang] to the border.

魏荊州刺史魯爽及弟秀等率部曲詣鑠歸順。(Wang 2006, *juan* 217, 2443)

Lu Shuang, provincial governor of Jingzhou under the Wei, together with his brother Xiu and others, led their *buqu* and submitted themselves [to the Song].

Historians of medieval China have all pointed out that the disbandment of tribes provided the necessary conditions that allowed for the Northern Wei society to transform from pastoralism to a more settled agricultural lifestyle. Breaking up the tribal confederations into smaller units restructured the pastoral clan affiliation into a part of Northern Wei state institution, so that while the tribal leaders lost their hierarchical power in the confederation under the tribal policy, they gained status in becoming part of the Northern Wei administration. Consequently, the

tribal policy was a step towards feudalisation of the Tuoba Northern Wei, as these new rulers of northern China weaned themselves and their people off the pastoral ways, adapting to the ruling methods of the central plains. As argued by Yang Yaokun, “In the early to mid-Northern Wei, due to the strength of the Xianbei confederation tribal soldiers and the enhanced centralisation of power, it was impossible for the powerful lineages and the great names of the north to organise *buqu*” (Yang 1991, 129). Nonetheless, it was precisely because the central power of the Northern Wei state wanted to put a check on the strength of the Xianbei confederate tribal leaders that the tribal policy was carried out. In light of such a policy, there was inevitably a need for a conscious, or subconscious, shift in loyalty allegiance from tribal ties to social ties, one that did not challenge the directive of the Northern Wei state. As such, reverting to the traditional Han Chinese social establishment of the *buqu*, or at the very least, using the *buqu* concept in reference to such a dependency relationship, seemed to be a more benign recourse.

Indeed, as pointed out by Tang Changru, “The term ‘bound retainers’ [*buqu*] appears very seldom in the Northern Wei period, and it is at the end of the dynasty, during the disorders, that such great local lineages as the Gao of Bohai possess bound retainers, but they are used only in warfare” (1990, 130). However, it is important to note that historians such as Tang mainly base their studies on the dynastic histories, in which textual accounts of a certain social phenomenon often appear much later in time as it becomes typified and popularised. It is only then that such a social change will appear in the histories. Textual accounts from the Northern Wei remain scarce, and the few that we have regarding the term *buqu* from this period are either taken from the southern histories or used with relevance to Han Chinese families. The representation of military troops in murals and clay figurines on such a large scale in Pingcheng elite tombs might be the only material evidence that we have to hypothesise on the possible dawn of a changing social reality before it enters into written history. Somewhere in this period of historical silence, the Pingcheng society had either consciously or subconsciously chosen the *buqu* institution as the more fitting alternative to fill in the social power void left behind by the tribal policy.

With a long history as a social institution since the Han, *buqu* was not an alien concept, at least to the Han Chinese. It is thus not unlikely, maybe even logical, that the Tuoba would have looked to the traditional *buqu* institution as the new social establishment to deal with the ramifications of the tribal policy. Using the notion of *buqu* to replace the original tribal ties, even though most of the followers of these recently registered tribal leaders would have still been their clansmen to begin with, their loyalty to their master was no longer necessarily bound by blood or kin, but by the confines of an existing social institution. Of course, whether or

not a refugee/migrant imperial family (Huang 2017) such as the likes of Sima Chuzhi and Sima Jinlong who defected to the North, would have been permitted to have *buqu* retainers on their estates within the vicinity of the Pingcheng capital is a subject that deserves the discussion of a paper by itself. In fact, Northern Wei regulations on retaining armed men for elite households residing within the capital is a specialised subject that would require further detailed examination of the textual histories.



Figure 3: Clay figurine set in the tomb of Sima Jinlong, Shanxi (author's photo taken at the Datong Museum).

While nothing exists in historical documents to indicate the actual status of *buqu* in Northern Wei, it is interesting to note that the first time *buqu* was written into textual history as a legal social status was in the Northern Zhou (557–581 CE), which must have carried on much of the social practices of the Northern Wei. In the eleventh month of the sixth year of the Jiande reign 建德 (577) under Emperor Wudi 武帝, after the Zhou conquest of Qi, a decree was issued for the release of Qi captives who were originally of *liangren* 良人 (literally “virtuous people,” commoner) social status and taken in as slaves, together with the Liang captives from the Western Wei conquest of 534, who were now all living in the realm of the Zhou.

及平江陵之後，良人沒為奴婢者，並宜放免。所在附籍，一同民伍。若舊主人猶須共居，聽留為部曲及客女。(Linghu 1971, *juan* 6, 104)

[...] as well as after having conquered Jiangling [in the year 534], the good population who had been taken in [and demoted to] slaves, are all to be released. They are to be entered into local household registration, to be treated in the ranks of the commoners. If their former masters still require them to reside within the same household, they will obey and remain as *buqu* and *kenü*.

Tang Changru sees the issuing of this decree in 577 as a watershed event that marked the legitimisation of *buqu* by law. Before this, though personal dependencies in a feudal society had developed into somewhat of a retainer system, the type of dependent relationship was often unstable and without legal recognition (Tang 1983, 18). With this decree, it is clear to us that by the Northern Zhou it was well established that *buqu* retainers were different from slaves (*nubi* 奴婢), yet still below the class of *liangren*, classified as *jiankou* 賤口 (literally “unworthy population”; inferiors).

This decree paved the way for the legal stipulation of *buqu* in the seventh century *Tang Codes* (*Tanglü* 唐律), of which the definition of *buqu* had clearly taken after the legacy of the Northern Zhou decree. Though privately-owned by masters, just like slaves, unlike the latter *buqu* were not given a price when transferring between the hands of different masters, which clearly indicates that *buqu* were not considered to be the private “property” of the master that could be bought or sold (Zhangsun 1983, *juan* 25, 468).

諸謀反及大逆者皆斬……若部曲資財田宅，並沒官。疏議曰：部曲不同資財，故特言之……奴婢同資財，故不別言。(Zhangsun 1983, *juan* 17, 321–22)

Those who have attempted rebellion and treason should all be executed ... *buqu*, property, and estate etc. should be confiscated by the state. *Shuyi* commentary states: *Buqu* are different from property, thus they are separately listed ... Slaves are the same as property, and thus they are not separately listed.

部曲者，謂本是賤品，賜姓從良而未離本主。本主身死……（部曲）衣資畜產，隨身所屬，不合追奪。(Shi 1895, T45, no. 1895)

Buqu, was originally of the inferior class, who were granted surnames and turned into commoners but never left their original masters. When the master dies ... clothing, property, livestock, and estate [that belonged to *buqu*] are their personal property. To have these taken from them would be inappropriate.

Moreover, apart from not being the personal property of any master in the Tang Dynasty, the above accounts clearly stipulate that while *buqu* belonged to their household masters, they could possess their own personal property, including estate and livestock. This is an important point of information if we take into account that the *Tang Codes* were compiled based on legal codes adopted after social practices that were put into legal terms in the Northern Dynasties.

Conclusion

There is no doubt that *buqu* were already a well-recognized funerary visual motif on the Han pictorial stones and the Wei-Jin brick murals (Wang 2017, 97), one which continued into the Northern and Southern Dynasties, with recognised examples on the pictorial bricks in Dengxian, Henan province (Ma 2016). While these representations all remain as a pictorial depiction in mural painting or moulded pictorial bricks, with the Pingcheng examples we see a distinct development of this motif in scale (into one of the central motifs that takes up an entire wall space) and in the type of representation medium (into a set of clay figurines) by the Northern Wei. Changes in material culture usually suggest the possibility of social change, and the prominent representation of these military troops in Pingcheng period tombs might reflect a resurgence of *buqu* retainers at a time when the Northern Wei tribal policy was being implemented piecemeal. This social reality could have made a stronger impact in funerary repertoire before being registered in textual accounts. So much so that instead of remaining as a mural image, for re-enacting the daily life of the tomb occupant, these clay figurines came to represent the retainers who remained dependents of the master's household, and who would remain loyal to the master into eternity.

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Asian Studies in Slovenia

Filozofija na Tajvanu: nadaljevanje tradicije ali ustvarjanje novih teoretskih paradigem?*

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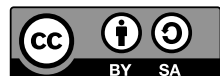
Izvleček

Tajvanski filozofi in filozofinje igrajo v kontekstu ohranjanja kitajske idejne tradicije izjemno pomembno vlogo, četudi njihov topogledni pomen v svetu za zdaj še zdaleč ni dovolj ozaveščen. Osrednji cilj pričujočega članka je zato kritična predstavitev njihovega dela ter njegova umestitev v kontekst političnih, ekonomskih in idejnih pogojev druge polovice 20. stoletja. Vloga tajvanskih filozofskih raziskav je bila namreč še posebej odločilna ravno v obdobju od leta 1949 pa do konca devetdesetih let. Takrat je v filozofski produkciji na kitajski celini večinoma prevladovala cenzura in smernice vladne politike so raziskovalcem in raziskovalkam filozofije narekovale predvsem delo na področju sinizacije marksizma, medtem ko je bilo raziskovanje kitajske idejne tradicije nezaželeno. Članek nazorno prikaže razloge in pomen ohranjanja kontinuitete raziskovanja tradicionalne kitajske idejne zgodovine na Tajvanu in izpostavi, da bi bile brez te izjemno konstruktivne vloge tajvanskih filozofov in filozofinj tovrstne študije na kitajskem jezikovnem področju utišane za skoraj pol stoletja, zaradi česar bi filozofsko raziskovanje kitajske tradicije v matičnem kulturno-jezikovnem kontekstu utrpelo veliko škodo. Avtorica poleg tega prikaže, da pri delu tajvanskih filozofov in filozofinj tega obdobja ni šlo zgolj za ohranjanje kontinuitete kitajskih filozofskih raziskav, temveč so mnogi med njimi ustvarili tudi vrsto inovativnih metodoloških in teoretskih konceptov, ki so bistveno obogatili novejšo zgodovino raziskovanja in razvoja kitajske filozofije. Kot nazoren primer pri tem izpostavi, predstavi in kritično analizira inovativne filozofske koncepte glavnega predstavnika moderne tajvanske filozofije, Mou Zongsana.

Ključne besede: tajvanska filozofija, raziskave kitajske idejne tradicije, kitajska filozofija, konfucijanstvo, novi koncepti, nova metodologija

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Philosophy in Taiwan: the Continuation of Tradition and the Creation of New Theoretical Paradigms

Abstract

Taiwanese philosophers are playing a rather prominent role in the context of preserving the Chinese ideational tradition, even though their significance in this context is still widely unknown. The present article is thus focused upon the critical introduction of their work, and its positioning into the context of the political, economic and intellectual conditions of the second half of the 20th century. The role of the Taiwanese philosophy was especially important precisely in the period which begun in 1949 and lasted until the end of the century. In these five decades, the philosophical production on the mainland was mostly dominated by censorship, and the prevailing regulations of the Communist Party's policies mainly demanded that researchers working in philosophy stayed in the field of the sinization of Marxism, whereby investigating the Chinese intellectual tradition was not so much in favour. The article clearly exposes the reasons for and significance of the preservation of continued research into Chinese ideational history in Taiwan, and points out that without this extraordinarily constructive role of the Taiwanese philosophers, these studies would have suffered immense damage. The author also shows that the work carried out by the Taiwanese philosophers was not merely important in respect of preserving the continuation of Chinese philosophical research, but also because they have at the same time created numerous innovative methodological and theoretical concepts that have fundamentally enriched the recent history of investigating and developing Chinese philosophy. In this regard, the author exposes and critically analyses some of the central philosophical concepts of Mou Zongsan, who is among the most important representatives of modern Taiwanese philosophy.

Keywords: Taiwanese philosophy, research in the Chinese intellectual tradition, Chinese philosophy, Confucianism, new concepts, new methodologies

Uvod

Medtem ko so se v drugi polovici 20. stoletja filozofi na celini v skladu z ideološkimi smernicami ukvarjali predvsem z raziskovanjem marksističnih in leninističnih teorij ter njihovih prilagoditev specifičnim kitajskim razmeram in je bila kitajska idejna tradicija vse do osemdesetih let v veliki meri izgnana na smetišča »fevdalističnih ideologij«, so teoretiki na Tajvanu – podobno kot v Hongkongu – razvijali, nadgrajevali in modernizirali predvsem konfucijanske, delno pa tudi daoistične miselnosti. Pri tem nadaljevanju oziroma ohranjanju filozofskih raziskav, ki so bile osredotočene na kitajsko tradicijo, so bile še posebej pomembne raziskave konfucianizma in konfucijanstva, kajti ravno Konfucij kot simbol kitajske preteklosti je bil v takrat prevladujoči ideologiji predmet ostre kritike, idejni diskurzi konfucijanstva ter konfucianizma pa so bili videni kot reakcionarni produkti »razreda izkoriščevalcev«. Članek prikaže, da sodi filozofska struja revitalizacije

konfucijanstva k osrednjim in najpomembnejšim miselnim strujam tajvanske filozofije 20. stoletja. Seveda pa zaradi pomembne vloge tega intelektualnega gibanja, ki je postalo znano pod imenom novo ali moderno konfucijanstvo (Xin Ruxue 新儒學)¹, nikakor ne gre zanemarjati vseh drugih filozofskih raziskav, v okviru katerih so se ohranjali in razvijali mnogi drugi vidiki in druge smernice kitajske filozofije. Zato bom v nadaljevanju najprej predstavila široko paleto različnih filozofskih študij, ki so v zadnji polovici prejšnjega stoletja nastale pod peresi tajvanskih raziskovalcev in raziskovalk. Potem si bomo na kratko ogledali temeljne pogoje, ki so določili nastanek in razvoj različnih struj moderne in sodobne tajvanske filozofije. V nadaljevanju se bo članek osredotočil na vprašanje o tem, ali se pomen moderne in sodobne tajvanske filozofije kaže predvsem na področju ohranitve tistega stanja raziskav, ki je bilo doseženo v prvi polovici 20. stoletja (torej pred ustanovitvijo Ljudske republike Kitajske in prevlado sinizacije marksizma-leninizma ter maostične miselnosti), ali pa se njena vrednost kaže tudi širše. V tem pogledu bom skozi optiko kritične analize izpostavila vrsto inovativnih konceptov in kategorij, ki so jih razvili tajvanski filozofi in filozofinje, ter v tem kontekstu ponovno opozorila na enega najplivnejših sodobnih kitajskih filozofskih sistemov, katerega idejni oče je tajvanski filozof Mou Zongsan.

Nastanek in razvoj sodobne tajvanske filozofije: vsebine, metode in osebnosti

V tem poglavju si bomo najprej nekoliko podrobneje ogledali razloge za dejstvo, da so tajvanski akademiki po eni strani bistveno doprinesli k ohranjanju kontinuitete kitajske, tj. predvsem konfucijanske, daoistične pa tudi moistične, nomenalistične in budistične tradicije v kitajsko govorečem akademskem prostoru, po drugi strani pa so se izkazali kot inovativni pionirji nadaljnjega razvoja teh tradicij. Pri tem pa ne gre zanemariti niti dejstva, da so bili tajvanski teoretiki in teoretičarke pomembni tudi v izgrajevanju in razvoju mnogovrstnih stikov z idejno zgodovino Zahoda, ki je bila na celini prav tako dovoljena zgolj v okrnjeni obliki. Pri tem gre predvsem za raziskave, predstavitve in nadgradnje nemške klasične filozofije (zlasti treh osrednjih *Kritik* Immanuela Kanta) in določenih del ameriškega pragmatizma. Posebej pomemben pa je na tem področju tudi doprinos tajvanske neosholastične filozofije (Xin shillin zhexue 新士林哲學), ki je bila osnovana in

1 Četudi se dobesedni prevod imena te struje glasi »novo konfucijanstvo«, sama v izoginitev zamenjavam s strujo srednjeveškega konfucianizma dinastij Song in Ming, ki je na Zahodu znan pod imenom neokonfucijanstvo, raje uporabljam prevod »moderno konfucijanstvo«. Ta prevod sicer ni dobeseden, vendar je primeren tudi zaradi tega, ker gre pri tej struji konfucijanskega preporeda za smer, ki je bila osredotočena na probleme kitajske modernizacije in v tem okviru tudi na modernizacijo samega konfucijanstva.

se je razvijala na katoliški Univerzi Furen (輔仁大學). Najpomembnejši pionir in osrednji predstavnik te filozofske struje, Luo Guang 羅光, je pomemben ne zgolj zaradi tega, ker je širil znanja ter odstranjeval predsodke o zgodovini in vsebinah sholastične filozofije, temveč tudi zato, ker je izdelal precej inovativnih smernic za razvoj metodologije kitajske filozofije, zlasti njenih hermenevtičnih vidikov (Wang 1997, 67).

Osrednja in verjetno najbolj znana struja tajvanske filozofije je struja modernega konfucijanstva (*Xin ruxue* 新儒學), ki jo bomo zaradi njene izjemno pomembne vloge nekoliko podrobneje predstavili pozneje. Njeni najpomembnejši tajvanski predstavniki so Mou Zongsan 牟宗三, Xu Fuguan 徐復觀 in Liu Shu-hsien 劉述先².

Vendar se je na Tajvanu izoblikovala tudi vrsta drugih diskurzov, katerih doprinos je prav tako pomemben in ga ne gre spregledati. Sem sodi, denimo, prej omenjena struja neosholastične tajvanske filozofije, ki je delovala predvsem na Univerzi Furen. Poleg tega moramo omeniti strujo tako imenovanega novega daoizma (*Xin dao* 新道家). Najpomembnejši predstavnik te smeri je Chen Guying 陳鼓應, ki si je že v osemdesetih letih pridobil sloves tudi na kitajski celini in odtlej redno predava na najboljši kitajski visokošolski instituciji, Univerzi Beijing (Beijing daxue 北京大學). Chen je vzgojil vrsto mladih raziskovalcev in raziskovalk, med katerimi velja posebej izpostaviti mlado docentko Wu Huiling 吳惠齡, ki pod vodstvom profesorja Lee Hsien-chunga poleg novodaoističnih izvaja tudi raziskave na področju predqinske logike in metodologije kitajske filozofije.

