

Discussing Ancient History with Mr. Qian Xuanton¹

Since two years ago, I have had the intention to critique ancient Chinese history in a further step than Cui Shu². The *A Collection of Reliability Analysis*³ by Cui Shu is indeed a fabulous and meticulous work that I am too far behind to reach. I myself know that I can only catch up with him through a dozen years of diligent reading, but I find two points in his work unsatisfying. First, the purpose of his book was to unveil the sagely way and kingly achievements of ancient sages on their behalf. Detecting falsification was just a means. He only knew that the narratives after the Warring States period⁴ could obscure the factuality of the ancients, yet he did not realize that narratives before the Warring States period could do likewise; he only knew that the works of Yang⁵ and Mo⁶ intentionally glamorized the ancients, yet he did not realize that Confucian works did the same. Therefore, his book was just a Confucian work on critiquing ancient history, not a historian one. Second, his method to systematize the ancient historical traces directly from old books was inappropriate as well. Given that the citable ancient literature is very few, we must reject the assumption that falsified history can be diagnosed through a comparison of various texts, but admit that reliable history has no actual verifications. Cui Shu believed that classics were equivalent to reliable history and took the narratives in the classics as criteria, with which he regarded those conforming to the classics as reliable, otherwise unreliable, so the results he systematized and the historical events he acknowledged were quite clear and distinct, which from our point of view, however, are untenable after all: because the difference between the classics and the commentaries or annotations is just a matter of successive temporal order, which has no significant distinction in terms of reliability; if there had been texts before the classics, then these classics would have been reduced to commentaries or annotations. Since we do not have the preconceived idea that “the classics are equivalent to reliable history,” we shall play down the

1 錢玄同 (1887–1939).

2 崔述 (1740–1816).

3 *Kaoxin Lu* 考信錄.

4 *zhanguo* 戰國 (475 BCE—221 BCE).

5 楊 (368 BCE—317 BCE) referring to Yang Zhu 楊朱, also known as Yangzi.

6 墨 (469 BCE—390 BCE) referring to Mo Di 墨翟, also known as Mozi.

systematization of historical traces yet emphasize the events in myths if we want to critique and gain a clear conception of ancient history. We shall look at how it was in the earliest place and how it gradually changed over time for every single historical event. Given that we do not have evidential artifacts and solely start from texts, only by doing so can we make an adequate systematization and fulfill our responsibility.

I want to write on the layered and accumulated ancient history of China¹, in which I will discuss the ancient historical events in myths in detail. It comprises three hypotheses. First, “the later the era is, the longer the ancient historical period of myths is.” As said in this letter, the most ancient person in the minds of the Zhou² people was Yu³, but there were Yao⁴ and Shun⁵ in the time of Confucius, Emperor Huang⁶ and the Divine Husbandmen⁷ in the Warring States period, the Three Sovereigns⁸ in the Qin⁹, and Pangu¹⁰ in the time after the Han¹¹. Second, “the later the era is, the more amplified the central figures in the myths are.” For example, there was only one sage ruler who “governed without actions” in the time of Confucius, but it became a sage whose “family was regulated and then the country was rightly governed” in the *Canon of Yao*¹², and later became an exemplar of a filial son in the time of Mencius. Third, in this regard, we are unable to know the actual conditions of a particular event but we can understand the earliest conditions of that in myths. Though we are unable to know the history of Eastern Zhou¹³ written in the time of Eastern Zhou, at least we can access the history of Eastern Zhou composed

1 層累地造成的中國古史。

2 周 referring to the Zhou period (1045 BCE—256 BCE).

3 禹。

4 堯。

5 舜。

6 Huangdi 黃帝 traditionally translated as Yellow Emperor.

7 Shennong 神農 traditionally regarded as one of the Three Sovereigns.

8 Sanhuang 三皇 consisting of the Heavenly Sovereign (*Tianhuang* 天皇) which was Fu Xi 伏羲, the Earthly Sovereign (*Dihuang* 地皇) which was nvwa 女媧, and Tai Sovereign (*Taihuang* 泰皇) which was Shennong 神農, according to the *Records of the Grand Historian*.

9 秦 referring to the Qin dynasty (221 BCE–206 BCE).

10 盤古。

11 漢 referring the Han dynasty (206 BCE—220 CE).

12 *Yaodian* 堯典 the first chapter in the *Book of Documents*.

13 *Dongzhou* 東周 the second half of the Zhou period (770 BCE—256 BCE) which consists of the Spring and Autumn period and the Warring States period.

in the Warring States period; though we are unable to know the history of Xia¹ and Shang² written in Xia and Shang, at least we can access the history of Xia and Shang composed in the time of Eastern Zhou.

However, this topic is too broad. It is almost impossible for a person like me, who cannot do specialized research, to succeed in completing it. Therefore, I want to divide it into three topics: the first is to be entitled "*the Ancient Historical Outlook Before the Warring States Period*;" the second is "*The Ancient Historical Outlook During the Warring States Period*;" and the third is "*The Ancient Historical Outlook After the Warring States Period*." Later I feel like these are still broad, so I intend to write on a book basis, such as "*The Ancient History in the Classic of Poetry*³," "*The Ancient History in the Book of Zhou*⁴," "*The Ancient History in the Analects*⁵," and so on. I guess, if I read one book in a month and then write one paper in another month, I may gradually complete it in several years. Of course, I cannot catch up with Cui Shu's academic skills, while I may be able to make up for his deficiency by adopting another method.

When Mr. Shizhi⁶ came to Shanghai this time, he urged me to contribute an article to the *Jottings on Books We Have Read*⁷ as he did not have enough time to write a piece. At this moment I just want to write one to be entitled "*The Ancient History in the Analects*." Given that the materials are not many, it should be easy. After I started to write today, however, I feel like it's too hurried. It is indeed relatively easy to focus on the *Analects* in isolation, but its significance cannot be displayed without comparison to other texts. Once I compare it with other texts, the scope again becomes broad, which is no longer a business that can be finished in one

1 夏 referring to the mythic Xia period which is traditionally believed to precede the Shang period.

2 商 referring to the Shang period (1600 BCE—1045 BCE).

3 *Shijing* 詩經 also known as the *Poetry* (*Shi* 詩) It containing 305 poems under six sections: *Ballads from States* (*Guofeng* 國風), *Minor Courtly Songs* (*Xiaoya* 小雅), *Major Courtly Songs* (*Daya* 大雅), *Sacrificial Odes of Zhou* (*Zhousong* 周頌), *Praiseful Odes of Lu* (*Lusong* 魯頌), and *Sacrificial Odes of Shang* (*Shangsong* 商頌).

4 *Zhoushu* 周書 by which according to the contexts Gu Jiegang probably referred to the *Lost Book of Zhou* (*Yi Zhou Shu* 逸周書), a compendium of Chinese historical documents about the Western Zhou period, instead of the one under the same title (*Zhoushu* 周書) composed by Linghu Defen 令狐德棻 in the Tang dynasty about the history of the Later Zhou dynasty 後周 (951–960).

5 *Lunyu* 論語.

6 適之 the courtesy name of Hu Shi 胡適 (1891—1962).

7 *Dushu Zazhi* 讀書雜誌 a supplement to the *Endeavor Magazine* (*Nuli Zhoubao* 努力週報) published between 1922 and 1923 in Beijing with Hu Shi as the chief editor.

day or two. Therefore, I remembered that I wrote Mr. Xuantong a letter regarding this matter two months ago. Although that letter was written at random, it is enough to provide a general idea, so I copy the letter here as the point of departure to publish my research. I myself know that I have neither academic skills nor time so it cannot be counted as research. I just hope the publication of this article can facilitate readers to make comments and have discussions so that I can put this work on the track, which will indeed be super cheerful!

[19]12, April 27.

Mr. Xuantong,

(The above is left out)

You entrusted me to write an article for the *Journal of Sinological Studies*¹ and I have had this interest for a while. The article I intend to write is *the Layered and Accumulated Ancient History of China*. Now I would like to tell you a general idea first, — I have never put down these thoughts in writing before, so this letter might seem messy and unorganized.

I think the people from the Western Zhou period² to the early Spring and Autumn period³ did not have lasting speculation on antiquity. The *Sacrificial Odes Of Shang*⁴ reads “The heaven commissioned the swallow, to descend and give birth to the Shang,” and *Greater Courtly Songs*⁵ reads, “When the people first sprang, from the land of Ju⁶ and Qi⁷,” adding, “the first birth of the people, was from Jiang Yuan⁸,” which suggest that they only regarded people in the time of the formation of their tribes as progenitors. Yet, they had no remote progenitors in their minds. They

1 *Guoxue Jikan* 國學季刊 whose full name was the *Journal of Sinological Studies of National Peking University* (*Guoli Beijing Daxue Guoxue Jikan* 國立北京大學國學季刊) published between 1923 and 1951 with Hu Shi as the chief editor.

2 *Xizhou* 西周 (1045 BCE—771 BCE) the first half of the Zhou period.

3 *Chunqiu* 春秋 (770 BCE—476 BCE) a period within the Western Zhou period.

4 *Shangsong* 商頌 a section of the *Classic of Poetry*.

5 *Daya* 大雅 a section of the *Classic of Poetry*.

6 沮 a place name.

7 漆 a place name.

8 姜嫄 the mother of Houji.

simply preceded that one tribe had one progenitor of their own but there was no progenitor various tribes generally acknowledged.

Still, they had a “Yu” apart from their progenitors. *Changfa*¹ in the *Sacrificial Odes Of Shang* states, “When the waters of the deluge spread vast abroad, Yu arranged and divided the regions of the land...God raised the son and founded Shang.” This is the most ancient record whereby Yu made his appearance. All of the occurrences of “*di* (emperor)” in the *Book of Poetry*² refer to God (Emperor Yao³ and Emperor Shun⁴ do not count. See detailed discussions below. There is only one suspicious emperor in the *Book of Documents*⁵, Emperor Yi⁶. It is possible that the later kings of Yin-Shang⁷ respectfully accepted him as their ancestor and regarded him as God, thus adding this honorific title to him. I’m not sure). The main idea of this poem is that God established the nation of Shang. Then what does the God’s establishment of Shang have to do with Yu? Look at the idea of this poem, it seems that God sent Yu to arrange the lands and founded the nation of Shang when the waters of the deluge spread vast abroad. However, Yu is a celestial being sent down by God, not a human being. The poem of *Xiaomin*⁸ has lines such as “Dignified was the compassionate Heaven, it extended through the lands below,” suggesting that “the land below” is in comparison with “the heaven above.”

According to the research by Mr. Wang Jingan⁹, the poems in the *Sacrificial Odes Of Shang* were composed by Song¹⁰ people during the middle Western Zhou period (*A Study of the Musical Poetry*¹¹ and *On the Sacrificial Odes Of Shang Part Two*¹²). At that time, the conception of Yu was a spirit. When it came to the time of Duke Xi of Lu¹³, Yu became a human. The

1 長發 a poem in the *Sacrificial Odes Of Shang*.

2 *Shishu* 詩書 an alternative name of the *Classic of Poetry*.

3 Di Yao 帝堯 an alternative name of Yao.

4 Di Shun 帝舜 an alternative name of Shun.

5 *Shangshu* 尚書 also known as the *Classic of Documents* (*Shujing* 書經) and the *Documents* (*Shu* 書).

