

Reading Through Recovered Ancient Chinese Manuscripts. Edited by Shirley Chan. Sydney, Australia: The Oriental Society of Australia, Inc. 2020. pp. xvii + 362, AU\$30.00, US\$19.00. ISBN: 978-0-9592269-3-5 (paperback).

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Shirley Chan and twelve other established scholars prepared fourteen insightful, detailed textual analyses of several of the recovered ancient Chinese manuscripts. The book consists of a Preface, Acknowledgements, fourteen chapters, and a list of contributors. The five chapter titles that begin with Chinese are written in Chinese, with English abstracts.

In the Preface Shirley Chan notes the diversity in unity of the essays. The authors bring their respective areas of specialization and different disciplinary methods for explicating the philosophical, philological, historical, and literary contents and contexts of the recovered texts. Their unifying focus is “how do these recovered texts shed new light on important aspects of ancient China, from text-thought interactions, mythology and philosophy to theoretical construction and philological analysis, scholastic lineages and their evolution pertaining to a particular genre of literature?” (pp. vii-viii). Most of the chapters are based on papers the authors had presented at a conference held at Macquarie University on “Reading the Old in the Light of the Newly Discovered: An International Symposium on Chinese Philosophy and Ancient Chinese Texts” in December 2014. The authors analyze several of the texts discovered over the past century that date to the pre-Qin, Han, and Tang dynasties, respectively.

Cai Xianjin authored chapter 1, “上古宇宙生成論的創世文化思維 Ancient Chinese Creation Myths and Cosmogony.” It is often noted that early Greek mythology influenced the development of Greek philosophy. Sinologists who only focus on the Confucian classics tend to play down the role of mythology in the development of Pre-Qin (Chinese) philosophy. Cai compares two received texts, the *Book of Changes* and the *Laozi*, with four excavated texts, namely the Warring States *Chu Silk Manuscript: Section 1* from Zidanku in Changsha, *The Great One Generates Water (Taiyi sheng shui 太一生水)* in the Guodian Bamboo Slips, the *Constancy, at the Outset (Hengxian 恆先)* in the Shanghai Museum, and *The Yellow Emperor's Four Classics: Fundamentals of Dao (Huangdi sijing: Daoyuan 黃帝四經: 道*

原) in the Mawangdui Silk Manuscripts, and proceeds to argue that mythological genesis stories influenced the development of cosmogony and ontology in early Chinese philosophy.

Chapter 2 is by Shirley Chan, “From Nothing to Something: Reading the Shanghai Museum’s *Hengxian* 恆先 (Constancy, at the Outset).” After a concise review of how “constancy” (*heng*) is used in other pre-Qin works, Chan makes a strong case for her interpretation of the work’s title, which underlies the interpretation she presents in the rest of the essay. She argues that the *Hengxian* develops a political philosophy and offers advice for the ruler and ministers to model the constancy of nature’s cosmic patterns so as to maintain an orderly society and state.

Chapter 3 is an English translation of a previously published article in Chinese by Li Rui. “The Early Chinese Concept of *de* 德” explicates early uses of the character *de* to establish its fundamental meaning and how this meaning changed over time. Analyzing received and excavated texts to explore the meaning of *de*, *qi*, and *dao*, he builds a case that the *Laozi* further developed various connotations of these key concepts. Arguing that the development of an anthropocentric focus on efficacious praxis led to the promotion of *de* over the cosmic *dao* in Daoism. Hence, the HuangLao philosophers were moved to set the *de* chapters before the *dao* chapters of the *Laozi* as is seen in the arrangement of the Mawangdui *Laozi*. As *dao* studies continued to develop in the Han, scholars, likely Liu Xiang, rearranged the *Laozi* into its received order with the *dao* chapters preceding the *de* chapters.

Ding Sixin authored “馬王堆帛書《易傳》的哲學思想 Philosophical Thinking in the Mawangdui Silk Manuscripts *Yizhuan* 易傳.” Chapter 4 makes the case that the silk manuscript *Yizhuan* influenced the received edition.

Chapter 5 entitled “Reading *Laozi* 老子 Section 54” by Barbara Hendrichske offers a comparative analysis of poem 54 by examining the various versions of the *Laozi* from Mawangdui and Guodian with the received *Laozi*. Comparing the text of poem 54 with the Great Learning, and especially the Hanfeizi’s commentarial chapters on the *Laozi*, the Huainanzi and other materials. Hendrichske proposes that there were different versions of the *Laozi* in circulation that allowed for the inconsistent interpretations of the role of the ruler’s self-cultivation in maintaining social-political order.

