Reading the Li sao

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What is the Li sao? On a simple level we can say that it is a poem in ninety-two quatrain stanzas, with a coda. What the poem is doing or what it is "about" is a more difficult question. We can give a secure account of how the poem was interpreted at the turn of the second century CE, and we know that this first full interpretation was an elaboration of a more general understanding of the poem that went back at least to the end of the second century BCE. The full interpretation from the turn of the second century CE, by one Wang Yi 王逸, can be to some degree justified by the text; but at the same time, we can recognize that it is a historicizing and rationalizing interpretation of a text that is far more problematic.

The historicizing interpretation makes the Li sao the composition of one Qu Yuan 屈原, an aristocrat of the Chu kingdom in the late fourth and early third century BCE. In the poem's interpretation Qu Yuan figuratively expresses his loyalty to the king of Chu, his distress at having been slandered and exiled, and a resolution to seek out a prince who appreciates his worth, figured as the quest for a woman. This historicizing interpretation, first appearing in embryonic form in the historical record late in the second century BCE, has survived to the present and is still how most readers understand the poem. Following this interpretation, Qu Yuan stands at the beginning of full historical authorship in the Chinese tradition; and the Li sao, along with other works attributed to Qu Yuan, are understood as the earliest "lyric" poems with a fully historical first-person speaker. Parts of the poem can easily support such an interpretation; other parts require considerable exegetical ingenuity in figurative reading.

We have enough collateral examples from the Han to recognize the historical contingency of such a form of interpretation; different varieties of historicizing interpretation were widely practiced in the Western Han dynasty to explain and organize the textual legacy of pre-Qin times. Historical circumstances were adduced to contextualize texts, and authorial names were attached to many texts to provide a fully historicized account of their composition. This kind of interpretation transformed the meaning of texts within a new concept of centralized, linear

historical time that was central to the enterprise of Sima Qian 司馬遷 in his *Historical Records*, *Shiji* 史記 (or *Archivist's Records*), the work in which we also first find Qu Yuan fully historicized. In the case of Li sao, we can recognize that the received interpretation is yet another case of Han transformative historicizing, but the more difficult question is what the historicizing interpretation was a transformation of.

The text provides many clues, but they remain ambiguous. We can follow those clues and to some degree also read the text negatively, looking for those places where the standard interpretation must struggle to explain what was unacceptable or no longer explicable. We might look to those points where the exegete leaves shadows of effort to explain how the text holds together. Perhaps the most difficult task is to look at the text with fresh eyes. The Han interpretation of the Li sao was not only authoritative, it was the basis of the Li sao's considerable influence in Chinese literature across two millennia. The weight of such history makes certain interpretations so naturalized that it takes a considerable effort of imagination to recognize that the text points in a different direction.

To offer but one example: at one point in the text Qu Yuan, who has been unsuccessfully seeking a mate, asks the advice of Shaman Xian. Shaman Xian tells him to continue looking, giving a series of examples of rulers who found worthy ministers. As suggested above, this is understood as Qu Yuan seeking a prince who will appreciate his worth. When we look at those examples again, however, we realize that the more appropriate analogy is Qu Yuan as the ruler, traveling to find an appropriate minister/mate. We realize that in the preceding section of the poem Qu Yuan has been very much represented as a ruler. We notice that he masses a "thousand chariots," the standard mark of a feudal lord, the rulers of the kingdoms of Qu Yuan's day. We note that his famous complaint in the coda, that "no one can join me in making good rule," is far more appropriate statement for a ruler than for the minister who might join a ruler. In the received interpretation such an explanation is unthinkable. One of the pleasures of rereading the Li sao is to think the habitually unthinkable and to try to make sense of these words that initially elude coherence without the received interpretation.

Before proceeding, we need to briefly review the process by which Qu Yuan and the Li sao entered recorded history.

The earliest datable reference to Qu Yuan is in 176 BCE by the Han statesman Jia Yi 賈誼 (200-169 BCE), in exile in the South at Changsha, then a Han principality. Jia Yi wrote a poetic lament deploring Qu Yuan's suicide, the "Diao Qu Yuan fu" 弔屈原(賦) ("Lament for Qu Yuan"). We can surmise that at this time the legend of Qu Yuan was circulating in at least one part of what had been the old Chu Kingdom, of which Changsha had been an outlying province. Jia Yi knew of Qu Yuan's inflexibility, his purity, his exile, and his suicide. The "Lament for Qu Yuan" apparently quotes a line from the Li sao at one point, but Jia Yi does not mention the work or mark the line as a quotation. If he did know a Li sao, it is far from certain he knew the version we now possess. The Li sao itself appears in history around 139-35 BCE in Shouchun 壽春, the capital of the Han principality of Huainan and before that, the last capital of the exile Chu court, fleeing the advance of Qin.[1] It is of some interest that none of our earliest Han notices of Qu Yuan and the *Chu ci* come from the Chu heartland in modern Hubei; material was evidently preserved in the eastern and southern provinces of the old Chu Kingdom.[2] This fact finds suggestive echoes in texts that speak so often of longing for one's home and traveling outward. The Han Prince of Huainan, Liu An 劉安 (179-122 BCE), presented the text of Li sao to young Emperor Wu, who commanded Liu An write a *zhuan* 傳 for the work. The *zhuan* may have been a very general commentary or some contextualizing information with some form of the Qu Yuan legend. The Li sao text presented by Liu An is almost certainly the redaction of the Li sao that we now have.

Emperor Wu must have deposited the Li sao in the imperial library, where it was "read" (*du* 讀) by the historian Sima Qian around the turn of the first century BCE.[3] Probably working from Liu An's *zhuan*, Sima Qian provided Qu Yuan with a full biography, filling in the murky outlines of the narrative with a historical context that is largely drawn from other sources.

[1] Chen Wenxin 2006, vol. 2: 46 places this at the very beginning of Emperor Wu's reign in 139 BCE, based on Liu An's visit to court that year (*Zizhi tongjian*: 557)
[2] The eastern provinces of greater Chu were the former kingdoms of Wu and Yue.
[3] I stress Sima Qian's note that he read the Li sao and other texts attributed to Qu Yuan, because we are not sure what the function of Liu An's *zhuan* was, whether it was for reading or a depository text, a tangible tribute "gift" to accompany someone who could recite and explain. Hawkes suggests that Liu An brought the first form of the anthology, the first nine pieces of the old arrangement of titles (Hawkes 1985: 32-33); there is no evidence for this conjecture, and it is improbable for many reasons, not the least of which is the dating on "Nine Songs."

A Layered Discourse

The Li sao belongs to a distinctive family of early texts, most of which were included in the *Chu ci*, which was, according to Wang Yi, first put together by Liu Xiang 劉向 (77-6 BCE) in the last part of the first century BCE. Scholars usually distinguish between the texts attributed to Qu Yuan (or, if one doubts the authorship of some of the works attributed to Qu Yuan, then the "pre-Qin" *Chu ci*) and works that are considered "Han imitations." The term "pre-Qin" here is a notional placeholder and in no way indicates that such texts are necessarily pre-Qin.

In the first century BCE we have a truly scholastic tradition of imitation by northern court figures. Separating out the courtier imitations is useful because it reminds us that in the second century BCE (and still perhaps even in the first century BCE) less scholastic composition in this poetic style was still an ongoing practice in the Han principalities that occupied the eastern and southern part of the old Chu kingdom, as well as in the Han court. Those who could still compose in this style could probably also recite versions of works like the Li sao.

This leads to the inevitable question whether the Li sao, as it initially circulated outside the courts in Shouchun and Chang'an, was based on a written text or on a text primarily performed from memory.[4] This question requires some nuance in the second century BCE when many things had been committed to writing. The question is not whether the Li sao was ever written down before Liu An, but whether it was learned from a text and transmitted by copying a text; if it did indeed become a text transmitted in writing before Liu An's *zhuan*, then the question is when that happened. If at some stage in its transmission the Li sao was an oral text rather than a written text, this leads to a further question of whether it was a stable text or a freely variable one. The standard interpretation presumes that Li sao was composed in writing by Qu Yuan and that we have a more or less accurate copy of that authorial text. A more liberal variation might allow that the text was composed and transmitted orally for a period, but that transmission was through precise memorization of the oral text.

[4] While the question of a written text, transmitted through written copies, versus oral production or degrees reproduction remains important, we are far from the old binary of writing versus orality. Texts often moved from one mode to the other and show different degrees of stability through the entire range of variation.

I would here propose an alternative hypothesis: that the text grew and changed in the process of transmission and reperformance.[5] The advantage of such a hypothesis—neither provable nor disprovable—is that it helps account for the mixture of distinct discourses that we find in the current version of the Li sao. It further allows us to see a Li sao that grew and changed in tandem with the developing legend of Qu Yuan. We can at least raise the possibility the Li sao was not a fixed text, but an outline of motifs, probably with many passages or stanzas that were always included; this outline might grow or contract according to the disposition of the reciter. Elements could be included that spoke directly to the legend of Qu Yuan. In this case, what we have is a Huainan court recension from the second half of the second century BCE. In other words, there may have been many versions of the Li sao, varying over history, by region, and by reciter.[6]

The Li sao is one variety of a larger body of *Chu ci* poetic discourse. Like most early poetic discourses it is constructed of a relatively limited vocabulary—in motifs and gestures, as well as in its lexicon. This poetic discourse also has exclusions. This is no place to enter the vexed question of "Chu culture" beyond a few general points. Chu was on the margins of the Zhou cultural region, and its culture was in some respects distinct and regional. At the same time, as the kingdom grew, it interacted constantly with North China; and its aristocratic culture was a hybrid one. A particular poetic discourse can be quite distinct from the usual discourses of a community, and one characteristic of *Chu ci* discourse is clear: by and large it excludes Northern *textual* material. Let me emphasize the word "textual." The speaker in the Li sao knows stories that were probably Northern in origin, borrows rhetorical habits, and uses popular Northern words and metaphors; these had all certainly become part of a syncretic Chu tradition. But the speaker does not cite canonical Northern texts. As we observed above, insofar as these texts might be speculatively linked to some elusive "Chu culture," it may well be a nostalgic "Chu" of provincials. Moreover,

[5] It is hard to say when the text stabilized, but it does not show the influence of Legalism or Huang-Lao Daoism that we often find in texts presumed to be composed in the Han.

[6] I will refer to the poem as the Li sao, without translating it. The most commonly accepted interpretation of the title, of various explanations proposed, is "Encountering Sorrow." Since this is perhaps the earliest example of a rhymed verse text having a "title" in the full sense of the word (along with other pieces in the *Chu ci*), it is not unreasonable to wonder if it always had this title or the title was acquired at some stage. *Li* as "encounter" is very common in the late Warring States and Western Han. We can wish that *sao* would have been used somewhere else in the *Chu ci*, in order to have some sense of the word in this poetic discourse; unfortunately, it is not.

a poetic discourse, marked as "regional," need not be practiced only by those from the region evoked by that discourse. This has been true worldwide.

If we are looking for a "control text," one almost entirely unmarked by a more general borrowing from Northern discourse, The *Jiu ge* 九歌 ("Nine Songs") can serve as an alternative against which to read Li sao. Presuming that the core of *Jiu ge* is only rather late (Han Wudi's reign, we will argue), it probably represents the surviving traces of a much broader religious discourse, and we can still see from those traces that much in the Li sao shares that discourse. It is clear that many passages in the Li sao had a strong religious resonance. At the same time there is much in the Li sao that has no counterpart in *Jiu ge*, and many of these elements have analogues in North Chinese prose discourse, for example, the craft metaphors and structured appeal to historical precedent. Moreover, the elements that cannot be found in *Jiu ge* tend to cluster in groups of adjacent stanzas of Li sao.

To explain this phenomenon we again find ourselves outside the possibility of proof and can only offer a plausible hypothesis. The "core" of the Li sao was built largely on the kind of religious poetic discourse that we find in *Jiu ge*—elaborating elements, twisting conventional moves, and complicating them. Li sao may not only have used religious discourse, it may have, at one stage, been religious in the full sense. As the text grew in tandem with the Qu Yuan legend, it incorporated new elements that were integrated into the poem. I would prefer to use the term "layered" text rather than "hybrid" text, reserving the term "hybrid" for those sections that recast characteristically North Chinese metaphors and discursive moves in the *Chu* poetic idiom.

Later, in discussing a series of stanzas early on in the text, I will take up the unlovely issue of the rhetorical "machinery" by which stanzas were composed. Here I would like to consider the example of one large thematic pattern, both its roots in the religious motifs found in *Jiu ge* and how it differs from those roots. In a number of cases in *Jiu ge* the "shaman" speaker or god takes flight (by air, land, or water); this is what David Hawkes refers to as the "itineraria."[7] In the Li sao the speaker takes flight twice; but in each case, flight follows consultation in a double interview

[7] Hawkes 1989: 115-141. I will use the term "shaman" and (feminine) "shamanka" for the religious practitioners who mediate between gods and mortals; it is a term of convenience for religious practitioners who report an encounter with a divinity.

with authority figures. What makes the repetition of the pattern most striking is not the preliminary interview itself, but that in both cases there is a double interview, in which an initial statement by one figure is submitted to another figure of presumably greater authority. In the first case Qu Yuan is distraught and taken to task by the Sister (*nüxu* 女嬃) for his inflexibility; he immediately takes his case to Shun, states it, and then sets off on a flight through the heavens. In the second version, disappointed in his quest, he seeks divination from Numinous Fen (*ling Fen*), then seeks confirmation from the more famous Shaman Xian (*wu Xian*); then he flies off again. In both cases of consultation, the second and greater authority requires going south: in the first case to Cangwu (in the Many Doubts Range) and in the second case more generally to the Many Doubts Range (Jiuyi).[8] In face of the second authority figure, in each case there is a series of historical examples. Although the historical examples in the first case seem to be presented by Qu Yuan himself and in the second case by Shaman Xian, they occupy the same position in an identical sequence of moves; that is, they are functionally the same.

In *Jiu ge* there is flight but no interview. In the Huang-Lao *Yuanyou* 遠遊 ("Far Traveling,"), a Han piece that explicitly tropes on Li sao, we have almost all the elements: the speaker is distressed with the world, travels south to Nanchao where he has an interview with the Daoist immortal Qiao the Prince (Wangzi Qiao), who gives advice that is metrically as well as discursively distinct; then the speaker flies on his journey. What has changed is, of course, the peculiar and apparently unnecessary two-stage interview—the need to supplement the first interview.

The question is what to make of this remarkable structural homology in the Li sao. One thing we can probably say is that this pattern, including the double interview, belongs specifically to the Li sao. Pieces of the pattern occur in other texts, but not the full pattern with the double interview. What is less certain is whether the double interview pattern must occur twice and whether the particulars, including the authority figures, must always be the same. We could exchange the first pair (the Sister and Shun) for the second pair (Numinous Fen and Shaman Xian) without working any profound changes in the text. Each iteration of the pattern responds to a different issue: the

[8] The *yi* 疑 "doubts" of "Many (literally "nine") Doubts" is apparently also a Southern word for large mountains, later written 嶷. I translate it as "doubts" because the term appears often in the Li sao to refer to Qu Yuan's "doubts," usually *huyi* 狐疑 and once as *buyi* 不疑 ("not to doubt"). Note that the divine entourage of the "Xiang furen" 湘夫人 ("Mistress of the Xiang") also comes out from the Jiuyi 九嶷, "Many Doubts"/ "Nine Alps."

first addresses Qu Yuan's unbending purity and the second speaks to his doubts. There are some other differences: the interview with Shun, a sage-king of antiquity, uses the formal terms of *chenci* 陳詞 ("stating a case"), and seeks *jiezhong* 節中 ("moderate judgment"); approaching Shaman Xian, Qu Yuan clasps "pepper and rice," as Shaman Xian descends from Heaven with a host of attendant deities, *yang ling* 揚靈 ("sending forth his spirit"). Functionally, structurally, and in many details the two interviews are the same, including the locale; the cultural context, however, could not be more different.

In the case of the second pair of interviews, we have a strong suggestion (to be discussed in detail later) that the second interview (with Shaman Xian) was added, breaking an older sequence. Since the interviews with Shun and Shaman Xian are closer to the Qu Yuan legend, we have a hint that this characteristic "recourse to a second opinion" in the Li sao was a device to reconcile the poem with the Qu Yuan story.

We cannot disprove the received conviction that the Li sao was "through-composed" as we have it. We can, however, propose an alternative account in which it began as a distinct version of the "quest for the goddess" that we see in *Jiu ge*—distinct because, as we will see, the women sought were not goddesses (whom, we suppose, were sought with ritual regularity), but rather mates, here localized as belonging to archaic history and playing key roles in the two royal lineages of the entire Chinese cultural region. As the goddesses sometimes elude the shaman-speaker in *Jiu ge*, here the appropriate bride, necessary to found a ruling lineage, is not acquired. We are not certain what the consequences are for the "pre-ruler" who fails to find his bride, but there are many hints that it involves going to heaven (perhaps after drowning) and achieving the status of a deified shaman.

In this hypothesis the text was not a fixed one, but allowed for elaboration and variation, with recognizable patterns and segments. Its variability opened the poem to assimilation to the Qu Yuan story.

In the religious context of *Jiu ge*, whose speakers live in their own current moment, those speakers do not need a reason to be miserable or to make a flying circuit of the heavens or go to the southern wilderness. Since the Li sao was perhaps always in the voice of a particularized "I" rather than a quasi-shamanic role, we can see the political narrative of Qu Yuan as essentially

euhemeristic, providing credible historical reasons for actions that in another context may have had only mythic necessity. We can thus see the Li sao growing in tandem with the evolving Qu Yuan story, the legend contributing new elaborations to the poem and the poem expanding to support the legend. Rather than a through-composed text of allegory, here we may have an evolving text that responded to a changing cultural context, in which the early strata could be recuperated only by allegorical interpretation, an interpretation implicit in the political discourse grafted into the poem.

The possibility that the Li sao is a layered text accounts for certain aspects of the text and is thus worth considering as a possibility, though beyond proof. To go beyond that to try to outline some "original" version without the "additions" would be folly, especially if the text was indeed continually recomposed. We have to consider the text as we have it—though the reader, attracted by the possibility, may notice points where the text seems to have grafts.

Qu Yuan

Sima Qian 司馬遷 (145-after 91 BCE) identified Qu Yuan with one Qu Ping 屈平, a Chu figure only once attested elsewhere in extant texts. The speaker in the Li sao names himself otherwise, but commentators explain those names away to preserve the name given by Sima Qian around the turn of the second century BCE.[9] On the surface even his name, Qu Yuan, is strange. The Qu were one of the three royal clans of the kingdom of Chu; that much is clear. But to name a child "Yuan" 原, "origin," would have been a most peculiar act. The most famous parallel would have been Jiang Yuan 姜嫄, named in the *Shengmin* 生民 ("She Gave Birth to the Folk")of the *Shi* as the mother of the Zhou royal house, the woman who conceived Hou Ji ("Lord Millet") by stepping in the big toe-print of the god. The Jiang clan would long continue to provide exogamous brides for the royal and ducal Ji of the Zhou house. Considering the Li sao's interest in marriages that would have had profound impact on the endogamy or exogamy of the great royal lineages of which Qu Yuan was a member, the parallel between his name and Jiang Yuan is striking. Reading naively,

[9] Hawkes 1985 gives a good summary of the issues surrounding the biography. Although he lays out the evidence clearly, he does not raise the obvious possibility that Sima Qian has conflated Qu Yuan and Qu Ping, a figure in a debater romance that Sima Qian apparently drew on to flesh out the biography.

Qu Yuan should mean "the Qu originator." Here and elsewhere in the Li sao and the stories around it we are always on the edge of falling out of the historical world of Warring States Chu and back into archaic legend. The latest historical figure mentioned in the Li sao, Count Huan of Qi of belongs to the seventh century BCE; and his presence in the poem seems dissonantly recent.[10] The Qu Yuan of received lore may come from the turn of the third century BCE, but he moves in the hazy world of archaic legend, and his personal historical knowledge seems largely restricted to that era. As we will discuss later, he travels in time—in the sense of being at a place in the remote past before certain things are decided. In a speculative context of religious performance, he could well have originally been a revenant of an ancient figure, perhaps a figure in the self-representation of the Qu clan. Particularly suggestive is the formal name (*zi*) received from his father: Ling Jun 靈均, "Numinous Poise," whose form, with the prefixed *ling*, is that of a shaman name (like "Numinous Fen," Ling Fen, later in the poem).

I will use the name Qu Yuan in the following discussion, but in doing so, I am referring to the speaker in the Li sao, with no judgment one way or the other regarding his historical existence or authorship of the poem.[11]

Qu Yuan is commonly treated as the earliest lyric poet in the Chinese tradition. But the Qu Yuan who emerges in the Li sao is a character whose traits are shaped by ritual and mythic necessities, rather than by accidents of personality and historical contingency. If his "nature" is the cause of events in the poem, it is, as we will see, a nature without specific content. Even if there were a Qu Yuan whose experiences were close to those described in Sima Qian's biography and who did "compose" the Li sao in some form, in representing himself within the poem he would have already transformed himself into a figure of myth: he would have been acting out a role. If some putative historical person was the first horticulturalist or liked to eat bear's paws or disapproved of Chu policy in regard to Qin, these dispositions and opinions have no direct place in the self-

[10] Sukhu 2012: 159-60 offers a suggestive parallel from a recovered text called "Qiongda yi shi" 窮達以時 ("Success of Failure is Determined by the Times"), which includes some of the same exempla, including Count Huan.

[11] I cannot disprove the existence a fourth- to third-century BCE historical author any more than I can prove his existence. This is not my concern. I rather note that he consistently speaks from a mythically archaic age. My task is to discuss the speaker in the context of the age he himself claims to inhabit. If he is a third-century BCE author using that archaic age figuratively, that is an interpretation based on "information" of a later era from outside the text. The reader is, of course, free to base his or her interpretation on that external information but should reflect on its credibility.

representation in the poem. If the "many" who contend to advance themselves also happen to represent those within the Chu polity who supported a Chu alliance with Qin, that is an interesting hypothesis, unknowable, and occurring outside the level of textual representation. A millennium later, or even three hundred years later, historical contexts and conventions of reference were to become sufficiently well established that we would be justified in considering such potential referents outside the level of textual representation, but there is no earlier credible historical context here, and the conventions of extra-textual reference were not yet established.

The most difficult question in the Qu Yuan legend for Han intellectuals was Qu Yuan's suicide, related to his virtuous, but self-destructive inflexibility. This quality was mocked in "Yufu" 漁父 ("Fisherman"), questioned in the "Diao Qu Yuan" 弔屈原 ("Lament for Qu Yuan") by Jia Yi, and attacked in the "Fan Li sao" 反離騷 ("Contra-Li sao") by Yang Xiong 揚雄 (53 BCE-18 CE), and in comments by Ban Gu 班固 (32-92 CE) and others. The critique of such self-destructive inflexibility was not purely extraneous to the text: it occurs within the Li sao itself, in the speech of the Sister, *nüxu* 女嬃, accusing Qu Yuan of being like his ancestor Gun, the failed flood-controller of high antiquity. Here we might recall another willful hero, Yu Rang 豫讓, whose story also includes a friend's critique of his stubborn and impractical will and Yu Rang's rebuttal (*Shi ji* 2520). Qu Yuan's refusal of the critique, however justified, was an important part of the appeal of the figure; and Qu Yuan became something of a hero of inflexibility and determination. In this quality Qu Yuan joined a family of inflexible heroes, the prime example of whom was Wu Zixu 伍子胥, who, in Sima Qian's version of the story, declared to Baoxu of Shen that he would carry out his revenge against the King of Chu in spite of all (*Shi ji* 2171-2184). We should not forget that not only was Wu Zixu also from Chu, he ended up committing suicide on account of his inflexible bluntness and loyalty in protesting royal policy, and then having his body thrown into the river; like Qu Yuan, Wu Zixu ends up as a water deity. In short, we seem to be dealing less with history than myth—allowing the possibility that historical figures might reenact existing myths as well as becoming myths themselves. We may, in fact, be dealing with different types of mythic protagonist who have been conflated: the seeker after the goddess/bride and the inflexible hero.

Qu Yuan's inflexibility is, by his own account, not a matter of free decision. Qu Yuan claims that his nature has been determined by birth, and that there is an unchanging inner quality that is manifest in name and outward appearance. It is proper, if despicable, that others behave in the unseemly ways they do; but he alone cannot. This is a peculiarly aristocratic position. He begins, as an aristocrat must, by declaring his ancestry and birth: this is the very basis of his "quality," in the older sense as well as the more recent sense of the word. This fixed, inner quality can be read in outward signs, words, and appearances. Initially he has no ignorance or uncertainty about his nature; and from such absolute self-knowledge, he judges all attempts on the part of others to interpret his outward signs as tests of the interpreter's capacity for discernment. His father initially reads his nature successfully and names him; later the king fails to "examine" properly and misprizes him. The entire Li sao is an extended declaration that he must be what he cannot help being. His initial certainty of identity makes his subsequent doubts regarding the proper course of action all the more striking. One cannot help here think of Wu Zixu when the King of Chu orders him to come to court; his father accurately predicts catastrophe for Chu because he knows how Wu Zixu will behave, driven by the inner imperatives of his nature. The actions of great Chu heroes can be known to a competent judge prior to the crises that precipitate action.

"Quality" is given by birth and must withstand the pressures of society to be other than oneself (a motif picked up in a significant variation by Tao Qian many centuries later). The one, the "bird of prey," as Qu Yuan figures himself (25), is always set in opposition to the many. It is easy to read this, on one level, as the last gasp of Chu aristocratic culture, set against the social mobility and expedient statecraft of the Warring States. Sima Qian's Qu Yuan was supposed to have been, after all, the *sanlü dafu* 三閭大夫, the representative of the three royal clans of Chu (one of which was the Qu clan).[12] If this was indeed the case, Qu Yuan represented the Chu royal "family" in the large sense. He not only was "of" the aristocracy, in his office, real or imagined, he functionally represented the old aristocracy.

We may possibly understand this character as the voice of Chu aristocratic tradition against the "new men" of the late Warring States. Qu Yuan speaks the language of tradition, of identity and

[12] The reference to his position appears in the "Yufu," cited in Sima Qian's biography.

obligation by birth, and of ritual purity. Both Qu Yuan and the would-be assassin Yu Rang represent "integrity," *jie* 節. But Yu Rang's integrity results from a personal act of decision made in response to those who recognized his worth; and the decision gives the inner man upward mobility, even as his body is mutilated. But, significantly, Yu Rang behaves like an ordinary man toward his former masters who had treated him as an ordinary man. In this story, with many parallels in Northern texts, recognition of worth is itself agency. This is not the case for Qu Yuan. Qu Yuan's integrity cannot be validated by external recognition, no matter how scrupulously he dresses to display it; and he takes pride that his integrity is not chosen but forced upon him by his very nature from birth. Since his value is given with his body, the body must be kept immaculate. He is a creature bound to the archaic past to which he so often refers.

In the Li sao itself Qu Yuan's vaunted moral uprightness is utterly without ethical content; that is, it is linked to no specific position, value, or action. We are told that he is virtuous and in the right, that he is not like the others and that his virtue is shared with the good men of old. Qu Yuan represents, in fact, a true aristocratic conservatism in which the authority of the past is itself the sole determinate criterion of value (just as the aristocrat himself has value only by virtue of his past). He may have, as Sima Qian claimed, opposed Qin; but the weight of his political decisions would be right because it was he himself who decided one way or another—not because of some external political criterion or acquired skill. This is conservatism as a pure form emptied of all content. This should be clearly distinguished from the scholastic conservatism of the Confucians, where received ethical values are held up for reflection (that is, they have content), where ethical values are interpreted from texts, and above all, where virtue does not come by birth (except for a Sage), but by study or self-cultivation. One of the tasks left to Sima Qian was to tell a story that gave Qu Yuan's virtue some content and a political context in which conflict is explained by Chu policy disputes rather than by some inexplicable "hatred of beauty."

Being, Eating, and Wearing: Outsides and Insides

Much in the Li sao goes to prove the adage "you are what you eat"; you are also what you wear. The concern with inside and outside, *nei* 內 and *wai* 外, was shared by a wide range of political

and philosophical writers in North China. In the Li sao that concern takes on a peculiarly literal form, often linked to eating and apparel.

朝飲木蘭之墜露兮，夕餐秋菊之落英。
苟余情其信姱以練要兮，長顑頷亦何傷。

At dawn I drank dew that dropped from magnolia,
in twilight ate blooms from chrysanthemums shed.
If my nature be truly comely, washed utterly pure,
what hurt can I have in long wanness from hunger?
(17)[13]

It is hard here not to recall Bo Yi and Shu Qi, who starved to death eating wild beans while refusing to eat "the grain of Zhou." They would suffer political pollution by eating food produced through the new and, in their eyes, illegitimate polity. Bo Yi and Shu Qi, however, did not plant the things that they ate.[14] Qu Yuan not only eats flowers and aromatics, he cultivates them and reaps them. Qu Yuan maintains his purity by what he eats (as later in Huang-Lao dietary regimen). But the question of food here is not politicized like the "grain of Zhou." This dietary purity is akin to ritual purity. A famous parable in the Mencius tells of a man who fed daily on the offerings to the dead; he was exposed as morally corrupt (compounded by the twisted truth he told to his wives that he was dining with the rich and noble). There moral corruption may have been analogically linked to ritual pollution in diet, but it has gone beyond it. In the Li sao, by contrast, the moral is very much "in" the physical.

The question of dressing appropriately is even more pervasive, and it is another problem case of inner and outer. Sumptuary concerns, the dress appropriate for a person's station and the occasion, were no less common in North Chinese writing. At certain points in the Li sao commentators go to great lengths to cite early texts in order to explain distinctions in clothing, the

[13] Here and elsewhere, out-of-sequence references to Li sao will be indicated by italics and the stanza number in parentheses.
[14] Note planting aromatics by the shrine in *Jiu ge*, "Xiang furen" (8) and "Shao siming" (1).

proper attire for court or for sacrifice. There are, however, larger issues of clothing. The dress of court ministers was what distinguished them from commoners, and changes of status were marked by changes in clothing. This, of course, presumes a world in which status can change. But in an ideally pure aristocratic culture the relation of clothes and quality would be both simpler and more complex: the aristocrat claims that he has his "quality" by birth and that such quality is invariable no matter what his place or position might be. If clothing confirms that inner quality, then the aristocratic speaker must wear the same kind of clothes he always wore—what Qu Yuan calls *chu fu* 初服, his "first garb."

By and large Qu Yuan wears flowers and aromatics. Sometimes he wears flowers and aromatics as a mantle, *hu* 扈 (3) and sometimes as full robe and skirts (29), but most often they are strung from his waist. This has an uncertain relation to the court (unless used figuratively); dressing in flowers and aromatics was, however, an essential part of religious ceremonies in which contact was establish with deities. Flowers were worn by devotees and by the deities themselves (or the mortals who stood in for them). Moreover, like the deity Junior Master of Lifespans, *Shao siming* 少司命 in *Jiu ge*, Qu Yuan's king/beloved has a "flower-name." In contrast to *Jiu ge*, however, in the Li sao the significance of wearing flowers becomes a theme in its own right. Flowers are the outer beauty that corresponds to his "inner beauty," and he not only wears what he is, he sometimes eats what he wears. Clothing, food, and "inner beauty" are a closed circle.

Qu Yuan declares he will wear his flowers even in private, where no one will see them. This is significant because he declares that he does so in words; that is, he makes the beauty of his attire, even in private, a public theme. He understands that it is a problem; he understands that it could be otherwise. Qu Yuan's inner worth is not an achievement; he has already informed us that he has it from birth. It is moral quality that must be displayed externally, even to no one; and this need is a mark of a threat, the possibility of misprizing or corruption, "rotting." Inner worth may not be acquired, but at various moments in the Li sao it does seem that inner worth can be betrayed or lost. At this point Qu Yuan must *choose* to be the person he is by birth.

