

1                   Tang Political Treatise from Dunhuang

2                   “Heavenly Instructions” (*Tian xun*)

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6                   **Introduction: Tang Emperors’ Instructions**

7 In 1937, the eminent Chinese scholar Wang Zhongmin 王重民 (1903–  
8 1975) found in the Pelliot Collection of the Bibliothèque nationale de  
9 France an untitled fragment of a Chinese work bearing the pressmark  
10 P.5523. He tentively identified the work as the family admonition of the  
11 Tang Emperor Gaozong 高宗 (650–683) entitled “Heavenly Instructions”  
12 (*Tian xun* 天訓) that had long been considered lost.<sup>1</sup> The manuscript  
13 consisted of two conjoining parts of 97 and 90 lines of characters of the  
14 main text and after the restoration these two parts constituted a single  
15 scroll lacking beginning and end with dimensions of 27.3 × 449.5 cm.  
16 The main text was written in large *kai* 楷 script with 17 characters per  
17 line, while the commentaries were written in double lines with 22 charac-  
18 ters. The discovered copy of the text was dated to the reign of Empress  
19 Wu (684–795) on the grounds that the characters 日, 月 and 國 appeared  
20 in the form introduced by her. The reverse side of the scroll bore the post-  
21 face (*houyu* 後語) to the *Spring and Autumn Annals* (*Chunqiu* 春秋), and  
22 the text contained numerous variant readings and therefore differed from  
23 its received version.

24 The Tang period was the time of genuine flourishing and splendor of  
25 the Chinese empire and engendered numerous works dedicated to issues  
26 of governing the state. Some of those works belong to a special genre of  
27 emperors’ instructions (*huangdi xunjie* 皇帝訓誡). Their authorship is as-  
28 cribed to Tang emperors who, having unified the empire’s territory after  
29 400 years of disunity, wanted their descendants to inherit the principles of  
30 rule they had introduced. In 684, shortly after his enthronement, Taizong

<sup>1</sup> Wang 1958: 188–190; Twitchett 1966: 3.

1 太宗 (627–649) expounded his political tasks in the work titled *The*  
 2 *Golden Mirror* (*Jin jing* 金鏡).<sup>2</sup> In 648, at the very end of his life, he  
 3 handed his son, the future Emperor Gaozong, the didactic treatise *Rules*  
 4 *for an Emperor*” (*Di fan* 帝範). In 675, Empress Wu composed her *Rules*  
 5 *for Subordinates* (*Chen gui* 臣軌) in model of *Di fan*, addressing the  
 6 treatise to courtiers and officials of the highest rank.<sup>3</sup> The subsequent des-  
 7 tiny of these two works was not easy: *Chen gui* had been considered lost  
 8 under the Southern Song until its complete version was discovered in Ja-  
 9 pan.<sup>4</sup> *Di fan* had also been partly lost in the Song period but was recon-  
 10 structed by the Yuan scholar and commentator Wu Lai 吳萊 (1297–1340)  
 11 who discovered a complete text of the treatise in Yunnan Province.<sup>5</sup>

12 The full title of the *Tian xun* is *Yuan shou, qian xing, wei cheng, gu-*  
 13 *gong lun* 元首前星維城股肱論 [The Discourse about the Ruler, His Heir,  
 14 Ruling Clan and Counselors]. It was compiled by Gaozong in the sixth  
 15 month of the second year of Xianqing 顯慶 era (657) and initially con-  
 16 sisted of two parts: “*Yuan shou, jing xing, wei cheng, gugong jie*”  
 17 元首荆星維城股肱誡 and “*Gugong lun*” 股肱論. By the Emperor’s or-  
 18 der, a commentary on the text was written under the direction of Xu Jing-  
 19 zong 許敬宗 (592–672) who held the post of the Minister of Rites and  
 20 was a member of the Institute for the Advancement of Literature (*Hong-*  
 21 *wenguan xueshi* 弘文館學士). He introduced the commentary with his  
 22 preface. The work *Tian xun* by Gaozong in four *juan* is mentioned in the  
 23 bibliographic treatises of the two Tang histories,<sup>6</sup> in the *Tang huiyao* 唐  
 24 會要<sup>7</sup>, in the Song *leishu* 類書 encyclopedias such as the *Cefu yuangui*  
 25 冊府元龜<sup>8</sup> and the *Yuhai* 玉海.<sup>9</sup>

26 The *Tian xun* was obviously lost after the Song period and was subse-  
 27 quently discovered only among the manuscripts of the Dunhuang cave  
 28

<sup>2</sup> Tang Taizong’s *Jin jing* was translated into Russian by A. G. Vladykin in 1805 (See Archives of Orientalists of the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the Russian Academy of Sciences, fond 88, unit 6, ff. 19–26v).

<sup>3</sup> For the English translation of *Jin jing* and *Di fan*, see Twitchett 1996: 18–33, 50–92. The Russian translation of *Di fan* can be found in Popova, 1995: 44–73, and Russian translation of *Chen gui* in Popova 2001: 130–167.

<sup>4</sup> Franke 1982: 180.

<sup>5</sup> *Siku quanshu jianming mulu*: 343.

<sup>6</sup> *Jiu Tang shu*, ch. 47.27: 2026; *Xin Tang shu*, ch. 59.49: 1512.

<sup>7</sup> *Tang huiyao*, ch. 36: 656.

<sup>8</sup> *Cefu yuangui*, ch. 40: 452. In place of character *qian* 前 (‘front’), here the title of the treatise has *jing* 荆, which can mean ‘my wife’: 元首荆星維城股肱.

<sup>9</sup> *Yuhai*, ch. 28: 26b.

1 library. From this apparently large work only four chapters (*pian* 篇) sur-  
2 vive: chapters 20–23 but of these chapters 20 and 23 are incomplete.  
3 Chapter 20 is devoted to the virtuous conduct of rulers towards their fami-  
4 lies. Examples of two virtuous women, the wife of Ling gong 靈公 (613–  
5 600 B.C.), the Prince of Wei, and the wife of the official Shan Tao 山濤  
6 (205–283), are cited as paragons of wifely understanding and support.  
7 The text states that harmony in the family is achieved by daily efforts of  
8 its members, but in fact it is easy to perturb; the lack of harmony in the  
9 emperor’s family may bring disaster upon all under heaven. Showing  
10 respect towards his spouse is an indispensable virtue of the ruler, while  
11 recklessly indulging women’s whims is a clear demonstration of weak-  
12 ness. The last tyrant rulers of the Xia and Yin dynasties perished owing  
13 much to their unbridled passion for their concubines, and the decline of  
14 the Zhou and Han ruling houses were also connected with the growing in-  
15 fluence of women.

16 Chapter 21 entitled “The Genuine Rectitude” (*Zhen Zheng* 真正) says  
17 that the essence of true rectitude manifests in different ways in the con-  
18 duct of the ruler, the official and the ordinary man. The monarch’s recti-  
19 tude manifests itself by way of extending his harmonizing influence all  
20 over the universe. The improvement of the universe is in the ruler’s pow-  
21 er because he is essentially one with nature; he adopts and embodies the  
22 most important elements of the world. It is from the ruler that universal  
23 moral transformation begins. Honesty and moral loftiness proper to the  
24 monarch, as well as his skillful conduct form the basis for real order in  
25 the country. Only a ruler endowed with genuine rectitude is able to foster  
26 a wise official. The genuine rectitude of the official comprises honesty,  
27 an unbiased outlook and skillful ways of showing the ruler his imperfec-  
28 tions. The mutual understanding between ruler and official and the honesty  
29 of their cooperation constitute the foundation for governing the people.  
30 The genuine rectitude of the common subject is decency, charity, modesty  
31 and contentedness.