6 Di Yi 帝乙 (1199 BCE–1075 BCE) a king in the Shang period from 1101 BCE to 1076 BCE.

7 殷商 an alternative name of the Shang period.

8 小旻 a section in the *Classic of Poetry*.

9 王靜安 (1877–1927) referring to Wang Guowei 王國維 (Jingan 靜安 was his courtesy name).

10 宋 referring to the State of Song (*Songguo* 宋國) (?–286 BCE) a vassal state in the Zhou period.

11 *Yueshi Kaolue* 樂詩考略.

12 *Shuo Shangsong Xia* 說商頌下.

13 Lu Xi Gong 魯僖公 (749 BCE–626 BCE) referring to Ji Shen 姬申, the ruler of the State of Lu from 659 BCE to 627 BCE.

*Solemn Temples*¹ reads, “[Jiang Yuan] gave birth to Houji²... [Houji] taught the people to sow and reap...[Houji] had all the lands below, and continued the achievements of Yu.” (Note: the narratives about Houji in the Chapter of *Shengmin*³ are the most comprehensive, but they only state that he was under God’s protection and did not mention that he “continued” certain person’s “achievements.” This is because according to the author’s idea, Houji was the one who initiated sowing and reaping and he did not have to continue predecessors’ achievements, which became different for the author of the *Solemn Temples*, who knew that Yu was the most ancient person and Houji should continue his achievements. Therefore, the *Shengmin* was composed in the Western Zhou period and there was no concept of Yu before the writing of *Changfa*.) The idea of this poem is that Yu was the person who “had all the lands below” and a king before Houji who was a later king. Why did it not claim that Houji continued the achievements of Emperor Huang or that of Yao and Shun? Clearly, there were no Emperor Huang, Yao, or Shun at that time, and Yu was the the most ancient human king (with a celestial nature), so it claims that Houji continued Yu’s achievements. Shang tribe regarded Yu as a celestial being who descended to the mortal world and Zhou tribe considered him the most ancient human king, which indicates that their conceptions on Yu were just same as the conception of Pangu of present-day people.

At this point, we should notice that “Yu” and “Xia” had no relationship. *Changfa* on the one hand, states, “When the waters of the deluge spread vast abroad, Yu arranged and divided the regions of the land,” on the other hand saying that Tang⁴ “had attacked Wei⁵ and Gu⁶, Kun Wu⁷ and Jie of Xia⁸.” Suppose we follow the posterity’s idea that Yu was Jie’s ancestor. How could Shang appreciate Yu’s favor of establishing the land and also turned against Yu’s descendants and killed them? Note: *Changfa* reads, “The dark king exercised an effective way: charged with a small state, he commanded success; charged with a large state, he commanded success,” adding,

1 *Bigong* 閟宮 a poem in the *Classic of Poetry*.

2 Houji 后稷 referring to Qi 棄, a reputed agricultural official in the time of Yao and Shun and progenitor of Zhou royal family.

3 生民 a poem in the *Classic of Poetry*.

4 湯 (?—1587 BCE) the first king of the Shang period.

5 韋.

6 顧.

7 昆吾.

8 夏桀 (1728 BCE—1675 BCE) referring to Lv Gu 履癸 who was believed to be the last king of Xia.

“All-ardent was Xiang Tu¹, and all the seas and beyond acknowledged his restraints.” It is just the power of the nation of Shang was already developed before Tang and became capable of making more prominent achievements in the time of Tang and defeating Yu, Gu, Kun Wu, and Jie of Xia. Yu was the person they considered to split the sky and the ground, and Jie of Xia was the one attacked by Tang. They two have no connections. It is quite evident.

Then where did Yu come from? For what reason did Yu and Jie have a relation? I think both assumptions are from the Nine Tripods². Yu, says *Shuowen*³, “referring to worms, following *rou*⁴, pictographic;” *rou*, says *Shuowen*, “referring to animals’ feet trampling on the ground.” As a worm with feet trembling on the ground, it is probably a type of reptile such as lizard. I think Yu might be a kind of animal cast in the Nine Tripods. Given that people at that time cast tripods according to objects’ forms and there must have been a significant number of strange shapes, in which Yu was the most powerful one; or it looked like the way one arranged and divided the lands, so it was taken as the person who split the sky and the ground. (Boxiang⁵ says that Yu might be a dragon, as the legend of Great Yu⁶ controlling the waters might be similar to the story of God of Water⁷ sacrificing the Dragon King⁸.) As transmitting to posterity, it then became an actual human king. The Nine Tripods were cast in Xia. Shang obliterated Xia and took the tripods to Shang,, and Zhou obliterated Shang and took them to Zhou. They were taken just because they were treasures at that time, which did not indicate any significance; but after being preserved for a long time, people constructed a traditional outlook of them, believing that whenever a state was established, the Nine Tripods shall be taken as important objects, which were just the same as the “Heirloom Seal of the Realm⁹” in later generations. Holding such a traditional outlook, they thus needed to trace the previous orthodox. Recognizing that Zhou came

1 相土 the grandson of Qi.

2 *jiuding* 九鼎.

3 *Shuowen* 說文 referring to *Explaining the Single-Component Graphs and Analyzing Compound Characters* (*Shuowen Jiezi* 说文解字) a Chinese character dictionary written by Xu Shen 許慎.

4 肉.

5 伯祥 referring to Wang Boxiang 王伯祥 (1890–1975).

6 Da Yu 大禹 an alternative name of Yu.

7 *Sshuishen* 水神.

8 *Longwang* 龍王.

9 *Chuanguo Xi* 傳國璽.

from Shang and Shang came from Xia, they naturally concluded that Xia, Shang, and Zhou formed a genealogy. With this genealogy formed, Tang of Shang thus had no reason not to be a servant of Jie of Xia, and King Wen of Zhou¹ had no reason not to be a servant of Zhou of Yin². They traced Yu back to Xia tripods, and thus considered Yu as the most ancient person who was the progenitor of Xia. (I have not found any earliest concurrences of “Xia” and “Yu” in texts.)

That there was only Yu in the early years of Eastern Zhou can be inferred from the *Classic of Poetry*, and that there were Yao and Shun in the late years of Eastern Zhou can be inferred from the *Analects*. (The question of when the stories of Yao and Shun started is hard to resolve: *Zuo's Commentary*³ was a work at the time of the Warring States period; the *Canon of Yao and Counsels of Gao Yao*⁴ in the *Book of Documents* are unreliable; the *Analects* is relatively reliable, so I choose it as my sources.) In the *Analects*, Yao and Shun cooccurred twice ("Even Yao and Shun were still solicitous about this."), and Shun and Yu cooccurred once ("How majestic was the manner in which Shun and Yu held possession of the All-Under-Heaven⁵,"), and Yao, Shun, and Yu were also praised in a sequence ("Great was Yao as a ruler—Shun had five ministers and had All-Under-Heaven well governed—I find no flaw in the character of Yu"), which suggests that it was perceived at that time that Yao and Shun were before Yu. Therefore, more ancient Yao and Shun existed before Yu. Still, the relationship between Yao and Shun and that between Shun and Yu had not been mentioned. Besides, the ancient kings who had hundred years intervals in the minds of people at that time, such as Yu and Tang, and Tang and Wen⁶ or Wu⁷, remained unknown. (Though *Yaoyue*⁸ in the *Analects* explains their relationships as the giver and the receiver, according to Cui Shu's research, later generations added the five chapters from *Jishi*⁹ to *Yaoyue*. The first paragraph of *Yaoyue* indicates an intentional patterning on antiquity in terms of

1 周文王 (1111 BCE—1049 BCE) his full name was Ji Chang 姬昌.

2 殷紂 (1105—1045 BCE) the pejorative posthumous name of the last ruler of Shang.

3 *Zuo Zhuan* 左傳 composed by Zuo Qiuming 左丘明, traditionally regarded as a commentary on the *Spring and Autumn Annals*.

4 *Gaoyaomo* 皋陶謨 a chapter in the *Book of Documents*.

5 天下 a Chinese traditional concept concerning cosmological perspectives and political ontologies. For detailed accounts of this term, see Zhao (2006) and Wang (2012).

6 文 referring to King Wen of Zhou (?—1065 BCE).

7 武 referring to King Wu of Zhou (?—1043 BCE).

8 堯曰.

9 季氏 a chapter in the *Analects*.

style and the two isms of “Kingly Way¹” and “Transmission of the Way²” in terms of theme, which is the Confucian color in the Warring States period.)

Subsequent to the *Analects*, the deeds of Yao and Shun became more comprehensive, thus bringing up chapters such as the *Canon of Yao*, *Counsels of Gao Yao*, and *Tribute of Yu*³. With these chapters, Yao and Shun thereby obtained a relationship of father-in-law and son-in-law, and Shun and Yu obtained a relationship of ruler and servant. “Barbarous tribes disturbing the Xia” and “money to be received for redeemable offenses” raised by Mr. Liang Rengong⁴ are both examples of the untenability of the *Canon of Yao*. Let’s verify this with the *Classic of Poetry*. The *Solemn Temples* speaks of Houji “had all the states below,” who was undoubtedly a king yet was said to be a servant of Shun (the character of “*Hou*” in Houji originally had a meaning of king. It is indeed unacceptable that Shun said “you Houji” to Ji in the *Canon of Yao*). The *Solemn Temples* says that Houji “continued the achievements of Yu,” clearly suggesting that he existed after Yu, but it instead claims that he was a servant at the same time as Yu. We can also verify it with the *Analects*. (1) Many followers asked about filial piety in the *Analects*. Given that Shun had “been able to live in harmony with his filial piety,” for what reason did Confucius not take him as an exemplar? (2) The *Analects* states that “Shun had five ministers,” and for what reason there were nine people in the *Canon of Yao*? If there have had been nine people and each performed their own duties and no one was replaceable, then for what reason did Confucius only select five out of them? (3) Nangong Shi⁵ said, “Yu and Ji practiced agriculture and hence had the All-Under-Heaven,” indicating that both Yu and Ji had the All-Under-Heaven, so why were both of them servants instead of rulers in the *Canon of Yao*? (4) Confucius said that Shun “governed without actions,” whereas the *Canon of Yao* claims that he “had a tour of inspection every five years” and “had the dukes present themselves at court four times.” Don’t they conflict with each other? All these problems can lead to the conclusion that the *Canon of Yao* was composed later than the *Analects*. (I mean, there came first the theory of abdication, and then

1 *wangdao* 王道.

2 *daotong* 道統.

3 *Yugong* 禹貢 a chapter in the *Book of Documents*.

4 梁任公 referring to Liang Qichao 梁啟超 (1873-1929), Rengong 任公 was his artful name.

5 南宮适 (?—?) a student of Confucius.

came the *Canon of Yao* and *Counsels of Gao Yao* as supporting evidence for the theory; the school of Confucianism advocated the theory of abdication to venerate the worthy.) At the time of compiling the *Analects*, the conceptions of Yao and Shun were still empty and deficient, and people just pictured them as two ancient kings with highest virtues and most significant achievements; with chapters such as the *Canon of Yao*, the “stories” of Yao and Shun therefore had facts that could be listed as examples.

