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Reproduction in the *Shijing* (Classic of Poetry)

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WHY do cultures make verbal representations and then try to continue to repeat or reproduce those same words? What is at stake in the correctness of such repetition? Is there some formal homology between the content of such representations and the process of exact verbal reproduction itself? Although early texts are problematic and frustrating, they have the virtue of permitting us to ask such simple questions, questions that appear too basic beneath the layers of history that govern significance later in the tradition.

To pose the third question, regarding a homology between content and the act of repetition more precisely: do we find that verbal reproduction takes up issues of perfect and continuous reproduction on other levels of life? One obvious way to answer that question affirmatively is in terms of the mnemonic function of language. To represent a process such as the phases of farming in words, and to be able to reproduce those words from year to year and from generation to generation, promises a continuity of knowledge. Such knowledge ensures perfect reproduction in the fields just as in words.

The case of ritual representations is an interesting derivation from the pragmatically mnemonic function of representations. On one level, ritual representations were probably perceived as no different from pragmatic mnemonics. One digs a hole, puts in a seed, pats

down the earth, clears away weeds, and says "The seed grows" three times over the seed. When we moderns scientifically test the components of such received knowledge, we may discover that saying "The seed grows" three times lacks the predictive importance for the success of the plant that the other elements do. Such testing of efficacy, however, lies outside the system of early representations. It was enough to know that all the elements taken together, including the statement "The seed grows," do indeed work.

Ritual representations tend to occur on the margins of action: before or after an action, or between cycles: one acts out or recounts what has happened or will happen. And we find that these representations often turn back to thematize the question of repetition and perfect reproduction.

This brings us to the more complicated question of human reproduction. Reproduction involves identity through time. The celebrants of the harvest rite affirm that these are the same grains as those first given to the folk long ago by Hou Ji, Lord Millet. They affirm that the Way (*Dao*) of making the crops grow is the same that Hou Ji handed down to the Zhou folk. They affirm that the rite they practice is the same rite that Hou Ji founded. But human reproduction and patrilineal descent create problems of continuity and identity through time, raising questions about "same" and "different." In patrilineal descent we distinguish the sameness over time of the inherited role and the difference of the people who assume that role. To produce more identity out of such difference we have not just roles, but received models to be emulated. One cannot *be* the ancestor, but one can *be like* the ancestor. When King Xuan reminds the current Duke of Shao of his ancestor, the Duke of Shao in the times of Kings Wen and Wu, he says, "You, Duke of Shao, resemble him [that former Duke of Shao]" (*Shaogong shi si* 召公是似; 262).[1] But we can never perfectly discriminate the homophones "to resemble" (*si* 似) and "to be the successor of" (*si* 嗣). Therefore the line of the Ode at once means: "You, Duke of Shao, are his successor." "To resemble" is to stand without too great difference in the place of a predecessor, and by extension, to stand in place of something or someone else.

[1] The numbers in parenthesis are those conventionally assigned to works in the *Classic of Poetry* in Western scholarly practice.

Extension through territory also requires reproduction. The very system of reproduction can be itself reproduced elsewhere. Thus Heaven establishes the king as the "Son of Heaven," as both his counterpart on earth and the counterpart of his illustrious ancestors in Heaven. The Zhou king, in turn, establishes the feudal lords in their fiefs. There we have reproductive lineage honoring and emulating ancestors, while acknowledging the Heaven or the Zhou king as the "grantor," the primary form of authority who legitimizes their secondary reproduction of royal authority. As the Great Odes often celebrate, the family spreads like vegetation.

"ZAISHAN" 載芟 ("MOWING GRASSES," 290)

"Mowing Grasses," from the "Zhou song" 周頌 ("Hymns of Zhou") is one of the two agrarian hymns that celebrate the agrarian cycle.[2]

載芟載柞，其耕澤澤．千耦其耘，徂隰徂畛．
侯主侯伯，侯亞侯族．侯彊侯以，有嗿其饁．
思媚其婦，有依其士．有略其耜，俶載南畝．
播厥百穀，實函斯活．驛驛其達，有厭其傑．
厭厭其苗，綿綿其麃．載穫濟濟，有實其積．
萬億其秭，爲酒爲醴．烝畀祖妣，以洽百禮．
有飶其香，邦家之光．有椒其馨，胡考之寧．
匪且有且，匪今斯今，振古如茲．

Mowing grasses, felling trees,
we till the churning soil.
A thousand pairs do weeding,
off to paddies, off to dikes.
Here the squire, here the firstborn,
here the nextborn, here the clan,
here the yeomen, here the hands,
hungry for their field-fare.
Comely are the wives,
sturdy are the men.

[2] The other is "Liang si" 良耜 (291). There are other Hymns that treat the royal plowing ceremony.

Sharp-tipped are the plowshares,
that set to work on southern tracts.

We scatter all the many grains,
the life is stored within the seed.
Then the bounty of the shoots,
and fullness in the single stalk.
Full indeed are all the sprouts,
row on row the weeders go.
In lines we come to harvest it,
and we have the grains in piles,
in myriads and millions.
Beer we make and the sweet ale,
to bestow on Foremothers and Forefathers,
and by this we join the many rites.

Musky is the grain-smell,
the splendor of our homeland.
Pungent is its fragrance,
well-being for our elderly.
Not just this that is before us,
not just for now what is here now:
from early times it was as this.

We cannot know with certainty which are the historically oldest pieces of the *Classic of Poetry*. To look for the "oldest" works in a body of texts presumes that these are stable texts, composed at a particular moment and surviving unchanged in the collection. What we have instead are texts that themselves probably grew and changed over time. The stratum that seems the oldest, the Hymns of Zhou, was probably shaped by the very image of its antiquity; and we can never perfectly separate the authentic survival from the later, unconscious construction of origins.[3]

Although we have no historical knowledge of origins, we do have texts that claim to represent unchanging continuity from origins.

[3] We cannot say that the "Hymns of Zhou" are late and pseudo-archaic any more than we can say that they are the earliest of the *Poems*. Such questions of historical layering are inappropriate for an evolving oral repertoire like the *Poems*. What we can say is that, within the collection, the "Hymns of Zhou" represent origins, both in their putative role within the Zhou ancestral temple and in a distinct language that sets them apart. They are meant to be close to the ancestors.