32 Chapter 22 “The Pure Caution” (*Qing Shen* 清慎) is devoted to the  
33 principle moral qualities of the official, i.e. unselfishness or disinterested-  
34 ness. The official should be prudent and of impeccable conduct, he should  
35 care for what others may say about him. He should engage in altruistic  
36 deeds without the thought of reward. His avarice and rush for wealth cause  
37 harm to others; they may bring about the most evil consequences and are  
38 worse than natural calamities.

39 Chapter 23 “To Look into Responses” (*Zheng Gan* 徵感) has come  
40 down to us incomplete. It states that the monarch’s actions cause immedi-  
41 ate response of natural forces. Virtuous rule causes favourable phenomena

1 while cruelty and tyranny result in natural calamities. As “all disasters  
2 come from human race,” the harmonious state of natural forces, a condi-  
3 tion of orderly labour, depends on the ruler’s deeds.

4 The *Tian xun* has a stylistic, categorical and genre affinity with imper-  
5 ors’ instructions of the early Tang period. The works *Jin jing* and *Di fan*  
6 by Taizong, as well as the *Chen gui* by Empress Wu were written in the  
7 “pair style” of rhythmical prose (*pian wen* 駢文) in keeping with the  
8 metre of 4 or 6 characters. Chapter titles in accordance with the style of  
9 pair constructions are composed of two characters. By its genre the *Tian*  
10 *xun* may certainly be placed among the “family instructions” (*jia xun* 家  
11 訓). Works instructing children and relatives had been wide spread in  
12 China since ancient times and the earliest of them *Ji Dan jia xun* 姬旦家  
13 訓 is ascribed to Shu Dan 叔旦, the Duke of Zhou 周公, who was the  
14 younger brother of King Wen 文王. During the reign of the Han and the  
15 Six Dynasties, family instructions were created by elders of large houses,  
16 but instructions on the imperial level began to spread only from the early  
17 Tang period. The earliest of such writings were expressly didactic in char-  
18 acter, focusing on moral postulates related to the essence of emperor’s  
19 power, while rarely discussing practical issues of governing the state.

20 The political ideology of the Tang dynasty emphasized pragmatic ob-  
21 jectives of statecraft. Administering the state began to be viewed as a mor-  
22 ally motivated but nevertheless essentially rational and effective activity  
23 accomplishing tasks other than ideal of appeasement (*taiping* 太平 or *and-*  
24 *ing* 安定). Tang imperial ideology was striving to find rational ways of  
25 understanding politics and to elaborate categories and concepts fit to enun-  
26 ciate new ideas of state power and administration. Endeavours to base cur-  
27 rent political decisions on historical precedents typical of Chinese ideol-  
28 ogy became more concrete and pragmatic. Roles and duties of the emperor  
29 himself, his relatives, high-ranking dignitaries and officials became much  
30 more articulate. The ideological changes mentioned above conditioned the  
31 spread of the imperial family instructions in the early Tang period.

32 Imperial family instructions became especially widespread during the  
33 reigns of the Ming and Qing dynasties. The year 1395 saw the completion  
34 of the treatise *Imperial Ming Ancestral Instructions* (*Huang Ming zu xun*  
35 皇明祖訓), expounding the main political principles proclaimed by Zhu  
36 Yuanzhang 朱元璋 (1328–1398), the founder of the Ming dynasty. Sub-  
37 sequently, during the Qing dynasty reign, almost every ruler would hand  
38 down to his successors an ample encyclopedic corpus of works on state-  
39 craft written in the genre of the emperor’s sacred instructions (皇帝聖訓  
40 *huangdi sheng xun*). The august writers of such works mostly focused on  
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1 the practical aspects of governing, such as the system of the palace guard  
2 service, the daily schedule of imperial family, the system of legal proceed-  
3 ings, the relationship with neighboring states, etc.

4 Wang Zhongmin noted that the *Tian xun* was close to the *Di fan*, but it  
5 is evident that their contents differed considerably. Chapter titles in the  
6 *Di fan* present a declaration of a sort of a program, while in the *Tian xun*  
7 they are rather moral admonitions. In its contents the *Tian xun* is closer to  
8 the *Chen gui* of Empress Wu. Her treatise, though it does not belong to  
9 the genre of family instructions (*jia xun* 家訓), focuses on the moral quali-  
10 ties rather than functions of ruler and official.

11 In the *Chen gui*, Empress Wu emphasizes that the ruler and his official  
12 are one in essence, which is conditioned by the ultimate wisdom of exist-  
13 tence, in the same way loyal and uninterested service of the subjects to  
14 their ruler is as natural and trustful as the service of children to their par-  
15 ents. The problems of roles and functions of high-ranking bureaucracy  
16 touched upon in Taizong’s *Di fan* were not discussed in the *Chen gui*.  
17 The treatise of Empress Wu, with its detailed treatment of the role of the  
18 official in governing the state, certainly was a response on the part of the  
19 Empress to the covert discontent of dignitaries who were, during her reign,  
20 deprived of the opportunity to take important political decisions and en-  
21 gage in advisory activities. Therefore in her detailed description of the  
22 qualities of an ideal official, Empress Wu focused on inner harmony,  
23 modesty, prudence, renunciation, reticence, skillful ways of maneuvering,  
24 persuasion, hinting, avoiding conflicts, and putting one’s thoughts in the  
25 mouth of the ruler, rather than on personal talents and abilities that should  
26 serve the benefit of the state. In the *Chen gui* the Empress emphasized the  
27 commitment to the Dao, and the knowledge of skillful ways to serve the  
28 ruler as the most important qualities of the high-ranking official. These  
29 ideas accorded with the principles of her political regimen and served to  
30 support the validity of her political norms. The theory of statecraft during  
31 the reign of Empress Wu generalized and analyzed political practice by  
32 means of ethical categories, while the social ideology of the period brought  
33 to the foreground the evaluation of political and social statuses rather than  
34 functions of power.

35 Works in the genre of rulers’ family instructions were also popular in  
36 Europe, e.g. the *Admonition to Children* (ca. 1099) by Prince Vladimir Mo-  
37 nomach (1053–1125). This work, like many other writings of this kind, is  
38 related to the Greek and Byzantine traditions and to didactic Christian  
39 literature aimed at fostering righteous Christians and at elucidating moral  
40 admonitions.

1 **Translation of the “Heavenly Instructions”**

2 The Lord of Wei [Ling gong] recognized [Qu] Boyu<sup>10</sup> from a distance [by  
3 the sound of the coach approaching] to the gate. Shan gong without quit-  
4 ting [his] chamber was able to outargue [Ruan] Sizong.<sup>11</sup> So what is the  
5 way to achieve harmony, which is like the [sound] of zither and harp, or  
6 the unanimity in a magpie’s nest?<sup>12</sup> It is not something to covet, while  
7 lack of restraint appears only in one’s desires when one is tormented by a  
8 passion for songstresses<sup>13</sup> and dancers and starts illegal connections. To  
9 aim at transforming [the people] when trouble threatens all under heaven  
10 comes from the [emperor’s] chambers – oh, how difficult this is!