From the Warring States to the Western Han¹, unreliable history was amply created. So many ancient emperors were added before Yao and Shun that Yu, who was portrayed as the most ancient in the early Spring and Autumn period, was at this moment quite close to contemporary time. Since Duke Ling of Qin² built Shang Zhi³ at Wuyang⁴ to worship Emperor Huang (See *Treatise on Sacrifices*⁵ in the *Book of Han*⁶. The celestial beings that the State of Qin⁷ believed in were the most miscellaneous and their names were the weirdest: Duke Wen of Qin⁸ dreamed about a yellow snake and then built Fu Zhi⁹, and he picked up a stone and then built the Shrine of Chen Bao¹⁰. It was indeed fetishism. Given that the sacrifices of Emperor Huang originated from the State of Qin, Emperor Huang may probably be something like “yellow dragon and earthworm.”), through the advocacy by masters of methods¹¹, Emperor Huang was therefore placed before Yao and Shun. Since Xu Xing¹² and his clan brought up the Divine Husbandmen, the Divine Husbandmen was therefore placed before Emperor Huang. Since the *Great Treatise*¹³

1 *Xihan* 西漢 (202 BCE—23 CE) also known as *Qianhan* 前漢, a period within the Han dynasty (202 BCE—220 CE).

2 *Qin Ling Gong* 秦靈公 (?—415 BCE) a ruler of the State of Qin in the Warring States period.

3 上時 the name of a sacrificial altar. *Zhi* 時 is the name of a type of place where heaven and earth and ancient emperors are worshipped.

4 吳陽 a place name.

5 *Jiao Ji Zhi* 郊祀志 a chapter in the section of *Treatises* (*Zhi* 志) in the *Book of Han*.

6 *Han Shu* 漢書 also known as the *Book of Former Han* (*Qian Han Shu* 前漢書), composed by Ban Gu 班固 in the Eastern Han period 東漢 (25—220), which is also known as Later Han (*Hou Han* 後漢).

7 *Qin Gio* 秦國 (?—221 BCE) a state in the Zhou period which unified all the states and established the Empire of Qin (221 BCE—207 BCE).

8 *Qin Wen Gong* 秦文公 (?—716 BCE) a ruler of the State of Qin in the Spring and Autumn period.

9 鄜時 the name of a sacrificial altar. *Fu* 鄜 stands for a place (in today's Luoji, Shaanxi Province).

10 *Chenbao Ci* 陳寶祠.

11 *fangshi* 方士.

12 許行 a representative scholar of the school of Agriculturalism (*nongjia* 農家) in the Warring States period.

13 *Xi Ci* 繫辭 a chapter which is divided into two parts in the *Changes*.

in the *Changes*¹ brought up Paoxi², Paoxi was thus positioned prior to the Divine Husbandmen. Since the generation of Li Si³ claimed, “there was the Heavenly Sovereign⁴, the Earthly Sovereign⁵, and Tai Sovereign⁶, among whom Tai Sovereign was the most honorable,” they three were thus positioned prior to Paoxi. Since the *Book of Origins*⁷ came out, it awkwardly formed the lineages for famous ancient figures, and no one thereby was not the descendants of Emperor Huang. Since *A Sequence of Charges and Calendars till the Spring and Autumn Period*⁸ said, “It was 2,260,000 years from the beginning of the world till the year of catching Kylin in the Spring and Autumn period,” each of the twelve people including the Heavenly Sovereign thus lived for eighteen thousand years. Since people in the Han Dynasty communicated with the Miao people⁹, which brought in the Miao’s progenitors, Pangu became the one splitting the sky and the ground and existed before the Heavenly Sovereign. The later the era is, the earlier known ancient history is; the fewer evidential the texts are, the more known ancient history is. Ji An¹⁰ once said, “As accumulating firewoods, the new arrivals overtake those who have gone before,” which is a perfect metaphor. Reading the recklessly written history, doesn’t the *Canon of Yao* become reliable history! But after reading the vague historical narratives in the *Classic of Poetry*, how could one not doubt the history before Shang!

If I fully elaborate on these thoughts, I will definitely end up writing a dozen volumes of books. Tenable ancient history is few, and how could what Cui Shu argued “reliable” be genuinely reliable! Just like Houji, whom Zhou people called as their progenitor, we cannot even know whether this person has ever existed or not. Because the *Poetry* and the *Documents*¹¹ suggest that the Shang people emphasized nomadic pastoralism, whereas the Zhou people

1 Yi 易 referring to the *Changes*, also known as the *Classic of Changes* (*Yijing* 易經) or the *Book of Changes*. It is a text concerning divination in the Western Zhou period.

2 Paoxi shi 庖犧氏 referring to Fu Xi 伏羲, the Heavenly Sovereign, see Footnote 8, Page 2.

3 李斯 (?—208 BCE) the Left Imperial Chancellor (*zuochengxiang* 左丞相) in the Qin dynasty.

4 tianhuang 天皇 see Footnote 8, Page 2.

5 dihuang 地皇 see Footnote 8, Page 2.

6 taihuang 泰皇 see Footnote 8, Page 2.

7 *Shiben* 世本 both the author(s) and time of composition remain unknown.

8 *Chunqiu Ming Li Xu* 春秋命歷序 composed in the Han dynasty whose author(s) remain unknown.

9 Miao zu 苗族.

10 汲黯 (?—112 BCE) an official in the Western Han period.

11 *Shu* 書 referring to the *Book of Documents*.

emphasized agriculture. So-called “Houji” was a posthumous title for their progenitor just because they made a living by agriculture, praised virtues, and rewarded merits. As a matter of fact, what is the difference between the Zhou people’s Houji and Xu Xing’s Divine Husbandmen? From these two ancient kings who initiated agriculture, it is easy to see the reduplications by those history writers. Why did these people reduplicate them? It was because there were too many people accumulated above and Houji’s status was therefore not valued. They must create a Divine Husbandmen, and hence Xu Xing and his clan were not worthy of being appealed to!

(The following is left out)

Jiegang respectfully handing in this letter [19]12, February 25.

Attaching the Letter

Mr. Xuantong,

I did not receive a reply after sending you this letter, which keeps me thinking about it a lot.

I read your epilogue in *A Study on the Ancient Readings of Ge Ge Yu Yu Mo*¹. In the epilogue, you say, “Xu Shen²’s *Shuowen* is a book comprised of falsified ancient characters, falsified ancient meaning, falsified ancient rites, falsified ancient regulations, and falsified ancient theories.” I hope you can publish your article on critiquing *Shuowen*.

By comparing the *Marquis of Lu on Punishments*³ and the *Canon of Yao* last month, I developed another variant legend of the Miao people. I have no time to write about it today but I will tell you about it in detail in the next letter.

Jiegang attaching the letter [19]12, April 28.

1 *Ge Ge Yu Yu Mo Gudu Kao* 歌戈魚虞模古讀考 an article by Wang Rongbao 汪榮寶 in 1923.

2 許慎 (58–147) the author of *Shuowen Jiezi*.

3 Lv Xing 呂刑 a chapter in the *Book of Documents*.

Appendix

Qian Xuanton: in Reply to Mr. Gu Jiegang's Letter

Mr. Jiegang,

Your idea of "the layered and accumulated ancient history of China" is fantastic and unparalleled. You use the successive myths of the Yao, Shun, Yu, Ji¹, the Three Sovereigns, the Five Kings², and the Three Generations³ for your argumentation. After reading it, I am so glad that I can only heap praise on it. I hope you use this method to conduct more investigations and generate more findings to dispel the clouds and cut off the entangled relationships so that scholars in later generations can be prevented from being deceived by all the falsified history. I used to consider Yao and Shun as two definite "nonexistent men" or "naught misters." Yao means high, and Shun is borrowed as "*jun*⁴," meaning big (which appeared as "Emperor Jun" in the *Classic of the Great Wilderness: East*⁵ of the *Classic of Mountains and Seas*⁶): the meanings of "Yao" and "Shun" are just the same as those of "sage," "worthy⁷," "hero," and "luminary." They are simply terms for imaginary characters. Chinese history shall start with Yu. Every people has myths of flooding, so such events may have indeed taken place; one probably can find no way to investigate the history before the floods. Yao and Shun are two figures that the Zhou people invented by imagining what happened before the floods; they were perhaps folk legends in the very beginning and later those scholars used these two imaginary figures to "plead antiquity for social reform⁸." This kind of trick has already been exposed by Hanfei⁹. It was just because scholars after the Han dynasty had little knowledge that they muddily accepted them as

1 稷 referring to Houji, see Footnote 2 Page 6.

2 *wudi* 五帝 comprising Emperor Huang (*Huangdi* 黃帝), Zhuanxu (顓頊), Ku (嚳), Yao (堯), and Shun (舜) according to the *Records of the Grand Historian*.

3 *sandai* 三代 including Xia, Shang, and Zhou.

4 俊.

5 *Da Dong Huang Jing* 大東荒經 a chapter in the *Classic of Mountains and Seas*.

6 *Shan Hai Jing* 山海經 a Pre-Qin text whose author(s) remain unknown.

7 *xianren* 賢人.

8 *tuogugaizhi* 托古改制.

9 韓非 (?–233 BCE) also known as Han Feizi 韓非子 a representative scholar of the school of Legalism in the Warring States period.

real persons with factual information. It wasn't clear until Kang Youwei¹ wrote *Confucius as a Reformer*². When I read your critique accompanied by examples of *Changfa* and the *Solemn Temples*, I realize that Yu is also suspicious. Wang Jingan argues that the *Sacrificial Odes Of Shang* was composed by Song people in the middle Western Zhou period, but I don't think so. Of course it is right that Wang does not accept that the argument in Wei Hong³'s *Preface*⁴ that the *Sacrificial Odes Of Shang* was Shang poetry. In particular, it is profoundly knowledgeable that he finds that it was Song poetry with examples of "Mountain Jing⁵," personal names, place names, idioms, and titles. However, although the Zhou poems that he lists as "intertextual" poems in the *Sacrificial Odes Of Shang* are said to be works in the time of Xuan⁶ and You⁷, such as *Changchu*⁸, *Xisang*⁹, *Shiguwen*¹⁰, *Yunhan*¹¹, *Zhengmin*¹², *Changwu*¹³, *Jianghan*¹⁴, and *Caiqi*¹⁵, I cannot confidently agree with that; furthermore, Wang states, "Whether it is the *Sacrificial Odes Of Shang* that followed the *Ballads*¹⁶ and the *Courtly Songs*¹⁷ or vice versa, or neither of them followed each other but both of them employed contemporary idioms, is unknowable," so Wang does not use the similarities of these wordings to argue that the *Sacrificial Odes Of Shang* was the poetry in the Western Zhou period. However, Wang asserts that "It is an obvious fact that the *Praiseful Odes of Lu*¹⁸ followed the *Sacrificial Odes Of Shang*. The way that Lu¹ was to

1 康有為 (1858–1927).

2 *Kongzi Gaizhi Kao* 孔子改制考 (1898).

3 衛宏 (25–57).

4 *Xu* 序 referring to the *Preface of Mao Poetry* (*Mao Shi Xu* 毛詩序).

5 *Jingshan* 景山.

6 宣 referring to the King Xuan of Zhou (?—783 BCE).

7 幽 referring to the King You of Zhou (795 BCE—771 BCE).

8 萇楚.

9 隰桑.

10 石鼓文.

11 雲漢.

12 烝民.

13 常武.

14 江漢.

15 采芑.

16 *Feng* 風 referring to *Ballads from States* (*Guo Feng* 國風) a section in the *Classic of Poetry*.