V zadnjih letih pa postaja na tem področju vse bolj pomembna tudi skupina filozofov, ki se posvečajo raziskovanju filozofije koncepta vitalnega potenciala *qi* 氣. Ta skupina, ki samo sebe označuje kot strujo *qija* (*qi pai* 氣派), deluje pod strokovnim vodstvom Yang Rubina 楊儒賓 z Univerze Tsinghua (清華大學) v Xinzhuju. Kot zanimivost velja omeniti dejstvo, da v okviru te struje deluje tudi filozof Fabian Heubel (He Fabi 何乏筆), ki je bil rojen v Nemčiji, kjer je pridobil sinološko izobrazbo, vendar že več kot dvajset let živi in dela na Tajvanu kot redni član osrednje tajvanske znanstvenoraziskovalne ustanove Academia Sinica (*Zhongyang yanjiu yuan* 中央研究院). Na tej instituciji trenutno deluje vrsta izjemnih teoretikov, med katerimi velja omeniti Huang Kuan-mina 黃冠閔, ki je na področju kitajske filozofije zaslovel predvsem s svojimi raziskavami hermenevtike, ter dva sodobna pripadnika struje modernega konfucijanstva, namreč mednarodno odmevnega filozofa Lee Ming-hueija 李明輝 ter Mou Zongsanovo študentko Lin Yue-huei 林月惠.

2 Prva dva filozofa sodita v t. i. drugo generacijo modernega konfucijanstva, tretji pa v tretjo. Medtem ko sta prva dva živela do zadnjih desetletij 20. stoletja, je tretji, torej Li Shu-hsien, preminil šele 7. junija leta 2016.

Na osrednji tajvanski univerzi, tj. na Državni univerzi Tajvan (Guoli Taiwan daxue 國立台灣大學), prav tako še vedno deluje vrsta izjemnih teoretikov in teoretičark, ki razvijajo in nadgrajujejo raziskave s področja kitajske filozofije. Poleg nekaterih profesorjev na Oddelku za kitajski jezik in literaturo (Zhongwen xi 中文系) je v tem pogledu seveda še zlasti pomemben Oddelek za filozofijo (Zhaxue xi 哲學系), na katerem deluje precej strokovnjakov in strokovnjakinj za kitajsko hermenevtiko (npr. Lin Ming-Chao 林明照) in budistične študije (npr. Duh Bao-Ruei 杜保瑞).

Tu ne moremo mimo pomembnega doprinosu dolgoletnega predstojnika tega oddelka in trenutnega prodekana Filozofske fakultete te univerze, profesorja Lee Hsien-chunga 李賢忠. Njegov izjemno pomemben prispevek se ne kaže zgolj v izvrstnih in mednarodno znanih objavah s področja klasične kitajske (zlasti moistične in nomenalistične, pa tudi konfucijanske) logike, temveč tudi v inovativnih študijah s področja razvoja metodologije raziskovanja kitajske filozofije. Na tem področju si je profesor Lee ustvaril mednarodni sloves s konstruiranjem novega metodološkega sistema, ki temelji na metodi t. i. miselnih enot (*sixiang danwei* 思想單位). Profesor Lee je poleg tega aktiven tudi kot urednik najpomembnejše tajvanske filozofske revije *Filozofija in kultura* (*Zhexue yu wenhua* 哲學與文化) in v vlogi predsednika najpomembnejše tajvanske filozofske organizacije Akademsko združenje za tajvansko filozofijo (Taiwan zhaxue xuehui 台灣哲學學會).

Na Državni univerzi Tajvan pa poleg tega deluje tudi Inštitut za podiplomske raziskave na področju družboslovja in humanistike (Renwen shehui gaodeng yanjiu yuan 人文社會高等研究院), katerega dolgoletni dekan je profesor Huang Chun-chieh 黃俊傑, ki je bil sicer zaposlen tudi kot redni član Academie Sinice in se je v zgodovino tajvanske teorije zapisal predvsem kot pomemben metodolog, idejni zgodovinar ter specialist za hermenevtiko klasične kitajske filozofije (zlasti mencijanske) in za konfucijanstvo v Vzhodni Aziji. V tem kontekstu se profesor Huang zelo veliko ukvarja tudi s proučevanjem in evalvacijo dela prej omenjenega vélikega tajvanskega teoretika in predstavnika druge generacije modernega konfucijanstva, Xu Fuguanu.³

Kot že omenjeno, sodijo filozofi te struje na Tajvanu k osrednjim in najbolj znanim teoretikom moderne in sodobne dobe. Njihovo delo zagotovo sodi k tistim doprinosom nove tajvanske teorije, ki bodo v novejši zgodovini kitajske filozofije pustili neizbrisen pečat. Pričujoči članek izhaja iz predpostavke, po kateri tega doprinosu ne gre omejevati zgolj na funkcijo ohranjanja in reproduciranja izsledkov novejših raziskav klasične kitajske filozofije, temveč pri tem ne smemo pozabiti inovativnih razvojev in številnih konceptualnih ter metodoloških novosti, ki so nastale v tem

3 Za informativni pregled in kritično analizo Huangove evalvacije Xu Fuguanove metodologije glej Sernelj (2014, 19).

okviru. Ti razvoji in novosti pa so vsekakor povezane s specifičnimi idejnimi in političnimi pogoji, ki so v drugi polovici 20. stoletja opredeljevali življenje in delo izobražencev na Tajvanu. Zato bom v naslednjem poglavju podala kratek pregled teh pogojev in razvoj, ki so jim botrovali.

Idejno in politično ozadje tajvanske filozofije v drugi polovici 20. in na začetku 21. stoletja

Kot že omenjeno, je najvplivnejša in po vsej verjetnosti tudi vsebinsko najpomembnejša smer moderne in sodobne kitajske filozofije na Tajvanu struja t. i. modernega konfucijanstva⁴ (現代新儒學). Ta filozofska struja je bila v obdobju prvih petindvajsetih let Ljudske republike – vsaj na eksplicitno formalni ravni – utišana, vendar so njena izhodišča v tem času razvijali naprej predvsem tajvanski, in v nekoliko manjši meri tudi hongkonški teoretiki. V nasprotju z Ljudsko republiko Kitajsko, kjer je konfucijanstvo vse do osemdesetih let 20. stoletja⁵ veljalo za »ideologijo preživelega fevdalizma«, so se v Hongkongu in na Tajvanu, ki sta bila (vsak na svoj način) opredeljena z družbenimi diskurzi postkolonializma, posamični izobraženci namreč že v petdesetih letih začeli postavljati po robu vse obsežnejšemu pozahodnemu svojim družb. Zaradi svojega kulturnega, nacionalnega in politično večplastnega položaja, o katerem bomo nekoliko podrobneje spregovorili v nadaljevanju, so tajvanski izobraženci pri tem že od vsega začetka imeli posebej pomembno vlogo.

Opozarjali so na dejstvo, da odvisnost otoka od zahodnih kolonialnih sil nikakor ni bila omejena zgolj na kulturo. Ker je po zmagi Komunistične stranke in ustanovitvi Ljudske republike Kitajske Tajvan postal sedež eksilne vlade pod praporom

4 V mednarodni sinologiji se ta struja prevaja z različnimi imeni, ki obsegajo pisan spekter od *neokonfucijanstva* oziroma *sodobnega* ali *modernega neokonfucijanstva* preko *novega konfucijanstva* do *modernega* ali *sodobnega konfucijanstva*. Medtem ko je prvi sklop, ki vsebuje oznako neokonfucijanstvo, nepraktičen zaradi tega, ker se to ime pogosto zamenjuje z neokonfucijanstvom kot terminom, ki se je v zahodni sinologiji uveljavil za označevanje reformirane konfucijanske filozofije iz obdobja Song in Ming (*li xue* 理學 ali *xingli xue* 性理學), sama iz drugega sklopa večinoma uporabljam oziroma prevzemam termin *moderno konfucijanstvo*, saj gre pri njem predvsem za filozofijo kitajske moderne. Podobna zmeda prevladuje tudi v kitajskih diskurzih, ki to strujo največkrat označujejo z enim od naslednjih izrazov: 新儒學, 現代儒學, 當代儒學, 現代新儒學, 當代新儒學 itd. V kitajskem jeziku se mi zdi najprimernejši izraz 現代新儒學, saj pismenka, ki znotraj tega naziva označuje novo, ni problematična, ker se neokonfucijanstvo dinastij Song in Ming v kitajščini (v nasprotju z evropskimi sinološkimi diskurzi) nikoli ni povezovalo s konceptom novega konfucijanstva 新儒學.

5 V zadnjih dveh desetletjih smo tudi v Ljudski republici Kitajski priča vse živahnejšim debatam in vse obsežnejšim raziskavam, ki izhajajo iz predpostavk teh novokonfucijanskih filozofij. Tu velja omeniti predvsem vlogo organizacije za *Raziskovanje idejne struje sodobnih Novih konfucijancev* (*Xiandai Xin rujia sichao yanjiu* 現代新儒家思潮研究), ki sta jo novembra leta 1986 ustanovila profesorja filozofije Fang Keli 方克立 in Li Jinquan 李錦全.

dotlej vladajoče nacionalne stranke (Guomin dang 國民黨)⁶, je državica za svoje politično in ekonomsko preživetje seveda nujno potrebovala zunanjo pomoč. Predvsem ameriške donacije, ki so zlasti po korejski vojni postale običajni del njihove »protikomunistične« strategije, so za tajvansko vlado, ki je v prvih povojnih desetletjih izvajala mehko obliko avtokratskega režima, za več kot desetletje predstavljale nujni predpogoj uveljavljanja in ohranjanja gospodarske in politične stabilnosti. Obsežna tajvanska odvisnost od ameriških kapitalnih investicij, njihove tehnologije in trga ni prenehala obstajati niti po uradnem izteku pomoči v letu 1965. Ameriškim donacijam in investicijam se je nedolgo zatem pridružila tudi Japonska, ki je že zelo kmalu po vojni ponovno⁷ prevzela prejšnjo ekonomsko prevlado nad otokom. Skupaj z ZDA je tako Japonska prevzela učinkovit nadzor nad tajvanskim industrijskim razvojem in njegovo zunanjo trgovino. Tako je leta 1970 ameriški in japonski kapital predstavljal kar 85 odstotkov vseh tajvanskih investicij (ibid.).

Ta dominacija ameriškega in japonskega kapitala je povzročila, da so bila nasprotja med delom in kapitalom pogosto dojeta kot vzporedna oziroma analogna nasprotjem med Kitajci in tujci. Namesto »razredne zavesti« se je med tajvansko populacijo v tem položaju hitreje razvijala »nacionalna identiteta«⁸, opredeljena s stremljenjem po nacionalni avtonomiji in neodvisnosti. Ta premik pogojuje dejstvo, da lahko tajvansko modernizacijo razumemo bolje, če jo obravnavamo skozi optiko postkolonializma.

Narava tajvanske identitete je bila vselej negotova. Otok, ki je bil izvorno naseljen s pripadniki različnih pacifiških ljudstev, je bil pravzaprav od leta 1683 pa vse do konca druge svetovne vojne pod nadzorom kolonialnih sil (Day 1999, 9). Prvi hankitajski imigranti so naseljevali dele Tajvana že od 17. stoletja naprej, torej še v času nizozemske kolonizacije. Po porazu in pregonu Nizozemcev je otok leta 1683 pripadel takrat mandžurski vladi celinske Kitajske.⁹ Ko so Japonci leta 1859 premagal Mandžure, so zasedli Tajvan kot eno svojih kolonij. Največji val hankitajskih migrantov (okrog milijon ljudi) pa je Tajvan zajel po končani državljanski vojni med Komunistično in Ljudsko stranko in ustanovitvi Ljudske republike Kitajske pod vodstvom prve. Soočenje z novimi prišleki je v prejšnjih, dotlej že »indigeniziranih« prebivalcih večinoma privedlo do okrepitve »tajvanske« etične in kulturne identitete. Razlikovanje med tajvansko in hankitajsko (celinsko) identiteto je v zadnjih desetletjih 20. stoletja merodajno vplivalo tako na politični

6 V nadaljevanju GMD.

7 Med letoma 1895 in 1945 je bil Tajvan japonska kolonija.

8 Tu velja opozoriti na splošno problematiko koncepta nacionalne identitete na Tajvanu. Vprašanje o tem, kaj naj bi bilo tisto, kar vzpostavlja tajvansko narodnost, postaja namreč vedno bolj kontroverzno.

9 Poslednja dinastija Qing 1644–1911.

kot tudi idejni razvoj otoka, ki se je – ob izdatni pomoči tujih investicij – hkrati pospešeno moderniziral. Ljudska stranka, ki je do leta 2000 predstavljala edino vladajočo stranko, je seveda vseskozi propagirala enotnost Kitajske in hankitajsko kulturno ter nacionalno identiteto, medtem ko je druga najpomembnejša stranka, ki je istega leta zmagala na splošnih volitvah (Stranka ljudskega napredka, *Minjin dang* 民進黨), poudarjala pomen specifične »tajvanske« identitete.

Vse to so razlogi za dejstvo, da sodi Tajvan, kamor se je po končani državljanski vojni zatekla poražena nacionalna vlada, k tistim področjem »moderne« Kitajske, kjer je nova filozofija modernega konfucijanstva naletela na najbolj plodna tla. Kitajski filozofi, ki so po letu 1949 živeli in delovali na Tajvanu in katerih funkcijo ter teoretske doprinose bomo nekoliko podrobneje obravnavali v naslednjem poglavju, se niso ukvarjali toliko z vprašanji sinizacije marksizma in njegovih pomenskih konotacij, temveč so bili veliko prej kot njihovi kolegi na celini soočeni s problemom modernizacije in kapitalizma; tu je šlo torej za kontinuirani razvoj, ki se je na Kitajskem začel že ob koncu 19. stoletja in je bil za te diskurze prekinjen »zgolj« z vojnimi vihrami protijaponske in pozneje državljanske vojne (ibid.). V njihovih delih se odraža želja po reševanju nujnih praktičnih problemov na področjih politike, družbe, gospodarstva in kulture. Zaradi »milosrčne podpore« zahodnih držav, ki so si z ZDA na čelu prizadevale ohraniti tajvansko »demokratsko alternativo« kot protiutež kitajskemu komunizmu, v Hongkongu pa zaradi njegovega polkolonialnega statusa, se je na tem področju že v petdesetih letih začel kazati razvoj eksplozivnega pozahodenja obeh družb. Procese njune integracije v svet sodobnega kapitalizma je v ideološkem smislu spremljala tradicionalna konfucijanska etika, ki temelji na hierarhičnem sistemu poslušnosti avtoritetam in se je že na Japonskem izkazala kot harmonično združljiva z zahtevami in pogosto nevzdržnimi socialnimi pogoji zgodnjega kapitalizma.

Ta trend mišljenja so močno podpirale izkušnje Japonske in štirih tako imenovanih »azijskih zmajčkov« – Koreje, Singapurja, Tajvana in Hongkonga –, katerih uspešno modernizacijo so imenovali »zmaga konfucijanskega kapitalizma«¹⁰ (Wang 2000, 19).

Zato nikakor ni presenetljivo, da so moderni konfucijanci že od vsega začetka etabliranja te filozofske struje svoje raziskave največkrat osnovali na tezi, po kateri je konfucijanska miselnost popolnoma združljiva s sistemom kapitalističnega razvoja. Elementi, ki tovrstno združevanje omogočajo, so mnogovrstni. Večina kitajskih teoretikov vidi to združljivost predvsem kot rezultat načelne kooperativnosti in t. i. »komunikativne metode delovanja« (Moritz 1993, 65), kakršna naj bi bila značilna

10 這一思想傾向特別的受到日本以及韓國，新加坡，台灣和香港等所謂‘亞洲四小龍’的鼓勵，這些國家和地區現代化的成功被視為‘儒教資本主義的勝利’。

za konfucianizem. A poleg že omenjenega hierarhičnega ustroja družbe na formalni kot tudi interakcijski ravni, ki prav tako predstavlja osnovo tradicionalno konfucijanskega videnja medčloveških odnosov v družbi, lahko tukaj vsekakor omenimo tudi pomen osebne, pravzaprav intimne identifikacije z lastnim klanom kot osnovno enoto socialnega okolja posameznika. Koncept tovrstne identifikacije je v procesih kapitalistične proizvodnje prenesen s klana na podjetje, kar omogoča učinkovito integracijo zaposlenih posameznikov. V povezavi z absolutno in ne-kritično poslušnostjo avtoritetam, ki temelji na specifični konfucijanskega videnja avtonomije sebstva – ta se je dokončno oblikovala v legalistično opredeljeni reformi izvornega nauka v obdobju dinastije Han –, lahko vodi transformacija tega koncepta identifikacije do presežkov v proizvodnji in dobičku.

V petdesetih letih je prišlo do polemike med modernimi konfucijanci, ki so delovali v Hongkongu in na Tajvanu, in liberalno strujo tajvanskih izobražencev. Na čelu slednjih je bil znani teoretik in politik Hu Shi 胡適. Polemika se je odvijala predvsem okrog vprašanja o tem, ali je tradicionalna kitajska kultura in zlasti konfucijanska miselnost primerna za razvoj znanosti, tehnologije in demokratičnega političnega sistema zahodnega tipa. Medtem ko so moderni konfucijanci zagovarjali stališče, da v tradicionalnem konfucijanstvu ti elementi sicer niso bili prisotni, vendar to še ne pomeni, da konfucijanska tradicija razvoj moderne države s temi atributi zavira, so bili liberalci prepričani o nasprotnem in so zato poudarjali, da mora Kitajska, če želi postati moderna, tehnološko razvita in demokratična država, odstraniti vse relikte konfucijanske miselnosti. V tej polemiki se je izkazalo, da so moderni konfucijanci sicer priznavali razliko med politiko in moralo, vendar so sistem politične svobode na teoretski ravni pogojevali z moralno svobodo. Predstavniki liberalnega tabora so zanikali njihovo predpostavko, po kateri naj bi bila politična svoboda osnovana na temelju morale, kajti to bi po njihovem mnenju v najboljšem primeru privedlo do »totalitarne demokracije«. V tem kontekstu sodobni tajvanski filozof Lee Ming-huei izpostavlja (2001, 89–129) razlikovanje med »pozitivno« in »negativno« svobodo, kakršno je leta 1969 v svoji knjigi *Štirje eseji o svobodi* (*Four Essays on Liberty*) vpeljal Isaiah Berlin¹¹. Lee v tem kontekstu zapiše tudi, da je to idejo dejansko omenjal že Chang Fo-chüan v svoji knjigi *Svoboda in človeške pravice* (*Ziyou yu renquan* 自由與人權), ki je izšla leta 1954. Tajvanski liberalci so izhajali iz tega pojmovnega para in izpostavili idejo, da je demokratični red mogoče vzpostaviti samo na osnovi »negativne svobode«. Uvedba »pozitivne svobode« bi po njihovem mnenju nujno privedla do totalitarizma. Moderni konfucijanci pa niso zagovarjali zgolj negativne svobode, temveč so bili tudi mnenja, da je bila tovrstna svoboda v kitajski kulturi premalo prisotna. Vendar so poleg tega poudarjali tudi, da mora biti na teoretski ravni negativna svoboda pogojena s

11 Pojem »negativne svobode« tukaj označuje *svobodo od nečesa* v smislu odsotnosti heteronomije, medtem ko se pojem »pozitivne svobode« nanaša na *svobodo do nečesa* v smislu zagotovljenih pravic.

pozitivno in da v praktičnem učinku teza »negativne svobode« ne zadostuje za to, da bi se bilo zgolj na njeni osnovi mogoče zoperstaviti totalitarizmu (Lee 2001, 78).