<sup>10</sup> In the *Lienü zhuan* 列女傳 there is a story about the wife of the ruler of Wei kingdom Ling gong 衛靈公 (613–600 B.C.). One night Ling gong heard a coach approaching the front palace used by high-ranking dignitaries. The coach stopped for a moment and then proceeded to another gate that was not meant for solemn occasions. Ling gong asked his spouse who that might have been. She answered that it was chancellor Qu Boyu 蘧伯玉. Ling gong inquired how she managed to know that. His spouse answered: “I have heard that in accordance with the rite of passing through the gate [intended for] junior dukes one should have princely horses for higher esteem. However, loyal dignitaries and respectful sons would never accept ostentatious honoring and would never make inexcusable mistakes. Qu Boyu is a wise dignitary. [He] is humane, clever and shows respect [to the seniors] in his actions. My Lord, a man like him would never act in an ignorant way upsetting the rite. Judging from that I have recognized him” (*Lienü zhuan*, ch. 3, p. 4a–4b).

<sup>11</sup> Shan gong 山公 or Shan Tao 山濤 (205–283) was a dignitary of the Western Jin dynasty, one of the Seven Virtuous Men of the Bamboo Grove (*Zhulin qi xian* 竹林七賢). The other six members of the group were Ruan Ji 阮籍 (210–263 A.D., second name Sizong 嗣宗), Ji Kang 稽康 (223–262 A.D.), Xiang Xiu 向秀, Liu Ling 劉伶, Ruan Xian 阮咸 and Wang Rong 王戎. These seven gentlemen exhibited behaviour unrestrained by social conventions, and often gathered together in bamboo groves to discuss philosophy, compose poetry, make music and drink wine. The spouse of Shan Tao was a lady from the Han 韓 family. Once, when Ruan Ji came to Shan Tao’s place she suggested to him to stay overnight, after that Shan Tao said that he could completely outargue Ruan Ji in all of their discussions (*Tian xun*, commentary).

<sup>12</sup> Here we find images from the *Shijing* 詩經: the ‘magpie’s nest’ (*que chao* 鵲巢) is a symbol of wifely virtues, and ‘zither and harp’ (*qin se* 琴瑟) are a symbol of family unanimity. A commentary on the poem “Que chao” states: “Magpie’s nest is a symbol of virtues of the spouse” 鵲巢夫人之德 (*Shijing*, ch. 1, p. 10a). The poem “Chang di” 常棣 says: “The harmony of love of wife and children is like a [joint] sound of zither and harp” 妻子好合, 如鼓琴瑟 (*Shijing*, ch. 9, p. 4b).

<sup>13</sup> Here the character 哥 should be read as 歌, which could be used for the verb ‘to sing’ or the noun ‘songstress’ in Classical Chinese.

1 Close and distant, wise and simple, all want to avoid suffering and to  
 2 attain happiness. In remote ages and now [all] want it the same way. Once  
 3 the Chu [Zhuang] wang wanted to receive Xia Ji<sup>14</sup> [in his house]. Wuchen  
 4 dissuaded him and Zhuang wang decided not to receive her. [Afterwards]  
 5 Wuchen himself took her to [his house]. Xia Ji diverted the disaster from  
 6 the kingdom of Chu but brought it on Wuchen’s kin. Wuchen was loyal to  
 7 the state of Chu and did not take care for himself. Was that not the reason  
 8 why he discarded his initial plan?

9 Only having come to know about the firmness of Yang Bing<sup>15</sup> and the  
 10 purity of [Liuxia] Hui<sup>16</sup> it is possible to become an eternal moral paragon  
 11 for future generations.

12 The Dao of a state’s fall and of a family’s decay lies not only from prof-  
 13 ligacy, though much evil, no doubt, arises from it. Moxi and Daji influ-

<sup>14</sup> Xia Ji 夏姬, a girl of rare beauty, was the daughter of Mu gong 穆公 (625–606 B.C.), ruler of the kingdom of Zheng. First she was married to Yu Shu 御叔, the chancellor of the kingdom of Chen, and gave birth to a son named Zhengshu 徵舒. After the death of Yu Shu she started connections with the Chen ruler Ling gong 靈公 (613–599 B.C.) and the dignitaries Kong Ning 孔寧 and Yi Xingfu 儀行父. Zhengshu killed Ling gong, and Kong Ning together with Yi Xingfu fled to Chu and asked Zhuang wang (613–591 B.C.), the ruler of Chu, to attack Chen. Xia Ji was captured, brought to Chu and given in marriage to the official Xiang Lao 襄老. After his death through mediation of Shen gong Wuchen 巫臣 (Qu Wu 屈巫) she was taken back to her native kingdom of Zheng. At the end of her life she was involved with Wuchen and fled with him to the kingdom of Jin where Wuchen was elevated to the rank of *xing dafu* 刑大夫. Fan, ruler of Chu, who also coveted Xia Ji, destroyed Wuchen’s entire family. Seeking revenge, Wuchen achieved that the kingdoms of Jin and Wu allied themselves against Chu and conquered it. In a commentary to the *Tian xun* an episode from the *Zuo zhuan* is cited (Chapter 12, “Cheng gong” 成公, part I), illustrating Wuchen’s fidelity to Zhuang wang, who wanted to attack Chen to capture Xia Ji: “Zhuang wang wanted to capture Xia Ji. Sheng gong Wuchen said: ‘It is impossible. You, my Lord, usually [summon] the *zhuhou* 諸侯 to punish crimes. Now [you want] to capture Xia Ji because you lust after her. Lust is a vice, and vice is a grave crime. <...> To summon the *zhuhou* in order to commit a grave crime means not to care about them. That is what you, my Lord, are aiming at.’ Thereafter the king discarded his plan” (*Zuo zhuan*, ch. 12, p. 9a–9b).

<sup>15</sup> Yang Bing 楊秉, an official in the Eastern Han dynasty (25–220 C.E.), held the posts of the regional inspector (*cishi* 刺史) and defender-in-chief (*taiwei* 太尉). His name was recorded in history owing to his utterance: “I can stand firm against three temptations: vine, women’s charms, and wealth” 我有三不惑, 酒色財也.

<sup>16</sup> Liuxia Hui 柳下惠 (720–621 B.C.) was a righteous official who served in the kingdom of Lu during the Chunqiu period. He has become a paragon of a chaste gentleman (*Kongzi jiayu*, ch. 2, p. 10a).

1 ended the fate of the Xia and Yin<sup>17</sup> [dynasties], the woman of the Di  
 2 [tribes]<sup>18</sup> and [Zhao] Feiyan<sup>19</sup> caused the downfall of the Zhou and Han  
 3 [houses]. All these paths to Lu, the Qi maidens, [trysts] in mulberry groves  
 4 and over the Qi [River]<sup>20</sup> influence people's morals and cause them to be  
 5 changeable as wind. When vicious life is openly led at court and [the noble-  
 6 men] commit adultery with wives of close relatives, start connections with  
 7 women of [higher] rank, find favourites among women of lower rank, and  
 8 openly [indulge in adultery], they are worse than animals! As for women  
 9 of captivating appearance<sup>21</sup> they are surely made favourites!