Chen Jian wrote chapter 6, “說《性自命出》的“牛生而俛”及相關問題 An Interpretation of ‘*Niusheng er chang*’ 牛生而俛 in the Guodian Bamboo *Xingzimingchu* 性自命出.” Drawing on paleography and philology, Chen argues that *chang* 俛 should be a variant of *zhang* 𦉳, and read the passage to mean “oxen are born with the ability to ruminate.” Based on this interpretation, Chen builds the case that the inborn nature (*xing* 性) of things and creatures differs from the nature of humans in that the human willingness to study and learn is not an innate trait.

Chapter 7, “《論語》鄉黨篇‘色斯舉矣’新証：兼釋帛書《五行》篇的‘色然’ A New Exposition of 色斯舉矣 in the Confucian *Analects* and an Analysis of 色然 in the Mawangdui Silk Manuscripts ‘Wuxing’ ” is by Liao Mingchun. Comparing the meaning of 色 in the *Wuxing* and the *Analects*, Liao argues that, in the phrase *seran* 色然, 色 should be read as *ai* 礙 in the *Wuxing*, and in the phrase *se si ju yi* 色斯舉矣 in the *Analects*, 色 should be taken to be *yi* 疑, implying “respectfulness” (*jing* 敬). This reading of *se* is preferable to “sex or lust.”

Chapter 8, “Scholars’ Backgrounds and Their Impact on Reading Newly Discovered Texts: Approaches to ‘Zhongxin zhi dao’ (忠信之道)” by Michael Schimmelpfennig, offers a new translation of this short text. He also provides a careful analysis of three prior studies to show how the disciplinary backgrounds of those scholars limited their understandings and translations of the text. Standing on their shoulders, Schimmelpfennig provides a well-rounded and detailed analysis and fresh translation.

Scott Cook authored chapter 9. “Kong Zi Had Audience with Ji Huanzi 孔子見季桓子 and Its Place in Confucian Intellectual History of the Warring States Era.” After reviewing the unearthed text and its initial reconstruction, Cook offers a reordering of the strip fragments, providing a revised transcription and translation. He offers a new analysis and an in-depth discussion of its importance for understanding the development of fourth century BCE Confucianism.

Guo Qiyong authored chapter 10, “上博楚簡有關孔子師徒的記載及其與《論語》的關係 Records of Confucius and His Disciples in the Shanghai Museum Chu Bamboo Manuscripts and Their Relationship with the Confucian *Analects*.” Guo discusses three texts

from the Shanghai Museum Chu Bamboo Manuscripts, namely, “Ji Kangzi Asked Confucius” 季康子問於孔子, “Zhong Gong” 仲弓, and “In Government” 從政. He aims to demonstrate that these texts supplement the *Analecets* and make the case that they belong to the mid to late Warring State period.

Constance A. Cook authored chapter 11, “The Curse of Female Trigrams in the Fourth-Century BCE Stalk Divination Text *Shifa* 筮法.” Based on her co-authored book with Zhao Lu (*Stalk Divination: A Newly Discovered Alternative to the I-Ching*, Oxford University Press, 2017), Cook explicates the role of what the *Shifa* labels as the four female trigrams, its unique use of stalk manipulation for divination, the numerical codes of the trigrams, as well as their signs, symbolism, omens, and curses.

In chapter 12, “Friend or Foe? Gift-Giving as Read in Ode 64 ‘Mugua’ 木瓜, ‘Kongzi shilun’ 孔子詩論 and Related Commentaries,” Daniel Lee argues that, contrary to the traditional view of gift-giving is an act of goodwill, it can be interpreted as a hostile act based on contemporary socio-anthropological theories and some ethnic minority perspectives.

Chapter 13 “Rhapsody on the Divine Crows (*Shenwu fu* 神鳥賦), Third Century BCE: Theme, Literary History and Gender,” by Lily Xiao Hong Lee, discusses this Rhapsody from the western Han (206 BCE- 24 CE), which was discovered in 1993 in Lianyungang, Donghai, Jiangsu province. She makes the case that such vernacular rhapsody had been written centuries earlier than previously believed, and that birds were an important motif in ancient literature. She also draws out the visibility of women in ancient folk literature.

Also, by Lily Xiao Hong Lee is chapter 14, “The Lost Link: The Place of *Yunyao ji* 雲謠集 in the Birth of *ci* 詞 Lyrics.” The Cloud Ballad (*Yunyao ji* ca. 922 CE), discovered at Dunhuang, provides the missing link between Tang dynasty *shi* 詩 poetry and the advent of *ci* 詞 lyrics in the Five Dynasties that flourished in the Song dynasty.

Reading Through Recovered Ancient Chinese Manuscripts offers scholars an important resource for the intriguing study of excavated texts. It is a welcome, insightful, and greatly needed addition to the growing body of literature for philologists, scholars, and philosophy professors to study these lost and found sources.

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