o

Reading *Jiu ge* (“Nine Songs”)

A Counterfactual Hypothesis[1]

Jiu ge still shines through a mountain of scholarship based largely on unexamined assumptions, begged questions, and red herrings. It is difficult to start over again, to consider the sources of the evidence itself, and to see where that evidence leads us.[2] Let me suggest a peculiar procedure, which is a counterfactual hypothesis; that is, making an assumption that we know is not true. Let us consider *Jiu ge* “as if” it were an archeologically recovered text, with titles but no attribution of authorship. We date our imaginary manuscript to roughly the *time* that our extant *Jiu ge* (rather than the legendary *Jiu ge* of high antiquity) appears in continuous history—in the *Chu ci*, where it is attributed to Qu Yuan.[3] This, in fact, does not occur until Wang Yi, around the turn of the second century CE. However, to avoid pressing the case too far, let us date our hypothetical manuscript to around the last quarter of the first century BCE, after which *Jiu ge* was presumably included in Liu Xiang’s *Chu ci* collection on which Wang Yi claimed to have been writing a commentary.[4]

---

[1] Galal Walker 1982: 133-34 astutely observed that *Jiu ge* has been taken by many commentators as the earliest work in the *Chu ci*, by others as among the latest works in the *Chu ci* before the known Han authors, and, I would add, taken by most scholars as in between, in the narrower span of Qu Yuan’s compositions. In this case the “when” of composition—usually an invitation to madness in *Chu ci* studies—may have consequences for just what this collection of songs to deities is.

[2] In the entire *Chu ci* I have found only two cases of internal evidence with a reliable *terminus post quem* date in the third century BCE before 201 BCE. The most obvious case is “Ai Ying,” the inconvenience of whose internal dating has led scholars to such interpretive gymnastics as “Ying is not Ying, but another Chu capital of the same name.” The other is in “Bei huifeng” (施黃棘之枉策) in which the most infamous site in later Chu history (Huangji, where Chu signed the treaty with Qin that led inexorably to Chu’s downfall) was interpreted literally as “yellow thorn” by Wang Yi, an interpretation still followed by many *Chu ci* scholars, as well as Hawkes and Sukhu. This suggests the Wang Yi had never read or had no access to the “Chu shijia” 楚世家 in *Shi ji*. We have little understanding of how widely accessible a cartload of *Shi ji* was to a relatively ordinary person like Wang Yi at the turn of the second century CE.

[3] There are earlier references to *Jiu ge*, “Nine Songs,” as a ritual suite of high antiquity. No one knows what this was. This is certainly the sense in which it is used in Li sao (91). It also appears in “Tian di” 天地 (“Heaven and Earth”) from the “Jia si ge” 郊祀歌 (“Songs for the Suburban Sacrifice”), from Emperor Wu’s reign. I will argue that this refers to the *Jiu ge* we now have, but it has been taken as a general term for ritual songs. When Yang Xiong 楊雄 (58 BCE-18 CE) makes reference to *Jiu ge* in “Fan Li sao” 反離騷 (“Anti-Li sao” roughly 23-21 BCE), it is clearly to its use in Li sao and the lost ritual songs of high antiquity.

[4] In other words, we are placing our manuscript at the latest point *before* which we know that most readers took *Jiu ge* as Qu Yuan’s work. It should be noted here that in the *Yiwenzhi* 藝文志 of the *Han shu*, *Jiu ge* would have been generically inappropriate for inclusion in the *cifu* 辭賦 category under “Qu Yuan’s *fu*” 屈原賦. It should have been in the *geshi* 歌詩 category, which has other works of its kind.

We need to make one thing clear about this hypothesis: although we set aside the attribution to Qu Yuan and all its scholarly baggage for the time being, we do so without prejudice for or against the attribution. We make the hypothesis in order to ask how a scholar would try to understand the Songs if they had been recovered without authorial attribution.[5] If this explanation proves simpler and can account for more anomalies in the series than the Qu Yuan attribution, then we will consider how the attribution to Qu Yuan could have occurred. One advantage of this procedure is that it removes our hypothetical scholar from the polemical aspect of past studies: he is seeking neither to overturn nor defend the attribution to Qu Yuan or to a Chu provenance of *Jiu ge*; moreover, by the nature of the "discovery," our scholar is forced to confine himself entirely to evidence that reliably predates the manuscript.

I will endow my hypothetical scholar with good common sense, along with some knowledge of what happened elsewhere in the world, of the role of literary language in regional idiom, etc. In the process we will be passing through some territory and texts familiar treated by earlier scholars of *Jiu ge*; and although my hypothetical scholar would not know these, as the author of the hypothetical scholar, I will acknowledge and cite them in passing.

The first thing our scholar would notice is that many of the deities were local, named for their particular jurisdiction and their title: in most cases, *jun* 君, "lord of." Our scholar would assume that their shrines and temples would be for individual deities (except the two Xiang goddesses, paired in a single shrine) and that those individualized temples would be the places where the deity sometimes resided and could be contacted. Moreover, each deity was celebrated at certain specific times in the year, which did not necessarily correspond to the ritual calendar for other deities elsewhere. People who celebrated the deities of one locale might not even know of the existence of some of the deities from other locales. So, our scholar's first question would naturally be: what these deities are doing, gathered together in the same manuscript?

[5] For convenience I will sometimes refer to *Jiu ge* as capitalized "Songs" and individual works in the set as a "Song."

The answer would come very easily. This is the work of a kingdom or empire that claims its own earthly jurisdiction over the all the individual spirit jurisdictions of the deities.

At this point our scholar will be pulled in two lines to investigate. First, there is the obvious evidence pointing to Emperor Wu (141 BCE to 87 BCE), who institutionalized the worship of Taiyi, the recipient of the first Song.[6] Taiyi was known in the pre-Qin, in Chu as elsewhere; but there is no evidence for Taiyi's role that we see here, heading a set of deities arranged in an order of descending hierarchy, the theological mirror of Emperor Wu's imperial ideology. The opening hymn states its purpose to as "give pleasure to the Sovereign on High," *yu xi shanghuang* 愉兮上皇, with the "Sovereign on High" clearly referring to Taiyi. Our scholar will immediately think of the lines from "Tian di" 天地 ("Heaven and Earth"), one of the "Jiaosi ge" 郊祀歌 ("Songs for the Suburban Sacrifices"): "In shared affection, joining in pleasure, we delight Taiyi, / the Nine Songs have been performed to the end, richly various." 合好交歡虞泰一, 九歌畢奏斐然殊.[7] He may even notice that "Tian di" has a sequence of paired phrases identical with one in "Dong jun" in the *Jiu ge*. In "Dong jun" we have "presenting the lyrics, joining in dance. / Catching the pitch, matching the rhythms" 展詩兮會舞. 應律兮合節; in "Tian di" we have "presenting the lyrics, catching the pitch, the clinging jades resound" 展詩應律鋗玉鳴. Our scholar will, of course wonder if his manuscript represents the *Jiu ge* mentioned in "Tian di", rather than simply a gesture to the lost songs of high antiquity.

Our scholar thinks in terms of probability. The phrase *zhan shi* 展詩 ("presenting the lyrics"), is used *only twice* in the entire received textual corpus before the end of the Western Han, once in our *Jiu ge* manuscript and once in "Tian di," which refers to performing *Jiu ge*. In both cases they are used in conjunction with the phrase *ying lü* 應律 ("catching the pitch"). What is the probability that this is an accident and that the two occurrences are unrelated? The answer is so obvious that

[6] Author's note. Here we will have to mentions scholarship on the Nine Songs" that our hypothetical scholar cannot know. Xu Duren 1935 and Sun Kaidi 1946 and 1948 are among those who have argued for a Han date for the *Jiu ge*. We will touch on familiar sources there, but perhaps in a different way, with some additional evidence.

[7] Here I read 交/for 效, following *Chuxue ji*. The *yu* in the first of *Jiu ge* is 愉, yu<lo; the *yu* in "Tian di" is 虞, ngju<[ŋ]^w(r)a, also written 娛. The basic meaning of the two words is the same, "to delight." Although phonologically distinct, *yu* 娛/虞 is the more common transitive usage, as in "Dong jun" 羌聲色兮娛人.

he could simply stop his research here. His manuscript is indeed the *Jiu ge* performed for Emperor Wu. But he wants to know more. Were these *Jiu ge* composed for Emperor Wu's ceremonies, or did they come from earlier or elsewhere?

Our scholar will return to Emperor Wu, but there is another line of questioning. What is the earliest evidence for such a gathering of local religious songs and what regions do they represent? In other words, what earthly political jurisdiction is collecting divine local jurisdictions and putting them together under the supreme divine authority, Taiyi?

The Qin was nothing if not theologically hyperactive, but they seemed to prefer deities as colorless as Qin itself. Sacrifices to deities outside of Qin were done in their own locale when the First Emperor was on a tour; all the deities in the region of the capital were systematically taken care of. But Qin does not seem to have "collected" deities from various regions into one place, as Qin collected the descendants of the rulers of the feudal domains.

In 201 BCE, just after the final defeat of Xiang Yu, Liu Bang sent out an edict to bring officers in charge of the rite, *sizhuguan* 祀主官, and shamankas, *nüwu* 女巫, from various regions to the capital, there to carry out rites, each for their own local deities.[8] At this time Liu Bang was still in his temporary capital in Luoyang, and Chang'an, the destination of the shamankas, was under construction. His extensive list of deities, categorized by region, looks rather different from the even more extensive system of deities patronized by Qin; but the most striking difference is that these deities and their officiants are being gathered in one place.

Our scholar would immediately notice that two of the deities in *Jiu ge* appear directly in Liu Bang's edict: Dong jun 東君, "The Lord of the East" and "Yunzhong jun" 雲中君, the translation of which we will defer. Three other deities appear less directly: two Siming 司命, "Masters of Lifespans," one from Jin and one from Jing (the old Chu heartland), and there were rites for the Yellow River to be conducted in Linjin 臨晉 (modern Dali County 大荔縣 in Shaanxi). These match the Senior and Junior Masters of Lifespans and the Earl of the Yellow River, He bo 河伯, in the Songs. Many of the deities in Liu Bang's list are not represented among the Songs, and *Jiu*

[8] *Shi ji*: 1378-79.

ge has other deities that are not on this list. Nevertheless, there is no escaping the fact that the deities of Liu Bang's edict by and large represent Han imperial territory and not a territory restricted to Chu or any single Warring States kingdom. Indeed, it roughly represents Liu Bang's yet undefined "imperial domain," without the feudal principalities, who would presumably ensure the contentment of their own deities.

At this point we suspect that our scholar's attention has been distracted from the manuscript of *Jiu ge* in front of him and has wandered off. But we must let him follow this train of thought to where it leads. Comparing the list of Qin rituals with the list of deities in Liu Bang's edict, Qin was truly mapping the theological landscape of his empire, while Liu Bang seems to be concentrating heavily on some regions and ignoring others. We would, for example, expect the Earl of the Yellow River to be worshipped farther downstream, rather than in Linjin, modern Shaanxi, just above the great bend in the River.

If we wanted to understand what was on Liu Bang's mind in doing this, we would ask what was happening in 201 BCE. Liu Bang had his temporary capital in Luoyang. Little rebellions were breaking out everywhere, and he was always concerned about who was loyal to him and who was not. But by far the most important news was that the Xiongnu, who had been out of the picture for an extended period because of internal struggles and the Qin military machine, were back. They had retaken lost territory in Yan (roughly the area around Beijing) and Dai (spanning the border of Hebei and Shanxi); and they were in the Shuofang 朔方, the north-central border area west of Dai (modern northern Shanxi). Right in the middle of that was a region called Yunzhong 雲中.

The urgent defense of this area had been entrusted to Han Xin 韓信, perhaps Liu Bang's best general and one with whom he had a long and often tense relation. Han Xin moved his troops north and stationed them in a military city called Mayi 馬邑. A large Xiongnu army surrounded him and forced him to surrender. Han Xin went over to the Xiongnu. This opened the way south to Taiyuan and on down to Luoyang. In the following year, 200 BCE, Liu Bang himself would find himself surrounded by the Xiongnu at Pingcheng 平城, near Yunzhong and just east of Mayi in the Xiongnu invasion corridor. Liu Bang barely escaped.

Scholars of *Chu ci* may claim that “Yunzhong jun” 雲中君 is the “Lord in the Clouds” and a deity of Chu; but when Liu Bang ordered shamankas to go from Jin to Chang’an to perform rites for this deity in 201 BCE, there is little doubt that Liu Bang meant the “Lord of Yunzhong,” the deity astride the Xiongnu invasion corridor and keeping watch across that route by looking toward Jizhou 冀州 to the east.[9] The other Jin deity in Liu Bang’s selection, “Dong jun,” the sun god, shoots “Heaven’s Wolf” as the sun sets; Heaven’s Wolf was the asterism associated with foreign invasion. These were, in 201 BCE, timely deities to support, and their iteration in our current *Jiu ge* remembers their original function.

This leads us to a further question, which is the history of this religious institution that Liu Bang founded by his edict. At this point our hypothetical scholar might then consider that while this gathering would have perfectly suited the religious imagination of Liu Bang, a commoner, born in 256 BCE on the fuzzy margins of Greater Chu, this institution would certainly have seemed more and more out of place as Han imperial ideology evolved through the course of the Western Han. How long did this institution continue? The scholar would check the histories and soon discover that Liu Bang’s original institution was not disestablished until 31 BCE in the reign of Emperor Cheng.[10] This ritual institution, which lasted 170 years, was still very much alive during the long reign of Emperor Wu. The question is whether it remained the *same* as in Liu Bang’s 201 BCE edict, or was it modified to meet the changing needs and values of the evolving empire?[11]

Our scholar thinks about the probability of two simultaneous ceremonies being conducted in the Han court to “Yunzhong jun,” one referring to a deity protecting the frontier and another, to a southern Chu cloud god. This is more than a little awkward, especially with a southern cloud god offering to keep an eye out in the direction of Jizhou.[12]

[9] This was David Hawkes intuition (“I can’t help thinking that . . .”) that Yunzhong refers to the region. (Hawkes 103). It was an excellent intuition, but I think we can see that it was more than a speculation.
[10] *Han shu*: 1257-58. This ritual reform eliminated 475 positions, of which the religious practitioners of Liu Bang’s institution were only a part. We might note the Emperor Wu’s own numerous ritual positions were eliminated, including the one(s) devoted to the worship of Taiyi.
[11] The notice of the dissolution of the institution in *Han shu* mentions the specific categories of the edict, so it might seem to have been unchanged, but it might simply be identifying the institution by the original terms of the edict.
[12] If, however, Ying is not really Ying, as has been sometimes claimed in reference to “Ai Ying,” then perhaps Jizhou is not really Jizhou, but synecdoche for “all China.”

In addition to two prior sacrifices instituted by Liu Bang, there were no less than twenty-five other regional rites with officers and shamankas summoned by the decree. We may assume one officer per rite for the deities of a region, but how many shamans and shamankas were involved for each? This was a large institution. When the institution was dissolved in 31 BCE, it was part of a general reform of the ritual establishment, which abolished 475 ritual positions (*suo* 所) out of 683 in the grounds that they "did not correspond to [correct] Rites" *bu ying li* 不應禮.[13] One thread in the complex fabric of Western Han history goes from 201 BCE, when these ceremonies for local deities were the among the very earliest rites to be established in the founding of the Han dynasty, to 31 BCE, when the thread is snipped off as "not corresponding to [correct] Rites." In the middle of that thread was the reign of Emperor Wu.

The documents are quite specific on *what* was to be done but rarely tell us *how* it was to be done. Liu Bang's edict gives the impression that he wanted religious practitioners from these different regions and shrines brought to Chang'an. He is quite specific that he wanted each deity to be worshipped at the correct times on that deity's ritual calendar. Using religious practitioners from the various regions would ensure that their rites would be carried out "as they had been before," *ru gu* 如故.

Although reading and writing had spread widely in the clerical (including scholarly) community, we can wonder if that was the case with shamankas gathered from various locales of the imperial domain. It is possible that there was a textbook entitled "How to Celebrate the Master of Lifespans," but it seems most unlikely. These things were likely to have been learned by practice from childhood—and almost certainly in the local dialect. We may well wonder if a shamanka from northern Shanxi could even understand a shamanka from Jing (Hubei).

In short, looking back from 31 BCE, this must have been a strict Confucian's nightmare: in some corner of the palace compound in Chang'an, there would have been a frequent or continuous

[13] We have from Gaozu's (Liu Bang's) reign the ritual "Chamber Songs" of Lady of Tangshan, "Anshi fangzhong ge" 安世房中歌 (Lu Qinli 1983: 145), originally known as "Fangzhong si yue" 房中祀樂. Although the Lady of Tangshan was famously skilled in "Chu music," *Chusheng* 楚聲, which Liu Bang favored, the existing texts are mostly moralistic and Confucian. "Fangzhong" was one of the local rites providing officiants and shamans in the 201 BCE institution; the region was Liang 梁 (in the vague regional spread of the 201 edict this refers to part of Henan; but of the regions named, this was the closest to the Confucianized central-east). "Fangzhong" was originally supposed to have been Zhou music.

cacophony of regional music, songs in dialect, and dancing shamankas for a hundred and seventy years. And no one could do anything about such rituals because they had been established by an edict of Great-great-grandfather Liu Bang. How, moreover, did they keep it staffed with a continuous stream of competent young shamankas and invocators?

These and many other questions worry our hypothetical scholar. Are they of consequence or simply a blind digression? We didn't mention one part of our recovered manuscript of *Jiu ge*, a short, broken bamboo slip at the beginning which read: "common people's rites of worship and the music of their songs and dances used language that was vulgar and base; and thus, one wrote the lyrics of the "Nine Songs." 俗人祭祀之禮，歌舞之樂。其詞鄙陋，因為作九歌之曲.

Our hypothetical scholar doesn't know about Wang Yi; but we recognize this as a passage from Wang Yi's prefaces to *Jiu ge*. Wang Yi's prefaces, intended to contextualize a work in the story of Qu Yuan, sometimes contain information that is unnecessary for the contextualizing story of Qu Yuan's authorship. The most famous of these additional bits of information is linking the *Tian wen* 天問 ("Heaven Questions") with paintings on a temple. Here too in the *Jiu ge* preface, the comment on recomposing "vulgar and base" lyrics in a higher register is unnecessary and could represent an older stratum of contextualizing material that Wang Yi incorporated in his reconciliation of the *Jiu ge* with the Qu Yuan story.

To return to our hypothetical scholar: at this point his wandering reflection on Liu Bang's ritual establishment and his certainty that the "Nine Songs" of his manuscript belong to the age of Emperor Wu begin to come together. Liu Bang's ritual institution was a virtual mirror of the Han founding: enfeoffing loyal generals and followers, leaving power in place, and requiring that liegemen remain loyal and come to the emperor when called. What works with people should also work with the gods. By contrast with that moment of dynastic founding, the Songs of *Jiu ge* were the mirror of Emperor Wu's ideal political order: a single absolute authority and a more limited structure of subordinates hierarchically organized—a complete and closed system. Liu Bang's institution explicitly ordered that "all be worshipped in the palace compound at the appropriate time of year" 皆以歲時祠宮中. And later: "each one having its appropriate day" 各有時日. By contrast, *Jiu ge* were a suite that could be and was performed together as a whole, a contemporary

version of the lost "Nine Songs" of antiquity. This was ritual transformed into liturgy, written down and available for exact reperformance. Perhaps this should be repeated every year:

禮魂 Rites for the Souls

成禮兮會鼓，	The rites are done now, drums beat together,
傳芭兮代舞。	the blooms are passed on, new dancers take our place.
姱女倡兮容與，	Fairest maidens sing, taking their ease,
春蘭兮秋菊，	in spring the eupatorium, chrysanthemums in fall,
長無絕兮終古。	forever and unceasing for all time.

When our scholar thinks of this coda for *Jiu ge*, declaring conclusion and repetition, he will think the line from "Heaven and Earth" from Emperor Wu's ritual songs: "the Nine Songs have been performed to the end, richly various" 九歌畢奏斐然殊. Such an announcement of completion—the mark of a closed set—is remarkably resonant.

Now our scholar has a hypothesis of what the source for *some* of the *Jiu ge* was; and the question arises: what was done to them, where did the other Songs come from, and why were they composed in Chu metrics and, in varying degrees, in the literary idiom of Chu? If the original lyrics of Liu Bang's ritualists were *bilou* 鄙陋 ("vulgar and base"), what would be the remedy? *Bilou* suggests low-class rusticity. The opposite is, of course, *ya* 雅, which we might translate as "sophisticated grace" or "classical grace." Emperor Wu, unlike his great-grandfather, had plenty of court ritualists, who were quite able to produce "classical grace." What could better create the image of classical grace and antiquity than *Shijing* rhymes—we can be reasonably certain that an illiterate shamanka from northern Shanxi would not have been using *Shijing* rhymes in 201 BCE.

Why then did he not have his Songs made in the *Shijing* style? We should not forget which emperor needed to be pleased. Underneath all the legends, it is still clear that Emperor Wu was fascinated by the gods and immortals. At some point between 139 and135 BCE, very early in his reign, he had been brought the Li sao, attributed to Qu Yuan, and he had been attracted to it. If we

do not believe that he actually encountered the Queen Mother of the West, Xiwangmu, we can reasonably suppose that he wished to do so. He had probably heard the legend of the dream-encounter of the king of Chu and the goddess of Wu Mountain. When his beloved Lady Li died, he staged a séance to bring back her spirit, then composed a song on how uncertain he was about her presence and how elusive her apparition had been. Most important, he had his musical establishment perform this song for his pleasure, to savor the experience. Afterwards, he supposedly composed a rhapsody for Lady Li (or had someone else compose it for him); the first part of this rhapsody is in almost pure *Chu ci* style, in which she is represented as the elusive goddess.

Suppose you were in the court ritual establishment and wanted to please Emperor Wu with his own set of the famous "Nine Songs," praising the gods. Imitating the *Shijing* might not be the best course of action. One might look at the existing institution from Liu Bang's time and notice something very troubling: almost all the deities there were male, with a very few exceptions like Chuimu 炊母, the "Cooking-Fire Mother." While Great-grandfather Liu Bang would surely have approved of propitiating such a useful goddess (?), she would probably not have been a favorite in Emperor Wu's pantheon.