<sup>17</sup> Moxi 妹嬉, the favourite concubine of the tyrant Jie 桀, the last ruler of the Xia dynasty, was a beautiful but dissipated woman. It is generally accepted that it is mainly due to the fact that Jie became enamoured of her and indulged her whims that he had lost his state. She perished from the hands of Cheng Tang together with Jie (*Lienü zhuan*, ch. 7, p. 1a–1b). Daji 妲己, the concubine of Zhou, the last ruler of the Yin dynasty, who also became notorious for her disgraceful behavior and her negative influence on the ruler, was killed by King Wu, founder of the Zhou dynasty (*Lienü zhuan*, ch. 7, p. 1b–2b).

<sup>18</sup> The principle wife of Zhou Xiang wang 襄王 (651–619 B.C.) belonged to the Di tribes. In 636 B.C., Xiang wang decided to dispose her, and in the end the Di people attacked Zhou, killed the dignitary Tangbo and the councilor Fuchen. Xiang wang fled to Zheng and his wife enthroned her son Shudai. In 635 B.C., Wen gong, the ruler of the Jin kingdom brought Xiang wang back to his capital and killed Shudai (*Shiji*, ch. 4, p. 23b–24a).

<sup>19</sup> Zhao Fei-yan 趙飛燕 (d. 1 B.C.), the spouse of Emperor Cheng (32–7 B.C.) and the daughter of Chengyang hou Zhao Lin 趙臨, was accepted to the palace as a concubine titled Lady of Handsome Fairness (*jieyu* 婕妤). After the empress was disposed she became the principle wife of Emperor Cheng. For more than 10 years Zhao Feiyan and her sister Zhao Zhaoyi 趙昭儀 were favourites of Emperor Cheng. They were childless and therefore people said that ‘the Zhao kin sowed discord in the emperor’s family’. After Emperor Ping 平帝 (1–5 C.E.) ascended the throne, Zhao Feiyan was deprived of all ranks and committed suicide.

<sup>20</sup> The poem from the *Shijing* entitled “Zai lin” 載臨 is dedicated to the departure of Wenjiang 文姜, Princess of Qi, to the house of her husband, Lu Huan gong 桓公 (711–694 B.C.) (*Shijing*, ch. 5, p. 6b–7a). The Princess was reputed to be having an incestuous relations with her brother. The images of trysts in mulberry groves (*sang zhong* 桑中) and over the Qishui River (*Qi zhi shang* 淇之上) were also borrowed from the *Shijing* (see the poem “Sang zhong” 桑中 (*Shijing*, ch. 3, p. 3b–4a, Legge, vol. IV, part 1, p. 78). The commentarial tradition associates the poem with the princes of Wei Xuan gong 瑄公 (718–698 B.C.) and Hui gong 惠公 (699–697 B.C.) notorious for their utmost profligacy.

<sup>21</sup> ‘Captivating appearance’ (*zhi rong* 冶容) is an image from the *Xici zhuan* 繫辭傳: “Captivating appearance induces profligacy” (*zhi rong hui yin* 冶容誨淫) (*Yijing*, ch. 3, p. 109).



1 When the palace is a wild of lust, and the country neglects the affairs  
2 of ruling.<sup>22</sup> When people do not see virtues [of the senior], and the rite and  
3 moral code lose their power. Even if one wants to avoid mortal danger is  
4 it possible to achieve that? The admonitions of the *Shu[jing]* and *Shi[jing]*  
5 are not just empty words!

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## [Chapter] 21. The Genuine Rectitude

9 The *Yi[jing]* says that the merit of creation lies in firmness.<sup>23</sup> The *Shu[jing]*  
10 contains such words: “The path of the ruler is right and straight”.<sup>24</sup> And  
11 thus said Confucius: “The essence of ruling consists in correct actions”.<sup>25</sup>  
12 Oh, how deep the meaning of genuine rectitude is!

13 To rule the vast area without having passion for even a little thing, to  
14 equal in virtue to Heaven and Earth, to equal in brightness to the Sun and  
15 Moon,<sup>26</sup> to listen with the ears of all under heaven, to look with the eyes  
16 of all who live amidst the seas, to deny the music of Zheng [kingdom] and  
17 to estrange flatterers,<sup>27</sup> to cut short vices and passion for luxuries and to  
18 forbid foreign things,<sup>28</sup> to inevitably punish for crime, to always reward for  
19 good deeds – this is what the genuine rectitude of the perfectly wise ruler is.

<sup>22</sup> The first part of the phrase is a citation from the *Shangshu* where in “Wu zi zhi ge” 五子之歌 we find: “When the palace is a wild of lust, and the country is a wild for hunting” 内作色荒，外作禽荒 (*Shangshu*, ch. 3.3, p. 12a; Legge, vol. III, part I, p. 159).

<sup>23</sup> “Creation. Elementary accomplishment. Firmness is favourable” 乾. 元亨利贞 [*Yijing*, ch. 1, p. 1; Schutsky, p. 242].

<sup>24</sup> “Without perversity, without one-sidedness, the royal path is right and straight” 無反無側，王道正直 (*Shangshu*, ch. 7.6, p. 4a; Legge, vol. III, pt. II, p. 332).

<sup>25</sup> Citation from the *Lunyu* in J. Legge’s translation: “To govern means to rectify” 政者正也 (*Lunyu*, ch. 6.12, p. 18b; Legge, vol. I, p. 122).

<sup>26</sup> The *Xici zhuan* contains a phrase: “*Dao* of the Sun and Moon is a pure light” 日月之道。貞明者也 (*Yijing*, ch. 3, p. 120). The term 貞 *zhen* is one of those most widely used in the “Book of Changes” and is interpreted as “firmness” and “being” (Schutsky 1997: 534).

<sup>27</sup> The *Lunyu* says: “Banish the song of Zheng, and keep far specious talkers. The Zheng songs are licentious, specious talkers are dangerous” 放鄭聲遠佞人。放鄭淫佞人殆 (*Lunyu*, ch. 8.15, c. 4a; Legge, vol., p. 162).

<sup>28</sup> Chapter “Lü ao” 旅獒 of the *Shangshu* says: “When he (the prince) does not look on foreign things as precious, foreigners will come to him” 無寶遠物則遠人格也 (*Shangshu*, ch. 7.7, p. 7b; Legge, vol. III, part II, p. 349).

1 To serve devotedly one's sovereign and to remain loyal [to him] after  
 2 his death, to be useful to one's state, to work for the benefit of the people,  
 3 to advise openly, to voice one's opinion truthfully, to expose [ruler's]  
 4 faults frankly, to indispensably admonish, to preserve the laws of the Em-  
 5 pire, to distrust one's emotions, to find the wise within the state's borders,  
 6 to be unbiased towards both familiars and strangers, to be ready to face  
 7 death without hesitation for the sake of one's service<sup>29</sup> – this is what the  
 8 genuine rectitude of the wise official is!

9 To adhere to the Dao<sup>30</sup> by following one's nature [given by Heaven],  
 10 to be humane and impartial, not to eat food when it is said: “Come on,  
 11 eat!”<sup>31</sup>, to regard devotion and loyalty as the most precious things, to get  
 12 awards without striving to win them, to look on riches and grandeur as if  
 13 they were clouds floating by, to be content with one's home, to enjoy [the  
 14 people's] customs,<sup>32</sup> when fishing not to rival [with the waves], when till-  
 15 ing land not to encroach on [others' land] – this is what the rectitude of a  
 16 respectable man is!