17 *Ya* 雅 referring to *Minor Courtly Songs* (*Xiao Ya* 小雅) and *Major Courtly Songs* (*Da Ya* 大雅), sections in the *Classic of Poetry*, see Footnote 3, Page 3.

18 *Lu Song* 魯頌 a section in the *Classic of Poetry*, see Footnote 3, Page 3.

The way that Lu¹ was to Zhou was that Lu shared Zhou's last name if Lu was close to Zhou, or Lu presented itself in court if it respected Zhou. Thus Lu created odes following the *Sacrificial Odes Of Shang* rather than the *Sacrificial Odes Of Zhou*², as Lu was in the same position as a vassal state as Song and they adopted the same rites of the Son of Heaven³. Besides, the poems of the *Sacrificial Odes Of Shang* were in a nearer era, thus making it easier to imitate them than others.” Based on this, he concludes that Song people in middle Zong Zhou⁴ wrote “the *Sacrificial Odes Of Shang* to offer sacrifices to their ancestral kings. Zheng Kaofu⁵ offered it to the Grand Preceptor⁶ of Zhou and the Grand Preceptor placed it after the *Sacrificial Odes Of Zhou*. When the *Praiseful Odes of Lu* was compiled, it was then placed after Lu.” This kind of argumentation is illogic. His claim that it is “an obvious fact” that the *Praiseful Odes of Lu* followed the *Sacrificial Odes Of Shang* is probably based on the argument in the *Model Sayings*⁷, “Prince Xisi⁸ used to look up to Zheng Kaofu⁹.” Therefore he concludes that “Pines in Mountain Culai¹⁰ and cypress in Mountain Xinfu¹¹” in the *Praiseful Odes of Lu* were based on “Climbing Mountain Jing and straight were the pines and cypress” in the *Sacrificial Odes Of Shang*. Yet, such a claim by Yang Xiong¹² has no value of being a piece of evidence. Others such as “in the same position of a state,” “adopting the same rites of the Son of Heaven,” and “in a nearer era” are simply speculations without foundations. Although Wang does not believe Hong's *Preface*, he firmly believes the accounts in the *Discourses of the States*¹³ such as “Zheng Kaofu *xiao*¹ (Wang

1 魯 referring the State of Lu (*Luguo* 魯國) (1042 BCE—249 BCE) a vassal state in the Zhou period.

2 *Zhou Song* 周頌 a section in the *Classic of Poetry*, see Footnote 3, Page 3.

3 *Tianzi* 天子 referring to the Zhou royal king.

4 宗周 an alternative name of the Zhou period.

5 正考夫 (?—?) Song people who was believed to be an ancestor of Confucius.

6 Taishi 太師 the highest official rank in the Zhou period.

7 *Fayan* 法言 composed by Yang Xiong 楊雄 around 9 CE.

8 *Gongzi Xisi* 公子奚斯 also known as Prince Yu (*Gongzi Yu* 公子魚) (?—?) a prince of the State of Lu.

9 正考甫 a variant form of the name of Zheng Kaofu.

10 徂徠 the name of a mountain.

11 新甫 the name of a mountain.

12 楊雄 the author of the *Model Sayings*.

13 *Guoyu* 國語 a text of the Warring States period about the speeches of Spring and Autumn period, whose author(s) remain unknown.

*xiao*¹ (Wang reads it as “*xiao*”² and interprets it as “*xian* (offer)”³.) the *Sacrificial Odes Of Shang* to the Grand Preceptor of Zhou.” I think this account in the *Discourses of the States* is also unreliable. Because it contains words such as “the Grand Preceptor of Zhou” and “offer,” which possesses a color of people in the Han dynasty. From my point of view, the argument in the *Records of the Grand Historian*⁴ is more resealable, that the *Sacrificial Odes Of Shang* dates back to Duke Xiang of Song⁵. Because the *Sacrificial Odes Of Shang* contains so many exaggerated narratives which are extremely similar to those of the *Praiseful Odes of Lu*. In *Interpreting the Ancient Meaning of the Poetry*⁶, Wei Yuan⁷ asserted that “the battle in Shaoling⁸ was the first attempt for Zhong Xia⁹ to resist Chu¹⁰ based on that the *Solemn Temples* in the *Praiseful Odes of Lu* reads “punishing Jing Shu¹¹” and *Yinwu*¹² in the *Sacrificial Odes Of Shang* reads “vigorously attacking Jing Chu¹³.” So when Xi of Lu¹⁴ and Xiang of Song¹⁵ returned, they exaggerated the achievements and each had odes written for sacrifices in ancestral temples.” This conclusion sounds reasonable. In addition, the style of the *Sacrificial Odes Of Shang* is rather clear and cohesive, which is not like that of the works before the Eastern Zhou period at all. Though different from Wang’s, my opinion has no conflicts with your opinion that “Shang tribe regarded Yu as a celestial being descending to the mortal world and Zhou tribe considered him as the most ancient human king (with a celestial nature).” Moreover, my view especially accords

1 校.

2 效.

3 獻.

4 *Shiji* 史記 whose original title was *Taishigong Shu* 太史公書, composed by Sima Qian 司馬遷 (145 or 135 BCE —?).

5 Song Xiang Gong 宋襄公 (?—637 BCE) a ruler of the State of Song in the Spring and Autumn period.

6 *Shi Gu Wei* 詩古微 a Qing dynasty work on the *Classic of Poetry* authored by Wei Yuan.

7 魏源 (1784–1857).

8 召陵 the name of a place.

9 中夏 an alternative name of the region of the central plain (*Zhongyuan* 中原).

10 楚 referring to the State of Chu (Chuguo 楚國) (?—223 BCE) a vassal state in the Zhou period.

11 荆舒 referring to the State of Chu.

12 殷武 the name of a poem.

13 荆楚 referring to the State of Chu.

14 Lu Xi 魯僖 a shorten form of the Duke Xi of Lu.

15 Song Xiang 宋襄 a shorten form of the Duke Xiang of Song.

especially accords with yours that "the *People* was composed in the Western Zhou period and there was no concept of Yu before the composition of *Changfa*."

Boxiang's argument that Yu was perhaps a dragon can remain as a hypothesis. You argue that Yu was perhaps something like a lizard based on *Shuowen*'s "following *rou*" and the interpretation of "*rou*" as "animals feet trampling the ground," but I personally don't think so. All the characters that *Shuowen* claims to follow "*rou*" do not follow "*rou*" in oracle inscriptions and bronze inscriptions (e.g., "*qin*¹," "*wan*²," "*zeng*³," and "*shou*⁴."). The character "*rou*" that is "pictographic and pronounced as *jiu*⁵" and contains a meaning of "animals' feet trampling the ground" is very likely a character Han people invented according to an erroneous graph.

I quite enjoy researching on so-called "classics," but I "question the classics" a lot. I read the *Falsified Classics of the Wang Mang Period*⁶ by Kang Youwei and *Exploring the Sources of the Records of the Grand Historian* by Cui Zhifu⁷ twelve years ago and learned that so-called "Old Text Classics⁸" were invented Liu Xin⁹ and his clan. After that, I read the *Confucius as a Reformer* by Kang Youwei and learned that most of the events recorded in the classics were Confucians' "pleading antiquity" and they have no value of reliable histories. Recently, I have been reading books such as the *Study Notes*¹⁰ by Ye Shi¹¹, *Doubting All the Books*¹² by Wan Sinian¹³, *A General Introduction to the Classic of Poetry*¹⁴ and *a General Introduction to the*

1 禽.

2 萬.

3 罍.

4 獸.

5 九.

6 *Weijing Kao* 偽經考.

7 崔觬甫 (1852–1924).

8 *guwenjing* 古文經.

9 劉歆 (50 BCE—23 CE).

10 *Xixue Jiyan* 習學記言.

11 葉適 (1150–1223).

12 *Qunshu Yibian* 群書疑辨.

13 萬斯年 (1617—1693).

14 *Shijing Tonglun* 詩經通論.

*Book of Rites*¹ by Yao Jiheng² (*Continuing the Collection of Studies on the Book of Rites*³ by Hang Shijun⁴), and *A Collection of Reliability Analysis* by Cui Shu, as well as discussions on “questioning the classics” in other books. Then I realize that the “Six Classics” are neither political texts of Ji Dan⁵ nor works of Confucius to plead antiquity (yet it contains some parts that are later Confucians’ “pleading antiquity”; those in the *Analects* whereby Yao, Shun, King Wen, and the Duke of Zhou are mentioned, are Confucius’s “pleading antiquity”). Most of the “Six Classics” have neither the value of reliable history nor that of philosophical ideas and political theories. Now, I argue that —

(1) Confucius did not delete or compile the “Six Classics.”

(2) The *Poetry*, the *Documents*, the *Rites*⁶, the *Changes*, and *Spring and Autumn Annals* were originally five separated books with no relations to each other (There was no “*Classic of Music*”⁷ ever at all).

(3) The reasons for compiling the five books into one and named it as “Six Classics” are as follows: based on “the Master’s cultivated speech or received pronunciation are poetry, documents, and the maintenance of rites” and “risen in poetry, established in rites, and accomplished in music” in the *Analects*, the idea that “Confucius instructed through the *Poetry*, the *Documents*, the *Rites*, and the *Music*” (the *Hereditary Houses of Confucius*⁸, the *Records of the Grand Historian*) was thereby developed, with which the following idea was produced, “the *Music* gave all honor to its four subjects of instruction, and arranged the lessons in them, following the *Poetry*, the *Documents*, the *Rites*, and the *Music* of the former kings closely. In order to cultivate scholars. in spring and autumn they were instructed with the *Rites* and the *Music*; in winter and summer they were instructed with the *Poetry* and the *Documents*” (*Royal Regulations*⁹, the *Book of Rites*). Therefore, the *Classic of Poetry*, the

1 Liji Tonglun 禮記通論

2 姚際恒 (1647–?1715)

3 Xu Liji Jishuo 續禮記集說

4 杭世駿 (1696–1773)

5 姬旦 also known as the Duke of Zhou (Zhou Gong 周公) (?—?) the younger brother of the King Wu of Zhou.

6 Li 禮 referring to the *Book of Rites*.

7 Yuejing 樂經.

8 Kongzi Shijia 孔子世家 the name of the chapter about Confucius in the *Records of the Grand Historian*.

9 Wangzhi 王制 the name of a chapter in the *Book of Rites*.

Book of Documents, and the *Book of Etiquette and Ceremonial*¹ were grouped together. Given “the origin of the *Music* was within the three hundred poems in the *Poetry* and the practices of the *Music* were within the seventeen chapters in the *Rites*” (in *A General Introduction to the Classic of Rites*² by Shao Yichen³), the actual three books then gained four titles, so they were regarded as four books then. Further, given that Mencius said, “Confucius made the *Spring and Autumn Annals*”, the *Spring and Autumn Annals* was thus included. I only have no idea why the *Classic of Changes* was included. Please let me know if you have any thoughts.