The Songs needed goddesses who were both desirable and elusive, and where better to find such than in greater Chu, south of Jing. That area to the south was the Han Principality of Changsha, Qu Yuan territory.[14]

At this point our hypothetical scholar wants to review the things he knows with some certainty or a high degree of probability. The evidence is overwhelming that the manuscript he has represents the "Nine Songs" performed for Emperor Wu. He cannot say for certain whether these were new compositions or reperforming an older suite, but the evidence is strong (the Taiyi Song, the organization of the suite) that this was put together for Emperor Wu. Our scholar knows with

[14] While we sometimes use the term "Chu" very broadly to cover the entire region of Chu's conquests at their greatest extent, we know very little about how Chu governed that territory—indeed, if they did anything more than station troops there. There was a great difference between Jing, which was the Chu heartland, and Changsha—Qu Yuan certainly thought so. Jing was part of the early Han imperial domain; Changsha was a separate principality.

certainty that some of the same gods in the Songs were regularly celebrated in a court institution founded by Liu Bang and still in existence in Emperor Wu's time. He does not know what the relation was between the ceremonies for those gods in Liu Bang's institution and the Songs in the manuscript, but he has circumstantial evidence that they were rewritten or completely recomposed for the Songs (the prefatory fragment). He does not know what the nature of the revision or recomposition was or who was responsible for it.

He also must take into account the addition of the three southern Songs to goddesses, but he does not know where they came from or who was responsible for them. These three southern Songs are very much in the poetic idiom of Chu and very much alike. The three Songs from Jin—"Yunzhong jun," "Dong jun," and, he suspects, "Da siming"—are overall quite distinct from the southern Songs; but in parts all the Songs show traces of the lexicon, the sentence patterns, and motifs of the poetic idiom of Chu. The first Song ("Donghuang Taiyi"), the final Song ("Guo shang"), and the coda ("Li hun") are the "frame" for the other Songs and are truly different. He knows that the Li sao was known and admired by Emperor Wu from early in his reign and that there were other works in that poetic idiom known in the court and composed there. In short, the competence to rework existing ritual songs in the poetic idiom of Chu was there in Emperor Wu's reign.

The Songs use basically the same meter as Li sao: each line has two hemistiches of three and two syllables, the three-syllable hemistich both moderately expandable or contractable, and the two-syllable hemistich moderately expandable. Li sao line uses an unstressed syllable between the two hemistiches, while the Song line uses the sound *xi* 兮 (*hej*< gˁe). Li sao uses the *xi* at the end of the first line of the couplet. Both rhyme at the end of the couplet, but Song lines often rhyme both lines of the couplet. The *xi* provided a break in recitation; but if we trust our evidence, the Songs were indeed sung rather than recited, and this may be a reason why they did not use the *xi* at the end of the line.

He has some additional information. Like the "Songs for the Suburban Sacrifice, the *Jiu ge* use *Shijing* rhymes, with errors, but pretty much as Emperor Wu's ritualists understood *Shijing* rhymes. He thinks it is highly improbable that shamankas and shamans in their local performances would

have used *Shijing* rhymes, all in the same way, from northern Shanxi down to Changsha. This is evidence of revision or recomposition and necessarily involves someone who knew *Shijing* rhymes or Li sao rhymes, which were close to *Shijing* rhymes.

Next our scholar turns to the obvious verbal overlaps between Li sao and *Jiu ge*. He notes them all. But then, reflecting, admits to himself that despite all this evidence, something is terribly wrong with thinking of *Jiu ge* and Li sao as being closely related. Then he writes out a list of differences:

Jiu ge	*Li sao*
no "bad guys"	"bad guys" everywhere and getting worse
no history	history invoked at crucial moments
no mediators; direct contact	advisors, matchmakers, carriage drivers
pleasure, realized or invoked	no pleasure
gods and goddesses powerful	no powerful male gods or goddesses
no moralizing	always moralizing

His conclusion: these are two texts speaking the same language in different worlds.

From this he is compelled to revise his earlier conclusion: while the competence to compose in the poetic idiom of Chu did exist in the court, there is nothing there that suggests competence in this particular mode: to compose a religious cult song according to the rules that makes it efficacious, saying the right things in the right order. This would probably require a professional practitioner in local religion. When we look closely at the Xiang goddess(es) Songs, we will see that at least one specialist who knew the religious ritual forms of the Changsha region would be needed. In the Xiang goddess Songs, we have someone who composes as he goes along.

At this point our scholar realizes that he does not have the same kind of evidence he had earlier to make a clear assessment of probability. In a case like this, he has to take the facts he has and try to explain what happened in the simplest possible way. The court ritualists have been commanded to produce a new version of the ancient *Jiu ge* as part of the ceremonies for Taiyi (according to the ritual song "Heaven and Earth" it says "In shared affection, joining in pleasure, we delight Taiyi" 合好交歡虞泰一 immediately before making reference to the performance of *Jiu ge*; and the first

Song says “solemnly we will give pleasure to the Sovereign on High” 穆將愉兮上皇, who must be the Taiyi of the first Song’s title). To satisfy Emperor Wu’s preoccupations, they add three (or two) Songs in the “southern style” for goddesses; and they either have or find someone who is competent to do such songs. To make a complete suite they add an opening piece for Taiyi, who is to be pleased by the Songs; they arrange the deities in a hierarchy; and they add a concluding Song on the spirits of dead soldiers (presumably left unburied), who become “numinous” (*ling* 靈) by their heroism. There is also a brief coda—a cadenza—to signal closure. They draw on Liu Bang’s existing institution to fill the complement; there they have ritual specialists, who can tell them what must be said for each of those deities. They also need someone from the south—probably a male shaman in this case—who can compose the Songs for the goddesses.

They know by now that in order to please this emperor, the underlying theme must be unity: one emperor and one supreme deity in charge of an orderly pantheon of deities who, in their own ways, administer the spiritual world that hovers above the earthly empire. A cacophony of completely different local ceremonies with different music and different dialects will not do. All the Songs must share at least their metrical patterns. The idiom of Chu, with its associations of otherworld experience, seems an appropriate mix of the familiar and the exotic.

The correspondence between the divine and earthly empire is essential. Emperor Wu’s officers have to appear in the emperor’s court when summoned. In the same way the gods and goddesses come to Taiyi’s court. They have to show themselves (theophany), each with an appropriate conveyance, and say something about their jurisdiction, their function. The Xiang goddess(es) perform the theophany but are spared a clear statement of jurisdiction (although Xiang jun crosses Lake Dongting and Shan gui “rains”): they are principally to be desired. Seen with these principles, the unity of the songs becomes clearer.

To briefly outline the order of the suite, “Donghuang taiyi” 東皇太一 (“The Sovereign of the East: The Supreme One”), is an outlier, seeming more like an imitation of the core Songs than simply one among them. This song alone bears no traces of the compositional practice we see in the others. It is also the only monorhyme Song and the only Song that offers the deity not just delights for eyes, ears, and nose, but also food. After this we have “lords” or “ladies,” both *jun* 君

(with Xiang fu ren" included because they need a different title for the alternative version of the Song for the Xiang goddess). However important the god of the Yellow River might be, he was always He bo 河伯, an "earl," which brings him down in the hierarchy to the antepenultimate position (not counting the coda). The penultimate Song brings us down to a low status divinity, "nymph" (or however we might want to translate *gui* 鬼 in this context). Contemporaries would surely associate her with the "clouds-and-rain" goddess, *shennü* 神女, but the articulation of hierarchy requires that she be ranked as a mere *gui* 鬼.

That leaves the very bottom of the hierarchy, the very margins of divinity. Here we find "Guo shang" 國殤 ("The Kingdom's Dead") and the condition of "becoming numinous," *ling* 靈. Most of this Song, however, has no precedent in the poetic idiom of Chu and no resources for the composer—unless we presume that the *yuefu* "Zhan chengnan" 戰城南 ("Fought South of the Wall") was in circulation.

After this, the story is easy. As a ritual suite from Emperor Wu's Taiyi cult, a depository copy would have been left in the imperial archive (or book depository). Although the Taiyi cult disappeared from the imperial ritual schedule after Emperor Wu, a place in the archive would have ensured the survival of *Jiu ge*. We know almost nothing about the archive at this stage, but there is no hint that it was organized in any systematic way until the work of Liu Xiang 劉向 (79-8 BCE), who was charged by Emperor Cheng to organize the mess it had become.[15] Finding authors for texts was an essential part of Liu Xiang's system of categorization; the *Jiu ge* manuscript gave no author, had no named speaker, and no compiler. It did, however, share phrases and verbal patterns with Li sao. It was a moment of recognition and misrecognition, in which a shared regional poetic practice was confused with authorial style. All that was left was for the commentators was to explain how such songs could possibly be reconciled with Qu Yuan as they understood him.

[15] There was a book collection in the first part of the Western Han, including the remains of the archive from the Qin palace; but it was emperor Wu who made the collection an institution and hired copyists.

A Practice

When moderns think of "composition," they usually think of writing: in the Western Han this would mean someone at a table with a brush and a pile of prepared bamboo slips. The writer thinks, put something down, crosses out some words and writes other ones until the writing is finished. Most scholars know better, but such a habit of thinking about composition is so ingrained that its assumptions carry over into thinking about a text, even if we know that it probably wasn't composed that way.

It might be good to think of the still widespread alternatives to this mode of composition in our world. One close analogy in the contemporary world is telling a joke. There *are* joke-books, but when someone who memorizes a joke and tells it exactly as it was written is liable to offer a very ineffective joke. The joke has a determinate "plot-line," things that must be said in a certain order. It can be told tersely or in a leisurely, delaying fashion. A good joke-teller has resources to shape the oral joke for maximum effectiveness, and our appreciation of the joke is as much in the telling as in the punch line.

There is the university lecture, where professors often come with a series of points they want to make. Sometimes they skip a point or put it in the wrong place ("one more point I should mention is . . ."), or think of something they had not anticipated, all amid digressions and repetitions, which, by long habit, fill a predetermined time interval.

In the preface we mentioned the similarity to storytelling; telling a joke is another example, or even a university professor giving a lecture from notes. These are "practices," never done exactly the same way twice. Sometimes they are done with memorable skill; sometimes they fall flat. Nowadays we have recording devices; younger people often do not even remember what a "stenographer" is. But in business (stenographers) and courts of law ("court recorders") there were people trained to write down spoken words with accuracy. In royal courts such "recorders" were of great importance. This was the role of the legendary *zuoshi* 左史 ("the cleric on the left") attributed to ancient China. In English was a "shorthand" script that made this easier. Even without recording devices, it was possible to accurately transcribe examples of an oral practice. One suspects that in the Chinese case, radicals were often omitted.

It is useful to think of the performance by a shaman or shamanka as a practice. We can suspect that most were illiterate. They learned the things that had to be said in a certain order, and things that could be said and the things that should not be said. They had a set of verbal resources: set phrases, phrase patterns, how to make substitutions, how to elaborate certain topics, and so on. They probably had a limited vocabulary. And in *Jiu ge* we have a fine example of a variable, where the performance of the "same" Song can go one way or another.

It is important to keep in mind how skilled these religious practitioners could be: this is was their art and their livelihood, and they had probably been trained in it since childhood. Their aim was to convey the mystery of divinity to their audience; and if they were worked in the court, they would learn to adjust their performances accordingly, evoking the exotic thrill of the sacred, the margins of another world, in ways that would please their audience. In Emperor Wu they would have probably found a receptive viewer.

The earlier, local audience for whom the shamanka provided these services had heard it all before many times, but the performance lost nothing of its pleasure through its various iterations. If something important was left out, they would know, and each time he or she touched on a familiar moment, there was the pleasure of recognition.

The *Jiu ge* that we have is *not* the practice in its original form; the Songs have been written down, probably for the sake of exact repetition.[16] But they still bear the traces of the practice. To see the traces of the practice clearly, we need two iterations of the "same" song.

Here I would like to pick up from a suggestion made by Arthur Waley in his commentary to the two Xiang goddess songs in *Jiu ge* of the *Chu ci*.

> I cannot . . help thinking that the Lady of the Hsiang (Hsiang Fu-jên [in the following essay given as "Xiang furen"]) is merely another name for the Princess of the Hsiang (Hsiang Chün [given as "Xiang jun"), and that the two hymns represent local variants of a hymn addressed to the same deity.[17]

[16] See p.XXX on *zhan shi* 展詩.
[17] Waley 1973: 35.

In support of his thesis, Waley cites two couplets, each of which occupies the same position in the two Songs. Here I will use my own translation for the two couplets. First, “Xiang jun”:

捐余玦兮江中， I cast a ring broken into the river,

遺余佩兮醴浦。 I left my pendants on the shores of the Li.

Next we have the corresponding couplet in “Xiang furen”:

捐余袂兮江中， I cast my sleeve into the river,

遺余褋兮澧浦。 I left my plain shift on the shores of the Li.

Waley suggests that “the character for ‘sleeve’ is almost certainly a corruption of the character for ‘thumb ring’ [broken ring]; both have the same right half. . . . The character for ‘thin dress’ [translated as “plain shift”] is presumably also a corruption of some character meaning girdle-ornaments or the like . . .”

This is good example of a brilliant intuition that has gone awry because of an assumption of the essentially written nature of the *Jiu ge*. To be fair to Waley, there has been over sixty years of historical phonology since his book was first published in 1955. The graphocentric assumption leads to a not impossible speculation that the character for “sleeve,” *mei* 袂, was a corruption of the correct character, which was *jue* 玦, a “thumb ring” or a “broken ring,” that is, a ring that was not a complete circle. But he is then led to the highly improbable speculation that the word in the same position in the following couplet, *die* 褋, is also the corruption of a character referring to some otherwise unknown type of sash pendant (and we have a rich vocabulary of known types of sash pendants). Here we must ask the probability of two corrupted characters in corresponding positions in a couplet. Perhaps a copyist saw the corrupted 袂 and changed the parallel character *pei* 佩 to a *die* 褋, which, according to the *Fangyan*, fortuitously represented a Huainan and southern Chu usage. This gets far-fetched.

An easier assumption is that these songs were transcribed from a recitation. Baxter suggests that the pronunciation of “sleeve,” as *mei* 袂, derives from a dialect variation; it was also pronounced *jue* (Schuessler kiwet; Baxter, taking the *mei* reading, kwet<k.m^{ʕ}et or k^{wʕ}et), and either an exact or very close homophone with “broken ring,” *jue* (Schuessler kiwet; Baxter kwet<[k]^{wʕ}et). In other words, the first line in each version of the couplet was either phonologically exactly the same or extremely close.[18] If we presume different informants, one understood the sound as “broken ring,” while the other understood the same sound as “sleeve.” If we presume the same informant, there are also good reasons to understand k^{wʕ}et differently in “Xiang jun” and “Xiang furen.”

This is interesting, but not yet significant. It becomes significant in the parallel position in the second line of each couplet. *Pei* 佩, “pendants,” and *die* 褋, a “shift” (a single layer gown), are phonologically quite distinct and each belongs in the same category as its counterpart in the first line of the couplet. The easiest and simplest way to understand this is that the informant chose, in process, a parallel term to match the way he or she understood the *jue* (k^{wʕ}et) in the first line of the couplet.

What this implies is oral composition with fixed sound elements (lines, phrases) and liberty of variation. She/he is producing part of the text as she/he goes along.

This will become still clearer when we later compare the two iterations, and we may see why the sound k^{wʕ}et was heard differently in the two iterations.

Ritual

Jiu ge as we have them were a culturally resonant religious spectacle, for the delight of Taiyi and Emperor Wu.

[18] See Baxter 2014: 152, entry 612, and 162, entry 655. To venture a guess, while a gown could be made as a single piece, few looms would be wide enough to make a single-piece gown with sleeves. The sleeves could easily be sewn on; they were “detachable” and could be torn off. This was, of course, what happened when Jing Ke grabbed the sleeve (here *xiu* 袖) of the First Emperor: “the sleeve was torn off” 袖絕. The robe itself would not tear so easily.

Texts that are necessary for efficacious religious performance are "ritual" texts, but this may be too a capacious category, which may hide further distinctions that are useful in understanding such texts. The *Zhou song* 周頌 in the *Shijing* are texts that were *part of* the ritual, but not all of the ritual. One obvious example is "Wo jiang" 我將 (272), in which the sacrificial beasts are brought in and named, with the expressed hope the Heaven will accept the offering. But if one does not slaughter the animals in a prescribed manner and does not do certain other things, then the ritual does not occur. The hymn is a *component* of a ritual that must extend beyond what is said.

In this aspect *Jiu ge* are fundamentally different. They give an account of the whole, including what transpires in the spirit world, which would be otherwise inaccessible. Perhaps other things were done in the ceremony, but the representation itself is complete. "Dong jun" is a telling example. The song is short, but it gives an account of a full day. In "Wo jiang" in the *Zhou song* the time to perform the text finds an easy place *within* the time-interval of the ritual. In "Dong jun" the time of performance represents the whole and becomes the ritual, in this case representing a duration that is essential to the sun god's diurnal journey. The Song cannot be practically mapped on that interval except in condensed representation: the time of representation is not the time represented. The same is true of many other of *Jiu ge*: imaginatively longer intervals of the duration of events are condensed into shorter intervals of duration of performance.

Unlike the *Zhou song* or the *Jia si ge*, Emperor Wu's more "literary" state ritual songs, *Jiu ge* do not seek blessings, either particular or general, nor do they express gratitude for blessings (the "Da siming" is a partial exception). Their sole purpose is to make contact with the deity, usually to please him or her. They celebrate; and when the god leaves or the goddess eludes contact, they express longing, pain, and complaint.

"The Nine Songs" and Li sao: the Ethical Turn

Our hypothesis has left us with a peculiar situation and an apparent contradiction. The Li sao that we have, the Huainan recension, presented to Emperor Wu in the first half of the 130s BCE, is older than *Jiu ge*. The Li sao, however, seems to know at least the discourse of *Jiu ge*—

particularly the southern Songs—while much in the discourse of Li sao was either not available to or excluded by whoever composed the current redaction of *Jiu ge*.

In cases in which the discourse is shared, it is easier to see the Li sao transforming an existing discourse represented in *Jiu ge* than it is to see the Songs drawing on the Li sao. To offer an example, in "Dong jun" the sun-god is driving his carriage in the heaven; he "looks around/back with care," sees the dancers and hears the music, then is "transfixed and forgets to go." Toward the end of Li sao 1) the attendant deities perform music and dance, as 2) Qu Yuan rises toward the heaven; then 3) the speaker "peers down," *linni* 臨睨, on his homeland, 4) the driver and horses feel "care" and "look around/back," and will not go on. In the final stanza the speaker admits that he himself might "feel care" for his home by asking why he should feel care. The components are exactly the same and in roughly the same sequence as in "Dong jun," but in the Li sao they have been disaggregated and displaced into different agents. I would suggest that the correct sequence of moments with identifying verbal cues is habitual (which is the illusion of the "necessary"); the agents are variable. If we reflect on the famous Li sao passage more closely, we see that the speaker clear knows he *should* feel care, but questions it—as might be appropriate for one always filled with doubt and surrounded by helpers and advisors to set him on the right path.

Questioning is closely related to negation, which recalls a moment discussed in (12) of "Reading the Li sao." The speaker in "Xiang jun" feels reproach when the goddess is "untrue to her pledge" and will not meet him. In Li sao too the king first gives his word and then changes his mind. The Qu Yuan speaker *denies* feeling resentful about his own case but claims, rather, to feel bad about the king's character failure—implying an ethical judgment—with the king referred to as the "Numinous One," *lingxiu* 靈脩. The Li sao represents a different world.

The "Nine Songs" are delightfully without ethical content—except by the most strained allegoresis. Experiencing and giving pleasure is the highest goal. Pleasure always fails through limitation, either in time or degree; the singer looks for a stasis of pleasure, *dan wang gui* 澹忘歸, "being rapt and forgetting to go," or *rongyu* 容與, a drifting absorption in the moment. It is a literature of pure, amoral gratification, very different from the putative political and ethical

purposiveness in other texts from the early period and the complex social pleasures of literature in the middle period.

Much is shared here with the Li sao; however, some subtle, but fundamental changes reorient familiar processes. The first-person speaker in Li sao gives an account of traveling in an unseen world and a failure to consummate a desired match. But he tries multiple women, sometimes denouncing their morality after failure, and is tormented not by the failure with one particular beloved, but rather a failure in the process to find an appropriate one. Equally significant is the presence of the "foul world," resisted and fled.

The other major difference is the politicization of motifs in Li sao. This sense of "politicization" is different anything we see in pre-Qin northern Chinese political discourse, or the fusion of the ethical and political that was consummated by the end of the Western Han. Lineage is central and "goodness" is a function of lineage; "goodness" is the proper issue in political value, so that the "quest for the goddess" of the Songs becomes in Li sao the desire to establish a lineage-founding marriage.

As the speakers in some of *Jiu ge* alternate between the voice of the deity and that of the suppliant, the speaker in the Li sao alternates between a woman suppliant of the king's favor and a king seeking a mate/minister.

We come here to the vexed problem of the theology of kingship. There is no doubt that Sima Xiangru's "Taren fu" 大人賦 ("The Great Man") praises Emperor Wu by appealing to a vision of a god-king, who flies through the cosmos (snatching the heavenly maidens that eluded the speaker in Li sao) and rises to a cosmic solitude. Its Huang-Lao cognate, *Yuan you* 遠遊 ("Far Traveling"), follows a similar course to immortality, getting his advice from the immortal Red Pine rather than shamans and a sage-king. Both texts are grounded in Li sao; but the changes are significant. The foul and hostile home-space of Li sao becomes an entire world that is too limiting.

This is not the place to go into the full complexity of this motif: the Zhou ancestors rising and descending, the Yellow Emperor ascending to Heaven, the peripatetic First Emperor touring his

empire in a sublunary mimesis of the flight to the four corners of the cosmos, Emperor Wu's encounter with the Queen Mother of the West.

We return to the question of just where the speaker in the Li sao finally goes: where 彭咸, "Peng Xian" or "Peng and Xian" dwell/dwells. "Peng Xian" seems to be a construct to perfectly identify the speaker in Li sao with the legend of a historical Qu Yuan. In this version the speaker plans to go down and drown himself, with a myth of Peng Xian adduced as a precedent. "Dwell," *ju* 居, is a peculiar word to use in this context, since it hardly befits a drowned mortal. "Xian" as "Shaman Xian" clearly dwells in heaven, from which he descends to offer the speaker in Li sao advice. After pausing and looking back, the speaker in *Yuan you* rises to the ultimate heights. These constitute circumstantial evidence in the textual rather than commentarial tradition that the speaker in the Li sao plans to continue upward, rather than downward.