17 When the *qi* is right [one is able] to become an emperor, and this truly  
 18 follows from the aforesaid. And it is also known from the instructions of  
 19 the past that hero tigers reveal their presence in due time.<sup>33</sup> Therefore if the  
 20 *qi* lacks rectitude, the perfectly wise sovereign cannot appear. The sover-  
 21 eign who lacks rectitude is unable to foster the wise official. If there is no  
 22 rectitude [in the cooperation] of the ruler and his officials, [they] will be

<sup>29</sup> The *Zuo zhuan* says: “If for the sake of his lord one is ready for everything he is a loyal [subject]. If for the sake of his service one is ready to face death without hesitation, he is a true [subject]” 公家之利知無不為忠也。送往事居偶俱無猜貞也 (*Zuo zhuan*, ch. 5, p. 16b).

<sup>30</sup> A hidden citation from the *Zhongyong* 中庸: “What Heaven has conferred is called the nature, in accordance with this nature is called the path” 天命之謂性。率性之謂道 (*Zhongyong*, ch. 1.1, p. 1a; Legge, vol. I, p. 247).

<sup>31</sup> A hidden citation from the *Liji* 禮記: “[I] would not take food when they say ‘Come on, eat!’” 嗟來不食) which means never accepting help offered in contemptuous tone, with insulting pity, and without signs of respect. “There was a great famine in the [kingdom] of Li. [A certain] Qian Ao 黔敖 made some food and waited beside the road to offer it to the hungry. A hungry man hiding his face with his sleeve approached him tottering and begged for alms. Qian Ao offered him some food with his left hand and a drink with his right hand saying ‘Come on, eat!’ [The man] looked up to him and said: ‘I would never take food when they say ‘Come on, eat!’ And that is all!’ [He] refused to take food, went away, and later died of starvation” (*Liji*, ch. 3.4, p. 18a–18b).

<sup>32</sup> “To be content with their dwellings, and rejoice in their customs (*an qi ju, le qi su* 安其居。樂其俗) is a citation from chapter 80 of *Laozi*, ch. 2, p. 26.

<sup>33</sup> Literally: “The wind rises from the tigers’ roar” 虎嘯風生.

1 unable to convert the people to goodness. If the people lack rightness it  
2 will be impossible to secure the succession of the throne.

3 Looking at the downfall of the Xia and Yin [dynasties] and at the end  
4 of the Zhou and Han the rulers should try not to be like their [last] emper-  
5 ors, who appeared when the *qi* was lacking rectitude. The true gentlemen  
6 had been removed from service, and mean people had held their posts,<sup>34</sup>  
7 thus it was impossible to foster wise officials. If the sage-ruler is not in  
8 power, [the state] posts are held by unworthy officials, troublous and dan-  
9 gerous times begin, morals degenerate, customs become vicious. First the  
10 superior ones start to follow evil ways and, finally, doing so turns into a  
11 deep-rooted habit and becomes a usual practice, and it is impossible to  
12 convert the people to goodness.

13 And if the right and just Dao gets lost, vices reveal themselves: the  
14 powerful oppress the weak, the crowd injures the ingenuous, the punish-  
15 ment for crimes comes to exposing dead bodies of the executed, atrocities  
16 reach their extreme. The dead cannot remain in peace, while the living  
17 cannot find any mainstay. Therefore the people are unable to support the  
18 succession of the throne.

19 However, when the ruler avoids immoral thoughts, when he is impar-  
20 tial, even if pure genuineness<sup>35</sup> will not be achieved, is it so difficult to  
21 act in accordance with the true Dao? The *Shi[jing]* says: “Shall the spirits  
22 hearken you, if the right and honest are with you!”<sup>36</sup> How true this is!

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## [Chapter] 22. The Pure Caution

26 Heaven and Earth are divided and have different *qi* – clean and turbid.  
27 But is it true that only the superior and the sage are always kin to Heaven  
28 while the inferior and the stupid are completely bound to Earth?

<sup>34</sup> The phrase from the commentary to the poem “Xi sang” 隰桑 in the *Shijing*:  
君子在野，小人在位 (*Shijing*, ch. 15, p. 8a).

<sup>35</sup> With ‘true genuineness’ we translate the Chinese term *tai qing* 太清, as the com-  
mentary refers to the treatise of *Huainanzi* 淮南子, where the term is interpreted  
as ‘nature’, ‘primordial nature’, ‘Dao of Heaven’.

<sup>36</sup> The altered citation from the poem “Xiao ming” 小明 from the *Shijing*: “...Asso-  
ciating with the correct and upright, so shall the spirits hearken to you” 正直是  
與，神之聽之 (*Shijing*, ch. 13, p. 8b; Legge, vol. IV, part II, p. 366).

1 How [...] flows in all directions! [...] amidst the seas [...] and in the  
2 splendour of the jade palace rooms. [Not to be content?] with tithe [...] and to sell ranks [without] restrictions<sup>37</sup>.

4 When the [ruler] knows that Jie and Zhou despised Yao and Shun for  
5 their humble origin and the two Han emperors – Huandi and Lingdi<sup>38</sup> de-  
6 rided Cheng Tang's poverty, looking at the rise of some and the downfall  
7 of others, he understands how deep the gap between the ignorant and the  
8 wise is. And if [he] has come to understand [it], he will appoint to high  
9 posts the best men, he will follow the Dao and will not be afraid of missing  
10 wealth, like Yan Ying,<sup>39</sup> or of valuing jewels, like Zihan.<sup>40</sup>

11 The Dao of Heaven avoids plentitude, the Dao of Man injures complete-  
12 ness.<sup>41</sup> If one has thoughts like those of a wolf or a tiger and feels thirst  
13 like that of a dry ravine, if one abandons oneself in gluttony and knows no  
14 measure in profit-seeking, then even without natural disasters one will be  
15 visited by misfortune.

16 And even if the designs of Heaven are inconceivable and deep, bound-  
17 less and swift, it is difficult to expect people to be afraid of might and  
18 power. If punishments are executed in plenty, only [outstanding] person-  
19 alities and rare talents will remain. There had always been those who

<sup>37</sup> It is impossible to reconstruct the meaning because of the lacunae in the Chinese manuscript.

<sup>38</sup> Emperor Huan 桓帝 (147–167 C.E.) and Emperor Ling 靈帝 (168–188 C.E.) became notorious for their truant and profligate lives; their reigns heralded the beginning of the downfall of the Han.

<sup>39</sup> Yan Ying 宴嬰 (d. 500 B.C.) or Yanzi 晏子, the chancellor and scholar of the Qi state, the author of the treatise *Yanzi chunqiu* 晏子春秋, earned fame for his frugality and temperance, e.g. he wore his only winter robe lined with fox fur for 30 years. Once the ruler of Qing decided to award Yanzi with a serf city but Yanzi refused to accept it. The ruler said: “Wealth is what people are trying to obtain. Why won't you accept it?” Yanzi replied: “An undeserved award and unfairly obtained wealth are causes of miseries. I do not want it at all.” (*Yanzi chunqiu*, ch. 2, p. 35b–36a).

<sup>40</sup> Zihan 子罕 lived in the times of the Qin Xiang gong 襄公 (777–766 B.C.). The *Zuo zhuan* records the following story: “A certain man from the state of Song purchased a piece of jade to present it to Zihan. Zihan would not accept the present. The giver said: ‘I showed the jade to a jeweler and he said that it was precious. Therefore I decided to present it [to you].’ Zihan replied: ‘I am not a lover of jewels. You consider this piece of jade to be precious, but if you give it to me you will lose it. It is better if [each] man keeps his own jewel.’” (*Zuo zhuan*, ch. 15, p. 26b–27a).