(4) The compilation of the “Six Classics” ought to be at the end of the Warring States period. The earliest occurrence of the name “Six Classics” was in the *Revolution of Heaven*⁴, *Zhuangzi*⁵. The chapter of *All Under Heaven* in *Zhuangzi* also states, “poetry, documents, rites, and music might be learned from the scholars of Zou⁶ and Lu, and the girdled members of the various courts.” In its following contexts, it lists “the *Poetry*,” “the *Documents*,” “the *Rites*,” “the *Music*,” “the *Changes*,” and “the *Spring and Autumn Annals*” by their individual names without using “Six Classics.” Note: only the seven pieces in the “Inner Chapters”⁷ can be attributed to Zhuang Zhou⁸. The *Revolution of Heaven* was in “Outer Chapters”⁹ and *All Under Heaven* are in “Miscellaneous Chapters”¹⁰, both of which were not authored by Zhuang Zhou and were probably written in the late Warring States period.

(5) Since the name “Six Classics” was established, these six books were always mentioned together every time they were cited, such as the *Ruxiao* in *Xunzi*¹¹, *Agriculture and War*¹² in

1 Yi Li 儀禮 one of the “Three Rites” (The other two are the *Rites of Zhou* and the *Book of Rites*).

2 Li Jing Tinglun 禮經通論.

3 邵懿辰 (1810–1861).

4 Tianyun 天運 the name of a chapter in *Zhuangzi*.

5 *Zhuangzi* 莊子 referring to the *Book of Zhuangzi* by Master Zhuang (*Zhuangzi* 莊子) and his followers, a representative work of Daoism.

6 鄒 referring to the State of Zou (Zouguo 鄒國) a vassal state in the Zhou period.

7 neipian 內篇 the name of the first section in the *Book of Zhuangzi*.

8 莊周 also known as *Zhuangzi* (莊子) a representative scholar of Taoism in the Warring States period.

9 waipian 外篇 the name of the second section in the *Book of Zhuangzi*.

10 zapien 雜篇 the name of the third section in the *Book of Zhuangzi*.

11 荀子 referring to the *Book of Xunzi* by Master Xun (*Xun Kuang* 荀況), a representative work of Confucianism in the Warring States period.

12 Nongzhan 農戰.

the *Book of Lord Shang*¹, the *Different Teaching of the Different Kings*² in the *Book of Rites*, the chapter of *Fanluyubei*³ in the *Spring and Autumn Annals*, the *Records of the Grand Historian* (a lot), *Treatise on Literature*⁴ in the *Book of Han*, and *Bai Hu Tong*⁵. Moreover, even far-fetched analogies such as “Five Constant Virtues⁶” and “Five Elements⁷” were groundlessly made! (When “Old Text scholars⁸” came around, they also attached the *Rites of Zhou*⁹ in addition to these five books. As for the *Three Commentaries of the Spring and Autumn Annals*¹⁰, the *Little Dai Book of Rites*¹¹, the *Analects*, the *Classic of Filial Piety*¹², *Erya*¹³, *Mengzi*¹⁴, all of them were considered as “commentaries and annotations,” so there are also popular terms such as “Seven Classics,” “Nine Classics,” “Eleven Classics,” and “Thirteen Classics,” all of which can be summarized as “Six Classics.”)

If we are to investigate Confucius’s theories and deeds, I think only the *Analects* is the most reliable. Now I single out all the references concerning the so-called “Six Classics” in the *Analects* and make a detailed discussion of them:

There are eighteen entries concerning the *Poetry*:

A. It is said in the *Poetry*, “As you cut and then file, as you carve and then polish.”
(*Xueer*¹⁵)

1 *Shang Jun Shu* 商君書 a foundational work of Legalism by Shang Yang (商鞅) in the Warring States period.

2 *Jingjie* 經解.

3 繁露玉杯篇,

4 *Yiwenzhi* 藝文志.

5 白虎通 traditionally regarded as a work by Ban Gu (班固) and others in the Han dynasty.

6 五常 referring to five constant virtues in traditional Chinese ethics, namely benevolence (ren 仁), righteousness (yi 義), propriety (li 禮), wisdom (zhi 智) and fidelity (xin 信)

7 五行 referring to five elements, namely metal, wood, water, fire and earth

8 *guwenjia* 古文家 scholars who studied the Old Text classics.

9 *Zhouli* 周禮 originally entitled *Officials of Zhou* (*Zhouguan* 周官), one of the “Three Rites.”

10 *Chunqiu Sanzhuan* 春秋三傳 consisting of *Zuo’s Commentary* (*Zuo Zhuan* 左傳), *Gongyang’s Commentary* (*Gongyang Zhuan* 公羊傳), and *Guliang’s Commentary* (*Guliang Zhuan* 穀梁傳).

11 *Xiaodai Liji* 小戴禮記 edited by Dai Sheng 戴聖. It is the present-day circulation of the *Book of Rites* in relation to the *Elder Dai Book of Rites* (*Dadai Liji* 大戴禮記) edited by Gai De 戴德 which has been lost.

12 *Xiaojing* 孝經 a work of Confucianism.

13 爾雅 a Chinese dictionary.

14 孟子 referring to the *Works of Mencius*, a representative work of Confucianism.

15 学而 the title of a chapter in the *Analects*.

- B. The Master said, "the *Poetry* has three hundred poems, which if synthesized into one sentence, it will be "having no depraved thoughts." (*Weizheng*¹)
- C. "Assisting are the dukes; the Son of Heaven looks solemn and grave." (*Bayi*²)
- D. "How sweet is her artful smile; How distinct in back and white are her beautiful eyes; with paleness as gorgeousness." (*Bayi*)
- E. The Master said, "*Guanju*³, which is delightful yet not licentious, and glum yet not grieved." (*Bayi*)
- F. The Master's cultivated speech or received pronunciation⁴: poetry, documents, and the maintenance of rites are all cultivated speech or received pronunciation. (*Shuer*⁵)
- G. It is said in the *Poetry*, "be apprehensive and careful, as if you were on the brink of a deep gulf, as if you were treading on thin ice." (*Taibo*⁶)
- H. The Master said, "Risen in poetry, established in rites, accomplished in music." (*Taibo*)
- I. The Master said, "the beginning of Master Zhi⁷, the ending of the *Guanju*, how magnificent, how it filled the ears!" (*Taibo*)
- J. The Master said, "I returned from Wei⁸ to Lu, and then the music was regulated, and the courtly songs and sacrificial or praiseful odes all found their proper places." (*Zihan*⁹)
- K. "One does not envy or hate, one was not greedy - for what is he or she not good?" (*Taibo*)
- L. "The flowers of the aspen-plum slant and flip over. Do I not think of you? It's just that your house is distant." (*Taibo*)

1 為政 the title of a chapter in the *Analects*.

2 八佾 the title of a chapter in the *Analects*.

3 關雎 a poem in the *Classic of Poetry*.

4 *yayan* 雅言.

5 述而 the title of a chapter in the *Analects*.

6 泰伯 the title of a chapter in the *Analects*.

7 Shi Zhi 師摯 referring to a Grand Preceptor named Zhi 摯.

8 衛 referring to the State of Wei (*Weiguo* 衛國) (?—209 BCE) a vassal state in the Zhou period.

9 子罕 the title of a chapter in the *Analects*.

- M. “Nan Rong¹ repeatedly recited the lines regarding the white scepter stone.”...
(*Xianjin*²)
- N. ““If you does not made with rich, reverently make a difference.”” (*Yanyuan*³)
- O. The Master said, "Recite the three hundred poems in the *Poetry*, ..." (*Zilu*⁴)
- P. ...when I passed below the hall with hasty steps, and [he] said to me, "Have you learned the *Poetry*?" (*Jishi*⁵)
- Q. The Master said, "Son, why do you not study the *Poetry*?" (*Yanghuo*⁶)
- R. The Master said to Bo Yu⁷, "Did you study the *Zhou Nan*⁸ and the *Shao Nan*⁹?"
(*Yanghuo*)

There are four entries concerning the *Documents*:

- A. It is said in the *Documents*, "Filial piety is being friendly to brothers." (*Weizheng*)
- B. The Master's cultivated speech or received pronunciation: poetry, documents, and the maintenance of rites are all cultivated speech or received pronunciation. (*Shuer*)
- C. King Wu said, "I have ten ministers who govern." (*Taibo*)
- D. It is said in the *Documents*, "Gao Zong¹⁰, while observing the usual imperial mourning, was for three years not speaking." (*Xianwen*¹¹)

There are six entries concerning the *Music*:

1 南容 (?—?) a student of Confucius.
 2 先進 the title of a chapter in the *Analects*.
 3 顏淵 (521 BCE—481 BCE) referring to Yan Hui 顏回, a student of Confucius.
 4 子路 (542 BCE—480 BCE) the courtesy name of Zhong You 仲由, a student of Confucius.
 5 季氏 the title of a chapter in the *Analects*.
 6 陽貨 the title of a chapter in the *Analects*.
 7 伯魚 also known as Kong Li 孔鯉 (532 BCE—483 BCE) Confucius's son.
 8 周南 the first chapter in the section of the *Ballads from States* in the *Poetry*.
 9 召南 the second chapter in the section of the *Ballads from States* in the *Poetry*.
 10 高宗 referring to Wu Ding 武丁, a King of Shang.
 11 憲問 the title of a chapter in the *Analects*.

- A. The Master told the Grand Preceptor of Lu music... (*Bayi*)
- B. The Master spoke of the *Shao*¹... spoke of *Wu*²... (*Bayi*)
- C. When the Master was in Qi³, he heard the *Shao*... (*Shuer*)
- D. The Master said, "Risen in poetry, established in rites, accomplished in music."
(*Taibo*)
- E. The Master said, "the beginning of Master Zhi, the ending of the *Guanju*, how magnificent, how it filled the ears!" (*Taibo*)
- F. The Master said, "I returned from Wei to Lu, and then the music was regulated, and the courtly songs and sacrificial or praiseful odes all found their proper places." (*Zihan*)

There are three entries concerning the *Changes*:

- A. The Master said, "If some years were added to my life, I would study the *Changes* with fifty years, and then I might come to be without big faults." (*Shuer*)
- B. "Inconstant in one's virtue, one will undergo disgrace." (*Shuer*)
- C. Master Zeng⁴ said, "respectable person thinks and does not go out of his place."
(*Zilu*)

There are three entries concerning all of them:

- A. The Master's cultivated speech or received pronunciation: poetry, documents, and the maintenance of rites are all cultivated speech or received pronunciation. (*Shuer*)
- B. The Master said, "Risen in poetry, established in rites, accomplished in music."
(*Taibo*)

1 韶 said to be the title of a piece of music in the time of Shun.

2 武 said to be the title of a piece of music in the time of King Wu of Zhou.

3 齊 referring to the State of Qi (*Qiguo* 齊國) (?—221 BCE) a vassal state in the Zhou period.

4 Zengzi 曾子 also known as Zeng Shen 曾參 (505 BCE–435 BCE), a student of Confucius.

C. [Chen Kang¹] said, “have you studied the *Poetry*?”... [Chen Kang] said, “have you studied the *Rites*?”... (*Jishi*)

Although the *Analects* contains a lot of references of the *Rites*, all of them are discussing the significance of rites, which have nothing to do with the *Book of Etiquette and Ceremonial* at all. (Though later scholars could cite the *Book of Etiquette and Ceremonial* to give strained interpretations of words such as “the archery does not aim to go through the leather target” and “one makes a slight bow with hands folded in front before ascending the hall and drinks after descending from it,” it can’t be argued that this is the evidence that Confucius cited the *Book of Etiquette and Ceremonial*.)