The closing stanza of "Shao siming" offers us a suggestive parallel to the Li sao, with flight through the heavens and rulership.

孔蓋兮翠旍，	With peacock-plume canopies, kingfisher streamers,
登九天兮撫彗星。	he mounts nine-banked Sky, lays hand on comets' tails,
竦長劍兮擁幼艾，	high he lifts long sword protector of young lovelies—
蓀獨宜兮為民正。	Sweet Flag alone is fit to rule all the folk.

"Sweet Flag," *sun* 蓀, is the god's aromatic plant name, punning, of course, on the homophone *sun* 孫, "grandson" or "descendent." If we keep in mind that this would be oral performance, perhaps before Han Wudi, we can imagine how it would be heard.

The difference of this Song from the Li sao could not be more obvious. The Junior Master of Lifespans is "alone" fit to rule and fit to rule "alone"; the speaker in Li sao seeks someone to join him, just as he seeks either the king's favor or a bride. To seek a bride, he needs matchmakers; to rid himself of matchmakers, he needs Shaman Xian's advice. Unlike the world of *Jiu ge* the speaker in Li sao belongs in a world of others who help or hinder the speaker. Once the opening confidence in his goodness wavers, he needs help to choose and go on the "right" path. Ethical questions seem

to appear through this world of mediation. *Jiu ge* (apart from "Guo shang") represent a world of divinity and mortals; the disparity of power is so great that there is no need for ethics. The only power given to mortals is the use of beauty, music, and sweet fragrance to lure the deity.

Representation and the Empirical World

In many of the Songs we have a representation not simply of an encounter with the divine, but also a representation of the performance as such. The Songs tell of the aromatics, the clothing, the instrumental music, the dance, and the lyrics performed ("Donghuang Taiyi" and "Dong jun"). "Yunzhong jun" mentions the "Temple of Life," *Shougong* 壽宮, perhaps the one at Emperor Wu's Sweetspring Palace complex; "Xiang furen" mentions the "purple altar," perhaps the one at the Taiyi temple in Sweetspring Palace. Elsewhere we are told of the temple gardens, with their aromatics planted in rows ("Shao siming"; cf. Li sao 13). These could conceivably be part of the immediate scene of performance, but then in "Xiang furen," after a journey by water, we have the speaker building, or simply preparing a temple out over the water, described in considerable detail. This must be no less removed from the empirical scene of performance than the water journey or deities flying in their carriages through the heavens. Scholars have often imagined the performance of the Songs, but performance inevitably had far fewer visible phenomena than the Song describes. The words call things into being, and whatever regional or seasonal aromatic or flower is invoked, it may be only notionally and discursively present, but not necessarily actually there.

This is comparable to the representations in *Zhao hun* 招魂 ("Calling Back the Soul,"), where even the scene at "home" would have been exceedingly difficult to stage in such a way that there were things to correspond with the words: the architecture, the park, the menu, the orgy—the demons lying in wait in all directions are out of the question. There would have hardly been time for the dances or the games, and the orgy would have had to be consummated in indecent haste. These texts are not scripts nor are they merely moments within ritual performance; they "stand for" the performance as a whole. They assign meaning rather than naming what occurs and is present. In *Zhao hun* we might not want to go so far as to say that the shaman speaker is lying to the wandering soul (who presumably could hear the descriptions but not see the delights offered); but

we can say that the shaman is using words to create fear or desire, verbal promises that can never be perfectly fulfilled in this sensuous world. The goal of description is not fulfillment, but rather the instigation of desire and bending the behavior of the soul by controlling fear and desire. For this reason, the summons need not be issued only to the wandering soul of a king; one can tell royal lies to any wandering soul. If the wandering soul swallows the shaman's verbal hook and is drawn flopping back into life, it will always be disappointed. Life back here is never as good as what the words can describe.

There is a great deal of pleasure-giving in the Songs. Perhaps the most remarkable phrasing is found in the Song that is clearly from Emperor Wu's reign, the Song to Taiyi: "solemnly we will give pleasure to the Sovereign on High" 穆將愉兮上皇. "Solemnity," *mu* 穆 is the quintessential quality of demeanor in high status ritual, where the attitude of the celebrant is as important as the effect on the spirit celebrated. Here it is grafted onto the pleasure-giving aspect of the Songs and strangely dissonant, because the officiant-speaker so often yearns, enjoys, is intensely happy, or bitterly miserable through the successful or thwarted encounter with the deity—but not "solemn." The god Taiyi is finally *xinxin* 欣欣, "much pleased," with the music and dance and, in this case uniquely in the Song, with a feast rather than just aromatics and adoration.

Jiu ge contains verbal representations of worlds that cannot be seen by ordinary mortals. The wizard, the Young Old Man, Shaoweng 少翁, promised to bring back the spirit of Emperor Wu's dead beloved Lady Li. Emperor Wu was confined to a curtained enclosure, and another curtained enclosure was set up for the revenant Lady Li. A figure appeared that was said to "look very much like" Lady Li. The Emperor asked the question in song: "Is it she or not?" 是邪非邪. But the mightiest emperor of the Han Dynasty could not cross the space between the two enclosures. It is a fine figure of the absolute division between this world and represented world—in this case in a visual rather than a verbal medium. And it is given to us in verbal representation, in the way a story is told about Emperor Wu.

東皇太一 The Sovereign of the East: The Supreme One[19]

吉日兮辰良， On a day of good luck, at a well-favored time,[20]

穆將愉兮上皇。 solemnly we will give pleasure to the Sovereign on High.[21]

撫長劍兮玉珥， Clasping long swords, jade, the hilt-guards,[22]

璆鏘鳴兮琳琅。 with clinking of pendants, resounding and chiming.[23]

瑤席兮玉瑱， On alabaster mats, jades weight the corners,[24]

盍將把兮瓊芳。 we join to grasp qiong blooms.[25]

---

[19] The title here presents a problem, indeed a contradiction. What we know is that Taiyi, the "Supreme One" or Ultimate Unity was a pre-Qin intellectual principle, a deity, and a star, here transformed into an anthropomorphic deity who can be pleased and entertained by the sensuous opulence of the ceremony. Taiyi does appear as a deity in Chu bamboo slips, but since Hubei produces (I use the term ambiguously) the majority of bamboo slips, that is no indication that the worship of Taiyi was not more widespread. Imperial worship of Taiyi was instituted by Han Wudi and disappeared after Wudi's death. Taiyi is, by his very name, linked to a transcendence of distinction and difference, thus well suited to imperial ideology. How can his name then be qualified as "Sovereign of the East," an emperor of only one of the five cardinal points (the four quarters and the center)? We might note also that this is unique among titles of *Jiu ge* in combining two titles, either of which might stand alone. Chinese scholarship has combed the record, but no source resolves the combination here. We might want to question the title; if it were *shang huang* 上皇, as the deity is referred to in l.2, there would be no problem. Tang Bingzheng makes a possible suggestion that the High God was worshiped in the capital's east suburban meadows, therefore the "eastern" designation (Tang Bingcheng 43; Cui Fuzhang 723). There are no fully satisfying solutions. We might note that Taiyi refers not just to absolute unity but to that unity as primordial, the beginning of things. Although *Jiu ge* are not at all consistently seasonal, the closing coda refers to continuity in the seasonal cycle, "springs and autumns." In this regime, the East is spring, the time of beginnings. In the hierarchical theology of "The Nine Songs," the fact that Taiyi is a *huang* 皇, followed by lesser divine ranks, and closing with deified soldiers, is significant. The speaker in "Shan gui" refers to year's end, thus closing the annual cycle. However, the intervening Songs are not consistently seasonal. If "Guo shang" refers to those lost and unburied in the Xiongnu wars, the Songs would map the empire theologically, from the east to the west.

[20] Note that the common phrase *liang chen* 良辰 is here inverted for the sake of rhyme. The choice of an auspicious time for the rite does not occur in the other Songs, but the first of Emperor Wu's "Jiao si ge"郊祀歌 ("Songs for the Suburban Sacrifices") begins with a poem entitled "Lianri" 練日 ("Choosing the [Right] Day,"). The deities of the 201 BCE institution were each worshipped at the proper time of year for that deity (各有時(月)[日]). Judging from the closing "Li hun," this smaller revised set was performed together as a suite and thus required the choice of an auspicious time to perform them all together, which was not necessarily the time each deity would be worshipped according to his or her own ritual calendar.

[21] *Mu* 穆, often duplicated as *mumu* 穆穆, was a common Northern term for proper ritual demeanor. There are a few other usages in presumably purely Han *Chu ci*, but this and one duplicated usage in "Dazhao," are the only usages in the proper context of ritual demeanor (the others seem to be loans).

[22] Most Chinese commentators take 珥 *er* as the sword-guard; Hawkes translates it as "haft," as understood by some. The sound was so close to *er* 耳, "ear," that it is hard to see it as the hilt rather than the guard. Jiang Liangfu takes the "long swords" as those used by the shamans. I have taken this reading because in the opening, the Song is referring to the officiants, even though elsewhere the officiants (shamans?) are not armed. Jiang Tianshu makes an interesting link between the military campaign against Nan Yue in the Han and a preliminary announcement in the Taiyi temple (Jiang Tianshu 127; Cui Fuzhang 728). Tang Bingzheng offers the attractive possibility that this and the following line refer not to officiants but to the god descending. Both the other two cases in *Jiu ge* where we find swords belong to the deity or spirits addressed. Apart from a use of *jian* 劍 in "Ai shi ming," the "long swords" in "Nine Songs" are the only *jian* swords in *Chu ci*. Before the end, however, all the other lines in this song describe the officiants.

[23] *Qiuqiáng* 璆鏘 is a quality of sound. Liu Yongi explains the grammar here as a poetic pattern with a secondary adverb preceding the primary adverb, as in "Yunzhong jun": 猋遠舉兮雲中.

[24] *Yao* 瑤, fine jade, is commonly used as an ornamental modifier: "fine." Wen Yiduo argues that this *yao* is 蓧, a plant whose fiber was used in making mats. Such homophones, differentiated only by radicals, would seem to be a purely scribal choice. *Tian* 瑱 is understood as *zhen* 鎮, which is the *Beitang shuchao* and *Yiwen leiju* reading, a decorative weight used to hold down mats. Compare "Xiang furen": "White jade served as the weights" 白玉兮為鎮.

[25] *He* 盍 (*hap*<m-[k]ˁap) is the subject of some disagreement. Wang Yi takes it as 何 (ha< [g]ˁaj) in a contraction, one supposes, of 何不 (ha-pjuw< [g]ˁaj-pə), a rhetorical "why not ...?" This is possible—very easy from MC, but less obvious in the intermediate

蕙肴蒸兮蘭藉， Viand-heaped platters with basil, eupatorium mats,[26]

奠桂酒兮椒漿。 make offerings of cinnamon ale and peppered beers.

揚枹兮拊鼓， Raise up the drumstick, strike now the drums,[27]

□□□□□。 . . . . .

疏緩節兮安歌， Make the beat sparse and slow, steady the song,[28]

陳竽瑟兮浩倡。 play pipes and the zithers, let the paean swell loud.[29]

靈偃蹇兮姣服， The numinous ones bend and sway, comely their gowns,[30]

芳菲菲兮滿堂。 the scent spreads around us, it fills the whole hall,[31]

五音紛兮繁會， A tumult of all notes, played swiftly together,

君欣欣兮樂康。 and our Lord is much pleased, hale in his joy.[32]

---

pronunciation of the late second century BCE. Other commentators take it as a loan for *he* 合 (*hop*<m-[k]op), though there are diverse explanations as to how *he* 合 is then understood; some take it as "join," but He Jianxun takes it as "should." There are some who want to take *jiang* 將 as "take in hand," which is attractive; but the predominant use of *jiang* in *Chu ci* is a future marker. Wang Yi's reading of *he* would force the less likely interpretation of *jiang*, so the sense of *he* 合 as "come together" seems better. We should note that in "Chou si" 抽思 ("Drawing Out My Thoughts") of the *Jiu zhang*, 蓋 is used as 盍, clearly in the sense of 何 (but not 何不). *Qiong* 瓊, a precious stone, is probably 藑 of 藑[瓊]茅, "bindweed" or "qiong" as discussed in Li sao 65.

[26] While *lan* 蘭 is not, in this period, an orchid, but *Eupatorium japonicum* or *chinense*, *hui* 蕙 may indeed be a member of the orchid family, *Cymbidium pumilum*, by some accounts. Since the plants in the *Chu ci* are generally aromatics rather than blossoms, Pan Fujun's identification of *hui* with the far more common and widespread *ocimum basilicum*, sweet basil, seems more likely. *Zheng* 蒸 is understood as 脀, a platter filled it ritual meat offerings. I have translated *hui* 蕙 as the character is given, the sacrificial meats probably wrapped in basil, *huì*; however, apparent parallelism with the following line strongly suggests this should be a verb. *Hui* 惠 in the sense of "give" is the obvious solution; however, not only would this be inappropriate for inferiors presenting something to a superior, the word does not appear in this sense elsewhere in the *Chu ci*. Likewise, *dian* 奠 does not appear elsewhere in *Chu ci*.

[27] The rhyme line seems to be missing in this couplet, as pointed out by Wen Yiduo and Jiang Liangfu. Tang Bingzheng 1988 argues that the three-line phrase does not mean that a line is missing. The indication of a lacuna is the stronger argument.

[28] Although *shu* 疏 and *huan* 緩 are here translated as if coordinate, in *Chu ci* diction (cf. Liu Yongji 1961), *shu* 疏 is properly an adverb. Logically a "slow" beat is also a "sparse" beat (with longer intervals between beats). Wen Yiduo takes *shu* as "present." *An* 安 is probably properly 按 "strike [a drum]", as in *Zhao hun*: 陳 鐘 按 鼓.

[29] *Chen* 陳 basically means to "present," usually words or food in the *Chu ci*; for a parallel to the present usage Wen Yiduo cites the "Qifa" 七發: 高歌陳唱. *Hao* 浩 probably means simply to "sing out with all one's might," hence "loudly"; cf. "Shao siming": 臨風怳兮浩歌.

[30] *Ling* 靈 is here conventionally translated as "numinous" or "numinous one." The term can refer either to the deity or to the shaman or shamanka, especially when in performance the officiant represents the deity or an attendant. Jiang Liangfu argues that this is always the deity himself or herself. This becomes an impossible distinction if the shaman or shamanka represents/is the deity. *Yanqian* 偃蹇 describes sinuous motion, especially of dancers and dragons. Note the close parallel in "Yunzhong jun": 靈連蜷. Because Jiang understands *ling* as the deity Taiyi, he wants to take *yanqian* as "rising up," citing Li sao 59 as a parallel. *Yanqian* is indeed used for rising, but it is associated with dragons, whose motion is sinuous. Li sao uses it to describe a terrace, but the terrace probably has layers or bends. The bending seems to be the semantic center of the compound, which is how it is used in Li sao 79 as swaying, dangling pendants. The clothing of the deity is not usually praised in terms that would most appropriately describe female performers.

[31] Some take the dancers, rather than the fragrance, as "filling the hall."

[32] *Xinxin* 欣欣 is used only here and in *Yuan you*, suggesting the lateness of the text. *Lekang* 樂康 is an inversion of *kangle* 康樂 for the sake of rhyme.

Rhymes: 良 [r]aŋ; 皇 [ɢ]ʷˤaŋ; 琅 [r]ˤaŋ; 漿 [ts]aŋ; (*missing*); 倡 mə-tʰaŋ-s; 堂 [d]ˤaŋ; 康 [kʰ]ˤaŋ

"Donghuang Taiyi" stands apart from the other Songs in many ways. This is not surprising because Taiyi is the heavenly counterpart of the earthly emperor who is sponsoring the party. This Song alone is in monorhyme and proceeds with dignity from beginning to end without the changes, motions, and intensities that drive the other Songs. Instead of passionate devotees and gods and goddesses who are lured by their passions, we have a group of hard-working servants preparing a dinner party for an abstraction. One thing we might notice is that, unlike most of the other Songs, here the deity does not depart at the end. This might be significant. If we take seriously the reference to *Jiu ge* in "Tian di" of the "Jia si ge," then the whole suite of Songs may be to please Taiyi, who watches the spectacle of the important lesser gods and goddesses coming to pay their respects, following proper hierarchy, just as Emperor Wu's lords come to his earthly court. In other words, the *Jiu ge* may contain a "play within a play," and this first Song sets the stage.

The Song begins with a declaration of the timeliness of the rite, but this timeliness does not refer to any particular moment in the year. Rather it is any moment deemed auspicious. We should contrast with this with Liu Bang's decree which repeatedly makes the point that deities he is sponsoring should be worshipped at the appropriate times for each. If this Song governs the other songs in the cycle, then they may name seasons and have their empirical botany spread over the year. That does not matter. The gods and goddesses are gathered into this cycle by imperial will, and their seasons and favorite plants accompany them verbally.

Presiding over an assemblage of local deities, Taiyi becomes a distinctly male, anthropomorphic deity to be attracted, held in place, and pleasured by *sheng* 聲 and *se* 色, the music and beguiling visibility of the shamankas, accompanied by fine foods. The aromas, so independently important in other Songs, here are primarily associated with food and drink. The second line declares the officiants' purpose: "solemnly we will delight the Sovereign on High." But how does one please an absolute deity? The answer is apparently that you please him as you do lesser gods: cleaning

oneself and using aromatics to smell good, good music, food, drink, and lovely dancers, culminating, perhaps, in the presentation of his subordinate deities.

We might question the nature of this pleasure. The verb *yu* 愉 (yu<lo), might better be rendered "blissful indulgence." For the nuance of such words, we look to parallel usages, as in "Si meiren" 思美人 in *Jiuzhang* 九章: "I will give free rein to my aims and find pleasure and joy" 吾將蕩志而愉樂. This is not just good cheer or mirth, but an extravagant, even sensuous pleasure. This *yu* has what is apparently a graphic variant 媮 (in its pronunciation as *yu*), in Li sao (91) also compounded with *le* 樂: "making use of this day to take their delight" 聊假日以媮樂, describing the deities rising to the heavens with music being played. In Sima Xiangru's "Poetic Exposition on Shanglin Park" after dissolute music of Zheng and Wei is played for the Emperor, we see beautiful women whose charms are lavishly described, concluding: 色授魂與, 心愉於側, in David Knechtges's translation "Their beauty is offered, the spirit consents / And the heart rejoices [finds pleasure] to be at their side."[33]

The term that qualifies the intention to delight is "reverent" or "solemn," *mu* 穆, usually a grave dignity that commonly characterizes the restraint of northern ritual. The solemnity of *mu* is not precisely opposed to the pleasure of *yu*, but it is a term of restraint, with a certain tension when set beside pleasuring and the extravagant spectacle. This is no shared sensuality but a serious business of pleasing. In doing so the celebrants engage and attract the deity. The space of the song lies between the intention and the accomplishment of the god's delight in the final line.

[33] Knechtges, Wen Xuan, vol.2, 1987: 109. In earlier usage *yu* seems less associated with sensuous pleasures. See *Jiang Liangfu 1999:* IV.24. Around the age of Han Wudi this milder "delight" seems to have required the marked compound *tianyu* 恬愉, "placid delight," the very opposite of the passions. We see this in *Yuan you* 遠遊: "Dispassionately empty and still, I felt placid delight" 漠虛靜以恬愉, and in *Huainanzi* 7, 精神訓. p.223: "Temper is empty and still with placid delight, and desires are reduced" 氣志虛靜恬愉而省嗜欲.

雲中君 The Lord of Yunzhong

浴蘭湯兮沐芳，	In eupatorium baths bathed, hair washed in aromatics,
華采衣兮若英。	decked in brightly colored robes, with galangal flowers.[34]
靈連蜷兮既留，	The numinous one bends sinuously, she has made him linger,[35]
爛昭昭兮未央。	he glows with a nimbus, unceasing.[36]
謇將憺兮壽宮，	He shall be here transfixed in the Temple of Life,[37]
與日月兮齊光。	He whose rays are the equal of sun and the moon;
龍駕兮帝服，	in his dragon-drawn carriage, with a god's robes,[38]
聊翱遊兮周章。	he soars roaming awhile around and around.[39]

[34] The first question in this line is how to take *hua* 華. It would be best to take it as a verb, as in "Shan gui": 歲既晏兮孰華予. Since wearing flowers and aromatics is important in both *Jiu ge* and in the Li sao, it seems best to understand it as "adorn with flowers and aromatics," evidently a necessary preparation for encounter with a deity. Most commentators take *huacai* 華采 as a compound. Zhu Jihai 87, however, argues that it should be *ye* 曄, "splendid." He Jianxun wants to move the punctuation of the first line to after *hua*. *Ruoying* 若英 was understood by Wang Yi as "*duruo* blossoms." *Duruo* 杜若 is *Alpinia officinarum*, "lesser galangal." However, an argument has been made that *ying* 英 should be understood as 瑛, "jade sparkles," and *ruo* 若 in its standard sense of "like" (stressing the *Shi* parallels of jade similes). Wang Yi's interpretation is closest to *Chu ci* usage; cf. *Tian wen*: 若華, "flowers of the Ruo tree." *Ying* 瑛 is not used in early *Chu ci*. See also Jiang Liangfu 1999: III.382.

[35] *Lianquan* 連蜷 is descriptive of sinuous motion or sinuous form, describing dance, eyebrows, dragons in motion, and tree branches. Here it is also improbably interpreted here as "linger" (see Jiang Liangfu 1999: IV.517). Jiang Liangfu, following Wang Fuzhi, has the god lingering in the clouds, though others have the god moving in the shamanka's body (for *ling* 靈 see Jiang Liangfu 1999: I.211). The choice of the gender of the shaman/shamanka is arbitrary, but the passage in *Shiji* on Gaozu bringing regional practitioners to perform their rites in Chang'an is quite explicit in bringing shamankas, *nüwu* 女巫 for his almost entirely male cast of divinities. *Ji liu* 既留 can be taken with the god as the subject (in this case possibly taking 靈 as the god, rather than the shamanka). I take the *liu* 留 as transitive, with the motions of the shamanka (*ling*) "making the god linger."

[36] Clearly the god is the source of glowing, though it is unclear whether this is understood as the god in his own right or the shamanka possessed by the god. Line 9 shows that this is clearly an attribute of the *ling* 靈.