Such texts do not speak from the moment or phase of origin, but offer instead its adequate representation by virtue of perfect reproduction. An example is the coda of this hymn:

> Not just this which is before us,
> not just for now what is here now,
> from early times it was as this.

In its declaration of continuity with origins, the coda betrays not only its belatedness but also an anxiety regarding the perfect reproduction of the agrarian and ritual cycle: rather than simply affirming continuity, it denies the difference and singularity of the present moment. Whether the coda is an authentic survival from an archaic period, or a later construction, or some combination of both, the mode of representation in this and other Poems about origins and the reproduction of origins differs significantly from Poems that explicitly represent a later phase of history.[4]

"Mowing Grasses" celebrates collective endeavor and the perfect integration of the individual within a community defined by social and agricultural roles. It involves a poetics of accumulation. The community amasses and consumes in an eternal cycle. The poem does not represent generosity and giving that create economic imbalances, nor does it celebrate bargains and exchanges, which we so often find in the "Guo feng" 國風 ("The Airs of the Domains"). The central issue here is the stability of technique, which is both farming and rite. To possess such technique, both in farming and ritual, guarantees perfect repetition and reproduction.

Itemization is essential: taking stock applies not only to things, but also to actions, agents, narrative phases, stages of natural process, and categories, such as the hierarchical levels in the clan. One begins at the beginning, with clearing the ground, mowing and plowing, and carries on to the end, with harvest and the ritual celebration in which the ancestors are fed. In the same way, the head of the clan is named first, then the firstborn, and so on, down to the workers.

The synchronic counterpart of sequence in itemization is the full complement. Every whole comprises a complete set of constituents.

[4] I refer to the *Shijing* collectively as the "Classic of Poetry"; when I refer to specific pieces in the collection, I refer to them as "Poems" with a capital letter, to distinguish them from poems in general.

One names the constituents to represent the whole and guarantee its completeness. This is the formal counterpart of the agrarian cycle of constituent phases, and it is mirrored in the social order. The cycle is whole; the phases of farm work are its constituents. The rite is whole; its activities are its constituents. The clan is whole; its roles are its constituents.

Much like mnemonic verses for the months and their activities, this is a kind of poetry that uses words against the danger of forgetting and overlooking. We speak of memory as retention. The verbal accumulations of the constituents of sequences are such retention, an orderly structure of words corresponding to the agrarian order. Hierarchy and priority in a process are formally identical: one moves from first to last, from top to bottom. At the top of the social hierarchy is the master, and, above him, the invisible ancestors above him, who fade off toward origins.

In the system words play an essential role. Something is complete only if it is declared so. Between the end of one agricultural cycle and the beginning of another stands the rite: to finish the cycle, this checklist is necessary, for it affirms the performance or presence of all the necessary constituents. The poem of the rite repeats the cycle in words. And, as the agrarian cycle itself aspires to perfect repetition, the words of the ritual hymn are exactly repeated, telling of repetition that came from the beginning and can be perpetuated forever.

If ritual representations are the surplus beyond the frugality of simple mnemonics, the more substantial surplus of agricultural production is converted into beer and ale for the male and female ancestors, feeding their tenuous spiritual presences with the distillate (*jing* 精) of the abundance of grain. The rite and its words, moving beyond the perfect enclosure of the agrarian cycle and the farming clan, go back to the origins that they reproduce.

A STORY OF ORIGINS: "SHENG MIN" 生民 ("SHE BORE THE FOLK," 245)

厥初生民, 時爲姜嫄. 生民如何, 克禋克祀.
以弗無子, 履帝武敏. 歆攸介攸止, 載震載夙.
載生載育, 時維后稷.
誕彌厥月, 先生如達. 不坼不副, 無菑無害.

以赫厥靈，上帝不寧．不康禋祀，居然生子．
誕寘之隘巷，牛羊腓字之．誕寘之平林，會伐平林．
誕寘之寒冰，鳥覆翼之．鳥乃去矣，后稷呱矣．
實覃實訏，厥聲載路．
誕實匍匐，克岐克嶷．以就口食，蓺之荏菽．
荏菽旆旆，禾役穟穟．麻麥幪幪，瓜瓞唪唪．
誕后稷之穡，有相之道．茀厥豐草，種之黃茂．
實方實苞，實種實褎．實發實秀，實堅實好．
實穎實栗，即有邰家室．
誕降嘉種，維秬維秠．維穈維芑，恆之秬秠．
是穫是畝，恆之穈芑．是任是負，以歸肇祀．
誕我祀如何，或舂或揄，或簸或蹂．釋之叟叟，烝之浮浮．
載謀載惟，取蕭祭脂．取羝以軷，載燔載烈，以興嗣歲．
卬盛于豆，于豆于登．其香始升，上帝居歆．
胡臭亶時，后稷肇祀．庶無罪悔，以迄於今．

She who first bore the folk,
Jiang it was, First Parent.
How was it she bore the folk?—
she knew the rite and sacrifice.
To rid herself of sonlessness
she trod the god's toe-print
  and she was glad.
She was made great; on her, luck settled;
the seed stirred; it was quick.
She gave birth, she gave suck,
and this was Lord Millet.

When her months had come to term,
her firstborn sprang up.
Not splitting, not rending,
working no hurt, no harm.
Thus he made his spirit-force gleam forth,
the high god was greatly soothed.
He took great joy in those rites
and easily she bore her son.

She set him in a narrow lane,
but sheep and cattle warded him.

She set him in the wooded plain,
he met with those who logged the plain.
She set him on cold ice,
birds sheltered him with wings.
Then the birds left him
and Lord Millet wailed.
This was long and this was loud;
his voice was a mighty one.

And then he crept and crawled,
he stood upright, he stood straight.
He sought to feed his mouth,
and planted there the great beans.
The great beans' leaves were fluttering,
the rows of grain were bristling.
Hemp and barley, dense and dark,
the melons, plump and round.

Lord Millet in his farming
had a way to help things grow:
He rid the land of thick grass,
he planted there a glorious growth.
It was in squares, it was leafy,
it was planted, it grew tall.
It came forth, it formed ears,
it was hard, it was good.
Its tassels bent, it was full,
he had his household there in Tai.

He passed us down these wondrous grains:
our black millets, of one and two kernels,
Millets whose leaves sprout red or white,
he spread the whole land with black millet.
And reaped it and counted the acres,
spread it with millet sprouting red or white,
hefted on shoulders, loaded on backs,
he took it home and began this rite.