This brings us to a remarkable passage:

悔相道之不察兮，延佇乎吾將反。
回朕車以復路兮，及行迷之未遠。

I regretted judging the course was not well discerned,
long I stood staring, about to go back.
I turned my coach 'round retraced my path—
before I strayed too far in my going.
(27)

This passage was later picked up by Tao Qian, who developed the questions first raised by the Li sao: the existence of a fixed interior nature, the possibility of corrupting or violating that nature (without the possibility of losing or changing such a nature), and the peculiar decision to *be* the person one is by nature. Tao Qian too decided to "change his course" before he strayed too far.

We have two closely related Qu Yuan's. One cannot be other than the person he is, an identity received at birth; his course of action is always clear to him, however difficult; he is driven by necessity. The other Qu Yuan can stray, is sometimes uncertain and, must decide to be the person he is. These two versions of Qu Yuan alternate through the poem.

Much has been made of Qu Yuan as the first lyric "I" in Chinese literature. When such a claim is biographically linked to a historical person and author named "Qu Yuan," it is unsound. If, however, we understand this "I" in the context of the increasingly complex notion of the self in late Chinese antiquity, it is a remarkable moment. The self is doubled into an original, unchanging nature and a present consciousness that can decide to go against or conform to that nature. Flowers and aromatics may be the fragrant outside of a good self, but in the final part of Li sao he discovers that even the natures of flowers and aromatics can change (77, 78). It is against this dangerous possibility that the unity of the self has meaning.

The context in which this self-proclaimed unchanging "I" appears is one in which many other common markers of identity are peculiarly unstable: the genders of the speaker and his king shift back and forth. In the passage above Qu Yuan declares that he has not strayed far and will retrace his steps. Earlier we had been told that the king might stray from his path and that he, Qu Yuan,

hopes to bring him back to the "way" of the old kings. Qu Yuan hopes to set his king aright and ends up setting himself aright. He says that he failed in discernment, just as he accused the king of failing in discernment. The relation between Qu Yuan and his king is that of heterosexual lovers; but at different moments in the text Qu Yuan and king take turns being the woman in the relationship. As the gender identities of this strange pair shift back and forth, we realize that Qu Yuan and the king are interchangeable in many ways. Commanding his cavalcade in his flight through the heavens, Qu Yuan clearly assumes the trappings of royal power. He is promised by Numinous Fen or promises himself success in his quest for "the woman" with the peculiar phrase: "Two lovely beings must surely be matched" 兩美其必合 (65). As the poet sometimes must decide to return to his original self, everywhere the poem aspires to a union of the same. The most striking moment in such a speculative union of sameness is his proposed match with Jian Di, who stands at the head of the alternative Gao Xin lineage of one of the two ruling families of "Chinese" cultural territory; had Qu Yuan, of the alternative Gao Yang lineage, been successful in his quest, the entire royal exogamy of Chinese history to that point would have been subverted and turned to endogamy. However taboo endogamy might have been, it promises a continuity of the same.

This lyric "I" who turns back on his figurative path to return to the person he was from the beginning also journeys to find the beloved who is the same in the very "loveliness" which is the essential characteristic of his own original nature. The purpose is *he* 合, a "matching" as two halves of a tally match to make a whole. This passion for duplication is no less dramatized in the need to wear the appropriate clothing even in private, to display the matching of inner and outer. Qu Yuan is a hero of redundancy.

The idea that original good nature can be betrayed but is, at the same time, constantly present within is a notion with obvious affinities with Mencian Confucianism. Both are, in some sense, secondary, reactive stances, taken against a growing sense of the malleability of human nature, explicitly stated by Gaozi and implicit in Warring States statecraft. Becoming the original person within and reunifying the divided self is a visionary goal in the *Mencius*; in the Li sao it is an agony.

1
帝高陽之苗裔兮，朕皇考曰伯庸。
攝提貞于孟陬兮，惟庚寅吾以降。

Of the god-king Gao Yang I am the far offspring,[15]
my late honored sire bore the name of Boyong.
The *sheti* stars aligned with the year's first month;
gengyin was the day that I came down.

2
皇攬揆余於初度兮，肇錫余以嘉名。
名余曰正則兮，字余曰靈均。

He scanned and he delved into my first measure,[16]
from the portents my sire bestowed on me fine names:
The name that he gave me was Upright Standard;
and my formal title was Numinous Poise.

The rubric "Speaking to Strangers" is meant as a reminder of the strangeness of this act; in the present day, at the end of a long history of first-person monologue, it seems an unremarkable way to begin discourse, but to do this in verse around the turn of the third century BCE (or even later) might have been quite different. To declare one's ancestry, to give a date (if symbolic rather than historical), and to announce names that imply manifest personal qualities was not an obvious thing to do; there is no extant tradition behind it, nor do we find it later, until we begin to have imitations of the Li sao. It implies that the speaker is addressing strangers, those who don't know him or his

[15] Gao Yang was the title of a legendary emperor of high antiquity, sometimes identified with Zhuanxu 顓頊, to whom the ruling clans of Chu (as well as Qi, Zhao, and Qin) traced their ancestry.
[16] "He" is *huang* 皇, taken as *huangkao*, "Late honored sire," above.

background—or at least would not otherwise recognize the speaker. And we might wonder what situation would lead someone to make such public address.

It would be anachronistic to assume this is addressed to a "readership," especially a future readership. There is no hint of this in the Li sao itself, and it appears first only in Sima Qian's reflection on his history, together with the intensely self-conscious act of "composing a work" and painful reflection on the idea of posterity as those for whom one writes. In pre-Qin texts most acts of address are represented as directed to known individuals (the collective address in some speeches of the *Shu* being an exception). Speakers do not introduce themselves with such a detailed background. The situation in which such a declaration would be made is most obviously addressing an audience of strangers. Can we imagine Qu Yuan, the representative of the three royal lineages, standing before a Chu audience and declaring who he was? We can hardly imagine the "historical" person addressing an audience of commoners, and anyone to whom he would have been willing to speak would surely have already known who he was. However unsurprising from our modern perspective, in working with early texts we look for parallels for what one might say in a certain situation of discourse—and this is not only without parallel, it is also hard to imagine in what circumstances an author, speaking in the first person, would say such a thing.

We are left with one obvious alternative: the person speaking the words will not be recognized *unless* he identifies himself in words. The speaker uses the words to let the audience know that he is speaking "as" Qu Yuan. This strongly suggests that we have here dramatic impersonation and not a simple first-person lyric. Or we have a revenant, "channeling," someone who, for an interval, "is" Qu Yuan inside the body of another. Moreover, the only distinction between these two situations, the dramatic persona in recitation and the religious revenant, is one of belief—on the part of the speaker and those who listen.

Hawkes and numerous Chinese scholars have done excellent work explaining the context of Qu Yuan's claims of ancestry and the significance of such claims when made by Warring States rulers. But to declare one's ancestry as the first thing one says about oneself was unprecedented. We might think of the standard form of historical biography (which is, of course, not in the first person), but then we recall that the opening formula of biography appears only later.

We are then told the date when he "came down," *jiang* 降. Almost all commentators interpret this as "being born," though the word is not used elsewhere in that way in early texts.[17] The only other "coming down" in the Li sao itself is when Shaman Xian descends from Heaven (70). We cannot help recalling the opening words of "Xiang furen": "The god's child comes down" *dizi jiang* 帝子降, declaring not her birth but her manifestation, the passage from Heaven to Earth. And, indeed, Qu Yuan has just declared himself to be, if not "the god's child" *dizi* 帝子, at least *disun* 帝孫, the "god's descendant," *di . . . miaoyi* 帝 . . . 苗裔, "the far offspring" of a *di*, the deified ancestor Gao Yang.[18] The opening of the Li sao is permeated with terms of royal divinity; and these claims are made in the context of a culture where divinities show themselves, appear in shrines, and speak through the mouths of mortal intermediaries.

Whatever Qu Yuan's historical existence, the opening of the Li sao suggests that this is dramatic monologue as the outgrowth of religious performance—or, perhaps, at an early stage as actual religious performance. In sharp contrast to *Jiu ge*, however, the speaker begins here by identifying himself as a particular person and locating himself in time. The time designated is an auspicious point in cyclical time rather than a moment in human history. Nothing in poem binds it directly to history, meaning the history of Warring States Chu or later (although the speaker does "visit" moments in archaic history); and even if the speaker is taken by the audience to be the historical Qu Yuan, he is quickly transformed into a strange fusion of the political and the divine.

The world of *Jiu ge* was very much one of seeing and display. In the Li sao too Qu Yuan repeatedly asks that others look at him and examine him, or he complains that they have failed to do so. He is putting himself forward to be viewed and dressing appropriately. The speaker in "Shan gui" 山鬼 ("Mountain Nymph") complains, "the year has grown late, who will deck me in flowers?" 歲既晏兮孰華予. Qu Yuan will deck himself in flowers so that his inner goodness can be seen, and he too worries about passing time and his flowers fading. Here, in the beginning, Qu Yuan's father inspects him and names him accordingly (unless these acts of naming occur at different

[17] Sukhu 2012: 35 reads this as I do and cites Dong Chuping 董楚平 as the Chinese scholar who reads *Jiang* the same way.
[18] In order to clarify, this we might put the opening of "Xiang furen" 帝子降 beside the opening stanza of the Li sao (leaving out some words): 帝苗裔降. As I will discuss later, repetition is a particular sequence of words or variable motifs, regardless of the degree of intervening elaboration.

moments in his maturation). There is a perfect correspondence between what is on the outside and what is inside.[19]

3
紛吾既有此內美兮，又重之以脩能。
扈江離與辟芷兮，紉秋蘭以為佩。

Such bounty I had of beauty within,
this was doubled with fair appearance.
I wore mantles of lovage and remote angelica,
strung autumn eupatorium to hang from my sash.

The third stanza announces the central concern with the correspondence of inner and outer. Here Qu Yuan acts for the first time, and his first action is to clothe himself, to find external adornments that "duplicate," *chong* 重 (translated "doubled"), his beauty within. The *xiu tai* 脩能, "fair appearance," might be simply good looks, but it is more likely that this is the sumptuary self-adornment of flowers. The most remarkable thing, however, is the notion of "beauty within" or "inner beauty" 內美. "Beauty," *mei*, was essentially a word for external appearance; to apply to something unseen it had to be marked with a qualifier. In other words, beauty is something properly external that is here hidden within and therefore requires a supplement that shows the hidden inside on the outside.

Whatever this external beauty might be, it is not a straightforward beauty of the body. Only external adornment is legible and appropriate counterpart of "beauty within." Even the body's mutability is figured in the withering of flowers that clothe it.

[19] Scholars have long discussed the fact that these are not the "name," *ming* 名, and "title of honor," *zi* 字, assigned to Qu Yuan in Sima Qian. The simple answer to the question would be that the speaker of the poem is *not* the Qu Yuan described in Sima Qian, or perhaps that these were the correct *ming* and *zi* of he who was "Qu Yuan," the Originator of the Qu clan. One more point should be raised regarding the two opening stanzas: they do not rhyme perfectly (which is all the more troubling because the *zi* assigned to Qu Yuan by Sima Qian, Ping 平, would have made a perfect rhyme in the second stanza). Did Sima Qian have a variant in the opening and based his identification of Qu Yuan with the historical Qu Ping on those grounds? More intriguing, *ling* 靈 [r]ˁeŋ is a perfect rhyme with *ming* 名 meŋ. Thus, the weight of the rhyme word would shift to *ling* "numinous." See the translation notes for the issue of the question when the *zi*, the "formal title," was given.

Text Production: the Local Level

Study of the Li sao has generally focused on problems of lexical interpretation, attempting to reconcile the possibilities of lexical meaning with the general interpretation of a textual segment, understood in the assumed context of Qu Yuan's intentions. These attempts have not been entirely satisfying. Such interpretations usually do not account for particular stanzaic sequences or require a strained ingenuity to do so. Let me suggest an alternative hypothesis on how the Li sao is made, so that we can frame the kinds of questions that can be reasonably posed.

The Li sao seems to be structured on two relatively discontinuous levels. The first level consists of the large components of a mythic "narrative," in the loosest sense. There are necessities that drive the exposition. The speaker *must* be misprized or dissatisfied and want to escape; the speaker *must* make various declarations about himself; the speaker *must* receive the counsel of paired superiors on one or more occasions; the speaker *must* fly to heaven or make a circuit of the cosmos on one or more occasions; finally, the poem *must* end with the speaker going off.

The second level is the local "machinery" of textual production, how certain words and semantic elements lead to subsequent words and semantic elements. The best way to see this is to look carefully at a series of stanzas. On this local level we find the kind of rhetorical determinations generally common to textual production. These drive segments of varying lengths, of which there are a limited number of types. Each segment type has a set of master metaphors and thematic concerns which route the exposition; they are not used to make a linear argument or narration. Inversion, for example, is one of the most common ways of continuing discourse and is peculiarly related to the desire for unity and the identification of opposed terms. The proposition "I feel threatened by passing time" leads naturally to the proposition "the other [the king] is threatened by passing time," or to the proposition "I will not change and passing time does not matter." Many of the "logical" discontinuities are easily explained as inversions or associative expansions. Often the process of semantic association is serial rather than linear: A links to B, B links to C, C links to D. It is, however, not always clear from a larger view that D follows from A. This often creates

the suggestion of an argument, but one with gaps that the commentator tries to bridge. The same segment types can be applied to different players, often leading to strangely shifting roles.

4

汩余若將不及兮，恐年歲之不吾與。
朝搴阰之木蘭兮，夕攬洲之宿莽。

Hastening went I, as though I could not catch them—
I feared the years passing would keep me no company.
At dawn I would pluck magnolia on bluffs,
In the twilight on isles I culled star anise blooms.

5

日月忽其不淹兮，春與秋其代序。
惟草木之零落兮，恐美人之遲暮。

Days and months sped past, they did not long linger,
springtimes and autumns altered in turn.
I thought on things growing, on the fall of their leaves,
and feared for the Beauty, her drawing toward dark.

At this point we have no hint of the political Qu Yuan who will appear later in the poem. The voice here is like that of the desperate mortal speaker in "Da siming" 大司命 ("Senior Master of Lifespans"), who fears the passage of time and picks flowers as an offering to the god.

折疏麻兮瑤華，將以遺兮離居。
老冉冉兮既極，不寖近兮愈疏。

I snapped off a hemp bud and alabaster blooms

to give as a gift to Him Who Dwells Apart;
old age steals upon me and now has arrived;
He does not draw nearer, He grows more remote.

By the end of the fifth stanza of the Li sao, however, we note the first of the inversions that will continue to be one basic form of textual production in the poem. The speaker in *Jiu ge* worries about aging; here in Li sao that common move is reiterated and then inverted, as Qu Yuan first worries about his own aging and then about the aging of the beloved. Moreover, the term for the beloved is the "Beauty," *meiren* 美人 ("beautiful person"), using the same word for "beauty" that Qu Yuan attributed to himself in 3.1. The ruin of the beautiful self through time's passage is transposed to the ruin of other.[20] Inversion operates on other levels as well. All the early commentators interpret the "Beauty" as a figure for the king, but at this point the term *meiren* was gender marked primarily as feminine. The term *meiren* is used nowhere else in the Li sao itself. Excluding uses in the *Jiuzhang*, some of which may be later, the term appears three times in *Jiu ge* and once in *Zhaohun* 招魂 ("Calling Back the Soul"). In every case the term refers to women (though one case in *Jiu ge* it could possibly be understood as male).

An analogy was commonly made between the relation of a liegeman to his lord (minister to ruler) and the relation of a woman to her husband. Later in the Li sao, in passages taken as referring to court intrigues, Qu Yuan does himself assume a feminine persona as a harem woman. There was, however, no precedent in political metaphor for feminizing the ruler, with the potential inversion of power relations implied. The obvious analogue is what David Hawkes call "the quest for the goddess," the erotic shamanistic relation to goddesses in the *Jiu ge*, with its masculine counterpart in the passage from "Da siming" cited above. In the case of this passage, however, the Beauty is clearly mortal and in danger of fading.

6

[20] All of the early commentators have taken *meiren* as referring to the king, but a number of Qing commentators suggested that it refers to Qu Yuan himself or his own youth. The last line in the subsequent stanza (6), however, requires two distinct characters. This, in turn, makes the exhortation in the beginning of that stanza necessarily addressed to another, rather than to himself. From this it follows that the *meiren* here is not the poet himself.

不撫壯而棄穢兮，何不改此度。
乘騏驥以馳騁兮，來吾道夫先路。

You do not cling to your prime and forsake what is rotting—
why not change this measure of yours?
I will drive my fine steeds, go off at a gallop—
I will now take the lead, in the vanguard chariot.

The serial associative process of a segment is particularly clear in these early stanzas. From affirming his "beauty within" the speaker turns to external flower adornment as the literal "double" or external complement of such beauty. Flowers lead to thoughts of impermanence (paving the way to the binary opposition of impermanence/constancy), then anxiety about one's own mortality generates anxiety about the mortality of the other, the feminized "Beauty." Resistance to the inevitable decay of the flowers, leads to the exhortation to "forsake what is rotting," with the semantic range of "rotting," *hui* 穢, enabling a shift from the vegetative frame of reference to the moral. By this the Beauty's speculative decline is transposed to the Beauty's voluntary association with corruption. "Forsake," *qi* 棄, can be a spatial "abandonment," which the speaker develops by offering to lead the way on a new "course." The "course" can be either an established "way" or dark and dangerous shortcuts.

The continual reiteration of such paradigmatic oppositions and associative shifts throughout the poem, combined with the fragments of mythic narrative, created a powerful sense of unity, but it is a rhetorical, rather than a linear or logical unity.

We might observe that the semiotics of the Li sao is formally identical to one of its central themes, which is the reproduction or matching of the same. If the flowers are the external beauty that matches internal beauty, then the seme of "transience," strongly linked to flowers, is carried back to the self. The difference of metaphor tries to become a matching of the same. The process also works across binary distinctions: if the speaker worries about his own impermanence, then impermanence also characterizes the *meiren*, the "Beauty." The speaker is *mei* ("beautiful"), and

the *meiren* is, by definition *mei*; and as the poem says later: “Two lovely (*mei*) beings must surely be matched” 兩美其必合 (65). But just as the speaker is tormented by difference throughout the Li sao, the semiotic process of trying to make different terms the same constantly opens gaps that drive the exposition.

7
昔三后之純粹兮，固眾芳之所在。
雜申椒與菌桂兮，豈維紉夫蕙茝。

The Three Kings of old were pure and unblemished,[21]
all things of sweet scent indeed were there.
Shen’s pepper was mixed together with cassia,
white angelica, basil were not strung alone.

8
彼堯舜之耿介兮，既遵道而得路。
何桀紂之昌被兮，夫唯捷徑以窘步。
Such shining grandeur had kings Yao and Shun;[22]
they went the true way, they found the path.
Why were kings Jie and Zhow slouching and shambling?—[23]
they walked at hazard on side-paths.

If lateness is associated with rotting and corruption of the beauty with which one is endowed at birth, then the “path” of flight from rotting on which Qu Yuan will lead the Beauty must be a return to origins. Beginnings, however, need not be personal; and following the moral twist in “forsake what is rotting,” the models for return are the exemplary kings of antiquity, together with blooming

[21] Opinions differ greatly on the identification of the “Three Kings.”
[22] Sage kings of high antiquity.
[23] Jie and Zhow were the last kings of the Xia and Shang respectively.

flowers and aromatics. The rhetoric invites schematic representation, showing the slippages of semantic reference:

Now (later kings)	*Then* (spring/his birth/ancient kings)
rotting>corruption	fragrance and blooming>goodness
twisted trails	the [true] way

Who precisely the Three Kings are is a matter of scholarly controversy. Their particular identification is immaterial: they are simply models of virtue in the archaic past, and their presence introduces a mythically indeterminate cultural history into this strange integral of ritual purity, erotics, and the desire for permanence or immortality. The associative link between this and the preceding stanza, with the reversion to youth or the past, is clarified by a line in *Yuanyou* 遠遊 ("Far Traveling") in which the adept is purifying himself—"essence pure and unblemished, I first felt [back in] my prime" 精醇粹而始壯. There the technical term "essence," *jing* 精, of Huang-Lao Daoism here becomes instrumental in the attainment of purity (*chunsui* 純[醇]粹, 7.1) and return to one's "prime," which is here associated with the ancient kings.[24] In the Li sao Qu Yuan says "forsake what is rotting," while in *Yuanyou*, "Essential breath entered, the crude and rotting were eliminated" 精氣入而麤穢除. Terms are often shared between the two poems; but what Li sao proposes as magically possible by mere choice returns in *Yuanyou* framed in a new Huang-Lao technical context.

The "Three Kings" are amplified with flowers and aromatics, flourishing rather than rotting. The stanza that follows largely reiterates the issue using, instead, the figure of the "way." Here we have exemplary good kings Yao and Shun and exemplary bad kings Jie and Zhow.[25] These figures are more clearly pan-sinitic than the "Three Kings," and their cases are amplified by the figure of

[24] Li sao *chun* 純 dzywin<[d]u[n]; *Yuanyou* 醇 dzuwin>[d]u[r]. The alternation of the two characters in what is the same compound suggests that by the time of *Yuanyou*, the characters had become homophones.
[25] The last ruler of the Shang, properly Zhoù, is here romanized Zhow to clearly distinguish him from the Zhou Dynasty that overthrew him.

the "way," also a more pan-sinitic metaphor.[26] Moving into this mode suggests the persuasion of princes by holding up predecessors as examples; and however we might interpret the Beauty earlier, here we have discourse appropriate to a minister addressing his ruler.

If we were seeking a layer of later elaboration, this stanza (8) would be a good candidate (as would the following stanza). It begins with the common demonstrative *bi* 彼, used nowhere else in the Li sao. While (7) uses many terms that recur in the Li sao itself, (8) uses terms that are either unique (*changpi* 昌被, *jiongbu* 窘步) or recur in *Chu ci* discourse only outside the Li sao (*gengjie* 耿介 appears twice in *Jiu bian*, which is in many parts lexically different). Even if (8) represents a later layer with pan-sinitic elements, the elaboration has been assimilated to a distinctly *Chu ci* mode of discourse. Rather than being described simply as morally bad and unconcerned with the well-being of the folk, Jie and Zhow don't walk well, *changpi* 昌被, "slouching and shambling." Moreover, these bad kings walk on "byways" or "twisted trails."

9

惟夫黨人之偷樂兮，路幽昧以險隘。

豈余身之憚殃兮，恐皇輿之敗績。

Those men of faction had ill-gotten pleasures,
their paths went in shadow, narrow, unsafe.
Not for myself came this dread of doom—
I feared the great chariot soon would be tipped.

10

忽奔走以先後兮，及前王之踵武。

荃不察余之中情兮，反信讒而齎怒。

[26] My term "pan-sinitic" is a neologism obviously modeled on Pan-Hellenic. Although there are significant differences, the analogy is useful, in the way that certain common figures (along with tropes and ideas) affirm a shared cultural heritage with the Zhou North, against the purely local aspects of culture—including the locally cultic.

I went swiftly dashing in front and behind,
till I came to the tracks of our kings before.
Lord Calamus did not fathom my nature within,
he believed instead slander, he glowered in rage.

Here we are clearly in the world of court, as the speaker turns from the prince to the "men of faction" (*dangren* 黨人) expanding the figure of the road in the "paths in shadow" (*lu youwei* 路幽昧), recalling his earlier fear that the Beauty is going into darkness. The danger is the "overturned chariot," implying defeat in battle and the ruin of the state. The claim that the speaker does not fear death in the course he has chosen will be reiterated often in the course of the poem.

As we suggested earlier, literalizing and expanding conventional metaphors was an important technique in expanding segments. The overturning of a chariot was a standard Northern metaphor for royal catastrophe, but the speaker comes to it out of the metaphor of roads, and he then becomes the frantic attendant, rushing on all sides of the chariot to protect it and looking for the tracks of the former kings to set the royal chariot on the stable and right course. Although the elaboration of master metaphors also occurs in Northern discourse, this kind of serial elaboration of a metaphor in the course of a few stanzas is particularly characteristic of *Chu ci* exposition.[27] Note also that in *Jiu ge* the appropriate conveyance of each deity is named and described, but they are not used metonymically as here.

The king, previously the Beauty and associated with flowers and aromatics, now becomes literally a flower, referred to by a flower-name, *Quan*, "Calamus." The princes of north China were not generally referred to as flowers.[28] For a parallel for such a usage we must look to *Shao siming* 少司命 ("Junior Master of Lifespans") in *Jiu ge*, where the deity is twice referred to as Sun 蓀 ("Sweet Flag"). The second of these explicitly associates the deity with rulership.

[27] Here we have: road/Way; "slouching and shambling" (manner of walking the Way); twisted trails; tipped chariot; rushing on all sides to protect the chariot.
[28] One remarkable and suggestive exception, hinting at the use of flower-names in the Zhou domains, is Duke Mu of Zheng, who is called *lan*, "Eupatorium" and whose fate is tied to the eupatorium (*Zuo zhuan*, Xuan 3, 606 B.C.)

竦長劍兮擁幼艾，蓀獨宜兮為民正。

high he lifts a long sword, protector of young lovelies—
Sweet Flag alone is fit to rule all the folk.

At the end of the Li sao Qu Yuan, always decking himself in flowers and leading his own cavalcade of deities, raises the possibility of his own (joint) rule with the same term, "make rule," *wei zheng* 為政 (正):

既莫足與為美政兮
Since no one can join me in making beautiful rule

Rulers, deities, and Qu Yuan himself share a remarkable number of characteristics. A few stanzas later Qu Yuan himself will decide he himself is not on the right "way," as he worries here about the king not being on the right way (inversion). At the end of the final stanza in this passage, however, we have a new motif: misprizing. In the two following stanzas the ruler is referred to by the term reserved for the deity or the shaman or shamanka receiving the deity, "Numinous One," *lingxiu* 靈脩. Political relationships are being mapped on sacred erotic relationships.

11
余固知謇謇之為患兮，忍而不能舍也。
指九天以為正兮，夫唯靈脩之故也。

I knew well my bluntness had brought me these ills,
yet I bore through it, I could not foreswear.
I pointed to Heaven to serve as my warrant,[29]

[29] I follow commentarial tradition here in taking *wei zheng* as "serve as my warrant" (witness or guarantor), but the careful reader will note that this is exactly the same phrase discussed immediately above. If we take this as identical to other usages of the same phrase, then Heaven "will make rule," will correct things and make things right, as the earthly ruler should do.

it was all because of the Numinous One.

12
初既與余成言兮，後悔遁而有他。
余既不難夫離別兮，傷靈脩之數化。

To me at first firm word had been given,
she regretted it later, backed off, and was otherwise.
I made no grievance at separation between us,
but was hurt that the Numinous One so often changed.

At the end of the preceding stanza a new motif was introduced: the king's misprizing the speaker and his anger. The Li sao characteristically announces such occurrences not in terms of contingency (why was the king angry? what did Qu Yuan do or what was said about him?), but rather in terms of its focus on "what happened" and how the speaker felt. In this peculiar discourse, failure to understand the speaker's true nature constitutes adequate cause for anger. Moreover, we attribute this anger to the king only because of the preceding stanzas. Breaking faith was a known trait of divinity: insofar as the King is the "Beauty" and the "Numinous One," *lingxiu*, he is like the goddess, and the goddess is known to be fickle, as in "Xiang jun" 湘君 ("The Lady of the Xiang":

交不忠兮怨長，期不信兮告余以不閒。

Her friendship was faithless, reproach long remains;
untrue to her pledge, she told me she had no time.

The shaman speaker in "Shangui" 山鬼 ("Mountain Nymph") also seeks the "Numinous One," *lingxiu*:

留靈脩兮憺忘歸, 歲既晏兮孰華予.
采三秀兮於山間, 石磊磊兮葛蔓蔓.
怨公子兮悵忘歸, 君思我兮不得閒.
山中人兮芳杜若, 飲石泉兮蔭松柏.
□□□□□□□, 君思我兮然疑作.

I would make the numinous one stay, transfixed, forget going,
but the year has grown late, who will deck me in flowers?
I picked three-bloom zhi out in the hills,
stones rough and rocky, vines spreading in tangles;
reproaching the Lady, I, in grief, forget going,
for though the lady may love me, she does not find time.
In the hills there is someone, sweet smell of galangal,
she drinks from the stone-springs in shadow of cypress and pines.
.....
though the lady may love me, she holds back unsure.

For his part the speaker in the Li sao can only assert his unity in face of the "Numinous One's" betrayal: the identity of inside and outside and his constancy through time.

Language, however, disrupts the system of perfect correspondence. Beauty may be inner and find an external and easily legible counterpart in flower clothing, but speech that is the exact counterpart of "beauty within" may not be beautiful. We do not know if the composer(s) of the Li sao knew adage of the *Laozi*, that "trustworthy words are not beautiful, / beautiful words are not trustworthy" 信言不美，美言不信 (LXXXI); but the assumption was widespread. Beauty of speech usually suggests a deceptive artfulness, a version of false appearance that conceals the true person within and potentially dubious motives: it is always a potentially sumptuary deceit. The speech that corresponds to inner beauty is instead blunt, clumsy, and unattractive. It is precisely at

this moment when the thematic problem of language arises that we have one of our most serious lexical problems in the term *jianjian* 謇謇, which means either artful ("beautiful") speech or clumsy ("blunt") speech. If it is artful speech, then it is the slandering speech of others that has harmed the speaker; if it is clumsy speech, it is his own speech which causes the harm. In either case the outside and inside no longer correspond transparently, which leads to further language problems in which the king/goddess changes his/her "word," *chengyan* 成言, which in this case means the promise of a tryst or marriage. Like the Lady of the Xiang, the king is "untrue to his/her pledge" *qi bu xin* 期不信 ("untrue," *buxin*, is "not trustworthy," the negative of the term for "believe" in (10.4).

13
余既滋蘭之九畹兮，又樹蕙之百畝。
畦留夷與揭車兮，雜杜衡與芳芷。

I watered my eupatorium in all their nine tracts,
and planted basil in one hundred square rods;
I made plots for paeonia and for the wintergreen,
mixed with wild ginger and sweet angelica.

14
冀枝葉之峻茂兮，願俟時乎吾將刈。
雖萎絕其亦何傷兮，哀眾芳之蕪穢。

I wished stalks and leaves would stand high and flourish,
I looked toward the season when I might reap.
If they withered and dried, it would cause me no hurt,
I would grieve if such sweetness went rotting in weeds.