[37] *Jian* 謇 or 蹇 is generally understood as an introductory particle, explained by Jiang Liangfu as *nai* 乃 (Jiang Liangfu 1999: I.459; IV.340). It is alternatively explained by Wang Siyuan as "at last"—though on no evidence other than the fact that it seems to work in all cases where the particle is used, and it is close to the early sound for *jing* 竟. In this case Jiang Liangfu wants to make it equivalent to the binome *yanjian* 偃蹇, in this case referring to the "height" of the temple. *Dan* 憺, with the early gloss *ding* 定, "fixed," is perhaps best understood in this sense in the formulaic phrase 憺忘歸. There it is clearly an absorption that makes one stay (留), hence the translation "transfixed." Most commentators take the *shougong* 壽宮 as the temple, well attested in early texts–though Lin Yunming and Jiang Liangfu take it as the dwelling of the god in Heaven, going with the interpretation that the god stays in the clouds and does not come down (Jiang Liangfu 1999: I.147). Emperor Wu had a *shougong* in the Ganquan palace compound.

[38] The "with a god's robes," *di fu* 帝服, presents a thorny problem, because the Lord of Yunzhong is not a high god (*di*). Compare "Da siming": 導帝之兮九坑 "I lead on the god down to Nine Hills." One way to think of this issue is ask how a speaker would refer to a divinity in the Songs. One would never substitute *shen* 神, the word we usually translate as a "god," because the divinities here are definitely of higher status than the average *shen*. *Jun* 君 is a title also used by mortals. We have three uses of *di* in the Songs: here, in "Da siming" and in "Shao siming." The standard interpretation takes these as *shangdi* 上帝.

[39] *Zhouzhang* 周章 implies going in a circuit; it is unclear whether this is a general circular motion or a formal "circuit," of the temple or of the cosmos, represented in the circuit of the temple (Jiang Liangfu 1999: IV.490). Wen Yiduo understands 周章 as *titang* 倜儻, "free and unrestrained."

靈皇皇兮既降， The numinous one gleams, he has come down;[40]

猋遠舉兮雲中。 he lifts up in a gust, afar [into clouds/] to Yunzhong.[41]

覽冀州兮有餘， He scans Jizhou and beyond,[42]

橫四海兮焉窮。 he crosses seas on all sides; where does he end?

思夫君兮太息， I yearn for my Lord and heave a great sigh,[43]

極勞心兮忡忡。 heart greatly troubled, and fretful within.[44]

Rhymes: 芳 [pʰ]aŋ; 英 ʔ<r>aŋ; 央 ʔaŋ; 光 kʷˤaŋ; 章 taŋ; / [降kˤruŋ-s]; 中 truŋ; 窮 [g](r)uŋ; 忡 tʰruŋ

The Name and the Deity

In the opening sections of this essay, I have discussed why this deity is, unambiguously, the Lord of Yunzhong, and not the "Lord in the Clouds," except in poetic literalization of the place name. This would have been the name of the deity from Jin whose worship Liu Bang instituted in 201 BCE. That institution still existed at the end of the second century BCE, and we can, with no small certainty, assume that the invocators and shamankas attached to that post had not forgotten for whom they were doing their rituals. Insofar as those rites were adapted for Emperor Wu's "Nine Songs," the deity involved was clear. If this were not enough, the Song itself references Jizhou 冀州 in *north* China, a region near enough that the Lord of Yunzhong could indeed gaze toward it.

---

[40] I have translated *jiang* 降, the technical term for a god's descent to earth, with the god as the subject, but like *liu* 留, this is also commonly used transitively: "to make the god descend." See the parallel phrase *ji liu* 既留 in line three.
[41] *Ju* 舉 is the technical term for "rising up" from the earth; here we can see clearly its opposition to *jiang* 降, "come down," in the preceding line. Here I have translated also *yunzhong* with its ambiguity, rising up and back to Yunzhong.
[42] In *Chu ci* commentary Jizhou 冀州 is usually glossed as all "China," but Jizhou is well attested as a region and a Han prefecture lying just east of Yunzhong, with narrow Bingzhou in between, appropriate for the "Lord of Yunzhong." This is an excellent example of the blinders guiding scholars of *Chu ci*; Jizhou means all the Chinese heartland only for readers of Wang Yi's commentary.
[43] The officiants' longing for the god is standard, but Jiang Liangfu inexplicably takes this as the "Lord in the Clouds" longing for the "Lord of the East."
[44]*Chongchong* 忡忡 is taken as equivalent to 忡忡.

The proper form is a regional deity's name is 1) jurisdiction 2) status term. If in bamboo slips recovered from Chu there is reference to a Yun jun 雲君, that is indeed a "Lord of the Clouds," a cloud god. But we do not have a Xiangzhong jun 湘中君 or a Hezhong jun 河中伯 or a Dongzhong jun 東中君 or a Shanzhong gui 山中鬼.

The *only* reason to insist that Yunzhong jun is the "Lord in the Clouds" is to keep it attached to Qu Yuan's authorship; and for those who have given up that attribution, to preserve its association with Chu. *All* the evidence cited to show that this deity is the Lord of Yunzhong is older and more reliable than *any* of the evidence that it is by Qu Yuan—or was even linked to other *Chu ci* before the end of the Western Han (or the turn of the second century CE).

The Components

Each of the Songs is distinct, and I will treat each in turn (except for the Xiang goddess/es, which I will treat together). It is, however, useful to review the way in which the Songs were made and the kinds of things we will take note of. This will help us assess what is unique to each deity and what part is a shared discourse. The commonalties may possibly be from some pan-sinitic habits on celebrating local gods; they may be, in part, from over half a century of regional shamankas working together in the Han court; but some aspects seem to be the "revision" of received Songs into a recognizable "Chu" literary idiom.

The differences may derive from particular necessities for different deities and the inertia of earlier practice. There is, for example, no question that the three apparently southern goddess songs—the two Xiang goddess songs and the "Shan gui"—have more in common with each other than with the Songs deriving from Liu Bang's institution.

One interesting question is how the deity's jurisdiction and responsibilities are represented. "Yunzhong jun" is divided into two sections by a rhyme change. In the first part the worshippers call down the deity; in the second section the deity departs. This conveniently follows the binary "greeting the deity, *yingshen* 迎神 and "seeing off the deity," *songshen* 送神, of later popular religion.

We note that his jurisdiction, Yunzhong, is explicitly mentioned in the second part, along with what seems to be his function, "to gaze" or, perhaps, "to keep watch" in the direction of Jizhou and beyond. We should recall in 201 BCE that before the Xiongnu surrounded Mayi and forced the surrender of Han Xin, they had recaptured parts of Yan and Dai, Dai being just north of Jizhou and just west of Yan. Certainly, in the context of 201 BCE the god's gaze and its direction were significant. If in the first rhyme unit the deity is treated in very general terms, this functional representation of the deity's jurisdiction was important—even if the theater of the Xiongnu wars had shifted.

The second section contains a common and apparently simple phrase *youyu* 有餘, "there is extra," lamely translated "and beyond." Does this mean that the god does plenty of gazing or that he looks over Jizhou and more? The phrase can also mean "there is a remainder," "any left." This would scarcely deserve notice except that the phrase and the word *yu* 餘 (yo<la), "surplus," is used nowhere else in the *Chu ci* corpus.[45] It is a small corpus, and the reader grows accustomed to strange descriptive phrases used nowhere else. But *yu*, "surplus," is a very common word. All this *proves* nothing, but it is one hint among many that this is a compound discourse of different language usages, embedded in a lost context.

The Song opens with a couplet of bathing and dressing in aromatics, like "Donghuang Taiyi." No other Song starts this way, but "Shao siming" begins with the scene of aromatics growing around the temple. The Song then goes directly into the business of the ceremony. While this does not apply to all the Songs, there are recurring terms that help understand the process. First, the god is lured to "stay," *liu* 留, in his passage.[46] Sometimes this term seems to be used with "keeping"

[45] If I were to do the dangerous thing and look for homophones, I would get 有余, also [ɢ]^{w}əʔ la, "I am there," yielding a line something like "I am/will be there looking out over Ji." We should note that while *yu* 余 la does not appear as the direct object of a verb elsewhere in the "Nine Songs," *yu* 予 laʔ appears six times in the Songs following a verb. Note that in "Da siming" the Senior Master of Lifespans, probably also a Jin deity, using both 余 la and 予 laʔ to describe his function, "what I do" 余所為. A scribe would naturally write the very common phrase 有餘, but the alternative is not unattested. It appears as 其何有余一人, "What can be done when there is just me, the One Man?" (*Zuo zhuan*, Zhao 9). It is probably only fortuitous that Zhou King Jing here is talking about defenselessness against incursions by the barbarians.

[46] *Liu* 留 tends to have a transitive sense, not just "stay" in the sense of "hang around," but "staying for" some person or reason. It does not matter whether the shamanka "stays" the god or the god "is stayed by" the shamanka, and this often makes it uncertain whether the subject of adjacent predicates is the shamanka or the god.

him in the temple, but it often comes first. Then the god “descends,” *jiang* 降. Then he may be *dan* 憺 (damX<[l]ˤamʔ), which I translate as “transfixed,” and “forget to go,” *wang gui* 望歸. The allied term is *chang* 悵 (trhjangH<tʰraŋ-s), “in great sorrow.” Finally, the god *ju* 舉, “lifts up,” and departs, leaving the worshippers longing and feeling distressed. Perhaps the most important thing for the modern reader to understand is that it is not a “story” in which the terms are used, but the terms themselves that hold the piece together, and that the terms can be deployed in different ways with different actors.

Anyone who has worked with *Jiu ge* knows how many different ways its lines and passages have been taken: some are simply wrong; some are possible but involve fanciful interventions for which there is no evidence (for example, Jiang Liangfu’s interpretation that in the end of this Song that the Lord of Yunzhong (for Jiang, the Lord in the Clouds) is longing for the Lord of the East, Dong jun). Nevertheless, in many cases we have two or more very plausible, but mutually contradictory interpretations. Consider the second couplet here:

靈連蜷兮既留， The numinous one bends sinuously, she has made him linger,

爛昭昭兮未央。 he glows with a nimbus, unceasing.

The question is whether the subject here is the shamanka or the god. I have cheated by making each the subject in turn. But the god could be the one “bending sinuously” and “made to linger” or the shamanka could be glowing in the god’s presence.

Before we ask how to adjudicate this question (which is not as important here as in some cases elsewhere), we need to ask whether we *should* decide a question like this. Jiang Liangfu insists that *ling* 靈, the “numinous one,” is always the deity; but in some cases, that decision forces improbable explanations. For example, in “The River’s Earl” we have the line:

靈何為兮水中。 why is the numinous one here, down in the water?

Is the poem really asking why the god of the Yellow River, with his underwater palace, is “down in the water?” To what degree are some decisions of specification a problem restricted to

commentators, periphrasts, and translators? The Song itself has done its work: it has brought the god down and sent him back to the far north to do his job. The viewers of the spectacle know this much. They might not think to ask whether a phrase describes the god or the shamanka. In other cases, listener X may hear the line as referring to the god, while listener Y hears it as belonging to the shamanka; and X and Y never once talk to each other about it.

In other cases, it helps to decide in a probabilistic way. I can see immediately why I "cheated" in translating the second couplet. The first couplet in this Song describes the mortal participants in the ceremony; and we should, where possible, continue the subject of the preceding couplet. The third couplet probably refers to the god; and where possible, we should keep what precedes in line with what follows. This leads to the couplet in between, which changes the subject (in translation); but then, where possible, we should not change the subject in the middle of the couplet.

Such a contradictory confluence of interpretive principles—each one valid and useful at times—may give some insight into poetry of the *Jiu ge*. Sometimes the shaman or shamanka is speaking, sometimes the deity speaks; sometimes the audience describes the scene from their point of view. Sometimes such distinctions are clear and obvious. But just as often one position blurs into another and we cannot tell whose words these are or whom they describe. And that may lie at the heart of the religious mystery here, in which the shamanka is both the other who longs for the god and can speak as the god.

Another good interpretive principle that sometimes fails is using *Jiu ge* to explain the *Jiu ge*. Many of *Jiu ge* not only involve a highly stylized discourse of bringing the god and sending him on his way, they use a limited body of template lines and set phrases. How these are used in one case sometimes help us understand how they are used in another case. The limit here is that some of these patterns are sound rather than sense. Pattern with its sounds recurs at a certain part of two Songs, and it is the task of the performer to discursive embed those sounds in a way that fits the sense of the current Song at that point.

There are Songs that in part or throughout deviate from these repeated phases and conventions. These are interesting because they may represent the inertia of a very different practice linked to this particular deity.

The phases of the "standard version" are particularly clear in the first rhyme segment of "Yunzhong jun." The sinuous movement of the shamanka(s), sometimes explicitly dancing and sometimes accompanied by instrumental music, make the deity "stay," *liu* 留. Then the deity "comes down" or "is brought down," *jiang* 降. There is a moment of stillness as the deity is "transfixed," *dan* 憺 (here given in sequence only as an intention, marked by the future tense, *jiang* 將).

For a parallel case of "staying," we look to the opening of "Xiang jun":

君不行兮夷猶， The Lady will not go, still she does linger,

蹇誰留兮中洲。 who is it stays her on the isle midstream?

This is a delightfully uncomfortable parallel because the male god sometimes comes, but the goddess flees. Here clearly the goddess is at a distance. She is neither "going away" nor "coming," but uncertainly "lingering," *youyi* 夷猶. Such uncertain lingering is a function of someone who "makes her stay," *liu*. Grammatically we could do this as "for whom does she stay," but that is functionally the same as "make her stay"—except for the difference of weight on whose agency is foregrounded. This case clarifies the *liu* in "Yunzhong jun"; *liu*, "staying," is not an act in itself implying refusal to come or "descend" as some commentators have taken it.

In "Shan gui" we have: "I would make the numinous one stay, transfixed, forget going" 留靈脩兮憺忘歸. How do we translate *liu* in this context? Things have been going well for the shaman-suitor up to this point, despite the arduous journey up the mountain. The goddess appears "on the height of the mountain" above him and rains. After this point everything goes wrong. In other contexts we would translate the formulaic line: "I make the numinous one stay, transfixed, she forgets going." The context, however, makes this more like a wish than a fact, making the translation: "I *would make* the numinous one stay, transfixed, forget going." This is followed immediately by the failure of the process, perhaps because an essential phase cannot be done: "but

the year has grown late, who will deck me in flowers?" 歲既晏兮孰華予. In effect, we have a brief "staying," but no *jiang* 降, "coming down"—except as rain.

"Dong jun," spoken in the voice of the deity, does not admit explicitly to having been "made to stay," *liu*. This phase in the process, from the deity's perspective, is an interesting variation:

長太息兮將上， But I heave a great sigh on the point of ascending;
心低徊兮顧懷。 the heart hesitates, I look back with care:
羌聲色兮娛人， for the sounds and beauty so give a man joy
觀者憺兮忘歸。 that the one who watches is transfixed and forgets to go.

Many of *Jiu ge* alternate stillness and motion: "staying" and being "transfixed" (*dan* 憺, essentially "still" but implying absorption in the formula *dan wang gui* 憺忘歸), versus sinuous motion, wandering around, and flying off suddenly. That sudden flying off occurs in the case of "Dong jun" in line ten. The deity's motion carries him to remote places, leaving the officiants in longing, as in "Yunzhong jun."

Purely Speculative Comment

"Yunzhong jun's" long first rhyme unit gives us the first necessary phase of a Song, the god's appearance, while the second rhyme unit gives a statement of the god's jurisdiction. The opening lustration appears elsewhere only in the anomalous "Donghuang Taiyi" while the appearance (lingering and the descent) is peculiarly schematic with none of the distinguishing particulars that we find in other Songs. The last couplet, affirming the devotes longing after the god's departure, is also conventional. If I were to try to identify what the ritualist in charge of Liu Bang's Yunzhong jun ceremony might have required for this *Jiu ge* version, it would be the awkward statement of jurisdiction in the first two couplets of the second rhyme unit: "I will be there, keeping watch on the frontier, as far as I can." The rest could have easily been filled in by anyone competent in such songs in the southern style.

The two Songs to the Xiang goddess/es give us the clearest picture of the nature of the Songs, and I will treat them together.

湘君 The Lady of the Xiang

君不行兮夷猶， The Lady will not go, still she does linger,[47]
蹇誰留兮中洲。 who is it stays her on the isle midstream?[48]
美要眇兮宜修， Lovely, far-peering, her mouth shows a smile;[49]
沛吾乘兮桂舟。 "Streaming swiftly I ride my cassia boat,
令沅湘兮無波， I bid Yuan and Xiang to be without waves,
使江水兮安流。 and command River's waters to steady their flow."[50]

望夫君兮未來， I gaze toward my Lady, she has not come;
吹參差兮誰思。 I blow on my panpipes, for whom do I yearn?

[47] *Yiyou* 夷猶 is an inversion of the common *youyi* 猶夷 for the sake of rhyme. *Youyi* implies indecision and uncertainty.
[48]*Jian* 蹇 is a common particle in *Chu ci*, though Wen Yiduo takes it with its full semantic force of (lame=) "faltering." *Liu* 留 might be understood intransitively ("who stays?"); the translation here takes it as transitive ("who makes her stay?"). Many commentators take it as "for whom is she staying," which is one of the possible implications of the transitive. Since most commentators take *shei si* 誰思 below as "for whom do I yearn?" it is also possible to take this as "for whom do I stay," "who makes me stay?" The parallel line in "Shao siming" is: 君誰須兮雲之際, with *xu* 須, "await," as a possible variation for *liu*.
[49] *Yixiu* 宜修 was commonly understood as "fitly adorned," though in *Chu ci* usage *xiu* 修 should be taken as a general term for beauty and excellence. Wen Yiduo argues persuasively that this is a variation (for rhyme) on 宜笑, which is commonly used for a quality of smiling, as in "Shan gui": 既含睇兮又宜笑. Wen goes on to interpret *yi* 宜 as 齸, glossed in the *Jiyun* as a "tooth-revealing smile" (it seems more likely that the association of the phoneme *yí* with smiling derives from this compound *yixiao* 宜笑). Jiang Liangfu 1999: I.464 notes that *yixiu* creates rhyme in a non-rhyming position. *Yaomiao* 要眇 is understood by most commentators as a compound like *yaotiao* 窈窕, describing a quality of loveliness. The translation above roughly follows Wen Yiduo, who takes it as a squinting manner of gazing into the distance. The line from "Shan gui" cited above represents a quality of gazing (*handi* 含睇) in the first hemistich before *yixiao* 宜笑; moreover, *miao* 眇 is clearly associated with a quality of gazing, as in "Xiang furen" 目眇眇兮愁予 and *Zhao hun* 娭光 眇視. *Yuan you* uses this same compound (神要眇以淫放), where it seems to describe the quality of the object of squinting vision: "faint in the distance." It is possible that here too the *yaomiao* 要眇 describes her distant faintness in the eyes of the viewer, rather than the quality of her gaze; however, if she were "lovely and faint in the distance," the *yixiu* 宜修 (宜笑) quality of her smile would not be visible.
[50] There is some disagreement here who is speaking, a decision in part determined by how one understands the situation. In other Songs, "riding" (*cheng*) some conveyance is consistently a part of the theophany, and the deity is the subject. In many of the Songs, the deity speaks at this point. In this case I tentatively take this as the goddess speaking, with the devotee/shaman following her in line nine. It matters less who is doing the actions than the fact that the action is declared in the right words.

駕飛龍兮北征，　I yoke flying dragons　and journey on north,[51]

邅吾道兮洞庭。　then bending my way　around Lake Dongting.[52]

薜荔柏兮蕙綢，　climbing fig is my sail,　bound up with basil,[53]

蓀橈兮蘭旌。　the oars are of sweet flag,　my banners, eupatorium.[54]

望涔陽兮極浦，　I gaze to Cen's sunlit banks,　to the farthest shores,

横大江兮揚靈。　and across the great river　I send my soul flying.[55]

揚靈兮未極，　I send my soul flying,　still it can't reach her;

女嬋媛兮為余太息。the woman, tender and drawn,　heaves a sigh for me;[56]

横流涕兮潺湲，　My tears now flow freely,　trickling down,

隱思君兮陫側。　I sadly long for the Lady,　I am tormented.[57]

---

[51] Although Wen Yiduo tries to rationalize the "flying dragons" here as "dragon horses" 龍馬, it seems rather that in the "traveling" phase, the boat 沛吾乘兮桂舟), the earthly chariot (朝騁騖兮江皋), and the airborne dragon chariot (飛龍兮翩翩) are interchangeable.

[52] The first hemistich appears in the heavenly journey in Li sao 86.

[53] There are numerous interpretations of *bai*/*bo* 柏: I have followed the interpretation that takes it as 箔, a matted sail. Some commentators understand it as 帕 (帛), a kind of streamer, while others retain 柏, interpreted as the sides of the boat. *Chou* 綢, usually meaning "bound up," presents similar disagreements. Hawkes takes it as the "rigging." Wen Yiduo argues that this is the staff to which the streamer is tied. Jiang Liangfu takes it as a sheath. Zhu Jihai takes it as a loan for *chou* 幬, which he says is the Chu term for a screen.

[54] Wuchen *Wenxuan* reads 采荃/蓀. *Nao* 橈 is taken by Wang Yi as a kind of oar, with the pronunciation *rao*. Hawkes takes it as the "yard" from which the sail is hung, which is visually similar to Wen Yiduo's interpretation as the "crosspole," the bent wood on the top of a staff from which a banner is hung.

[55] *Yang ling* 揚靈 is what Shaman Xian does in Li sao 71 (皇剡剡其揚靈兮), which is decisive evidence that this is how the phrase should be understood here. Liu Yongji, however, notes variant citations as 揚舲(艫), accepted by a number of commentators as "sending a small boat with an enclosed cabin."

[56] I understand the "woman" here as the goddess herself; many modern commentators, to avoid the apparent contradiction of the goddess eluding the speaker yet still sighing for him, take the 女 as the attendants of the goddess. Here we might cite parallel examples in "Shan gui", in which the goddess both longs for the speaker and eludes him: 君思我兮不得閒 and 君思我兮然疑作. Note the parallel in this poem: 期不信兮告余以不閒. Wen Yiduo take 女 as the goddess but interprets it as 汝. *Chanyuan* 嬋媛 is understood by Wang Yi, who takes the 女, as the speaker's "sister" (like the 女嬃 in Li sao), as "draws me." This is consistent with his interpretation of the parallel line in Li sao 33: 女嬃之嬋媛兮. In "Ai Ying" 5 the speaker looks back to the fallen capital and says: 心嬋媛而傷懷. This is a good example of yearning represented as "being drawn." Wen Yiduo and some others take 嬋媛 as 嘽咺, interpreted as "panting," or "breathing heavily."