And how goes this rite we have?—
at times we hull, at times we scoop,

at times we winnow, at times we stomp,
we hear it slosh as we wash it,
we hear it puff as we steam it.
Then we reckon, then we consider,
take artemisia, offer fat.
We take a ram for the flaying;
then we roast it, then we sear it,
to rouse up the succeeding year.

We heap the wooden trenchers full,
wooden trenchers, earthenware platters.
And as the scent first rises
the high god is peaceful and glad.
This great odor is good indeed,
for Lord Millet began the rite,
and hopefully free from failing or fault,
it has lasted until now.

"She Bore the Folk" contains elements of narrative, but it is not a narrative poem: the narrative is only the occasion there originated a practice and its attendant rite, which have been continuously and perfectly repeated from the beginning to the indeterminate present.[5] The narrative in the poems leaves too many silences to constitute a complete story; only those narrative segments are present that serve to validate the rite. Perhaps once upon a time everyone knew the full story to which the opening stanzas allude, or perhaps there never was a full story—only those shards of mythic events that survived by having been attached to the rite. For the needs of ritual argument it matters not who abandoned Hou Ji or why, only that he passed his trials.[6]

The oral transmission of song and myth is local and changes through time. Every informant believes that he knows the real version, but no two of those real versions are ever quite the same.

[5] This discussion of "She Bore the Folk" appeared an a modified version in Pauline Yu, Peter Bol, Willard Peterson, and Stephen Owen, eds., *Ways With Words: Writing About Reading Texts from Early China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), pp. 25–31.

[6] The full narrative account of Jiang and Hou Ji in the "Zhou benji" 周本紀 of the *Shiji* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1959, pp. 11–12) is euhemeristic, an account shaped by the need of explaining what is left unexplained in the Poem.

Against such truth of mutation is the balancing need to assert an unchanging continuity with origins:

> 后稷肇祀. 庶無罪悔, 以迄於今.
>
> for Lord Millet began the rite,
> and hopefully free from fault or cause for regret,
> it has lasted until now.

The rite of the one man (the ancestor or ruler) becomes, without change or variation, the rite of the collective folk. Ultimately such a desire for perfect continuity against the forces of variation and dispersion shaped the very idea of the "Classics" themselves, of which the *Classic of Poetry* was one—though it took all the centuries of the Han Dynasty to overcome variation and dispersion and reconcile many versions into one version.

In the anxiety about deviation, which would result in "fault and cause for regret" (*zuihui* 罪悔), we see one of the most powerful concerns of Zhou culture. Used throughout the feudal domains of North China, the *Classic of Poetry* served to support the unity and continuity of Zhou culture amid natural pressures for diversification and change. We should not be surprised to find that this social role of the *Classic of Poetry* in resisting change reappears as a theme in some of the Poems. The unity and continuity of the Zhou are declared here through common ancestry. In some Poems the "folk" (*min* 民) are all the ruler's subjects, but in this case the *min* are clearly the Zhou people, who are said to have been physically born by Jiang the First Parent. Their ancestry is not the Zhou aristocracy alone or of the entire human race, but of a particular tribe, unified by a putative common ancestry and thus subject to the natural hierarchies of the family.

The true Zhou, those who share the surname Ji 姬, begin here; at a beginning there can be no father to reproduce his surname in the son. The Zhou derive from a woman, who, of course, bears a different surname—and an exceptionally distinguished one, Jiang 姜. Family lines that begin with the mating of a woman and a god without surname, or the human lineage that enables patronymics, can be found in the myths of many cultures, but here in the origin of the Zhou people there is nothing like the divine rape found so often in Western classical mythology. The question of *how* Jiang

gave birth to the folk is answered by a statement of ritual mastery: "She knew the rite and sacrifice" (*ke yin ke si* 克禋克祀). There is no mistaking the *ke*'s in the Chinese text here: she "was able to," she "had the power to." Conception is achieved by a combination of will and technical skill. The rite (*si* 祀) that Jiang has mastered to bring about Hou Ji's conception is the same rite that Hou Ji himself institutes in the sixth stanza, the rite that is accurately reproduced in the present, in the final stanzas of the poem. "How was it she bore the folk?" is answered by the knowledge of ritual, and the initial question is later echoed by a second question: "How goes this rite we have?"

Knowledge of the rite is the effective control of reproduction. There is no terror in the encounter with the fertilizing divinity, no lust or victimization; the only question is whether the woman has the ritual mastery to effect her will. The point of anxiety is not in the eruption of inexplicable divinity but in the ability to master a technique perfectly; and such technical ritual mastery is formally homologous to agrarian skills.

From preparatory ritual, Jiang moves to the act, which is treading on the phallic toe-print of the god. It is a magical encounter, but it is also a strangely displaced encounter; there is no meeting of mortal and divine flesh. Conception is described in terms of blessings and increase. *Jie* 介, translated as "made great," is one of the most common terms used in the Poems when invoking blessing; *jie* is to be enlarged and extended, here perhaps in the literal sense of pregnancy, but also in the abundance of grain and progeny that will follow from this encounter between the woman and the god.

The phases of pregnancy and parturition are characteristic of longer representations in the Poems. As in "Mowing Grasses," any whole—whether a process such as conception and birth, or an activity such as farming or ritual, or a category such as grain, or an institution such as the clan—tends to be represented by naming a full complement of its constituents. It is a special way of dealing with knowledge—taking stock, enumerating in a ledgerbook of the imagination. There was obviously great pleasure in naming the phases and the varieties of any topic—all the grains and their qualities, or the stages in preparing the rite. This was a way of thinking about all sets, whether they were temporal phases, spatial, or taxonomic.

Speculating, we might associate such a way of conceptualizing the order of events with an agrarian, as opposed to a warrior, aristocracy.[7] For the person who defines himself as a warrior, events are organized in subordination to a single moment of decision (*krisis*), whose outcome is uncertain. Such a moment of life and death gives meaning to all that went before and all that follows, and time is organized as leading toward that moment of uncertainty. The order of narrative that took shape in ancient Greece and was inherited by Europe was shaped by such a structure of time. In contrast, the agrarian aristocrat understands time as a sequence of phases, in which each phase is just as important as any other and dereliction in any phase can be catastrophic. He is prudent; he remembers what was done before and takes care to repeat each remembered step. There is no single moment of decision, no crisis; the only moment of a different order lies between the completion of one cycle and the initiation of the next. At this moment one looks ahead in hopes of the perfect repetition of what has just been completed. And this is the moment at which "She Bore the Folk" speaks.