The shaman-lover of *Jiu ge* may twist flowers or robe himself in flowers; but faced with the anger and fickleness of the king/goddess, Qu Yuan brings his own flowers under extensive cultivation. “Shao siming” in *Jiu ge* begins with a description of eupatorium growing extensively “at the foot of the hall”; since they were used in ceremonies, it is likely that they were indeed cultivated around shrines—but if that were the case, it not only is not said in *Jiu ge*, but would not be said in the discursive universe of *Jiu ge*. Qu Yuan explicitly plants and cultivates his flowers and aromatics, anticipating the need to wear them. Such complex agency and purpose anticipating future outcomes are here in miniature the counterpart of the same discursive elements on a larger scale in the Li sao. We are still in a mythic world: the historicism of the biography and later exegesis was to supply a further level of historical context and historical causation that would integrate the poem into a new sense of totalizing history. Nevertheless, in comparison to the relative immediacy of response and action in *Jiu ge*, we have in the Li sao a far more sophisticated universe of proposal, decision, and performance and their negations. One conclusion we should not draw from such a comparison is that the Li sao is necessarily later intellectually than *Jiu ge*, even if our current *Jiu ge* postdates Li sao. Whatever the Li sao is, however, it is addressing problems on a different level

Qu Yuan’s moment of horticulture is apparently an act of withdrawal, the first of such in the Li sao. Encountering difference, the speaker dissociates himself from both the angry “Numinous One” and the jostling crowd in the stanza that follows. Change is the recurring problematic term in a poem so passionately in search of continuity, unity, and self-identity. We have just been told that the Numinous One “changes” (*hua* 化); we have seen elsewhere and will see again that what is predicated of the “Beauty”/ king / Numinous One will be predicated of the speaker—that is, after all, one kind of unity. We should not then be surprised that the speaker, who has just declared that he will “bear through it and not foreswear (*she* 舍, “set aside”), now seems to withdraw to cultivate his garden; later he will more explicitly change his course, and later still, abandon this beloved and seek for others. There is, indeed, a powerful “logic” at work in the text, but it is a rhetorical logic rather than a narrative or “ethical” logic.[30]

[30] I am using “ethical” here in its root sense as norms of personality, the kind of determinant of action that Aristotle rejected in the *Poetics*.

Again we see how the literal level of the metaphor is expanded and how the figurative level of meaning must be reconciled with it. These may be signifying and verbal flowers, but they are trapped in the universe of their botanical cousins. He plants flowers as a sign of cultivating his virtue/purity/beauty. Such extensive planting is, however, generally reserved for food crops; and in a few stanzas we will see one inevitable consequence: the speaker is eating flowers and growing wan from hunger. In the stanzas above planting implies harvest, which of course will kill the flowers. This demands a distinction between a positive ruin of the flowers—presumably harvested as dried aromatics—and the "rotting" that he earlier rejected.

15

眾皆競進以貪婪兮，憑不厭乎求索。
羌內恕己以量人兮，各興心而嫉妒。

Throngs thrust themselves forward in craving and greed,
never fully sated in things that they seek.
They show mercy to self, by this measure others,
in them the heart stirs to malice and spite.

16

忽馳騖以追逐兮，非余心之所急。
老冉冉其將至兮，恐脩名之不立。

Such a headlong horse-race, each hot in pursuit,
is not a thing that thrills my own heart.
Old age comes on steadily, soon will be here,
I fear my fair name will not be fixed firmly.

The focus of attention shifts back and forth between the solitary speaker and those who are different or alienated from him, the king and the jostling crowds, driven by greed and self-interest. The context here seems very much that of the world of the late Warring States, where the quest for advantage is set in opposition to virtue, as we see commonly in the *Mencius*. In the case of the speaker of the Li sao, "virtue" is an innate endowment and not something that can be learned or chosen. It can, however, be hidden—in which case his "fair name," *xiuming* 脩名 would be hidden.

Although such shifts of attention give the Li sao some of its energy, the sequence of the poem would follow much more smoothly without these stanzas (that is, reading 14, then 17. At the beginning of the poem Qu Yuan's father gives him a "name," *ming* 名; "name" as reputation is not otherwise an issue in the Li sao. Others vilify the poet, but the "establishment ('fixing firmly') of a fair name" is something different. The very common word *li* 立, "to establish," does not occur elsewhere in the Li sao. *Li* has two other usages in the *Chu ci*: one is in the patently Legalist sense of "establishing laws," *lifa* 立法, in the patently Legalist "Xi wangri" 惜往日 of the *Jiuzhang*; the other is institutional "establishment" in the *Dazhao* ("establishing the Nine Grandees" *li jiuqing* 立九卿). When Boyong gives the speaker *jiaming* 嘉名 ("fine names"), these are proper names that are qualified as "fine" and auspicious; it is not the figurative "name/reputation for being "fine."

Some of the terms in these stanzas recur in Li sao; some unusual terms ("horserace") we do not expect to recur; but we also have other peculiar usages of common terms such as *ji* 急, translated as "thrills," but essentially meaning "go fast" or "urgency" in this usage.[31] The only other use of this word in the *Chu ci* is in the anomalous *Tian wen*, which asks: when King Wu of Zhou set off to conquer Shang and brought along his father's corpse, "why was he in such a hurry" 何所急? The fact that we find singular words, words in singular usages, and singular themes that are common in Northern discourse but not in the Li sao tells us nothing in itself; in conjunction with a passage that intrudes into a longer passage, the presence of such words and themes is at least suggestive of an expansion. When we find, further, that these disjunctive passages bear almost the entire weight of the political interpretation of the poem, it is more suggestive still.

[31] I was tempted to translate this as "makes my heart race," which is quite accurate, but creates an illusion of a too close semantic relation with the horserace in the preceding line.

17

朝飲木蘭之墜露兮，夕餐秋菊之落英。
苟余情其信姱以練要兮，長顑頷亦何傷。

At dawn I drank dew that dropped from magnolia,
in twilight ate blooms from chrysanthemums shed.
If my nature be truly comely, washed utterly pure,
what hurt can I have in long wanness from hunger?

18

攬木根以結茝兮，貫薜荔之落蕊。
矯菌桂以紉蕙兮，索胡繩之纚纚。

I plucked tendrils of trees to knot white angelica,
pierced fallen pistils of flowering ivy.
I reached high to cassia for stringing basil,
and corded continuous coils of rope-vine.

19

謇吾法夫前脩兮，非世俗之所服。
雖不周於今之人兮，願依彭咸之遺則。

Yes, I took as my rule those fair men of old,
it was not the garb worn in the ways of our age.
Though it did not agree with men of these days,
I would rest in the pattern that Peng and Xian left.

Here the speaker begins by eating and drinking only pure things that correspond to his purity within. This is the consequence of flower-farming, and there is a lack of "advantage" in such fare. He is ingesting the very kind of external adornments that are the double of what is already within. He also returns to preparing his flower garb, which was worn by "those fair men before me," clothing that he will later call his *chufu* 初服 ("first garb"): that assertion of identity with his own origins is at the same time an identity with the exemplary past.

The body's changes have a problematic position in this matching of inside and outside. The inner nature is constant, received from the ancestral past; the adequate external counterpart is flowered garb. Yet this passage permits the changing body to intrude between the interior and the sumptuary exterior, and the body visibly shows the effects of long hunger. It is an external whose difference does not "hurt" the interior. The word for "hurt" here is *shang* 傷, and we think of a wound: the body can be disfigured without changing the interior, which necessarily finds its exterior match only in clothing.

The mystery of "Peng and Xian" or Peng Xian is not to be easily solved. Shaman Peng and Shaman Xian are referred to independently as quasi-divine shamans of the past, but many commentators want to take this as a single person, Peng Xian, identified as a worthy advisor of a Shang king who committed suicide by drowning. At the end of the Li sao Qu Yuan resolves to go where they/he dwell(s). One suspects that the legend of Peng Xian's drowning is euhemeristic, to make Qu Yuan's final resolution in the poem a decision to drown himself, and thus reconcile the poetic text with the Qu Yuan legend. But within the Li sao itself, as we see later, we know that Shaman Xian currently dwells in heaven, from which he descends to advise the speaker. Here we also know that they are exemplars from the past.

20

長太息以掩涕兮，哀民生之多艱。

余雖好脩姱以鞿羈兮，謇朝誶而夕替。

Long did I sigh and wipe away tears,

sad that men's lives have so many hardships.
Though love of the fair was the halter that guided me,
at dawn I was damned and by twilight, undone.

21
既替余以蕙纕兮，又申之以攬芷。
亦余心之所善兮，雖九死其猶未悔。

Yes, I was undone for a sash hung with basil,
I lengthened it further by picking angelica.
Still my heart finds goodness in these—
though I die many times, I will never regret.

Being misprized is one thing, but the speaker carries it further to another level of inversion, an inversion of values and the hatred of the good. No longer is it simply a case of *bu cha*, "not discerning": it has become a case of discerning the good and rejecting it. If the response to a failure of discernment is to adorn oneself, the response to inverted values is defiance—even in face of death. Questions of regretting and not regretting are important; they lie at the heart of a purity of decision. The speaker will soon regret that he has somehow strayed from the path, but here he will not regret.

22
怨靈脩之浩蕩兮，終不察夫民心。
眾女嫉余之蛾眉兮，謠諑謂余以善淫。

I reproach the Numinous One's unbridled wildness,
never discerning what lies in men's hearts.
Women-throngs envied my delicate brows,

scurrilous songs claimed I found lewdness good.

Yuan 怨 (“reproach”), is a response of the shaman-lover in the *Jiu ge* against the deity’s fickleness. *Haodang* 浩蕩 (“unbridled wildness”) is used once in a non-pejorative way in *Jiu ge* (“He bo” 河伯), where the speaker climbs Mount Kunlun and his “heart soared aloft, it went sweeping free [unbridled wildness]” 心飛揚兮浩蕩. This quality is, however, the opposite of the speaker who is “haltered,” guided and constrained by the bridle of his “love of the fair” (20).

The position of a deity can be analogous to that of a king, as we saw in the conclusion of “Shao siming”: “Sweet Flag alone is fit to rule all the folk” 蓀獨宜兮為民正. Clearly deity and ruler were in some ways homologous; their attributes and what may be predicated to them overlap. This certainly encouraged the figurative interpretation of deity as ruler, both in the Li sao and in *Jiu ge*. Allowing the possibility that this discourse truly is figurative (that is, an individual poet intentionally using the language of divinity to refer to the king for poetic purposes), there is also the possibility that this overlap occurred through a shared discourse, at the very least in certain poetic venues and perhaps in other venues as well. Considering the theology of kingship in the Qin and Han (and indeed worldwide), this is quite unsurprising as a large proposition; however, considering the personal, often erotic relation between worshipper and deity in *Jiu ge* and in Li sao, the theology of kingship is potentially much stranger. The Junior Master of Lifespans may be “fit to rule the folk,” but we see clearly earlier in the Song that his fitness to rule included a marked eroticism:

滿堂兮美人, 忽獨與我兮目成.
入不言兮出不辭, 乘回風兮載雲旗.
悲莫悲兮生別離, 樂莫樂兮新相知.

The hall is filled with fair women;
at once with me only His eyes meet and fix.
He comes without speaking, without farewell, goes;

He rides on the whirlwind, bears banners of cloud.
No grief is so great as parting while living;
no joy so strong as love newly found.

Insofar as a shared discourse of divinity overlapped with that of kingship it invited the kind of metaphorical expansion we see throughout Li sao. Gods and kings are, however, different orders of being, and rather than forming an easy unity, the discourse of king and court and the discourse of divinity were later grafted together, sutured by figural exegesis.

In the second half of the stanza an abrupt reversal occurs. Qu Yuan had been assuming the voice of a male shaman, referring to the king as the goddess-lover who had betrayed him. Suddenly it is Qu Yuan who speaks as the woman, the king's favorite, suffering calumny due to the spite of other ladies. This is, again, essentially the possible situation in the preceding passage from the "Shao siming": there are many women, but the god casts his eyes on the speaker alone. The inevitable consequence is spite from other competitors. In the first half of the stanza the king/goddess is accused of "unbridled wildness"; now Qu Yuan, as a woman, complains that she/he is accused of "finding lewdness good." The symmetry of the inversion of roles is striking.

23
固時俗之工巧兮，偭規矩而改錯。
背繩墨以追曲兮，競周容以為度。

Of these times the firm folkways: to be artful in guile;
facing compass and square, they would alter the bore-hole.
They forswear the straight line, go chasing the crooked;
rivals for false faces, such is their measure.

Here the sudden, disjunctive turn to attack, as in (15-16), introduces new elements, the terms of artisanship: the compass, square, and straight-line (the taut cord used to mark straight lines). This terminology was very much part of Northern moral discourse. *Qiao* 巧, translated as "guile,"

is a potentially deceptive "artfulness," that prefers the crooked. As with beautiful words, craft is something in which extreme skill produces an inversion to the negative. Again, as in (15-16) the sequence of the poem would follow more straightforwardly without this stanza—and be less interesting.

24

忳鬱邑余侘傺兮，吾獨窮困乎此時。
寧溘死以流亡兮，余不忍為此態也。

A woe wells within me, in such despair,
alone at an impasse in times such as these.
Best to die promptly, to vanish away,
for I cannot bear to show myself thus.

At this point he declares the option of death, but one oddly conjoined with *liuwang*, to "vanish away." In the context of the Qu Yuan legend and the drowned heroes, avengers or lovers of deities, it is hard to overlook the watery aspect of *liu (literally "flow")*. Yet in this period *liuwang* had a rather precise meaning of fleeing a state. In the context of the spirit wandering that occurs later in the poem this is indeed what the speaker does on a grand geographical scale—traveling through the heavens looking for a royal mate.

In this context the proposition of "dying" deserves some reflection. "Death" here should be distinguished from its present medical meaning; it can also be loss of consciousness; that is, the soul has left the body. In *Zhaohun* 招魂 we have a soul that has left its body (in this case actually "dead" in our medical sense, in that the shaman, sent down by the High God to call back the soul, tells the god that the body is decaying, and his summons will do no good). The shaman then summons the soul from the extremities of all the directions; that is, in "death" the soul may "vanish away" or "flee the state," engaging in a wandering potentially every bit as extensive and far-flung as that of Qu Yuan in the Li sao.

"To show myself thus," *wei ci tai* 為此態, is more literally "to make such an appearance." "Appearance," *tai*, was the term of endowed appearance at his birth, matching his beauty within (3. 1-2):

Such bounty I had of beauty within,
this was doubled with fair appearance.

Two interesting questions arise here: what the "such" (*ci* 此, "this") refers to and the use of *wei* 為, "to make," which often implies falseness, perhaps better translated as "feign." The initial system of perfect correspondence between inside and outside is collapsing. First others have "false faces" and wrongly accuse him; now he can see the prospect of a false appearance in his own right, even though he claims that he could not bear it.

25
鷙鳥之不群兮，自前世而固然。
何方圜之能周兮，夫孰異道而相安。
The bird of prey does not go in flocks,
so it has been from times long ago.
How can square and circle ever be matched?—
what man can find peace on a way not his own?

26
屈心而抑志兮，忍尤而攘垢。
伏清白以死直兮，固前聖之所厚。

Bending one's heart, quelling one's will,
abiding faults found, submitting to shame,
wearing pure white, death for the right—

these indeed were esteemed by sages of old.

27

悔相道之不察兮，延佇乎吾將反。
回朕車以復路兮，及行迷之未遠。

I regretted judging the course was not well discerned,
long I stood staring, about to go back.
I will turn my coach 'round, retrace my path—
before I stray too far in my going.

Interpretive ingenuity can probably wrestle these stanzas into some sort of coherence, but there is no escaping the impression of sudden shifts in mood and position. The sequence of stanzas begins with a reiteration of his absolute difference from others by his nature. Such difference may have substance (for example, he loves virtue and others do not), but the claim is an essentially formal one: he is the singular bird of prey who is not only different by nature, but for whom difference *is* his nature.[32] Such singularity admits no company, no "friends," as he says later: the only alternative to absolute difference is duplication and union of the same.

Such proud, unbending assertiveness of distinction is apparently followed by a praise of restraint and submission. "Quelling one's will," *yizhi* 抑志, occurs elsewhere; but "submitting to shame," *rang gou* 攘垢, does not sound like the bird of prey. The shift is so striking that it is tempting to preface stanza twenty-six with "but": "I am unbending, but the ancients valued a capacity for endurance that can bear with shame." Considering his earlier protestations of devotion to the king, we would understand this as patiently bearing the king's anger and the spite of others. But then in the next stanza he decides to change his course, which we soon learn means leaving

[32] Pace Sukhu 2012: 141-42, the fierceness of the "bird of prey," *zhiniao* 鷙鳥, was associated with righteous courage (cf. *Zuo zhuan*, Wen 18).

the court. Thus in (26) he speaks of the value of "abiding faults found," *ren you* 忍尤; yet in (28) he withdraws from court when he "meets with fault-finding," *li you* 離尤.

This is one of the cruxes in the poem, the moment of decision to change his course; and choice is impossible for someone who is a perfect unity, always the same. The stanzas, for all their tone of assertive certainty, waver between values. Before he pointed out the right path to the king, but now he claims to recognize that he strayed on his path. Inner nature and outward behavior did not correspond; now he will restore them to unity by returning to origins.

We are at the moment in a shift between a Qu Yuan who was born good and will never change to a Qu Yuan who is filled with doubts and uncertainties, who needs others to advise him, to act on his behalf, and to complement him as bride or minister. Before this moment he knew where he was going; here he seeks to return to his original self. Before he was complete; here he begins to need a counterpart to be complete.

Sequences

Sequences are useful tools by which to understand earlier discourse. Moment B should follow moment A. It does not matter if the two moments are adjacent or twenty stanzas occur between them; the only thing that matters is that A and B both appear and appear in the proper sequence. An audience, having heard moment A, will have the pleasure of recognition fulfillment on hearing moment B when it finally occurs.

28

步余馬於蘭皋兮，馳椒丘且焉止息。
進不入以離尤兮，退將復脩吾初服。

I let my horses walk through eupatorium meadows,
sped to pepper-tree hill, there rested the while.
I drew close, did not reach him, I met with fault-finding,

I withdrew to restore that garb I first wore.

Though postponed by much intervening complaint and reflection, this occasion of riding is inevitable and in the right position in a sequence. Let us put stanza (28) right after (12):

To me at first firm word had been given,
she regretted it later, made excuses.
I made no grievance at this break between us,
but was hurt that the Numinous One so often changed.

I let horses walk through a eupatorium plain,
sped to pepper-tree hill, there rested the while.
I drew close, did not reach him, I met with fault-finding,
I withdrew to restore that garb I first wore.

We may read this against the same sequence of betrayal and riding off in "Xiang jun," one couplet of which was cited earlier:

交不忠兮怨長, 期不信兮告余以不閒.
鼉騁騖兮江高皋, 夕弭節兮北渚.

Her friendship was faithless, reproach long remains;
untrue to her pledge, she told me she had no time.
I galloped that dawn on the high plain by the river,
slackened my pace in the twilight by northern flats,

Although again many more stanzas will intervene, subsequent lines in “Xiang jun” will return transformed in the Li sao in the proper sequence. After a couplet on the river temple, “The Lady of the Xiang” continues:

捐余玦兮江中, 遺余佩兮醴浦.
采芳洲兮杜若, 將以遺兮下女.

I cast a ring broken into the river,
my pendants I left on the shores of the Li.
I plucked the galangal on flowering isles
to give as gift to the woman below.

In (55) the Li sao has:

At once I went roaming to the Palace of Spring,
I broke sprays of garnet to add to my pendants.
Before the bloom’s glory had fallen away,
I would divine a woman below on whom to bestow them.

When we have a sequence of events in a ritual hymn reappearing in the proper order in widely spaced stanzas in Li sao (declaration of the beloved’s faithlessness, galloping away, a flower gift to a “woman below”), it is fair to ask if this might be significant. If we also consider “Xiang furen,” which is a variation of the material in “Xiang jun,” there are even more parallels. It may be that Qu Yuan is “using” the quest for the goddess as a figurative model for his poem, or that the person(s) composing “Xiang furen” and “Xiang jun” are “using” the Li sao. Or it may be that this is an expanded version of the same kind of poem, structured around “moments” that have to occur in the proper sequence.

29

製芰荷以為衣兮，集芙蓉以為裳。
不吾知其亦已兮，苟余情其信芳。

I fashioned lotus and caltrop to serve as my robe,
I gathered the lotus to serve as my skirt.
No one knows me, it is all over!—
but truly my nature has scent steadfastly sweet.

30
高余冠之岌岌兮，長余佩之陸離。
芳與澤其雜糅兮，惟昭質其猶未虧。

High was my hat, above me it loomed,
my pendants were long of shimmering patterns.
Fragrance and filth were all intermingled,
my gleaming flesh only suffered no dwindling.

The robe and skirt of flowers are presumably his “first garb”; but we might note that the lotus robe was also worn by the Junior Master of Lifespans. Using *Jiu ge* to read Li sao can, however, change the way we commonly understand certain passages. “No one knows me,” reiterated in the Li sao’s coda, is generally understood as no prince or high courtier appreciating Qu Yuan’s virtue. We have, however, earlier quoted the lines from “Shao siming” that appear in close conjunction with the god’s robes of lotus.

悲莫悲兮生別離, 樂莫樂兮新相知.
荷衣兮蕙帶, 儻而來兮忽而逝.

No grief is so great as parting while living;

no joy so strong as love newly found.
The robe is of lotus, sash wound with basil,
He comes in a flash, as suddenly leaves;

The term translated as "love" in this passage is *zhi* 知, more usually meaning "to know," as translated in (29) of the Li sao above. There is no doubt that the *zhi* of "Shao siming" means some kind of love or attraction. We might carry these associations over to "know" in the context of the Li sao stanza above: it may indeed be "understanding," but it may suggest more, with resonance in the erotics of the Li sao: "It is over then, no one loves me." Declaring here that no one here knows/loves him, Qu Yuan goes off on a quest for a woman. When in the end he has failed to find a mate, he reiterates in the coda that "no one loves/knows" him.[33]

Clothing himself in aromatics, he declares that his "nature" (*qing* 情, meaning *xing* 性) is *fang* 芳, "sweet-scented," the attribute of the material for his clothes. The scent remains, though unrecognized. In this context he makes the statement of finality—that no one knows/loves him and that's it. It is a judgment and statement of renunciation, in which he accepts the finality of the breach with the king; the only alternative is to *liuwang*, to "vanish," which is to die or to flee the country (24). In the following stanza he will decide to "go off to view the wild lands around." We cannot help observing that when he makes the same statement of finality in the coda of Li sao, it also leads to a declaration that he will go somewhere else. At that point the poem stops, but essentially it could go on reenacting these patterns that lose nothing by repetition.

There is a great deal of "fragrance," *fang* 芳, here and in the following stanza, but the last lines of 30 above call for some comment. Translation fixes interpretation as if it "is" the text, and interpretation tries to reconcile disjunctions. In 29.4 he declares that his "nature" is fragrant; in 31.4 he declares that fragrance spreads around him, apparently from the aromatics worn pendant from his sash. Between these two manifestations of inner and outer fragrance we read: "Fragrance

[33] I do not want to too much try the reader's patience proving the case, but "reach him" in the preceding stanza (28) is *ru* 入, literally "enter," used in the sense of "entering" the ruler's inner circle and his presence. The only use of *ru* in *Jiu ge* is in "Shao siming," also immediately preceding the passage quoted: "He comes [enters] without speaking, without farewell, goes" 入不言兮出不辭. Readers accustomed to thinking of "meaning" rather than on the level of words may be difficult to persuade; although the corpus is a limited one, the statistical probability that this aggregate ("knowing"/"loving, lotus robes, and "entering") is an accident is very low.

and filth were all intermingled" 芳與澤其雜糅. There is supposed to be only "fragrance" at this point (and "intermingling" is always potentially negative in Li sao's poetics of purity); we try to reconcile the apparent contradiction by understanding the line as a reference to the past (hence the past tense "were" in the translation), a former proximity to base sorts after which he discovers that he himself has not been corrupted. Alternatively, we may take *ze* 澤 in the older, positive interpretation as "moist gloss," rather than "filth" (though such an interpretation leaves no obvious room for mixing).

31
忽反顧以遊目兮，將往觀乎四荒。
佩繽紛其繁飾兮，芳菲菲其彌章。

All at once I looked back, and I let my eyes roam,
I would go off to view the wild lands around.
Pendants in profusion, I was richly adorned,
their sweet fragrance spread, ever more striking.

32
民生各有其所樂兮，余獨好脩以為常。
雖體解吾猶未變兮，豈余心之可懲。

Each man has a thing in which he finds joy:
I alone love the fair, in that I abide.
Though my limbs be cut from me, I still will not change,
how could my heart be subdued?

In (31) he begins with the common motif of "looking back," then "going off." Although Qu Yuan moves from defiance to despair and doubt in the course of the poem, such declarations of

unbending will obviously had a resonance in *Chu ci* discourse, and here it paves the way for the Sister's critique of his inflexibility in the passage that follows. The refusal to change or regret has already been announced several times: (21, 24) and with the figure of starvation in (17). *Cheng*, translated as "subdued," essentially humbles and forces submission. As with "beauty within," it is essentially something external that has been transferred to something internal, and in that transferal, it is negated: the body may be "subdued," but not the heart. The same term, also transferred to the heart and negated, is used in "Guo shang" of *Jiu ge* to described soldiers who died and were dismembered without submitting, suggestively appearing in conjunction with the transformation of man into god (*ling*, "numinous", the prefix of a shaman name and the Li sao speaker's "formal title" 字):

帶長劍兮挾秦弓, 首雖離兮心不懲.
誠既勇兮又以武, 終剛強兮不可凌.
身既死兮神以靈, 魂魄毅兮為鬼雄.

Long-swords at waists, Qin bows under arms,
heads cut from bodies, hearts never subdued,
brave you were truly, stout fighters too,
hard to the last, not to be conquered,
your bodies are dead, your spirits are now numinous ones,
your souls are heroes among the wraiths.

When we read the *Chu ci* closely, we often find parallel aggregates of motifs; when the situations are as far apart as the Li sao and "Guo shang," we don't know whether have purely verbal parallels or variations on a religious theme (nor do we know if there is any profound difference between the two). The soldiers of "Guo shang" clearly died out of the kingdom:

出不入兮往不反, 平原忽兮路超遠.

We marched out but not back, we went forth but not home,
the plains stretch on far, the journey, too distant.

In the parallel it is hard not to notice that both Qu Yuan and the dead soldiers *buru* 不入, literally "do not enter"; in the context of this passage, we have to translate it as "[did] not [march] back," whereas in (38) it is "did not reach him [the king]."

It seems likely that the formal propitiation of this song is precisely because the dead could not be buried. The purposes that sent soldiers out of the domain is not *liuwang*, "vanishing" or "fleeing the state," but it is a form of "far traveling" outside the state. Thus, we have here the conjoined motifs of "far traveling," dismemberment, refusal to allow one's heart to be "subdued" and to submit, and the transformation into *ling*, translated with the epithet "numinous," the term of a shaman. Such stubborn will and refusal to submit is attributed to Qu Yuan's ancestor Gun in the stanzas that follow; we must note that Gun is put to death by Shun (inevitably implying mutilation), exposed on Mount Yu in the far outlands, and eventually transformed into a bear spirit; that is, exactly the same motifs reappear here with Gun.

33
女嬃之嬋媛兮，申申其詈余。
曰鯀婞直以亡身兮，終然殀乎羽之野。

Then came the Sister, tender and enticing,
mild of manner she upbraided me thus,
she said: "Gun was unyielding, he fled into hiding,[34]
at last died untimely on moors of Mount Yu.

[34] Gun was a son of Gaoyang and the father of Yu; he was charged by sage-king Yao with controlling the great flood. When he failed, he was put to death and his body left on Mount Yu. Gun also seems to have been important as a folk deity, transformed into a brown bear spirit after being killed. We should note that he is of the same Gao Yang line as Qu Yuan.

34

汝何博謇而好脩兮，紛獨有此姱節。

薆蓊蔽以盈室兮，判獨離而不服。

“Why such wide culling, such love of the fair,
in you alone bounty of beautiful raiment?
They stack stinkweed filling their rooms;
you alone stand apart and will not wear it.

35

眾不可戶說兮，孰云察余之中情。

世並舉而好朋兮，夫何煢獨而不余聽。

“No swaying the throngs person by person;
‘no one discerns this my nature within’!
Men now rise together, each favors friends,
why do you stand alone and not listen to me?”

Unlike Qu Yuan’s other advisors in Li sao, the “Sister” comes to him abruptly and unsought, trying to persuade him to accommodate himself to the world of others and warning him of the consequences of his unyielding nature. This is the first in a long lineage of critiques of Qu Yuan, from that offered by the fictional “Fisherman,” *Yufu* 漁父, to criticisms by many prominent Han intellectuals. The motif of steadfastness, announced in the preceding stanza, requires challenge and opposition in order to show itself.

The critique is initially presented through a minatory historical example. Such a use of historical example to argue for or against a course of action was characteristic of pan-sinitic court rhetoric. Although the current version has Qu Yuan himself mentioning ancient rulers earlier in the poem

(8), it was then not part of a persuasion; with that sole exception the use of historical examples is restricted to these scenes of encounter with an advisor in which a persuasion is made.

The minatory example offered by the "Sister" is none other than Gun, the son of Gao Yang, Qu Yuan's own ancestor. Gun was charged by Shun to control the great flood, and he failed. According to the "Heaven Questions," Gun was punished and his body lay exposed for three years; at some point before or after his exposure, he produced Yu from his body (which transcends even conventional endogamy). Yu was to grow up and successfully control the great flood. According to some accounts, after his exposure and the birth of Yu, Gun turned into a bear and threw himself into the water. There are entirely too many submersions for pure coincidence. Although it is singularly appropriate for Qu Yuan to be like his ancestor, we do not know for what reason Gun is described as being "unyielding" (or "unyieldingly upright"). Perhaps there is a part of the Gun myth we no longer have, but it seems to precede his punishment on Mount Yu.

The "Sister's" description of Gun's fate closely parallels Qu Yuan's earlier declaration: "Best to die promptly, to vanish away," *ning ke si yi liuwang* 寧溘死以流亡. Some commentators want to take *wangshen* 亡身 (translated as "fled into hiding") as "brought destruction on himself" or "was heedless of his life" (忘身); but *wangshen* usually means to flee one's state, just like *liuwang* discussed earlier. If this is indeed the implication of *wangshen* here, then Gun's journey to Mount Yu was an escape from the ruler's displeasure, like Qu Yuan' proposed journey. If Qu Yuan proposed to "die promptly," *kesi* 溘死, Gun also died an "untimely death," *yao* 殀.

We cannot but get the impression that an ancient myth is being reenacted, even as it is proposed as a possibility to be avoided: steadfastness or stubbornness, disfavor, flight away from the center, death, transformation into something "other," and submersion. As in *Jiu ge* mortals who seek divinities are sometimes inhabited by them, and the figure of becoming other is closely related to a drama of shamanistic possession. If the divinities happen to be deified ancestors, as they are in the present case, the relation becomes more complicated: the aristocratic claim of value by birth—that is, from one's royal ancestors—can be realized literally as the present mortal becomes the "same as" the ancestor.

Although earlier there was the possible rotting of aromatics, here (34) we find the first mention of noxious plants. In the critique—as in the Fisherman's critique later—there is no suggestion that Qu Yuan's analysis of the moral situation is wrong. What is proposed rather is to go with the crowd, to consider the noxious as fragrant, which is the dark transformation of the argument for the relativity of values in the *Zhuangzi*. The argument is for society at any cost, an argument of expediency. "Favoring (loving) friends," *haopeng* 好朋, is placed above "love of the fair," *haoxiu* 好脩. The singularity of Qu Yuan's "love of the fair" is self-reflexive; the alternative, not being absolutely singular, is to love others, that is, one's friends, those of one's faction.

Warring States court argumentation is strongest in the recitation of exemplary cases set before Shun in the passage that follows and in Shaman Xian's speech later. In this passage, however, we apparently have the technical use of *shuo* (or *shui* 說, translated as "swaying") here. Within *nüxu*'s (the "Sister") own argument there is embedded another hypothetical scene of persuasion. Although this persuasion does not offer compound examples as does the following section, it does have in miniature many of the usual components of a court persuasion: the example, the elaboration, the argument by exaggeration, and the summation. And, like a good court argument, it argues for expediency. It is an argument Qu Yuan must reject.