[57] Although some commentators take this as "secretly," Zhu Jihai is certainly correct in interpreting *yin* 隱 as 慇, "sorrowfully," a common loan usage. *Feice* 陫側 was originally understood as "in an out-of-the-way place"; however, Wang Fuzhi and some subsequent commentators have argued that this is a loan for 悱惻, the quality of grieving; although *feice* as "grieving" appears only later, it is there explicitly associated with *Chu ci*. Jiang Liangfu interprets 陫側 as "the northwest corner," which seems strange. Note that 潺湲 is close in sound to 嬋媛.

桂櫂兮蘭枻，　The paddles were cassia,   of magnolia, the sweep,[58]
斲冰兮積雪。　I cut through the ice   and piled spray of snow.[59]
采薜荔兮水中，　It was picking climbing fig   in the middle of waters;
搴芙蓉兮木末。　it was plucking the lotus   from tips of the trees.[60]
心不同兮媒勞，　When hearts are not one,   the go-between struggles;
恩不甚兮輕絕。　her love was not strong,   it lightly was broken.[61]

石瀨兮淺淺，　Over stone shallows   the current runs swift,
飛龍兮翩翩。　my dragons were flying,   beating their wings.
交不忠兮怨長，　Her friendship was faithless,   reproach long remains;[62]
期不信兮告余以不閒。　untrue to her pledge,   she told me she had no time.[63]

鼂騁騖兮江皋，　I galloped that dawn   on the plain by the river,
夕弭節兮北渚。　stayed my pace in the twilight   by northern flats.
鳥次兮屋上，　Birds took their lodging   high on the roof
水周兮堂下。　and the waters were circling   the base of the hall.
捐余玦兮江中，　I cast a ring broken   into the river,[64]

---

[58] Here I follow commentarial habit (without conviction), interpreting this *lan* 蘭 not as eupatorium, but as *mulan* 木蘭, "magnolia." These may, however, not be what the parts of the boat are made of, but rather aromatics twined on them.

[59] Some commentators take *ji* 積 as 擊, to "strike," in parallel with *zhuo* 斲. The words are radically different in their early pronunciation, and it is not a possible loan.

[60] The figure of impossibility in the preceding line suggests that this is indeed lotus rather than magnolia, *mu furong* 木芙蓉.

[61] This can also be understood as a general statement: "when love (longing) is not intense, it is lightly broken off."

[62] The use of *zhong* 中/忠 here calls for comment. These are graphic variations of the same word, with the heart radical added for the word's use in a highly specific context, with its weight and associations changing through time. This is the scribe's choice. We usually translate the graph 忠 as "loyal," though something more like "steadfast" might be better for many contexts in this period. The use here demonstrates that the meaning had not settled down into the later sense of "loyal." Later *zhong* "loyal" was reserved exclusively for the relation of an inferior to a superior, the king or emperor. Here it is used for the behavior of a superior (goddess) towards an inferior (the speaker-suitor).

[63] In this text there has been no pledge made, and we must read this in conjunction with the line in "Xiang furen": "with her a pledge to meet was set for the evening" 與佳期兮夕張. It is also parallel to the line in "Shan gui" where the speaker voices "reproach, *yuan* 怨: "for though the lady may love me, she does not find time" 君思我兮不得閒.

[64] The *jue* 玦, a ring with a gap, may be linked to a broken relationship (*jue* 決). Here, however, the speaker continues to plead. The central issue in this line is its recurrence in "Xiang furen" as: 捐余袂兮江中. Clearly 玦 and 袂 are alternative writings of the same sound. 袂, Mandarin *mei*, had two pronunciations according to Baxter 2014: 152, 162, one of which became homophonous with *jue* and the other rhyming with *mei* 妹, both with the same meaning. Zhu Jihai has a long discussion about offerings, in which he discusses the importance of the sleeves of the shaman or shamanka.

遺余佩兮醴浦。　my pendants I left　on the shores of the Li.

采芳洲兮杜若，　I plucked the galangal　on flowering isles[65]

將以遺兮下女。　to give as gift　to the woman below.[66]

時不可兮再得，　This moment may never　be ours again,

聊逍遙兮容與。　let us wander freely　and be at our ease.

Rhymes: 猶 [ɢ(r)]u; 洲 tu; 舟 tu; 流 ru; 來 mə.rˤək (> *rˤə); 思 [s]ə; 征 teŋ; 庭 lˤeŋ; 旌 [ts]eŋ; 靈 [r]ˤeŋ; 極 [g](r)ək; 息 sək; 側 [ts]rək; 枻 s-lat; 雪 [s]ot; 末 mˤat; 絕 [dz]ot; 淺 [tsʰ]e[n]ʔ; 翩 pʰe[n]; 閒 N-kˤre[n]; 渚 taʔ; 下 gˤraʔ; 浦 pʰˤaʔ; 女 nraʔ; 與 m-q(r)aʔ

湘夫人 The Mistress of the Xiang

帝子降兮北渚，　The god's child comes down　to the northern flats,[67]

目眇眇兮愁予。　her far-peering glances　bring me grief.[68]

嫋嫋兮秋風，　Lightly fluttering,　autumn's wind,[69]

洞庭波兮木葉下。　waves rise on Dongting,　leaves fall from trees.

---

65 *Duruo* 杜若 has been understood as pollia (*pollia japonica*). According to Zhu Jihai, working with a later pharmacopeia, pollia was given to a mate for remembrance. Pan Fujun 2002: 76-77, however, argues persuasively that *duruo* is "lesser galangal," *alpinia officinarum*.

66 Although Jiang Liangfu and some other commentators beginning with Wang Yuan in the Ming interpret *xianü* 下女 as "serving girls," the translation above is consistent with *Chu ci* usage: from the perspective of heaven, the 下 might indicate "on earth"; here it suggests "down in the water." Compare Li sao's speaker when on his heavenly journey: 相下女之可詒 (55).

67 *Jiang* 降 is the technical term for a deity's descent from heaven. Cf. "Xiang jun": 夕弭節兮北渚. *Zhu* 渚 is often an island, and probably has that sense here, in that the Lady of the Xiang first appears on an "isle midstream," *zhong zhou* 中洲. I have used "flats" to maintain consistency with its use in "Xiang jun," where the sense of the "flats" by a river are a far better place for riding than a small island.

68 Although most commentators take *miaomiao* 眇眇 as the quality of her gazing (Jiang Liangfu somewhat comically specifies these as furtive glances, fearful, yet hoping), Hong Xingzu took it as the "far-gazing" of the speaker observing her. The translation of the second hemistich follows the traditional interpretation; however, Jiang Liangfu and others have suggested that *yu* 予 (*jo*<laʔ) is a loan for 忬 or 盱 (*xju*<qʷʰ(r)a), thus a compound 愁忬, meaning "sorrowful." Wen Yiduo offers the more questionable suggestion that 予 is a loan for *zhu* 貯/眝, hence to "peer sadly." Not only are the sounds of these suggested loans quite distinct from *yu*, I keep to the traditional interpretation because of the template line in "Da siming": 羌愈思兮愁人. Compare also later in this poem 聞佳人兮召予 and "Shao siming" 芳菲菲兮襲予.

69 *Niaoniao* 嫋嫋 is often explained in its usual sense of "long and pliant," though contextually it is extended to the quality of leaves blowing in the wind.

5登白薠兮騁望， She steps on white sedge,   the gaze runs free,[70]

與佳期兮夕張。 with her a pledge to meet   was set for the evening.[71]

鳥何萃兮蘋中， Why do birds gather   there in the water clover?[72]

罾何為兮木上。 why are there fishnets   up in the trees?

沅有茝兮澧有蘭， The Yuan has angelica,   the Li has eupatorium,[73]

10思公子兮未敢言。 I long for the noble lady,   I dare not speak.[74]

荒忽兮遠望， A vast blur,   I gaze in the distance,

觀流水兮潺湲。 I watch flowing waters   trickling on.

麋何食兮庭中， What will the elk eat   there in the courtyard?[75]

蛟何為兮水裔。 why is the kraken   out on the river's marge?

15朝馳余馬兮江皋，I sped my horse that dawn   on the plain by the river,

夕濟兮西澨。 at twilight I crossed   at the western levee.

聞佳人兮召予， I heard the fair one   summoning me,

將騰駕兮偕逝。 I will send the team flying aloft,   we will go off together.

築室兮水中， I built up a chamber   out in the water,[76]

20葺之兮荷蓋。 I thatched it over   with a lotus cover.

---

[70] The standard Hong Xingzu text reads 白薠兮騁望. The *deng* 登 is added in one early edition of *Wen xuan*, though the Wuchen edition reads the line without it. Wen Yiduo explains *deng* 登 as 蹬, which is essentially the same word. The same version of *Wen xuan* that adds *deng* also reads 蘋 for 薠. This is clearly an error. Note, however, the template line in "He bo": 登崑崙兮四望. This could be the devotee stepping onto white sedge, but as will be noted, in other Songs it is the deity who is the subject of the verb (elsewhere *cheng*) in this position.

[71] Some versions have *ren* 人 after *jia* 佳. Wen Yiduo reads *zhang* 張 as 帳. Gao Heng takes 張 as "spread out [a ritual sacrifice]."

[72] Some versions lack *he* 何. Although some commentators want the birds to be waterfowl, most recognize that this is a figure of impossibility, like the similar couplet in "Xiang jun."

[73] *Chai* 茝 is equated with *zhi* 芷 and is sometimes pronounced *zhi*; some texts read 芷.

[74] Although *gongzi* 公子 is usually male, there are precedents for its application to a woman. Cf. "Shan gui": "reproaching the Lady, I in grief forget going" 怨公子兮悵忘歸.

[75] Some texts read *wei* 為 for *shi* 食.

[76] Wen Yiduo mention earthen islands built for the worship of water deities.

蓀壁兮紫壇，　Its walls were of sweet flag,　its altar-platform was purple,[77]

播芳椒兮成堂。　I strewed scented pepper　to finish the hall.[78]

桂棟兮蘭橑，　Its beams were of cassia,　magnolia, its rafters,[79]

辛夷楣兮藥房。　of lily magnolia the lintels,　white angelica rooms.

罔薜荔兮為帷，　I wove climbing fig　to serve as the arras,[80]

擗蕙櫋兮既張。　split basil partitions　already spread out.[81]

白玉兮為鎮，　White jade　served as the weights,

疏石蘭兮為芳。　stone-orchid strewn sparsely　made sweet scent.[82]

芷葺兮荷屋，　Angelica thatched,　of lotus, the roof,[83]

繚之兮杜衡。　it was all bound around　with asarum.

合百草兮實庭，　I combined plants of all kinds　filling in the yard,

建芳馨兮廡門。　set out aromatics　in the gate and the porch.[84]

九嶷繽兮並迎，　The hosts of the Nine Alps　joined to greet her,[85]

靈之來兮如雲。　the numinous ones come　like clouds.[86]

---

[77] Cui Fuzhang takes the "purple" as referring to 紫貝 "purple cowries," mentioned in "He bo": 紫貝闕兮朱宮. Hu Wenying takes it as a plant *zicao* 紫草, to match the other adornments. According to Pan Fujun this is *lithospermum erythrorrhizon*, purple gromwell. The "purple altar-platform" is mentioned in *Han shu* as the altar to Taiyi in Ganquan Palace (*Han shu*: 25b, 1256).

[78] *Bo* 播 is the *Wen xuan* reading; Hong Xingzu reads a strange character which he explains as an old character for *bo*. Zhu Xi reads *ju* 匊, also explaining it as an old character for *bo*. *Cheng* 成 is variously interpreted as "filling" or "adorning." The interpretation "filling" probably derives from *sheng* 盛. Wen Yiduo argues that this is not the walls themselves but wallcoverings.

[79] Commentators here again prefer magnolia to eupatorium. I suspect that the rafters are hung with eupatorium. *Eupatorium sinensis* is fragrant only in spring (this is an autumn Song), but it may have retained its fragrance when dried.

[80] *Wang* 罔 is used for 網, to "weave into a net."

[81] *Man* 槾 is a variant for *mian* 櫋. *Mian* is interpreted as a room partition or as eaves.

[82] Wen Yiduo argues that 芳 should be 防, a barrier or screen.

[83] We do not quite know what to do with cases like this, comparing this line with the earlier 葺之兮荷蓋. The problem is that 之 (*tsyi*<tə) and 芷 (*tsyiX*<təʔ) are virtual homophones, differing by glottal stop or tone. It seems unlikely that these are different words; and since we cannot have 之葺, this argues that line 20 should be 葺芷兮荷蓋.

[84] Xu Renfu argues that *wu* 廡 must be a verb to maintain parallelism and cites a *Shu* usage in which it means "fill." I do not think that *Shu* usages are particularly relevant for the limited lexicon of *Jiu ge*.

[85] This same line occurs in Li sao 71 in the form 九疑繽其並迎. *Yi* 疑 and 嶷 are only variant writings. This occurs with the descent of Shaman Xian.

[86] Compare "Dong jun": 靈之來兮蔽日.

捐余袂兮江中， I cast my sleeve into the river,[87]
遺余褋兮澧浦。 I left my plain shift on the shores of the Li.[88]
搴汀洲兮杜若， I picked the galangal on beaches and sandbars,[89]
將以遺兮遠者。 I was going to give it to the one who is far.[90]
時不可兮驟得， This moment may never be ours often,[91]
聊逍遙兮容與。 let us wander freely and be at our ease.

Rhymes: 渚 taʔ; 予 laʔ; 下 gˁraʔ; 望 ; 張 C.traŋ; 上 Cə-daŋʔ; 蘭 k.rˁan; 言 ŋa[n]; 湲 ɢʷa[n]?; 裔 l[a][t]-s; 澨 [d][e][t]-s?; 逝 [d]at-s; 堂 [d]ˁaŋ; 房 [Cə-N-]paŋ; 張 C.traŋ; 芳 [pʰ]aŋ; 衡 [g]ˁraŋ; 庭 lˁeŋ?; 門 mˁə[r](probably [m]ˁ[ə][n]); 迎 ŋ<r>aŋ; 雲 [ɢ]ʷə[n]; 浦 pʰˁaʔ; 者 tAʔ; 與 m-q(r)aʔ

It is best to read “Xiang jun” 湘君 together with its companion piece, “Xiang furen” 湘夫人. The Chinese scholarly assumption that *Jiu ge* were composed and entitled by a single hand—that of Qu Yuan—compelled scholars to account for a *purposeful* difference between them. The standard solution is to take “Xiang jun” not as “The Lady of the Xiang” but as male, “The Lord of the Xiang,” and to take “Xiang Furen,” “The Mistress of the Xiang” as his mate, construing the two poems as a dramatic dialogue between divine lovers.[92] The only reason to offer such an interpretation is to account for a meaningful difference between the two poems, while at the same time satisfying the later understanding of *jun* 君 as only the male “lord,” rather than also the “lady.” All early notices take the Xiang deity to be two women; and the *Lienü zhuan* explicitly says that they are called “Xiang jun,” the “Ladies of the Xiang.” The two Xiang River goddesses were supposed to have been the daughters of Yao and the wives of the Shun, Ehuang 娥黃 and Nüying 女英, whose tears after Shun’s death were said to have permanently speckled bamboo of the region.

[87] See note on “Xiang jun.”
[88] *Die* 褋, a plain shift, replaces 佩 in the identical line in “Xiang jun.”
[89] This is clearly a variation of “Xiang jun”: 采芳洲兮杜若.
[90] Note the variation in “Xiang jun”: 將以遺兮下女.
[91] The “Xiang jun” variation: 時不可兮再得.
[92] The evidence and arguments in favor of and against such an interpretation are set out in Hawkes and various Chinese commentaries.

The *Shanhai jing* has two goddesses, the daughters of the heavenly emperor. For conservative sensibilities, it would be shocking to have one or both of the widows of Shun remarry a local male river deity. Jiang Liangfu solves the problem ingeniously by having a "Lord of the Xiang," identified as deified Shun.

David Hawkes follows Aoki Masaru's theory that the two Xiang goddess songs are for seasonal performance, the first in spring and the second in autumn. Certainly "Xiang furen" is quite explicit about autumn, but "Xiang jun" is not so clear about spring. The problem is that the speaker is picking lesser galangal in both songs, and lesser galangal flowers from mid-spring through summer. This is not definitive, because supposes the speaker in "Xiang furen" could be picking (or pulling up) some other part of the plant. As in much *Chu ci* exegesis, ingenuity can serve the purpose of drawing attention away from the most obvious difference: in "Xiang jun" the speaker's suit fails; in "Xiang furen" the speaker's suit is successful.

As Arthur Waley suggested, the shared lines and passages and the similarity of relations in the two songs suggest two versions of the same song—the male shaman unsuccessfully or successfully seeking the river goddess/es—rather than a dialogue between two deities. If we take these as two versions of a song for the goddess/es of the Xiang River, then they are particularly precious, because they let us see the range of variation and what is constant in both versions.

Our model of "ritual" in early China is based on well-documented northern ritual praxis, which finds close counterparts in religion in Europe and the Near East. There are fixed roles, each of which is obliged to say certain things and do certain things at set moments. Trying to write such a fixed "script" for "*Jiu ge* has been a basic part of the interpretive process for almost a century. The trouble is that too many scripts can be written for the same text, and every script involves forcing interpretations at certain points. It seems that many possible narratives can be the subtexts of the texts.

Perhaps there is indeed a single correct narrative that subtends each text, and all the others are wrong. But let me suggests a very different notion of ritual utterance, one not based on a determined narrative. Rather, there are things that must occur, gestures that must be made, emotions that must be declared in a certain sequence, often linked to specific phrases. The one

underlying "narrative" line seems to divide by the gender of the divinity. For the male deity, the officiants offer music and dance; the deity stops and may descend, then leaves, with the officiants longing for him. The female deity shows herself and her apparent attraction for the male officiant; he pursues her and in one case she eludes him; he complains that she changed her mind and is left in longing. These "moments" can be repeated in a given text and constitute in themselves an efficacious ritual performance. This hypothesis does not work for all the *Jiu ge*, but it works for most, and explains some of the oddities in most (apart from the coda).

Both songs begin with the theophany of the Xiang goddess—as other Songs begin with a theophany of the deity. We may recall that in "Yunzhong jun" we saw the two phases of the theophany: the god first was brought to "stay" or "linger," *liu*, and in the second he "came down," *jiang*. In the two Xiang goddess poems, we see in the first the goddess being "stayed" by someone, and in the second she "comes down." In "Yunzhong jun" coming down brings contact, however brief, even though the god quickly departs. With the goddesses, there is the gaze. In "Xiang jun" her gaze seems inviting, "Lovely, far-peering, her mouth shows a smile" 美要眇兮宜修; in "Xiang furen" we see the effect of the gaze on the speaker, "her far-peering eyes bring me grief" 目眇眇兮愁予. Some commentators suggest that in "Xiang furen" the "far-peering eyes" are those of the speaker, but the listener, familiar with this kind of song, will probably hear them as the goddess's gaze. At roughly the same point in "Shan gui" we have: "with a sidelong glance, her mouth showed a smile" 既含睇兮又宜笑. It may not matter which of the two is "looking" in these cases: what is necessary is the looking itself

The gaze is followed by the instigation of desire. In "Xiangjun" the goddess immediately gets in a boat:

沛吾乘兮桂舟。 "Streaming swiftly I ride my cassia boat,
令沅湘兮無波， I bid Yuan and Xiang to be without waves,
使江水兮安流。 and command River's waters to steady their flow."

Then the mortal devotee sets off pursuing her on Lake Dongting, carried by "dragons" (but apparently also in a boat).

In "Xiang furen" the speaker is brought to grief, but significantly this is immediately followed by lines on Lake Dongting:

嫋嫋兮秋風， Lightly fluttering, autumn's wind,
洞庭波兮木葉下。 waves rise on Dongting, leaves fall from trees.

The lake and river scene in this case has no relation to what went before or what immediately follows. Its disjunctive distraction from the matter at hand is, indeed, poetically effective. But in more prosaic terms, it is probably here because the person delivering this iteration of the Song feels that something about the rivers and/or Lake Dongting belongs at this point in the Song.[93]

"Shan gui" has no rivers or lake, but the smile immediately instigates desire, as the goddess herself seems to observe: "You yearn for me, good at being comely" 子慕予兮善窈窕. We cannot help noticing the parallel phrasing: *chou yu* 愁予 and *mu yu* 慕予. It does not matter that the first *yu* 予 is the speaker who gazes at the goddess and second *yu* seems to be the goddess; it is the same situation at the same place in the song with the same verbal pattern. Earlier we raised the question whether the songs are a sequence of moments, a thematic unity, or a purely verbal sequence of key words and template phrases. Here we have a good answer: it is a mix of all three.

If the goddess in "Xiang jun" "rides" (*cheng* 乘 *dzyeng*<Cə.ləŋ) her cassia boat, the goddess in "Shan gui" "rides" (*cheng*) red leopards (a carriage drawn by red leopards); in "Da siming" the god "rides" a roiling mass of purple clouds"; in "Dong jun" the god "rides" thunder, but uniquely in the second hemistich of a line; in "He bo" the river god "rides" his "water coach" and later "rides" white turtles. Almost all the gods, it seems, are "riding" (*cheng*) something at this stage in the sequence (and the River Earl does it a second time, when he starts over again). The appropriate

[93] We should keep in mind that Lake Dongting contains the isle, "The Mountain of the Lady," Junshan 君山, referring to the Xiang goddess/es.

vehicle seems to be a necessary attribute in the theophany. This word is not used in “Xiang furen”; rather the goddess “treads,” *deng* 登 (*tong*<tˤəŋ), white sedge. The initials are different, but the final is the same. This discourse is marked not simply by a conservatism of words and theme, “moments,” but also by a conservatism of sound, with variation often preserving finals.[94]

Immediately after the goddess sets off in her boat, the speaker in “Xiang jun” says:

望夫君兮未來， I gaze toward my Lady, she does not come;
吹參差兮誰思。 I blow on my panpipes, for whom do I long?

After describing autumn on Lake Dongting, the speaker in “Xiang furen” says: “I long for the noble lady, I dare not speak” 思公子兮未敢言. Immediately after this line we have the gazing for the goddess: “A vast blur, I gaze in the distance” 荒忽兮遠望. We should note the *wei* 未 in the same position in the second hemistich; and the verbs in the two sequential lines (crossing from one couplet to the next), “gaze,” *wang* 望, and “long for,” *si* 思, both appear, in alternate order.