Hou Ji is born and named. It is not just a name; he is literally "Lord Millet," though we cannot say whether he gives his name to the grain or the grain gives its name to him. His attributes are human, but at first Hou Ji shares certain traits with the vegetable world over which he will preside. We might consider the line translated as "her first-born sprang up" (*xiansheng ru da* 先生如達). The great second-century commentator Zheng Xuan takes *da* here as a lamb, giving the line as "her firstborn was like a lamb." The tradition of commentary following Zheng discounts the old Mao gloss of *da* as "come forth." But in "Mowing Grasses" we have the line, "luxuriant the sprouting blades" (*yiyi qi da* 驛驛其達), with Zheng Xuan glossing *da* as "breaking out of the soil." The ease of Jiang's parturition seems beautifully to link the mythic ancestor with agrarian generation, sprouting without the pains of labor.

The following stanza on the exposure of the infant Hou Ji gives no explanation. Perhaps the serial exposures refer to a story with motives and agents already known to the audience and thus not

[7] Here I am not so much describing an actual sociological distinction as a self-image; the Greek aristocrat may have been more actively engaged in managing his fields than the Zhou aristocrat; but Homer provided the images by which he could represent himself as *aristos*.

needing narration; but on a deeper level, a full narrative with adequate motives and agents is not essential to the ritual function of these moments; only Hou Ji's survival is at stake.

Hou Ji, babe and sprout, is thrown into a narrow lane to be trampled by cattle and sheep. It is hard not to notice that this first exposure involves pastoral folk, as opposed to the Zhou, who "grow" from the gift of agriculture. The animals "warded him" (*fei zi zhi* 腓字之), literally, "straddled him with their legs and nurtured him." To the human babe they give the protection they give their young; to the plant they give manure. Similarly, the second encounter with the woodcutters in the forest is not only the rescue of the human babe, but also the clearing of spaces for the plant that would otherwise die in the overgrowth. And again the miracle of the birds stands between shelter, which provides warmth, and guano, in which seeds are widely dispersed.

Surviving the three exposures, Hou Ji "wails" (*gu* 呱) the cry of human birth, using the voice that distinguishes him from mere plant. Passing from crawling to standing with miraculous speed, Hou Ji seeks food by planting beans, grains, hemp, and gourds that seem to grow to fullness with a speed as miraculous as his own. The loving itemization of the plants, each kind of plant and phase of plant growth or farming, each with its own special qualifying descriptive term, is again that process of taking stock that we saw earlier.

In growing these grains and vegetables, Hou Ji acquires something more than pure produce, something that can be passed on:

> 誕后稷之穡，有相之道.
>
> Lord Millet in his farming
> had a way to help things grow.

This is one of the earliest usages of the term *Dao* ("way") in an abstract sense. *Dao* is here clearly "method," though a "method" that works together with Nature, rather than being independent of Nature, opposed to Nature, or understood as "Nature left alone" (*ziran* 自然). The role of the human being is "helping" (*xiang* 相), a relation to natural process that is usually overlooked in Western formulations of the relation between man and Nature, but one that is pragmatically obvious in the agrarian community. *Xiang* is a

different way to think about what human beings do, neither laissez-faire natural nor artificial. The farmer works with natural process in a systematic way (*Dao*), which is Hou Ji's lesson and legacy for the annual reproduction of bounty.

After naming the phases of Hou Ji's planting and the growth of the grain, the stanza states, "He had his household there in Tai" (*ji you Tai jiashi* 即有邰家室). Settling and founding a family follow after the harvest. Agriculture is the reproduction of a process that (as opposed to the migrations that must accompany grazing herds) occurs on the same site. And once the household is established, the very next stanza leaps to the indeterminate and repeatable present; that is, Hou Ji founded his household only once, but the present of the song can be repeated every year. This is the voice of the folk, the *min*, who are Hou Ji's family, still reproducing Hou Ji's "way" of agriculture that has been "passed down" (*jiang* 降, often "sent down from a deity") to them. Once again the grains are all named, the gifts enumerated, then taken home for the rite that Hou Ji also initiated.

The speaker then calls for a description of the rite, which leads to an itemization of actions. Between the preparation of the grain and the sacrifice of the ram, we may note an unobtrusive, but significant line: "Then we reckon, then we consider" (載謀載惟). As we see often in the *Classic of Poetry* and in the *Shujing* (*Classic of Documents*) deliberation, consultation, and thinking ahead were high among the virtues of Zhou rulers. Actions are carried out neither through unreflective habit nor with hot-headed Homeric rashness. As with Jiang's planning her pregnancy, action becomes efficacious both by technique and forethought.

The seventh stanza describes the preparation of food for the eighth and final stanza of offering, and the seventh stanza ends with the line that explains the entire ritual enterprise: the sacrifice is "to rouse up the succeeding year" (以興嗣歲). The rite occupies the key position in the agrarian cycle mentioned earlier, between the completion of one harvest and the beginning of the cycle anew—in a year that is *si* 嗣, both the "successor" of the old year, and its "resemblance." Insofar as this song is part of the ritual itself, it reproduces the agrarian cycle, with its origins and its rite, in words. As it is represented here, there is no hiatus: the harvest leads immediately

to the rite, which leads immediately to the next cycle. But in the tiny crack between ends and new beginnings there is this song, which repeats (year after year) the entire process in words, and by words links the end of one year and the new beginning.

The final stanza is the offering, the moment of presentation and consumption of what has been produced. The full sacrificial vessels are brought forward, and the absent deity, who fertilized and watched over Jiang the First Parent, is fed; he eats the aroma and enjoys it. The contact between men and the god is still as intangible as the footprint: there is only the good strong odor (*xiu* 臭), rising, crossing the space separating worlds.

The coda repeats the earlier line: "Lord Millet began the rite," and, as in "Mowing Grasses," declares the rite's unvarying perfection from the beginning to the annual present. Everything can be perfectly repeated except the individual, especially the ruler. For a lineage of individuals, new terms of continuity are necessary.