<sup>41</sup> The text of the *Yijing* is slightly different: “The Dao of Heaven lacks completeness, the Dao of Man injures completeness” 天道虧盈, [...] 人道惡盈 (*Yijing*, ch. 1, p. 28).

1 would refuse to move to a quiet lodging,<sup>42</sup> who would let the Han emper-  
 2 ors to be engaged with family affairs,<sup>43</sup> who having lost their horses would  
 3 walk on foot,<sup>44</sup> and who would refuse to take a new born calf.<sup>45</sup> Zhang  
 4 Pan, when on the post of regional inspector would take away dainties  
 5 from his son,<sup>46</sup> while Hu Wei living in the district would ask his father  
 6 about the piece of silk.<sup>47</sup> It is not due to squeeze [all] juices [out of the  
 7 people],<sup>48</sup> one should constantly remember that all that is clandestine [fi-  
 8 nally] becomes known,<sup>49</sup> one should be ready for self-sacrifice for the sake  
 9 of good name, and then one may avoid misfortune.  
 10 Those higher military and civil officials who lived a life of noble pov-  
 11 erty and did not support the poor and the sick fecklessly, merely out of

<sup>42</sup> Yan Ying (i.e. Yanzi), who lived not far from the market, refused to move to a quieter place saying that only ignoble people settle in the vicinity of the market as all day long they think only of their profit.

<sup>43</sup> This is a reference to Huo Qubing 霍去病 (140–117 B.C.), general of Han dynasty. He is credited with the words: “How can [one] engage in family affairs as yet the Xiongnu have not been destroyed?” 匈奴未灭, 何以家爲.

<sup>44</sup> Zhang Xi 張翕 was a commandery aide (*juncheng*) 郡丞 of the Yuesui 越嶲 county in the Eastern Han dynasty. He earned fame for his modesty and temperance, wore simple clothes, and ate only vegetables. A carriage and pair was allocated to him in accordance with his rank. When one of his horses died and the other fell ill, he walked on foot.

<sup>45</sup> In the Eastern Han dynasty there was a man called Shi Miao 時苗 who held the post of district magistrate (*ling* 令). He rode a cart to which a yellow buffalo cow used to be harnessed. One day the buffalo cow bore a calf. On the expiry of his service Shi Miao would not take the calf claiming that when he had begun his office the buffalo cow had not had a calf.

<sup>46</sup> Zhang Pan 張磐 was an official in the reign of Emperor Huan 桓帝 (147–167 C.E.) of the Eastern Han dynasty. He held the post of regional inspector (*cishi* 刺史) of Jiaozhi 交趾 and earned fame for his decency and noble manners.

<sup>47</sup> Hu Wei 胡威 was the son of the official Hu Zhi 胡質. In the Three Kingdoms period Hu Zhi held the post of regional inspector (*cishi*) of Jingzhou 荊州 in the state of Wei. When Hu Zhi was going to pay some visits, Hu Wei told him: “The families we are going to visit in our town are poor. They cannot afford grooms. I will drive our donkey myself and will go alone with you.” They paid more than ten visits and when they were back Hu Zhi handed his son a piece of silk. Hu Wei, bending one knee, said: “You, my father, are famous for your lofty virtue. Why are you doing that?” Hu Zhi replied: “This is part of my salary, I give it to you in reward for your services” (*Tian xun*, commentary).

<sup>48</sup> The utterance “It is not due to squeeze [all] juices [out of the people]” (*zhi gao bu run* 脂膏不潤) belongs to the dignitary Kong Fen 孔奮 who lived during the reign of Han Emperor Guangwu (25–57 C.E.).

<sup>49</sup> Literally “[One] should always apprehend that the four know” (*chang wei si zhi* 常畏四知). The four who know are Heaven, Spirits, I and you (天, 神, 我, 子).

1 benevolence, received unanimous praise when retired from service. There-  
 2 fore it happened that [some] deplored the fact that disinterested men nei-  
 3 ther showed avarice, nor abused their power, nor searched everywhere for  
 4 jewels or rarities. [They] gave away money, made all they could to serve  
 5 their sovereign, and attained fame and respect. Therefore the avaricious  
 6 and the vicious derided the disinterested and the prudent.

7 To achieve perfect order is really difficult!

8 When awards and punishments in a state are [properly] distinguished,  
 9 the avaricious become unselfish and the timid turn resolute.<sup>50</sup>

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### [Chapter] 23. To Look into Responses

13 *Yin* and *Yang* are immeasurable, [their] true essence is difficult to define.  
 14 [One] flows around, [the other] goes upwards, [they] come together and  
 15 get pushed [apart].<sup>51</sup> Because human actions take the path of good and evil,  
 16 they get favourable or unfavourable responses from [good and evil] ghosts  
 17 and spirits. When mountains were falling down, the bell was heard,<sup>52</sup> when  
 18 wine was pouring,<sup>53</sup> not everybody obeyed [the omens]. It was because  
 19 they knew that the superior lord was wise, saw all and extended far [his]  
 20 audition. The sharp eyesight of Li Zhu could not be compared to his vi-  
 21 sion and the audition of Ziye cannot excel his audition.<sup>54</sup> Therefore the

<sup>50</sup> A hidden citation from the *Mengzi*, chapter “Wan zhang” 萬章, part II. In J. Legge’s translation: “The corrupt became pure, and the weak acquire determination” 頑夫廉，懦夫有立志也 (*Mengzi*, ch. 10, p. 1a; Legge, vol. I, pp. 245–246).

<sup>51</sup> “The homogeneous come together, and the heterogeneous get pushed [apart]” 方以群分，物以類聚 (*Yijing*, ch. 3, p. 99).

<sup>52</sup> During the reign of Emperor Wu (140–85 B.C.) of the Han it happened that the bell installed in front of the Weiyang palace was ringing for three days and three nights without an obvious reason. It was interpreted as a sign of war soon to begin, however the chancellor Dongfang Shuo (東方朔 154–93 B.C.) claimed that it was not the case. As copper from which the bell was made was in control of the element of *yin*, the landfall far in the mountains, as Dongfang Shuo said, caused the bell’s response, and that was the reason why it was ringing for three days and three nights (*Tian xun*, commentary).

<sup>53</sup> Lavishly pouring wine (*jiu zhan yi* 酒湛溢) is one of the symbols of how the world of sacred responds to human deeds (*Huainan-zi*, ch. 6, p. 2b).

<sup>54</sup> Li Zhu 離朱 (or Li Lou 離婁) could discern the thinnest hair from one hundred steps’ distance. Ziye 子野 (or Kuang 曠) was a blind teacher of music who lived in the Jin kingdom during the reign of Ping gong 平公 (557–532 B.C.). Both of them are mentioned in particular in the *Mengzi* (Chapter “Li Lou,” part I): “Mengzi said:

1 sage attains the Mandate of Heaven; if, when ruling, he achieves the order  
 2 predetermined by spirits, and exerts his teachings; if he sees the signs of  
 3 blame, he perfects [his] Dao; if he feels [their] anger, he refrains from ar-  
 4 rogance. Heaven had granted a jade thumb ring, but after that [the archer]  
 5 Yi perished.<sup>55</sup> A hawk had hatched out in a sparrow’s [nest], but [the  
 6 apanage ruler] Song Kang [wang] ruined his prinshipality.<sup>56</sup> Oh, if only such  
 7 awards could be avoided! After an earthquake in the [state of] Zhou Wen  
 8 wang prospered [for many years];<sup>57</sup> [in the sky] above the kingdom of  
 9 Song the stars had betokened misfortune, but Jing gong was not overtaken  
 10 by disaster.<sup>58</sup> Oh, if only we could perfect ourselves in virtue!