36

依前聖以節中兮，喟憑心而歷茲。
濟沅湘以南征兮，就重華而陳詞。

I trust sages of old for fair judgment,
my heart swelled in rage, it had come now to this.
I crossed Xiang and Yuan, faring on southward,
reached Chonghua, to state him my case:[35]

[35] Chonghua is Shun, so named for having double (*chong*) pupils in his eyes. Although here he seems very much alive, his tomb was at Cangwu in the far South.

To counter *the* Sister's argument, Qu Yuan appeals to higher authority to support his decision. Since he has been charged with extreme rigidity, he promises to trust the sage's *jiezhong* 節中, "fair judgment." This appeal to sagely authority prepares the way for the argument by examples that follows, in which the speaker no longer claims decision by his nature, but rather decision by a knowledge of consequences—an argument of ethical expediency, in which evil actions will come to a bad end. The "Sister" threatened him with a bad end like Gun; he will now demonstrate that his unyielding position will bring a good outcome. In short, here we enter a different moral universe where one survives because one is in the right, rather than one in which one dies because one is in the right.

The most striking characteristic of this new moral universe is mediation. In *Jiu ge* the devotee simply seeks the god or goddess: there is no deliberation, no decision, and no scene of judgment before a figure of authority. Immediately before these first interviews in the Li sao we saw stanzas that suggested personal decision. Now we have a "case" that needs to be argued and decided. Mediation changes both the nature of action and the relation between the speaker and the deity/beloved/king. Once it is introduced in the poem, it remains in the poem in different guises. When Qu Yuan proposes a particular mate on his first journey through the cosmos, he requires the services of a matchmaker—always a bad one. When the matchmaker fails, both Qu Yuan and Shaman Xian propose meeting the beloved directly (61.2; 73.2), but the idea is rejected as improper. The same mediated relationship exists with the king, where slanderers always stand in between the speaker and the king.

In this stanza we have the initial version of *liuwang*, fleeing the state, crossing the Xiao and Xiang Rivers southward to Cangwu in the Many Doubts Range. Cangwu was traditionally taken as the burial place of Shun, in the text referred to as "Chonghua" for his double eye-pupils—perhaps giving him greater discernment. After abdicating the throne, Shun journeyed outward to the far South to die; but in Li sao he seems still very much alive. After the minatory example of Gun presented by the "Sister," the choice of Shun as a judge can hardly be accidental; it was, after all, Shun who judged Gun and condemned him to death on Mount Yu. Qu Yuan will submit another case of "unyielding uprightness" for Shun's decision.

We should stress that at this time Cangwu was indeed outside or on the far margins of the Chinese cultural world; it was an uncivilized, scarcely human world. If the cosmos is made up of concentric circles, the rest of the Li sao will be played out on the periphery, here the place of transformed kings. Later, in "Yuanyou," it will be the place of immortals.

Qu Yuan declares he will *chenci* 陳詞, a formal phrase for stating a case to a superior. Here and later in the case of Shaman Xian the compound examples of the court oration are clearest. In the court oration the speaker is trying to persuade the prince to some course of action; the speaker here is only seeking justification for his own decision (though it would make no difference if the persuasion were instead the "judgment," placed in the mouth of Shun). Normally the persuader offers the example of kings for kings; the speaker here offers the example of kings on his own behalf, an indication that he is assuming the trappings of kingship.

If we assume that the Li sao represents a historical layering rather than a single compositional moment, this and the section that follows show hints of belonging to a separate and perhaps later stage in the evolution of *Chu ci* discourse. We might first note the use of the term "sages of old," *qiansheng* 前聖, rather than "fair men of old," *qianxiu* 前脩. The phrase *qiansheng* was, in fact, used earlier, in the anomalous stanza declaring the value of "submitting to shame" (26); here is it used before a long passage of compound historical examples that argue for the expediency of ethical behavior. Although this interview in some ways closely parallels the advice of Shan Xian later, the frame is strikingly different: here he "states his case" like a court orator; there, awaiting Shaman Xian's descent, he "clasps pepper and rice to beseech him" (70), assuming the role of suppliant before a deity.

37

啟九辯與九歌兮，夏康娛以自縱。

不顧難以圖後兮，五子用失乎家衖。

“King Qi had Nine Variations and the Nine Songs—[36]
extreme in wild pleasures, he did as he pleased.
He was heedless of troubles, made no plans for the morrow,
whereby the five sons brought strife to his house.

38
羿淫遊以佚畋兮，又好射夫封狐。
固亂流其鮮終兮，浞又貪夫厥家。

“Yi roamed recklessly, he was lavish in hunts,[37]
he also loved shooting the great foxes.
Indeed, going cross-current rarely ends well:
and Han Zhuo was lusting to seize his bride.[38]

39
澆身被服強圉兮，縱欲而不忍。
日康娛而自忘兮，厥首用夫顛隕。

“Guo Ao garbed himself, he opposed violently;[39]
he followed his wants, he failed to forbear.
He lost himself daily in wild pleasures.
whereby his own head was toppled and fell.

40

[36] King Qi of the Xia was the son of Great Yu, who was in turn the son of Gun and the founder of the Xia Dynasty. He brought back (or stole) the “Nine Songs” and the “Nine Variations” from Heaven.
[37] Yi the Archer seized the kingship from Taikang after King Qi’s death but was subsequently killed by his retainer Han Zhuo.
[38] Han Zhuo 寒浞 was Yi’s trusted minister. He deposed Yi and married Yi’s wife.
[39] Guo Ao was a son of Han Zhuo and Yi the Archer’s former wife. He killed Xiang, the nephew of the former king Taikang, and was later killed by Xiang’s son Shao Gang who restored the Xia Dynasty.

夏桀之常違兮，乃遂焉而逢殃。
后辛之菹醢兮，殷宗用而不長。

“Xia’s Jie was constant in his erring,[40]
in pursuit of these he met with his doom.
Shang’s Zhow, the Lord Xin, minced men into stew,[41]
whereby Yin’s great lineage could not last long.

41
湯禹儼而祗敬兮，周論道而莫差。
舉賢才而授能兮，循繩墨而不頗。

“Yu the Great was stern, respectful and godly;[42]
the right way was Zhou’s norm and thus did not stray.
They raised men of worth, rewarded the able,
they kept the straight line, they did not veer.

42
皇天無私阿兮，覽民德焉錯輔。
夫維聖哲以茂行兮，苟得用此下土。

“Sovereign Heaven is slanted in favor of none;
it scans a man’s virtues, puts helpers beside him.
Only when sage wisdom does deeds that are splendid,
may one then be used in this land down below.

[40] Jie (see stanza 8) was the last ruler of the Xia and notorious for his misrule.
[41] Lord Xin is King Zhow, the evil last King of Shang (Yin). There are several stories in which Zhow chopped up members of the nobility and fed them to others.
[42] Most commentators have taken 湯禹 as Tang and Yu. Great Yu, Gun’s son, was the founder of the Xia; Tang was the founder of the Shang.

43

瞻前而顧後兮，相觀民之計極。

夫孰非義而可用兮，孰非善而可服。

“I viewed times before us, looked to times yet to come,

observed measures of men, and the ends of their plans:

who found wanting in virtue may be put to use?

who found wanting in good may still be retained?

This is a *changduan* 長短 persuasion: negative and positive examples are offered, followed by a conclusion stating the general case that has been demonstrated by the examples. As in most such persuasions, the issue is to know the consequences of action beforehand. By knowing consequences, decision becomes possible. Earlier the speaker had maintained that his actions followed by necessity from his pure nature, that he could not do otherwise and would do as he must in spite of the threat of death and suffering ill consequences. Here moral action is also ultimately expedient action that preserves life and therefore should be *chosen*. Such arguments were the norm for persuaders who, in a world that valued expediency, wished to persuade a prince to an advantageous course of action. As the speaker’s critique of King Qi in (37) says: “He was heedless of troubles, made no plans for the morrow,” *bu gu nan yi tu hou* 不顧難以圖後—his was a failure in foresight. This is not the earlier world of the Li sao in which the good are good and the bad, bad; here someone who behaves badly can theoretically correct his behavior if he understands its consequences.

The sin that destroys princes is inevitably “wantonness” in the broad sense, including the narrower sense—following the sensual will. The speaker himself has been charged with a similar crime by those who were jealous of him, and he has also leveled a similar charge against the king. Later on, when he seeks the goddess Fu Fei, she is rejected because she proves to be wanton.

After the negative examples, we have one stanza of positive figures. One virtue is *yan* 儼, a "sternness." But the virtue of Zhou is named in the remarkable phrase *lun Dao ("the right way was [Zhou's] norm")*. One must be careful here because of the later common usage of *lun* as "discourse": the usage here perhaps is that of 倫, taking the Way as the "ethical norm." Heaven rewards such virtue: it is impartial (although we note that earlier Heaven showed great partiality to the speaker by endowing him with such good inborn qualities). And following the Zhou ideology of Heaven's Charge, rule is granted to virtue.

Although this is formally a Warring States persuasion, the historical examples chosen are far from the norm of the age. David Hawkes cites a passage from *Zuo zhuan* in which the famous minister of Zheng, Zi Chan, shows similar knowledge, but the case is unusual.[43] Concerned as he is with his ancestry and later with contracting a marriage with figures from the great royal lineages in the archaic past, Qu Yuan here seems primarily concerned with the troubles of succession in the very ancient Xia Dynasty—though he does finally mention the Shang and Zhou. Similar knowledge of remote antiquity is interrogated in the "Heaven Questions" (*Tianwen*). We do not know why Qu Yuan concentrates so much on early antiquity, but it not only had its own aura, it was the age to which Qu Yuan was to travel in his journey over the ends of the earth.

44

阽余身而危死兮，覽余初其猶為悔。
不量鑿而正枘兮，固前脩以菹醢。

"By the brink stands my body, I am in death's peril,
I scanned my beginnings and still regret not.
Not judging the drill-hole, they squared the peg:
indeed fair men of old came to mince in a stew."[44]

[43] Hawkes 1985: 61-62.
[44] This refers to King Zhow of Shang cutting up virtuous lords into mince (40).

Although it uses a craft metaphor and makes reference to tyrant Zhow's mincing his advisors, this stanza turns abruptly back to the "fair men of old," *qianxiu*, rather than the "sages of old," *qiansheng*; and with the reintroduction of the characteristically Li sao term *xiu*, we also return to the motif of the inevitable misprizing of virtue rather than the expediency of virtue. There are varying accounts of just whom the tyrant Zhow made into mince, but they were primarily virtuous advisors. Zhow was punished in the long run, but virtue, it seems, was not expedient for royal advisors. With this stanza we temporarily take leave of the ethics of ancient history and return to Qu Yuan as shaman-lover, flying of in search of a mate.

45

曾歔欷余鬱邑兮，哀朕時之不當。
攬茹蕙以掩涕兮，霑余襟之浪浪。

Sighs come from me often, my heart swells within,
sad that my time was not right.
I pluck hare's ear and basil to wipe away tears,
that soak my gown's folds in their streaming.

46

跪敷衽以陳辭兮，耿吾既得此中正。
駟玉虯以乘鷖兮，溘埃風余上征。

I knelt with robes open thus stated my case,
having grasped so clearly what is central and right.
I teamed jade-white dragons, rode the Bird that Hides Sky,
waiting for winds to fleetly fare upward.

We have addressed the double interviews and their homologies at the beginning of this discussion. Here we might expand upon one point. In the later interview with Shaman Xian, the shaman, in conjunction with his historical examples, tells Qu Yuan to undertake a journey; Qu Yuan then denounces the age and sets off. Here a case is explicitly presented, but the advice and the decision to accept it are apparently elided. I say "apparently" because 46.2 could just as easily be interpreted as receiving the "fair judgment" he sought earlier; translating *de* 得 as "receive" rather than "grasp," the line becomes: "I received clearly what was central and right." While 46.1 suggests that the speech earlier was Qu Yuan's, the "central and right" judgment of Shun would be implicitly his assent to the argument.

Another point of interest is the claim that Qu Yuan's "time was not right" 時不當. Here is another of those notions that later became so commonplace in the tradition that we can easily read over it without fully appreciating its possible implications. Qu Yuan has, by this point, already set up an opposition between the virtuous past and the corrupt present. In saying that his "time was not right," we cannot ignore the fact that his heavenly journey will take him into the past, even as it takes to the margins of the universe.

47

朝發軔於蒼梧兮，夕余至乎縣圃。
欲少留此靈瑣兮，日忽忽其將暮。

At dawn I loosed wheel-block there by Cangwu,[45]
and by twilight I reached the Gardens of Air.[46]
I wished to bide awhile by the windows of gods,
but swift was the sun and it soon would be dusk.

[45] Cangwu was the mountain where Shun (Chonghua) was buried.
[46] The "Gardens of Air," Xuanpu 縣圃 or "suspended gardens," was a section of the Kunlun Range and an abode of the Undying.

Although the itinerary is discontinuous, the heavenly journey here, like the speculative circuit from which the soul is recalled in *Zhaohun* circles the world's margins. Beginning from Cangwu in the far south, Qu Yuan travels first to the Kunlun Range in the west, where the "Gardens of Air" are located. He next appears at the Fusang Tree in the furthest east. Since the sun was setting when he was at Kunlun and the sun is rising when he is by the Fusang Tree, he has apparently followed the sun's course (though the Ruo tree, a few lines later, may possibly place him back in the extreme west). It is likely that the palace of the God, from which he is subsequently turned away, is located at Beiji 北極, the pole star, thus completing the four directions and defining a journey that moves from south to north.

The reconciliation of a circuit with a journey defined along a south-north axis is suggestive for other reasons. Qu Yuan must await the wind to take off, recalling a similar dependence on a great wind for the Peng 鵬 in the "Xiayao you" chapter of the *Zhuangzi*. The legendary Peng bird also migrates back and forth to the ends of the earth along a north-south axis; and when it makes the passage, its wingspan is so huge that it covers the sky from horizon to horizon. Qu Yuan is carried by a Yi 鷖, a bird whose name is homophonous with "covering" or "hiding" (thus translated "Bird that Hides Sky").

48

吾令羲和弭節兮，望崦嵫而勿迫。
路曼曼其脩遠兮，吾將上下而求索。

I bade sun-driver Xihe, to slacken her pace,
to stand off from Yanzi and not to draw nigh.[47]
On and on stretched my road, long it was and far,
I would go high and go low in this search that I made.

49

[47] Yanzi was a legendary mountain in the west where the sun was said to go down.

飲余馬於咸池兮，摠余轡乎扶桑。
折若木以拂日兮，聊逍遙以相羊。

I watered my horses in the Pools of Xian,[48]
and twisted the reins on the tree Fusang,[49]
snapped a branch of the Ruo tree to block out the sun,[50]
I roamed freely the while and lingered there.

The heavenly journey is also defined by its intervals of time: the dawns and evenings that mark a phase of travel (when night turns to dawn again, the speaker has emerged at the furthest point east with the rising sun). There are phases of commanding, tarrying, roaming carefree, and anxiety at time's passage, which he now temporarily masters by ordering the sun to pause.

The image of the road undergoes an interesting transformation, from the straight path marked by the tracks of former kings (or its deviant byways) to the long road here. This road not only moves along or around the horizontal plane, it also goes *shangxia* 上下, "high and low." There can be no tracks on this road. The beginning of the journey was *shangzheng* 上征, "faring upward," moving in three-dimensional space beyond the human realm, but moving along the margins of the two-dimensional plane. The sequence of Kunlun (west), Pools of Xian ("where the sun bathes"), Fusang tree (east), Ruo tree (either the farthest east or west) is "touching base" with the extreme cardinal points of the world.

50
前望舒使先驅兮，後飛廉使奔屬。
鸞皇為余先戒兮，雷師告余以未具。

[48] The Pool of Xian was where the sun was immersed ("bathed") on setting.
[49] The Fusang Tree was where the sun rose.
[50] According to the *Shanhai jing*, the Ruo Tree is on Kunlun, where the sun goes down; according to the *Shuowen*, it is where the sun rises and is identified with Fusang. The second is clearly the easier reading in this context.

Ahead went Wang Shu to speed on before me,[51]
behind came Fei Lian, he dashed in my train.[52]
Phoenix went first and warned of my coming,
Thunder-master told me that all was not set.

51
吾令鳳鳥飛騰兮，繼之以日夜。
飄風屯其相離兮，帥雲霓而來御。

I bade my phoenixes to mount up in flight,
to continue their going both by day and by night.
Then the whirlwinds massed, drawing together,
they marshaled cloud-rainbows, came to withstand me.

After leaving the Sister, Qu Yuan has gradually been transformed from the solitary traveler to someone surrounded by a full entourage, a sign of his growing power and importance as he heads to the palace of the high God. Although he moves on the margins of the universe, the entourage constructs his centrality; he is surrounded by attendants, just as he himself once dashed on all sides of the king's chariot. His central position is clearly a figure for kingship and rule, as are his biddings and commands. Perhaps the clearest indications of his royal position are the references to protocols of "warning" [of a prince's coming] and the preparations that must be made (50.3-4). As he is accompanied, so is he also "met," *yu* 御, though it is uncertain whether this is a welcoming or opposing encounter (the translation "withstand" takes it in a negative sense). Considering that just a few stanzas earlier he was "kneeling with robes open," clearly assuming the position of a subordinate before Shun, this transformation into a figure of royal command is striking and cannot be so easily explained as the allegorical quest of a loyal minister for a ruler who appreciates his worth.

[51] Wang Shu was the charioteer of the moon-carriage.
[52] Fei Lian was the god of winds.

Again, the notion of a layered text is attractive here. These stanzas of the heavenly journey have close parallels in *Jiu ge*, where the speaker seeks for the goddess as Qu Yuan here is seeking a mate. The address to Shun is very different in diction and taxis and has no parallel in *Jiu ge*. We should, however, note that the address to Shun hangs ambiguously between expressing the concerns of Qu Yuan as loyal minister and of Qu Yuan as ruler: it concerns *solely* the behavior of rulers. Ministers either are chopped up or usurp the throne. Qu Yuan has speculated on being himself chopped up (32.3), and in these stanzas he has assumed a royal position (usurpation occurs because rulers are bad, as his own ruler is bad). As far as the ministers themselves are concerned, getting chopped to mince is not the kind of happy outcome predicted as following from upright behavior.

In the stanzas that follow, Qu Yuan's empowerment meets resistance, and the speaker temporarily falls back on the discourse of the suppliant—though here were see the suppliant of *Jiu ge*, plaiting orchids and standing expectantly, rather than "kneeling with robes open and stating his case."

52

紛總總其離合兮，斑陸離其上下。
吾令帝閽開關兮，倚閶闔而望予。

A bewildering tumult, first apart, then merging together,
they streamed shimmering colors, high and then low.
I bade the God's gatekeeper to open the bar;
he stood blocking the gateway and stared at me.

53

時曖曖其將罷兮，結幽蘭而延佇。
世溷濁而不分兮，好蔽美而嫉妒。

The moment grew dimmer, moonrise would be soon,
I plait eupatorium, long stand fixed and gazing.
An age foul and murky cannot tell things apart;
it loves to block beauty from malice and spite.

Here the royal act of command ("I bade") fails, mirroring in Heaven his experience with the king earlier: "I drew close, did not reach him," *jin bu ru* 進不入 (28.3). We have not yet been told what the object of his journey is, though in the following stanza he is seeking a woman. This same moment survives in a residual way in "Youanyou":

命天閽其開關兮，排閶闔而望予

I charged Heaven's gatekeeper to open the bar;
he pushed Gates of Sky open and stared at me.

But in "Daren fu" 大人賦 ("The Great One"), Sima Xiangru's panegyric for Emperor Wu of the Han, not only does the heavenly traveler receive admittance, but the goal of his visit is made explicit:

排閶闔而入帝宮兮，載玉女而與之歸

I pushed Gates of Sky open, I entered the God's palace,
I took the Jade Maidens and went back with them.

As "The Great One," Emperor Wu evidently would not accept any resistance. Note the use of *ru* 入, here translated as "entered"; this is what Qu Yuan failed to do in (28.3), where it is translated as "reach [him]." But the speaker in the Li sao is closer to the shaman companion of the Senior Master of Lifespans in "Da siming" of *Jiu ge*; the god deserts him, and he worries about old age coming. We might particularly note the formulaic line in 52.3, recurring below only with "cassia twigs" replacing eupatorium.

乘龍兮轔轔，高馳兮沖天。
結桂枝兮延佇，羌愈思兮愁人。

He rides his dragon-car, its wheels are rumbling,
and racing high off He dashes to Sky,
I plait cassia twigs, long stand fixed and gazing,
for increase of longing thus grieves a man.

Like the melancholy petitioner in the "Da siming," Qu Yuan suffers rejection and makes a complaint, as he had earlier when suffering estrangement from the king. But in this case, he continues the quest.

54
朝吾將濟於白水兮，登閬風而紲馬。
忽反顧以流涕兮，哀高丘之無女。

At dawn I set to ford across the White Waters,[53]
I climbed Mount Langfeng, there tethered my horses.
All at once I looked back, my tears were streaming,
sad that the high hill lacked any woman.

55
溘吾遊此春宮兮，折瓊枝以繼佩。
及榮華之未落兮，相下女之可詒。

[53] White Waters was a legendary river flowing from Kunlun that made those who drank from it immortal.

At once I went roaming to the Palace of Spring,[54]
I snapped stalks of qiong to add to my sash.
Before the bloom's glory had fallen away,
I would divine a woman below on whom to bestow them.

As in *Jiu ge*, frustration leads to a resumption of the journey, back to the west and in the following stanza to the east. This recapitulates the journey he made before reaching the gates of Heaven. Here again is the "looking back" (反顧 *fangu*). And this is the moment when the motif of "seeking the woman" (*qiunü* 求女) first appears explicitly. In 48.4 he said he would "go high and go low" (*shangxia* 上下): going to the hill is "going high" (*shang*); it is appropriate that next he "go low" or seek "below" (*xia*). The hill that lacks a woman may be Langfeng in the Kunlun Range or the God's palace, where Han Wudi was to obtain his Jade Maidens; the countermove seeks a "woman below" (*xia'nü* 下女). When that same phrase is used in the "Xiang jun" in the *Jiu ge*, it referred to the riverine goddess(es), with the "below" clearly meaning underwater.[55] In the stanzas that follow here, the "woman below" turns out to be another riverine goddess, Fu Fei.[56] Now we find that flowers are picked not as food or pure adornment, but as a courtship gift. This same itinerary, from Kunlun down into the river, is also found in "He bo" (河伯 "The River's Earl).

登崑崙兮四望，心飛揚兮浩蕩。
日將暮兮悵忘歸，惟極浦兮寤懷。
魚鱗屋兮龍堂，紫貝闕兮朱宮。
靈何為兮水中。

I climbed the Kunlun Mountains, I gazed all around,
the heart flew aloft, it went sweeping off free.

[54] The Palace of Spring is where the Emperor of the East lives.
[55] Pace Chinese commentators who prefer a serving girl to a water-dwelling river goddess.
[56] Here we might recall Cao Zhi's hesitation at the Goddess of the Luo's invitation to join her underwater.

Soon the sun was to set, I, transfixed, forgot going,
I thought of the farthest shore, I looked back with care.
The roof is of fish-scales, halls of the dragon,
turrets of purple cowries, palaces of pearls—
why is the numinous one here, down in the water?

"He bo" is generally understood in reference to the annual ritual of sacrificing a bride to the god of the Yellow River. It may, however, be that this refers to his bride of myth, Fu Fei, Fu Xi's daughter, who became the goddess of the Luo River, just as the two goddesses of the Xiang River were the brides of Shun. Since, by some accounts, Fu Fei was later taken as a wife by Yi the Archer (38), in the Gao Xin lineage, we have the first hint of Qu Yuan's speculative intervention in the family lines of the ruling houses of China.

56
吾令豐隆乘雲兮，求虙妃之所在。
解佩纕以結言兮，吾令蹇修以為理。

Feng Long I bade to go riding the clouds,[57]
to seek out Fu Fei where she dwells.[58]
I took pendant-sash, I tied there a message,
and bade Lady Blunt to act as my envoy.

57
紛總總其離合兮，忽緯繣其難遷。
夕歸次於窮石兮，朝濯髮於洧盤。

[57] Feng Long is generally understood as the god of clouds, though some argue that he is the god of thunder.
[58] Fu Fei was, by one account, the daughter of the sage Fuxi; she drowned and became the Luo River goddess.

A bewildering tumult, first apart, then merging,
she suddenly balked, she could not be swayed.
She went twilights to lodge at Farthest-of-Rocks,[59]
and at dawn bathed her hair in Weiban Stream.[60]

58
保厥美以驕傲兮，日康娛以淫遊。
雖信美而無禮兮，來違棄而改求。

She held on to her beauty, she was scornful and proud,
in wild pleasures daily she wantonly roamed.
Though beautiful truly, she lacked right behavior—
Come, let her go then, I will seek for another.

We might note that the obscure line of confusion (57.1) is repeated verbatim from (52.1): in both cases it precedes the failure of his quest for a woman. In the first case it seems to describe the host that came to meet/oppose him when he went to the palace of Heaven seeking a woman; here it seems to (?) describe the marriage negotiations or Fu Fei's state of mind. Although much of the Li sao is not formulaic, moments like this remind us that there is probably a residual formulaic stratum in the poem. The line does not have determinate meaning in its own right; rather it is a line which, in both cases, formally precedes the failed quest for a woman. Here we can see the line deployed in the correct sequence on two occasions, but in different contexts that give the identical line different "meanings."

In contrast to the two failed courtships that follow, the stated problem with Fu Fei is not competition from another male but her own rejection of his suit (which in itself would constitute "lacking right behavior"). She withholds herself, which is taken as a mark of both willful pride and wantonness. Qu Yuan had seen "false faces" earlier, but this is a new level of division in which

[59] Farthest-of-Rocks was supposedly in the far west and the source of the Ruo River.
[60] Weiban Stream supposedly flowed off Mount Yanzi (see stanza 48).

the "beauty," *mei*, he seeks is only on the surface; examining her, he finds her lacking in *li*, "right behavior," "ceremony." As we might expect, this is the only reference to *li* in the *Chu ci* (apart from the use of the term as a title for the coda of *Jiu ge*, a title that may well have been added later, and in "Tianwen"). The magical correspondence of inner and outer beauty, with which the *Li sao* opened, is here replaced by a more conventional disjunction between appearance and inner nature.

Space and Time

In Li sao space and time often become discursively the same, sharing a common vocabulary, including rushing, catching, distances that may or may not be crossed. In English and other languages there is also a degree of shared vocabulary between these two fields, but there is a filter of conceptual habit that says that though we "move" in time and space, in time we only go forward and not back. This is also sometimes the case in the Li sao—but not always. That is, a set of common terms, shared by space and time, generates a conceptual overlap and conflates what we would, through modestly rational reflection, see as the essential differences between those two fields of "movement."

Fu Fei, the first match proposed and failed, certainly belonged to an archaic past, but she became a goddess and we can imaginatively grant her continuing existence, as we grant deified Shun. In the subsequent matches, however, we have remarkably precise proposals to intervene in past history. He first hopes to make a match with Jian Di, the daughter of the You-Song, then turns to another possible match with the two daughters of the You-Yu:

59
覽相觀於四極兮，周流乎天余乃下。
望瑤臺之偃蹇兮，見有娀之佚女。

I scanned and observed all the world's ends,
I roamed throughout sky, then I came down.
I viewed the rising crest of a terrace of onyx,

there saw a rare woman, the You-Song's daughter.[61]

60

吾令鴆為媒兮，鴆告余以不好。

雄鳩之鳴逝兮，余猶惡其佻巧。

I bade the venom-owl to make match between us,

the venom-owl told me it was not good.

The dove-cock went away singing,

and I still loathe its petty wiles.

61

心猶豫而狐疑兮，欲自適而不可。

鳳凰既受詒兮，恐高辛之先我。

My heart then faltered, doubts overcame me,

I wanted to go myself; it was not allowed.

Already the phoenix had given its gift,

I feared that Gao Xin had come before me.[62]

62

欲遠集而吾所止兮，聊浮游以逍遙。

及少康之未家兮，留有虞之二姚。

I wanted to alight far away, there was no place to halt,

so I drifted the while and roamed at my ease.

[61] The You-Song was the family from which came the mother of Jie, the ancestor of Shang, Jian Di 簡狄.

[62] Gao Xin is Diku 帝嚳 who sent a *xuanniao* 玄鳥 (usually understood as a swallow, but also taken as a phoenix) to Jian Di. The 玄鳥 laid an egg, which Jiandi swallowed and became pregnant, thus establishing the Shang lineage.

75

If still not yet married to Shaokang the Prince,
there remained the two Yao girls of the clan You-Yu.[63]

63
理弱而媒拙兮，恐導言之不固。
世溷濁而嫉賢兮，好蔽美而稱惡。

My envoy was feeble, the matchmaker, bumbling;
I feared words to charm them would not hold fast.
An age foul and murky, it spites a man's worth,
it loves to block beauty, it acclaims what is ill.

We may not know the stories exactly as Qu Yuan knew them, but we know enough to get the point. Jian Di, the daughter of the You-Song, was married to Gao Xin and/or swallowed an egg from Heaven (I will refrain from an ornithological debate on the nature of the bird that brought the egg), giving birth to the lineage that founded the Shang dynasty. As mentioned above, the speculative match with Fu Fei might have also been an intervention—though somewhat later—in the Gao Xin lineage. The speaker is, at the beginning of the Li sao, himself a self-proclaimed remote descendant of Gao Yang. Gao Yang and Gao Xin were the two alternative deified ancestors of most of the ruling houses in China at the time—creating the possibility of an archaic and ongoing exogamy. If Qu Yuan (the descendant of Gao Yang) gets there first, the two distinct lineages become the same.

If lineage is important (and it certainly is in the Li sao), such a speculative intervention is remarkable. If the speaker's suit with Jian Di had been successful, he would have derailed a long dynastic lineage from roughly the time of his own ancestor and made difference into sameness. With Jian Di he would possibly (depending on the precisions of myth) have been the founder of the Shang lineage, as he would have inserted his seminal presence in the Xia lineage if he had

[63] When Guo Ao destroyed the Xia ruler Xiang, his son Shaokang fled to the You-Yu people, whose ruling family was surnamed Yao. The ruler of the You-Yu gave him his two daughters in marriage. By some accounts Xiang's wife fled to the You-Yu and gave birth to Shaokang there. Shaokang restored the Xia and the Gao Yang line.

married “the two Yao girls of the clan You-Yu.” In this second case Shaokang and the Xia ruling lineage followed from Gao Yang, the speaker’s own ancestor (though by a different line of descent).

This is weird stuff. There are various extant versions of these archaic myths, and we can be sure that there were many more versions of which we have no extant record. If we look to what is shared by extant versions, we find that they involve crucial marriages at the beginnings of family lineages of rulers. We note also that family lineage and finding the right mate are particular important to the speaker in our poem.

The obvious conclusion we must draw from these passages is that—unless we interpret them figuratively, as they have been—Qu Yuan’s movement in space is simultaneously a movement in time, or more specifically, a movement back in history. One of the commonplace assumptions of scholarship on ancient China is that deified ancestors are in Heaven—though such assumptions are always problematic because we know so little about which ancestors were there, when and where such a belief was active, how much people thought about the precise heavenly condition of those ancestors. Certainly, for Zhou ancestral ritual we know the ancestors rise and descend (as Qu Yuan himself does on this journey), look down, and sometimes extend favor. Let me again raise the hypothesis, suggested earlier, that in the heavenly journey deified beings from the remote past may be “there” in the present, with significant events that occurred in the past still ongoing. By traveling through the heaven one can reach Jian Di while she is being courted by Gao Xin, etc. With this in mind, the interview with Shun and the proposed match with Fu Fei may not mean they are “immortal” in the later sense, but rather they can be found in their own historical present “out there.”