SUCCESSORS AND COUNTERPARTS: "TRULY WEN WAS KING WEN"

Although the Zhou monarchy projected the term "king" (*wang* 王) back on its pre-dynastic ancestors (in Wangji 王季 and Taiwang 大王), the two central figures at the inauguration of the monarchy were kings Wen and Wu 武. We do not know if, in the beginning, these were names or attributes, but the meaning of the words was shaped by the roles these two kings, father and son, played in the Zhou founding. The name of the father, Wen, which eventually acquired a meaning something like "cultured," was a quality of *de* 德, effective moral attainment, and was a common epithet of ancestors in bronze inscriptions. The king to whom the name was attached amassed *de*, partially through refraining from expending it in violent action against the Shang king. The name of the son, Wu, came to mean "warlike," but it was also a "footprint," the metaphor of succession; and the king who bore that name was also the "successor," who "succeeded in/resembled [his father's] footprints" (*siwu* 嗣武). Wu was associated with "deeds" (*gong* 功), rather than *de*; and King Wu expended the moral capital of his father in the deed of violently overthrowing the Shang Dynasty.

These two names and attributes, *wen* and *wu*, became mutually

constitutive: non-violence and violence, ancestor and the successor who depends upon the ancestor's accumulation of moral power to achieve his deeds. In their deployment in the names of the Zhou founders, these terms implied a sequence; in other cases, as applied to later figures—such as the warrior Jifu (177), the Earl of Shao (259), or the Duke of Lu (299)—they could be combined as a perfect complement of virtues, one who is both *wen* and *wu*. But in the moral mythography of early Zhou, their sequence defined the trajectory of dynastic foundation; after Wen and Wu, what else could the third king have been named but Cheng 成, "Completion," the title of King Wu's son, who came to the throne as a child, not yet himself "complete," depending on his uncle, the regent Duke of Zhou, to finish the pacification of the kingdom before he could rule? The king who next followed in this sequence of names proper to the phases of the kingdom was Kang 康, the king who "Enjoyed" the fruits of the great work that had been brought to completion in the preceding reign.

We come here to the complexities of human reproduction and succession, to questions of name, title, and attribute, and how difference can be accommodated in a structure that aims for permanence through perfect reproduction of the past. The farming cycle and the rites received from Hou Ji can last forever, but, as one of the "Great Odes" tells us: "It is not easy to be king" (不易維王, 236), and Heaven, if angered, can transfer the kingship to others. Against this danger the Odes and Hymns often speak of the achievements of the royal ancestors, calling upon the descendants to "preserve" (*bao* 保) their heritage.

Let us return to the line from "Wu" (285): "Truly *wen* was King Wen" (允文文王). If we take this line apart, we find complexities on all levels of human succession. The term that should be the simplest term of succession is the title "king" (*wang* 王). It would seem that, in holding that title, the son perfectly reproduces the father, since the powers and functions of the office are presumably constant. Yet in this exemplary case of royal father and son, of Kings Wen and Wu, it was the son who used his father's accumulation of *de* and conquered the Shang, thus earning the name of "king." His father, previously "Earl of the West," became a proper king only by virtue

of his son's kingship. The son made the father king so that he, the son, could inherit the title.

We have discussed the problem of the names themselves. The names Wen and Wu acquired or augmented their semantic value through the historical relation of the succession, by virtue of the differences between father and son. Attribute becomes name and name becomes attribute. King Wen was, of course, *not* really the "name" of Chang 昌, the man who bore it; "King Wen" is a posthumous title, and even "Wen," the differentiating part of that title, was a normative attribute of distinguished ancestors. The line of the Hymn embodies that division between name and attribute: "Truly *wen* was King Wen." The "truly" (*yun* 允) is essential, allowing the possibility that King Wen might not, in fact, be *wen*, that the semantic content of a name might not be true (as King Cheng, when he inherited the throne, was not himself *cheng*, "complete" or "grown up," even though that name was proper to the phase in the sequence of dynastic founding).[8]

The transformation of attribute into name and name into attribute permits one kind of perfect reproduction through time; one can reproduce the qualities that named an ancestor or model. This applies not only to successors, who might hope to be *wen* like their ancestor King Wen; the attribute can also be projected back on King Wen's own ancestors, as in "Siwen" 思文 (275), which begins: "Be *wen*, Lord Millet" 思文后稷.[9] As the office of kingship was projected back several generations in the house of Zhou before the conquest, here the first ancestor receives the attribute from his descendant. Hou Ji, Lord Millet, acquires this attribute for his non-violence and capital-formation of good works, by which he can be said "to resemble" (*si* 似) his descendant. But, as we pointed out before, in these early texts the word "resemble" (*si* 似) is usually interchangeable with the word *si* 嗣, "to be the successor of," "to follow in the place of." Hence in the penultimate stanza of "She Bore the Folk," the

[8] Compare "Dang" 蕩 (255), where King Wen says that the Shang lacks "old complete people" (*lao cheng ren* 老成人), that is, mature advisers.

[9] I am grateful to Michael Puett for the suggestion of taking *si* 思 as an optative particle here.

sisui 嗣歲, the "succeeding year," will "resemble" its predecessor. The relation between these two usages, "to succeed" and "to resemble," exactly parallels the relation between name and attribute: one is the discrete identity that permits only succession, and the other, a quality that can be found continuously through time.

The line we have been discussing, "Truly *wen* was King Wen," comes from the Hymn in praise of his son, "Wu" (285).

> 於皇武王，無競維烈．允文文王，克開厥後．
> 嗣武受之，勝殷遏劉，耆定爾功．
>
> O splendid, King Wu,
> none could best your blazing force.
> And truly wen was King Wen,
> he could open the way for his progeny.
> [Wu,] in succession, received it;
> you conquered Yin and slew them,
> achieving the fullness of your deeds.

King Wu, the son, does not simply duplicate his father; he takes the military action against the Shang that his father did not take. His attribute-name is virtually glossed by another attribute in the first couplet: he is "possessed of blazing force" (*lie* 烈). He is both the "Warlike" King and the "successor king," as in the apparent play on words in the fifth line: *siwu* 嗣武, meaning both "Wu in succession," and "following in the footprints."