There is no single word about the *Spring and Autumn Annals* at all. The New Text scholars² are particularly keen on citing the two paragraphs of “In reply to Zi Zhang³’s question regarding ten generations” and “in reply to Yan Yuan’s question regarding governance” to support their views, interpreting them as subtle words with profound meaning concerning the *Spring and Autumn Annals*. However, if we read the two paragraphs closely, we will find they actually insipid and dull, which are not “exceedingly unusual and bizarre assertions” at all. Moreover, there are no words similar to the two paragraphs in the *classic of Spring and Autumn Annals*⁴, *Gongyang's Commentary*⁵ and the *Luxuriant Dew of the Spring and Autumn Annals*⁶, either. Isn’t it suspicious that such an important matter finds no materials in the *Analects*?

Entries concerning the *Poetry* in the *Analects* are of the greatest number, among which P is probably unworthy of credibility (said Cui Shu) and G is far later than the time of Confucius. Excluding these two there are still sixteen entries, in which one cannot find any information about deleting the poems at all. All of the verses and names of titles quoted in ABCEIKMNR are in the present edition of *Classic of Poetry*. Only D and H are two “lost poems” (D is a lost

1 陳亢 (511 BCE–430 BCE) a student of Confucius.

2 *jingwenjia* 今文家 scholars who studied the New Text classics.

3 子張 (503 BCE—?) the courtesy name of Zhuansun Zhi 顓孫師, a student of Confucius.

4 *Chunqiu Jing* 春秋經 an alternative name of the *Spring and Autumn Annals*.

5 *Gongyang Zhuan* 公羊傳 authored by Gongyang Gao 公羊高 in the Warring States period.

6 *Chunqiu Fanlu* 春秋繁露 authored by Dong Zhongshu 董仲舒 in the Han dynasty.

poem. See discussions below.). Thus the *Poetry* that Confucius saw was in fact not that dissimilar from the present edition (It is definitely unreasonable to say that they are exactly the same. Although they are the same in terms of the number of poems, the loss and addition of the content are undoubtedly inevitable with transcription through over two thousand years). Next, B and O suggest that the *Poetry* that Confucius saw had just three hundred poems, whereby Confucius did not make deletion and saved only three hundred poems. This has been previously argued by a number of scholars. Only J says, "music was regulated, and the courtly songs and sacrificial or praiseful odes all found their proper places," which, however, is discussing the *Music*, not the *Poetry*. It merely suggests that Confucius ordered the sequence of these poems, but it can never be evidence of a deletion of the poems. In my opinion, if Confucius had ever deleted some of the poems, then *Odes of Zheng*¹ definitely would have been deleted, given he advocated to "banish Zheng songs" (some scholars argued "songs" was "music" not "poems," which is a theory to fill gaps and force interpretations); Further, if one interprets the *Poetry* following the way the Confucians since Qin and Han did with "the Sage's Way²" and "the Ruler's Virtue³," then the arguments by Wang Bai⁴, Yan Ruoku⁵, and Wan Sitong⁶ are totally correct. Because only through editing the *Classic of Poetry* in this way can it be prevented from being crooked and licentious, and conformed to the Sage's Way and the King's Transformation.

One cannot find any information regarding the deletion of the *Documents* in the four entries concerning the *Documents*. All of them cite the *Documents* except B, but it is odd that all the three citations are not found within the twenty eight chapters. Thus, the "New Text version of the *Book of Documents*" is probably quite different from the *Documents* that Confucius saw.

Given that the *Music* has no classic, there is probably no need to discuss the six entries concerning the *Music*. Yet concerning F, it suggests that it was Confucius who systematized the music without a classic.

1 *Zhengfeng* 鄭風 a chapter in the section of *Ballads from States* in the *Poetry*.

2 聖道.

3 王化 *hua* 化 means to transform one through education.

4 王柏 (1197–1274).

5 閻若璩 (1636–1704).

6 萬斯同 (1638–1702).

There are three references concerning the *Changes*, which were not unique and are not enough to verify that Confucius used to praise the *Changes*, instead of that he had no relationship with it. The wording of A is rather different in the Lu version of the *Analects*¹ and the Gu version of the *Analects*². The current edition was from Zheng Xuan³ who followed the reading in the Gu version for this section, which in the Lu version is “studying for fifty years then I might also come to be without big faults” (See the *Textual Explanations of Classics and Canons*⁴). “Not seeking worldly gains and being tranquil, as well as keeping the promises, one studies for fifty years” in the *Stele of Gao Biao*⁵ composed in the Han dynasty followed the Lu version of the *Analects*. I think the character was in fact “yi (also)”⁶ in the original copy of the *Analects*. Han people changed “yi (also)” into “yi (changes)”⁷ in order to make them accorded because of the perception since Qin and Han that “Confucius praised the *Changes*.” The Gu version of the *Analects* is indeed implausible as it was a classic-in-wall⁸ falsified by Liu Xin, but the substitution of this character did not originate from the Gu version of the *Analects* because it had been written as “yi (changes)” in the *Hereditary Houses of Confucius, Records of the Grand Historian*. Probably Han people first replaced “yi (also)” with “yi (changes)” and later altered this paragraph in the *Analects* into “When Confucius grew old he liked the *Changes*. He wrote prefaces for *Tuan*⁹, *Xi*¹⁰, *Xiang*¹¹, *Shuogua*¹², and *Wenyan*¹³. He read the *Changes* and studied diligently, saying, ‘If I were given several years, by doing so, I would have been refined on the *Changes*’ ” in the *Records of the Grand Historian*. This alternation was initially an attempt to

1 *Lulun* 魯論 one version of the *Analects* in the Han dynasty

2 *Gulun* 古論 another version of the *Analects* in the Han dynasty, discovered in a wall of the home believed to be Confucius's.

3 鄭玄 (127–200).

4 *Jingdian Shiwen* 經典釋文 composed by Lu Deming 陸德明 in the Tang dynasty.

5 *Gaobiao bei* 高彪碑.

6 亦.

7 易.

8 *bizhongjing* 壁中經 also known as *bijing* 壁經 or *bizhongshu* 壁中書, referring to texts discovered in a wall of Confucius's home which are called as the "Old Text classics" (*guwenjing* 古文經).

9 彖 referring to the *Tuan Commentary*.

10 繫 referring to the *Xici* 繫辭.

11 象 referring to the *Xiang Commentary*.

12 說卦.

13 文言.

make this paragraph in the *Analects* the evidence for Confucius's praise on the *Changes*, but unexpectedly it left a giant loophole due to accidental carelessness: they claimed that Confucius returned to Lu in his late years and then deleted and edited the "Six Classics," but Confucius was already in his seventies at that time. Therefore, the "fifty" in the *Analects* makes no sense. There were explanations, such as "five years to ten years," "using five or ten," or alternations, such as "zu¹ (die)" and "wu² (I)." No matter what it was, the lies failed to be covered! B only quoted the six line statements³ in *Heng Hexagram*⁴, thus having no relation to praising the *Changes*. As for Zeng Shen's words in C, it is *Daxiang*⁶ in *Gen Hexagram*⁷ of the *Changes*, yet has an additional character "yi (have)"⁸ which is "Junzi⁹ has thoughts and does not go out of his place." Obviously, the author of *Daxiang* followed Zeng Shen's claim and then added this "yi (have)" character, thus according it with other wordings and phrasings in *Daxiang* in other hexagrams. Cui Zhu used to treat this as the evidence for the argument that the *Xiang Commentary*¹⁰ was from a time after Confucius. Doesn't this verify that Confucius has no relationship with the *Changes* instead?

As for the three general references, C is suspicious, so I do not discuss it; A records that Confucius read literature and histories and also praised rites with the *Discourses of the States* ("cultivated speech or received pronunciation" originated from Liu Taigong¹¹'s research); B discusses the chronological order of the textbooks, which has nothing to do with the claim of "deleting the *Poetry* and the *Documents*, deciding rites and music" by later generations.

The "Six Classics" has no relation to Confucius, as discussed above. Then, what's the nature of the "Six Classics" on earth? I think—

1 卒.

2 吾.

3 yaoci 爻辞.

4 Henggua 恆卦.

5 曾參.

6 大象 referring to *Da Xiang Commentary* 大象傳, a subsection of the *Xiang Commentary*.

7 Gengua 艮卦.

8 以.

9 君子 a term denoting to a person of notable character and integrity.

10 *Xiang Zhuan* 象傳 consisting of *Da Xiang Commentary* and *Xiao Xiang Commentary*.

11 劉台拱 (1751—1805).

The Poetry It is the earliest collection, in which a small portion was the poetry of the Western Zhou period and the main body was the poetry of the Eastern Zhou (prior to Confucius's time). There is certainly no way of investigating its author. As for the time of editing, I think it is prior to Confucius's time; Confucius stated "the *Poetry* the three hundred poems" and "reciting the *Poetry* the three hundred poems," which suggests that what he saw was a ready copy. You argue that "the compilation of the *Classic of Poetry* must be after Confucius's time and before Mencius's time" by citing the present edition which contains neither the verse "with paleness as gorgeousness" nor the verse "the flowers of the aspen-plum" as the evidence for the argument that it was compiled after the *Analects* (*The Short Story Magazine*¹ Volume 14, No.1). I think it is not necessarily the case. What Zi Xia² was asking about was not the poems in *Shuoren*³. Every verse in the second part of *Shuoren* describes the beautifulness of Zhuang Jiang⁴'s body, rendering it impossible to have the verse "with paleness as gorgeousness" at the end of it, which must be of another poem. The two verses starting with "artful smile" simply happen to be the same as *Shuoren*. The whole poem was lost later. The poem concerning "the aspen-plum" was also lost. Confucius presided "paleness and gorgeousness," thus it shall not be deleted; that is, though the poem concerning "the aspen-plum" was not taken by Confucius, the result that the present edition does not include it is not due to intentional exclusion but to accidental loss. As there were losses, there might also be additions. For example, only the *Mao Poetry*⁵ contains the first paragraph of *Durenshi*⁶, while none of the Three Schools⁷ has it (See the *Book of Rites, Ziyi Interpretations*⁸). So it remains a question whether it is that it had been there but the Three Schools lost it or it did not exist at all but the *Mao Poetry* added it to the collection according to the *Zuo's*

1 *Xiaoshuo Yuebao* 小說月報 a literary monthly first published in 1910 in Shanghai. Mao Dun 茅盾 became its chief editor in 1921.

2 子夏 (507 BCE—400 BCE) a student of Confucius.

3 碩人 a poem in the *Classic of Poetry*.

4 莊姜 (?—?) the wife of the Duke Zhuang of Wei (Wei Zhuang Gong 衛莊公), Jiang 姜 was her surname.

5 *Maoshi* 毛詩 an Old Text version of the *Classic of Poetry* with the commentary by Mao Heng 毛亨.

6 都人士 a poem in the *Classic of Poetry*.

7 *sanjia* 三家 referring to three New Text versions of the *Classic of Poetry*, including *Qishi* 齊詩, *Lushi* 魯詩, and *Hanshi* 韓詩.

8 *Ziyi Shiwen* 緇衣釋文 *Ziyi* 緇衣 is the title of a poem in the *Classic of Poetry*.

the *Zuo's Commentary* (*Xiang Fourteen*¹), the *Book of Rites* (*Ziyi*), and *New Books by Jia Yi*² (*Dengqi*³). Whatever the truth is, the collection can verify that the transcription of the *Classic of Poetry* must have had loss or add-ons. Though there have been loss or add-ons, the collection is a variant of the original copy. They cannot be said to be two different copies.