Številni teoretiki so izpostavili, da je tudi negativna svoboda nujno pogojena s pozitivno (Taylor 1985, 221–29). Vztrajanje predstavnikov liberalne struje na izključnem pomenu negativne svobode je torej pomenilo, da so izhajali iz individualističnega stališča, ki je temeljilo na ideji posameznika kot subjekta, popolnoma ločenega od skupnosti, torej na ideji »neobremenjenega sebe«¹² (Sandel 1984, 81). Nekateri teoretiki so celo mnenja, da so bili moderni konfucijanci v tej polemiki precej bližje komunitarističnim stališčem, kot bi se zdelo na prvi pogled (Lee 2001, 78). To, kar so namreč iskali, bi lahko povzeli z izrazom »konfucijanski liberalizem«, torej liberalizem, ki naj bi se »naravno« razvil v kontekstu konfucijanske tradicije.

Novi koncepti, dodatni vsebinski vidiki in inovativne metodologije

Prej omenjeni »konfucijanski liberalizem«, ki se je brezdvomno razvil na osnovi antičnih protodemokratskih idej izvornega konfucijanstva, kamor sodijo na primer ideje o »ljudstvu kot osnovi« (*min ben* 民本) ali »notranjem svetniku in zunanjem vladarju« (*neisheng waiwang* 內聖外王), pa nikakor ne predstavlja edinega izraza modifikacije ali modernizacije tradicionalnih filozofskih konceptov. To je dejstvo, ki je v širših akademskih krogih sodobne sinologije še vse premalo ozaveščeno, saj se tajvanska filozofija dandanes še vedno ne obravnava kot specifičen del sodobne kitajske filozofije. To, kar se ji večinoma le priznava, je kvečjemu njen doprinos v ohranjanju tistega stanja topoglednih raziskav, ki je bilo doseženo v prvi polovici 20. stoletja. Zato bom v nadaljevanju izpostavila vrsto inovativnih konceptov in idej, ki so jih razvili tajvanski filozofi in filozofinje. Te ideje in koncepte lahko razdelimo v tri kategorije. V prvi gre za metodološke, v drugi za teoretske, v tretji pa za sistemske inovacije. V spodnjih odstavkih bom na kratko obdelala vse tri kategorije po zgoraj omenjenem vrstnem redu. Seveda bom zaradi prostorskih omejitev v pričujočem članku lahko pri vsaki kategoriji eksemplarično navedla zgolj manjše število najvidnejših študij oziroma raziskovalcev in raziskovalcev, ki v zadnji polovici 20. stoletja ustvarjajo in razvijajo filozofske inovacije. Pomembna pa je kategorizacija kot taka, saj lahko iz nje razberemo specifično naravo tajvanskega doprinosa k razvoju sodobnih kitajskih filozofskih razprav.

Ad 1) Metodološke inovacije:

V zadnjih petih desetletjih so tajvanski filozofi izdelali in vzpostavili veliko različnih pristopov k preseganju evrocentričnih pristopov na področju metodologije

12 »the unencumbered self«

raziskovanja kitajske filozofije. Pri tem so večinoma izhajali iz podmen primerjalne filozofije, saj so si bili edini v predpostavki o tem, da je za kitajsko (in tajvansko) modernizacijo nujno potrebno soočenje z njenimi teoretskimi osnovami, kakršne so se razvile na Zahodu. Četudi so večinoma zavračali evrocentrično hipotezo o tem, da kitajska tradicija sama ni imela potencialov za tehnološko, politično in idejno modernizacijo, so si bili vendarle vsi edini v priznavanju dejstva, da je bila modernizacija v takšni obliki, v kakršni se je udejanjila na Kitajskem, v Azijo vpejlana prek Evrope in zato ni predstavljala avtohtonega procesa. Tudi za izdelavo konsistentnih in koherentnih teorij kitajske oziroma vzhodnoazijske modernizacije je bilo treba določene temeljne koncepte in kategorije kitajske tradicije modernizirati, kar pa brez referiranja na sorodne ideje, vsebovane v zahodni tradiciji, nikakor ni bilo mogoče, četudi je (bila) kitajska tradicija v delih teh filozofov večinoma obravnavana kot primarna in najpomembnejša.

Ta primerjalni pristop je kot prvi zakoličil že Hu Shi 胡適 (1922), prvi direktor tajvanske Academie Sinice. V svojem svetovno znanem delu *Razvoj logične metode v kitajski antiki* (*The Development of the Logical Method in Ancient China*)¹³ je poskušal kitajsko filozofijo sistematizirati skozi logiko formalno logičnih metod (Chan 1965, 6). Četudi je pri tem izhajal iz statičnih paradigem moderne zahodne filozofije in je zato pri tem popolnoma zanemaril temeljno esenco kitajske filozofije, ki se izraža skozi njeno dinamično–procesualno naravo, je bilo to delo pomembno, ker je bilo prvo, ki je predstavilo zgodovinski razvoj kitajske filozofije na sistematičen in koherenten način.

Tudi Luo Guang je v svojih delih poskušal združiti logiko in metafiziko zahodnih diskurzov z deli kitajskih klasikov, predvsem konfucijanstva. V svojih predstavitevah neosholastične filozofije je poskušal prikazati, da je njegova teologija združljiva ne samo s tradicionalnimi, temveč tudi z najnovejšimi logičnimi metodami, ki so temeljile na semantiki in semiotiki. V tem je videl stično točko, ki bi lahko omogočila dialog med konfucijansko in krščansko tradicijo, četudi se je na Tajvanu pogosto izkazalo, da ta dialog iz različnih razlogov, ki so bili pogosto povezani z osebnimi ambicijami in zamerami, v resnici ni možen (gl. Lin 2012, 2).

Če štejemo med tajvanske filozofe tudi Lao Sze-Kuana¹⁴, moramo na tem mestu omeniti tudi njegovo metodologijo, ki je temeljila na t. i. »metodi osnovnega vprašanja« (*jiben wenti fangfa*¹⁵ 基本問題方法). Četudi se je zelo podobna metoda v zadnjih letih (neodvisno od Laojevega dela) oblikovala in razširila tudi znotraj

13 Kitajski naslov te knjige, ki je bila izdana na osnovi njegove disertacije, napisane pod mentorstvom Johna Deweyja, je *Xian Qin mingxue shi* 先秦名學史 (Gl. Hu 1922, II).

14 To je nekoliko sporno, ker je Lao na Tajvanu živel in delal samo med letoma 1949 in 1955, ko se je bil prisiljen zaradi sporov z vladajočo Nacionalno stranko preseliti v Hongkong.

15 Gl. Lao 1986 in 1989.

zahodnih humanističnih znanosti¹⁶, pa je na Tajvanu in v Hongkongu v prvih letih po svojem nastanku vplivala na razmeroma široke kroge mladih filozofov in raziskovalcev kitajske filozofije. Svoje prve inspiracije je pri Laoju zagotovo črpal tudi sodobni metodolog in teoretik kitajske filozofije Lee Hsien-Chung (gl. npr. 2018, 40), ki je v zadnjem desetletju na podlagi svojih inovativnih analiz starokitajske semantične logike postopno razvil novo metodološko paradigmo »miselnih enot« (*sixiang danwei* 思想單位), ki v sebi nosi velik potencial nadaljnjih razvojev in nadgradenj in bo zagotovo močno vplivala na mlajše generacije sedanjih tajvanskih, pa tudi celinskih raziskovalcev in raziskovalk.

V razvoju novih metodoloških pristopov je zagotovo pomemben tudi Huang Chun-chieh, ki je svoje metodološke raziskave začel s sistematično analizo in kritiko Xu Fuguanove metodologije kitajske estetske, etične in politične misli (Huang 2009). V tem pogledu so zelo pomembne tudi njegove raziskave hermenevitične metodologije konfucijanskih klasikov, zlasti Mencija (ibid. 2002). V zadnjih letih se je v svojem metodološkem delu osredotočil na konfucijanstvo kot skupno idejno dediščino Vzhodne Azije, zlasti Japonske in Koreje. V tem okviru je skozi optiko koncepta *problematike* (*wenti yishi* 問題意識) razvil metodologijo vzhodnoazijskih idejnih izmenjav in pokazal, da so te potekale v znamenju kontinuiranih dekontekstualizacij in ponovnih rekontekstualizacij posamičnih vsebinskih konceptov (ibid. 2016).

Ad 2) Teoretske inovacije

Teoretske inovacije zadnjih petih desetletij lahko opazujemo tako na področju idejne zgodovine kot tudi na področju primerjalne filozofije in nadgradnje srednjeveških, zlasti neokonfucijanskih iztočnic. Kot pionirja na tem področju velja vsekakor omeniti Xu Fuguan in njegov izjemno vplivni koncept »zaskrbljene zavesti« (*youhuan yishi* 憂患意識, gl. Sernelj 2016).

V okviru struje modernega konfucijanstva je vrsto pomembnih teoretskih inovacij ustvaril osrednji in najbolj znani tajvanski filozof Mou Zongsan, čigar delo bomo obravnavali v ločeni točki sistemskih inovacij. A tudi mlajši predstavniki in predstavnice te struje so na tem področju vzpostavil nemalo inovativnih konceptov in kategorij. Pri tem lahko omenimo dva predstavnika četrte generacije, namreč Lee Ming-Hueija, ki si je v svetu pridobil sloves vodilnega strokovnjaka za kitajsko percepcijo Kantove filozofije, za primerjave med Kantovo in konfucijansko metafiziko ter za specifiko tradicionalnega kitajskega humanizma in njegovega ovrednotenja v zrcalu globalnih humanističnih izhodišč (gl. npr. Lee

16 Pri tem se lahko razgledamo po polnih policaх knjig, ki so bile v zadnjih letih napisane na temo raziskovalnega vprašanja njegove vzpostavitve, formuliranja, problematiziranja, razvoja in obdelave.

2013). Njegova kolegica Lin Yueh-hui je skozi optiko primerjalne (zlasti korejske) filozofije nadgradila vrsto konceptov neokonfucijanskih diskurzov, zlasti Wang Yangmingove ideje praznanja (*liangzhi* 良知, gl. npr. Lin 2009, 287), hkrati pa si v svojem teoretskem delu prizadeva izdelati skupne paradigme za dialog med konfucijanstvom in krščansko teologijo (ibid. 2012, 2).

Zelo pomemben tajvanski teoretik je bil tudi Fang Dongmei 方東美, ki brezdvomno sodi med pomembne in vplivne filozofe, katerih delo predstavlja precejšen doprinos na področju teoretske refleksije procesov kitajske modernizacije in poskusov ustvarjalnega razreševanja izzivov zahodne filozofije, s katerimi je bil v obdobju realizacije teh procesov soočen tako on sam kot tudi njegova domovina. Bil je tudi eden tistih novodobnih kitajskih filozofov, ki so odgovore na najbolj pereča idejna vprašanja svoje dobe iskali v revitalizaciji lastne tradicije, pri čemer sicer – v nasprotju z večino modernih konfucijancev – ni izhajal iz elaboracij neokonfucijanskih diskurzov, temveč predvsem neposredno iz zapuščine klasičnega konfucijanstva, oplemenitenega z estetskimi in metafizičnimi idejami klasičnega daoizma in siniziranega budizma. Njegov doprinos se kaže predvsem v tvornih vsebinskih in konceptualnih sintezah vseh teh treh osrednjih kitajskih idejnih sistemov. V središču Fangove filozofije je koncept življenja oziroma živega, živečega (*sheng* 生). Po Fangovem mnenju so vse struje tradicionalne kitajske miselnosti izhajale iz kozmologije, ki jo opredeljuje vseprevevajoči gon po življenju, po preživetju, vitalni impulz, ki nenehno ustvarja in poustvarja vse, kar obstaja (Fang 1957, 73). Koncepta *shengsheng* 生生 ali *shengshengbuxi* 生生不息, ki se pogosto pojavljata v kozmologiji *Knjige premen*, Fang interpretira kot koncept ustvarjalne ustvarjalnosti, ki naj bi simbolizirala tovrstno vitalnost življenja. Hkrati je zanj to tudi osnovni koncept logične racionalnosti bivanja. V vrsti svojih del se je posluževal tudi primerjave z indijsko filozofijo; preko tovrstnih študij je namreč lažje definiral posebnosti tradicionalne kitajske filozofije. Ena takšnih je zanj tudi temeljno izhodišče kitajske klasike, ki naj bi videla in razlagala svet ter bivanje izhajajoč iz epistemoloških temeljev, ki v prvi vrsti niso bili osnovani na matematičnih in protoznanstvenih, temveč prej na estetskih paradigmah (ibid., 195–235). Kljub temu je njegovo videnje ontologije tesno povezano z racionalno strukturo kozmosa, kakršna izhaja iz temeljne starokitajske klasike, *Knjige premen* (*Yi jing* 易經). Kot že omenjeno, je Fang namreč opisal proces kozmične premene (tj. nenehne ustvarjalne ustvarjalnosti bivanja) kot izraz racionalnosti, ki temelji na in hkrati zaobjema do potankosti razčlenjeni sistem »logike stvarstva« (ibid. 1981, 83–118).

Fang je bil profesor dveh svetovno znanih sodobnih strokovnjakov za raziskovanje kitajske filozofije; četudi trenutno oba živita v ZDA, sta študirala pod njegovim mentorstvom na Državni univerzi Tajvan. Vsak od njiju je razvil vrsto pomembnih teoretskih konceptov, ki merodajno opredeljujejo tako rekoč vse pomembne raziskave kitajske filozofije, ki so nastale v zadnjih letih. Prvi je tajvanski filozof

Cheng Zhongying 成中英, drugi pa kanadski sinolog Roger T. Ames. Prvi si je v širši akademski javnosti svojega področja ustvaril sloves predvsem s konceptom ontohermenevtike (*benti quanshi xue* 本體詮釋學¹⁷), drugi pa – v sodelovanju z ameriškim filozofom Davidom Hallom – z metodologijo polja in fokusa (gl. Hall in Ames 1998; Ames 1994), pa tudi s svojo inovativno konceptualizacijo relacijskega sebstva ter etike vlog (gl. Ames 2011).

Ad 3) Sistemske inovacije

Tretja kategorija se nanaša na inovacije, ki presegajo posamične koncepte, kategorije ali partikularne metode oziroma metodološke pristope. Prej bi lahko trdili, da sodijo vanjo samostojni, koherentni in v sebi zaključeni teoretski sistemi, ki vključujejo vse prej naštete elemente in njihove vzajemne relacije. V akademskem svetu prevladuje mnenje, da sta tak sistem med modernimi konfucijanci, ki so živeli in delovali zunaj kitajske celine, izdelala samo dva filozofa, in sicer Mou Zongsan in Tang Junyi 唐君毅. Ker pa je slednji večino svojega življenja po letu 1949 preživel v Hongkongu, ga ne moremo prištevati k »avtohtonim«¹⁸ tajvanskim filozofom. Zato se bom v predzadnjem poglavju pričujočega članka osredotočila samo na kritično interpretacijo filozofskega sistema, ki ga je ustvaril Mou Zongsan in ki še danes merodajno vpliva na delo mlajših generacij, delujočih na področju raziskovanja kitajske filozofije.

Novi tajvanski filozofski sistem: teorija moralne metafizike

Kot že omenjeno, je ta sistem nadvse kompleksen, saj vključuje elemente vseh treh zgoraj navedenih kategorij, ki so povezani v koherentno celoto. Ta sistem temelji na dvojni ontologiji, ki je umeščena v sestav t. i. imanentne transcendence. Zaobjema tako logične in epistemološke diskurze kot tudi elemente etike in politične teorije. Srž tega teoretskega sistema pa je najti v teoriji moralne metafizike. Avtor te kompleksne filozofske teorije je Mou Zongsan (1909–1995), ki je velik del svojega življenja preživel na Tajvanu¹⁸ in sodi med osrednje in najvplivnejše kitajske filozofe 20. stoletja.

Mou je bil inovativen teoretik, ki je bil od osemdesetih let 20. stoletja pa pravzaprav vse do smrti najpomembnejši tajvanski – in prav gotovo tudi eden

17 Profesor Cheng je to teorijo razvil v delu *Ontologija premenologije* (*Yixue bentiljun* 醫學本體論) (gl. Cheng 2008).

18 Kot večina najpomembnejših tajvanskih teoretikov je tudi Mou emigriral na Tajvan s celine po porazu Nacionalne stranke (GMD) in ustanovitvi Ljudske republike Kitajske leta 1949, ko je imel štirideset let. Na Tajvanu je ostal vse do svoje smrti leta 1995.

najpomembnejših kitajskih filozofov; bil je tudi najbolj znani predstavnik prej omenjene druge generacije modernega konfucijanstva.

Ukvarjal se je predvsem z logiko in metafiziko, obrobno pa včasih tudi z določenimi vprašanji, ki sodijo v politično teorijo. Med drugim je bil tudi znan in precej radikalen nasprotnik marksizma in marksistične teorije ter posledično tudi prevladujočih ideologij Ljudske republike Kitajske. V splošnem metodološkem pogledu je Mou nadaljeval tradicijo svojega profesorja Xiong Shilija, kar pomeni, da se je osredotočal na reevalvacijo kitajske idejne tradicije. V nasprotju s Xiongom se je sam tega ponovnega ovrednotenja loteval predvsem skozi optiko novoveške evropske, zlasti Kantove filozofije.