This is a large piece of archaic theology to hang on a few stanzas in the Li sao, and the failure of Qu Yuan’s speculative interventions happily never test the case of whether it is possible to change the past. Nevertheless, Qu Yuan clearly speaks of possibly being present before things were decided, things which, speaking historically, were not only decided long ago but were part of a central lineage of great clans of which Qu Yuan was himself a member.

In the case of Jian Di and the daughters of the You-Yu the question is getting there on time, getting there before it is too late; that is, events can happen and determine consequences, such as Jian Di becoming contracted to Gao Xin. To reach a point in space is also to reach a particular

moment. And Qu Yuan, the speaker in the poem, clearly knows "what happened"; that is, he knows that Jian Di became the wife of Gao Xin and that the You-Song's daughters married Shaokang. Moreover, as he moves in space from Jian Di to the You-Song's daughters, he also moves across a number of generations.

Before coming back to the Li sao, let me suggest one consequence. The heavenly journey of the *Yuanyou* is clearly modeled on the Li sao's heavenly journey. Indeed, *Yuanyou* is explicitly a Huang-Lao transformation of the Li sao journey. And it is a journey to "immortality," defined in a new way. The Li sao version, let us hypothesize, is not the promise that one *will* live forever, but rather a journey that moves freely in time. In *Yuanyou* one may travel and still meet a figure who lived in the past, such as Qiao the Prince; but he is encountered in the present and his continued "presence" is rationalized by having discovered the secret of immortality. That is, the very idea of physical immortality may be in part a rationalization of earlier notions of encounters with beings from the past when "journeying beyond"—if such encounters are assumed, physical immortality is a way to solve time paradoxes.

Here we might return to earlier stanzas in which the speaker is anxious about the passage of time and aging.

4

Hastening went I, as though I would not catch them—
I feared the years passing would keep me no company.
At dawn I would pluck magnolia on bluffs,
In the twilight on isles I culled star anise blooms.

5

Days and months sped past, they did not long linger,
spring-times and autumns altered in turn.
I thought on things growing, on the fall of their leaves,
and feared for the Beauty, her drawing toward dark.

Here is the same anxiety about catching the moment and being too late. Indeed, figuring the years as "not keeping me company" 不吾與, is remarkably suggestive of the quest for a mate who will keep him company if he is not too late. When he flies, he not only catches the passing years but catches years that are past. Time shares the language of swift motion and not lingering with movement through space. Both are fields on which difference occurs, difference that keeps perfect identity—the collapse of difference into the same (such as being one's own parent or ancestor)—just out of reach. One flies in time and space but never "reaches" or "catches" the person or moment sought: there is a hovering proximity and a gap that eludes crossing: if one could catch the fleeting years or those archaic brides before they found their husbands and entered history, movement in space would stop as well as movement in time. Without that gap things would be always the same and always "here," centered on the speaker who is as he was from the moment of his birth and as his ancestors were, the same inside and outside.[64]

64

閨中既以邃遠兮，哲王又不寤。

懷朕情而不發兮，余焉能忍而與此終古。

Remote and far are the chambers of women;

[64] Speculative aside: *If* the Li sao is not "by" Qu Yuan, but rather "about" Qu Yuan, then we have a speaker, a performer, speaking "as" Qu Yuan in the past. We cannot help observing that the form of such performance exactly reproduces the discursive issues outlined quickly above: the performer tries to catch a moment in the past elsewhere, moves close to but never can quite reach identity with the Qu Yuan, in whose voice he is speaking. The performer is not the shaman, an imagined transparency in which the voice in the scene of performance is connected without mediation to what is occurring elsewhere, becoming the voice of the god or the revenant. For the performer there is always a gap in space and time that prevents the collapse of difference into sameness. Perhaps that gap becomes reinscribed in the discourse he performs. By this I mean that the quest for perfect reproduction and the union of the same is the mirror image of shamanistic possession or the revenant, which passes into mere "performance" by a reciter. Let us stretch that gap between the reciter and the figure whose words are recited a little bit wider; let us insert into that gap a growing sense of history and historical difference. In the gap we have the ground of a new kind of identification between the reciter/reader and the voice he assumes in the act of "reciting"/ "reading (out loud)," *du* 讀. In that new and painful sense of sameness and difference we find Jia Yi and Sima Qian, both of whom identify with Qu Yuan but recognize Qu Yuan as a person of the past, now truly dead. The gap is such that invites them to supplement the act of "reciting"/ "reading" with a response from their own doubled sense of identification and difference. This is exactly what we find in both Jia Yi and Sima Qian responding to Qu Yuan. We have in this a new kind of reading.

and the wise king also is not yet aware.
I keep feelings within me, do not bring them forth,
yet how can I bear that it be thus forever?

While the second half of this stanza very much belongs to *Chu ci* discourse, with swelling passions and the question of "bearing" it, the first two lines of the stanza are inexplicable without considerable commentarial intervention. Although the lines maintain the theme of "woman" from the preceding passage, they seem to gesture back to the theme of Qu Yuan as harem woman in 22. We should also point out that the term *gui* 閨, "chambers of women," and *zhe wang* 哲王, "wise king," are found nowhere else in *Chu ci*. As so often elsewhere, we find a thematic incongruity linked to a passage supporting the theme of Qu Yuan as loyal minister (harem woman) using anomalous vocabulary. Indeed, the second line makes sense only is we read it with the closely allied 22. What is the king not aware of?—the answer can only be that the other women of the harem (obsequious courtiers) are slandering Qu Yuan, and the king is not aware of his true nature.

65
索瓊茅以筳篿兮，命靈氛為余占之。
曰兩美其必合兮，孰信脩而慕之。

I sought out qiong stems, for stalks to cast lots,
and bade Numinous Fen to divine the thing for me.
He said: "Two lovely beings must surely be matched;
whoever is truly fair adore her.

66
思九州之博大兮，豈惟是其有女。
曰勉遠逝而無狐疑兮，孰求美而釋女。

“Consider the wide sweep of these Nine Domains—
can it be only here that a woman be found?”
He said: “Undertake a far faring, be not full of doubts;
none who seeks beauty would let you slip by.

67
何所獨無芳草兮，爾何懷乎故宇。
世幽昧以眩曜兮，孰云察余之善惡。

“Is there any place lacking in plants of sweet fragrance?
why must you so cherish your former abode?
This age is a dark one, eyes are dazzled and blinded,
no man can discern what I find good or hate.

68
民好惡其不同兮，惟此黨人其獨異。
戶服艾以盈腰兮，謂幽蘭其不可佩。

“What men love and loathe is never the same—
only these men of faction alone stand apart.
Each person wears mugwort, stuffed in their waists,
they declare eupatorium may never be strung.

69
覽察草木其猶未得兮，豈珥美之能當。
蘇糞壤以充幃兮，謂申椒其不芳。

“If in discerning plants they still cannot grasp it,

can they ever be right in judgments of beauty?
They seek shit and mire to stuff their sachets,
and say that Shen's pepper lacks any sweet smell."

Following the three failures to make a match in remote antiquity, Qu Yuan turns to Numinous Fen (靈氛 OC pə[n]), probably Shaman Fen (巫盼, OC pʿ<r>ə[n]), one of the ten shamans said by the *Shanhai jing* 山海經 to inhabit the outland wilderness. The Chinese does not indicate clearly who is speaking in this passage, but the use of *yue* 曰 indicates that someone is. I have taken the first *yue* as Numinous Fen, but it could just as easily be Qu Yuan stating his case.

Fu Fei was said to be "beautiful truly," *xin mei* 信美, but was not a worthy mate because she lacked a sense of proper behavior. Clearly, she was wanting in the "inner beauty," *nei mei* 內美, that Qu Yuan claims to have. The person who is "truly fair," *xin xiu* 信脩, will be the "beauty" that will match his. When he encounters such a person, he will *mu* 慕, translated as "adore." *Mu* is the erotic term used in "Shan gui" 山鬼 of the *Jiu ge*, declaring the attraction of the shaman for the goddess or vice versa. In the *Jiubian* (九辯 "Nine Variations") it is the "admiration" for worthy men in the past. Whatever its actual date in relation to those other works, the *mu* here occupies an intermediary position between those distinct usages. The erotic is still the primary sense, but in the context of this and the following passage delivered by Shaman Xian, it is easily transferred to admiration of spiritual and moral worth ("inner beauty"). When beauty encounters beauty, they will be "matched," *he* 合. *He*, "match," is an interesting term. In the "Lord of the East" it is used in a musical sense, "matching the rhythm," *he jie* 合節. In the following passage, it is what Great Yu sought in a minister (72.3). It is a conjunction of like things, and the "adoration" that precedes union is not, as in the Platonic myth of the androgyne, the desire for what is lost or missing in the self, but rather a form of narcissism, loving that very quality of beauty that one has oneself.[65]

Before addressing the question of traveling outward, we need to consider the evolution of the opposition between the fragrant and foul-smelling. The Li sao began with simple fragrance, an

[65] The comparison is invited because *he* 合 is also the "matching" of tallies, parallel to "each is ever seeking his own counterpart (*symbolon*)" in the myth of the Androgyne.

external good to match inner good. We have seen fragrance not discerned and called foul-smelling. We have seen a preference for the foul-smelling on the part of bad people (e.g. 34.3). If we understand 68 correctly, we are here at a new level. Most people are various; previously only Qu Yuan stood apart from others by his unwavering love of fragrance. Now, however, the "men of faction" also stand apart from others in their equally consistent love of the foul-smelling. That is, they are Qu Yuan's negative double, differing from him only in their passion for the malodorous. They differ also from Qu Yuan in being plural to Qu Yuan's singular, a situation Qu Yuan is seeking to remedy by finding a mate who is both a pair and a perfect unity.

Diaspora

The solution to the frustrated quest is to travel farther. The problem for the person of singular beauty is the suspicion that, as the bird of prey, singularity is his determining characteristic. He is in a state of doubt, *huyi* 狐疑, uncertain that his match will be found. He has found some that are "beautiful," *mei*, but not totally so. Numinous Fen says go farther, and he will find the mirror of his own quest, one who "seeks beauty," *qiu mei* 求美, who will not let him go. That mutuality, union with the figure in the mirror, is the goal.

There is a motif of diaspora in the *Chu ci*. For those scholars who look to have manuscripts dug up near old Ying in southern Hubei, this is a poetics of aristocratic diaspora, whose extant traces were found in Hu'nan, Anhui, Jiangxi, and the old Wu region. They belong to Greater Chu, but to the core region that the Han called Jing 荊.[66]

Gun and Shun go outward to "die" and be transformed. In the Qu Yuan legend, the loyal minister is driven to wandering in the wilderness of the Xiao and Xiang region. Here Numinous Fen advises him not to cling to his "former abode," *guyu* 故宇; and at the end of the Li sao, traveling outward,

[66] The courtier feels that he has been misprized by the king and sent off to various outlying regions of greater Chu. One possibility we should consider is that this was an administrative solution to a basic problem of the Chu kingdom, which had outgrown its manageable boundaries. In the Tang too members of the elite did not like being sent to serve in the remote regions of the empire—we even call it "administrative exile." They wrote often about their desire to be recalled to Chang'an and the court. But in the Tang service in the provinces was governed by fixed terms of service. What if Chu courtiers were "exiled" to establish a royal presence in the far-flung outposts of the kingdom. Perhaps this poetry was a stylized means to speak their dissatisfaction and desire to return to the great city. No wonder it requires extreme commentarial ingenuity to move Qu Yuan all over the map of greater Chu: Hunan, Hanbei, the Wu region and the seacoast, all places mentioned in the works attributed to him

he looks back to his "former city," *gudu* 故都. The same term is used in the quintessential diaspora poem, the "Ai Ying" (哀郢 "Lament for Ying"), where the traveler looks back with care on the "former city," the fallen capital of Chu. The exile is traveling east, downriver, in the direction of Shouchun, which would become the final capital of Chu and the capital of the Han principality where the early *Chu ci* were preserved. It is worth here recalling that our current evidence suggests that the early *Chu ci* were preserved in what were the eastern and southern parts of the expanded Chu Kingdom. That is, these texts that so often speak of going outward, away from one's domain and native city, are texts from those who had "gone outward": Chu remained the imagined homeland, but the texts come from the provinces.

We also have in the *Chu ci* the inversion of diaspora in *Zhao hun*, in which the wandering soul of the dying may go forth to the far wilderness in all directions. Shaman Yang, who is designated to call back the soul, warns the soul that it will find not a perfect mate or ancient kings, but rather it will find only horrible monsters that will devour it. Numinous Fen tells Qu Yuan not to yearn for his "former abode"; Shaman Yang asks the soul to return to its "former dwelling place," *guju* 故居.

This discursive construction of space in the *Chu ci*, both pioneer and mythic, is distinctive. North China had its wanderers like King Mu of Zhou; but King Mu's *wanderlust* has little of the pained intensity of his *Chu ci* counterparts. At some stage in the characteristic *Chu ci* itinerary there is often a point of decision, the moment of "doubting," *huyi*, or "looking back." Whether one chooses to go on or return is less significant than the mythic pattern that demands the pause for decision. When we see the pattern echoed in datable history, as in the "Ai Ying," a historical subject discovers himself in a mythic moment. In the Li sao returning to the "former abode" is entering a world of inverted values, where foul stench is taken as sweet fragrance, and true sweetness can be discovered only by traveling on further. In *Zhao hun* all good things are to be found at home; going outward involves encounters with monsters (keeping in mind the metamorphoses that occur in the outer wilderness, such as Gun being transformed into a bear). Whatever one's judgment regarding the quality of home and outland spaces, the core of the mythic narrative remains the same.

Despite the auspicious prognostication of Numinous Fen, Qu Yuan still hesitates, seeking further confirmation.

70
欲從靈氛之吉占兮，心猶豫而狐疑。
巫咸將夕降兮，懷椒糈而要之。

I wished to follow Numinous Fen's lot of good fortune,
yet my heart faltered, doubts overcame me.
Shaman Xian would descend in the twilight,
I clasped pepper and rice to beseech him.

71
百神翳其備降兮，九疑繽其並迎。
皇剡剡其揚靈兮，告余以吉故。

The gods blotted sky, their full array descending,
the hosts of Many Doubts joined to go greet him.
Gloriously shining he sent forth his spirit,
giving me word of fortunate outcomes.

For some reason Numinous Fen's reading of the lots is insufficient to persuade Qu Yuan to venture further; perhaps in some hierarchy of deified shamans Shaman Xian had greater authority, suggested by the fact that he "descends" (from Heaven) and comes with the entourage of attendant divinities that is the sign of authority. As mentioned earlier, Qu Yuan is back in the Jiu Yi Range ("Many [literally "Nine"] Doubts/Alps") where Cangwu is located and where Qu Yuan held his first interview with Shun. In place of the quasi-political scene before Shun, here Qu Yuan comes with ritual offerings as a suppliant.

"To send forth the spirit," *yangling* 揚靈, was the term used in the "Xiang jun" in the "Nine Songs," when the shaman was seeking the beloved goddess; in that case he failed to reach her. Clearly the *ling* (very imperfectly translated here as "spirit" and elsewhere, as an attribute, as "numinous") is something that can be detached from the physical being; it is associated with light; it can travel and it can communicate. Like Numinous (*ling*) Fen, Shaman Xian encourages him to fare ahead.

72

曰勉陞降以上下兮，求矩矱之所同。
湯禹儼而求合兮，執咎繇而能調。

He said: "Undertake to fare high and then to fare low,
seek one who agrees with the yardstick and square.
Yu the Great was stern, he sought one who matched him,
he held to Gao Yao as one able to suit him.[67]

73

苟中情其好脩兮，又何必用夫行媒。
說操築於傅巖兮，武丁用而不疑。

"If one's nature within loves what is fair,
what need to make use of matchmaker or envoy?
Yue held an earth-ram upon Fu's cliff;
Wuding employed him and did not doubt.[68]

74

[67] Gao Yao 咎繇 was the minister of Yu.
[68] The Shang king Wuding found his famous minister Fu Yue when the latter was working in a labor gang, building earthen works.

呂望之鼓刀兮，遭周文而得舉。
甯戚之謳歌兮，齊桓聞而該輔。

"Lü Wang swung the knife of a butcher,[69]
yet he met Zhou's King Wen and he was raised up.
And there was Ning Qi, a singer of songs,
Huan of Qi heard him; he assisted in all.[70]

75
及年歲之未晏兮，時亦猶其未央。
恐鵜鴂之先鳴兮，使夫百草為之不芳。

"Yet act now before the year grows too late,
now while the season has not yet passed.
I fear only cries early from summer's nightjar,
making all plants lose their sweet scent."

Although approached as a shaman, Shaman Xian supports his prognostication like a court orator, with historical examples of rulers who found worthy ministers. The purely erotic version of the quest in the preceding section is redeployed as a political quest. Finding the right woman has been overwritten by the ruler finding the right minister: allegoresis has been written into the text itself—in a section that has the clearest trace of being a later elaboration (see comment on 84). It is interesting to note that the primarily political versions of Qu Yuan's quest are restricted to the interviews with Shun and Shaman Xian; elsewhere the political version is mingled with the erotic. The conventional interpretation of this passage is a promise that Qu Yuan will find a ruler who will appreciate him and employ his talents; however, as suggested at the beginning of our discussion,

[69] Lü Wang or Taigong, King Wen's famous advisor, first was a butcher, and when he grew older, became a fisherman. King Wen of Zhou discovered him in the latter role.
[70] Ning Qi was a petty merchant who attracted the attention of Count Huan of Qi by rapping on the horns of his ox and singing. Duke Huan, who ruled in the seventh century B.C., is the latest historical figure mentioned in Li sao.

in Shaman Xian's examples it is the future minister who stayed stationary and the ruler who traveled to find him. Great Yu "sought one who matched him," *qiu he* 求合; the analogy applies to Qu Yuan and not the person sought: he is the man seeking a "bride," *qiu nü* 求女, whether divinely literal or politically figurative. That is, just as Qu Yuan sought earlier to insert himself at the beginning of a lineage of rulers, here he is in the role of the ruler seeking a worthy minister, rather than vice versa.

Earlier Qu Yuan had insisted on using a matchmaker as necessary in finding a mate, even though all his matchmakers failed him. Here Shaman Xian tells him to dispense with the matchmaker, and indeed in the historical examples the ministers are found by chance rather than being recommended. As Qu Yuan has discovered, those who mediate prove to be unreliable: they are likely to be men of faction who "favor friends," *hao peng* 好朋, rather than "loving the fair," *hao xiu* 好脩. The only way to escape corrupt mediation—slanders, lies, and favoritism—is the direct encounter of like and like. When Wuding found his minister Fu Yue in a corvee labor gang, he recognized his worth at once "and did not doubt." Shaman Xian warns Qu Yuan of the danger that, as happened with the daughters of the You-Song and You-Yu, the moment will be missed, wasted by "wavering in doubt."

In contrast to Qu Yuan's earlier speculative interventions in archaic history, here Qu Yuan's quest is clearly occurring in what game-designers call "real-time." Qu Yuan's anxiety about passing time was raised early in the poem (4) and was the essential factor in his strange journey into history in 56-63. Time is always pressing, and the allotted time is always about to pass. It is, however, poetically "never too late." Qu Yuan always hesitates at the crucial moment and starts the cycle again.

76

何瓊佩之偃蹇兮，眾曖然而蔽之。

惟此黨人之不諒兮，恐嫉妒而折之。

My sash-hangings of qiong, how they dangle swaying—

yet the throngs would dim them, cover them over.
These men of faction are wanting in faith,
I fear their spite and malice, that they will break them.

77
時繽紛其變易兮，又何可以淹留。
蘭芷變而不芳兮，荃蕙化而為茅。

The times are in tumult, ever transforming.
how then may a man linger here long?
Eupatorium, angelica change, they become sweet no more;
calamus and basil alter, they turn into straw.

78
何昔日之芳草兮，今直為此蕭艾也。
豈其有他故兮，莫好脩之害也。

How do sweet-smelling plants of days gone by
now become nothing more than stinking weeds?
Can there be any reason other than this?—
the harm that is worked by no love for the fair.

79
余以蘭為可恃兮，羌無實而容長。
委厥美以從俗兮，苟得列乎眾芳。

I once thought Eupatorium could be steadfast:
it bore me no fruit, it was all show.

Forsaking its beauty, it followed the common;
it wrongly is ranked in the hosts of sweet scent.

80

椒專佞以慢慆兮，櫗又欲充夫佩幃。
既干進而務入兮，又何芳之能祗。

Pepper is master of fawning, it is swaggering, reckless,
only mock-pepper stuffs sachets hung from waists.
It pressed hard to advance, it struggled for favor,
what sweet scent remains that is able to spread?

81

固時俗之流從兮，又孰能無變化。
覽椒蘭騎若茲兮，又況揭車與江離。

Truly, ways of these times are willful and loose,
who now is able to avoid being changed?
Viewing eupatorium and pepper, seeing them thus,
will it be less true of lovage and wintergreen?

82

惟茲佩之可貴兮，委厥美而歷茲。
芳菲菲而難虧兮，芬至今猶未沫。

Only these my own pendants are still to be prized;
forsaken is beauty, and I come to this.

Yet their sweet scent spreads, it is not diminished,
even now the aroma has still not abated.

Qu Yuan's longest denunciation of his times, while not uncharacteristic, comes rather incongruously after Shaman Xian's persuasion to continue to seek. The segments seem held together by association. Shaman Xian's advice to act before the plants lose their fragrance leads to an anxiety about others seeking to hide his fragrance, and then the perversion of the flowers, losing their fragrance not because of time passing but because they have changed their nature. As often, a motif, once introduced, is subject to variation and inversion.

He looks for the reason, *gu* 故, for change and corruption; and he locates the cause of change in failure to love what is fair, *haoxiu* (78). This brings him back to the motif of constancy—his own as opposed to "eupatorium" and "pepper." "Eupatorium" was once thought trustworthy, but it "forsook its beauty," *wei jue mei* 委厥美. Clearly, we have left the realm of common botany. "Eupatorium" and "pepper" have been taken by traditional commentators to refer to particular individuals in the Chu court, and it is indeed clear that they should, in some ways, be figures for the human. We might recall the use of flower names for the king in Li sao and the deity in "Shao siming."

The question is: are these plants figures for particular human beings, or have they been generally anthropomorphized? There is no question that they are linked to moral qualities, but that does not answer the question. Is "pepper" a someone or an anyone who "fawns," or is the exhaustion of its scent the failure to find the external counterpart of inner beauty? Whatever the case, the fragrance that comes from his own sachet and pendants is permanent, in contrast to those others. As 72-74 is an exegetical overlay of seeking a minister on seeking a mate, this passage allegorizes the corruptible flower, once the external counterpart of his inner beauty.

83
和調度以自娛兮，聊浮游而求女。
及余飾之方壯兮，周流觀乎上下。

In their blending's measure I take my delight,
I will drift and will roam, seeking the woman.
And while such adornment is still in its glory,
I will range widely looking, both high and low.

After declaring the constancy of his own fragrance amid general change, Qu Yuan here returns to the interpretation of time and change offered earlier: "while such adornment is still in its glory [prime]," *ji yu shi zhi fang zhuang* 及余飾之方壯. He also returns to seeking a woman.

84
靈氛既告余以吉占兮，歷吉日乎吾將行。
折瓊枝以為羞兮，精瓊靡以為糧。

Since Numinous Fen told me my lot of good fortune,
I choose a day of good fortune, and I will set out.
I snap stalks of qiong to serve as my viands,
fine qiong meal will serve as my fare.

This stanza is one of those points that strongly suggest that a simpler sequence of stanzas has been amplified in the current version. The first two lines are a direct response to Numinous Fen's earlier prognostication, and no mention is made of the intervening confirmatory judgment of Shaman Xian and Qu Yuan's radical denunciation of plants that have changed their very nature. We should here keep in mind that the political figure of the ruler seeking a minister is carried *entirely* through Shaman Xian's advice, and that Numinous Fen spoke only of seeking a woman. Moreover, decision by an augury of "good fortune," *ji* 吉, has very different premises from a decision based on historical precedents. In 71.4 Shaman Xian does inform him of "fortunate outcomes," *ji gu* 吉故; although we are not certain of the precise sense here, it seems to refers to

the occasions when rulers found ministers. But in this case the "good fortune" is not based on casting divination stalks; the shifting sense of *ji* here invites the translation "lucky outcomes," stressing the element of chance over that of prediction. When Qu Yuan chooses "a day of good fortune," *ji ri* 吉日, we could call it a "lucky day," but it belongs to a predictive system.

If we assume that 84.1-2 is an older layer of the text, initiating the second heavenly journey, then it is easy to explain the transition to the Shaman Xian passage as the necessary act of deferral, using very similar words.

欲從靈氛之吉占兮, 心猶豫而狐疑.

I wished to follow Numinous Fen's lot of good fortune,
yet still my heart faltered, doubts overcame me. (70.1-2)

靈氛既告余以吉占兮，歷吉日乎吾將行。

Since Numinous Fen told me my lot of good fortune,
I choose a day of good fortune, and I will set out.

That is, it is easier to explain the necessity of 70.1-2 (postponing action) if 84.1-2 (taking action) is already a stable passage, than to explain why 84.1-2 suddenly goes back fifteen stanzas to Numinous Fen rather than more proximately to Shaman Xian's advice, especially when Shaman Xian seems to be the more authoritative figure as the one sought for a "second opinion." Anywhere else in the literatures of the world, this would be strong and persuasive evidence of an interpolation.

85
為余駕飛龍兮，雜瑤象以為車。
何離心之可同兮，吾將遠逝以自疏。

For me have been hitched those dragons that fly,
mixed onyx and ivory serve as my chariot.
How can a mind set apart be ever like others?
I will go away far, keep myself removed.

86
邅吾道夫崑崙兮，路脩遠以周流。
揚雲霓之晻藹兮，鳴玉鸞之啾啾。

I bent my way round at Kunlun Mountain,
Long and far was the road, there I ranged all around.
I raised my cloud-rainbows, dimming and darkening,
jade phoenix chimes rang, with a jingling sound.

87
朝發軔於天津兮，夕余至乎西極。
鳳皇翼其承旂兮，高翔翱之翼翼。

At dawn I loosed the wheel-block at Ford-of-the-Sky,[71]
by twilight I came to the ends of the west.
Phoenix spread its wings, and bore up my banners,
high aloft it soared, its wing-beats were steady.

88
忽吾行此流沙兮，遵赤水而容與。
麾蛟龍使梁津兮，詔西皇使涉予。

[71] The "Ford-of-the-Sky" was located between the Sieve and the Dipper, or, by another explanation, in the very center of the sky.

All at once I was faring across Drifting Sands,
I went along the Red Waters, there took my ease.[72]
I signaled the dragons to make me a bridge,
I called to West's Sovereign to take me across.

89
路脩遠以多艱兮，騰眾車使徑待。
路不周以左轉兮，指西海以為期。

Long and far was the road, it was filled with perils,
I had all my chariots mount up, drive straight and attend me.
I made my path to Mount Buzhou, there turned to the left,[73]
toward the Sea of the West my appointed goal.

90
屯余車其千乘兮，齊玉軑而並馳。
駕八龍之婉婉兮，載雲旗之委蛇。

Then I massed my chariots, a thousand strong,
jade hubs lined even, we galloped together.
I hitched my eight dragons, heaving and coiling,
and bore my cloud banners streaming behind.

The second and shorter version of the heavenly journey is better prepared. The reader might reasonably ask where "seeking a woman" has gone, since this was the burden of Numinous Fen's prognostication and the figurative burden of Shaman Xian's historical examples. If we assume that

[72] The Red Waters were said to flow from Kunlun.
[73] Mount Buzhou was supposed to be to the northwest of Kunlun.

the Li sao consists of segments in a more or less determined order, then the answer is that "seeking a woman" should be the next segment. In the first heavenly journey, Qu Yuan travels and then goes up, apparently to the core region of Heaven. He is turned away there and only afterward, in a reprise of the heavenly journey, seeks a "woman below." Here we have only the initial traveling, with his journey interrupted as he ascends.

Although some new places are named, the itinerary begins remarkably like the two phases of the first, setting out from the Many Doubts Range and going to Mount Kunlun in the far West. This journey, however, is primarily to the West, rather than the circuit of the first journey. Indeed, Drifting Sands on his itinerary was one of the horrible places that Shaman Yang warned the wandering soul not to go in *Zhao hun*. Qu Yuan here admits that the journey was "filled with perils." At last we have what looks like a chariot charge, a thousand chariots galloping hub to hub, with banners flying. This recalls the hunt in the coda of *Zhao hun*:

青驪結駟兮齊千乘

Jet-black steeds were yoked in teams,
a thousand chariots in an even line.

As mentioned earlier, a "thousand chariots" was the mark of one of the lords of the domains, and the coda of *Zhao hun* explicitly mentions the king in this context. There is no doubt that at this point Qu Yuan is acting as a king.

Reiteration

The homology of the three iterations of a heavenly journey (46-51, 54-56, and 85-90) is remarkable: there is the setting out, the itinerary naming places, and the commanding of deities, each element occurring in roughly the same order. Like the double interview before taking flight, we might see this as a compositional template that defines the Li sao. Works composed in the shadow of the Li sao often follow this template, though they do not follow the double interview.

By contrast, many of the same elements are present in the river journey of "Xiang jun," but in a different order. If we think of the Li sao as a text that was elaborated differently in each performance (before the text was fixed), then the identity of the text was in part the function of such a template, however much it might be expanded and however many times it might be repeated within any given realization.

The reiteration of segments also contains purely verbal repetitions; that is, we may find the same word in the same position in a line of the same pattern, even though the lines may say very different things or serve different purposes in the discourse. Comparison of the three iterations of the heavenly journey will show a number of obvious verbal repetitions, but since these serve thematically identical roles, they do not show how verbal repetition exists on a purely mechanical level. In 49 we may recall that in the course of the heavenly journey: he "snapped a branch of the Ruo tree to block out the sun," 折若木以拂日兮. After failing in Heaven and resuming the journey in 55 "I snapped sprays of garnet to add to my pendants" 折瓊枝以繼佩. We should note that this "snapping" occurs in the "Palace of Spring," the ends of the east where the Ruo tree may also be located. In the third iteration (84) it is the gesture that precedes the second journey: "I snap stalks of qiong reeds to serve as my viands" 折瓊枝以為羞兮. This is not true "formulaic" composition, but rather a verbal pattern with some shared words that belongs at a particular phase in the discourse. This final variation of the line (84.3) is what comes to mind on the prospect of "setting out" (84.2). Since particular "snapping stalks of qiong reeds" line occurs before the formal departure, the snapping is realized as an act of provision. As we might expect, we find the same snapping in the heavenly journey in "Da siming" in *Jiu ge*: "I snapped off a hemp bud and blossoms of yao-grass" 折疏麻兮瑤華. I am being conservative in my translation of this line: the parallel lines all suggest that the penultimate word in the line should be a verb, and indeed *yao* 瑤, "yao-grass" is simply a graphic decision for a sound that is also 搖, "to wave."

91

抑志而弭節兮，神高馳之邈邈。

奏九歌而舞韶兮，聊假日以媮樂。

I then quelled my will　and slackened my pace;
the gods galloped high　far into the distance,
they were playing Nine Songs　and dancing the Shao,
making use of this day　to take their delight.

92
陟陞皇之赫戲兮，忽臨睨夫舊鄉。
僕夫悲余馬懷兮，蜷局顧而不行。

I was mounting aloft　to such dazzling splendor—
all at once I peered down　to my homeland of old.
My driver grew sad,　my horses felt care,
they flexed looking backward　and would not go on.