Taken individually, these recurring elements might be accidental; in the aggregate they are compelling. Sometimes scenes recur, sometimes actions, and sometimes phrases recur in different contexts. Unable to reach her with his soul, the more tormented speaker in “Xiang jun” says:

橫流涕兮潺湲， my tears now *flow* freely, *trickling* down,
隱思君兮陫側。 I sadly long for the Lady, I am tormented.

Gazing for the goddess, the speaker in “Xiang furen” says:

荒忽兮遠望， A vast blur, I gaze in the distance,
觀流水兮潺湲。 I watch *flowing* waters *trickling* on.

He does not shed tears but finds a variation on the same words: [X]流[Y]兮潺湲.

[94] Note also variant lines differing by initials in “Shao siming,” line 20, and “He bo,” line 2.

How do we explain such repetition, each applied to different phenomena at roughly the same point in the sequence, just before the figures of impossibility appear (appearing for the second time in the “Mistress of the Xiang)? What is the probability that this *chanyuan*, a compound that appears nowhere else in the Songs, would accidentally reappear at the same point in a sequence of shared moments? The easiest explanation would seem to be two iterations of the same Song. In each case, the singer or informant recalls that this phrase belongs at this point. In “Xiang jun” the speaker has been pursuing her by water and has received no promise to meet. He weeps flowing tears. In “Xiang furen,” she has set a date to meet with him in the evening; he gazes toward her and watches the water flowing on. There is no particular reason for this line to be here: it does not advance the narrative or elaborate the feelings of the speaker. The speaker in “Xiang furen” has already used the figures of impossibility (a bit incongruously), but both singers know that figures of impossibility belong “next.” Although the future date is set for the singer in “Xiang furen,” he adds another couplet of impossibility at the correct point.

The figures of impossibility stand out in these two songs. In “Xiang furen” this appears twice. The first occurrence is in the second stanza, after declaring that he has a tryst set to meet the goddess in the evening. Such a meeting is always problematic (here deferred to the last section), so immediately the speaker offers a figure of impossibility:

鳥何萃兮蘋中， Why do birds gather there in the duckweed?
罾何為兮木上。 why are there fishnets up in the trees?

Later, after the flowing water, another figure of impossibility is given:

麋何食兮庭中， What will the elk eat there in the courtyard?
蛟何為兮水裔。 why is the kraken out on the river's marge?

In “Xiang jun” yet another figure is used, given only once:

采薜荔兮水中， It was picking climbing fig in the middle of waters;
搴芙蓉兮木末。 it was plucking the lotus from tips of the trees.

We do not need to go far to discover that not only do the two iterations of the Song say the "same thing" in the same sequence, each seems to know about the other version of the Song. It is fair enough for the speaker in "Xiang jun" to complain about the impossibility of getting together with the goddess. She may have sighed "for him," but that doesn't count for much; goddess have those moments but change their minds, as in "Shan gui": "For though the lady may love me, she does not find time" 君思我兮不得閒. But the speaker in "Xiang furen" has set a time to meet, and there is no indication that the goddess will go back on it. Why then is he using the figures of impossibility? And why is the Lady in "Xiang jun" accused of going back on her word, when she never made a promise in this version? If "Xiang jun" spends many words on chasing the goddess over Lake Dongting, "Xiang furen" spends as many words on the preparation of the shrine. If the speaker in "Xiang furen" includes an incongruous line on Lake Dongting, the speaker in "Xiang jun" gives an equally incongruous line on passing a shrine, precisely according to the sequence in which the shrine appears in "Xiang furen."

The two songs do not so much diverge as complement one another, each adding or amplifying a part that adds to a more "complete" version. It is not the logic of narrative, but the sequence remains fairly consistent.

Lady	Mistress
[Openings very close, with initial indication of her interest]	
Longing-Pursuit	
4-18	2
Goddess agrees to meet	
X	6
Goddess reciprocates	

[16?][95] 17-18

Goddess breaks with suitor

23-24, 27-28

Shrine

31-32 19-32

Gift of broken ring/sleeve and conclusion

33-38 35-40

As we might expect, the beginning and end are very similar, with shared lines and passages in between. “Xiang jun” does not develop the building or preparation of the shrine but concentrates on complaint about the broken agreement. “Xiang furen” spends many lines on the shrine but does not mention the broken promise. This is an important omission.

The speaker has pursued the goddess, lamented his failure, and inexplicably blamed her for her faithlessness. At this point the “Xiang jun” is much more expansive than “Xiang furen.” Then in line 29 of “Xiang jun” and only line 15 of “Xiang furen” we have what is almost a shared line.

“Xiang jun”:

鼂騁騖兮江皋， I galloped that dawn on the plain by the river,
夕弭節兮北渚。 stayed my pace in the twilight by northern flats

“Xiang furen”:

朝馳余馬兮江皋， I sped my horse that dawn on the plain by the river,
夕濟兮西澨。 at twilight I crossed at the western levee.

[95] In one possible interpretation of the line this might be a line of reciprocation.

This tells us that however far apart we are in line numbers, we are at the same “moment” in the sequence. “Xiang jun” adds a couplet here:

鳥次兮屋上，　Birds took their lodging   high on the roof
水周兮堂下。　and the waters were circling   the base of the hall.

If we didn’t have “Xiang furen” with its elaborate preparation of the shrine, we might well ask: “What roof?” “What hall?” But we know that this must be the shrine. We may still ask: “What’s the shrine doing here?” But it simply passes by. By contrast, it is the turn of “Xiang furen” to use more words; the speaker not only still has his date to meet the goddess, she reconfirms:

聞佳人兮召予，　I heard the fair one   summoning me,
將騰駕兮偕逝。　I will send the team flying aloft,   we will go off together.
築室兮水中，　I built up a chamber   out in the water,
20葺之兮荷蓋。　I thatched it over   with a lotus cover.

蓀壁兮紫壇，　Its walls were of sweet flag,   its altar-platform was purple,
播芳椒兮成堂。　I strewed scented pepper   to finish the hall.
桂棟兮蘭橑，　Its beams were of cassia,   magnolia, its rafters,
辛夷楣西藥房。　of lily magnolia the lintels,   white angelica rooms.
罔薜荔兮為帷，　I wove climbing fig   to serve as the arras,
擗蕙櫋兮既張。　split basil partitions   already spread out.
白玉兮為鎮，　White jade   served as the weights,
疏石蘭兮為芳。　stone-orchid strewn sparsely   made sweet scent.
芷葺兮荷屋，　Angelica thatched,   of lotus, the roof,
繚之兮杜衡。　it was all bound around   with asarum.
合百草兮實庭，　I combined plants of all kinds   filling in the yard,
建芳馨兮廡門。　set out aromatics   in the gate and the porch.
九嶷繽兮並迎，　The hosts of the Nine Alps   joined to greet her,

靈之來兮如雲。 the numinous ones come like clouds.

At this point the two versions of the Song come together again for the finale.

The Lady of the Xiang:

捐余玦兮江中， I cast a ring broken into the river,

遺余佩兮醴浦。 I left my pendants on the shores of the Li.

采芳洲兮杜若， I plucked the galangal on flowering isles

將以遺兮下女。 to give as gift to the woman below.

時不可兮再得， This moment may never be ours again,

聊逍遙兮容與。 let us wander freely and be at our ease.

The Mistress of the Xiang

捐余袂兮江中， I cast my sleeve into the river,

遺余褋兮澧浦。 I left my plain shift on the shores of the Li.

搴汀洲兮杜若， I picked the galangal on beaches and sandbars,

將以遺兮遠者。 I was going to give it to the one who is far.

時不可兮驟得， This moment may never be ours often,

聊逍遙兮容與。 let us wander freely and be at our ease.

We have discussed the opening lines of this passage earlier as the telltale trace of creative adaption and amplification working together with memory. We have the remembered sound, [k]^{wʕ}et, the “broken ring” and the “sleeve.” The rejected suitor in “The Lady of the Xiang” cast a [k]^{wʕ}et, “broken ring,” the figure of “breaking off,” the failure of union. The successful suitor in “Mistress of the Xiang,” also casts a [k]^{wʕ}et, but in this case it is a torn-off “sleeve.” The story is

over and starts again, picking galangal as a gift to the goddess, urging her come and roam with him

We don’t know why there are two versions of the Xiang goddess song. Perhaps because there were two goddesses; perhaps because Emperor Wu complained that the shaman-seekers of the goddess always fail; perhaps because the singer wanted to show that it could be done either way, and perhaps to show off his/her skills in using multiple rhymes and being able to do two versions of his set-pieces—the pursuit of the goddess, the lament at separation, the shrine. This we don’t know; but if we take this to count as one Song in two variations rather than two Songs (and not counting the final coda of the series), we do indeed have “*Nine* Songs,” and not eleven.

Purely Speculative Comment

I suspect that the title “Xiang furen” 湘夫人 was added at some early point in the manuscript tradition and that we originally had two songs, one after the other, under the title “Xiang jun” 湘君. There were, after all, two goddesses. The previous Songs and two that following are *jun* 君 in a sequence that observes hierarchy. Once that title “The Mistress of the Xiang” 湘夫人 was added to distinguish the two variations (with the increasingly masculine understanding to the term *jun*), it provided endless opportunities for commentators to offer theories about the relation between the two versions.

If we are correct that this suite of Songs was performed for Emperor Wu, this would have been after the death of Lady Li, who was “Li furen” 李夫人 (in the present context we would translate her title as “Mistress Li”). The “Lament for Lady Li,” “Diao Li furen fu” 弔李夫人[賦], had been composed after her spirit was brought back by the “Young Old Man.” In the “Lament” Lady Li is treated as the elusive goddess (using a line seeming based on a line in the Xiang goddess Songs); she appears and then disappears. The “Lament” seems to be referring to his experience in bringing back her spirit. Here we possibly have a sense of the resonance and forces at work in providing a successful a version with a successful encounter between the goddess and the speaker.

大司命 The Senior Master of Lifespans

廣開兮天門， “Open them wide, the gates of the heavens,
紛吾乘兮玄雲。 in a mass I come riding dark purple clouds,
令飄風兮先驅， and bid whirling gusts to speed on ahead,
使凍雨兮灑塵。 commanding a downpour to moisten the dust.”

君迴翔兮以下， My Lord soars in circles, then He descends,[96]
踰空桑兮從女。 “Crossing Mount Kongsang I will have you follow.[97]
紛總總兮九州， Earth's nine domains are teeming;[98]
何壽夭兮在予。 whichever span, long or short, depends on me.”[99]

高飛兮安翔， High off we fly, steadily soaring,
乘清氣兮御陰陽。 riding Pure Ether, He drives Shadow and Light;[100]
吾與君兮齋速， then I and my Lord, speed side by side,[101]

---

[96] Wen Yiduo and Jiang Liangfu argue from Wang Yi’s commentary that the variant 來 for 以 is better.

[97] Kongsang was a mythical mountain eternally covered with snow and the home of Zhuanxu. The question of the speaker here is problematic. The first stanza is clearly the god speaking, as is the second half of this stanza. We might take the speaker as the devotee, addressing the deity as 女 (汝). Although it is difficult to judge the propriety of pronominal usages in such a context, the familiarity of *ru* invites taking the speaker as the god: “I have you follow [me].”

[98] The first hemistich occurs twice in the Li sao in a repeated line: 紛總總其離合兮. It seems to describe numerousness and confusion.

[99] The interpretation of this line splits into opposite possibilities. One version is as translated above; another version disclaims such powers: “How could long or short lifespans depend on me?” While the latter interpretation is reasonable from the words, it would ill befit a deity known as *siming* 司命, “master of lifespans.”

[100] Both *cheng* 乘 and *yu* 御 are terms of chariot-driving. This is the only time *yu* is used in this sense in the *Chu ci*. Wen Yiduo cites a similar couplet in *Zhuangzi* “Xiaoyao you”: 乘天地之正，御六氣之辯 [辯 = 變]. Tang Bingzheng cites a resonant parallel from the “Yuan Dao” of *Huainanzi*: 以四時為馬，以陰陽為御. *Lai* 來 is a variant for *yi* 以.

[101] The interpretations of *zhaisu*/*qisu* 齋速 vary greatly. Many commentators take it as 齊 (*zhai*) 速, “restrained and respectful.” As Jiang Liangfu points out, this was a common compound, variously written 齊肅, 齊宿, or 齊遬. The choice of *qi* 齊 in the compounds probably reflects early usage, when the graph could be used for both the unvoiced and voiced pronunciations; 齋 came to be used for the voiced pronunciation (齊 is dzej<[dz]ˁəj; 齋 is tsreaj<tsˁr[ə]j). This is a strong argument of a certain kind, though premised on technical Traditionalist (Ru) vocabulary being shared with *Chu ci*. The choice of Zhu Xi’s interpretation in the translation above is based on the assumption that the *Chu ci* are best understood in terms of template lines or hemistiches. This does not mean parallelism in the usual sense, but rather the repetition of key words at certain positions in the line. We may read this line with 與日月兮齊光 in “Yunzhong jun.” The meaning of 齊 there and the repeated *yu* 與 (“equal to/with X”) invite the interpretation above. Elsewhere 齊 is used for chariots galloping side by side. We find it most commonly followed by a noun, but in “Ai Ying” we have: “Together raising the oars, we glide along” 楫齊揚以容與兮. See also Li sao (90): 齊玉軑而並馳.

導帝之兮九坑。 as I lead on the god down to Nine Hills.[102]

靈衣兮被被， Our robes are of cloud, trailing long,[103]

玉佩兮陸離。 our pendants of jade swing dangling in profusion.[104]

壹陰兮壹陽， "Sometimes the Shadow, sometimes the Light;[105]

眾莫知兮余所為。 of the many, none know that which I do."[106]

折疏麻兮瑤華， I snapped off a hemp bud's alabaster blooms[107]

將以遺兮離居。 to give as a gift to Him Who Dwells Apart;[108]

老冉冉兮既極， old age steals upon me and now has arrived;[109]

不寖近兮愈疏。 He does not draw nearer, He grows more remote.

---

[102] This line also presents numerous problems. Many commentators take *di* 帝 as *shangdi* 上帝, which would imply that the speaker and the Senior Master of Lifespans are leading the High God. *Di* 帝 appears often in the older *Chu ci*, but generally does not travel, much less get led. None of the Songs include another deity. There is much we do not know about the range of *di* in different contexts and its enigmatic use as a qualifier of clothes in "Yunzhong jun." I have chosen to take *di* here as a reference to the "master of lifespans," but it is possible that it refers to a higher level of the divine hierarchy, perhaps *shangdi* 上帝, as most commentators prefer. As Jiang Liangfu notes, "leading" 導 (道), does have a clear parallel in the Li sao, where the speaker proposes to lead the ruler on a horizontal plane: 來吾道夫先路. Although some commentators think that *jiu keng/gang* 九坑 is a variation on *jiu zhuo* 九州, the civilized world, it possibly refers to *jiugang* 九岡, supposedly a group of mountains near the Chu capital Ying. I have not been able to find such a place name apart from commentarial suggestion. We simply do not know what *jiu keng* refers to, and there is no strong evidence to hazard a compelling guess.

[103] Here I accept the emendation of *lingyi* 靈衣 to *yunyi* 雲衣, which also appears in "Dong jun." The line is cited as 雲衣 in *Beitang shuchao* and *Taiping yulan*. A very similar line with 雲衣 is cited in *Jiu tan* 九嘆, which suggests that Wang Yi understood the line here as 雲衣.

[104] *Luli* 陸離 (Jiang Liangfu 1999: 4.511) describes pendants again in Li sao 30 (長余佩之陸離) and a sword in "She Jiang" (帶長鋏之陸離兮). In Li sao 52 (斑陸離其上下) it describes multicolored clouds and rainbows roiling.

[105] The implications of this line are uncertain. It may simply stand for transformations, or, more specifically, it may refer to death and life, over which the Senior Master of Lifespans has charge. Another plausible interpretation is that the Senior Master of Lifespans is sometimes hidden and sometimes appears.

[106] Cf. *Jiu zhang*, "Huai sha": 羌不知余之所臧.

[107] One interpretation has *yaohua* 瑤華 as blossoms of the hemp (*cannabis*). Other commentators take this as the separate yao 蓄 plant. Wang Yi glosses *shuma* 疏麻 as *shenma* 神麻. This is followed by most commentators, but very few have tried to explain the *shu* 疏 (*sryo*<sra). Jiang Tianshu wants it to be *shou* 壽, but the sounds are too different. He Jianxun explains it as *suma* 蘇麻 or 酥麻, sesame, which came to China during the Han. This *su* is differentiated from the *shu* only by the initial. A more radical suggestion is that this is *Chu ma* 楚麻. *Chu* is *tsrhjoX*<s.r̥aʔ). This is not impossible given the final "t" in *zhe* 折 (*tsyet*<tet). If this is the case, then the explicit use of the qualifier "Chu" would suggest that this text is not from Chu (in Chu itself "Chu hemp" would be just "hemp"). The use of *cannabis* in religious rites is well-documented throughout Eurasia since earliest antiquity. I dare not suggest *soma* for 疏麻 sra-C.mˤraj. On another level, the mention of *shuma* is interesting because it appears nowhere else in the botany of *Chu ci*. This is probably a song from the old region of Jin and may represent a plant that grows only in the north.

[108] To take *liju* 離居 as "[the one who] dwells apart" is compelled both by sense and the template lines, as in ("Xiang jun" 將以遺兮下女 and "Xiang furen" 將以遺兮遠者.

[109] Note that although the template of the "Xiang jun" and "Xiang furen" is not used, in this poem the "gift" line is also followed by a comment on the passage of time.

乘龍兮轔轔，　He rides his dragon-car,   its wheels are rumbling,
高駝兮沖天。　and racing high off   He dashes to Sky,[110]
結桂枝兮延佇，　I plait cassia twigs,   long stand fixed and gazing,
羌愈思兮愁人。　for increase of longing   thus grieves a man.

愁人兮奈何，　How can it be helped,   that it grieves a man?—[111]
願若今兮無虧。　I wish now be forever,   and never to wane.
固人命兮有當，　Fixed is man's fated span,   it is as it must be;
孰離合兮可為。　who can control   unions and partings?[112]

Rhymes: 門 *mˤə[r]; 雲 [ɢ]ʷə[n]; 塵 [d]rə[n]; 下 ɡˤraʔ; 女 ; 予 laʔ; 翔 s.[ɢ]aŋ; 陽 laŋ; 坑 k-ŋˤaŋ; 被 mə-pʰ(r)aj; 離 [r]aj; 陽 laŋ; 為 ɢʷ(r)aj; 華 N-qʷʰˤra; 居 k(r)a; 疏 sra; 轔 C.r[ə][ɴ]?; 天 l̥ˤi[n]; 人 ni[ŋ]; 何 [g]ˤaj; 虧 [k]ʷʰ(r)aj; 為 ɢʷ(r)aj

If there is any doubt about the striking conservatism of word sequences in the Songs, one need only compare opening passages in "Xiang jun" and "Da siming":

沛**吾乘**兮桂舟。　紛**吾乘**兮玄雲。
令沅湘兮無波，　**令**飄風兮先驅，
使江水兮安流。　**使**凍雨兮灑塵。

Each deity arrives naming the proper conveyance and showing his or her power over the medium through which that conveyance passes. It is a formula that allows the performer to "fill in the blanks" with exactly the same sentence patterns, but even more important is its position in the

[110] I translate the subject as the god, but it could be the mortal speaker going in pursuit. However, the sudden flight of the deity into the heavens occurs in several other "Songs." 駝, here voiced as *chi*, is equivalent to 馳.
[111] Or: "How is it, what so troubles a man?"
[112] That is, given human mortality, how can one be in control of union and parting. Union and parting here seem to refer to the relations between gods and mortals as well as parting by death.

Song as a whole, in the theophany. This is all the more striking in "Da siming," which differs from the other Songs in so many ways. We might note that Li sao has the speaker "riding" [mounting a conveyance] *cheng* 乘, "bidding" *ling* 令, and "commanding," *shi* 使 on many occasions and often under similar circumstances, these do not occur together as here. We have in Li sao the same poetic idiom as in *Jiu ge*, but not the subset of that idiom which governs particular compositional forms of *Jiu ge*.

Although this Song follows the standard pattern of a theophany followed by a statement of jurisdiction, the Master of Lifespans is not one of those shy deities who must be lured down or pursued; instead, he bursts onto the stage in a roiling mass of dark clouds. With his northern geography (Mount Kongsang) and his unfamiliar cult plant (*shuma*), it is reasonable to identify him with the "master of lifespans," *siming* 司命, from the old region of Jin (in Liu Bang's pantheon); and his entrance is similar to that of the sun god, "Dong jun," also from Jin. This may suggest the influence of the established rites of Liu Bang's institution on our *Jiu ge*.

He is "Da siming," and his *da* 大, "big" translated as "senior," does not refer to his size or status, but because he in charge of the lifespans of adults, specifically the elderly. His companion devotée is getting old: "old age steals upon me and now has arrived" 老冉冉兮既極. Moreover, the Senior Master of Lifespan's Song is devoid of any hint of erotic attraction. His "junior" counterpart seems in charge of babies and children (whose mortality rate was, of course, very high); the "junior," of course, is adored by nubile young women.

In the deployment of first-person pronouns, the speaker alternates between the god and the attendant devotée—although the point at which the speaker changes is often uncertain. The first-person *wu* 吾 in the opening must be the voice of the god, since an entrance like this would hardly be suited to anyone else. The *jun* 君 at the beginning of the second stanza must refer to the god as well, shifting the speaker to the position of the devotee, then shifting the speaker back to the god, addressing the devotee as *ru* 女. The first person *yu* 予 in the second half of that stanza must be spoken by the god since the claim in the last line is clearly the god's. In the following stanza we have a *wu* (devotée) and a *jun* (the god), with the devotée leading the god (probably the referent

of *di* 帝). In the last line of the following, fifth stanza, we have *yu* 余: “of the many, none know that which I do,” we have again a claim that must belong to the god.[113]

Without separation and longing, however, “The Senior Master of Lifespans” would not have the right form. The fourth stanza serves this purpose: there is separation, the flower-gift, and the longing gaze for the god flying off in the sky. In this case the longing is not pure adoration and loss, but is contextualized by worry about aging and death, implicitly hoping for the god’s protection. This is as close as the Songs come to asking for a blessing. Likewise, the closing is quite distinct from the other Songs, stoically affirming that a person’s fate is fixed. Such a concluding reversal with stoic acceptance speaks from a position outside the other Songs.