The *Documents* It seems to be a “collection of documents” or “archives of files” in the time of the “Three Generations,” which ought to be considered as histories, but I suspect that it was not edited into a book. All the things cited by the people in the Spring and Autumn period or the Warring States period such as *Xiazhi*⁴ and the *Book of Zhou*, as well as the present so-called the *Lost Book of Zhou*⁵ are of the same kind, so it is untrustworthy that it contains either twenty eight chapters claimed by the New Text scholars or one hundred chapters claimed by the Old Text scholars. Since it was never edited into a book, there is no way for it to be so-called complete or incomplete. Because it was frequently cited, thereupon it was inevitable that people “pleading antiquity” came to falsify it. There might be few of historical value in the present-day twenty eight chapters. Late Zhou people must have falsified chapters such as the *Canon of Yao*, the *Counsels of Gao Yao*, *Tribute of Yu*, and *Speech at Gan*⁶. In the *Lost Book of Zhou*, falsified chapters must have occupied the main portion. Moreover, even if the *Book of Documents* does not have falsified chapters it is still just a politically correct work to cover the falsification. One cannot be cautious enough to use them as historical sources. There was only one scholar in previous generations who did not trust it, Liu Zhiji⁷. Questioning the antiquity with Cui Shu’s courage while firmly believing in this, he was simply cheated by the conceptions of “the Kingly Way” and “the Sagely Governance.”

The *Rites* The *Book of Etiquette and Ceremonial* is an unreliable work arbitrarily transcribed in the Warring States period. This has already been confirmed by scholars including

1 *Xiang Shisi Nian* 襄十四年 a chapter in *Zuo's Commentary*. Xiang 襄 refers to the Duke Xiang of Lu 魯襄公 (575 BCE—542 BCE).

2 *Jia Yi Xinshu* 賈誼新書 a book composed by Jia Yi 賈誼 in the Han dynasty.

3 等齊.

4 夏志.

5 *Yizhoushu* 逸周書.

6 *Ganshi* 甘誓.

7 劉知幾 (660–720).

Mao Qilin¹, Gu Donggao², Yuan Mei³, and Cut Shu. Liu Xin falsified the *Rites of Zhou* and ninety percent of the *Book of Rites by Two Diao*⁴ were created by Han Confucians.

The *Music* There was no classic of music in the first place. The purpose of the Old Text scholars to create the idea that “the books Lord Dou⁵, the musician of the Marquess Wen of Wei⁶, offered to Emperor Wen of Han⁷ were the *Dasiyue*⁸ in the section of *Dazongbo*⁹ of the *Rites of Zhou*¹⁰” (See *Treatise on Literature* in the *Book of Han*) was to falsely claim it to be “the *Classic of Music*.” But the story they made up was so plastic! Because based on what they said, Lord Dou was already two hundred fifty or two hundred sixty years old when he presented the books (says Kang Youwei)!

The *Changes* I think the original Yi hexagram¹¹ was something in the time of phallism. The two of “Qian¹²” and “Kun¹³” are the symbols of the reproductive organs of males and females, which first transformed to eight, and then sixty four. People used them for practicing divination with tortoise shell or straws; thereupon, some people added a lot of interpretations on the *Guaci*¹⁴ and the six line statements, which was the same as the present-day “Lottery Poetry¹⁵,” “there will be no error¹⁶” and “occasion for repentance will disappear¹⁷” are the same as “up-up” “central-level” and “down-down.” There might not be just one type of the “Lottery

1 毛奇齡 (1623–1716).

2 顧棟高 (1679–1759).

3 袁枚 (1716–1797).

4 *liangdaiji* 兩戴記 referring to *Xiaodai Liji* 小戴禮記 edited by Dai Sheng 戴聖 and *Dadai Liji* 大戴禮記 edited by Dai De 戴德.

5 Dou Gong 竇公.

6 Wei Wen Hou 魏文侯 (?—396 BCE) a ruler of the State of Wei in the Warring States period.

7 Han Wen Di 漢文帝 (203 BCE—157 BCE) the fifth emperor of the Han dynasty.

8 大司樂.

9 大宗伯.

10 *Zhouguan* 周官 an alternative name of the *Rites of Zhou*.

11 *Yi gua* 易卦

12 乾.

13 坤.

14 卦辭.

15 *qianshi* 籤詩.

16 *wujiu* 无咎 a formulaic in the *Classic of Changes*.

17 *huiwang* 悔亡 a formulaic in the *Classic of Changes*.

Poetry” (But accounts of *Lianshan*¹ and *Guicang*² must not be trusted), so what recorded in the *Zuo's Commentary* are highly dissimilar to the present *Classic of Changes*. Later Confucians borrowed it to propagate their theories (which was also “pleading antiquity”). Some wrote *Commentaries on Tuan*; some wrote *Commentaries on Xiang*; some wrote *Commentaries on the Great Treatise*; some wrote *Commentaries on Wen Yan*; in the Han dynasty, a gang of people including Jiao Gan³ and Jing fang⁴ wrote *Commentaries on Shuo Gua*⁵; certain anonymous shallow people wrote the *Commentaries on Xu Gua*⁶ and another unknown scholar wrote the *Commentaries on Za Gua*⁷; therefore came the collection of so-called “Ten Wings⁸.”

The *Spring and Autumn Annals* Wang Anshi (some say it was not him who said this) called it “an incomplete court briefing” and Liang Qichao said it was like “a journal account,” both of which were precise comments. Mencius claimed that “the *Poetry* was lost and then the *Spring and Autumn Annals* was composed” and “Confucius completed the *Spring and Autumn Annals* and thus rebellious ministers and villainous sons were struck with terror” because he wanted to take advantage of Confucius. He forcedly argued that this incomplete court briefing possessed “righteousness” and it was “matters of the Son of Heaven.” It was first transformed into *Gongyang's Commentary* and then the *Luxuriant Dew of the Spring and Autumn Annals* by Dong Zhongshu⁹, and later the *Interpretations of Gongyan*¹⁰ by He Xiu¹¹. Thus the “exceedingly unusual and bizarre assertions” increasingly amassed. However, though the righteousness of the *Spring and Autumn Annals* proposed by Gongyang¹² (?) and Dong Zhongshu was not in the original version of the *Spring and Autumn Annals*, while it by itself is an organized and

1 連山 another ancient divination text, one of the “Three Changes” (*sanyi* 三易).

2 歸藏 another ancient divination text, one of the Three Changes (*sanyi* 三易)..

3 焦贛 (?-?) a person in the Western Han dynasty.

4 京房 (77 BCE—37 BCE) a person in the Western Han dynasty.

5 *Shuogua Zhuan* 說卦傳.

6 *Xugua Zhuan* 序卦傳.

7 *Zagua Zhuan* 雜卦傳.

8 *shiyi* 十翼.

9 董仲舒 (179 BCE—104 BCE).

10 *Gongyan Jiegu* 公羊解詁.

11 何休 (128–182).

12 Gongyang Shi 公羊氏 referring to Gongyang Gao 公羊高, the reputed author of the *Gongyang's Commentary* and a student of Zixia who was a student of Confucius.

systematic theory. The illiterate and illogic Guliang¹ (?) that came out later attempted to follow it yet made a number of ridiculous arguments, whose work is merely insignificant. As for *Zuo's Commentary*, it was initially a “history by states²” composed by a literature scholar in the Warring States period, namely the *Discourses of States*, which has absolutely nothing to do with the *Spring and Autumn Annals*. Later, Liu Xin adopted from it and added nonsenses such as “fifty editorial guides³”, which were regarded as commentaries of the *Spring and Autumn Annals*. Those he had no use for remained as the *Discourses of States* (says Kang Youwei). The credibility of this book is not dissimilar from *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*⁴. Still, one has to refer to it as the most valuable historical records before Han.

These are my current opinions on what kind of books the so-called “Six Classics” are in their nature.

Practically speaking, the most nonsensical one of the “Six Classics” is the *Spring and Autumn Annals*. However, due to Mencius’s special praise, no one except Liu Zhiji has ever cast doubt upon it in the past two thousand years. Mencius was the first person who proposed the “Transmission of the Way”. In the last chapter of his book, it evidently indicates the idea of “independently carrying on the Transmission of the Way” when the narratives came to himself after Yao, Shun, Tang, King Wen, and Confucius. He mentioned the *Spring and Autumn Annals* three times throughout his book (I am not sure whether I missed any tokens as I did not check it closely).

A. Mencius said, "The world fell into decay, and principles faded away. Perverse speakings and oppressive deeds waxed rife again. There were instances of ministers who murdered their sovereigns, and of sons who murdered their fathers. Confucius was afraid, and composed the *Spring and Autumn Annals*. The *Spring and Autumn Annals* are matters of the Son of Heaven. Therefore, Confucius said, "It is the *Spring and Autumn Annals*

1 Guoliang *Shi* 穀梁氏 referring to Guliang Chi 穀梁赤, the reputed author of the *Guliang's Commentary* and a student of Zixia who was a student of Confucius.

2 *guobieshi* 國別史.

3 *wushifan* 五十凡.

4 *Sanguo Yanyi* 三國演義 a fiction authored by Luo Guanzhong 羅貫中 in the Ming dynasty (1368–1644).

which makes me known! It is the *Spring and Autumn Annals* which makes me condemned!”... Confucius completed the *Spring and Autumn Annals*, and rebellious ministers and villainous sons were struck with terror.... (Teng Wen Gong II¹)

B. Mencius said, 'The deeds of the king extinguished, and the *Poetry* ceased to be made. When the *Poetry* ceased to be made, then the *Spring and Autumn Annals* was produced. The *Sheng*² of Jin³, the *Tao Wu*⁴ of Chu, and the *Spring and Autumn Annals* of Lu were the same. The subject was the affairs of Huan of Qi⁵ and Wen of Jin⁶, and its style was historical. Confucius said, “It is the righteousness that I ventured to take.” (Li Lou II⁷)

C. Mencius said, 'In the *Spring and Autumn Annals* there are no righteous wars.’ (Jin Xin II⁸)

B literally makes no sense. The systematic relationship between the *Poetry* and the *Spring and Autumn Annals* is far-fetched in no matter ways. I think all of the three references are Men Ke⁹'s attempts to base his theories on Kong Qiu¹⁰'s, which was out of the same purposes of Zhu Xi¹¹ and Wang Zhouren¹² when they established their theories, “the theory of examining objects and exhausting reasoning” and “the theory of attaining kind consciousness,” respectively, on the basis of the *Great Learning*¹³. He wanted to refute Yang and Mo because of their theories of “no ruler and no father,” so he made the arguments in A; he valued the king and degraded hegemonies so he made the arguments in B; he championed that “skillful fighters should suffer

1 *Teng Wen Gong xia* 滕文公下 the title of the second chapter in the third section of the *Mencius*.

2 乘 the title of an official historical book.

3 晉 referring to the State of Jin (*jinguo* 晉國) (?—376 BCE) a vassal state in the Zhou period.

4 檮杌 the title of an official historical book.

5 齊桓 referring to the Duke Huang of Qi (?-643 BCE) a ruler of the State of Qi in the Spring and Autumn period.

6 晉文 referring to the Duke Wen of Jin (697 BCE–628 BCE) a ruler of the State of Jin in the Spring and Autumn period.