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‘The vision faculty of Li Lou and the skill of gong Shuzi 公輸子 cannot make squares and circles without compasses and a square. Even the audition of such musician as master Kuang cannot discern the five pitches without the pitch-tubes.’ Shuzi or Luban 魯班 was an outstanding technician who lived in the Lu kingdom at the time of Confucius (551–479 B.C.).

<sup>55</sup> Yi 羿 was the ruler of the kingdom of Jun during the Xia dynasty. He was famous for his skills in archery and perished from the hands of the member of his household Pang Meng 逢蒙. The treatise *Mengzi* (Chapter “Li Lou,” part II) states: “Pang Meng studied archery under Yi. Having mastered the art of Yi, Pang Meng thought that there was only Yi in the whole empire who was superior to himself in archery and therefore he killed Yi.”

<sup>56</sup> The *Xinshu* 新書 by Jia Yi 賈誼 says: “In the times of Kang wang 康王, [the ruler of] Song, a hawk hatched out in a sparrow’s nest. [It happened] in an outskirt district of [the Song] capital, and therefore the predictors decided: ‘The small has engendered the great, and therefore ba, the great leader, will certainly appear under the Heaven’. Kang wang rejoiced, but finally perished.” (*Xin shu*, ch. 6, p. 9b–10a).

<sup>57</sup> The *Lü shi chunqiu* 呂氏春秋 (Chapter “Zhi yue” 制樂) says that in the sixth moon of the eighth year of his rule the Zhou Wen wang fell ill and took to his bed. On the fifth day of his disease an earthquake happened that did not spread farther than the Zhou capital. The predictors said that earthquakes could be controlled by rulers and began to supplicate Wen wang to divert this calamity. As a means to do this, they advised him to start a construction, to gather multitudes of people and to begin to overbuild the walls of the capital. Wen wang answered: “It is impossible! Heaven sends the omens to punish the wrongdoer. I have obviously committed certain crimes, and therefore Heaven punishes me. If I begin the large-scale works, gather multitude of people and start to overbuild the walls of the capital I will only aggravate my faults. No, it is impossible! I should better look into my behaviour and engage in good deeds, and then the calamity may recede.” After that Wen-wang reviewed the rites, revised his edicts and monitions, and perfected the statecraft, doing much good to many of his subjects. Thus he dispelled the consequences of the bad omen and continued ruling for more than 43 years (*Lü shi chunqiu*, ch. 6.4, p. 7b–8a).

<sup>58</sup> This episode is also described in the “Zhi yue” chapter of the *Lü shi chunqiu*: “In the times of Jing gong 景公 (516–451 B.C.) from the kingdom of Song, the fire star

1 [It sometimes happens that] natural calamities do not cause harm. Hap-  
 2 piness and misfortune come from the human race,<sup>59</sup> and bad omens do  
 3 not arise by themselves.<sup>60</sup> The one who wanted his shadow straight first  
 4 [should have made] straight himself. It has a verification. In the times of  
 5 the Xia ruler a lake was made amidst the high mountains, in the times of  
 6 the Yin sovereign the sky fire burned the palace.<sup>61</sup> In the times of the Zhou  
 7 [You]-wang an earthquake happened in the Sanchuan;<sup>62</sup> in the times of

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Yinghuo 熒惑 appeared in the constellation of Xin 心. Overtaken by fear Jing gong summoned [the astrologer] Zi Wei 子韋 and inquired: ‘What does Yinghuo in Xin mean?’ Zi Wei said: ‘Yinghuo is the judgment of Heaven. Xin is the sphere of the kingdom of Song. A misfortune will befall you, my Lord. Still, the guilt may be ascribed to the minister.’ Jing gong replied: ‘We govern the country together with the minister and if he [alone] is put to death it will be a bad sign.’ Zi Wei said: ‘May be it is the guilt of the people?’ Jing gong answered: ‘If [all] the people die, whom will I govern then? I would rather die myself!’ Zi Wei said: ‘Maybe the harvest failure is in fault?’ Gong said: ‘In a year of famine the people, of course, will die out because of the harvest failure. To be the ruler and to kill my subjects to survive myself – who will acknowledge me as the ruler after that? No, it is a monition of fate and I accept it. You [may] say nothing more.’” The text of *Lü shi chunqiu* explains further that Zi Wei was about to quit but turning around he said that Jing gong had thrice expressed the perfect virtue, in his words, and therefore Heaven should have awarded him thrice. After that Yinghuo had really moved three dwellings (*she* 舍) away and Jing gong continued to live for 21 more years (*Lü shi chunqiu*, ch. 6.4, p. 8b–9a).

<sup>59</sup> A hidden citation from the *Zuo zhuan* (Chapter “Xi gong” 僖公, part II): “Good luck and misfortune come from mankind” 吉凶由人 (*Zuo zhuan*, ch. 6, p. 1b).

<sup>60</sup> The *Zuo zhuan* (Chapter “Zhuang gong” 莊公) says: “The inconceivable comes from the humans. The humans do not get omens about it. Bad omens do not occur by themselves” (*Zuo zhuan*, ch. 3, p. 13a).

<sup>61</sup> Jie, the last ruler of the Xia Dynasty, took much time and effort to pierce the Qushan Mountain and to draw off the water of the local rivers to an artificial lake. It caused the shallowing of the rivers and a great drought. (See: *Tian xun*, commentary.) Zhou, the last sovereign of the Yin Dynasty, perished in the fire on the Lutai terrace in his capital.

<sup>62</sup> In 780 B.C., in the second year of the reign of the King You 幽王 (781–771 B.C.), an earthquake occurred in Sanchuan 三川 district, in the centre of the Zhou kingdom, in the area of the rivers Jingshui, Weihe and Luohe. Interpreting this event Bo Yangfu 伯陽甫 noted: “The collapse of Zhou is nearing! [It is known that] the relationship of the forces of Heaven and Earth does not lose its order. If this order gets perturbed, the people rebel. [When] the force of *yang* is thrown down and is unable to come up, when it is suppressed by the force of *yin* and is unable to soar, earthquakes occur. Today in Sanchuan an earthquake occurred and it means that the force of *yang* has lost its inherent position and has been suppressed by the force of *yin*. [When] *yang* loses [its position] and comes under the pressure of the



1 the Han Emperor [Cheng] all around got folded in heavy mist.<sup>63</sup> And that  
2 betokened unhappy end. When the comedians danced to unseemly music  
3 [at the court], when the loyal and respectable were burnt alive,<sup>64</sup> the flat-  
4 terers were most prosperous, and the favourites were very powerful – and  
5 that was the source of misfortunes!

6 In the times of Tang [Yao], the stars betokening happiness engendered  
7 winged [phoenixes]; in the times of Yu [Shun] the multicolored clouds re-  
8 flected in the rivers; there was the granting with the black sceptre during  
9 the times of Xia [Yu]; there were white clouds during the reign of Yin  
10 [Tang]; in the times of [Zhou] Cheng wang the wind did not stir the trees,  
11 and in the times of [the Han] Emperor Guangwu the ailing got cured in  
12 sweet springs.<sup>65</sup>

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force of *yin*, [river] sources inevitably get occluded; if the sources have got occluded, the state falls.” (*Shiji*, ch. 4, p. 23b).