[113] Note the possible use of this *yu* 余 for the god referring to himself in “Yunzhong jun,” note 45.

少司命 The Junior Master of Lifespans[114]

秋蘭兮麋蕪， Eupatorium of autumn, the deerweed,[115]

羅生兮堂下。 they grow in their rows at the foot of the hall,[116]

綠葉兮素枝， green are their leaves, pale their branches,

芳菲菲兮襲予。 their scent spreads around, it steals upon me.[117]

5夫人兮自有美子， Since mortal men have children so fair,[118]

蓀何以兮愁苦。 why should Lord Sweet Flag be troubled so?[119]

秋蘭兮青青， Eupatorium of autumn, lushly they grow,[120]

綠華兮紫莖。 green are their leaves, purple their stems.

滿堂兮美人， The hall is filled with fair women;

10忽獨與我兮目成。at once with me only His eyes meet and fix.[121]

入不言兮出不辭， He comes in without speaking, without farewell goes;[122]

---

[114] The "senior" Master of Lifespans is invoked with "old age coming on" 老冉冉; the "junior" is seems to be associated with pregnancy and children.
[115] Deerweed, or Szechuan lovage, was an herb which, according to the *Bencao*, was supposed to promote pregnancy.
[116] The "hall" is identified with the temple. The *luo* 羅 suggests that they are planted there in rows. Chinese eupatorium is most aromatic in spring, but flowers in mid- to late summer or autumn, perhaps still aromatic.
[117] There is some variation among commentators on how strongly to read *xi* 襲, often the term for an unexpected military assault, "catch by surprise." The few other usages in the older *Chu ci* suggest that it is lighter: "reaches" me, as a fragrance does.
[118] *Fu* 夫 here is a particle, though Jiang Liangfu takes it as a demonstrative "that person," referring to the Junior Master of Lifespans. In the latter case, what he "has" is not the lovely children themselves, but the means to protect them in infancy and, perhaps, to ensure fertility. The significance of *meizi* 美子 is debated: some suggest that this poem involves a desire for children; others take it as the young people in the ceremony. We might here point out that 子 is commonly used for young women and that 美子 can be seen as a paradigm variation of 美人, which occurs later in the poem.
[119] *Sun* 蓀, "[Lord] Sweet Flag," seems to be a kenning for the god, similar to the use of aromatic plants to stand for people in Li sao; the god is named again as such at the end of this Song. The choice of 蓀 plays on *sun* 孫, "grandchild," since this is the "Junior Master of Lifespans." I hesitate to depart too radically from the commentarial tradition, but when I see *zi* 子 at the end of one line and *sun* 蓀/孫 beginning the following line, it is very hard not to read them as mutually defining. The young women are beautiful, and the Junior Master of Lifespans, controlling childbirth and infant mortality, can favor them. It is therefore tempting to take these lines as 夫人兮自有美子孫，何以兮愁苦. This also means that we do not need to have the god as the subject of the sentence: "why should one be troubled so?" This makes much better sense.
[120] Ma Maoyuan and other commentators treat *qingqing* 青青 as a loan for *jingjing* 菁菁. This is unnecessary.
[121] *Mucheng* 目成 is the meeting of lovers' eyes and the mutual recognition of attraction.
[122] Commentators differ on the force of *ru* 入 and *chu* 出. Some suggest that even though the god's eyes fasten on a woman, he comes into the temple and leaves without ever meeting her. Others suggest that this is indeed their meeting, that he enters the chamber or her (sexually and/or in divine possession) and then leaves abruptly. He Jianxun, citing *Laozi*, understands *bu ci* 不辭 as "does not speak," rather than "does not take leave." "Does not take leave" is the usual sense.

乘回風兮載雲旗。 He rides on the whirlwind, bears banners of cloud.

悲莫悲兮生別離， No grief is so great as parting while living;
樂莫樂兮新相知。 no joy so strong as love newly found.

荷衣兮蕙帶， The robe is of lotus, sash wound with basil,
儵而來兮忽而逝。 He comes in a flash, as suddenly leaves;
夕宿兮帝郊， He lodges this night in the fields of the god;[123]
君誰須兮雲之際。 for whom waits our Lord at the brink of clouds?[124]

與女遊兮九河， *With you I will roam to the River's nine channels,*
衝風至兮水揚波。 *when blasts of wind rise, heaving the waves.*[125]
與女沐兮咸池， I will wash my hair with you in the Pool of Xian,[126]
晞女髮兮陽之阿。 you will let your hair dry on the Sun Clefts.[127]
望美人兮未來， I gaze for the Beauty, she does not come;
臨風怳兮浩歌。 I face the wind dazed, loudly I sing forth.[128]

孔蓋兮翠旍， With peacock-plume canopies, kingfisher streamers,

---

[123] Modern commentators generally agree that *di jiao* 帝郊 refers to the high god (上帝) and that the 郊 must be the outlying area around the heavenly capital. Why the Junior Master of Lifespans should spend the night there remains a question, unless he is waiting for someone as in the following line. I have serious doubts about this explanation of *di jiao* and hesitate to identify *di* as the Han emperor; but I can think of no alternative with some evidence.

[124] *Xu* 須 in this sense of "await" is an archaic Northern usage (*Shu*, *Shi*), with only one possible parallel usage in *Chu ci*, "Si meiren."

[125] This couplet is almost verbatim from "He bo," and is generally considered an interpolation. Wang Yi makes no comment on it, suggesting that it was not in his original version of the *Chu ci zhangju*. Since the following couplet follows a similar pattern, Ma Maoyuan argues that it was originally in "He bo." This is a hard case to adjudicate since it easily follows from the waiting in the preceding line, suggesting wooing the chosen beloved.

[126] The "Pool of Xian" is the legendary site where the sun goes down.

[127] The Sun Clefts are where the sun rises.

[128] Ma Maoyuan suggests that these four lines also belong with "He bo" segment, though they are not in the current version of "He bo." Rather than thinking of single texts, it is perhaps best to conceive of these pieces as free variations of template lines, verbal formulae, and thematic variations. The second of these two couplets seems to be such a variation of the couplet in the current "He bo": 登崑崙兮四望，心飛揚兮浩蕩. The theme of waiting earlier in "Shao siming" suggests that these four lines are not entirely out of place.

登九天兮撫彗星。　he mounts nine-banked Sky,   lays hand on comets' tails,[129]

竦長劍兮擁幼艾，　high he lifts a long sword,   protector of young lovelies—[130]

蓀獨宜兮為民正。　Sweet Flag alone is fit   to rule all the folk.[131]

Rhymes: 蕪 m(r)a; 下 gˤraʔ;予 laʔ; 苦 kʰˤaʔ; 青 [s.r̥]ˤeŋ; 莖 m-k-lˤ<r>eŋ; 成 [d]eŋ; 辭 sə.lə; 旗 [g](r)ə; 離 [r]aj; 知 tre; 帶 C.tˤa[t]-s; 逝 [d]at-s; 際 [ts][a]p-s; 河 [C.g]ˤaj; 波 pˤaj; 池 Cə.lraj; 阿 qˤa[j]; 歌 [k]ˤaj; 旍 (旌) [ts]eŋ ; 星 s-tsʰˤeŋ; 正 teŋ-s

This song opens with the scene around the god's shrine, with aromatics clearly planted in rows for use in the shrine (recalling the planting of aromatics in Li sao 13). We have the ubiquitous eupatorium, but also "deerweed," *miwu* 麋蕪 (also written 蘼蕪), which occurs only here in the *Chu ci*. Associated in the *Bencao* 本草 with fertility, this is the Junior Master of Lifespan's sphere of responsibility. This is an "attribute" that identifies a particular deity.

The erotics of this Song are quite distinct. Given the god's powers, it should be no surprise that the temple is filled with attractive young women seeking his favor. We cannot escape the *mucheng* 目成, the meeting of eyes and "agreement." This marks the deity as male. The women presumably have or anticipate mortal husbands, but the god whose favor assures or protects their baby or child is described as a lover.

Lines five and six have so many possible interpretations that it is hard to place them in the Song. "Children so fair," *meizi* 美子, is a unique compound. We suspect it is a variation on "fair person" or "beauty," *meiren* 美人, but since the *zi* 子 is not in a rhyme position, we need to account for the variation by the surrounding semantics. If we disregard characters and look at sounds (easily in

[129] Since comets were taken as portents of misfortune, here it seems that the deity is preventing misfortune, as The Lord of the East shoots the ominous Heaven's Wolf.

[130] *Youai* 幼艾, "young lovely," is glossed by Wang Yi as "the young and the elders." This usage occurs in *Zhanguo ce* twice referring to pretty young girls, and *ai* alone is used for "lovely." If we take this sense of the compound, then *yong* 擁 could mean that he "is surrounded by" or "embraces" rather than "takes under protection." I follow the common interpretation because of the raised sword.

[131] This line obviously parallels the penultimate line of the Li sao: 既莫足與為美政兮.

this case because it involves only an added radical), we have it in the adjacent word *sun* 孫/蓀. *Zisun* 子孫 is a well attested compound for children/sons and grandchildren/descendants. We can move the *sun* to the preceding line: "Since men have such fair children and grandchildren and descendants, / why should you/we be troubled?"[132] This is metrically awkward but yields a far clearer sense. If we read it this way, then lines nine and ten make sense: the god is attracted to the beautiful children, makes an "eye-compact," *mucheng* 目成, and the woman becomes pregnant or her child is protected.[133]

Here we need to consider the other famous "compact," *cheng* 成 (related to *cheng* 誠, "being "true") in the Li sao 12:

初既與余成言兮，To me at first firm word had been given,
後悔遁而有他. she regretted it later, backed off, and was otherwise.
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 Numinous One so often changed.

The Li sao has a verbal compact, *chengyan* 成言; here we have a compact made by the eyes, *mucheng* 目成. The Li sao stanza leads us into the betrayal motif that we find in "Xiang jun" and "Shan gui." In "Shao siming" consummation is immediate—and brief: "He comes in without speaking, without farewell, goes" 入不言兮出不辭.

When we read texts together, we need to notice the variables, which must be based on a common ground. The speaker here is proud of her singular election from the others. In Li sao we see jealousy, many women envying and slandering the chosen one. Different texts go different ways, but they often share the circumstantial scene when their ways depart.

[132] *Sun* 蓀, "sweet flag," with the plant radical, is the name by which the god is apparent invoked at the end. The copyist might easily have added the radical to this *sun*, which would compel the current punctuation.
[133] Zhu Xi cannot think outside his intellectual sphere, but he is very smart. Zhu Xi takes *mei* 美 as a verb—though with only one clear parallel in *Chu ci*—giving us: "there being among men those who admire you, why should Sweet Flag worry so?" Except for a few twisted usages, this works very well, though it introduces an anxiety on the part of the deity that does not occur elsewhere.

The expected response following the god's departure is the longing and sorrow of the mortal devotee (ll.13-14).[134]

悲莫悲兮生別離，　No grief is so great　as parting while living;

樂莫樂兮新相知。　no joy so strong　as love newly found.

But, as always in the *Chu ci*, repetition is the way to expand upon a motif: the next lines reiterate his sudden arrival and departure, with the god at a distance in heaven waiting for someone.

荷衣兮蕙帶，　The robe is of lotus,　sash wound with basil,

儵而來兮忽而逝。　He comes in a flash,　as suddenly leaves;

夕宿兮帝郊，　He lodges this night　in the fields of the god;

君誰須兮雲之際。　for whom waits our Lord　at the brink of clouds?

This is essentially the same phase as "The Lord of Yunzhong":

靈皇皇兮既降，　The numinous one gleams　for he has come down;

猋遠舉兮雲中。　he lifts up in a gust,　afar to Yunzhong/in the clouds.

This is followed by a couplet found also in "He bo," usually taken as an interpolation here. Certainly, the setting is different, but the lines that follow the couplet are congruous with the couplet. This is a moment that is helpful in understanding the shifting roles in Li sao. Before the fair children of men were looking for the god; now the god is in the same role, and whether he is waiting for the chosen woman below or some other goddess, he speaks as the suitor, longing for the beloved.

與女遊兮九河，　*With you I will roam　to the River's nine channels,*

衝風至兮水揚波。　*when blasts of wind rise,　heaving the waves.*

與女沐兮咸池，　I will wash my hair with you　in the Pool of Xian,

[134] As famous as this couplet is, it does not rhyme properly.

晞女髮兮陽之阿。 you will let your hair dry on the Sun Clefts.

望美人兮未來， I *gaze* for the Beauty, she does not come;

臨風怳兮浩歌。 I face the wind dazed, loudly I sing forth.

Perhaps we are wrong to look for narrative logic here. “Waiting” is the scene of longing. Longing develops as the scene of the couple roaming together, best understood as proposed and anticipated given the last couplet of the stanza. The frustration of that desire is the scene gazing and singing or sighing. It is not the logic of the whole, but a logic of sequence that can be initiated by a particular variation in a phase from another sequence—in this case, not just being in the clouds (or in Yunzhong), but “waiting.”

Let us set this with the first six lines of “He bo”:

與女遊兮九河， With you I will roam to the River's nine channels,

衝風起兮橫波。 when blasts of wind rise driving waves across stream,

乘水車兮荷蓋， we will ride my water coach, its canopy, lotus,

駕兩龍兮驂螭。 hitched to paired dragons, by basilisk flanked.

登崑崙兮四望， I climbed the Kunlun Mountains, I *gazed* all around,

心飛揚兮浩蕩。 the heart flew aloft, it went sweeping off free.

This looks like a set segment, with the god saying he will “roam” with the beloved, then where they will roam, then gazing for the beloved to come. In the “Shao siming” this is a single rhyme segment; in the “He bo” the rhyme shifts in the final couplet. Let me suggest than any person trained to do songs like this could easily do either. Thematically the performer “goes astray.” But it may not matter that the god was just up in heaven waiting [for a beloved] and then immediately down in the river. After all, the goddess of the Xiang was waiting for someone who “made her stay,” and then there was a pursuit over Lake Dongting. As soon as there is a ˤaj “river” 河, there will be pˤaj “waves” 波; if they are going to roam somewhere, some mythic qˤa[j] “mountain folds” 阿 would be good; and when the beloved does not appear, he will gaze for her and loudly [k]ˤaj “sing” 歌. In “He bo” the performer in the “roaming” couplet chooses to describe the coach, the

vehicle, rather than the itinerary, and the coach will be pulled by r̥aj 螭, translated as “basilisks,” straining a language that lacks an adequate verbal bestiary of dragons. Both performers of the segment know that maŋ-s “gazing” 望 must come next in the sequence. The performer in “Shao siming” begins the next line with “gazing,” and thus can carry through the rhyme to a third couplet with “sing.” In “He bo” uses maŋ-s “gazing” to end the line, and knowing that *hao* 浩 the penultima position in the following line, cannot resist the compound *haodang* 浩蕩, rhyming maŋ-s with lˤaŋ-s.[135]

This was a nice show of handling the segment, but he has to bring the god back to earth to celebrate his function at the end.

If the “waiting” initiated a sequence on longing and proposed roaming together, the final stanza returns to the heavens, where the deity acts to oppose astral menace. But first the performer sends the deity back to heaven.

孔蓋兮翠旍，　With peacock-plume canopies,   kingfisher streamers,
登九天兮撫彗星。　he mounts nine-banked Sky,   lays hand on comets’ tails,
竦長劍兮擁幼艾，　high he lifts long sword,   protector of young lovelies —
蓀獨宜兮為民正。　Sweet Flag alone is fit   to rule all the folk.

This is the same “moment that we see in the final stanza “The Lord of the East” (who uses a bow rather than a sword and prefers ale to beautiful girls):

青雲衣兮白霓裳，　In gown of green cloud   and white rainbow skirt,
舉長矢兮射天狼。　I raise the long arrow,   I shoot Heaven's Wolf,
操余弧兮反淪降，　with Yew-bow in hand   I now sink back under,
援北斗兮酌桂漿。　and seize the North Dipper   to pour cinnamon brew,

[135] Jiang Liangfu 1999: I.311.

In the final line of “Shao siming,” it is best to read *sun* 蓀, sweet flag, as referring to the deity, also used twice in *Jiuzhang* 九章, “Chou si” 抽思 (“Drawing Out My Thoughts”) to refer to the ruler, poetically feminized. This is strange stuff, but we might consider that the speaker in Li sao is seeking a woman and journeying through the heavens, closing with a line remarkably close to the last line here. If in Li sao finding the right mate is the condition of rulership, at the end the speaker has failed. The Junior Master of Lifespans has succeeded, which makes him suited to rule.

Purely Speculative Comment

Of course, *di jiao* 帝郊 could be “the Emperor’s suburban meadows,” the Eastern Meadows where the Taiyi rites were sometimes held, with the Junior Master of Lifespans waiting for a tryst.

東君 The Lord of the East

暾將出兮東方，　“Aglow, about to go forth   in the east,[136]
照吾檻兮扶桑。　shining on my railing   by the tree Fusang,[137]
撫余馬兮安驅，　then patting my steeds   in a steady trot,
夜皎皎兮既明。　the night is lit up,   and the day breaks.

駕龍輈兮乘雷，　My dragon-cart hitched,   I ride on the thunder,[138]
載雲旗兮委蛇。　bearing banners of cloud   streaming behind.
長太息兮將上，　But I heave a great sigh   on the point of ascending;
心低徊兮顧懷。　the heart hesitates,   I look back with care:[139]
羌聲色兮娛人，　for the sounds and beauty   so give a man joy[140]
觀者憺兮忘歸。　that the one who watches is transfixed   and forgets to go.[141]

緪瑟兮交鼓，　Tighten the zither strings,   beat the drums alternating,[142]
蕭鐘兮瑤簴。　strike the bells,   make the bell-frames shake,[143]
鳴篪兮吹竽，　make the fifes sing out,   blow the reed-organ;[144]

---

[136] *Tun* 暾 is usually explained as the quality of the first morning light. Wen Yiduo links it with *dun* 敦, explained as “round” in a *Shi* gloss; Zhu Jihai explains *tun* as “great.” All we know is that Liu Xiang 劉向 obviously understood it as “bright” because he reduplicated it as *tuntun* 暾暾 in his *Jiu tan* 九嘆 (“Nine Sighs”).
[137] The interpretation of *jian* 檻 as “railing” is presumably part of the dwelling of the Lord of the East. Fusang is the tree where the sun rises. Huang Xiaoshu 黃孝紓 believed it was a loan for *lan* 濫 in the sense of “tub,” referring to Tanggu 湯谷 or Xianchi 咸池, where the sun bathes (cited Cui Fuzhang: 906). Considering the usage in the “Da Ya” 大雅, “Zhan’ang” 瞻卬: “觱沸檻泉，維其深矣, this is not impossible. It is impossible to know where this *jian* 檻 stands in its extension from “animal pen” to “railing”; it is, however, worth asking if the Lord of the East keeps his sun-dragons in a corral overnight.
[138] *Zhou* 輈 was the regional term for a carriage shaft, here synecdoche for the carriage. Wen Yiduo suggests that the shaft was carved in the shape of a dragon. Thunder is often associated with the rumbling of a coach.
[139] *Dihui* 低徊: see *Jiang Liangfu 1999:* IV.505.
[140] *Shengse* 聲色, “the sounds and beauty,” is a conventional metonymy for women performers and music.
[141] *Guanzhe* 觀者 may be the collective audience of the performance or the sun god himself. Jiang Tianshu interprets the relation between this and the preceding couplet in a different way, and one that has much to recommend it. He takes the “looking back with care” as the hesitation in ascent as the sky-farer turns to long for home; the performance then keeps him from turning back.
[142] There is considerable commentarial discussion in this and the following line to find a series of verb-object phrases. *Jiaogu* 交鼓 is explained as “facing” drums, apparently playing in alternation. Wen Yiduo takes *gu* 鼓 as to “play.”
[143] The standard text reads *xiao* 簫, “pipes,” with 蕭 given as a variant. The Qing scholar Dai Zhen was the first to suggest that 蕭 was a loan for 攜, glossed as “strike”; Wen Yiduo suggested *yao* 瑤 was a loan for 搖. There is a closely parallel line in *Zhao hun*: 鏗鍾搖簴, and I have followed this interpretation.
[144] *Chi* 篪 (箎) and *yu* 竽 were both ancient bamboo woodwinds.

思靈保兮賢姱。 those who act numinous ones, wholesome and comely,[145]
翾飛兮翠曾， flutter here winging, mount abruptly on high,[146]
展詩兮會舞。 presenting the lyrics joining in dance.[147]

應律兮合節， Catching the pitch matching the rhythms,[148]
靈之來兮蔽日。 the numinous ones come, they cover the sun.[149]

青雲衣兮白霓裳， In gown of green cloud and white rainbow skirt,
舉長矢兮射天狼。 I raise the long arrow, I shoot Heaven's Wolf,[150]
操余弧兮反淪降， with Yew-bow in hand I now sink back under,[151]
援北斗兮酌桂漿。 and seize the North Dipper to pour cinnamon brew,
撰余轡兮高駝翔， then clutching my reins, I rush soaring high,[152]
杳冥冥兮以東行。 off far through darkness voyaging east."

[145] *Lingbao* 靈保 are the shamans or shamankas who take on the role of spirits. The *Shi* uses the phrase *shenbao* 神保; *Shi ji* uses *wubao* 巫保; and the Ma Rong biography in the *Hou Han shu* uses *lingbao* 靈保, glossed as *shenwu* 神巫. The *Shu* has the phrase *jiangbao* 降寶, 寶 being interchangeable with 保. Elsewhere in *Chu ci* 賢 is a moral quality; here it seems to describe some quality visible to onlookers, either of appearance or manner.

[146] *Ceng* 曾 is understood as a loan for 翻, meaning "flying up easily." The problem is that this gloss, given by Hong Xingzu, is a dictionary character. The best explanation is the meaning of *ceng* as "high" or "go high," offered by He Jianxun and supported by the use of *ceng* in that sense in Jia Yi's "Diao Qu Yuan [fu]." *Cui* 翠 is clearly not the halcyon kingfisher, or any of the qualities later associated with it. The question is what it refers to. Wen Yiduo first suggested that 翠 is 翔, another dictionary word glossed in the *Jiyun* 集韻 as "flying fast." What we probably have are extensions of *cù* 卒, "sudden" and "fast," and I have taken it in that sense.