In the poetic rhythms of the *Chu ci* "galloping" is properly followed by "slackening the pace," *mijie* 弭節. Qu Yuan does so, but the gods apparently keep galloping on. The word *shen* 神, translated as "gods," is used on only one other occasion in the Li sao, when the "gods" (literally "the hundred gods," *baishen* 百神) massed around Shaman Xian in his descent. In both Qu Yuan's heavenly journeys in the Li sao he mentions familiar deities in his train and under his command; it is therefore reasonable to suppose that these gods who continue on are indeed his entourage.

Agency is often a problem in Chinese poetry, where the subject of a verb is so often omitted. One looks for context and parallels. The translation above follows the standard interpretation in having the gods playing the music and dancing; this supported by a musical performance of the gods in a similar position in *Yuan you* and many later texts. There is, however, another parallel situation in which a first-person speaker is ascending the heavens, then witnesses music and

dancing which fill him with longing and keep him from going on. The speaker is the sun god in "Dong jun" in *Jiu ge*:

曒將出兮東方，照吾檻兮扶桑。
撫余馬西安驅，夜皎皎兮既明。
駕龍輈兮乘雷，載雲旗兮委蛇。
長太息兮將上，心低徊兮顧懷。
羌聲色兮娛人，觀者憺兮忘歸。
緪瑟兮交鼓，蕭鐘兮瑤虡。
鳴篪兮吹竽，思靈保兮賢姱。
翾飛兮翠曾，展詩兮會舞。

"Aglow, about to come forth in the east,
shining on my railing by the tree Fusang,
then patting my steeds in a steady trot,
the night is lit up, and the day breaks.
My dragon-cart hitched, I ride on the thunder,
bearing banners of cloud streaming behind.
But I heave a great sigh on the point of ascending;
the heart hesitates, I look back with care:
for the sounds and beauty so give a man joy
that the one who watches is transfixed and forgets to go.
Tighten the zither strings, beat the drums alternating,
strike the bells, make the bell frames shake,
make the fifes sing out, blow the reed-organ;
those who act numinous ones, wholesome and comely,
flutter here winging, abruptly mounting on high,
presenting the lyrics joining in dance.

Some of the same words are used, and the parallel is a suggestive one. The sun god at last breaks away from this moment of "looking back" and continues his journey. Yet another parallel is the description of the musical performance that is supposed to lure the wandering soul back home in *Zhao hun*. We cannot be sure if the music is being played by the gods above, luring him onward, or on earth below, making him pause and look back with longing. In the poetics of the *Chu ci* it probably doesn't matter who is playing the music and where, only that beguiling music is being played at this moment of ascent. The music belongs at this point on a purely textual level; its "meaning," its contextual function, can go one way or another.

The "Nine Songs" was indeed the music of Heaven, music that King Qi of Xia received and played on earth (37):

啟九辯與九歌兮，夏康娛以自縱。

"King Qi had Nine Stanzas and the Nine Songs—
extreme in wild pleasures, he did as he pleased.

Our extant version of *Jiu ge* ("The Nine Songs") in the *Chu ci* is only an ancient name attached by a later editor to a set of ritual songs; it is not the original "Nine Songs" of Heaven, played with the no less numinous Shao music in the Li sao passage. But the pleasures of the heavenly music can go wrong and be linked, as in the couplet quoted, to the same kind of corruption that he flees.

Of course, it is not Qu Yuan himself who admits to feeling sad on looking back. It is his driver who is saddened by the departure and the horses that look back and balk. In many ways this is the most remarkable moment in the poem, where natural feeling is allowed to emerge, feeling that belongs neither to the noble and solitary Qu Yuan nor the corrupt many. Up to this point Qu Yuan kept company only with semi-divine beings and kings; now his very conveyance to Heaven resists the ascent. One last time a persuasion is needed—though it remains unclear whether he is persuading himself or his driver and horses:

亂曰：已矣哉，國無人兮莫我知兮，又何懷乎故都。
既莫足與為美政兮，吾將從彭咸之所居。

The Ending Song: It is done now forever!
in the domain there is no one, no one who knows me,
then why should I cherish that city, my home?
Since no one can join me in making beautiful rule,
I will go off to seek where Peng and Xian dwell.

The Li sao proper closes with a moment of pausing as Qu Yuan, his driver, and his horses all turn and look back. Qu Yuan obviously feels a moment of hesitation. Then he closely echoes Numinous Fen's question in 67 urging him to fare ahead: "why must you so cherish your former abode?" The reason not to cherish his home is as Numinous Fen says: no one can distinguish the good, thus no one knows him—or there is no one there to love him.

His search had been for someone to join him, woman or minister. Here at last he seems to reject that possibility in a line that recalls the closing of the "Shao siming," cited earlier:

蓀獨宜兮為民正。

Sweet Flag alone is fit to rule all the folk.

In place of *min zheng*, "rule of the folk," here we have *mei zheng*, "good (beautiful) rule."[74] Reading the lines together we notice a parallel that might otherwise have escaped us: the Li sao's

[74] Despite the more striking difference in Mandarin, *min* and *mei* were much closer in ancient Chinese (their proximity varying by the person making the reconstruction). They are distinguished by the finals, the nasal of *min* and a "d" or glottal stop for *mei*. We know that the initial of the following word can affect how the preceding word was heard and transcribed. My limited expertise in ancient phonology does not permit me to offer an informed judgment on the possibility that these might be the same word, transcribed from a stylized provincial Chu poetic dialect in the Han. Two points, however, might be made: 1) a repeated compound is preferable to two unique compounds; 2) "rule of the folk," *min zheng*, would have been dissonant in reconciling the poem to the Qu Yuan legend—although, as we have seen, at this point Qu Yuan has all the trappings of a ruler. Those who made good marriages earlier became rulers; if one cannot make the right marriage, perhaps one cannot become a ruler. On the level of speculation, this line in the Li sao should be *min zheng*. We would thus translate the earlier line as: "in the domain (or capital," his home) there is

"no one can join me" perfectly matches "alone" of "Shao siming." Perhaps we should translate the line slightly differently: "Sweet Flag is fit to rule the folk alone." Unlike the god, Sweet Flag, the Junior Master of Lifespans, Qu Yuan requires a mate, whether woman or minister.

His final decision is to go "where Peng and Xian [or Peng Xian] dwell." Chinese commentators have long wanted to make this a decision to drown himself, but within the Li sao itself we know that Shaman Xian lives in heaven. Thus, the most natural way to read the passage would be refusing that pang of hesitation as he looks back toward home, recognizing that he does not belong there, and deciding to on to Heaven. There, as a spirit, a return to earth would be a "descent," *jiang* 降, like that of Shaman Xian—and like the "descent" he declared in the first stanza. One of his names is, after all a shaman name, "Numinous Poise" or Numinous Jun," Lingjun.

We began with the question: "What is the Li sao?" After examining it carefully, we may know a great deal more, but greater knowledge more often leads to more uncertainties than to clearer understanding. Perhaps the Li sao was indeed written by a historical Qu Yuan who lived from about 340 BCE to 278 BCE; perhaps he drew on the religious model of seeking the goddess as a figure for his quest for a ruler who understood him. Perhaps, in the intensity of his distress, he invented an entirely new kind of poetic figuration. Perhaps he composed the poem orally or in writing and that text was transmitted with some precision to the second century BCE court of Liu An, where it was written down with a brief "tradition" (*zhuan* 傳) and presented to Emperor Wu. But only "perhaps."

The advantage of this argument, refined over millennia with many variations, is that it can account for the text that we have. Another way to describe this, however, might be to say that the problematic text and the assumptions about its composition produced interpretive procedures that could account for it. It "makes sense" because its very early canonicity was one of the bases for a poem "making sense" in the Chinese tradition and may have introduced changes in the text itself in its process of formation.

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no one who loves me." We would translate the line in question: "Since no one can join me in ruling the folk." *Mei zheng* 美政 is a term used to describe Traditionalist (Ru) government in Xunzi.

We can, however, offer another account, one that is much less neat. This account in part accepts the Qu Yuan story, though not as a story of authorship; rather, some elementary version of the Qu Yuan story became attached to a poem that was always reperformed somewhat differently, and the associated story guided the evolution of the poem. Although we have pointed out a few moments in the poem that suggest addition to an earlier level of the poem, precisely because it was always reperformed according to compositional rules rather than a fixed "script," we can never extract what was later from what was earlier. At some points we can see fissures, but in many cases stanzas fuse what seem to be older elements (in lexicon, line pattern, or motif) with elements that might seem to be later (e.g., terms not otherwise used in earlier *Chu ci*, but with strong resonance in Northern discourse). A fine example occurs in (16): "I fear my fair name will not be fixed firmly" 恐脩名之不立. We have discussed this earlier, but it remains a fine example of fusion: to "establish (fix firmly) one's name," *liming* 立名, is made up of two northern usages without clear parallel elsewhere in *Chu ci*. But the attribute of "name," *xiu* ("fair"), is the quintessential *Chu ci* quality. Here, as in much of the Li sao, two discursive traditions have been brought together.

The more difficult and unanswerable question is what the poem was that might have been transformed under the pressure of the Qu Yuan legend, as it was understood in the second century BCE, and perhaps earlier. We have reason to suspect it was both a religious poem and a political one, having something to do with the ancestry of the Qu family and all three of the royal lineages of Chu. The speaker in that poem may not yet be a full king, but he is kingly and looking for the mate that will confirm him as the head of a lineage. He moves in the archaic past. He fails in that quest, and his failure seems to take him to a realm different from governing mortals—perhaps a realm of numinous beings.

If there ever was such a poem, we can never find it again. We can only see remnant shards—odd pieces left in the other, later poem that took shape out of it. What links the two is the aristocrat, the man whose "good" quality derives solely from his birth, the man who can corrupt his legacy but can never lose it and whose finest choice is never to change. He is the man who can never find his double because he is radically singular.

離騷 Li sao

1

帝高陽之苗裔兮，Of the god-king Gao Yang　I am the far offspring,[75]

朕皇考曰伯庸.　my late honored sire　bore the name of Boyong.[76]

攝提貞于孟陬兮，The *sheti* stars aligned　with the year's first month;[77]

惟庚寅吾以降.　*gengyin* was the day　that I came down.[78]

2

皇攬揆余於初度兮，He scanned and he delved　into my first measure,[79]

肇錫余以嘉名.　from the portents my sire　bestowed on me fine names:[80]

名余曰正則兮，　The name that he gave me　was Upright Standard;

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[75] Gao Yang was the title of a legendary emperor of high antiquity, sometimes identified with Zhuanxu 顓頊, to whom the ruling clans of Chu (as well as Qi, Zhao, and Qin) traced their ancestry. *Di* 帝, translated as "god-king," was the term for a deified ancestor. *Yizi* 裔子 was used in *Zuozhuan* for a descendent; the *Chu shijia* 楚世家 in *Shi ji* uses 苗裔, which may suggest a Chu term or the influence of Li sao on Sima Qian. *Miao* 苗 "far," (mjew<m(r)aw) is literally "shoot" or "sprout," but it is very possibly a loan for the phonologically distinct *miao* 眇/渺, "remote," "faint to the eye in the distance" (mjiewX< [m]ewʔ).

[76] In the Warring States the first-person pronoun *zhen* 朕 ("my") was supposedly not restricted to rulers, though we should note that in this case the speaker claims to belong to the royal lineage. *Huangkao* 皇考 is generally accepted as a term for one's deceased father, though some scholars (Wang Kaiyun, Wen Yiduo, Rao Zongyi, Wang Siyuan) have argued that this is a grandfather, great-grandfather, or the ancestor of the lineage. The justification is the opening line of "Feng fen" 逢紛 in Liu Xiang's *Jiu tan* 九歎: 伊伯庸之末胄 "He is the late scion of Boyong." This might be consistent with the fully historicized Qu Yuan of Liu Xiang's day, but such twisting of the standard meaning of *huangkao* is unnecessary if we place Qu Yuan in mythic antiquity. The interpretation as deceased father has stronger claims (Zhan Antai, Jiang Liangfu). Rao Zongyi argues that Boyong is Zhu Rong 祝融, another deity prominent in the Chu royal lineage.

[77] The *sheti* 攝提 was either a constellation or a star-line or when Jupiter was in the position of *yin* 寅. *Zhen* 貞, glossed as 當, suggests the perfect alignment of the "handle" of the Plough constellation pointing to the *sheti*, a position from which one could tell the first lunar month. "The year's first month," *mengzou* 孟陬, is a speculative rendering of an astronomer's term.

[78] Although many scholars have taken the *jiazi* designation as a year, attempting to date Qu Yuan's birth to various years between 343 and 335 BCE, other scholars have argued persuasively that in the Warring States *jiazi* designations were used for days rather than years. Although the standard interpretation of *jiang* 降 here is "to be born," it is nowhere else used in that sense (until we have echoes of this text with its standard gloss). *Jiang* is generally used of a spirit descending to earth. Sukhu 2012 argues for this interpretation, and it indisputably correct. The first four characters of this line were preserved on bamboo slips from the Western Han; this is presumed to be the earliest textual remainder of the Li sao, but the phrase is so short that it could be from a different context.

[79] *Huang* 皇 here is generally taken as *huangkao* in l. 2, though Wen Yiduo takes it as the "high god" and Tang Bingzheng takes it as 媓, his mother. It has been argued that *lan* 攬 was a Chu usage for "scrutinize"; however, the *wuchen* edition of *Wenxuan* reads *jian* 鑒, and this reading is preferred by many modern scholars. *Du* 度 is understood in various ways: as the configuration of heavenly bodies on the speaker's birth (Wang Yi), as the time of year (Zhu Xi), or as his capacity or his appearance. Later uses of the term in Li sao favor capacity or appearance, some integral of measurable qualities, though You Guoen and Jiang Liangfu, following Wang Yi, take it as the proper configuration of heavenly bodies.

[80] *Zhao* 肇 should mean "initially"; however, it seems preferable to understand this as a loan for *zhao* 兆, to "choose by divination." Ma Maoyuan cites a parallel in the *Zuo zhuan* (Huan 6) in which an aristocratic father chooses a name for an infant.

字余曰靈均. and my formal title was Holy Poise. [81]

3

紛吾既有此內美兮, Such bounty I had of beauty within,[82]

又重之以脩能. this was doubled with fair appearance.[83]

扈江離與辟芷兮, I wore mantles of lovage and remote angelica,[84]

紉秋蘭以為佩. I strung autumn eupatoria to hang from my sash.

4

汩余若將不及兮, Hastening went I, as though I would not catch them—[85]

恐年歲之不吾與. I feared the years passing would keep me no company.

朝搴阰之木蘭兮, At dawn I would pluck magnolia on bluffs,[86]

[81] Sima Qian gives Qu Yuan's *ming* as Ping 平, and there has been much discussion why another name is given here. Setting aside the obvious possibility that Qu Yuan or the speaker in the Li sao is not Qu Ping, various explanations have been proposed: 1) this name is an elegant transformation of Ping (Yu Pingbo, et al); 2) the names here are purely poetic; 3) this is an infant name, later changed to an adult name. We should however note that the "formal title," the *zi* 字 name, has the form of a shaman's name, prefixed with *ling*, "holy," or, more precisely, "numinous." Moreover, while I do not know the practices in late Warring States Chu, the *zi*, "formal name," was later given only on a young man's maturity, at the capping ceremony. The antiquity of this procedure depends on the dating of a few other ancient texts that use it—explicitly in relation to the capping ceremony. Its appearance in this context as given at birth makes one of the more problematic usages in the poem.

[82] Jiang Liangfu discusses the use of an initial adverb or adjective as a peculiarity of *Chu ci* poetic diction. *Fen* 紛 is a common *Chu ci* descriptive, suggesting quantity and often (though not here) confusion due to numerousness. Note that *neimei* 內美is a "marked term"; *mei* 美 had been an external quality; transferred to an inner quality it must be "marked" by 內.

[83] *Neng* 能 (ɳˤə-s< nˤə(ʔ)) in its usual reading obviously presents a serious problem of rhyme. The old solution was to retain the meaning of the graph ("abilities") and to pronounce it *nai*. Since early characters were often written without the radicals now considered necessary, most scholars take this as a loan for 態 *tai* (thojH< ɳˤə-s), "appearance." Note that *tai* rhymes with *pei* 佩 in MC but not in OC. As an outer quality, *tai* complements "beauty within" and seems the proper reading. *Xiu* 修, translated as "fair," is one of the most common *Chu ci* terms for "good and beautiful"; one of its most common associations as "long" or "tall." It is possible here that Qu Yuan is saying here that he was tall, which, of course, was a mark of good looks. *Chong* 重, "doubled," a repetition or "second layer," is more specific than a simple addition; here it presumes that the internal repeats the qualities of the internal.

[84] *Hu* 扈 is explained as "wear"; some have suggested this is a Chu usage (doubtlessly because this sense of "wear" is found only in *Chu ci* commentary), and others have argued that this is specifically to wear like a cape, over the shoulders and back. All we really know with full confidence is that it is a verb that is something one can do with plants.

[85] *Gu* 汩 is glossed by Wang Yi as "the manner of going swiftly"; the *Fangyan* 方言 describes this as a usage from "beyond southern Chu" or, more likely, "the far reaches of southern Chu" 南楚之外.

[86] Wang Yi explains *pi* 阰, "bluffs," as a mountain in Chu. You Guoen prefers Wang Yuan's 汪瑗 (d. *c.* 1566) interpretation as *bi* 坒, "adjacencies," "land in succession and being adjacent" 地之相次而比者也, taken in opposition to "isles" in the following line. While this makes etymological sense, it is, to say the least, topographically vague. Jiang Liangfu 1999: I.424 agrees with Wang Yuan's interpretation (as Yu Yue's 俞樾, 1821-1907) and points out that the word is a hapax legomenon..

夕攬洲之宿莽. In the twilight on isles I culled star anise blooms.[87]

5

日月忽其不淹兮，Days and months sped past, they did not long linger,

春與秋其代序. spring-times and autumns altered in turn.

惟草木之零落兮，I thought on things growing, on the fall of their leaves,[88]

恐美人之遲暮. and feared for the Beauty, her drawing toward dark.[89]

6

不撫壯而棄穢兮，You do not cling to your prime and forsake what is rotting—[90]

何不改此度. why not change this measure of yours?[91]

乘騏驥以馳騁兮，I will drive fine steeds, go off at a gallop—

來吾道夫先路. I will now take the lead, in the vanguard chariot.[92]

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[87] *Sumang* 宿莽 has been interpreted as evergreen plants, but Tai Jingnong makes a good argument that these are plants that stay alive when pulled up. Zhao Kuifu identifies it with star anise, which I have followed without great confidence in the accuracy of the identification. Pan Fujun unfortunately identifies it as *Beckmannia syzigachne* (Steud.) Fernald, American sloughgrass, which is—as the name indicates—native to North America.

[88] *Wei* 惟 is here understood in its full verbal sense of "to think on."

[89] Although "Beauty" in itself is not absolutely gender marked, in *Jiu ge* it is feminine and generally presumed to be so until the diffusion of the figurative interpretation of the Li sao. If it is not an interpolation, it is possible to take the *meiren* in "Shao siming" as masculine, referring to the god. The term translated as "the Beauty" (literally "beautiful person"), *mei* 美, is the same as "beauty" earlier (3). Its usage in this passage is usually understood as referring to the king, though You Guoen and a few others want to take it as Qu Yuan himself. This is one of the many cases in which the "meaning" is clear, but the referent, unclear, and potentially fluid.

[90] This line presents a problem of interpretation. The *bu* 不, marking negation, has to be explained. Either it is dropped or expanded to *hebu* 何不, "why not," as in the following line, or it is given a different meaning. It seems best to take the subject as the Beauty of the preceding stanza: "He does not cling to his prime and forsake what is rotting" (Jiang Liangfu). Reading in the same way, Xu Renfu argues that it is necessary for the sense. Some early versions of *Wen xuan* do not have the 不, and Tang Bingzheng argues that Wang Yi's paraphrase suggests that his text did not read *bu*. If we read it as declarative, continuing the preceding stanza, then the *bu* is necessary; if we read it as imperative, then the *bu* is a problem. Since the Tang manuscript *Wen xuan* does read *bu*, I keep it and take it in Jiang Liangfu's interpretation. I have taken *fu* 撫 as "lay hold of," but many commentators interpret it as "rely on." "Prime," *zhuang*, is a distinctly human attribute (inappropriate for plants); but "rotting," *hui* 穢, is strongly vegetative, perhaps echoing the floral adornments that may "double" the inner person.

[91] *Du* 度, "measure," is the same term used in the second stanza as the object of the father's "scanning and delving." There it seems like a fixed thing awaiting discovery, indeed according to some scholars, the astrological conjunction governing one's birth. In this line it is represented as something capable of change. Note that *gai* 改 can be positive change. Although the context *may* make the referent and significance different, it is hard not to notice the homology between this line and the Sister's urging him to change own his stubborn nature (33-34).

[92] Ma Maoyuan and others take *lai* 來 as a term of invitation, though some scholars take it as *nai* 乃. *Dao* 道 is used in the sense of *dao* 導, "to lead." Wen Yiduo's suggestion that *lu* 路 is the homophonous 輅, with *xianlu* 先輅 as a special term for the "vanguard chariot" that goes ahead of the king's chariot. Usually it is simply "the ruler's chariot." It could, however, also be "on the road ahead."

7

昔三后之純粹兮，The Three Kings of old　were pure and unblemished,[93]

固眾芳之所在.　where all things of sweet scent　indeed were.

雜申椒與菌桂兮，Shen's pepper was there,　together with cassia,[94]

豈維紉夫蕙茝.　white angelica, basil　were not strung alone.[95]

8

彼堯舜之耿介兮，Such shining grandeur　had kings Yao and Shun;

既遵道而得路.　they went the true way,　they found the path.

何桀紂之昌被兮，Why were kings Jie and Zhow　slouching and shambling?—[96]

夫唯捷徑以窘步.　they walked at hazard　on side-paths.[97]

9

惟夫黨人之偷樂兮，　Those men of faction　had ill-gotten pleasures,[98]

路幽昧以險隘.　their paths went in shadow,　narrow, unsafe.

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[93] Opinions differ greatly on the identification of the "Three Kings" ("king" here is archaic *hou* 后, rather than *wang*). Wang Yi and many subsequent commentators take them as Yu, Tang, and King Wen. Among the various alternatives, many modern commentators take these to be three ancient Chu rulers. There is no way of deciding the issue. Such enumerations seem to have existed independent of their particular members, and different early informants might identify the particular members of an enumeration differently.

[94] Wang Yi glosses 申 as 重; Jiang Liangfu takes it as "large," but in *Jiang Liangfu 1999:* (III.471) takes it as a compound, as a kind of pepper. This seems obvious, though the origin of the component *shen* may well be the place name, as many modern commentators have taken it, and as I have above. Dai Zhen suggests that *jun* 菌 is a mistake for *qun* 箘, *qungui* 箘桂 being an aromatic shrub. This is, however, not attested until many centuries later.

[95] 豈維 is literally "How only . . .?"

[96] Jie and Zhow were the last kings of the Xia and Shang respectively. I use the romanization Zhow here to distinguish this Shang king from the Zhou Dynasty. The primary sense of *changpi* 昌被 ("slouching and shambling") is uncertain. Mao Maoyuan and You Guoen relate it to wearing unsashed robes, with the extended sense of "disorderly." Jiang Liangfu relates the elements of the compound to 倀 "wild" and 跛, to "walk not upright." This is probably preferable in the context of the stanza. Some take *he* 何 as a rhetorical emphatic: "how slouching and shambling . . .!" This usage of *he*, so common later, does not seem to belong to *Chu ci* discourse.

[97] *Jiongbu* 窘步 is variously interpreted as above ("walk at hazard") or, with *jiong* 窘 as *qiong* 窮, to "walk to a dead-end." "Side-paths" or "shortcuts" *jiejing* 捷徑 are associated with deviation.

[98] *Dang* 黨 ("faction") often had pejorative associations, as in *Analects*: "The superior man associates with others but does not form factions." 君子群而不黨. Some have suggested that 黨 is a loan for 蕩, "extravagant." The phonological difference makes this unlikely. Although *toule* 偷樂 ("stolen pleasures") makes perfectly good sense, Jiang Liangfu suggests that this is the more common *yule* 媮樂, a pejorative term for excessive pleasure (though perhaps 偷樂 is the primary form).

豈余身之憚殃兮，Not for myself came this dread of doom—

恐皇輿之敗績. I feared the great chariot soon would be tipped.[99]

10

忽奔走以先後兮，I went swiftly dashing in front and behind,[100]

及前王之踵武. till I caught up with the tracks of our kings before.

荃不察余之中情兮，Lord Calamus did not fathom my nature within,[101]

反信讒而齎怒. instead he believed slanderous words, he glowered in rage.[102]

11

余固知謇謇之為患兮， I knew well my bluntness had brought me these ills,[103]

忍而不能舍也. yet I bore through it, I could not foreswear.

指九天以為正兮，I pointed to Heaven to serve as my warrant,[104]

[99] *Baiji* 敗績 was a technical term used especially in military operations for an overturned chariot or carriage, with the extended sense of defeat in battle. It is a *Shu* usage. Although most commentators take this as purely figurative, Ma Maoyuan suggests that this reflects an anxiety about military reverses. We might note the use of *huang* 皇 for the more proper *wang* 王, "king." Wang Yi glosses this anachronistically as the "ruler." Jiang Liangfu notes that in *Chu ci huang* usually means "great," which he takes to be the functional equivalent of the royal chariot. It should be noted that this is by far the earliest usage of this compound in the received tradition and not repeated until the Li sao was widely known (Jiang Liangfu 1999: III.36). Yu Shengwu argues from a parallel passage in bronze inscriptions that *ji* 績 here is 跡, "tracks," "ruined tracks" yielding the same sense. Zhao Kuifu takes this as the ritual "spirit chariot," *lingyu* 靈輿, of the former kings.

[100] Wang Yi relates this to the *sifu* 四輔, the officers who stand on every side of the king's chariot to protect it. This is another *Shu* usage. While the usage here is clearly figurative, it is worthwhile to keep in mind this function of one of the king's officers. We find similar dispatching of attendants ahead and behind in the heavenly journey.

[101] Although Jiang Liangfu disagrees, Ma Maoyuan and You Guoen argue that 荃 ("[Lord] Calamus") is the same as 蓀 ("Sweet Flag"), the flower-title of the Junior Master of Lifespans, "Shao siming" 少司命. Although the two flowers may be different, both are flower-titles. Phonology would seem to preclude the claim that they are an ancient and later writing of the same word.

[102] Ma Maoyuan says that *jinu* 齎怒 is a Chu dialectical term for great rage; Jiang Liangfu argues that 齎 (as 齊) means "hasty," hence "quick to anger." Tai Jingnong notes the term *qi* 懠 for anger in the *Daya*.

[103] *Jianjian* 謇謇 is explained variously. Setting aside Wang Yi's gloss of "loyal and true," we have two opposite modern interpretations. Jiang Liangfu equates the compound with 諓諓 as "artful speech," with the presumed agents of such speech being "petty men," slanderers. See Jiang Liangfu 1999: I.550. Ma Maoyuan and You Guoen explain it as "mumbling" or "inarticulate." Later *jian* alone is used for stuttering. The earliest "gloss" on this is the reference in "Drawing Out My Thoughts" (8) in *Jiuzhang*. Unfortunately, we have the same ambiguity there, depending on whether we assume the subject is the Qu Yuan figure or the king.

[104] *Zheng* 正 here is understood as 證, "warrant" or "witness." A variation of the same line using 證 (also tsyeng<təŋ-s) occurs in Jia Yi's *Xinshu* 新書 (see Jiang Liangfu 1999: II.402-03 and IV.105-6). We cannot, however, fail to notice that this is essentially the same phrase used in the conclusion, in which Qu Yuan asks who will join him to *wei [mei] zheng* 為美政, "make beautiful government." Although I have followed the standard interpretation above, it might be best to take the line simply as "to set things right," to act as judge and rectifier rather than as mere testator.

夫唯靈脩之故也. it was all because of the Holy One.[105]

12

初既與余成言兮, To me at first firm word had been given,[106]

後悔遁而有他. she regretted it later, backed off, and was otherwise.[107]

余既不難夫離別兮, I made no grievance at this separation between us,

傷靈脩之數化. but was hurt that the Holy One so often changed.[108]

13

余既滋蘭之九畹兮, I watered my eupatoria in all their nine tracts,

又樹蕙之百畝. and planted basil in one hundred square rods;

畦留夷與揭車兮, I made plots for paeonia and for the wintergreen,[109]

雜杜衡與芳芷. mixed with wild ginger and sweet angelica.

14

冀枝葉之峻茂兮, I wished stalks and leaves would stand high and flourish,

願竢時乎吾將刈. I wished for the season when I might reap.

雖萎絕其亦何傷兮, If they withered and dried, it would cause me no hurt,

[105] The term *lingxiu* 靈脩 was used in "Shan gui" in *Jiu ge*: "I would make the holy one stay, transfixed, forget going" 留靈脩兮憺忘歸. There it seems to be a term for the mountain goddess. Here it has traditionally been taken as a figure for King Huai; if so, he is clearly being treated as a woman: the fickleness described in the following stanza is, in *Jiu ge*, an attribute of goddesses. After this line some versions have an additional couplet: "We made a tryst at twilight, / but in mid-course he changed his route." 曰黃昏以為期兮，羌中道而改路. Not only does this break the four-line stanza structure, Wang Yi does not comment on the lines. Thus, many scholars consider the couplet to be an interpolation. We should, however, note that this is closely parallel with the situation of the speaker in "Shan gui," in which the mountain goddess fails to keep her appointed meeting

[106] *Chengyan* 成言, literally "completed words [terms]," was a term for mutual agreement, particularly in marriage negotiations.

[107] *Dun* 遁 is understood as to "back out" of a promise. You Guoen takes this differently, as the verbal object of regret: "he regretted exiling me." Jiang Liangfu understands *ta* 他 as *tuo* 詑, a *Shuowen* word meaning "speak falsely"; although this is clearly an extended usage, it does give a sense of how *ta* was conventionally extended. I have translated the pronoun here as feminine because of the parallel cases, both elsewhere in the Li sao and in *Jiu ge*; the standard commentary takes this as the king, hence "he."

[108] Jiang Liangfu suggests that *hua* 化 be read *e* 訛 (or 吪), to "speak falsely" rather than "change." This appears to be a later usage; it appears as 吪 in the *Shi* in different senses, but none like later *e*.

[109] *Ji* 畦 are field boundaries, hence "to make plots for."

哀眾芳之蕪穢. I would grieve if such sweetness went rotting in weeds.[110]

15

眾皆競進以貪婪兮，Throngs thrust themselves forward in craving and greed,[111]

憑不厭乎求索. they never are fully sated in things that they seek.[112]

羌內恕己以量人兮，They show mercy to self, by this measure others,[113]

各興心而嫉妒. in them the heart stirs to malice and spite.

16

忽馳騖以追逐兮，Such a headlong horse-race, each hot in pursuit,

非余心之所急. is not a thing that thrills my own heart.

老冉冉其將至兮，Old age comes on steadily, soon will be here,[114]

恐脩名之不立. I fear my fair name will not be fixed firmly.

17

朝飲木蘭之墜露兮，At dawn I drank dew that dropped from magnolia,

夕餐秋菊之落英. in twilight ate blooms from chrysanthemums shed.[115]

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[110] An allegorical reading, like that proposed by You Guoen, can lead to a very different reading of the third and fourth lines of this stanza: if the fragrant plants are his court companions who have now turned into his enemies, then he will not feel bad if they wither. Such a reading ignores the "reaping" of 14.2 and the normal process by which aromatics are cut and dried.

[111] *Lan* 婪 is explained by Wang Yi as craving for food. Tai Jingnong cites *Zuo zhuan* (Zhao 28): "craving without feeling satiated" 貪惏無饜 (惏 is the same as 婪). This may have been a set phrase, amplified in this and the following line. To "go forward," *jin* 進 is probably specifically to get close to the king in court, thus enjoying his favor.