7 *Li Lou xia* 離婁下 the title of the second chapter in the fourth section of the *Mencius*.

8 *Jin Xin xia* 盡心下 the title of the second chapter in the seventh (last) section of the *Mencius*.

9 孟軻 referring to Mencius (Meng 孟 was his surname and Ke 軻 was his given name).

10 孔丘 referring to Confucius (Kong 孔 was his surname and Qiu 丘 was his given name).

11 朱熹 (1130–1200).

12 王守仁 (1472–1528).

13 *Daxue* 大學 the title of a chapter in the *Book of Rites*.

the severest punishment,” so came the statement in C. In paragraphs following B, there are arguments such as “I am alarmed by these and address myself to the defense of the traditions of the former sages” and “I also wish to rectify people's minds, to put an end to those perverse doctrines, to oppose their one-sided actions, and to banish away their licentious expressions, and thus carrying on the work of the three sages,” which clearly illustrate his purpose to carry on the Transmission of the Way following Confucius. Previous scholars believed in Meng Ke’s words but disbelieved in the “*Chunqiu Zunwang Fawei*”¹ by Sun Fu² when discussing the *Spring and Autumn Annals*. In fact, following the ideas of Meng Ke, the reasoning can only be consistent in the way Sun Fu argued.

The above analysis that reverses the previous perceptions simply aims to examine the true colors of the so-called “Six Classics” and whether they have relations to Kong Qiu. No sweeping remarks shall be made concerning the value of these unreliable texts. Works arbitrarily transcribed are not few, such as *Tuan* and *Xiang* in the *Changes, Commentary of the Great Treatise*, the chapters of *Ceremonial Usages*³, *the State of Equilibrium and Harmony*⁴, and *Great Learning* in the *Little Dai Book of Rites*, and the *Rites of Zhou*, all of which are valuable works that “plead antiquity.” However, neither can they be attributed to Ji Dan or Kong Qiu because of their value, nor are they be judged as worthless because they were not composed by Ji Dan or Kong Qiu. I admire Yao Jheng, Cui Shu, and Kang Youwei for their attitude of “doubting antiquity” to seek the truth, but I don’t appreciate their attitude to guard orthodox with which they blindly condemn the unreliable texts.

Among the studies of the “Six Classics” in the past two thousand years, Confucians in the Han dynasty did the worst. Not only did they not make a clear distinction between the reliable and the unreliable, but also did they make falsification by themselves. Neither were their explanations clear, nor were their wording and reasoning consistent. Both New Text scholars and Old Text scholars are “jackals from the same lair⁵.” Each of them had their own theories on

1 春秋尊王發威.

2 孫復 (992–1057).

3 *Liyun* 禮運 the title of a chapter.

4 *Zhongyong* 中庸 the title of a chapter.

5 *yiquizhihe* 一丘之貉, a Chinese idiom which contains a derogatory meaning, metaphorically referring to the bad people who are the same.

things such as *dijia*¹, *mingtang*², *fengjian*³, *jintian*⁴, palaces, and sacrificial vessels, and each of their theories even self-contradicted, which indicates that all of them were making overly literal interpretations and were blindly speaking of nonsenses. Qing⁵ Confucians thought that Han Confucians must have had some basis as there was not a long interval between their time and the Pre-Qin period⁶, so they were absorbed in conducting investigations and making interpretations for the Han Confucians and finding every way to cover their lies. They were literally being fooled! Mao Heng⁷ (?) was the most illiterate and illogic and Zheng Xuan's knowledge was the most jumbled. They made fools of themselves annotating the *Classic of Poetry*. After Zheng Xuan, scholars such as Jia Gongyan⁸ and Kong Yingda⁹ just produced more and more useless words. After the middle Tang dynasty¹⁰, there first appeared some lights, such as the works of Li Ao¹¹ and Han Yu¹² on the *Analects*, the works of Lu Zhi¹³, Zhang Kuang¹⁴, and Lu Chun¹⁵ on the *Spring and Autumn Annals*, and the work of Liu Zhiji's on the *Book of Documents* and the *Spring and Autumn Annals*. All of them were not deceived by the previous studies and opened the path for doubting the classics since the Song dynasty¹⁶ and the Ming dynasty¹⁷. Most of the Confucians in the Song dynasty attached their own theories to old classics, seventy or eighty percent of which were not originally in the old classics, no matter good or bad they were. Still,

1 禘祫 an ancient rite.

2 明堂 a place for rites.

3 封建 a political policy.

4 井田 a land policy.

5 清 referring to the Qing dynasty (1644–1912).

6 *xianqin* 先秦 referring to the historical period before the Qin dynasty.

7 毛亨 (?—?) a person in the State of Lu in the Warring States period, the editor of the *Mao Poetry*.

8 賈公彥 (?—?) the author of *Interpretations and Annotations of the Rites of Zhou* (*Zhouli Yishu* 周禮義疏).

9 孔穎達 (574–648) the grandson of Confucius and the author of *Correct Meaning of the Five Classics* (*Wujing Zhengyi* 五經正義).

10 *Tang* 唐 referring to the Tang dynasty (618–907).

11 李翱 (771–840).

12 韓愈 (768–824).

13 啖助 (749–?).

14 趙匡 a scholar in the Tang dynasty and a student of Dan Zhu.

15 陸淳 (?—806).

16 *Song* 宋 referring to the Song dynasty (906–1279).

17 *Ming* 明 referring to the Ming dynasty (1368–1644).

scholars such as Ouyang Xiu¹, Zheng Qiao², Zhu Xi, and Ye Shi had made remarkable achievements in detecting falsification. Another good trait was their consistent and logical wording and reasoning. Zhu Xi emphasized wording and reasoning when he annotated the Four Books³, and the *Book of Documents* and the *Book of Rites* annotated by Cai Chen⁴ and Chen Hao⁵ who were viewed as “shallow Confucians” are also much more consistent than those of “fake Kong Anguo⁶” and Zheng Xuan. From the early Qing dynasty till the present days, there have been Dai Zhen⁷, Duan Yucai⁸, Wang Niansun⁹, Wang Yinzhì¹⁰, Yu Yue¹¹, Sun Yirang¹², and Zhang Taiyan¹³ making consistent interpretations, as well as Yan Ruoku, Yao Jiheng¹⁴, Cui Shu, and Kang Youwei overthrowing the falsified classics. This gradually unveiled the truth of these classics (“Six Classics”). However, no matter how boldly previous scholars questioned antiquity, they were inevitably restrained by preconceived ideas. Your view that “Cui Shu’s purpose of writing this book was to unveil the sagely way and kingly achievements of ancient sages and detecting the falsification was just a means” indeed hits home. Yao and Kang did likewise. Therefore, they always left the thickest and darkest cloud and had no willingness to open up the blue sky. We now shall take a further step and try our best to drive away the thickest and darkest cloud.

There are so many falsified texts in China and there were even falsified works by modern people, such as Qian Xuanton’s article in *Zhang Taiyan’s Written Vernacular Chinese*¹⁵ (*a Brief*

1 歐陽修 (1007–1072).

2 鄭樵 (1104–1162).

3 *sishu* 四書 consisting of the *Analects*, *Menzi*, *the State of Equilibrium and Harmony*, and *Great Learning*.

4 蔡沈 (1167–1230).

5 陳澧 (1260–1341).

6 孔安國 (?–?) a descendent of Confucius.

7 戴震 (1724–1777).

8 段玉裁 (1735–1815).

9 王念孫 (1744–1832).

10 王引之 (1766–1934).

11 俞樾 (1821–1907).

12 孫詒讓 (1848–1908).

13 章太炎 (1869–1936) also known as Zhang Binglin 章炳麟 (Taiyan 太炎 was his art name).

14 姚際恆 (1647–?).

15 *Zhang Taiyan de Baihuawen* 章太炎的白話文 published in 1921 by Taidong 泰東 Library.

*Introduction to Chinese Characters*¹). Therefore, we must not save our efforts in detecting the falsification when we read Chinese texts, no matter what we are researching, sinology or Chinese history. The “Six Classics” were just a drop in the ocean in the ancient texts, but they have caused troubles for two thousand years. A lot of people have been affected. Among the various effective methods with which they caused troubles, “falsified texts” and “falsified interpretations” are two important ones. We must spend great efforts overthrowing them.

I cannot work on “critiquing the characters in *Shuowen*” now, given that my research on this topic is still shallow. I can only simply tell you the reasons for questioning *Shuowen*:

Xu Shen praised the characters in the “in-wall Old Text classics.” The “in-wall classics” came from “facing the wall (i.e., Kong wall²) and making fabrication” by Liu Xin. Kang Youwei and Cui Zhifu have already verified this and I think the conclusion is unquestionable. Since the in-wall classics were falsified, their characters were also falsified. Most of the seal scripts recorded by Xu Shen and the forms interpreted by him do not accord with oracle bone scripts and bronze scripts, especially the so-called “old scripts³” in *Shuowen*. According to my research, Oracle Bone Script was the earliest script; the second was Bronze Script; the third was Stone Drum Script and Large Seal (according to Ma Shuping⁴, the Stone Drum Script was Qin script; according to Wang Jingan, Large Seal was Qin script); and Metal Stone Seal⁵ and Small Seal in the Qin dynasty came later. It was the Han people who falsified many of the Small Seals listed in *Shuowen*. I recently read the manuscript of Gong Cheng⁶’s *Reexamining the Work of Xu Shen*⁷. He argued that the Small Seals in *Shuowen* were not as old as Clerical Scripts in the Han dynasty, which is quite insightful. The so-called “old scripts” and “variant characters” in *Shuowen* were falsified by Liu Xin and his clan following mistakenly-spread Small Seals, so they were the furthestmost from the forms of oracle bone scripts and bronze scripts. Because Small Seals were

1 *Zhongguo Wenzi Luoshuo* 中國文字略說 a paper published by Qian Xuantong in 1910.

2 *kongbi* 孔壁 referring to the wall of Confucius’s home.

3 *guwen* 古文 the Pre-Qin characters, in comparison with “new scripts” (*jinwen* 今文).

4 馬叔平 (1881–1955) referring to Ma Heng 馬衡 (Shuping 叔平 was his courtesy name.)

5 *jishike* 金石刻.

6 龔橙 (1817–1870).

7 *Lidong Xu Shu* 理董許書.

mistakenly spread and “old scripts” were falsified, I call them “falsified ancient characters” and “falsified ancient meaning,” such as “*gao*¹, an ox hit a person and its horn touched the cross-piece, with which one warns others,” and “*she*², arrows shouted from the body and reaching the distant.” By “falsified ancient claims,” I mean claims such as “King Zhuang of Chu³ said, *wu*⁴ was stopping wars” and “Confucius said, *wang*⁵ was *yi*⁶ penetrating *san*⁷.” As for “falsified ancient rites” and “falsified ancient regulations,” they were drawn from falsified classics. If the falsified classics are refuted, these two parts in *Shuowen* will then collapse of themselves.

I have not yet finished what I want to say but I will pause here today. I look forward to your instruction and correction.

Please let me know at your convenience if you have new findings on *Marquis of Lv on Punishments* and *Canon of Yao*.

Xuantong 1923, May 25

1 告.

2 射.

3 Chu Zhuang Wang 楚莊王 (?—591 BCE) a ruler of the State of Chu in the Spring and Autumn period.

4 武.

5 王.

6 一.

7 三.

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