Kljub tem temeljnim razlikam lahko trdimo, da je bil Mou pravzaprav edini filozof modernega konfucijanstva, ki se je izvornim naukom približal skozi optiko logike; četudi je jasno videl pomanjkljivosti njenih metod, se pravzaprav nikoli ni popolnoma nehal ukvarjati z njo (Tang 2002, 328). Podobno kot Zhang Dongsun in marsikateri drugi kitajski teoretik tistega časa se je tudi Mou Zongsan v prvih treh desetletjih 20. stoletja z logiko ukvarjal predvsem zato, da bi nasprotoval pripadnikom marksizma in da bi izpodbil teorijo dialektičnega materializma. Vendar se je njegov interes glede študija logike kmalu preusmeril, kar se je pokazalo v njegovi knjigi *Logične paradigme* (*Luoji dianfan* 邏輯典範), ki je izšla v Hongkongu leta 1941. Knjiga predstavlja poskus preseganja logičnih formalizmov, ki jih je Mou vse pogosteje videl kot nekaj, kar resnično filozofijo ne zgolj pogojuje, ampak jo v določenih pogledih tudi onemogoča oziroma ovira. Na tej točki se je začel vse bolj intenzivno ukvarjati s konceptom razuma, njegovih funkcij, njegovega delovanja in njegove strukture; v ta namen je podrobno proučil filozofijo Kanta, zlasti njegove tri *Kritike*. Na osnovi Kantove filozofije je Mou poskušal najti pot, ki bi ga prek logike privedla k metafiziki. Rezultat te transformacije oziroma poskusov povezovanja obeh disciplin je njegova knjiga *Kritika spoznavne zavesti* (*Renshi xinde pipan* 認識心的批判), ki jo je pisal več kot deset let in je izšla leta 1965. V njej je izhajal iz predpostavke, po kateri logika ni odvisna od konkretne stvarnosti in relacij znotraj nje. Zato je v svojih študijah poskušal najti nekakšen prazvor vseh logičnih metod, in v teku tega pisanja je, kot je sam zapisal (Mou 1989, 72), »potrkal na vrata, ki vodijo do subjekta spoznanja« (Rošker 2013, 65). O tem, kaj ga je čakalo za temi vrati in kakšne posledice je imelo to srečanje za nadaljnji razvoj njegovega filozofskega sistema – in tudi same teorije modernega konfucijanstva –, bomo podrobneje spregovorili pozneje.

Leta 1939 je Mou je spoznal svojega najpomembnejšega učitelja Xiong Shilija, s katerim je ostal v stiku, vse dokler so zunanje (politične) razmere to dopuščale. Xiong je v mladem filozofu zagotovo zapustil neizbrisen pečat, saj ga je uvedel v »nauk o življenju« (*shengmingde xuewen* 生命的學問), ki je zanj predstavljal ne zgolj pojmovnega, temveč »eksistenčno« dojemanje življenja (Lee 2001, 66).

V prvih letih življenja na otoku se je Mou – kot vsi ostali predstavniki modernega konfucijanstva – zelo veliko ukvarjal z vprašanjem, zakaj je tradicionalna kitajska kultura s svojimi paradigmatskimi vzorci mišljenja in socialnih interakcij državo privedla na rob propada in jo pahnila v zaostalost. Upal je, da bo odgovor na to vprašanje – in hkrati rešitev iz te zaostalosti – našel v tradicionalnem konceptu »notranjega svetnika in zunanjega vladarja (*neisheng waiwang* 內聖外王), ki ponazarja (v idealnem primeru komplementarno) razmerje med moralnim sebstvom in politično učinkovitostjo. Kot vsi zagovorniki tradicije je bil tudi Mou namreč vseskozi prepričan, da bi morala biti praktična politika vselej tesno povezana s samokultivacijo posameznikov, kar pomeni, da je videl možne rešitve vseh družbenih problemov v višji stopnji njihove moralne ozavešenosti oziroma zrelosti. Zaradi teh prepričanj se je postopoma začel ponovno vse bolj osredotočati na raziskave klasične kitajske filozofije. Pri tem se ni ukvarjal zgolj s konfucijanstvom, temveč tudi z daoizmom in predvsem z budistično filozofijo, zlasti z njenimi epistemološkimi raziskavami. Te študije kitajske tradicionalne miselnosti je nadgrajeval v obdobju svojega poučevanja na hongkonški Kitajski univerzi (Xianggang Zhongwen daxue 香港中文大學), kjer je redno deloval do srede sedemdesetih let.

Po svojem petdesetem rojstnem dnevu je ustvaril večino svojih najpomembnejših del, med katerimi moramo najprej navesti knjigo *Fizična narava in metafizični razum* (*Caixing yu xuanli* 才性與玄理, 1963), v kateri je obravnaval filozofijo dinastij Wei in Jin in obdobje Severnih in Južnih dinastij, pa tudi obširni deli *Substanca srčne zavesti in prirojena moralna substanca* (*Xinti yu xingti* 心體與性體, 1968) in *Od Lu Xiangshana do Liu Jishana* (*Cong Lu Xiangshan dao Liu Jishan* 從陸象山到劉戴山, 1979), v katerih je objavil predvsem svojo reinterpreteracijo osrednjih konceptov, vsebin in zgodovinskega razvoja neokonfucijanske filozofije dinastij Song (960–1279) in Ming (1368–1644).

V zrelih letih je Mou ponovno odkril tudi budizem, kar se odraža v njegovi leta 1977 objavljeni knjigi *Budova narava in prajna* (*Foxing yu bore* 佛性與般若), pri čemer je poskušal predstaviti predvsem epistemološke vidike šole Huayan 華嚴, zlasti pa šole Tiantai 天台. Vsa ta dela so sicer obravnavala določene posebnosti posamičnih obdobj in struj oziroma šol iz zgodovine kitajske filozofije, vendar pri njih ne gre toliko za same predstavitve njenega razvoja kot za raziskovanje in iskanje lastnega fundamentalnega, a hkrati izvirnega filozofskega izhodišča, torej za postopno sestavljanje mozaika lastnega filozofskega sistema.

V letu 1971 je objavil svoje morda najbolj znano delo, *Intuitivni zor in kitajska filozofija* (*Zhide zhibiue yu Zhongguo zhexue* 智的直覺與中國哲學), v katerem se je osredotočil na specifično kitajsko razumevanje ustroja bivanja; pri tem je opozoril tudi na vzporednice s Heideggerjevo ontologijo in poudaril nedoslednosti v Kantovi teoriji. Immanuel Kant je za tega sodobnega tajvanskega filozofa vse do njegove smrti predstavljal osrednjo inspiracijo in hkrati predmet ostre

kritike. Po eni strani je bil (zaradi eksistenčnega pomena, ki ga je ta pripisal morali) mnenja, da predstavlja ta nemški teoretik vrhunec evropske, pa tudi celotne zahodne filozofije; po drugi pa mu je očital, da je njegov teoretski sistem porozen in logično nekonsistenten (kajti na žalost Kant pač ni imel priložnosti pridobitve solidne klasične konfucijanske izobrazbe, ki bi po Moujevem mnenju prav gotovo pomagala zapolniti luknje v njegovem videnju sveta). Zato ni čudno, da je osnovno sporočilo te knjige Mou Zongsana domnevna »dopolnitev« in »poprava« Kantove filozofije.

Pri tem se Mou opre tudi na svoje zgodnejše, prej omenjeno delo z naslovom *Kritika spoznavne zavesti* (*Renshi xinzhì pīpān* 認識心之批判), v katerem je že zastavil osnove svojega modela rehabilitacije konfucijanstva in njegove nadgradnje, zlasti na področju kitajske ontoepistemologije. Kot drugi dve najpomembnejši deli njegovega opusa se v sodobni sinoški literaturi večinoma navajata razpravi *Pojavi in stvari po sebi* (*Xianxiang yu wu zishen* 現象與物自身) ter *O Summum Bonum* (Yuan shan lun 圓善論). V knjigi *Pojavi in stvari po sebi* poskuša skozi optiko tradicionalne kitajske filozofije na novo opredeliti *noumenon* in pojav ter njuno vzajemno razmerje; ob pisanju te knjige je hkrati opravil tudi natančne prevode Kantovih treh kritik v kitajščino. Na tej na novo dojeti razliki med pojavi in »stvarmi po sebi« je Mou utemeljil idejo nekakšne »dvojne ontologije« (Lee 2001, 70). Ta je temeljila na predpostavki, da je »človek končen in je hkrati lahko tudi neskončen«. Zaradi tega je Mou poudarjal, da potrebujemo ontologijo dveh ravni. Prva je ontologija *noumenalne* sfere in jo lahko imenujemo tudi »ontologija neoprijemljivosti«. Druga je ontologija sfere pojavnosti in jo lahko imenujemo tudi »ontologija oprijemljivega« (Mou 1975, 30).

Dvojna ontologija se torej po njegovem mnenju deli na *noumenalno* in *fenomenalno* ali, z drugimi besedami, na ontologijo oprijemljivosti oziroma neoprijemljivosti. Po Moujevem mnenju ustreza »neoprijemljivost« temu, kar imenuje »svobodna in neomejena srčna zavest« (v smislu Wang Yangmingove jasne srčne zavesti kognitivnega subjekta). »Oprijemljivost« pa v njegovem sistemu ustreza »oprijemljivosti spoznavnega subjekta« (ibid., 39).

V noumenalno ontologijo, ki zanj ni zgolj »neoprijemljiva« (*wuzhì cunyoulun* 無執存有論), temveč hkrati tudi »transcendentna« (ibid.), umešča tudi konfucijansko metafiziko. Takšna metafizika je možna zato, ker ljudje razpolagamo z intuitivnim razumom (*zhìde zhìjue* 智的直覺). Zato tovrstna »ontologija neoprijemljivosti« ustreza svobodni in neskončni srčni zavesti (*ziyoude wuxian xin* 自由的無限心). Vzporedno s tem je ontologija pojavnosti hkrati »ontologija oprijemljivega«. Tako pojem »neoprijemljivosti« kot tudi njegov protipol »oprijemljivosti« se seveda našata na spoznavni subjekt oziroma na spoznavno zavest.

Tudi v svojem delu *O Summum Bonum* izhaja Mou Zongsan iz kritike Kantove moralne filozofije, v okviru katere enota sreče in dobrote (*summum bonum*; yuan

shan 圓善) v nepopolnem tuzemskem svetu ni mogoča, temveč se lahko udejanji zgolj v popolnosti Božjega sveta. Mou je v tem kontekstu poudarjal vrednost in doprinos filozofske pragmatike, na kakršni sloni tradicionalna kitajska, zlasti konfucijanska miselnost. Ta je vseskozi usmerjena predvsem na tuzemsko življenje; osredotočena je na tukajšnji in zdajšnji trenutek, v katerem ni potrebe po pobegu v druge, »nadnaravne« svetove. Seveda tudi kitajska filozofija ni uspela »rešiti« Kantovega problema o *summum bonum*, vendar Mou v svojem istoimenskem delu izpostavi problematičnost samega načina zastavitve tega problema znotraj zahodnih, zlasti kantovskih diskurzov (Rošker 2008, 209).

Moralno sestvo, ki se izraža skozi prirojeno moralno substanco (*xingti* 性體), naj bi po Mouju v sebi združevalo vse tri esencialne postulate Kantovega praktičnega razuma, torej svobodno voljo, nesmrtnost duše in obstoj Boga. Mou vseskozi poudarja (gl. npr. 1975, 45), da vzporedna postavitev svobodne volje, nesmrtnosti in obstoja Boga ne more obstajati, kakor hitro se v človeku manifestira edina neskončna zavest substance.

Mou Zongsan torej Kantu očita umetno ločitev teh treh postulatov, saj sam meni, da so vsi trije neskončni in absolutni. In ker ni možno, da bi hkrati obstajalo več neskončnih in absolutnih entitet, so vsi trije postulati ena in ista substanca. Povzamemo jo lahko v pojmu izvorna srčna zavest (*ben xin* 本心), ki je ena od pojavnih oblik neskončne srčne zavesti (*wuxiande zhixin* 無限的智心). Zato Mou zaključí, da je moralno sestvo oziroma izvorna srčna zavest, ki je njegov vitalni del, resnična (in tudi edina) možnost za združitev sreče in dobrote (Bresciani 2001, 375). Kant se je po Moujevem mnenju »zapletel« z idejo Boga, ki je v njegovem teoretskem sistemu popolnoma odvečna in moteča, zato bi bil moral Kant Boga odstraniti, kot so storile vse koherentne moralne filozofije, denimo budizem. Ker je po Kantu svet ustvaril Bog, se svet ne more spreminjati v skladu z moralnim razvojem človeka. Zato naj bi Kant po Moujevem mnenju ne bil zmožen popolnoma razjasniti ideje o *summum bonum*.

V nasprotju s prevladujočimi stališči, ki ne razlikujejo med konfucijanskim filozofskim naukom in konfucianistično državno doktrino in ki predpostavljajo avtoritarnost vseh tovrstnih diskurzov, je bil Mou prepričan, da je konfucijanski nauk vseboval koncept resnične individualne avtonomije. V tem pogledu naj bi celo presegal Kantovo filozofijo, saj naj bi bil ta nemški filozof omejen s svojim krščanskim ozadjem; zato je lahko videl svobodno voljo zgolj kot enega od postulatov praktičnega razuma. Na ta način je lahko Kant vzpostavil samo metafiziko morale (ali vrsto moralne teologije), ne pa tudi moralne metafizike. Mou je bil prepričan, da je bila v tem pogledu kitajska filozofija veliko naprednejša (Liu 2003, 484).

V Moujevih zrelih letih je postajalo vse bolj jasno, da je osnovno izhodišče njegove filozofije slonelo prav na tej predpostavki moralne metafizike. To izhodišče je, kot nazorno pokaže v svojem delu *Devetnajst predavanj iz kitajske filozofije* (*Zhongguo*

zhexue shijiu jiang 中國哲學十九講), hkrati osnovno izhodišče klasične konfucijanske filozofije (Mou 1983, 71–76). Tradicionalni koncept *tian* 天 (narava, nebo) je tudi zanj – kot za večino ostalih pripadnikov struje modernega konfucijanstva – prazvor vsega obstoječega oziroma razlog za obstoj vsega, kar obstaja (ibid., 75). Združitev sestva s tem prazvorom vsega obstoječega je seveda mogoča šele prek neskončne srčne zavesti ali, z drugimi besedami, kadar se človek prepusti učinkom svoje prirojene moralne substance (*xingtī*), kajti pri tem intuitivno spozna tudi lastno sestvo (*neibude zhibue* 內部的直覺; Mou 1971, 132).

Nadvse pomembno je tudi njegovo dognanje o obstoju koncepta avtonomije znotraj tradicionalne kitajske oziroma konfucijanske miselnosti, ki smo ga omenili zgoraj. S svojo podrobno analizo poglavja *Gaozi* 告子 v Mencijevem osrednjem delu *Mengzi* 孟子 nazorno dokaže, da Mencijev koncept inherentne morale (*renyi neizai* 仁義內在) ustreza kantovskemu razumevanju avtonomije (Mou 1985, 1–58). To spoznanje je izjemno pomembno prav za zahodne bralce, kajti v njem postane jasno, da je Heglova (in pozneje tudi Webrova) kritika konfucijanstva napačna in da temelji na nerazumevanju oziroma nepoznavanju jedra kitajske filozofije. Za Hegla je konfucijanstvo namreč zastopalo zgolj nekakšno »populistično« moralo; po njegovem mnenju v konfucijanski miselnosti ni nikakršnega prostora (niti nikakršnega dejanskega potenciala) za spekulativno filozofijo. Za Webra pa je konfucijanstvo zgolj nekakšna ideologija prilagajanja pogojem zunanjega sveta. Moujeva analiza nazorno prikaže enostranskost tovrstnega videnja konfucijanstva.

Poudarek na etičnih vprašanjih, ki je značilen za celotno strujo modernega konfucijanstva, je tudi v Mou Zongsanovem delu vseskozi močno prisoten. Vendar zastopa Mou stališče, da moralna filozofija ni edina prioriteta starokitajske miselnosti. Eksplicitno je kritiziral trditve, da naj bi se konfucijanstvo ukvarjalo zgolj z moralno in da naj ne bi imelo nobenega opravka z eksistenco (Tang 2002, 330–31).

Po njegovem mnenju gre pri vseh treh osrednjih filozofskih diskurzih kitajske klasike za vertikalne sisteme (prim. Mou 1983, 29–103), ki na različne načine obravnavajo metafiziko. Vendar vidi tudi na področju metafizike konfucijanstvo kot tisto strujo, ki je največ doprinesla k oblikovanju teh specifično kitajskih diskurzov (Rošker 2008, 206).

Prav ta absolutizacija konfucijanstva kot edine resnično pomembne teorije pa je tisto, kar najbolj moti tudi njegove številne kritike; samovšečnost pripadnika domnevno »edino pravilni« struji (daotong) mu očitata tako Fang Dongmei kot tudi Fangov učenec Chen Guying, ki mu poleg tega očita tudi aroganco in zagovarjanje absolutne avtoritete samega sebe kot učitelja. Ta dogmatizem naj bi imel hude posledice tudi za ohranjanje stilne lepote in konciznosti jezika kitajskih humanističnih znanosti, saj naj bi njegovi študentje, ki so bili vajeni nekritično prevzemati njegove vsebine, prav tako nekritično prevzemali tudi njegove stilne posebnosti, kar naj bi privedlo do hudega »jezikovnega onesnaženja« (Chen 1998, 95). Vendar

Mou kljub kritikam njegove filozofije (in njegove osebnosti), ki seveda ne prihajajo samo s strani tajvanskih, temveč tudi celinsko kitajskih teoretikov, vseskozi velja za enega najbolj inovativnih in pomembnih tajvanskih filozofov modernega časa. Njegov filozofski sistem, ki je vzpostavljen na osnovi kitajske (zlasti konfucijanske) tradicije, brez dvoma predstavlja tudi izjemno obogatitev sodobne kitajske teorije.

Zaključek

Kot smo videli v prejšnjih poglavjih, pomena tajvanske filozofije 20. stoletja nikakor ni mogoče omejiti samo na funkcijo ohranjanja nepretrgane kontinuitete raziskovanja kitajske idejne tradicije in klasične filozofije. Vrsta tajvanskih teoretikov in teoretičark je v tem obdobju izdelala nekaj popolnoma novih, enkratnih in neponovljivih teoretskih inovacij, ki še naprej merodajno vplivajo na razvoj topoglednih raziskav. V zadnjih desetletjih smo bili tako na Tajvanu priča pojavu novih paradigem na področjih metodologije, teorije in sistematike kitajske filozofije. Ta pojav je vsekakor povezan z dejstvom, da so bili kitajski izobraženci in izobraženke v drugi polovici 20. stoletja že veliko bolje seznanjeni z zahodno filozofijo kot njihovi predhodniki. To je pomembno zaradi tega, ker je večina zgoraj omenjenih inovacij – zaradi ključne vloge, ki jo je pri njihovem nastanku imela potreba po teoretiziranju kitajskega modela modernizacije – nastala v dialogu z zahodno miselnostjo oziroma v okviru primerjalne filozofije. Po drugi strani pa pri tem nikakor ne gre zanemariti dejstva, da je leta 1949 kitajsko celino zapustilo razmeroma veliko število izjemno potencialnih teoretikov, od katerih je večina poslej živela in delovala na Tajvanu.