[112] Wang Yi explains *ping* 憑 as a Chu regional usage for *man* 滿. Jiang Liangfu agrees, but takes the line as: "Though full, they are not sated." This makes sense but is not the way initial adverbs usually work in *Chu ci* lines.

[113] *Shu* 恕 is "tolerance" or "mercy," though You Guoen is probably correct in stressing that this fundamentally judging others by the standard of oneself. Thus, we get the peculiar pejorative inversion of the usual sense of the term here, in which the greedy man measures Qu Yuan by the standard of himself and thus feels spite.

[114] Compare the line in the "Da siming": "Old age steal upon me (comes on steadily) and has arrived" 老冉冉兮既極.

[115] Wang Yi glosses *luo* 落 as 始, hence the "new blossoms." A number of modern commentators have gone to considerable lengths to prove this case, on the grounds that autumn flowers are not supposed to fall; however, 貫薜荔之落蕊 in the next stanza has *luo* 落 in the same position in the line and is generally taken as "fall" (though Jiang Liangfu is careful to take it in the same way as in the usage here). This is the triumph of a purely imaginary botany over language, forcing an unlikely and unprecedented usage. Flowers that bloom in autumn fall in autumn.

苟余情其信姱以練要兮，If my nature be truly comely, washed utterly pure,[116]

長顑頷亦何傷. what hurt can I have in long wanness from hunger?[117]

18

擥木根以結茝兮，I plucked tendrils of trees to knot white angelica,[118]

貫薜荔之落蕊. pierced fallen pistils of flowering ivy.[119]

矯菌桂以紉蕙兮，I reached high to cassia for stringing basil,

索胡繩之纚纚. and corded the continuous coilings of the rope-vine.

19

謇吾法夫前脩兮，Yes, I took as my rule those fair men of old,[120]

非世俗之所服. it was not the garb worn in the ways of our age.[121]

雖不周於今之人兮，Though it did not agree with men of these days,

願依彭咸之遺則. I would rest in the pattern left by Peng and by Xian.[122]

20

長太息以掩涕兮，Long did I sigh and wipe away tears,

哀民生之多艱. sad that men's lives have so many hardships.[123]

---

[116] It is unclear whether *xin* 信 here is an adverb, as translated above, or a distinct attribute, "trustworthy." Since in a similar pattern in (58) it is clearly an adverb, I have chosen this sense.
[117] *Kanhan* 顑含 is supposed to be a sallowness of complexion due to starvation.
[118] *Lan* 擥 is a graph variation on the 攬 earlier.
[119] Jiang Liangfu interprets *rui* 蕊 as "berries."
[120] *Qianxiu* 前脩 may be specifically Peng and Xian (or Peng Xian).
[121] Many commentators take *fu* 服 as "accustomed usage," though Zhu Jihai: 37-38 argues persuasively that it means "wear."
[122] There is disagreement whether 彭咸 is "Peng Xian," a single person (so Wang Yi thought) or "Peng and Xian," two ancient shamans (presumably one is the Shaman Xian who manifests himself later in the Li sao). According to Wang Yi, Peng Xian was a virtuous minister of Yin whose remonstrance with his ruler went unheeded, thus he drowned himself. Several modern scholars have pointed out the absence of evidence for this—indeed it seems that Peng Xian's story has been constructed "resting in the pattern left by" the Qu Yuan of the Sima Qian's biography. Jiang Liangfu's argument (following Yu Yue and Wang Kaiyun) that these are two distinct shamans seems most persuasive.
[123] *Min* 民 seems best understood as above, though some have argued that it refers to Qu Yuan himself or to "lesser men" 小人, with *jian* 艱 meaning "causing troubles" in the latter case. A later line (22), 終不察夫民心, suggests that it could refer to Qu Yuan, but not, in that case, to 小人. *Min* 民 is set in contrast to 余 in stanza 32. See also the concluding line of "Shao siming," in which it clearly means "the people": "Lord Calamus alone is fit to rule the people" 蓀獨宜兮為民正.

余雖好脩姱以鞿羈兮，　　Though love of the fair　was the halter that guided me,[124]

謇朝誶而夕替．　　at dawn I was damned　and by twilight, undone.[125]

21

既替余以蕙纕兮，Yes, I was undone　for a sash hung with basil,[126]

又申之以攬茝．　　I lengthened it further　by picking angelica.[127]

亦余心之所善兮，Still my heart　finds goodness in these—

雖九死其猶未悔．though I die many times,　I will never regret.

22

怨靈脩之浩蕩兮，I reproach the Holy One's　unbridled wildness,

終不察夫民心．　　never discerning　what lies in men's hearts.[128]

眾女嫉余之蛾眉兮，　Women-throngs envied　my delicate brows,

謠諑謂余以善淫．scurrilous songs claimed　I found lewdness good.[129]

23

固時俗之工巧兮，Of these times the firm folkways:　to be artful in guile;

---

[124] Or: "though I loved the fair and kept myself under restraint."

[125] *Jian* 謇 is probably an initial particle, as in the preceding stanza, but Jiang Liangfu understands it as 謇 謇, which in his interpretation means "artful slander." *Sui* 誶 and *ti* 替 may be taken as above, but some commentators taken them as "offer remonstrance" and "be relieved of post." Neither of the words have common currency in the *Chu ci*, though *ti* does occur in "Huai sha" of *Jiu zhang* as "replace," or "be removed." The problem that has stirred extensive controversy here is the fact that *jian* 艱 (kean<kˤrə[r]) and *ti* 替 (thejH<ɳˤi[t]-s) cannot rhyme. Some would take *ti* as a miswriting of *zen* 譖/譖 (*tsrimH*/[ts]r[ə]m-s), "slandered"; but that also cannot rhyme.

[126] Most commentators take *xiang* 纕 as girdle or sash; Jiang Liangfu takes it as a sachet.

[127] Jiang Liangfu gives an argument that *lan* 攬 here is a mistake for 蘭. However, *lan* 攬 is clearly correct because its use with angelica in "Si meiren" (9), in parallel with *qian* 搴.

[128] The use of *min* 民 merits some comment. It clearly does not mean "common folk" because here and in (32) Qu Yuan is a member of the category. (32), with the form *minsheng* 民生, shows clearly that it is a category rather than simply Qu Yuan himself. We should note, however, that in "Ai Ying" (1) it is used apparently in distinction from the *baixing* 百姓, probably in this context meaning the "great families."

[129] *Yaozhuo* 謠諑 is generally explained as above. Hawkes translates as "spiteful chattering," perhaps following the *Taiping yulan* citation of the line with 讒 for 謠. *Yao* 謠 later comes to mean "gossip," which would be attractive here; but I cannot find it is this sense until the ninth century.

偭規矩而改錯. facing compass and square, they would alter the bore-hole.[130]

背繩墨以追曲兮, They forswear the straight line, go chasing the crooked;

競周容以為度. rivals for false faces, such is their measure.[131]

24

忳鬱邑余侘傺兮, A woe wells within me, in such despair,[132]

吾獨窮困乎此時. alone at an impasse in times such as these.

寧溘死以流亡兮, Best to die promptly, to vanish away,[133]

余不忍為此態也. for I cannot bear to show myself thus.

25

鷙鳥之不群兮, The bird of prey does not go in flocks,

自前世而固然. so it has been from times long ago.

何方圜之能周兮, The square and the circle can never be matched,

夫孰異道而相安. what man can find peace on a way not his own?[134]

26

[130] *Mian* 偭 is explained as "to turn one's back on (face away from)" and also as "to face." Antonym definitions, while not uncommon, are always troubling. It seems best to keep the most common sense of the word, which in this case yields roughly the same meaning. Ma Maoyuan explains *cuo* 錯 as "measure." Zhu Jihai by a long argument explains 錯 as 鑿, citing a parallel line in *Jiubian*: 何時俗之工巧兮，滅規而改鑿. This is not an uncommon phenomenon; we often see the "same" line or couplet with slight variation and either homophones or "close" sounds in the variable points in the line. Here we have *mian* 偭 (probably mjienX<men?), a dictionary word which was probably originally written simply with the phonetic *mian* 面, with the radical added later to mark its verbal force. We see the same couplet with variations in *Jiubian*, with *mie* 滅 (mjiet<[m]et) instead of *mian*. *Mie* makes clearer sense. Except for the fact that some consonantal finals like dentals and final glottal stops are close kin, we do not know the processes that inform such variation; but it is worth noting.

[131] Commentators agree that *zhourong* 周容 means false, fawning appearance. *Zhou* 周 in this sense means something like "agreeable" [to others], in this case, the falseness implied in adjusting one's behavior and appearance just to make oneself "agreeable."

[132] *Tun* 忳 is explained as the quality of pent-up sorrow, which Jiang Liangfu derives from the basic sense of 屯 as "massed," "collected together." *Yuyi* 鬱邑 is a commonly used binome for sorrow. *Chachi* 侘傺 describes a state of perplexity and hopelessness (失志).

[133] Because of Qu Yuan's fate, commentators tend to take *liuwang* 流亡 as referring to his death; the compound, however, generally means to flee a domain. From the first hemistich it is clear that death is intended, but the common sense of *liuwang* 流亡 should be kept—perhaps an "escape" through death. See "Ai Ying," on the refugees fleeing the capital: "following Yangzi and Xia to flee their land (*liuwang*)" 遵江夏以流亡.

[134] *Xiàng* 相 is "to divine"; the embedded compound is *xiangdao* 相道, to "divine the [right] way." See (27.1).

屈心而抑志兮，　Bending one's heart,　quelling one's will,
忍尤而攘垢.　abiding faults found,　submitting to shame,[135]
伏清白以死直兮，wearing pure white,　death for the right—[136]
固前聖之所厚.　these indeed were esteemed　by sages of old.

27

悔相道之不察兮，I regretted judging the course　was not well discerned,[137]
延佇乎吾將反.　long I stood staring,　about to go back.
回朕車以復路兮，I will turn my coach 'round,　retrace my path—
及行迷之未遠.　before I stray　too far in my going.

28

步余馬於蘭皋兮，I let my horses walk　through eupatorium meadows,[138]
馳椒丘且焉止息.　sped to pepper-tree hill,　there rested the while.
進不入以離尤兮，I drew close, did not reach him,　I met with fault-finding,
退將復脩吾初服.　I withdrew to restore　that garb I first wore.[139]

29

製芰荷以為衣兮，I fashioned lotus and caltrop　to serve as my robe,

[135] *You* 尤 can either be transitive as taken above, "finding fault," or simple "transgressions." I follow the transitive sense as in (28.3). The relationship between this half of the stanza and the second half is far from clear. It is easy to read the self-submission in the first two lines as antithetical to the position taken in the second two lines, but *ren* 忍, "abiding," was used earlier in a positive sense (ll.2, "bear through").
[136] Mao Maoyuan explains *fu* 伏 here as 服; since they are homophones, this interpretation is most consistent with the usage in the poem.
[137] The present translation attempts to retain the uncertainty whether the speaker himself was not discerning in judging the right course or the king/ Beauty was not discerning about his judgment. As the stanzas develop it is clearly his course. To resolve the apparent contradiction between the affirmation of willingness to submit to shame (26) and the very different direction to which the poem turns here, You Guoen takes 27-30 as speculative and hypothetical (設詞).
[138] The translation above follows Zhu Jihai's persuasive argument about *buma* 步馬; however, Yu Yue and some modern commentators take this to mean that he unhitches the horses and leads them.
[139] *Xiu* 脩, here translated as "restore," is one of the most common and characteristic of *Chu ci* modifiers, usually translated here as "fine." This is its transitive verbal usage: "to make fine." This is usually translated as "to adorn"; it might be that Qu Yuan here plans to add adornment to his "first garb," but I prefer "restore," considering that his "first garb" was already well adorned.

集芙蓉以為裳. I gathered the lotus to serve as my skirt.
不吾知其亦已兮，No one knows me, it is all over!—
苟余情其信芳. but truly my nature has scent steadfastly sweet.[140]

30

高余冠之岌岌兮，High was my hat, above me it loomed,
長余佩之陸離. my pendants were long, of shimmering pattern.[141]
芳與澤其雜糅兮，Fragrance and filth were all intermingled,[142]
惟昭質其猶未虧. this gleaming flesh only suffered no dwindling.

31

忽反顧以遊目兮，All at once I looked back, I let my eyes roam,
將往觀乎四荒. I would go off to view the wild lands around.[143]
佩繽紛其繁飾兮，Pendants in profusion, I was richly adorned,
芳菲菲其彌章. their sweet fragrance spread, ever more striking.

32

民生各有其所樂兮，Each man has a thing in which he finds joy:
余獨好脩以為常. I alone love the fair, in that I abide.
雖體解吾猶未變兮，Though my limbs be cut from me, I still will not change,[144]

[140] Zhu Jihai cites several examples to show that *gou* 苟 here means "truly" or "in fact." As earlier, we are uncertain whether *xin* 信 is an adverb meaning "truly" or a distinct quality, "trustworthy."
[141] *Luli* 陸離 (or 流離) is glossed in various ways: many and unevenly arrayed, long, lovely and rare, or brightly patterned. Tai Jingnong points out that the term does not occur in pre-Qin texts outside the *Chu ci*. This is useful only if one presumes that this part of the text is pre-Qin. It seems to begin as an attribute of pendants. See Jiang Liangfu 1999: IV.511.
[142] The early explanation of this line took *fang* 芳 as the fragrance of flowers in which he decked himself and *ze* 澤 as the gloss of his pendants. Later commentators, however, observed that this created problems in the relation to the following line and took *ze* 澤 as a loan for a different *ze* 襗, "underwear," hence "the unclean." This seems probable. You Guoen, however, argues for the older interpretation of *ze*.
[143] *Sihuang* 四荒 are the wild regions beyond the civilized world, hence "the ends of the earth."
[144] *Tijie* 體解 was the technical term for capital punishment by cutting off the limbs, "dismemberment." *Gai* 改 is the more general term for "change," encompassing positive "reform." *Bian* 變 often carries a negative sense of "falling away" from some norm.

豈余心之可懲.　　how could my heart　be subdued?[145]

33

女嬃之嬋媛兮,　　Then came the Sister,　tender and enticing,[146]

申申其詈余.　　mild of manner　she upbraided me thus,[147]

曰鯀婞直以亡身兮,　she said: "Gun was unyielding,　he fled into hiding,[148]

終然殀乎羽之野.　at last died untimely　on moors of Mount Yu.[149]

34

汝何博謇而好脩兮,　"Why such wide culling,　such love of the fair,[150]

紛獨有此姱節.　　in you alone bounty　of beautiful raiment?[151]

薆菉葹以盈室兮,　They stack stinkweed　filling their rooms;[152]

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[145] *Cheng* 懲 essentially means "punish" or "submit"/"enforce submission." This negative use of *cheng* with heart seems to have been a set pattern for an unyielding spirit and is used in "Guo shang" in *Jiu ge* and "Bei huifeng" in *Jiuzhang*.

[146] "The Sister" is 女嬃 ***nüxu***, clearly a title or general category rather than a proper name; however, the actual role or relationship implied by the phrase is uncertain. Early commentators took this as Qu Yuan's sister. There is some evidence that *xu* 嬃 was a popular Chu term for "woman." I have adopted "sister" in a locution that invites us to think of the appellation figuratively—in China and many other cultures "sister" was a polite form of address for women of a certain age relative to the speaker. In addition to taking this as Qu Yuan's real sister, it has been proposed that this is a woman companion, a servant, a woman of humble status, or a shamanka (the final interpretation based on a *Han shu* usage). Considering that Qu Yuan's three other interviews are with shamans and a deified emperor, the shamanka interpretation is attractive; but it is probably best to see it as the kind of appellation that might be given to a shamanka, rather than as a name or categorical term for a shamanka. *Chanyuan* 嬋媛 seems to be a kind of gentle charm that "pulls at" the feelings; Wang Yi takes it as a more active attempt to restrain, which might be justified by this context, but not by other usages of the compound. As in its usage in "Xiang jun," some have proposed to take *chanyuan* 嬋媛 as "panting," here in distress, or in this case "huffing" in outrage. The pattern in "Xiang jun" is similar: "The woman, tender and drawn, heaves a sigh for me" 女嬋媛兮為余太息.

[147] ***Shenshen*** 申申 is understood by some commentators as "repeatedly." Jiang Liangfu proposes the interpretation given above, based on *Analects* usage. You Guoen prefers "repeatedly."

[148] Some commentators prefer to understand *wang shen* 亡身 as 忘身, "was heedless of his person." *Wangshen* 亡身 may be understood as "brought destruction on himself," as well as in the sense translated above. Wu Rulun notes that the Wuchen version of *Wen xuan* read 方 for 亡, but his explanation of 方 as 方命, to "resist a command," is overly ingenious.

[149] Gun was a son of Gao Yang and the father of Yu; he was charged by sage-king Yao with controlling the great flood. When he failed, he was put to death and his body left on Mount Yu. Gun also seems to have been important as a folk deity, transformed into a brown bear spirit after being killed. We should note that he is of the same family as Qu Yuan. *Yao* 殀 usually refers to dying young, which led Wen Yiduo to want to emend it to 夭; You Guoen prefers this and the sense of "brought to a halt." 妖 and 夭 are simply different writings of the same word, which means "to die before one's time," perfectly appropriate for Gun. The sense of "stop [mid-course]" is an extended usage. In several senses Gun was "stopped" on Mount Yu, as in the parallel line from *Tian wen*, referring to Gun: "Ever halted on Mount Yu" 永遏在羽山.

[150] Some scholars take *jian* 謇 as "bluntness," in the sense of *jianjian* 謇謇 discussed earlier, hence "excessive bluntness." I follow Jiang Liangfu's suggestion that it is 搴, to "pluck."

[151] The translation above follows the emendation of 節 to 飾. The rhyme is better.

[152] The old theory that *ci lu shi* 薆菉葹 are three different plants is wrong. *Ci* 薆 means something like "massed" or "piled."

判獨離而不服. you alone stand apart and will not wear it.[153]

35

眾不可戶說兮, "No swaying the throngs person by person;[154]

孰云察余之中情. 'no one discerns this my nature within!'[155]

世並舉而好朋兮, Men now rise together, each favors friends,

夫何煢獨而不余聽. why do you stand alone— and not listen to me?"

36

依前聖以節中兮, I trust sages of old for fair judgment,[156]

喟憑心而歷茲. my heart swelled in rage, it had come now to this.[157]

濟沅湘以南征兮, I crossed Xiang and Yuan, faring on southward,

就重華而陳詞. reached Chonghua, to state him my case:[158]

37

啟九辯與九歌兮, "King Qi had Nine Variations and the Nine Songs—[159]

夏康娛以自縱. extreme in wild pleasures, he did as he pleased.[160]

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[153] *Pan* 判 is variously interpreted as "making distinctions," "set apart," or "cast off."

[154] Ma Maoyuan takes *hu* 戶 extending its root sense to "from door to door." Jiang Liangfu equates it with *hu* 扈, meaning "wear" or "cover," and from that extended to "covering everyone." Both arrive at the same sense of "persuading everyone." Stanza 68 uses *hu* in an apparently similar way meaning "everyone." Fu Xiongxiang 傅熊湘 has suggested reading *shuo/shui* 說 as *yue* 悅, "no pleasing the throngs . . ." Although the version given above makes good sense, the only other usage of 說 in the *Chu ci*, in the "Si meiren" of the *Jiuzhang* is as *yue*, "to be pleased."

[155] Although it is tempting to read this as "Who would say . . .?" this line must be understood in the same way as its parallel in (67): 孰云察余之善惡. We could possibly take this as a question of the "Who says?" form; but it seems preferable to take it as a rhetorical question: "no man can discern my good or my bad."

[156] *Jiezhong* 節中, later as 折中, means to make a fair judgment of a case presented.

[157] *Pingxin* 憑心 is explained as a flash of resentment or rage. This *píng* is taken as related to *pǐng* 頩, glossed by Li Shan as "coloring in anger," on the strength of a *Fangyan* gloss. These are proximate, but not identical phonemes.

[158] Chonghua is Shun, so named for having double (*chong*) pupils in his eyes. Although here he seems very much alive, his tomb was at Cangwu in the far South. Note that in "stating his case," Qu Yuan makes reference to events that postdated the supposed historical time of Shun.

[159] King Qi of the Xia was the son of Great Yu, who was in turn the son of Gun and the founder of the Xia Dynasty. He brought back (or stole) the "Nine Songs" and the "Nine Variations" from Heaven. These are legendary music or dance suites and should not be identified with the *Chu ci* works of the same name.

[160] There are various interpretations of *xia* 夏 in this line, including Wang Yi's interpretation of Xiakang 夏康 as the name of King Qi's son, Taikang. Both Jiang Liangfu and Ma Maoyuan take *xia* adverbially as "greatly" or "extremely." Parallel lines with *kangyu*

不顧難以圖後兮，He was heedless of troubles, made no plans for the morrow,

五子用失乎家衖. whereby the five sons brought strife to his house.[161]

38

羿淫遊以佚畋兮，“Yi roamed recklessly, he was lavish in hunts, [162]

又好射夫封狐. he also loved shooting the great foxes.[163]

固亂流其鮮終兮，Indeed going cross-current rarely ends well:[164]

浞又貪夫厥家. and Han Zhuo was lusting to seize his bride.[165]

39

澆身被服強圉兮，“Guo Ao garbed himself, he opposed violently; [166]

縱欲而不忍. he followed his wants, he failed to forbear.

日康娛而自忘兮，He lost himself daily in wild pleasures.[167]

厥首用夫顛隕. whereby his own head was toppled and fell.

40

康娛 in the second and third positions strongly support the argument that *xia* is adverbial here. You Guoen prefers to keep this as the dynastic Xia, referring back to Qi, in parallel with 38.1 and 41.2.

[161] Jiang Liangfu accepts the sense of “five sons,” the younger brothers of Taikang. To the “five sons” is attributed a group of verses, the “Songs of the Five Sons” 五子歌. Ma Maoyuan takes this as Wuzi 武子, that is Wu Guan 武觀, Qi’s son, or, by some accounts, his brother. Wu Guan revolted against Qi. Ma Maoyuan reads *xiang* 巷 for *xiang* 衖, but also takes it as “strife.” Some scholars believe that there is an interpolation in the middle of the line.

[162] Yi the Archer seized the kingship from Taikang after King Qi’s death but was subsequently killed by his retainer Han Zhuo.

[163] Wen Yiduo thinks 狐 should be 豬, the “great boars.” It is true that foxes hardly deserve the epithet 封, “large.”

[164] Some commentators prefer to take *luan* 亂 as referring specifically to Yi’s usurpation; although it may do so in an extended sense, Wang Fuzhi is probably correct here that this is the technical use of *luan* as cutting across a current. Most attempts to find *Shijing* echoes in Li sao are forced. Probably the most persuasive argument for such can be made in this line, parallel to “Dang” 蕩 in the *Daya*: “Few are able to have a good end” 鮮克有終.

[165] Han Zhuo 寒浞 was Yi’s trusted minister. He deposed Yi and married Yi’s wife. Zhu Jihai takes *jia* 家 as his household.

[166] Guo Ao was a son of Han Zhuo and Yi the Archer’s former wife. He killed Xiang, the nephew of the former king Taikang, and was later killed by Xiang’s son Shao Gang who restored the Xia Dynasty. The traditional interpretation of this line is: “[Guo] Ao relied upon physical force.” Wen Yiduo’s proposes to take *qiangyu* 強圉 as hardened leather armor. You Guo’en makes an interesting argument that this is the same as *qiangyu* 彊禦, “violent oppression,” as used in “Dang” in the *Shijing*, citing a case in the “Wang Mang Biography” of the *Han shu* in which the *Shi* line is echoed as 強圉. The physical clothing oneself in the first part of the line seems to beg for something concrete here, but the traditional argument is stronger, if awkward.

[167] The translation attempts to retain the uncertainty in *ziwang* 自忘, whether “to forget oneself” or “to destroy oneself” (自亡).

夏桀之常違兮, "Xia's Jie was constant in his erring, [168]

乃遂焉而逢殃. in pursuit of these he met with his doom.[169]

后辛之菹醢兮, Shang's Zhow, the Lord Xin, minced men into stew,[170]

殷宗用而不長. whereby Yin's great lineage could not last long.[171]

41

湯禹儼而祇敬兮, Yu the Great was stern, respectful and godly; [172]

周論道而莫差. the right way was Zhou's norm and thus did not stray.[173]

舉賢才而授能兮, They raised men of worth, rewarded the able,

循繩墨而不頗. they kept the straight line, they did not veer.

42

皇天無私阿兮, "Sovereign Heaven is slanted in favor of none;

覽民德焉錯輔. it scans a man's virtues, puts helpers beside him.[174]

夫維聖哲以茂行兮, Only when sage wisdom do deeds that are splendid,

苟得用此下土. may one then be used in this land down below.[175]

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[168] Jie (see stanza 8) was the last ruler of the Xia and notorious for his misrule. Ma Maoyuan takes 常違 as an inversion of 違常, "strayed from the constants."

[169] *Sui* 遂 may be understood as "in consequence [of this]," with You Guo'en, as well as "in pursuit."

[170] Lord Xin is King Zhow, the evil last King of Shang (Yin). There are several stories in which Zhow chopped up members of the nobility and fed them to others.

[171] *Zong* 宗 (freely "lineage") is specifically the worship of the Shang ancestors.

[172] Most commentators have taken *tang yu* 湯禹 as Tang and Yu. Great Yu, Gun's son, was the founder of the Xia; Tang was the founder of the Shang. Jiang Liangfu gives a persuasive argument that *tang* 湯 here means "great."

[173] Jiang Liangfu takes 周 as "thoroughly," but the dynasty seems preferable. The 論 here has been interpreted as "to choose" by Jiang Liangfu, but the sense of the phoneme that became 倫 seems better.

[174] *Cuofu* 錯輔 presents problems of interpretation. The version above takes 錯 (OC [ts^{h}]^{ʕ}ak) as 措 (OC [ts^{h}]^{ʕ}ak-s). Alternatively, 錯 is sometimes taken in its normal sense as "interlocking," suggesting that the good rulers are given by Heaven as helpers for the people. This interpretation is rather anomalous. Zhu Jihai claims that *cuofu* 錯輔 is a term of carpentry, a straightener of sorts. You Guoen prefers to take it simply that Heaven helps the virtuous ruler. We might consider the Chinese scribal practice of late antiquity (through the Western Han) as similar to the rabbinical scribe pointing a bare Hebrew text. In most case it is obvious how to assign radicals (or point a Hebrew text), but there are many cases in which the scribe must depend on how he understood a memorized text or how he understood a passage. The Chinese scribe was fortunately spared the problem of word division.

[175] The translation follows Jiang Liangfu's interpretation of *yong* 用; Ma Maoyuan takes *yong* 用 as *you* 有, "to possess [the land below]"; You Guoen is similar.

43

瞻前而顧後兮，　“I viewed times before us,　looked to times yet to come,

相觀民之計極.　observed measures of men,　and the ends of their plans:[176]

夫孰非義而可用兮，who found wanting in virtue　may be put to use?

孰非善而可服.　who found wanting in good　may still be retained?[177]

44

阽余身而危死兮，“By the brink stands my body,　I am in death’s peril,[178]

覽余初其猶未悔. I scanned my beginnings　and still regret not.

不量鑿而正枘兮，Not judging the drill-hole,　they squared the peg:[179]

固前脩以菹醢.　indeed fair men of old　came to mince in a stew.”[180]

45

曾歔欷余鬱邑兮，Sighs come from me often,　my heart swells within,[181]

哀朕時之不當.　sad that my time　was not right.

攬茹蕙以掩涕兮，I pluck hare’s ear and basil　to wipe away tears,[182]

霑余襟之浪浪.　that soak my gown’s folds　in their streaming.

46

[176] I have taken *jiji* 計極 in something like a literal sense. Ma Maoyuan takes it in a somewhat similar way as the ultimate measure of their plans.
[177] Zhu Jihai discusses what he considers a Chu regional usage of *fu* 服 as 用, “to be employed.” This, of course, works with parallelism, but it is inconsistent with other usages of *fu* throughout the poem. It remains one of the more problematic usages in Li sao.
[178] *Dian* 阽 is explained by the commentators as “being on the brink of ruin or danger”; since all other usages are later, it is difficult to know the etymology of this word. It is perhaps cognate with *dian* 疒, “to bring distress upon,” attested in the *Yi*.
[179] Jiang Liangfu cites a similar passage in *Jiubian* with the phrase *zheng rui* 正枘; “squaring the peg” means to treat the round peg as square, with the result that it does not fit.
[180] This refers to King Zhow of Shang cutting up virtuous lords into mincemeat (40).
[181] *Zeng* 曾 here is used for 增, “to add to” (“often”).
[182] Here I follow Ma Maoyuan. Another interpretation takes *ru* 茹 as a different aromatic. Zhu Jihai argues from parallel texts that this should be 茄. You Guoen follows an older tradition that takes *ru* as “tender.” For an account of the debate on *ru*, see Jiang Liangfu 1999: III.424.

跪敷衽以陳辭兮，I knelt with robes open, thus stated my case,

耿吾既得此中正. having grasped so clearly what is central and right.[183]

馳玉虬以乘鷖兮，I teamed jade-white dragons, rode the Bird that Hides Sky,[184]

溘埃風余上征. waiting for winds to fleetly fare upward.[185]

47

朝發軔於蒼梧兮，At dawn I loosed wheel-block there by Cangwu,[186]

夕余至乎縣圃. and by twilight I reached the Gardens of Air.[187]

欲少留此靈瑣兮，I wished to bide awhile by the windows of gods,[188]

日忽忽其將暮. but swift was the sun and it soon would be dusk.

48

吾令羲和弭節兮，I bade sun-driver Xihe, to pause in her pace,

望崦嵫而勿迫. to stand off from Yanzi and not to draw nigh.[189]

路曼曼其脩遠兮，On and on stretched my road, long it was and far,

吾將上下而求索. I would go high and go low in this search that I made.

49

[183] This should be the response to Shun's judgment, but it immediately follows the formal closure of Qu Yuan's own "statement of his case," *chenci* 陳辭. This case, of course, comprehends within itself the judgment that Shun might pass.
[184] *Yi* 鷖 was a mythical bird, related to *yi* 翳, "cover," so called because it wings covered the sky.
[185] Wang Yi glosses *ai* 埃 (ʻoj<qᶜə) as "dust," which is the usual meaning of the character. Ma Maoyuan and others are probably correct to read this as *si* 竢, (zriX<s-[G]rəʔ) "to await." This seems a bit much for a sound loan, but it is the more natural sense here (cf. 14.2). You Guoen prefers *ai* "dust." It should be noted that while *si* is used for "wait," *ai* "dust," occurs nowhere else in the *Chu ci* as a single character. The opening modifier *ke* 溘 ("fleet[ly]") can apply to any appropriate element in the line; I have made the attribution to the rising itself, but it applies to the wind as well.
[186] Cangwu was the mountain where Shun (Chonghua) lay buried.
[187] The "Gardens of Air," Xuanpu or "suspended gardens," was a section of the Kunlun Range and an abode of the Undying. The name is also rendered with a homophone as "The Gardens of Mystery" 玄圃.
[188] The phrase *Lingsuo* 靈瑣 is the subject of much controversy. Several scholars take as the ornamental grillwork of doors and windows, hence the conservative translation above. Wen Yiduo thinks that it is properly 靈藪, the "Marsh of the Gods," mentioned in the Six Dynasties. Given the common lexical usage of *ling* as a prefixed title indicating a shaman and that *liu* 留, "detain," is used with deities, I suspect it is "Numinous [Shaman] Suo." This is pure conjecture, based on the preference for usages following a pattern we do have, rather than a verbal pattern without parallel. If we found *ling* "numinous" as an attribute of some architectural feature, I would withdraw the suggestion.
[189] Yanzi was a legendary mountain in the west where the sun was said to go down.