Now we are in a better position to read the peculiarly redundant third line. It is precisely the quality of *wen* that "empowers" (*ke* 克, the coverb of empowerment, also used in Jiang's mastery of the rites) King Wen to "open the way" for King Wu. The two act in tandem: King Wen's forbearance and accumulation of moral capital does nothing in itself except to empower the next generation, his "aftercomer" (*hou* 後, translated as "progeny"), who, "following in the footsteps" (*siwu* 嗣武) in this opened space, "receives" what has been handed down. One "opens" or "begins" (*kai* 開); the other "achieves," literally "settles" the deed. Neither completes the kingship in himself; each depends upon the other.

Kings Wen and Wu are a complementary pair, representing the necessary constituents of the conquest in a temporal sequence. We

have here reproduction whose perfection lies in a necessary difference.

Sequential complementarity is easily reoriented to spatial complementarity. The royal son complements the royal father; but both are "Sons of Heaven" (*Tianzi* 天子), where complementary reproduction is of an office or sphere of authority in a different space. Heaven rules above; the Son of Heaven rules below. In this relation a term of great conceptual importance appears: the "match" or "counterpart" (*pei* 配).

The first case we might consider is one in which the "counterpart" is not technically a king—though this man was, in a literal sense, "son of Heaven." This is Hou Ji, "Lord Millet." In the hymn "Siwen" 思文 (275), Hou Ji, the dynastic ancestor and literal but not official "son of Heaven," is retrospectively vested with the attributes of rulership; he is a "counterpart of Heaven"; he is given a Charge (*ming* 命); and he is invoked by the attribute *wen*, which, as we have seen, non-violently accumulates efficacy and opens the way for descendants.

思文后稷，克配彼天．立我烝民，莫匪爾極．
貽我來牟，帝命率育．無此疆爾界，陳常于時夏．

Be *wen*, Lord Millet,
you could be the counterpart of Heaven.
You gave grain to our teeming folk,
there is nothing not reached by you.
You gave us the millet and barley,
the god charged that you nurture all.
Make no limits to your fields,
spread the norms to these Xia people.

Hou Ji is charged with the perfect reproduction of norms (chang 常, "constants," those things that do not change), norms that involve agricultural reproduction. This is possible because he is a "counterpart" (*pei*) of Heaven.

The kingship is clearly Heaven's "counterpart." The relation implied in *pei* is not one of identity or even equality; one member of the pair retains priority and authority; that first member is the stable term for which the secondary figure is the "counterpart."

Before someone becomes *pei* of Heaven, he may be subject to Heaven's power, but he is not subject to Heaven's authority. Only as *pei* of Heaven and the ancestors can the king receive the Charge. Thus in "Huang yi" 皇矣 ("O Splendor," 241):

帝遷明德, 串夷載路. 天立厥配, 受命既固.

The god transferred the bright *De*,
the Guanyi tribes were laid low.
Heaven set up its counterpart,
and the Charge given was made fast.

At the historical moment when this event occurs, the recipient of the massive transfer of moral power should have been the preconquest Zhou duke Danfu. But in the Ode itself he is not mentioned; the actual recipient seems to be the newly cleared land on Mount Qi (岐), which was to become the seat of Zhou power. It was well known that the Charge cannot be "made fast," that it was a slippery thing that could easily be lost by those unequal to it. It was held through *de*, effective moral power. We see here that moral power was not only amassed by human producers; a place like Mount Qi or a favored family, like the royal Ji, could receive it from the high god as an investment.

The *pei* relation, the "counterpart," is seen in the "Son of Heaven's" role on earth, "matching" parental Heaven. In the same way, the successor king is a counterpart of his ancestors, as in the first two stanzas of "Xiawu" 下武 ("Succession," 243):

下武維周, 世有哲王. 三后在天, 王配于京.
王配于京, 世德作求. 永言配命, 成王之孚.

The Zhou follows in a succession,
each generation has a wise king.
The Three Lords are in Heaven,
the king, their counterpart in the great city.

The king is their counterpart in the great city,
the *de* of their generations he seeks.
Forever he is counterpart of the Charge
and achieves the trust of a king.

According to commentators, the "Three Lords" are supposed to be Taiwang (Danfu), Wangji, and King Wen, and the king who is their counterpart is King Wu (thus some take the second line as "in the current generation there is a wise king"). For the continued use of the Ode, however, it would seem preferable to take the king as the present king, whoever that might be. Dynastic lineage and a celestial vice-royalty come together here. The king is their counterpart on earth, in the capital of Zhou, the *jing*, where the ancestral sacrifices are carried out. Here again we find the term the "footprint" (*wu* 武) as the figure of legitimate succession. In the first line xiawu 下武 ("in a succession") is literally "in descending footprints," with one wise king following after another through continuous generations. Zhou's success lies precisely in its power to reproduce such "wise kings," who stand as counterpart of the ancestors.

Not only does the king stand as the counterpart to his ancestors, he is also the counterpart for the Charge. Like Heaven and the deified ancestors, the Charge is intangible; elsewhere, though it is communicated to mortals below. The king is here the "counterpart" not simply in being adequate to the Charge but in embodying it, realizing it, and putting it into action. In this capacity he "achieves the trust of a king." This strange phrase suggests that, in realizing the Charge, which is after all a Charge to rule as a good king, the Zhou ruler becomes trustworthy, precisely because he is predictably what he is supposed to be. That same term for trust, *fu* 孚, recurs in "Wen wang" 文王 ("King Wen," 235), where it is achieved not by abstractly being "the counterpart of the Charge," but by taking as a model the person who perfectly carried out the Charge, King Wen: "Taking pattern and mold from King Wen, the myriad lands will trust in you" (儀刑文王, 萬邦作孚).

In the following stanza of "Succession," it is the king's "trustworthiness" (*fu*), achieved by being in the "mold" (刑; later, 型) of King Wen, that further reproduces that model in society:

成王之孚, 下土之式. 永言孝思, 孝思維則.

He achieves the trust of a king,
he is the model on earth below.
His filial thoughts last on and on,
his filial thoughts are the rule.

By realizing the Charge of kingship in his person, the Zhou ruler wins the trust of his people: he is legible. In this he becomes a pattern for emulation, a standard for human behavior. And the primary component of his position as a model are his filial thoughts, his concern for those ancestors in Heaven, who are his mold and whose counterpart he is.