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Raziskovanje izvora kamna za črnilo iz Zbirke Alme Karlin*

Tina BERDAJS**

Izvleček

V različnih slovenskih muzejih in zasebnih zbirkah hranijo več zbirke vzhodnoazijskih predmetov, od katerih so v zadnjih letih nekateri postali objekt večjega znanstvenega zanimanja. V prispevku je predstavljen primer kamna za črnilo iz zbirke osebnih predmetov Alme M. Karlin (1889–1950), ki jo hrani Pokrajinski muzej Celje. Pred to raziskavo so bile osnovne informacije o predmetu iz omenjene zbirke redke, konkretni podatki o njegovi zgodovini pa pomanjkljivi. S to študijo primera je bila določena provenienca in osnovni podatki, hkrati pa predstavljen tudi metodološki aparat, uporabljen za raziskovanje in končno potrditev izvora obravnavanega predmeta. Osrednji del članka se osredotoča na raziskovanje pomena na kamnu izrezljanega pečata in na razrešitev ročno napisanega zapisa na spodnji strani predmeta. Oba zapisa sta tudi postavljena v širši kulturno-zgodovinski kontekst vzhodnoazijske regije in v kontekst potovanja Alme Karlin.

Ključne besede: Zbirka Alme Karlin, provenienca predmetov, kamen za pridobivanje črnila, pečat

Researching the Origins of an Ink Stone from the Collection of Alma M. Karlin

Abstract

There are several collections of East Asian objects kept in various Slovenian museums and private collections, some of which have become the subject of greater scholarly interest in recent years. This paper is a case study of an object—an ink stone—from the collection of personal objects acquired by Alma M. Karlin (1889–1950), now preserved at the Celje Regional Museum. Prior to this survey, there was little basic information about the object from the collection, and concrete data on its history was lacking. This case study determined the object's provenance and basic data, and at the same time illustrates a methodological approach which was used for research and final confirmation of the origin of the object in question. The main part of the paper focuses on research into the meaning

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of the carved seal mark and deciphering of a handwritten inscription, both of which are located on the underside of the ink stone. Some of the problems of the research process were resolved through methods of analysis and comparison of photographic material, and the research revealed previously unknown data that helped to determine the correct place of origin of the ink stone, as well as a more precise timeframe in which the object was created. Both inscriptions were placed in the wider cultural and historical context of the East Asian region, as well as in the context of Alma Karlin's travels.

Keywords: Alma Karlin's collection, object provenance, ink stone, seal mark

Uvod

Alma Maximiliana Karlin (1889–1950) je brez dvoma ena največjih svetovnih popotnic z območja današnje Slovenije. Kot mlada ženska se je kmalu po dopolnjenem tridesetem letu starosti, 24. novembra 1919, sama odpravila iz rodnega Celja na študijsko potovanje okoli sveta. S seboj je vzela kovček, pisalni stroj, nekaj denarja in neustavljivo željo po odkrivanju novih dežel in spoznavanju novih ljudi ter učenju njihovih jezikov in odkrivanju njihove kulture, običajev, načinov življenja. Med osemletnim potovanjem je zbirala najrazličnejše predmete¹, ki dandanes sestavljajo Zbirko Alme Karlin; ta obsega 840 predmetov², hrani pa jo Pokrajinski muzej Celje³.

Celotna zbirka predmetov Alme Karlin odraža tudi naravo njenega potovanja in osvetljuje pogoje, v katerih je pisateljica potovala; kadar ji je lastni ekonomski položaj omogočal, je predmete kupovala, sicer je pogosto zbirala, kar je lahko: darila, školjke, minerale, cvetlice. Po vrnitvi s potovanja 28. decembra 1927 je zbirko predmetov razstavljala in uporabljala v svojem domu, po njeni smrti leta 1950 pa je lastnica zbirke postala njena edina dedinja, dobra prijateljica Thea Schreiber Gammelina (1906–1988)⁴. Slednja se je sedem let po Almini smrti odločila,

- 1 Predmete, ki jih je zbirala na potovanju, je Alma Karlin večinoma pošiljala domov, nekatere pa je najprej nosila s seboj in jih šele zatem odposlala. V posebnem zvezku je imela tudi seznam, kdaj in komu je različne predmete poslala, nekatere predmete je omenjala tudi v svojih potopisih *Samotno potovanje* in *Urok Južnega morja* (Trnovec 2015, 57).
- 2 Zbirka predmetov Alme Karlin, ki jo hrani Pokrajinski muzej Celje, še ni zaključena, kar pomeni, da se vanjo še vedno lahko dodajajo oz. vključujejo novi predmeti (Trnovec 2015, 58).
- 3 Pokrajinski muzej Celje v Zbirki Alme Karlin hrani različne predmete, ki jih je Alma zbirala med svojim potovanjem, celotna zbirčina pa je veliko bolj obsežna, razdrobljena in ni v celoti dostopna javnosti. Poleg omenjenega muzeja se deli zbirčina nahajajo še v Narodni in univerzitetni knjižnici v Ljubljani, Osrednji knjižnici Celje, Muzeju novejšje zgodovine Celje, zasebnih arhivih in drugje (Trnovec 2015, 58).
- 4 Thea Schreiber Gammelina je bila mlada slikarka s severa Nemčije. Za Almo Karlin je izvedela leta 1929, ko je izšel prvi del Alminega potopisa *Samotno potovanje*. Zgodba jo je tako očarala, da se je odločila Almo spoznati, zato ji je pisala. Sčasoma sta se spoprijateljili in si v naslednjih letih izmenjali vrsto pisem in obiskov. Leta 1934 se je Thea preselila k Almi v Celje in z njo ostala do njene smrti (Trnovec 2015, 52).

da zbirko predmetov neevropskega izvora preda takratnemu Mestnemu muzeju Celje (Trnovec 2015, 57; Shigemori Bučar 2017, 219). Del omenjene zbirke je tudi kamen za črnilo, ki je predmet pričujoče raziskave (Slika 1). Kamni za pridobivanje črnila se uporabljajo skupaj s pigmentno paličico in vodo v vseh državah Vzhodne Azije (na Kitajskem, Japonskem in v Koreji) predvsem kot pripomočki pri pisanju kaligrafije in slikarstvu v tehniki črnila in vode. V vdolbino na zgornji strani kamna se vlije manjšo količino vode, nato se v vodi ob kamen drgne pigmentna tablica, dokler se ne pridobi zadovoljive konsistence in količine črnila. Pridobivanje črnila je pomemben del postopka pisanja kaligrafije ali slikanja.



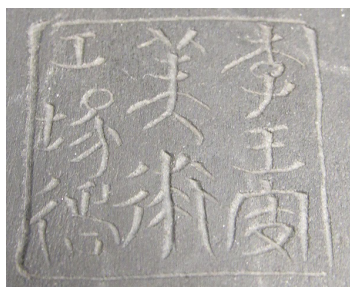
Slika 1: Kamen za črnilo iz Zbirke Alme Karlin (Pokrajinski muzej Celje).

Namen raziskave je skozi študijo predmeta prevrednotiti obstoječe podatke o kraju izvora kamna, glede katerih so se med ponovnim raziskovanjem ter identifikacijo in katalogizacijo predmeta pojavili dvomi. Po podatkih, zapisanih v Inventarni knjigi Zbirke Alme Karlin Pokrajinskega muzeja Celje, je bilo ugotovljeno, da se je kamen uporabljal za pridobivanje črnila, kot kraj izvora pa je bila navedena Japonska. Slednji podatek je vprašljiv iz več razlogov. Prvi je ta, da je osnovne podatke o provenienci predmetov muzeju posredovala dedinja Almine zapuščine. Kustosinja, ki je bila zadolžena za predajo predmetov Mestnemu muzeju Celje med letoma 1957 in 1960, je bila Milena Moškon, ki je o popisovanju predmetov povedala:

Na mestu prevzema nismo nič dokumentirali, ampak je Thea prihajala v muzej in pripovedovala, od kod izvira posamezen predmet. Povedala je tudi, da je Alma sama povedala, kaj naj podari muzeju. (Trnovec 2015, 57)

Ker Thea Schreiber Gammelini ni bila prvotna zbirateljica ali lastnica zbirke, je potovanje okoli sveta poznala zgolj iz Alminih pripovedovanj in zapisov. Njenih podatkov glede imen, uporabe in provenience ne smemo neposredno jemati kot dejstvo. Za več predmetov iz zbirke se je med raziskovanjem namreč že pokazalo, da so njihovi inventarni zapisi vsebovali napačne ali pomanjkljive podatke, ki so bili zapisani na podlagi Theinih osebnih pričevanj.

Poleg nezanesljivih osnovnih podatkov o predmetih sta na prevrednotenje obstoječe identifikacije vplivala tudi opis in pečat na kamnu za črnilo. Prvi zapis je ročno vrezan oziroma vklesan pečat na spodnji strani predmeta (Slika 2). Drugi zapis je ročno zapisan na spodnji strani kamna v vertikalni smeri od zgoraj navzdol. Oba, pečat in ročni zapis, sta potrebna natančne obdelave in prevoda.



Slika 2: Pečat na kamnu za črnilo (Zbirka Alme Karlin, Pokrajinski muzej Celje).

Cilj pričujoče raziskave je tako s pomočjo podrobne analize, primerjave in prevoda pečata ter ročnega zapisa na spodnji strani kamna za pridobivanje črnila pravilno določiti kraj izvora predmeta. Nato bomo s pridobljenimi podatki poskušali predmet umestiti v ožji časovni okvir nastanka in v širši kontekst Alminega potovanja ter obenem v splošnejši družbenozgodovinski kontekst vzhodnoazijske regije v zgodnjem 20. stoletju.

Kamen za črnilo – opis predmeta

Kamen za pridobivanje črnila iz zbirke predmetov Alme Karlin je črne barve in nekoliko trapezoidne oblike. Na zgornjem delu ima pravokotno vdolbino, katere dno se pod rahlim kotom spušča proti zgornji strani kamna. Kamen je dolg 15,1 cm, največja širina je 10,8 cm, najmanjša 8 cm, globok pa je 2,4 cm. Vdolbina na zgornji strani je dolga 13,7 cm, največja širina je 9,2 cm, najmanjša 5,7 cm, na najnižji točki je globoka 1,2 cm. Na zgornji strani je po vsej dolžini roba okoli

vdolbine izklesan okrasni vzorec v obliki meandra, ki je po vsej dolžini širok okoli 1,5 cm. Na spodnji strani je prav tako vdolbina, ki je enake oblike kot tista na zgornji strani kamna. V višino meri 13,7 cm, njena največja širina je 8,3 cm, najmanjša pa 4,7 cm. Na najnižji točki je globoka 1 cm.

Manjši ročno vrezan pečat sredi vdolbine na spodnji strani kamna je delno neberljiv. V višino meri 1,7 cm, v širino 1,8 cm in je štirikotne oziroma skoraj kvadratne oblike. Glede na pismenke, ki ga sestavljajo, ga lahko v notranjosti navidezno razdelimo na tri vertikalne pasove enake širine. Od teh sta skrajni levi in skrajni desni vsak horizontalno razdeljena na tri enako velike dele. Srednji navpični pas pa lahko po sredini navidezno razdelimo na dve polovici.

Napis pečata beremo od zgoraj navzdol in od desne proti levi. Sestavlja ga skupno osem različnih pismenk v mali pečatni pisavi.⁵ Zaradi stare oblike pismenk in ročne izdelave je pečat na nekaterih delih težko berljiv, vendar lahko nekatere pismenke prepoznamo brez večjih težav. Brez dodatnih orodij, slikovnega gradiva ali orodij lahko z osnovnim poznavanjem male pečatne pisave in kitajskih pismenk prepoznamo šest od osmih pismenk. Zapis je naslednji: 李王 [prva manjkajoča pismenka – nejasno] 美術工場 [druga manjkajoča pismenka – nejasno] ali *Liwang* [prva manjkajoča pismenka – nejasno] *meishu gongchang* [druga manjkajoča pismenka – nejasno] (Slika 3).

Kitajske pismenke na pečatu iz Zbirke Alme Karlin (vrstni red od zgoraj navzdol, od desne proti levi)									
Pismenke v mali pečatni pisavi <i>xiaozhuan</i> 小篆			[prva neznana pismenka]					[druga neznana pismenka]	
Pismenke v sodobni kitajščini (tradicionalna oblika <i>fanti</i> 繁體字)	李	王		美	術	工	場		

Slika 3: Ponazoritev primerjave pečata s pismenkami male pečatne pisave in sodobno kitajsko pisavo⁶ (Zbirka Alme Karlin, Pokrajinski muzej Celje).

- 5 Najpogostejša pisava, ki se uporablja na pečatih, je pečatna pisava (*zhuanshu* 篆書). Poznamo veliko pečatno pisavo (*dazhuan* 大篆) in malo pečatno pisavo (*xiaozhuan* 小篆). Njuni obliki se razlikujeta, velika pečatna pisava je nekoliko bolj okorna od male. Za časa obdobja Vojskujočih se držav *Zhanguoshidai* 戰國時代 (475 pr. n. št.–221 pr. n. št.) so uporabljali obe vrsti: veliko pečatno pisavo predvsem na območju takratne države Chu 楚 (1030 pr. n. št.–223 pr. n. št.), uporaba male pečatne pisave pa je prevladovala na vseh ostalih območjih (Sun 2004, 5).
- 6 Spletni portal Chinese Etymology: pismenka *li* 李 (slika št. S03959, slovar *Shuowen jiezi*); pismenka *wang* 王 (slika št. L32853, slovar *Liushutong*); pismenka *mei* 美 (slika št. S02687, slovar *Shuowen jiezi*); pismenka *shu* 術 (slika št. L26097, slovar *Liushutong*); pismenka *gong* 工 (slika št. S03466, slovar *Shuowen jiezi*); pismenka *chang* 場 (slika št. L32738, slovar *Liushutong*).

Čez pečat je zapisan tudi navpičen in nekoliko slabše viden, vendar v celoti berljiv ročni napis s svinčnikom v kitajskih pismenkah, ki se glasi 大正十年八月八日 ali *Dazheng shinian bayue bari*. V prevodu napis nakazuje na specifični datum, in sicer »Deseto leto [obdobja] Taishō, osmi mesec, osmi dan« ali »osmi avgust desetega leta v obdobju Taishō«.

Analiza in pomen ročnega zapisa

Napis na spodnji strani kamna za kaligrafijo se v smeri od zgoraj navzdol glasi 大正十年八月八日 (*Dazheng shinian bayue bari*) in v neposrednem prevodu označuje specifičen datum: osmi avgust desetega leta v obdobju Taishō oz. 8. avgust 1921. Obdobje Taishō⁷ je obdobje v japonski zgodovini, ki je trajalo od leta 1912 do leta 1926. Deseto leto obdobja Taishō je tako leto 1921. Ker napis nakazuje na morebiten japonski izvor predmeta, je primerno, da njegovo transkripcijo podamo tudi v japonskem jeziku, in sicer *Taishō jūnen hachigatsu hachi nichi* (Slika 4 in Slika 5).



Slika 4: Zgornji del ročnega napisa s svinčnikom na spodnji strani kamna (Zbirka Alme Karlin, Pokrajinski muzej Celje).

7 V tem času je vladal cesar Taishō *Taishō tennō* 大正天皇 po imenu Yoshihito 嘉仁 (1879–1926), ki je bil 123. japonski cesar (Andressen 2002, 93–99).



*Slika 5: Spodnji del ročnega napisa s svinčnikom na spodnji strani kamna
(Zbirka Alme Karlin, Pokrajinski muzej Celje).*

Omenjeni ročni zapis prvotno ni bil del predmeta, zaradi pomanjkljivih podatkov tudi ne moremo natančneje določiti avtorstva ali samega namena zapisa. Glede na to, da je zapis napisan površno in sama oblika pismenk nakazuje na nekoliko nerodno oziroma nevajeno roko, obstaja možnost, da ga je zapisala tuja oseba, mogoče celo Alma Karlin. Znano je namreč, da se je na Japonskem učila slikanja, zato je mogoče, da se je urila tudi v pisanju. To sicer ne izključuje možnosti, da je zapis dodala katera koli druga oseba. Tudi sam kamen bi lahko kupila Alma, lahko bi ga tudi dobila kot darilo. Kljub neznankam pa imamo možnost zapisani datum umestiti v kontekst Alminega potovanja glede na to, kje se je nahajala 8. avgusta 1921. Iz kombinacije podatkov, podanih v potopisu in življenjepisu Alme Karlin, lahko razberemo, da je v obdobju prve polovice avgusta leta 1921 potovala od Mehike (kjer je obiskala mesta Salina Cruz, Acapulco, Manzanillo, Mazatlan) prek Angelskega otoka v zalivu San Francisco do mesta San Francisco, kamor je prispela 15. avgusta 1921 (Trnovec 2015, 32; Karlin 1969, 125–28). Iz njenega potopisa ni mogoče razbrati, da bi se datum 8. avgust 1921 lahko nanašal na specifičen dogodek na poti, ki bi za pisateljico imel kakšen poseben pomen. Od kod izvira ta napis oziroma na kaj se nanaša konkretni datum, zaradi pomanjkanja virov zato težko točno argumentiramo.

V zgodnjih dvajsetih letih 20. stoletja je Alma Karlin sicer prepotovala tudi države Vzhodne Azije. Po območju Japonske, Koreje, Kitajske (s Hongkongom) in Tajvana (takratne Formoze) je potovala približno leto in pol, med začetkom junija 1922 in

koncem januarja 1924. V tem času je med junijem 1922 in julijem 1923 živel na Japonskem (Trnovec 2015, 30–36). Omeniti je treba zgodovinsko ozadje območja, po katerem je Alma Karlin potovala: Tajvan in Koreja sta bila v tistem času namreč pod japonsko oblastjo. Ozemlje Tajvana je Japonska dobila po podpisu sporazuma v Shimonosekiju leta 1895 ob koncu kitajsko-japonske vojne (1894–1895), oblast nad korejskim ozemljem pa leta 1905 po zmagi v rusko-japonski vojni (1904–1905) s podpisom mirovne pogodbe v Portsmouthu (Hwang 2010, 147; Andressen 2002, 93–96). To je razvidno tudi iz Alminega potopisa, saj je med potovanjem po omejenih državah opisovala tudi svoje stike z Japonci na okupiranih območjih.

V *Samotnem potovanju* avtorica ne omenja kamna za črnilo, le naklonjenost do japonskega načina slikanja in svoje učenje le-tega (Karlin 1969, 170). Kljub temu brez dodatnih virov s potovanja ne moremo odgovoriti na vprašanje, kaj je bil dejanski namen zapisanega datuma in kdo je zares njegov avtor. Lahko zgolj sklepamo, da je datum najverjetneje imel poseben oz. določen pomen za avtorja in da zaradi takratnih razmer v regiji obstaja verjetnost, da je bil datum zapisan na Japonskem, v Koreji ali na Tajvanu.