飲余馬於咸池兮，I watered my horses　in the Pool of Xian,[190]

揜余轡乎扶桑.　and twisted the reins　on the tree Fusang,[191]

折若木以拂日兮，snapped a branch of the Ruo tree　to block out the sun,[192]

聊逍遙以相羊.　I roamed freely the while　and lingered there.

50

前望舒使先驅兮，Ahead went Wang Shu　to speed on before me,[193]

後飛廉使奔屬.　behind came Fei Lian,　he dashed in my train.[194]

鸞皇為余先戒兮，Phoenix went first　and warned of my coming,[195]

雷師告余以未具.　Thunder-master told me　that all was not set.[196]

51

吾令鳳鳥飛騰兮，I bade my phoenixes　to mount up in flight,

繼之以日夜.　to continue their going　both by day and by night.[197]

飄風屯其相離兮，Then the whirlwinds massed,　drawing together,

帥雲霓而來御.　they marshaled cloud-rainbows,　came to withstand me.[198]

52

紛總總其離合兮，A bewildering tumult,　first apart, then coalescing,

[190] The Pool of Xian was where the sun was immersed ("bathed") on setting.
[191] The Fusang Tree was where the sun rose. "Twisting" the reins is probably tying them up.
[192] According to the *Shanhai jing*, the Ruo Tree is on Kunlun, where the sun goes down; according to the *Shuowen*, it is where the sun rises and is identified with Fusang. The second is clearly the easier reading in this context. *Fu* 拂 is interpreted by Wang Yi as to "strike"; others take it as "brush" (to clean the sun so that its rays will not darken, on the model of a mirror). Zhu Jihai takes it as above, which is closely related to Wen Yiduo's interpretation of "blur."
[193] Wang Shu was the charioteer of the moon-carriage.
[194] Fei Lian was the god of winds.
[195] *Jie* 戒 is in this context preparing the way for a royal procession.
[196] Although it is unclear why such an argument is required, Xu Renfu thinks that *wei* 未 is a mistake for *mo* 末. The template line can be found in "Xiang jun": 期不信兮告余以不閒.
[197] Or, with Jiang Liangfu, "days and nights kept continuing."
[198] *Lai yu* 來御 can also be "came to meet me."

斑陸離其上下. they streamed shimmering colors, high and then low.[199]

吾令帝閽開關兮，I bade the God's gatekeeper to open the bar;

倚閶闔而望予. he stood blocking the gateway and stared at me.[200]

53

時曖曖其將罷兮，The moment grew dimmer, moonrise would be soon,[201]

結幽蘭而延佇. I plait eupatorium, long stand fixed and gazing.[202]

世溷濁而不分兮，An age foul and murky cannot tell things apart;

好蔽美而嫉妒. it loves to block beauty from malice and spite.

54

朝吾將濟於白水兮，At dawn I set to fare across the White Waters,[203]

登閬風而商馬. I climbed Mount Langfeng, there tethered my horses.[204]

忽反顧以流涕兮，All at once I looked back, my tears were streaming,

哀高丘之無女. sad that the high hill lacked any woman.[205]

55

溘吾遊此春宮兮，At once I went roaming to the Palace of Spring,[206]

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[199] For *luli* see (30) as a description of pendants.

[200] *Changhe* 閶闔 are taken specifically as the gates of Heaven. There is some debate whether this means that he specifically blocked the gate or simply leaned on it. *Yu* 予 as the direct object first-person personal pronoun occurs in one other occasion in Li sao. This pattern is common in *Jiu ge*.

[201] *Ba* 罷 is generally understood as "finished," referring to the day; Jiang Liangfu 1999: IV.226, however, takes it as 霸 with the reading *po* (phaek<[p^{hs}]rak), equaling *po* 魄 (*phaek*< p^{hs}rak), the moon first coming out. This is a strong argument, consistent with both early usage and phonology.

[202] *Jie* 結, to "plait" or "knot," often implies a meaning on the part of the person plaiting. It seems that Qu Yuan here and the shaman speaker in the "Da siming" ("I plait cassia twigs, standing there long," 結桂枝兮延佇) are expressing themselves through this act. Later, when courting Fu Fei (56), he undoes his sash and literally "ties [plaits] words," *jie yan* 結言, in it.

[203] White Waters was a legendary river flowing from Kunlun that made those who drank from it immortal.

[204] Langfeng was one of the peaks of Kunlun.

[205] Various opinions have been advanced on whether this is Mount Langfeng, a place in Chu called High Hill, or the famous Gaotang where the King of Chu met the Goddess of Wu Mountain in dream. I take it as a "high hill."

[206] The Palace of Spring is where the Emperor of the East lives.

折瓊枝以繼佩. I snapped stalks of qiong to add to my sash.[207]

及榮華之未落兮, Before the bloom's glory had fallen away,

相下女之可詒. I would divine a woman below on whom to bestow them.[208]

56

吾令豐隆乘雲兮, Feng Long I bade to go riding the clouds, [209]

求虙妃之所在. to seek out Fu Fei where she dwells.[210]

解佩纕以結言兮, I took pendant-sash, I tied there a message,

吾令蹇修以為理. and bade Lady Blunt to act as my envoy.[211]

57

紛總總其離合兮, A bewildering tumult, first apart, then agreeing,[212]

忽緯繣其難遷. she was suddenly contrary, could not be swayed.[213]

夕歸次於窮石兮, She went twilights to lodge at Farthest-of-Rocks,[214]

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[207] Q*iong* 瓊 is a reddish semi-precious gem. When written 藑 with the grass radical, it is a plant; and compounded as *qiongmao* 瓊茅, it is understood as a bindweed, also known as the "trumpet vine." Scholars usually suggest that the plant was so named because its color resembled the semi-precious gem, but it could just as easily be the other way around. Later in Li sao Qu Yuan twice refers to eating *qiong* meal, written with the jade radical, and in the present line it is described as having *zhi* 枝, usually "branches," here rendered as "stalks." Eating ground rock obviously not wise, but neither would it be wise to eat bindweed, which is mildly poisonous. Qu Yuan speaks of hanging *qiong* from his sash (*pei* 佩), which probably invited the character with the jade radical, but in Li sao Qu Yuan hangs only plants from his sash (and a sachet with aromatics). I can only conclude that this is neither carnelian nor bindweed, but some other, edible plant, unknown to the scribes, who wrote the sound with a jade radical because it was strung from his sash. I will simply call it *qiong*.

[208] Although "woman below" seems the obvious sense here of *xianü* 下女, Jiang Liangfu, following Zhu Xi, wants this to be a serving girl, whom the speaker can ask to act as a go-between. The "woman below" is clearly on earth below Heaven or the "high hill"; but it is worth noting that the first woman sought is a river goddess, consistent with the use of the same term in "Xiang jun" ("woman underwater").

[209] Feng Long is generally understood as the god of clouds, though some argue that he is the god of thunder.

[210] Fu Fei was, by one account, the daughter of the sage Fuxi; she drowned and became the Luo River goddess.

[211] The old interpretation is that Jianxiu 蹇修 ("Lady Blunt") was a servant of Fu Fei. Dai Zhen believed this was a kenning for a matchmaker, known for blunt speech. Clearly the title plays on *jian* 蹇 ("lame")/ 謇 ("inept of speech" or "blunt"). We must, however, not discount the possibility that this is the same *jian* as 謇 in 11.1, where some take it as "artful speech." In that case, this might mean "Lady Artful Speech." For *xiu* 修 as the second term, compare the "Fair One," *lingxiu* 靈修. We have a system of typological naming here that is suggestive but not extensive enough to be fully clear. A *li* 理 was a negotiator.

[212] This same line recurs in (52). Earlier is described the scene on Qu Yuan's approach to Heaven's gate; here it seems to describe the marriage negotiations.

[213] *Weihua* 緯繣 is explained as "to go awry" or "to be contrary." Zhu Jihai explains 緯 as being "capricious" and 繣 as "easily pouting."

[214] Farthest-of-Rocks was supposedly in the far west and the source of the Ruo River. The subject of this and the following line could also be Qu Yuan.

朝濯髮於洧盤. and at dawn bathed her hair in Weiban Stream.[215]

58

保厥美以驕傲兮, She held on to her beauty, she was scornful and proud,[216]

日康娛以淫遊. in wild pleasures daily she wantonly roamed.[217]

雖信美而無禮兮, Though beautiful truly, she lacked right behavior—

來違棄而改求. Come, let her go then, I will seek for another.

59

覽相觀於四極兮, I scanned and observed all the world's ends,[218]

周流乎天余乃下. I roamed throughout sky, then I came down.

望瑤臺之偃蹇兮, I viewed the rising crest of a terrace of onyx,

見有娀之佚女. there saw a rare woman, the You-Song's daughter.[219]

60

吾令鴆為媒兮, I bade the venom-owl to make match between us,[220]

鴆告余以不好. and the venom-owl told me it was not good.[221]

雄鳩之鳴逝兮, The dove-cock went away singing,[222]

余猶惡其佻巧. and I still loathe its petty wiles.

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[215] Weiban Stream supposedly flowed off Mount Yanzi (see stanza 48).

[216] *Bao* 保, "hold on to," is both to guard and to treasure, to keep from others. Mao Maoyuan glosses *bao* as "depend on"; thus, that she was able to be haughty because of her beauty.

[217] The first hemistich of this line was used to describe the excesses of Guo Ao in (39).

[218] See (43) for the same verbal pattern in a different sense.

[219] The You-Song was the family from which came the mother of Jie, the ancestor of Shang, Jian Di 簡狄. *Yi* 佚, glossed by Wang Yi here as "fine" 美, has been related by Jiang Liangfu to 懿.

[220] The *zhen* 鴆 was supposedly a poisonous snake-eating bird. Hawkes takes it as a magpie.

[221] The commentaries generally take this line as the report of the *zhen* bird, that the woman is not beautiful or not good. This line follows the pattern used in the "Xiang jun" in which the goddess tells the speaker that she has no time. Thus, I am inclined to take it as the refusal of the *zhen* to carry out the mission, leading to Qu Yuan's proposal to go himself.

[222] Hawkes think the "dove-cock" is a mistake for the *zhen* 鴆.

61

心猶豫而狐疑兮，My heart then faltered, doubts overcame me,

欲自適而不可. I wanted to go myself; it was not allowed.

鳳凰既受詒兮， Already the phoenix had given its gift,[223]

恐高辛之先我. I feared that Gao Xin had come before me.[224]

62

欲遠集而吾所止兮，I wanted to alight far away, there was no place to halt,

聊浮游以逍遙. so I drifted the while and roamed at my ease.

及少康之未家兮，If still not yet married to Shaokang the Prince,

留有虞之二姚. there remained the two Yao girls of the clan You-Yu.[225]

63

理弱而媒拙兮， My envoy was feeble, the matchmaker, bumbling;

恐導言之不固. I feared words to charm them would not hold fast.

世溷濁而嫉賢兮，An age foul and murky, it spites a man's worth,

好蔽美而稱惡. it loves to block beauty, it acclaims what is ill.[226]

64

閨中既以邃遠兮，Remote and far are the chambers of women;

哲王又不寤. and the wise king also is not yet aware.

懷朕情而不發兮，I keep feelings within me, do not bring them forth,

[223] Presumably from Gao Xin. Normally these would be the betrothal presents, but in the light of the legend described in the following note, this may be the impregnating egg.

[224] Gao Xin is Diku 帝嚳 who sent a *xuanniao* 玄鳥 (usually understood as a swallow, but also a phoenix) to Jian Di. The *xuanniao* laid an egg, which Jiandi swallowed and became pregnant, thus establishing the Shang lineage. Qu Yuan is of the Gao Yang lineage; the lineage that followed from the marriage of Gao Xin and Jian Di was the competing royal lineage in ancient China.

[225] When Guo Ao destroyed the Xia ruler Xiang, his son Shaokang fled to the You-Yu people, whose ruling family was surnamed Yao. The ruler of the You-Yu gave him his two daughters in marriage. By some accounts Xiang's wife fled to the You-Yu and gave birth to Shaokang there. Shaokang restored the Xia and the Gao Yang line.

[226] Compare this couplet to stanza 53: 世溷濁而不分兮，好蔽美而嫉妒.

余焉能忍而與此終古. yet how can I bear that it be thus forever?

65

索瓊茅以筵篿兮，I sought out qiong stems, for slips to cast lots,

命靈氛為余占之. and bade Holy Fen to divine the thing for me.[227]

曰兩美其必合兮，He said: "Two lovely beings must surely be matched;[228]

孰信脩而慕之. whoever is truly fair adore her.[229]

66

思九州之博大兮，"Consider the wide sweep of these Nine Domains—

豈惟是其有女. can it be only here that a woman be found?"[230]

曰勉遠逝而無狐疑兮， He said: "Undertake a far faring, be not full of doubts;

孰求美而釋女. none who seeks beauty would let you slip by.[231]

67

何所獨無芳草兮，"Is there any place lacking in plants of sweet fragrance?

爾何懷乎故宇. why must you so cherish your former abode?[232]

世幽昧以眩曜兮，This age is a dark one, eyes are dazzled and blinded,

孰云察余之善惡. no man can discern what I find good or hate.

[227] One of the ten shamans mentioned in *Shanhai jing* 山海經 is Ling Pan/Fen 靈盼, which I take to be the same as *Ling Fen* 靈氛 here. Jiang Liangfu argues that *lingfen* is the same as *lingbao* 靈保 in *Jiu ge*, the shaman medium as a categorical term. This does not work phonologically and has no other support.

[228] Sometimes these are taken as Qu Yuan's words.

[229] There is an obvious problem with the rhyme here. Some try to solve the problem by making the repeated *zhi* 之 the rhyme, though it is usually the word before a final 之 that rhymes. Wen Yiduo proposes 莫念. Several scholars (Liu Yongji and Jiang Liangfu) accept a proposed emendation of *zhan* 占 to *bu* 卜, meaning roughly the same thing. In (70) the divination is referred to as *zhan*.

[230] There is some disagreement on the referent of "here," *shi* 是. Some take it as Chu; others take it as "these places," where he has encountered Fu Fei and the other women mentioned above.

[231] Taking *nü* 女 as *ru* 汝, "you." This could conceivably be: "Who seeks beauty and lets such a woman go?"

[232] Some earlier interpretations have Holy Fen's speech stopping here; many modern commentators continue it as translated above.

68

民好惡其不同兮，“What men love and loathe　is never the same—[233]

惟此黨人其獨異．only these men of faction　alone stand apart.[234]

戶服艾以盈腰兮，Each person wears mugwort,　stuffed in his waist,[235]

謂幽蘭其不可佩．they declare that the eupatorium　may never be strung.

69

覽察草木其猶未得兮，　“If in discerning plants　they still cannot grasp it,

豈珵美之能當．　can they ever be right　in judgments of beauty?[236]

蘇糞壤以充幃兮，They seek shit and mire　to stuff their sachets,[237]

謂申椒其不芳．　and say that Shen’s pepper　lacks any sweet smell.”

70

欲從靈氛之吉占兮，I wished to follow Holy Fen’s　lot of good fortune,

心猶豫而狐疑．　yet my heart faltered,　doubts overcame me.

巫咸將夕降兮，　The Shaman Xian　would descend in the twilight,

懷椒糈而要之．　I clasped pepper and rice　to beseech him.[238]

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[233] This is one possible interpretation of a line that can be understood many ways. The first question is whether 好惡 is *haowu*, “love and loathe,” the verbal counterpart of *shan’e* (“good and bad”) in the preceding stanza, or *haoe* “loving the bad.” If it is “love and loathe,” then the question is whether people’s general likes and dislikes differ, as translated above, or Qu Yuan differs in his likes and dislikes from others. The same question applies if we take the phrase as “loving evil.” Jiang Liangfu further complicates the line by suggesting that *qi* 其 here should be understood as 豈, thus making it a rhetorical question. Since the *qi* is in the “weak” position in the line, it is best not to read grammatical functions into it.

[234] This problematic statement has been explained several ways: Ma Maoyuan suggests that in hating virtue the men of faction place themselves outside the range of normal affections; Jiang Liangfu suggests that while others differ among themselves, men of faction all agree in their inversion of values. Although this couplet makes sense as translated, its interpretation is far from certain.

[235] Ma Maoyuan takes this as he takes *hushui* 戶說 earlier: from door to door; i.e., everyone. Jiang Liangfu also takes this *hu* 戶 as 扈, to “cover” or “wear.” Although this interpretation is attractive, a compound verb in the first two positions followed by its object is not usual.

[236] *Cheng* 珵 is a fine jade. Thus, the line becomes: “can they ever be right on the beauty of gems?” Xu Renfu and Jiang Liangfu take this as *cheng* 稱, to “weigh” or “evaluate,” which is the reading in the *Chu ci yin*. I have followed this here: even though the phonology is off, *Chu ci yin* is an early manuscript source. This is the sole use of *cheng* 珵 in *Chu ci*, but *cheng* 稱, “weigh in the balance,” is attested elsewhere.

[237] Some take *wei* 幃 in its more usual sense as bed-curtains.

[238] *Xu* 糈 was a refined rice used in offerings. This may be “peppered rice” rather than “pepper and rice.”

71

百神翳其備降兮，The gods blotted sky, their full array descending,

九疑繽其並迎. the hosts of Many Doubts joined to go greet them.[239]

皇剡剡其揚靈兮，Gloriously shining, he sent forth his spirit,[240]

告余以吉故. giving me word of fortunate outcomes.[241]

72

曰勉陞降以上下兮，He said: "Undertake to fare high and then to fare low,[242]

求矩矱之所同. seek one who agrees with the yardstick and square.[243]

湯禹儼而求合兮，Yu the Great was stern, he sought one who matched him,[244]

執咎繇而能調. he held to Gao Yao as one able to suit him.[245]

73

苟中情其好脩兮，"If one's nature within loves what is fair,

又何必用夫行媒. what need to make use of matchmaker or envoy?

說操築於傅巖兮，Yue held an earth-ram upon Fu's cliff;[246]

武丁用而不疑. Wuding employed him and did not doubt.

---

[239] This same line occurs in "Xiang furen" in *Jiu ge*. Zhu Jihai argues that *bin* 繽 is not "hosts" or "multitudes," but rather 賓, "guest," citing the phrase *Jiuyi bin* 九疑賓 from a Han ceremonial song. In either case we have a multitude of spirits. I have translated it distinguishing the descending "gods," *baishen* 百神 (literally "the hundred gods"), from the mountain spirits of the Many Doubts range. The gods and spirits may be the same, descending over the Many Doubts Range; in this case, the object of greeting will be Shaman Xian. *Yi* 疑, "doubts," may simply be a loan character for the categorical name of these mountains; but in the context of so much doubting, the play on words would have been unmistakable.

[240] *Huang* 皇 is the attribute and sometimes the attributive name of divinity. In this pattern it is probably an initial adverb, describing the quality of Shaman Xian's appearance, thus translates "gloriously." Some commentators want to take *huang* as the supreme deity among the "hundred gods." *Yangling* 揚靈, translated as "send forth spirit," is the term used in "Xiang jun" when the shaman seeker after the river goddess seems to come to an impasse. The subject here is apparently Shaman Xian.

[241] The "fortunate outcomes" are presumably the outcomes of the exemplary stories that follow. This stanza does not rhyme.

[242] The translation above follows the traditional interpretation. Ma Maoyuan takes this as "to rise and sink" with the times; this seems to me to anachronistically read "Yu fu" back into Li sao.

[243] *Tong* 同 does not rhyme here. Jiang Liangfu argues the correct term should be *zhou* 周. Here again the terminology of craft stands for moral uprightness.

[244] Most commentators take this as Tang and Yu. Here I follow Jiang Liangfu in interpreting Tang Yu 湯禹 as "Yu the Great."

[245] Many commentators take *zhi* 執 as *Zhi* 摯, referring to Yi Yin of Tang's time (see alternative interpretation of the preceding line). Gao Yao 咎繇 was the minister of Yu. Jiang argues persuasively for a verbal reading of *zhi* 執, which supports his interpretation of *tang* 湯 in the preceding line. One could take the second hemistich as: "and was able to govern harmoniously."

[246] The Shang king Wuding found his famous minister Fu Yue when the latter was working in a labor gang, building earthen works.

74

呂望之鼓刀兮，　“Lü Wang swung　a butcher’s knife,[247]

遭周文而得舉.　yet he met Zhou’s King Wen　and he was raised up.

甯戚之謳歌兮，　Ning Qi　was a singer of songs,[248]

齊桓聞而該輔.　Huan of Qi heard him;　he assisted in all.[249]

75

及年歲之未晏兮，“Yet act now before　the year grows too late,

時亦猶其未央.　now while the season　has not yet passed.

恐鵜鴂之先鳴兮，I fear only cries early　from the nightjar,[250]

使夫百草為之不芳.　making all plants　lose their sweet scent.”

76

何瓊佩之偃蹇兮，My sash-hangings of qiong,　how they dangle swaying—[251]

眾薆然而蔽之.　yet the throngs would dim them,　cover them over.

惟此黨人之不諒兮，　These men of faction　are wanting in faith,

恐嫉妒而折之.　I fear their spite and malice,　that they will break them.[252]

77

時繽紛其變易兮，The times are in tumult,　ever transforming.[253]

---

[247] Taigong, King Wen’s famous advisor, first was a butcher, and when he grew older, became a fisherman.
[248] Ning Qi was a petty merchant who attracted the attention of Count Huan of Qi by rapping on the horns of his ox and singing. Duke Huan, who ruled in the seventh century BCE, is the latest historical figure mentioned in Li sao.
[249] *Gai* 該 is used in the *Chu ci* like *bei* 備, “completely.”
[250] There are various interpretations of which bird is meant by the *tijue* 鵜鴂, hanging on whether the bird sings at the beginning of summer when the flowers are finished, or in early autumn.
[251] *Yanqian* 偃蹇 usually describes sinuous motion, sometimes rising to heights. Here it must describe the swaying of the qiong stalks.
[252] Ma Maoyuan wants to take *kong* 恐 (“I fear”) as *gong* 共, “together.” Although the two words are not exact homophones, this is phonologically not improbable. Presumably his pendants are the object of *zhe* 折.
[253] *Binfen* 繽紛, translated as “in tumult” here was earlier used in (31) to describe his sash-hangings “in profusion.”

又何可以淹留. how then may a man linger here long?
蘭芷變而不芳兮, Eupatorium, angelica change, they become sweet no more;
荃蕙化而為茅. calamus and basil alter, they turn into straw.

78

何昔日之芳草兮, How do sweet-smelling plants of days gone by
今直為此蕭艾也. now become nothing more than stinking weeds?[254]
豈其有他故兮, Can there be any reason other than this?—
莫好脩之害也. the harm that is worked by no love for the fair.

79

余以蘭為可恃兮, I once thought Eupatorium could be steadfast:[255]
羌無實而容長. it bore me no fruit, it was all show.[256]
委厥美以從俗兮, Forsaking its beauty, it followed the common;
苟得列乎眾芳. it wrongly is ranked in the hosts of sweet scent.[257]

80

椒專佞以慢慆兮, Pepper is master of fawning, it is swaggering, reckless,[258]
榝又欲充夫佩幃. only mock-pepper stuffs sachets hung from waists.[259]
既干進而務入兮, It pressed hard to advance, it struggled for favor,
又何芳之能祗. what sweet scent remains that is able to spread?[260]

[254] The "stinking weeds" are properly "artemisia and mugwort."
[255] According to the Wang Yi interpretation "Eupatorium" was King Huai's son Zilan (the "lan" being the eupatorium). While such specificity it part of later commentarial creation of contextual referent, it is possible that "eupatorium" is a flower title for a person.
[256] Or taking *shi* 實 more abstractly: "there was no substance to it."
[257] Some commentators take *gou* 苟 ("wrongly") in the weaker sense it often has in Li sao: "and yet."
[258] Like "Eupatorium" above, "Pepper" was taken by Wang Yi as a specific person, Sima Zijiao 司馬子椒. It is unclear whether *zhuan* 專 ("master of") is linked to *ning* 佞, as in the translation above, or is a distinct quality, "domineering."
[259] *Sha* 榝 ("mock-pepper") was a plant resembling pepper, but without scent.
[260] *Zhi* 祗 is understood as *zhen* 振, "to spread" See Jiang Liangfu 1999: II.389 and IV.136. Wang Niansun's claim that the two words have proximate sounds seems far-fetched (Wang Niansun, 1153.713), but the interpretation is widely accepted over Wang Yi's gloss as "respect." I have no more persuasive alternative.

81

固時俗之流從兮，Truly, ways of these times are willful and loose,[261]

又孰能無變化. who now is able to avoid being changed?

覽椒蘭其若茲兮，Viewing eupatorium and pepper, seeing them thus,

又況揭車與江離. will it be less be true of lovage and wintergreen?

82

惟茲佩之可貴兮，Only these my own pendants are still to be prized;

委厥美而歷茲. forsaken is beauty, and I come to this.[262]

芳菲菲而難虧兮，Yet their sweet scent spreads, it is not diminished,

芬至今猶未沫. even now the aroma has still not abated.

83

和調度以自娛兮，In their blending's measure I take my delight,[263]

聊浮游而求女. I will drift and will roam, seeking the woman.

及余飾之方壯兮，And while such adornment is still in its glory,

周流觀乎上下. I will range widely looking, both high and low.

84

靈氛既告余以吉占兮， Since Holy Fen told me my lot of good fortune,

歷吉日乎吾將行. I choose a day of good fortune, and I will set out.[264]

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[261] *Cong* 從 is here is used for *zong* 縱.

[262] The first hemistich here occurred in (79), in which "eupatorium" forsook its beauty.

[263] The translation follows Ma Maoyuan in taking *he diao du* 和調度 as referring to his pendants. Some other commentators take this more abstractly, as an inner harmony."

[264] Mao Maoyuan takes *li* 歷 as a loan for 遴, "select." I have followed this interpretation because the phrase recurs in Sima Xiangru's *Shanglin fu* and functionally means "select." I suspect, however, that this only a functional meaning in the phrase rather than a loan, particularly when *li* is used elsewhere; e.g., (36, 82) above. *Li* usually means "to go through," but the object in these cases may be the object of "go through to"; thus, the phrase may mean: "when I come to a lucky day."

折瓊枝以為羞兮，I snap stalks of qiong to serve as my viands,[265]
精瓊靡以為粻. fine qiong meal will serve as my fare.

85

為余駕飛龍兮， For me have been hitched those dragons that fly,
雜瑤象以為車. mixed onyx and ivory serve as my chariot.
何離心之可同兮，How can a mind set apart be ever like others?[266]
吾將遠逝以自疏. I will go away far, keep myself removed.

86

邅吾道夫崑崙兮，I bent my way round at Kunlun Mountain,
路脩遠以周流. Long and far was the road, there I ranged all around.
揚雲霓之晻藹兮，I raised my cloud-rainbows, dimming and darkening,
鳴玉鸞之啾啾. jade phoenix chimes rang, with a jingling sound.

87

朝發軔於天津兮，At dawn I loosed the wheel-block at Ford-of-the-Sky,[267]
夕余至乎西極. by twilight I came to the ends of the west.
鳳皇翼其承旂兮，Phoenix spread its wings, and bore up my banners,
高翔翱之翼翼. high aloft it soared, its wing-beats were steady.

88

忽吾行此流沙兮，All at once I was faring across Drifting Sands,
遵赤水而容與. I went down the Red Waters, there took my ease.[268]

[265] See note on (55).
[266] Or: "How can I be the same as minds set apart from mine?"
[267] The "Ford-of-the-Sky" was located between the Sieve and the Dipper, or, by another explanation, in the very center of the sky.
[268] The Red Waters were said to flow from Kunlun.

麾蛟龍使梁津兮，I signaled the dragons to make me a bridge,

詔西皇使涉予. I called to West's Sovereign to take me across.

89

路脩遠以多艱兮，Long and far was the road, it was filled with perils,

騰眾車使徑待. I had all my chariots mount up, drive straight and attend me.[269]

路不周以左轉兮，I made my path to Mount Buzhou, there turned to the left,[270]

指西海以為期. toward the Sea of the West my appointed goal.

90

屯余車其千乘兮，Then I massed my chariots, a thousand strong,

齊玉軑而並馳. jade hubs lined even, we galloped together.[271]

駕八龍之婉婉兮，I hitched my eight dragons, heaving and coiling,

載雲旗之委蛇. and bore my cloud banners streaming behind.

91

抑志而弭節兮， I then quelled my will and slackened my pace;[272]

神高馳之邈邈. the gods galloped high far to the distance,[273]

奏九歌而舞韶兮，they were playing Nine Songs and dancing the Shao,[274]

聊假日以娛樂. making use of this day to take their delight.[275]

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[269] I have taken *teng* 騰 in its simplest sense; however, Wen Yiduo argues that it means "pass word to." *Dai* 待 must be an error for *shi* 侍 because of rhyme.

[270] Mount Buzhou was supposed to be to the northwest of Kunlun.

[271] There is some disagreement about *dai* 軑. It is variously understood as a dialectical term for chariot hubs, chariot wheels, or the body of the chariot.

[272] Both Ma Maoyuan and Jiang Liangfu take *zhi* 志 as a loan for *zhi* 幟, hence "I lowered my banner." The two are homophones in MC but not in OC. Considering the use of the phrase in (26), where it clearly means repressing one's goals, we are compelled to take it in the same way here.

[273] Some commentators take *shen* 神 as Qu Yuan's own spirit. The only other use of *shen* in the Li sao is *baishen* 百神, and it seems best to take it as the deities in Qu Yuan's entourage.

[274] Both of these were pieces of Northern ritual music of legendary antiquity.

[275] If, as seems correct, *toule* 偷樂 in (9) is identical to *yule* 娛樂, then the "delight" here may suggest excessive pleasures.

92

陟陞皇之赫戲兮，I was mounting aloft to such dazzling splendor—[276]

忽臨睨夫舊鄉. all at once I peered down to my homeland of old.

僕夫悲余馬懷兮，My driver grew sad, my horses felt care,

蜷局顧而不行. they flexed looking backward and would not go on.[277]

亂曰：已矣哉， The Ending Song: It is done now forever!

國無人兮莫我知兮，in the domain there is no one, no one who knows me,[278]

又何懷乎故都. then why should I cherish that city, my home?

既莫足與為美政兮，Since no one can join me in making beautiful rule,

吾將從彭咸之所居. I will go off to seek where Peng and Xian dwell.[279]

[276] There are difficulties with this line. Ma Maoyuan takes *huang* 皇 as short for 皇天. I prefer to take it in its common sense of "splendid" or "glorious" (煌). Jiang Liangfu breaks apart *zhisheng* 陟陞 and takes *shenghuang* 陞皇 as the "rising sun" (taking 陟 as "when it comes to"). This is preferable for the rhythms of the line, but *shenghuang* 陞皇 is unprecedented. *Hexi* 赫戲 is 赫曦, "radiance." Zhu Jihai cites other examples of this compound.

[277] *Quanju* 蜷局 is essentially to "coil," here describing the horses or dragons bending their necks.

[278] Some take the first hemistich to mean that there is no worthy man in all the kingdom.

[279] Where Peng and Xian (or Peng Xian) reside, is a point of controversy. Traditionally it has been taken as an anticipation of his suicide, since Peng Xian was supposed to have drowned himself. Another possibility is, of course, Chu; that is, returning to Chu after making his circuit. However, from the evidence of the poem itself, we know Shaman Xian descends from Heaven (taking this Xian as the same person); in that case, the place referred to as his goal would be heaven.