媚兹一人, 應侯順德. 永言孝思, 昭哉嗣服.
昭兹來許, 繩其祖武. 於萬斯年, 受天之祜.
受天之祜, 四方來賀. 於萬斯年, 不遐有佐.

We adore this, the One Man,
we respond to his conforming *de*.
His filial thoughts last on and on,
shining, he assumes the succession of the task.[10]

Shining, he comes forward,
he continues his ancestors' footsteps.
O ten thousand are the years,
receiving the blessings of Heaven.

Receiving the blessings of Heaven,
from all around we come to congratulate him.
O ten thousand are the years,
he will not look far for helpers.

By fitting in the mold of the ancestors, the king is at the same time the model for the people below him. They gather to him and form a cohesive unity. It follows that, if something should go wrong, these bonds will be broken: the continuity of the kingship, the relation of being the counterpart of Heaven and the founding ancestors, and finally the adherence of the people, will be lost.

[10] It is possible that *zhao*, "shining," is, in fact, Zhao, the Zhou king following King Kang. In this case we would translate the line, "It was Zhao who succeeded to the task." In the beginning of the next stanza, it would be, "Zhao came forward."

FAILURE

命之不易，無遏爾躬.

The Charge is not an easy thing—
let it not end with your person.

"King Wen"

We breathe; the heart beats; and though these repetitions are life itself, they occur unnoticed and largely uncelebrated. Repetitions and the reproduction of regular patterns become of interest only insofar as they are shadowed by the anxiety that they may fail. In the praise of the perfect continuity of the rite at the end of "She Bore the Folk," the speaker raises the possibility of "fault or cause for regret" only to deny it. The very celebration of perfect reproduction, its representation in words and dissemination as a value, depends on the possibility of its failure.

The Zhou rulers were often praised in terms of an unbroken sequence of kings following in the complementary molds of Wen and Wu. If the king is himself a reproduction of the model, those below conform instinctively. But the king retains free will; his conformity to the model of his ancestors is an act of choice, and he must always be reminded of the dangers of deviation and failure. The kingship can indeed be lost. In the sixth stanza of "King Wen" (235) there are two *pei*'s: being the "counterpart" of the Charge is interchangeable with being the earthly counterpart of the high god; if one fails in one, one has failed in the other:

無念爾祖，聿修厥德. 永言配命，自求多福.
殷之未喪師，克配上帝. 宜鑒于殷，駿命不易.

Do you not think on your forebears,
and thus perfect their *de*?
Forever be counterpart of the Charge
and seek for yourself many blessings.
Before the Yin had lost its hosts
it could be the high god's counterpart.
You should look in the mirror of Yin,
the high Charge is not easy.

Reproduction of agricultural and ritual norms, accepting the role

of subordinate counterpart, emulating models—these were the ideological mechanisms at the heart of the Zhou polity. Through these the Zhou might hope to avoid the fate of the Shang (Yin) Dynasty, which lost both the Charge and its adherents. In the reproducing mirror of history, Zhou could find the model of failed continuity, a model that they themselves should not reproduce.

The Shang failed because individual rulers failed. But the procedures of efficacious ritual and political order were not themselves in question. The very celebration of perfect ritual reproduction assumes absolute responsibility on the part of the king. Failure has its signs: Heaven will send down warnings in the weather.

"Yun han" 雲漢 ("River of Stars," 258) is the lament of a unknown Zhou king (the commentarial tradition identifies him as King Xuan). He is confronting a drought, the sure sign of his personal failure and Heaven's displeasure. Yet he complains that he has carried out all the rites, and he cannot understand what has gone wrong.

"River of Stars"

倬彼雲漢, 昭回于天. 王曰於乎, 何辜今之人. 天降喪亂,
饑饉薦臻. 靡神不舉, 靡愛其牲. 圭璧既卒, 寧莫我聽.
旱既大甚, 蘊隆蟲蟲. 不殄禋祀, 自郊徂宮. 上下奠瘞,
靡神不宗. 后稷不克, 上帝不臨. 耗斁下土, 寧丁我躬.
旱既大甚, 則不可推. 兢兢業業, 如霆如雷. 周餘黎民,
靡有孑遺. 昊天上帝, 則不我遺. 胡不相畏, 先祖于摧.
旱既大甚, 則不可沮. 赫赫炎炎, 云我無所. 大命近止,
靡瞻靡顧. 群公先正, 則不我助. 父母先祖, 胡寧忍予.
旱既大甚, 滌滌山川. 旱魃爲虐, 如惔如焚. 我心憚暑,
憂心如熏. 群公先正, 則不我聞. 昊天上帝, 寧俾我遯.
旱既大甚, 黽勉畏去. 胡寧瘨我以旱, 憯不知其故.
祈年孔夙, 方祈不莫. 昊天上帝, 則不我虞.
敬恭明神, 宜無悔怒.
旱既大甚, 散無友紀. 鞫哉庶政, 疚哉冢宰. 趣馬師氏,
膳夫左右, 靡人不周, 無不能止. 瞻卬昊天, 云如何里.
瞻卬昊天, 有嘒其星. 大夫君子, 昭假無贏. 大命近止,
無棄爾成. 何求爲我, 以戾庶正. 瞻卬昊天, 曷惠其寧.

Vast is the River of Stars,
it shines revolving in the sky.
The king said: "Aiya!
What fault lies in this present man?
Heaven sends down ruin, turmoil,
famines come upon us often.
Each spirit has its offerings,
I do not stint on beasts of sacrifice.
Jade plaques and disks are used up,
why do you not heed me?

"The drought is terrible!
scorching heat swells everywhere.
We cease not rite and sacrifice,
from Heaven's Altar we go to the palace.
We offer to those above, make burials for those below,
each spirit receives reverence.
Lord Millet has no power,
the high god does not approach.
He works ruin on this land below,
why does this befall my own person?

"The drought is terrible!
we cannot be rid of it.
O dread and terror—
like lightning and the thunderclap.
Of the hosts of Zhou's folk
there are none remaining.
Mighty Heaven, the high god
does not let us remain.
How should all not stand in dread?—
the ancestors will be destroyed.

"The drought is terrible!
it cannot be stopped.
Blazing and searing light,
we have no place away from it.
The Great Charge draws near its end,

they do not look back upon me.
The dead dukes and their chief men
do not help me.
Father, mother, ancestors—
how can you been so heartless to me?