Obenem je treba omeniti, da lahko dodatni napisi, kot je bil obravnavani, zavajajoče vplivajo na določitev izvora predmeta, kar lahko vodi k napačnim zaključkom. Čeprav napis jasno podaja datum iz obdobja japonske zgodovine, to še ne pomeni, da je kraj izvora kamna Japonska, saj je bil napis dodan pozneje. Razumevanje samega napisa pečata je tako – v razmerju do ročnega zapisa – primarnega pomena.

Analiza in pomen vrezanega pečata

Za dokončno potrditev izvora predmeta je ključno raziskovanje pečata na spodnji strani kamna. Iz berljivega dela pečata smo razbrali pismenko *li* (李 *li*), ki je eden od najbolj razširjenih priimkov, nekoga ali nekaj kraljevega (王 *wang*), umetnost (美術 *meishu*) in delavnico (工場 *gongchang*) oz. umetniško delavnico (美術工場 *meishu gongchang*). Pismenki v spodnjem desnem in spodnjem levem kotu sta nejasni oz. težko berljivi zaradi nejasnega zapisa.

Način, kako lahko pridemo do informacij, ki bi nam pomagale razvozlati napis pečata, je iskanje slik podobnih pečatov na drugih izdelkih ali pečatov istega izdelovalca. Danes nam takšno iskanje omogočajo in tudi močno olajšujejo različni spletni brskalniki, ki imajo funkcijo iskanja slikovnega gradiva po določenem geslu. V tem primeru nam pomaga že samo delno poznavanje pečata. Z vsakim vnosom gesla oziroma ključnih besed sicer dobimo veliko zadetkov in potrebnega je veliko časa, da jih pregledamo in izločimo tiste, ki bi nam potencialno lahko pomagali pri raziskavi. S tem lahko pridemo do bolj specifičnih rezultatov tako slikovnega kot tudi

ostalega, za naše raziskovanje relevantnega gradiva. Ta pristop je lahko zelo učinkovit tudi pri raziskovanju najrazličnejših javno dostopnih spletnih arhivov slikovnega gradiva. Omenjeni princip raziskovanja nam je lahko v veliko pomoč pri problematiki berljivosti pečatov in raziskovanju včasih zapletene etimologije posameznih kitajskih pismenk. S pomočjo dela pečata, ki je bil razpoznaven oziroma berljiv, je bila tako s spletnimi brskalnikmi najdena slika pečata, ki je bil zelo podoben pečatu na kamnu za pridobivanje črnila iz Zbirke Alme Karlin (Slika 6). Omenjena slika je bila objavljena na japonskem osebnem blogu v sklopu dnevniskega zapisa iz leta 2014 uporabnika s psevdonimom Toyopika. Ta na novo najdeni pečat je bil tudi v celoti berljiv, kar omogoča rekonstrukcijo zapisa na pečatu, ki je predmet raziskave.



Slika 6: Pečat iste delavnice na drugem kamnu za pridobivanje črnila (Toyopika 2014).

V besedilu dnevniskega zapisa je avtor (ali avtorica) pisal o učenju kaligrafije, nakupu kaligrafskega kamna in pečatu, ki je bil na njem. Prav tako je trdil, da je pečat na kamnu pravzaprav pečat izdelovalca in da kamen za kaligrafijo ne izvira iz Japonske ali Kitajske, pač pa iz Koreje (Toyopika 2014). Najdba tega zapisa na blogu in slike, vključene v besedilo, je bila ključnega pomena za pričujočo raziskavo, saj sta bili skozi nadaljnje primerjanje in analizo pismenk odkriti podobi in pomena dveh neznanih oziroma neberljivih pismenk na prvotnem pečatu (Slika 7).

Kitajske pismenke na pečatu iz Zbirke Alme Karlin (vrstni red od zgoraj navzdol, od desne proti levi)								
Kitajske pismenke na pečatu najdenem na japonskem blogu								
Pismenke v mali pečatni pisavi	李	王	家	美	術	工	場	造
Pismenke v sodobni kitajščini (tradicionalna oblika)	李	王	家	美	術	工	場	造

Slika 7 Ponazoritev dveh pečatov s pismenkami male pečatne pisave in sodobno kitajsko pisavo⁸ (Zbirka Alme Karlin, Pokrajinski muzej Celje; Toyopika 2014).

8 Spletni portal Chinese Etymology: pismenka *li* 李 (slika št. S03959, slovar *Shuowen jiezi*); pismenka *wang* 王 (slika št. L32853, slovar *Liushutong*); pismenka *jia* 家 (slika št. S05205, slovar *Shuowen jiezi*); pismenka *mei* 美 (slika št. S02687, slovar *Shuowen jiezi*); pismenka *shu* 術 (slika št. L26097, slovar *Liushutong*); pismenka *gong* 工 (slika št. S03466, slovar *Shuowen jiezi*); pismenka *chang* 場 (slika št. L32738, slovar *Liushutong*) pismenka *zao* 造 (slika št. S01239, slovar *Shuowen jiezi*).





Analiza prve neznane pismenke

Primerjava in analiza sta pokazali, da je prva neznana oziroma nejasna pismenka v pečatu kitajska pismenka *jia* 家, ki pomeni »družina«, vendar se v napisu pečata na kamnu iz Zbirke Alme Karlin pojavi v popolnoma drugačni obliki. Druga neznana pismenka je pismenka *zao* 造, ki pomeni »izdelano« ali »narediti«, vendar se tudi ta pojavi v drugačni obliki, poleg tega pa je zelo nejasno zapisana in posledično pravzaprav neberljiva. Vzroke za drugačen zapis moramo iskati v etimološkem razvoju omenjenih kitajskih pismenk, predvsem njunih oblik v času, ko je bila uporaba pečatne pisave močno razširjena. V dinastiji Qin 秦 (221–206 pr. n. št.) je pod prvim kitajskim cesarjem Qinshijem 秦始皇帝 (221–210 pr. n. št.) prišlo do poenotenja pisave. Takrat so določene pismenke že imele več različnih oblik, ki so se s časom spreminjale. Zaradi regionalnosti je posledično obstajalo več različnih oblik določenih pismenk v različnih časovnih obdobjih; nekatere izmed njih so ostale v uporabi tudi po poenotenju pisave. To pomeni, da obstaja možnost, da so se še vedno uporabljale tudi v napisih pečatov, kar še danes otežuje branje starejših tekstov, prav tako ni bilo jasnih pravil o tem, kako naj bi bile pismenke zapisane, kateri del je zapisan na levi oziroma na desni (Wei 2014, 38–39). Mala pečatna pisava, katere uporabo so z reformo uvedli po celotnem območju takratne združene Kitajske, je tako izpodrinila vse ostale oblike pismenk, ki so se regionalno uporabljale zgolj na manjših območjih, in postala predhodnica današnje standardizirane oblike kitajske pisave (Norman 1988, 63).

Etimološka analiza pismenke *jia* 家 razkrije, da sta bili skozi zgodovino Kitajske v uporabi vsaj dve precej različni obliki. Glede na kitajski etimološki slovar *Shuowen jiezi* 說文解字⁹ iz obdobja Poznega Hana je oblika omenjene pismenke predstavljala podobo svinje *shi* 豕, ki se nahaja pod streho *mian* 宀 (Shuowen jiezi 2015). Iz njene oblike na obravnavanem pečatu lahko razberemo zgolj obliko strehe zgoraj, spodnji del pa je popolnoma drugačen. Ta pravzaprav ustreza podobi poenostavljene pismenke *zhi* 支, ki se uporablja tudi danes in v prevodu pomeni »veja« ali »podpora«, a njene oblike ne najdemo v kombinaciji s sestavnim delom pismenke, ki ponazarja streho. V iskanju povezave med tema različnima oblikama pismenke je treba raziskati tudi etimologijo pismenke *zhi* 支. Slovar *Shuowen* v tem primeru ponudi razlago, da je oblika te pismenke predstavljala podobo desne roke *you* 又, ki drži bambusovo palico *cao* 艸 (Shuowen jiezi 2015). Etimološki pomen s tem razkrije, da podoba pismenke dobesedno predstavlja roko, ki drži

9 *Shuowen jiezi* 說文解字 (skrajšano *Shuowen*) je eden najstarejših in najpomembnejših slovarjev, ki razlagajo pomene in etimologijo kitajskih pismenk. Prvič je bil zbran in urejen v obdobju Pozni Han (*Houhan* 後漢), ki obsega skoraj dve stoletji (25–220 n. št.).

palico pod streho. Slovar *Liushutong* 六書統¹⁰ iz časa dinastije Yuan pa razkrije, da se je pismenka *jia* 家 v mali pečatni pisavi pojavljala ravno v omenjeni obliki, torej v obliki roke, ki pod streho drži palico (Sears 2013). S primerjavo etimološkega razvoja dveh različnih oblik pismenk, ki se pojavljata na dveh različnih pečatih, tako lahko sklepamo, da gre za različni obliki iste pismenke (Slika 8).

Pismenka <i>jia</i> 家 v dveh različicah	Sestavni deli pismenk na pečatih	Delci pismenk v mali pečatni pisavi	Različice pismenke <i>jia</i> 家 v slovarju <i>Liushutong</i>
	宀 支	宀 攴	
	宀 豕	宀 豕	

Slika 8: Dve različni obliki pismenke *jia* 家 in njuno različno poenostavljanje¹¹ (Zbirka Alme Karlin, Pokrajinski muzej Celje; Toyopika 2017).

Čeprav je zgornji del obeh pismenk ostajal enak, sta bila spodnja dela različna. Iz tega razloga se je vsaka oblika pismenke poenostavljala v svojo smer, medtem ko je sam pomen obeh ostal enak. Postopoma se je v uporabi ustalila ena od obeh oblik, uporaba druge pa je bila počasi opuščena in je sčasoma postala težko berljiva oziroma nerazpoznavna. Pri raziskovanju je tako ključno poznavanje etimološkega razvoja pismenk in njihovih oblik v preteklih obdobjih. Samo tako lahko pridemo do zaključka, da gre pravzaprav za isto pismenko v dveh različnih oblikah.

Analiza druge neznane pismenke

Iz primerjave obeh pečatov je razvidno tudi, da je druga neznana pismenka *zao* 造, ki v prevodu pomeni »narediti« ali »zgraditi«. V rahlo spremenjeni obliki se pojavi radikal *chuo* 辵, ki pomeni »korak«. Zapisan je v obliki radikala *chi* 彳, ki sicer nosi enak pomen, vendar oblikovno spremeni podobo celotne pismenke. Pred strogo določitvijo pravil za zapisovanje pismenk in poenotenjem pisave se je radikal *chuo* 辵 namreč pojavljal v več različnih oblikah. Tako se je v oblikah *chuo* 辵, *chi* 彳,

10 *Liushutong* 六書統 je delo oziroma slovar kitajskih pismenk, napisan v času dinastije Yuan 元 (1279–1368), avtor je bil učenjak Yang Huan 楊桓.

11 Slovar *Shuowen jiezi*, spletni portal Chinese Etymology: pismenka *jia* 家 (slika št. L08797, slika št. L08806, slovar *Liushutong*).

chuo 走 in *zhi* 止 izmenjaje pojavljal na istem mestu pri istih pismenkah (Sears 2013). Na podlagi teh zaključkov lahko sklepamo, da kot v primeru raziskane pismenke *jia* oblika pismenke *zao* 造 s prvotnega pečata iz zbirke predmetov Alme Karlin najverjetneje izvira iz časa pred poenotenjem pisave, ko se je kljub enotnemu pomenu del pismenke (radikal) zapisoval v različnih oblikah.

Pri drugem delu pismenke, fonetiku *gao* 告, je bila edina problematika popolna neberljivost, saj je bil zapisan z veliko avtorske umetniške svobode. Ta del pismenke se je, v nasprotju z radikalom, razjasnil zgolj s primerjavo pečatov na dveh kamnih za črnilo. Oblika pismenke *zao* 造, in s tem tudi njenega fonetika, je bila na najdeni fotografiji z japonskega bloga povsem jasna. Na podlagi primerjave slikovnega gradiva se je s tem povsem rekonstruirala tako celotna oblika pismenke kot tudi podoba pečata na predmetu iz Zbirke Alme Karlin. V tem primeru bi bilo zgolj s poznavanjem sodobne kitajske pisave in osnov etimologije pismenk nemogoče razbrati pravo obliko in pomen zapisa oziroma pismenke na kamnu, ki je predmet raziskave.

S pomočjo zgoraj prikazanega raziskovalnega postopka je bilo ugotovljeno, da zapis 李王家美術工場造 ali *Liwangjia meishu gongchang zao* pomeni »Izdelano v umetniški delavnici kraljeve družine Li«. Ker gre za pečat specifične umetniške delavnice oz. obrtniške ustanove in ne kraljeve družine same, lahko potrdimo, da gre za pečat iz vrste zasebnih pečatov in podvrste studijskih pečatov. V celoti razvozan napis pečata vzpostavi temelje za nadaljnje raziskave o pomenu in vlogi predmeta in s tem pravilne umestitve predmeta v družbenopolitične okvire posameznih regij.

Utemeljitev in potrditev izvora kamna za črnilo iz Zbirke Alme Karlin

Razširjena uporaba kitajskih pismenk v vzhodnoazijskem prostoru pod vprašanje postavi izvor predmeta, na katerem je pečat, in posledično izvor samega pečata. Če se je ista pisava vsaj v določenem časovnem obdobju uporabljala v vseh omenjenih državah in če je prav tako razširjena uporaba enakega stila pečatov, potem moramo najprej razvozlati pomen celotnega zapisa. Samo tako lahko pečat z nadaljnjim raziskovanjem pravilno časovno in prostorsko umestimo, ga pravilno razberemo in njegovo vsebino razumemo v kontekstu specifičnega kulturnega okolja.

Kljub ročnemu zapisu, ki izpostavlja specifični datum iz obdobja japonske zgodovine, pa kraj nastanka s tem nikakor ni potrjen. Zapis na že omenjenem japonskem blogu je namreč kot kraj izvora izpostavil Korejo (Toyopika 2014). Prav tako lahko dvome o geografski umestitvi predmeta vzbudi razširjenost priimka Li 李 v državah Vzhodne Azije. Ta namreč izvira iz Kitajske, z isto pismenko pa

se pojavlja še v Koreji (v latinizirani transkripciji *Li, Lee, Yi, I in Ri*) in Vietnamu (v latinizirani transkripciji *Ly*). Priimek Li se v nasprotju s Korejo in Vietnamom ne uporablja na Japonskem, zato obstaja zelo malo možnosti, da bi se umetniška delavnica s tem imenom pojavila v tej državi.

Posledično je bilo ugotovljeno, da omenjena »kraljeva družina Li« (李王家 *Liwangjia*) izvira iz Koreje, saj je bil Li priimek kraljevske družine zadnje korejske dinastije Joseon (Hangul: *Choson* 대조선국; Hanja: 大朝鮮國) med letoma 1392 in 1897 ter Korejskega imperija (Hangul: *Daehan Jeguk* 대한제국; Hanja: 大韓帝國) med letoma 1897 in 1910. Leta 1910 je Koreja postala kolonija Japonskega imperija *Dai Nippon Teikoku* 大日本帝國 (1868–1947), predstavniki kraljeve družine Li pa so dobili naslov korejskih plemičev (*Chōsen kizoku* 朝鮮貴族) (Young 2000, 17–26).¹² Najbolj pogosto se predmeti s tem pečatom pojavljajo na japonskih spletnih dražbah, manjše število tudi na korejskih in kitajskih. Večkrat znotraj opisa predmetov te delavnice zasledimo tudi japonski napis *Chousen bijutsu* 朝鮮美術, ki pomeni »umetnost Joseon« oz. »korejska umetnost«. Še en znak, ki nakazuje, da izvor predmetov omenjene delavnice ni Japonska, pač pa po vsej verjetnosti Koreja.

Na nekaterih pečatih iste delavnice se poleg imena delavnice pojavlja tudi napis *jingcheng* 京城. To je bilo v času japonske okupacije Koreje med letoma 1910 in 1945 uradno ime mesta Seul (kor.: *Seul* 서울), ki je danes prestolnica Južne Koreje. V času pod japonsko nadvlado je bilo mesto preimenovano v *Keijō* 京城 (kor.: *Gyeongseong*). To potrди, da se je delavnica, iz katere izhaja obravnavani pečat, nahajala v Seulu v času med letoma 1910 in 1945. Iz tega smo razbrali natančno geografsko umestitev kamna za pridobivanje črnila, na katerem se nahaja obravnavani pečat; pečat se je uporabljal na izdelkih Umetniške delavnice kraljeve družine Li v Seulu na območju današnje Južne Koreje v prvi polovici 20. stoletja.

Na podlagi teh podatkov lahko z obdobjem med letoma 1910 in 1945 določimo tudi natančnejši časovni okvir izdelave predmeta. Za bolj specifično časovno umestitev je treba raziskati še delovanje omenjene delavnice. Po priključitvi korejskega ozemlja Japonski je na Japonskem začelo rasti zanimanje za tradicionalno korejsko umetnost in različne izdelke. S tem razlogom je bila leta 1908 ustanovljena tudi Umetniška delavnica Hanseong (*Hanseong misul pumjejangso* 한성미술품제작소). Njen glavni namen je bil izdelava umetniških izdelkov v podobi tradicionalne korejske umetnosti za izvoz in prodajo na Japonskem. Delavnico je ustanovil korejski dvor, zato je ta po letu 1911 tudi nosila ime Umetniška delavnica kraljeve družine

12 Koreja je pod japonsko oblastjo ostala do leta 1945.

Li (*Liwang ga misul gongjangjo* 이왕가미술공장조). Pod novim imenom je delovala med letoma 1911 in 1922 (Han in Kim 2013, 397). Vsi izdelki, ki nosijo pečat s tem imenom, so bili torej narejeni v časovnem obdobju enajstih let, ko je delavnica delovala pod tem imenom. Napis, ki sestavlja pečat, je zapisan v pisavi *Hanja* oziroma kitajskih pismenkah, ki jih je Koreja prevzela iz kitajske pisave.