<sup>63</sup> The *Qian Han ji* 前漢紀 (Chapter “Xiaocheng huangdi” 孝成皇帝, part I) says that in the fourth month of the first year of the reign of Emperor Cheng 成帝 (32 B.C.) of the Han it so happened that yellow mist enshrouded all around 黃霧四塞 and covered the earth like loess dust. Answering the question of the sovereign about the meaning of this event the predictors said that *yin qi* was advancing on *yang qi* 陰氣侵陽氣. The event was considered to be a response of Heaven to an exorbitant elevation of the maternal relatives of the emperor. However Emperor Cheng failed to come to right conclusions. (*Qian Han ji*, ch. 7.24, p. 3a)

<sup>64</sup> The *Shangshu* (Chapter “Tai shi” 泰誓, part I) says about the tyrant rulers: “[They] burnt alive the loyal and good, and ripped up pregnant women” 焚炙忠良. 劓剔孕婦 (*Shangshu*, ch. 6.1, p. 1b).

<sup>65</sup> Here the auspicious signs of the perfect reign and virtue are named, such as the white clouds, (*bai yun* 白雲) symbolizing the immaculate whiteness; the auspicious, benevolent and great stars (*jing feng* 景星) engendering the winged phoenixes (*yi* 翼 and *feng* 翼鳳) and the five coloured clouds (*rong guang* 榮光). The black colored or Heaven colored (*xuan gui* 玄珪) sceptre was granted to the Xia Yu in token of his great deeds (*Shu jing*, ch. 3.1, p. 10a).

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## Appendix

2 Chinese text of “Heavenly Instructions” (*Tian xun* 天訓) from Dunhuang  
3 (P.5523)

4 衛君闕下，懸知伯玉，山公室內，辯嗣宗。何以和比琴瑟，叶鵲  
5 巢□□？此弗求思。唯欲是縱，嘖嗟為寵，哥儻而稱妍。欲使化自宮  
6 中，刑於海內難矣哉！

7 疏物親己，賢愚共情，避禍求福，古今一揆。昔楚王欲納夏姬，  
8 巫臣致諫，莊王不納，巫臣納之。夏姬迴楚國之殃，入巫臣之室。巫  
9 臣忠于楚國，不愛於身。豈曰本圖心迷故也？方知楊秉不或，柳下惠  
10 清貞，可以永垂不朽作範來世。

11 亡國虧家，其道非一淫亂之事，多或由之。妹嬉、妲己領復殷之  
12 業，狄女、飛燕虧周漢之紀。兼魯道、齊子、桑中、淇上，鼓動流  
13 俗，為化如風。或宣淫於朝，或竊妻於室，上蒸下嬖，帷薄不修，斯  
14 故禽獸之不若。況冶容入寵女謂仍成！

15 內作色荒，外怠庶政，民不見德，禮教斯頹，欲弗危亡其可得也？  
16 詩書所戒，豈虛言乎也！

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## 貞正第二十一

20 易曰：“乾德貞幹”。書曰：“王道正直”。故孔子曰：“政者正也”。貞正  
21 之義大矣哉！

22 君臨萬方，無私一物，與天地合其德，與日月合其明，以兆民之耳  
23 而聽，四海之目而視，放鄭聲而遠佞人，絕淫巧而禁遠物，有惡必罰，  
24 有善必賞。此聖主者貞正也。

25 一心事君，死且不貳，有益於國，有利於民，正義昌言，犯顏必諍，  
26 守天下之法，不從喜怒，舉域中之賢，不私內外，事生送死偶居無  
27 猜。此賢臣之貞正也。

28 率性蹈道，惟仁與義，嗟來不食，顧忠信而為寶，無功之賞，視富  
29 貴如浮雲，安其居，樂其俗，漁者不爭，田者不侵。此善人之貞正也。

30 正氣為帝，實炳前文。虎嘯風生，又聞往誥，是則氣不正，不能  
31 生聖主。主不正，不能養賢臣。君臣不正，不能化民以善。民不正，  
32 不能以受終。觀夏殷之衰，周漢之季，君不似帝，非正氣之所生也。  
33 君子在野，小人在位，是不能以養賢臣。朝無聖君，任匪賢臣，世亂  
34 時危，風澆俗弊。始則上率為惡，終乃積習生常，是不能化民以善。  
35 正至道既喪，姦為滋彰，以強陵弱，以眾暴寡，刑法窮殺戮之威，盜  
36 賊盡毒螫之志，死者不得其死，生者固不聊生，是民不能以受終也。

1 君人者罷耶僻之心，無偏黨之意，太清之化雖未可追，直道之行豈伊  
2 難及？詩云：“神之聽之正直是歟”。信哉也！

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5

## 清慎第二十二

6 天地既分，清濁殊氣。豈才為上聖，悉繫於天，質曰下愚，咸繫於  
7 地？何□□ □□□□□流者矣！然則□□，四海□〈...〉□及瑤臺之華。〈...〉  
8 十一而稅，□□賣官之侈。則知桀、紂兩君鄙堯、舜之陋，桓、靈二  
9 帝笑成唐之貧。觀其興喪，方覺愚智之遠也。既覺而任優，道而不  
10 行，畏失晏嬰之富，當惜子罕之寶。

11 天道忌滿，人道害盈。若豺虎其心，谿壑厥志，肆吃饕之暴，縱聚  
12 斂之情，不有大災，必殆人禍。

13 雖復天心玄遠賒促，難期人懼威權。暫稽斧鉞，惟身及世罕或存  
14 者。故有辟齊侯之宅，讓漢帝之家，馬死步歸，產憤仍棄。張磐在郡  
15 奪子之甘，胡威至州，問其父之絹。脂膏不潤，常畏四知，非正殉名，  
16 蓋然避禍。

17 將吏清貧，不蒙寵撥窮老，謝事取美邑里，故使廉潔之士悔不為  
18 貪，專擅威權，廣求珍異。散金，輸玉座到榮顯。故貪濁之人嗤鄙清  
19 操。欲求到治，斯實難乎！

20 為國者明於賞罰，則貪夫廉，懦夫立志也。

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23

## 徵感第二十三

24 陰陽不測，真味難源。流漫就爆，類聚群分。以人事善惡之塗，成鬼  
25 神休咎之驗。山頽鐘響，酒溢未從方之。故知上帝聰明，高目下耳。  
26 離朱之視，不得比其察，子野之聽，不得比其聽。所以聖人受天命，  
27 以君臨假神道而設教，有謫見而修道，感憤既而不驕也。天賜玉玦，  
28 若羿殘其身，有雀生鶉，宋康滅其國。苟無益矣。周之地振，文王以  
29 興，宋分星妖，景公無患。苟能修德。

30 災無害焉。吉凶由人，妖不自作，欲求影正先直其。表然其，夏  
31 君之高山為澤，殷君之天火燒宮，周王之震三川，漢帝之霧四塞，是  
32 禍之未也。其倡優爛漫，焚炙忠良，巧佞已行，權臣大盛，是災之本  
33 也。

34 在唐之景星生翼，在虞之榮光映河，有夏玄珪賜，有殷白雲之下，  
35 成王之時，風不鳴條，光武之時，醴泉愈疾。

36