"The drought is terrible!
the hills and streams are swept bare.
The drought demon is cruel,
as if aflame, as if on fire.
My heart takes fright at the heat,
my careworn heart seems burned.
The dead dukes and their chief men
do not pay attention to me.
Mighty Heaven, high god—
why do you drive me to run away?

"The drought is terrible!
With all my might I dread and flee.
Why do you hurt me with the drought?—
I do not understand the cause.
Spring's harvest rites were very early,
rites for the Four Quarters and Soil were not late.
Mighty Heaven, high god,
you did not take my measure.
I have shown respect to the bright spirits—
you ought not find fault and be angry with me.

"The drought is terrible!
the scattering has no bounds.
All my chief men are in despair,
the chief minister is stricken.
The Stablemaster, the Palacemaster,
the High Cook, and all my men,
there are none whom you might not help,
none whom you cannot stop.
I look up to mighty Heaven,
how wretched am I!
"I look up to mighty Heaven,

twinkling are its stars.
Officers and gentlemen,
our bright offerings left nothing out.
The Great Charge draws near its end,
do not abandon your deeds achieved.
What am I seeking for myself?—
I would bring calm to all my chief men.
I look up to mighty Heaven—
when will it grace us with peace."

This poem begins and ends with the king looking up into the stars, addressing the high god, who, the poem tells us "does not approach," does not heed, and does not pay attention.[11] Such a complaint about the god's indifference runs counter to the usual assertion of the god's continual inspecting presence, as in "Jing zhi" 敬之 ("Revere Him," 288):

命不易哉, 無曰高高在上, 陟降厥士, 日監在玆.

The Charge is not easy—
say not: "It is too high above."
Rising and descending is its work,
daily inspecting those who are here.

In "River of Stars," the system seems to have broken down. The king addresses an absent deity, asking what fault he has committed to bring such retribution. Again and again he declares that he has carried out all the necessary rituals; he has not withheld sacrificial animals and he has used up all his precious jades—all burned, buried, or drowned for spirits of sky, earth, and water respectively.

The categorical terms "rite" and "sacrifice" (*yinsi* 禋祀) were the same used to describe the ritual mastery of Jiang the First Parent in "She Bore the Folk." That Ode declared their perfect continuation. In this Ode the ruler informs the god of what the god would know if he were being attentive, that he the king has not abandoned the rituals, and yet he is unable to exercise ritual control. Hou Ji,

[11] I have translated wo as singular throughout, as "I" rather than "we." Most Chinese translators do the same, though the 今之人 in line 4 is usually taken as "people today" rather than "this present person." I think the question of fault here lies with the king.

Lord Millet, was the singular figure who stood at the beginning of the history of the Zhou tribe; this king represents himself as the singular figure standing at its end, when the great Charge seems on the point of being withdrawn. Unlike the line of kings intervening between Hou Ji and himself, where the kingly role was reproduced in sets of counterparts and emulations, this king speaks of "my person" (*wogong* 我躬), distinguishing him from all predecessors. And he may be echoing the warning in the Ode "King Wu": "Nothing easy in the Charge—let it not end with your person." If he looks in the mirror of the Yin and Xia, as kings were instructed to do, he sees the flagrant misdeeds of bad rulers that ended those dynasties; this king feels he has done everything right.

Zhou's *de* and the efficaciousness that follows from it caused Zhou's increase, with people flocking to Zhou. The loss of *de* brings about a corresponding dispersal: whether by death or flight, the hosts of Zhou, including the officers of his palace, desert the king. If we understand the end of the third stanza as most Chinese commentators do, the consequence of such a dissolution of the Zhou will be the destruction of its ancestors by the cessation of ancestral sacrifice (the other deities attended to in the rites are not the ancestor spirits). But despite this threat to their continued ritual support, the dead dukes and the king's parents have all turned away from him.

In the sixth stanza the king turns to outright complaint. He has kept up with all the necessary sacrifices, but the high god did not take his measure, did not consider his virtues. The god's finding fault (*hui* 悔, the same term used at the end of "She Bore the Folk," which is the potential danger avoided by the perfect reproduction of the rite) is not fair.

On the verge of being deserted by his household and closest attendants in the final stanza, the king makes an interesting redirection of his plea. It is a move perhaps inspired by crisis and by the desertion of his successful ancestors, and it is a move that confronts the weight of responsibility that the king bears.

It was often said that the successful king settled or brought calm to the people. In "O Splendor" (241) the high god "sought stillness for the folk" 求民之莫, and therefore grew angry with the Shang, transferring the bright *de* to the Zhou. In "River of Stars" the royal

speaker takes this a step further: he pleads to heaven on behalf of his subjects:

> 何求爲我，以戾庶正.
>
> What am I seeking for myself?—
> I would bring calm to all my chief men.

The king who feels responsible for the bad weather is thereby responsible for the sufferings of those below him. The scope of his stated responsibility is relatively modest—the king does not feel responsible for the common people but only for those closest to him, his "chief men" (*shuzheng* 庶正). The king disclaims personal motives; he claims to speak by virtue of his responsibility to those below him.

This concluding move in the poem redirects the focus of kingship: the issue is no longer the king's reproduction of ancestral models. Unlike those successful kings who reproduced norms, this king is *wogong* 我躬, someone who thinks of himself in the kingship as "I personally." He is being punished, even though he believes that he has perfectly carried out the rites that should ensure continuing success. He has been singled out, not for what he has done wrong but apparently for who he is: Heaven disregards him in particular. Thus he claims to seek favor not for himself, but for his "chief men." And in this moment when the techniques of ritual control through the reproduction of norms breaks down, the lines of responsibility in the kingship shift from the triad of king, ancestors, and Heaven to the king and his subjects. At the same time the king invokes the ancestors' vested interest in the polity they created. This king addresses Heaven on behalf of his subjects: "Do not abandon your deeds achieved" 無棄爾成.

We cannot date the poems of the *Classic of Poetry*, so we cannot speak of historical changes. But we can observe differences that invite historical stories. Here is a king whose rituals fail to reproduce the proper consequences and who feels that he is not the reproduction of effective ancestral models (he has singularly and inexplicably earned disfavor). As a consequence he becomes a new kind of king: he is the intermediary between the collective ancestors in Heaven and their polity.