Zaključek

Z raziskovanjem ročnega zapisa, pečata in etimološkega razvoja pismenk je bila uspešno določena in potrjena tako prostorska kot tudi natančnejša časovna umestitev predmeta. Kot država izvora predmeta je do podrobnejše analize veljala Japonska, vendar so v pričujoči raziskavi predstavljeni argumenti, ki potrjujejo, da kamen za pridobivanje črnila iz Zbirke Alme Karlin izvira iz Koreje, natančneje iz mesta Seul (današnje prestolnice Južne Koreje). Skozi celotno analizo pečata in s podrobnim raziskovanjem etimološkega razvoja kitajskih pismenk je bilo ugotovljeno, da je bil predmet raziskave izdelan v Umetniški delavnici kraljeve družine Li, z nadaljnjim raziskovanjem imena delavnice pa je bilo čas izdelave mogoče umestiti v natančnejši časovni okvir, v desetletje med letoma 1911 in 1922. Na podlagi informacij o omenjeni delavnici je bil kamen iz Zbirke Alme Karlin najverjetneje produkt težnje po večjem proizvodjanju korejske umetnosti s tradicionalnimi značilnostmi v Koreji. S tem se je po eni strani ohranjala tradicija, po drugi pa so z izvažanjem in prodajo umetniških izdelkov zadovoljili zahtevni japonski trg.

Kljub pričujoči raziskavi ter prebiranju potopisa Alme M. Karlin in knjige o njenem življenju in delu še vedno ni znano, kje je Alma Karlin dobila ali kupila ta kamen. Glede na to, da je na Japonskem preživela največ časa, se tam aktivno učila japonskega načina slikanja in se družila z japonskimi umetniki ter bila v razmeroma dobrem ekonomskem položaju, obstaja večja verjetnost, da je kamen dobila ali kupila na Japonskem. Drugi argument bi bila že omenjena velika prisotnost korejskih umetniških izdelkov na japonskem trgu v času njenega potovanja. Povezava z Japonsko ostaja zelo verjetna tudi zaradi ročnega zapisa na predmetu, ki pomeni specifični datum v obdobju japonske zgodovine, imenovanem Taishō, ni pa jasno, kaj ta datum označuje.

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Research Articles

“The Master Said:”—Confucius as a Quote*

Helena MOTOH**

Abstract

The paper focuses on the phenomenon of quoting Confucius, the classical Chinese thinker of the Western Zhou Dynasty. Firstly, it approaches the core issue of quotes and historicity of the “master said” narrative which marked the tradition of quoting Confucius and understanding his heritage through the form of quotes. In the core part of the paper, a selection of ten quotes that most commonly circulate on the Internet are analysed and traced to their most probable sources, while the paper then concludes by approaching the problem of misquoting from a historical and philosophical point of view.

Keywords: Confucius, quote, misquote, internet, authorship

»Mojster je dejal«: – Konfucij kot citat

Izvleček

Članek je posvečen fenomenu citiranja Konfucija, klasičnega kitajskega misleca iz obdobja dinastije Zahodni Zhou. Najprej prouči osrednjo problematiko citatov in zgodovinskosti narativnega pristopa tipa »mojster je rekel«, ki je zaznamovala tradicijo citiranja Konfucija in razumevanja njegove dediščine v obliki citatov. V osrednjem delu članka sledi analiza desetih na internetu najpogosteje citiranih navedkov. Članek identificira vire, iz katerih najverjetneje izvirajo, nato pa v sklepnem delu ponudi še premislek o problemu napačnega citata z zgodovinskega in filozofskega vidika.

Ključne besede: Konfucij, citat, napačni citat, internet, avtorstvo

“There is nothing new under the sun.” Did Solomon say that or was it Arthur Conan Doyle? Was it John Piper or Nas? All these attributions and many more can be found in the vast landscape of the World Wide Web, and this misquoting actually proves what the “original” in *Ecclesiastes 1:9* expressed—that every deed has been done before, and that by the same necessity every new idea is nothing but a quote.

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This paper focuses on the very topic of quotes, more precisely on the phenomenon of quoting Confucius, the classical Chinese thinker of the Western Zhou Dynasty China. I chose to focus on Confucius to approach the topic of quotes, because it could be said that even the image of Confucius itself is nothing but a quote, just as is true for many axial thinkers of his time, to name only Siddhartha Gautama and Socrates as two other obvious examples. We know the ideas of historical Confucius to a great extent by what we could call the "Master said" narrative, organised and thought of in the form of quotes written down by the lineage of his disciples. Furthermore, quoting (and misquoting) the historical quotes themselves seems to be the preferred way that the ancient Master is known to this day. More than three centuries after the first wave of China-enthusiasm in Europe, the reading of the *Analects* still remains mostly a matter of specialist scholars and educated readers. For the large majority of the lay public, on the other hand, Confucius is represented not by his works, but by secondary sources and especially in the form of "quotes," or rather, quotes of his quotes.

The purpose of this paper is to assess the status of the "Master said" narrative through a selected sample of "Confucius quotes" that circulate on the Internet at present, and to use this sample to trace the heterogeneous components of the elusive popular image of Confucius today. The aim of the analysis is to see what the fame of the old wise man is at present, not only within what Du Weiming called the Cultural China (see Du 1991), but beyond that. The paper starts with an insight into the "Master said" narrative as the characteristic formative structure of ascribing authorship in early Chinese textual traditions. I continue with an analysis of the contemporary sample of Confucius thought in the intercultural or rather transcultural medium of the World Wide Web, while identifying some of the ways quotes and misquotes can be formed. Following the analysis of this sample, I will return to the "Master said" narrative in order to reflect on the impact this type of authorship might have had for the perception of Confucius to this day. Finally, I analyse this issue from two partly contrasting angles: through the cultural and historical relativisation of the concept of authorship.

"The Master Said" Narrative

The structure of a quote, the narrative in the form of the "Master said," was a very typical way of organising early philosophical and/or religious traditions. As in the well-known cases of Socrates or Siddhartha Gautama, but for many others in just the same way, it represented a link between the spoken transmission and the beginnings of a written one, often accompanied by a certain reluctance to write down in a condensed form what was initially expressed as part of a lively dialogue or debate. The written form was widely seen as too formulaic and rigid to grasp

the fine nuances of points expressed in speech, their many versions and contexts. As we can read in what are allegedly Socrates' words, written down by Plato in his dialogue *Phaedrus* (257c–279c) (Plato 2005), the written word is limited to its expression, and unlike a living person, the written text is deaf to our questions. When Plato was reconstructing Socrates' words in *Phaedrus*, his teacher had already passed away, and Socrates' preference for oral transmission is thus being transmitted in writing in the text of his student—which puts the whole written/spoken dilemma into an even more complex perspective.

The Confucius that we know of is himself also a similar historical quote. The debates about the chronology and dating of the parts of the *Analects* are many, and several criteria can be applied to group the passages in the book by temporal order from those closer to Confucius, to those which are further away from him. An interesting and perhaps the most thorough analysis of the historical and developmental layers of the composition of *Analects* can be found in the analyses appended to the 1998 translation of the book by E. Bruce Brooks and A. Taeko Brooks. They succeed in making a synthesis of previous scholarly attempts in order to explain the making and development of the text (Confucius 1998, 205). Apart from this perspective, they also approached the problem of the gradual composition of the *Analects* from viewpoints so varied as to include an analysis of Confucius' modes of transport (*ibid.*, 251), the references to hunting and animals (*ibid.*, 252), and so on. They contextualise the text into the transition between oral and written transmission. In the oldest layers of the text they find references to oral transmission and also recognise the mnemonic structure of the sayings, intended to be memorised by heart. On the other hand, they identify later segments, which already mention written transmission, which was apparently used to form the basis for a still existing practice or memorisation (*ibid.*, 256). A teacher would use the written text to have students learn it by heart, thus opening a new type of gap between the text and its transmission.

The later development of Chinese thought referred to Confucius by using his quotes perhaps more often than was the case for any other author of Classical China. The logic of the earliest periods was now reversed, since the written classics started to function as the solid ground and a reference point in the process of argumentation, which could be either oral or written. The authority of Confucius quotes and similarly of any other canonical classics became the cornerstone of any valid argument. In their analysis of the development of Chinese rhetoric, for example, Kirkpatrick and Xu analyse this shift on the case of the “Discourse on Salt and Iron” (盐铁论) between Legalists and Confucians in Western Han (Kirkpatrick and Xu 2012, 17). A practical application of Confucius quotes in order to achieve the lifting of tax on salt and iron, as banal as it might perhaps seem, signifies an important shift in the use of the “Master said” narrative, where

the quote is raised to the status of perennial truth and enters a life independent of its historical and textual context.

It is well beyond of the scope of this paper to explore the entire history of the uses of Confucius quotes in Chinese intellectual history with the full spectrum between the Han dynasty references and the recent uses, such as Yu Dan's *Confucius from the Heart* (论语心得). Today Confucius quotes are not only present in this almost pop-cultural approach, but also form a key element, a "cultural anchor" (see Pernet-Liu 2017) in the scholarly discourse (see Rošker 2017), even more so in the atmosphere of the revived interest in Chinese tradition seen in the past decade.

In the European representations of Confucius, quotes—and misquotes—also played an important role since the very beginning. Jesuits, who brought the comprehensive knowledge of Confucian philosophy to Europe for the first time, were also responsible for the first circulation of the translation of the *Analects*. As was analysed in detail in works such as Rule's *K'ung-tzu or Confucius?*, Jensen's *Manufacturing Confucius* and Standaert's critical comment on the latter (Rule 1986; Jensen 1997; Standaert 1999), the image that the Jesuits created of the Chinese Sage was in many ways a fabrication, fashioned for the desires and intellectual framework of a particular audience in Europe. As not unusual in the Early Modern period, the process of this representation was scholarly, but also quite vague. This was the time when it could be said that Confucius or "Confucius Sinarum Philosophus" became a trope for Chinese philosophy in general and for any given "Wise Man of China." This fame went beyond the actual community of people that had read Confucian texts, and it almost became a part of common knowledge. The translations were still only rare, while the ideas of Confucius came to be partly mistaken for those of the Neo-Confucian schools and other Chinese traditions of thought or—even more often—the other way around. Leibniz, who got most of his fairly wide knowledge of Chinese philosophy by correspondence with Jesuits in Beijing, ascribed to Confucius' words the status of having "*sensu maxime obvio et naturali*" (Leibniz 1994, II, §37), namely, to possess the maximally obvious and natural sense. While himself not always completely consistent in whether he ascribed certain thoughts and ideas to Confucius or his successors, he was very harsh on the position of those that criticised Confucius for what was written in later commentaries on his work. Judging a classic by its commentaries was for Leibniz a failure in theological approach: since for him the apodictic status of Confucius sayings was independent of the allegedly erroneous views of his philosophical descendants (ibid., §39).

Unfortunately, except for one example which I will analyse later, the quotes and misquotes of Confucius that were used by the Enlightenment thinkers do not seem to have had much impact on the way Confucius is quoted today. We could list a number of reasons for this gap in the transmission of Confucius thought from China to Europe, most notably the shift from sinophilia to sinophobia along with the

military conflicts in the 19th century, the linguistic shift from Latin translations to those in modern European languages, and the systematic organised study of China and Chinese language, which also starts at the same time as the previous two.

“10 Confucius Quotes That Will Change Your Life”

In order to assess the representation of Confucius through the medium of quotes I analysed several Internet pages that collect quotes by famous people. This would of course need to be quantified with more research, but what is evident without much further analysis was that the medium of the Internet seems to work as a form of error reinforcement—the quotes largely match between different quote-pages, while mistakes, misattributions, wrong translations and just plain fake quotes are very often repeated.

I will start by an analysis of a seemingly coherent sample, which includes several most frequently cited “quotes” by Confucius. On a page with a suggestive title—*Higher Perspective: Connect. Reveal. Transcend*—Confucius is presented with a collection of quotes “10 Confucius quotes that will change your life” (Higher Perspective 2019). The 10 “Confucius” quotes are:

1. “Never impose on others what you would not choose for yourself.”
2. “Real knowledge is to know the extent of one’s ignorance.”
3. “I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand.”
4. “Everything has beauty, but not everyone sees it.”
5. “The Superior Man is aware of Righteousness, the inferior man is aware of advantage.”
6. “Wheresoever you go, go with all your heart.”
7. “Our greatest glory is not in never falling, but in getting up every time we do.”
8. “He who learns but does not think, is lost. He who thinks but does not learn is in great danger.”
9. “He that would perfect his work must first sharpen his tools.”
10. “If you look into your own heart, and you find nothing wrong there, what is there to worry about? What is there to fear?”

The first obvious question is, of course, how many of these correspond to passages in the *Analects* and are therefore what we might call “real” quotations of Confucius, if we leave aside the issues of the authorship of the *Analects* mentioned above. Surprisingly, six quotes out of ten closely match the wording of the classical text. The first quote, the famous Golden Rule, is found as “己所不欲，勿施于人”¹

1 All quotes from the *Analects* and Mencius are taken from the internet database of Chinese texts: ctext.org.

twice in the *Analects*, first in the Yan Yuan chapter (2) and second in the Wei ling gong chapter (24). The second quote, a historical parallel to Socrates' famous statement² about knowledge and ignorance, can be found as “知之为之，不知为不知，是知也” in the Wei zheng chapter (17). The fifth quote about the attitude of the superior man towards righteousness and advantage forms a part of the Li ren chapter (16) as “君子喻于义，小人喻于利”. The eighth quote from the list, which talks about the proper relationship between studying and thinking, is also present in the same formulation in Wei zheng (15): “学而不思则罔，思而不学则殆.” The didactic advice about sharpening one's tools before attempting to perfect one's work is also quoted fairly accurately from Wei ling gong (10): “工欲善其事，必先利其器.” In the last, tenth quote, we can see some culturally specific phraseological adaptation, changing the “内” to “heart,” but the quote is otherwise true to the original phrasing: “内省不疚，夫何忧何惧?”

This is, however, where the obvious references end. Four out of ten of these “Confucius” quotes were much more difficult to track down, and for some there have been earlier scholars who attempted the task. An interesting systematic take on the topic of (mis)quoting was made by the author behind the webpage Quote Investigator (2019), Garson O'Toole, who published a book version of his findings under the title *Hemingway Didn't Say That* (O'Toole 2017). O'Toole lists several most common distortions which contribute to a misquote (ibid., 6–11):

1. Synthesis/streamlining—the result of memorisation process, where unnecessary parts are omitted and a more concise or even wittier formulation gets remembered and transmitted
2. Ventriloquy—someone summarises the ideas or attitudes of a certain person in the words of his own
3. Proverbial wisdom—when a quotation is transmitted, but the ascription is lost, therefore it obtains a status of popular wisdom
4. Textual proximity—when a quote (especially if said by a less known person) is ascribed to a more famous person whose name or image appears close to that quote in a publication, book, collection of quotes etc.
5. Real-world proximity—a quote shifts from one person to the other, because of a real life connection these two persons had
6. Similar names—a quote is mistakenly ascribed to a person with a similar name
7. Concoctions—deliberate misquotes or fabrications, e.g. for literary, theatrical or real-life reasons

2 Itself often (mis)quoted in an abbreviated form: “I know that I don't know,” the Socrates claim most probably comes from a passage in Plato's *Apology*: “Well, although I do not suppose that either of us knows anything really beautiful and good, I am better off than he is—for he knows nothing, and thinks that he knows. I neither know nor think that I know.” (Plato 2009)

8. Historical fiction—when a real life of a person is dramatized and the dramatized quotes are understood as something that the person said in real life or wrote in their books
9. Capture—when somebody (especially if more well-known) borrows a quotation from a less known author (or person) and presents it as his or her own
10. Hosting—personas who are “quotation superstars” (ibid., 10) are ascribed quotations that they never said.

With personas such as Confucius almost any scenario from the list could be possible, and many of these can be identified in various Internet lists of “Confucius quotations.” We can also recognise some of these in the remaining four mysterious quotes from the list of ten.

Quote number three, for example, usually phrased as “I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand,” could by its short sentences and repetitive structure indeed be a borrowing from a text from the *Analects*’ time. We find a sentence with a similar phrasing and structure in the Yong ye (20) chapter of the *Analects*, but the idea is different:

子曰：「知之者不如好之者，好之者不如乐之者。」

The Master said, “They who know the truth are not equal to those who love it, and they who love it are not equal to those who delight in it.”

A much closer passage can be found in *Xunzi* (Ru xiao, 23), where a similar pragmatic idea is expressed, although not in exactly the same words:

不闻不若闻之，闻之不若见之，见之不若知之，知之不若行之。学至于行之而止矣。行之，明也；明之为圣人。（儒效，23）

Not hearing is not as good as hearing, hearing is not as good as seeing, seeing is not as good as knowing, knowing is not as good as acting, learning should only stop when it can be put in action. Action is clarity, and clarity makes a sage.

A later Confucian text, *Zhongshuo*, however, seems to express the idea in more exact wording, although the text itself was often labelled a falsification (see Ding 2014). It reads:

子曰：「知之者不如行之者，行之者不如安之者。」《卷六 礼乐篇》（Wang 2016.）

The Master said: “They who know the truth are not equal to those who act upon it, those who act upon it are not equal to those that are at peace with it.”

It is of course difficult to assess whether any of the three is actually the source for this quote or if it is just a case of false attribution, perhaps loosely based on either of the three quotes or some later Chinese reworking thereof.

The fourth quote was the most suspicious of the listed ten. Already the use of the term "beauty" and the idea it expresses seem inconsistent with the interpretations in the Confucian classical texts, especially because the term *mei* used for "beauty" today might have more of an ethical connotation in the classical context. There are many speculations already in different sources about the quote, and posters in several Chinese forums in particular pointed out the similarity with a quotation by the French sculptor Auguste Rodin³:

In short, Beauty is everywhere. It is not she that is lacking to our eye, but our eyes which fail to perceive her (Rodin 2009, 48).⁴

How could Rodin's quote be mistaken for something by Confucius, we can only speculate. The phrasing of a very common idea still seems almost too similar to the Rodin's to be a mere coincidence. Perhaps the fact that this resemblance was noticed by Chinese commentators might hint at a similarity between the Chinese translation of Rodin's quote and the English translation of what is allegedly Confucius' quote, but this idea would require more historical verification. This possibility, however, opens another realm in the debate about quotes and misquotes that happen in the relation between two languages and different traditions of thought. It is not necessarily always a translation, but it can be the reverse-translation or second translation that can also cause similar results. As in the mentioned case, it is interesting to see how the misattributed English "quotes" of Confucius get translated back into Chinese and then how new matches are sought on this basis between the Classical Chinese material and this false quote.

The last two mysterious quotes were actually the most interesting, because they not only tell us where the two specific misquotes came from, but also hint at sources for other possible misattributions. The quote "Wheresoever you go, go with all your heart" appears in many Internet collections of "Confucius quotes," but in two variations, starting either with "wherever" or the more archaic "wheresoever." I could identify the source of this quote in a work which was traditionally ascribed to Confucius, the classic *Shu jing*. In the Announcement to the Prince of Kang, it is said: "往尽乃心" (Kang gao, 4), but the translation of *xin* to mean "heart" in the meaning of emotions is again culturally specific. The missing link I

3 Some of the debates which focus on this topic can be found at: Kongzi shuoguo 2019; Baidu zhidao 2018 etc.

4 In original text: *En somme la beauté est partout. Ce n'est pas elle qui manque à nos yeux, ce sont nos yeux qui manquent à l'apercevoir.*

could identify between early translations and the contemporary references, which most probably also helped to reinforce this misattribution, is a fascinating publication *The Ethics of Confucius* from 1915. The subtitle of this rather lengthy text is *The Sayings of the Master and His Disciples Upon the Conduct of the “Superior Man”* (Dawson 1915). The book was written by Miles Menander Dawson. Dawson spent all his life writing books and articles on insurance and accounting, and was a great expert in the field (among his most popular works, with an amazingly philosophical title, was a treatise on insurance, *Experience of Mortality*). On a completely different note, he also wrote several books on philosophy, on traditions as diverse as Zoroastrianism, Classical Greek philosophy and Confucius. Surprisingly well—researched and with quotations from the Five Classics and Confucian texts, the book went through numerous reprints—interestingly enough one of those even uses the famous illustrations from the 1687 *Confucius Sinarum philosophus*. The book uses quotes from the classical texts, not only *Analects* but several others, to underline the narrative about a coherent Confucian ethics. Under the title *The Ethics of Confucius*, it is perhaps more understandable how all these could be attributed to Confucius in the same way that some classical texts were attributed to him in the Chinese tradition. Although a largely forgotten name today, Dawson provides an interesting insight into the early 20th century connections between United States and China, which—apart from the 18th century Jesuit connections—might be among the most important periods for the popular knowledge of Chinese philosophy that prevails today.

A key into why (and how) Dawson, an accounting and insurance expert, dedicated so much attention and precise scholarly work to the topic of Chinese philosophy, is hidden within the book itself. *The Ethics of Confucius* is organised in seven chapters and covers a large span of topics from *junzi* and self-cultivation (chapters I. and II.), to human relations, family and the state (chapters III. to V.), with the last two chapters dedicated to fine arts (VI.) and “universal relations,” namely, the topics of death and immortality, ancestors and cosmology (VII.). The foreword was written by Wu Tingfang (伍廷芳), who was at the time of the publication of Dawson’s book the Minister of Foreign Affairs in the republican government of China. Wu studied law in the United Kingdom and was the first person of Chinese origin to be called to the English bar in the prestigious Lincoln’s Inn in 1876 (see Lincoln’s Inn 2019). A year before Dawson’s book he published an interesting text with the title *America, Through the Spectacles of an Oriental Diplomat* (Wu 2004). Wu refers to Confucius several times in this book, most often to reprimanding the American way of doing things, e.g. the lack of filial piety, the military orientation, etc. He even compares Confucius’ hardworking habits to those of Thomas Edison (Project Gutenberg 2019). Nevertheless, the main link between Dawson and the Chinese philosophical tradition was probably another author who Dawson mentions in the introduction. He expresses particular gratitude to “Chen Huan Chang.” Chen

Huanzhang (陈焕章) was an official at the very end of the Qing Empire, when he also became a friend of Kang Youwei. He was a student of economics at Columbia University, and wrote a PhD thesis in 1911, which was later printed in a 756-page book, *The Economic Principles of Confucius and His School* (Chen 1911). Upon his return, he became a figure in the attempt to make Confucianism a state religion. Kang Youwei's students pursued many such initiatives, of which the *Confucian Association* (孔教会) (*The Analects* 2014), presided over by Chen was the most prominent. Dawson also praised his Chinese colleague for trying to "restore public recognition of Confucian ethics and observances" (Dawson 1915, xiii), and was himself a member of the Confucian Association. As of present, I could not find what the personal connection was between these two scholars who both crossed the disciplines of economics and philosophy, but no doubt Chen's assistance contributed a lot to the composition of Dawson's scholarly book.

The last in the list of 10 Confucius quotes sounds even more modern by its phrasing, which could almost be imagined in some sort of self-help manual. As hinted on Garson O'Toole's webpage Quote Investigator, however, the quote is actually much older. It was attributed to Confucius in a book from 1762 with a title *The Citizen of the World: or, Letters from a Chinese Philosopher, Residing in London, to His Friends in the East* (Goldsmith 2010.). The trope of the so-called "Turkish spy," a foreigner who comments on the situation in a European country from the viewpoint of an outsider, was a popular genre trick in 18th century France and England.

The alleged author of this critical text was a fictional Chinese man called "Lien Chi Altangi," but the real author was Oliver Goldsmith. The existence of Lien Chi Altangi, however, was obviously taken very literally in Goldsmith's time. Although he mostly writes about England, he mentions Confucius constantly, even swearing "by the head of Confucius." We find the last quote from our list mentioned in Letter no. 7. In it, the fictional Lien Chi Altangi wants to provide a soothing piece of wisdom for the hardest of times. He claims to find the solace by "submitting to the stroke of Heaven" and "holding the book of Confucius" (*ibid.*, Letter VII.). He continues by randomly listing several "wise" sayings, implying that he is reading them from the same book of Confucius he had just mentioned. The section ends with the tenth quote from the analysed list, "Our greatest glory is not in never falling, but in getting up every time we do."

Surprisingly, this same paragraph, which corresponds very well to the genre of "Confucius quotes that will change your life," contains three sayings that also circulate as "Confucius quotes" today, while other passages of the book contain even more (*ibid.*):

- We should feel sorrow but not sink under its oppression.
- The heart of a wise man should resemble a mirror, which reflects every object without being sullied by any.

- The wheel of fortune turns round incessantly, and who can say to himself, I shall today be uppermost?
- We take greater pains to persuade others that we are happy than in endeavouring to think so ourselves.
- They must often change, who would be constant in happiness or wisdom.

Surprisingly this 18th century fictional travelogue seems to be one of the richest sources of misattributed or “fake” Confucius quotes, falling entirely into O’Toole’s category of concoctions, listed above.

Who Is the Author of Confucius Quotes?

If we follow O’Toole’s classification, we see that the misquotes attributed to Confucius could mostly be characterised as either concoctions or hosting, as they are either deliberate fakes or ascribed to Confucius because of the comparative prestige of his persona. Reconstructing of the ways in which misquotes were shaped, transmitted and popularised is of course a fascinating exercise in intellectual history. It does, however, also shed light on another interesting problem.

What is evident from the analysed list is that when people are quoting Confucius, they are often enough actually quoting somebody else: other Chinese classical texts, French sculptors, English writers and so on. But one particular type of misquoting Confucius is also “nothing new under the sun.” To illustrate this, let’s look at this sentence:

There are not two suns in the sky, nor two sovereigns over the people.

We cannot find anything similar in the *Analects*. The (mis)quote however, is not from any of the webpages we saw before. In its original form, it looks like this: 孔子曰：‘天无二日，民无二王。 It comes from Meng Zi (Wan zhang I.), so the misattribution could be a result of Mencius referring to a perhaps lost fragment of *Analects*, but as it is today, it is a misquote. Compared to the four misquotes among the analysed list of ten Confucius quotes, is Meng Zi’s misquote somehow more accurate than a contemporary fake quote by “Confucius?” Is the false attribution of a classical passage to Confucius somehow more correct than, for example, the fictional Lien Chi Altangi’s words by a British author? If so, why? These questions bring us to a completely different debate. As we touched upon before, the “Master said” narrative was a crucial element in the making of the Confucius tradition and the image of Confucius. What would then traditionally be the status of a misquote or, even more, a deliberate falsification? How can we interpret the decision of a later author to put his own words in the mouth of his Master? Was it done out of respect or to solidify the lineage of tradition? Or was it simply to provide his own ideas with a stronger historical authority?

Different methodological frameworks could be used to address this problem. One customary way to elaborate on this issue would be to say that cases such as falsifying of Confucius by Meng Zi cannot be judged by "our," "Western" standards, since the Chinese tradition of authorship is completely different from that of the "West." Many authors have for the last few decades claimed that the concept of authorship cannot be applied to China, or even to Asia in general, due to the virtual absence of the idea of author as the original creator of the text. As pointed out by authors such as, for example, Reynolds (Reynolds 1986, 22–28) and Huang (Huang 1994, 41–67), what would be considered the "author function" in theoretical frameworks such as that of Foucault, is structured very differently in the Asian traditions. In asserting this, the importance is stressed of the collective authorship of a learned community and power structures which, so to speak, "author" a body of text. Authorship, despite the fact that an individual name is used to signify it, is thus actually a collective undertaking of a power-determined lineage of writers, scholars and disciples. In this regard, the author of Meng Zi's phrase *is* Confucius, as far as this signifies the orthodoxy of the Confucian school. What Huang adds to this argument, is also an important insight into the blending of the border between the original text and its commentary. Even Confucius considered himself a transmitter of or a commentator on the ideas of antiquity, a claim which must be taken seriously. The distinction between Meng Zi commenting on Confucius thought and the ventriloquy of his phrase could therefore also be more blurred than it seems from today's perspective.

This, however, brings us to another view on this topic. While these claims about the different views on authorship in Chinese tradition and commentary-authorship as the traditional norm might be true for the early periods in Chinese literary history, giving this characteristic an essential cultural validity would be a grave anachronism. Although this would of course require a separate body of research, it can be observed that even within Chinese tradition the difference between the collective lineage authorship of the "Master said" narrative and the concept of individual authorship is primarily a historical one. Also in Europe, individual authorship is a conceptual phenomenon of modernity, just as well as the "death of the author" with Barthes or Foucault is historically grounded in a response to modernity. For the Vietnamese tradition this argument was very well drawn by Wynn Gadkar-Wilcox (Gadkar-Wilcox 2017, 7–33) in his analysis on authorship and authority in Vietnamese historical writing. His main point, which could be fairly adequately also be applied to China, is that the claim on the absence of the concept of authorship in Vietnamese "culture" is in itself a particularistic assertion with an evident political agenda. For the case of China, this type of—if we can use this term—orientalist claim is nothing new, the essential difference between alleged Chinese culture and that of the "West" often being described by the ideas of ahistoricity and the anti-individualism. Again, what is hidden under the claims

of alleged cultural difference is the relations of power, both when the anachronic claims of Chinese cultural difference are critical of China and when they are, in the inverted orientalist fashion, favourable. The use and abuse of these alleged cultural differences, however, seem not to alter substantially the processes of the new stage in the transformation of authorship which we witness at present.

What then is happening with the “authorship” of Confucius quotes today? If we observe the life of these sayings within the World Wide Web as a living laboratory where a new paradigm of authorship is being formed, the first thing we can notice is that the living environment of these quotes is increasingly transcultural. The quotes of “Confucius” seem to jump over the linguistic gap from Chinese to English and back (or the other way around) without much trouble. Although the label of “Confucius” still seems to carry a certain added credibility, the same process can be observed with quote “traditions” by other ancient authors. Not only are these quotes detached from their cultural traditions, in this case Chinese, but they are also becoming almost completely detached from the text of their origin. These fragments, loosely tied to their ascribed “author,” take on a new life, and are constantly in motion, not unlike the fragments of the early orally transmitted traditions. The label of the author, be it Confucius or Rodin, merely serves as a passport which helps them travel faster.

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Book Reviews

Geir Sigurðsson: *Confucian Propriety and Ritual Learning: A Philosophical Interpretation*

(2015. SUNY series in Chinese Philosophy and Culture. Albany: State University of New York Press. 177 pages. Hardcover ISBN 978-1-4384-5441-2.)

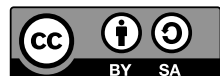
*Reviewed by Jana S. ROŠKER**

The study of rituals has been important in many different academic disciplines, because they are most often understood as formal procedures, which facilitate the fusion of rational and sensitive elements within the human psyche. The contemporary Chinese philosopher Li Zehou describes them as important social techniques, which lead at the level of external standardisation to the rational internalisation of regulations that determine human behaviour. In other words, they are significant tools for the rationalisation of collective demands and purposes and to the integration of social ethics. Due to such integral procedures, rituals have led to the formation of the essence of being human.

If we consider the central role of ethics in the Chinese philosophy, it is not surprising that the concept *li* 禮, which is most often translated into English with terms such as rituality or ritual propriety, also belongs to the crucial notions of the Chinese, and especially Confucian, ideational tradition. In the context of the presently very fashionable Confucian revival, we have been inundated with by all kinds of Confucian studies. However, most investigations of the ancient Confucian tradition from over the past three decades have neglected or ignored the important historical phenomenon of the establishment of ritual institutions and the significant philosophical grounds on which they were based. As Sigurðsson explains in the “Introduction” (p. 17), Confucian rituality is often still seen as a relic of some of the most archaic and conservative aspects of the Chinese tradition.

What sparked Geir Sigurðsson’s interest in the issue of the Confucian notion of *li*, was therefore his first intuitive insight into the fact that there must be something more important hidden beyond such superficial understandings (or prejudices), and underlying the genuine tradition of this important Confucian concept. In this interesting and valuable book, he shows why and how we should rather look upon it as an important guideline for socialisation, which can lead people through the opaque jungle of ethical and social dilemmas towards their own, most

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intimate humanness, or towards that which makes human beings human. The book also demonstrates how in the course of these transformations, the Confucian ritual moves from experience to the transcendental, from habit, tradition, and education to a common mindset.

Even though the book was published more than three years ago, it is still quite topical and remains unsurpassed. The *Outstanding Book Award*, which was presented to it last year by the *Society of Professors of Education*, was therefore well deserved and not surprising. In this work, Geir Sigurdsson reconstructs the meaning, role and manifold significance of the Confucian rituality by considering the spatial and temporal context of the present situation. This does not only mean that he wants to elaborate upon the question of what can Confucian rituality “still” offer to the present, and to select those elements of this rich classical tradition that could prove themselves to be most “useful” and “worthwhile” for such endeavours. It rather means that the author aims to offer the readers his own, often quite topical philosophical insights created upon the inspirational foundations of classical Confucian texts. In this context, he proposes a reconsideration of the notion *Li*, which is among the most controversial concepts in Confucian thought.

At the beginning of his book, the author points out (p. 12) that while ritual (*li* 禮) is one of Confucius’s most discussed notions and an integral component of the entire Confucian tradition, the term itself does not owe its origins to the Confucians. This is not surprising, for rituals belong to the earliest forms of human spiritual civilisation and symbolic production. In China, they go back to the royal families of the first three Chinese dynasties and were only later expanded, deepened, and modified in a multiplicity of ways by Confucius and his followers and commentators up until the present day. On this basis, the author highlights the fact that in the pre-Qin Confucianism, ritual became an important source of establishing moral psychology and spirituality. In the following chapters, the book documents on several levels that this fact is clearly reflected in numerous classical works of this dominant stream of thought. The author shows that in the original Confucian teachings *li*’s role cannot be reduced to the agenda of returning to the ancient tradition of the early Zhou Dynasty. It rather aims to revive its vital force and to inspire people to actively partake in the further development and evolution of this stimulating tradition. In this respect, Confucian rituality manifests itself in an “endeavour to continue forging the path that constitutes the tradition, to continue making the tradition—for without such an endeavour, the tradition runs the risk of becoming a thing of the past, a dead tradition” (p. 31). Here, it has to be noted that it is precisely this “traditionalism,” i.e. this positive evaluation of its past offerings to humankind, which leads many contemporary scholars to criticise Confucian rituality and its alleged “obsession” with propriety as outmoded and

even reactionary. Against this background, the author critically questions the instrumental rationality that was brought about by global modernisation processes and references in this context several important theoretical works of modern and contemporary Western philosophical and sociological production. Besides, the Chinese classics are in this work often examined in dialogue with both Chinese and Western interpreters and the most influential theoreticians.

The main body of the book is structured into three main chapters or “assemblages,” dealing (roughly described) with Confucian rituality and propriety through the lens of the problems linked to

- traditions and the concept of time,
- the concept of reason or “the reasonable” (in the sense of a dialectic relationship between ritual and the sense of the appropriate), and
- education as personal cultivation, internalisation of skills and values, and humanisation.

These three parts eventually flow into the “Concluding Remarks,” where Sigurðsson, among other issues, exposes the importance of being appropriate, not only for people living in the Confucian tradition, but even in a much more general sense, namely for all people living in human society. The attitude of propriety requires self-cultivation, which is, of course, a lifelong never-ending process, constantly and continuously directed towards an ethical awareness and individual integrity: “Tradition and culture must be continuously revised and reinterpreted in light of the novel circumstances arising in the ongoing transformation to which we refer as ‘reality’.” (p. 121)

In the first part of the book, Sigurðsson exposes the dynamic, flexible and adaptable nature of the Confucian concept *li* by illustrating it against the background of the specific Chinese conceptualisation of time and continuous change. These issues have been studied in detail by the narrow circles of Sinological and Chinese academia, but are doubtless of great interest for Western readers who are not experts in the specific paradigms of Chinese thought.

In the second chapter, he argues against the constricted ideas of the allegedly irrational nature of tradition that have arisen at the edge of European modernity. In contrast to such ideas, based upon an artificially constructed and allegedly absolute dichotomy of “rational enlightenment” and “irrational indoctrination” (see, for instance, p. 52), the author shows how Confucian rituality could teach us to become more “reasonable,” i.e., more open to—and, at the same time, more morally aware of—the diverse particularities of the situations in which we find ourselves. In such a form of rituality, ethics and morality become the individual’s own

self-conscious understanding of the meaning of life, value and his or her ultimate concerns.

In the third assembly, Geir Sigurðsson elaborates upon the role of education in the context of the Confucian ritual and propriety. He shows that in this respect, education is mainly seen as a tool for personal growth (in the sense of *Bildung*, pp. 81–83). He also points out the importance of the relation between ritual knowledge and aesthetic education, revealing hereby why it is important that the rituals must always be personalised. On such grounds, the role of Confucian ritual in the field of personal cultivation becomes more apparent and much more understandable. Hence, it becomes very clear why in the world of Confucian propriety education lies at the root of human existence. In the world of *li*, being human always means learning to be human. This becomes also apparent in the archaic mother tongue of Geir Sigurðsson, the Icelandic language, in which the word for education, *menntun*, is derived from the etymological meaning of “being human” (p. 84). In the endless change of our human societies, being human is always necessarily linked to the notion of becoming human, which is a never-ending process in which people can actively mould and shape new images and conditions of reality. On such grounds, the author successfully shows that both propriety and ritual learning as such are tightly linked to the issues of humanness. Hence, one could conclude that they are still of utmost importance as a precious tool which helps us in valuing ourselves and our fellow human beings in spite of all difficulties we encounter (and create) in today’s strange world.