[147] *Shi* 詩 here is clearly not the *Shijing* and is probably in the older sense of "lyrics" set to music. The phrase *zhanshi* 展詩 in parallel with *yinglü* 應律 occurs in the "Heaven and Earth" 天地 song in the "Songs for the Suburban Sacrifices," 郊祀歌: 展詩應律鋗玉鳴.

[148] I use the term "pitches" for *lü* 律. These are the "pitchpipes," with a fixed bore and fixed intervals for the holes, set the exact pitch for the notes.

[149] Commentators are clearly correct in saying that this suggests their numbers (indeed the turbulent multitude of spirits is conventionally part of a divine manifestation); the parallel line in "Xiang furen" has *ru yun* 如雲 in the second hemistich. Here, however, this also suggests a more literal covering of the sun.

[150] Heaven's Wolf" was a star of ill omen and an indication of invaders or marauders. It is unclear whether 長 is the length of the arrow or pulling the arrow.

[151] *Hu* 弧 refers to a bow of *hu* wood or just a wooden bow not fortified with horn, but some take it as an arrow of the same material. In the *Shiji* this is the name of a constellation of four or nine stars. The "arrow" in the preceding line is a star in the Yew-bow. In the second hemistich some take the *fan* 反 as a "reverse shot" and the *lunjiang* 淪降 as the fall of Heaven's Wolf. Others understand it as translated above. Note that the *jiang* 降, associated with the god "coming down" to earth, takes on a different sense when applied to the sun god, but that difference has to be marked by the addition of another term, *lun* 淪.

[152] Cf. *Yuanyou*: 撰余轡而正策兮. Most commentators gloss 撰 as "hold fast." Wen Yiduo explains it as "draw together," and He Jianxun explains it as "keep even."

Like “Donghuang Taiyi” and “Yunzhong jun,” “Dong jun” describes the ritual performance; in “Dong jun,” however, the performance is seen by the god and described from his perspective. The essential “lingering” of the deity is here spoken by the deity who is “stayed,” and who, in order to speak, probably must be represented in the very performance which he declares he is watching. If the shamanka performers “present the lyrics,” *zhanshi* 展詩, are these the very lyrics being sung, or are they some other lyrics? Whichever the case, this Song is the most self-referential, by virtue of being a ritual performance about viewing a ritual performance. The primary audience of the performance, the god, is speaking. With two first-person pronouns opening the Song, the god is the speaker, and there is no reason not to keep him as the speaker throughout.

Of all the Songs “Dong jun” gives the most attention to the religious performance, of which the deity is both a part and an outside observer. Here in particular we find the striking disjunction between the duration of the performance and the duration of time represented in the performance. The course of an entire day is contained in a brief interval. Other deities can pause and come down to the world below, but to have the sun stop is problematic power. The duration of the performance suspends time, and its representation must include the time before and after the performance to repair the disruption.

That moment of ritual and the suspension of time occurs between the glow of dawn with sunrise and the sun’s full ascent. This moment has great resonance in *Chu ci* context: the god hesitates and lingers, what some other Songs describe as *liu* 留, “being made to stay.” The deity is “transfixed and forgets to go.” But there is another term with equal resonance: *gu huai* 顧懷, “looking back with care” or “looking around with care.”

We have earlier mentioned the parallel with Li sao 92:

陟陞皇之赫戲兮, I was mounting aloft   to such dazzling splendor—
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.

Here the speaker also pauses as his carriage is about to take him to the heights of heaven. The significance of the pause and looking back differs by context, but this “moment” itself is a constant, with shared words used. We would also expect to find this “moment” in *Yuan you*, which follows Li sao so closely (but including the “sigh” that we find in “Dong jun”):

涉青雲以泛濫游兮，I fared through blue clouds, I swam swirling currents,
忽臨睨夫舊都。 all at once I glanced down to my homeland of old.
僕夫懷余心悲兮， My driver felt care, my heart grew sad,
邊馬顧而不行。 the outer horses looked back and would not go on.

思舊故以想象兮， I longed for those I had known, I imagined their forms,
長太息而掩涕。 I heaved a great sigh and wiped away tears.
氾容與而遐舉兮， Adrift for amusement, I rose to far places,
聊抑志而自弭。 and then quelled my will and gave myself ease.

But the same moment occurs in an entirely different context in “Ai Ying” 哀郢:

羌靈魂之欲歸兮, Ah, how the soul wants to return,
何須臾而忘反. how could I forget turning back even for a moment?
背夏浦而西思兮, Our back to Xia’s shores, thoughts going westward,
哀故都之日遠. I lament growing daily farther from the great city, my home.

登大墳而遠望兮, I climb a high hill and gaze afar,
聊以舒吾憂心. to relax my careworn heart for a while.
哀州土之平樂兮, I lament the peaceful joys of our land,
悲江介之遺風. I grieve for the lingering ways by the River’s edge.

Here the soul wants to return, but is helpless to do so, swept along with those fleeing from the fallen capital. We will see what is probably the same *gu huai* in “He bo.”

In “Dong jun” the *gu* 顧, “looking back” or, in this case, “looking around,” seems to occur because of *shengse* 聲色, the “sounds and beauty,” rather than looking back toward one’s home. But in *Zhao hun* a verbal performance of the “sounds and beauty” is intended to make the outbound soul stop and turn back. The “hesitation,” *dihui* 低徊, of the heart here is another term for a wide range of hesitations that run throughout the Songs and other works in the *Chu ci*. Given this web of overlapping motifs in sequence, it is no wonder that scholars from a later age were inclined to attribute so many pieces to a single author.

The term used for “the one who watches” or “those who watch,” *guanzhe* 觀者, unites the mortals who watch and the divinity. Here we have the formula *dan wang gui* 憺忘歸, translated as “transfixed, forgets to go [on].

Absorption, such that one forgets when it is time to go, is something that happens. The conditions responsible for such forgetting can vary. In *Jiu ge* we have two moods that make someone “forget to go”: we see the first here: *dan* 憺 (*damX*>[l]ˁamʔ), a happy absorption, translated as “transfixed.” The other, appearing in “He bo” and “Shan gui” is *chang* 悵 (*trhjangX*<tʰraŋs). These are phonologically quite distinct and must be true variables rather than different writings of a similar sound by assumed context.

Following the sequence of the compound *shengse*, “the sounds and [visual] beauty,” we have a brief description of instrumental music and then the beautiful dancers, who are *lingbao* 靈保, in the roles of divine beings. They apparently mimic ascent, dancing and reciting lyrics. At last, “they cover the sun”: since this is a song to the sun god, this is an interesting statement that suggests more than simply the numbers of the *ling*. We here might recall “Xiang furen”:

九嶷繽兮並迎，　The hosts of Many Doubts　joined to greet her,
靈之來兮如雲。　the numinous ones come　like clouds.

If we put the two lines with the same first hemistich together, we have the variable "like clouds" and "cover the sun." It is not hard to see this as choreography. I hesitate to add an anachronistic comment, but later the clothes of dancers were often figured with clouds or described as clouds.

Out of the clouds the Lord of the East emerges, describing his own clothing as green cloud and rainbow. The goddess of Wu Mountain declared herself to be "the clouds of dawn" and "evening rain," and the Mountain Nymph stands on the mountaintop and "rains." Here the clouds have drawn away, and the sun wears a rainbow.

The god is in motion again in the dark, an active figure moving through the heavens, shooting an asterism of ill omen. Many of the male deities have protective roles—standing watch over the frontier, raising a protective sword after grasping a comet, and here, shooting a threatening star-shape. These are the jurisdictions. He then uses the Northern Dipper to ladle out his ale, taking a moment to relax before mounting his carriage and return to the east in darkness. Since the sun's motion is cyclical, the last couplet performs the necessary task of getting the sun god back to the place from which he began.

A Note on "presenting the lyrics," *zhanshi* 展詩, and "catching the pitch," *yinglü* 應律

"A thousand lads dance in array" 千童羅舞: "Heaven and Earth"

In this period, we know that *shi* 詩 was most commonly used to refer exclusively to the *Shijing*, but most of our evidence comes from writers with a certain kind of *Ru* education. It is hard to fit this into a ritual performance for the sun god, as it is to fit the *Shi* into "Heaven and Earth." If our *shi* here does not refer to the *Shijing*, what does it mean here and why is it used?

Perhaps there were not "a thousand lads" dancing in Emperor Wu's ritual event, but a considerable smaller number might make it seem that way. It reminds us that this was a grand spectacle. And spectacles on this scale require complex training and management to be successful.

We know that listeners might "chime in," *he* 和, (sing in unison) when a more or less popular song was being performed. We have enough stories to infer choral singing in unison. In those cases, however, the songs were already known to and loved by their audience. But training a group of

young boys or girls to sing and dance together in unison to new music was no small undertaking. Our "thousand lads" in "Heaven and Earth" are for an event that contains *Jiu ge* but goes beyond it. While the Songs themselves contain direct references to a group and sometimes imply it, we cannot take that as evidence that there actually was a group in performance. This was, however, a show for the top of the hierarchy: Taiyi and almost certainly, Emperor Wu. Generally speaking, the importance of an occasion is correlated directly with the number of people one can get to stand in straight lines or move in unison.

It was one thing for a shaman or shamanka in a village or a shrine to dance and sing a ritual song celebrating the local deity The lone shaman or shamanka could improvise and embellish things as he or she went along, and the audience would be satisfied because all the important moments were present. When the ritual managers were training many performers for a spectacular court ritual, it was a different matter altogether. The words of the ritual song became a repeated text that had to be taught to many singers so that everyone would sing the same words at the same time. The music also had to be normalized so that singers would sing the right notes at the right time. Everyone knows what it sounds like when someone sings "out of tune" in a chorus.

The word used to pass to pass judgment (in the extract from the Wang Yi preface) on the diction of some earlier version of the Songs was *ci* 辭. But the quality of diction was not the same thing as a full lyric text, necessarily reproduced verbatim from memory. Mao tells us the number of stanzas and the number of characters for every poem in the *Shijing*. Especially in a high-status ritual performance of song, *shi* 詩 would seem to be the most natural term to use for a poetic text that had to be repeated exactly.

In our terms "presenting (/unfolding in sequence) the lyrics," *zhanshi* 展詩, and "catching the pitch," *yinglü* 應律, we seem to have the terms used by the ritual managers as necessary for a performance successfully executed.[153]

[153] A similar argument about the meaning of *zhanshi* as unfolding the poem in exact order has been made by Cao Haidong 2004.

河伯 The River’s Earl

與女遊兮九河，　With you I will roam　to the River's nine channels,[154]

衝風起兮橫波。　when blasts of wind rise　driving waves across stream,[155]

乘水車兮荷蓋，　we will ride my water coach,　its canopy, lotus,

駕兩龍兮驂螭。　hitched to paired dragons,　by basilisk flanked.[156]

登崑崙兮四望，　I climbed the Kunlun Mountains,　I gazed all around,

心飛揚兮浩蕩。　the heart flew aloft,　it went sweeping off free.[157]

日將暮兮悵忘歸，　Soon the sun was to set,　I, transfixed, forgot going,[158]

惟極浦兮寤懷。　I thought of the farthest shore,　I looked back with care.[159]

魚鱗屋兮龍堂，　The roof is of fish-scales,　halls of the dragon,

紫貝闕兮朱宮。　turrets of purple cowries,　palace of pearls—[160]

□□□□□□，[161]

靈何為兮水中。　why is the numinous one here,　down in the water?[162]

---

[154] *Jiu he* 九河 is explained by some as the full stretch of the Yellow River and by others as the Yellow River delta. The speaker may be understood as the shamanka addressing the god or, more likely, the god addressing his bride.

[155] *Heng* 橫 (hwaeng<C.gʷˤaŋ) can be understood as translated above, waves cutting across the current, or simply as “violent” waves. *Yang* 揚 (yang<laŋ) occurs as a variant for *heng*, the former being the word used when these lines occur in “Shao siming.” This is another case of retaining the final sound while varying the initial; see comment on *cheng* 乘 and *deng* 登 in “Xiang jun” and “Xiang furen.”

[156] Note the recurrence of the template in *She Jiang* 涉江 (“Venturing on the River”): “I hitch green krakens, by white basilisk flanked” 駕青虬兮驂白螭. *Can* 驂 is the additional horse in a two-horse team, to be hitched if one of the others fails.

[157] Compare *yangling* 揚靈 in “Xiang jun” and Li sao 71.

[158] Wang Yi’s strange gloss of “delight” (心樂志說) for *chang* 悵 can be explained (as several commentators do) by taking it as a mistake for *dan* 憺, yielding the formulaic phrase 憺忘歸; more likely, Wang Yi’s text read *chang*, and Wang Yi knew what it “should” mean, adding a note to take *chang* in this improbable sense.

[159] I take *wuhuai* 寤懷 here as the formulaic *guhuai* 顧懷 (“Dong jun”: 心低徊兮顧懷), with *wu* having a nasalized initial: 顧 *kuH*<[k]ʷaʔ-s and 寤 *nguH*<ŋˤa-s (or Coblin’s Eastern Han reconstruction: kak versus ngak).

[160] The translation follows many modern commentators who take *zhu* 朱 as *zhu* 珠.

[161] Here and below lines seem to be missing

[162] Many commentators take *ling* 靈 as the god himself, with Jin Kaicheng putting it in the voice of the River Earl’s beloved. It seems better to take it as the shamanka-bride of the god. This is a test case for Jiang Liangfu’s argument that *ling* 靈 alone always refers to the god; it makes little sense to ask the Earl of the Yellow River what he is doing in the water.

乘白黿兮逐文魚， We ride white turtles, with patterned fish following,[163]

與女遊兮河之渚。 with you I roam by the River's isles.

□□□□□□□，

流澌紛兮將來下。 where the current is rushing, there we go down.[164]

子交手兮東行， You clasp my hand, journeying eastward;[165]

送美人兮南浦。 I go with the Fairest to the southern shores

波滔滔兮來迎， where the swell of the waves is coming to greet us,

魚鄰鄰兮媵予。 and the schools of fishes, serve as my bridesmaids.[166]

The god or goddess and the shamaka or shaman "roaming together" is described or proposed in four of the Songs. In "Xiang jun" and "Xiang furen" it is the wish at the end. In "Da siming" it is realized. Here (and in "Shao siming") it seems to be a proposal from the god to his mortal bride.

We are in a riverine world here, and motifs that were earthly or aerial here find riverine counterparts. In the sky the coach is drawn by flying dragons; on earth the coach is drawn by horses, understood as related to dragons; in the water the conveyance is again dragon-drawn or drawn by turtles.

Although the motif has nothing to do with welcoming the bride, the coach is usually the means of travel, both to the theophany and to indicate the deity's jurisdiction. Some allusion to this journey is necessary, but for the riverine deity such a journey has riverine constraints. Although some scholars will argue that *jiu He* 九河 refers to the entire length of the Yellow River, the argument that *jiuhe* are the nine channels that made up the Yellow River delta is far stronger here.

[163] There are various interpretations of *wenyu* 文魚. The deity could, of course, be "following the fish," but *zhu* can be transitive as well.

[164] Wang Yi claimed that this was water flowing with chunks of ice, but discussions by Wen Yiduo and others show that it is simply flowing water.

[165] Most commentators think that the "you" joins hands with the other, though they differ on which is the River Earl and which the shamanka; Wen Yiduo thinks *jiaoshou* 交手 is to fold one's hands as sign of respect. The compound does have that meaning, and it is a possible interpretation here.

[166] *Linlin* 鄰鄰 is understood as describing their numbers or closeness like scales.

The divine *peripateia* names the extreme points; for the god of the Yellow River, the delta is one, and we can expect the god will next arrive at the Kunlun Mountains, notionally the other extreme of the Yellow River. As emperors tour their territory, marking ownership, so the god travels, marking his own jurisdiction.

Like the roaming to extremes, what follows is the necessity of the discourse and not necessarily the situation of welcoming the bride. The shaman-speaker in "Xiang jun" pursues her over the water and then:

望涔陽兮極浦， I gaze to Cen's sunlit banks, to the farthest shores,
橫大江兮揚靈。 and across the great river I send my soul flying.

Here the speaker comes to the furthest western reaches of his river and: "the heart flew aloft, it went sweeping off free" 心飛揚兮浩蕩. Then we have a standard moment:

日將暮兮悵忘歸， Soon the sun was to set, I, transfixed/ grief-struck, forgot going,
惟極浦兮寤懷。 I thought of the farthest shore I looked back with care.

This is the lingering, the pause of absorption or grief, and the looking back. The "farthest shore" is exactly whither the speaker in "Xiang jun" "sent his soul flying." Again, it is the verbal elements deployed in sequence rather than situations represented that are constant.

The brief description of the River Earl's palace recalls the more elaborate shrine constructed in "Xiang furen" and the copious architectural description in *Zhao hun*. The building materials are, of course, appropriate for a riverine deity. Then we apparently have a lost line, followed by: "why is the numinous one here, down in the water?" 靈何為兮水中.

The final roaming segment is hard to parse. It is easiest to take it as the god and his bride roaming together, but the speaker seems to switch, especially with the shift of second person pronouns (*ru* 女 and *zi* 子). The other case of a joint roaming is in "Da siming" prefaced by a circling flight in the heavens and a descent: "My Lord soars in circles, then He descends" 君迴翔

兮以下, with the variant *lai* 來 for *yi* 以. At last, we come to the *ying* 迎, the greeting or welcome, with the double sense of *ying* as “welcoming” the bride, and greeting the god.

A Note:

If I am correct that *wu huai* 寤懷 in this Song is simply a nasalized pronunciation of *gu huai* 顧懷, this suggests not only that the scribe was just writing down the sounds in graphs that made sense to the scribe, he was writing down sounds heard in a discourse that might be intensely local, and hence in a dialect. He wrote down what he heard in characters that seemed to make sense, and *wu* 寤, to “wake up” or “awaken,” was a word used in Li sao and elsewhere. “Waking up one’s cares” sort of makes sense, but it is not the way *wu* is used elsewhere.

This case would seem to be an easy one in phonological terms, but it leads one to wonder what other phonologically proximate words might be written with a character that accurately represented the sound as heard, but the wrong word. We are not just talking about southernisms, but different places, possibly over a wide geographical range, with variations of language that we know almost nothing about. I quickly close this tiny crack in Pandora’s Box.

山鬼 The Mountain Nymph[167]

若有人兮山之阿， It seemed there was someone in the fold of the hills,[168]
被薜荔兮帶女羅。 mantled in climbing fig, girded with ivy,

既含睇兮又宜笑， with a sidelong glance, her mouth showed a smile:[169]
子慕予兮善窈窕。 "You yearn for me, good at being comely."[170]

乘赤豹兮從文貍， I ride the red leopards, I have striped wildcats attend me,[171]
辛夷車兮結桂旗。 with magnolia-wood wagon, my flags, plaited cassia,
被石蘭兮帶杜衡， mantled in rock orchid, girded with asarum,
折芳馨兮遺所思。 I snap the sweet fragrance, gift for the one that I love.
余處幽篁兮終不見天， I am in bamboo's darkness, never see sky;[172]
路險難兮獨後來。 the way is steep and hard, I came late and alone.

表獨立兮山之上， Alone she stands forth, on the height of the mountain,[173]
雲容容兮而在下。 with clouds' rolling billows there down below;

---

[167] Ma Maoyuan notes the use of *gui* 鬼 here and suggests that this is not a full-fledged deity. This is a deity, but a low status deity.
[168] *Ruo* 若 is understood by some commentators as a particle, like *ruo yue* 若曰 or *ruofu* 若夫. This is hard to decide, because *ruo* as a particle occurs only in set phrases like those above. Xu Renfu has a very interesting comment (that has no bearing on Han or pre-Han usage); in Shen Yue's "Chu ci epitome" 楚辭鈔, he wrote this as 今有人山之阿. Jin Kaicheng and Tang Bingzheng take it as in the translation.
[169] *Di* 睇 is to look closely or fixedly or, as above, a sidelong glance; from the situation commentators extrapolate that this is a love glance. No one has successfully accounted for the *han* 含, though the later sense of "restrained" makes sense, as in *hanxiao* 含笑, "smiling." Wen Yiduo cites parallel examples to show that *yixiao* 宜笑 is a quality of smiling.
[170] There are differences in interpreting the referents of the pronouns. The template hemistich ending with a verb and *yu* 予 as its direct object argues against the theory that this hemistich is a loan for 子慕舒. Wang Yi takes 善 as "virtuous," but most commentators from Zhu Xi on have preferred to understand it in the sense above, linked to the erotic display of the opening. This is the sole use of *yaotiao* 窈窕 in the corpus; while its primary sense seems to be "comely," in the context of her appearance in the vegetation the Mao gloss of "secluded" may be an added association—even though her subsequent behavior is not at all the virtuous "tranquil solitude" that the Mao tradition had in mind when it was glossed in the *Shi*.
[171] *Cheng* 乘 is to ride a carriage drawn by the object of the verb. Wen Yiduo takes the mountain spirit as following the wildcats. Wen Yiduo properly calls attention to the template in "He bo": 乘白黿兮逐文魚.
[172] There is much disagreement on who is speaking here, the human or the goddess.
[173] The *biao* 表 is much discussed. This is a unique phoneme and occupies the initial modifier position, and Tang Bingzheng is certainly off the mark when he takes it as a wooden signpost. Height and singular visibility seem to be the primary aspects, rendered here by the "forth."

杳冥冥兮羌晝晦，　sunken in darkness,   daylight dims,

東風飄兮神靈雨。　in gustings of eastwind   the goddess rains.[174]

留靈脩兮憺忘歸，　I would make the numinous one stay,   transfixed, forget going,[175]

歲既晏兮孰華予。　but the year has grown late,   who will deck me in flowers?[176]

采三秀兮於山間，　I picked three-bloom *zhi*   out in the hills,[177]

石磊磊兮葛蔓蔓。　stones rough and rocky,   vines spread in tangles;

怨公子兮悵忘歸，　reproaching the Lady,   I, in grief, forget going,[178]

君思我兮不得閒。　for though the lady may love me,   she does not find time.

山中人兮芳杜若，　In the hills there is someone,   sweet smell of galangal,

飲石泉兮蔭松柏。　she drinks from the stone-springs   in shadow of cypress and pines.

□□□□□□□，　.......

君思我兮然疑作。　though the lady may love me,   she holds back unsure.[179]

雷填填兮雨冥冥，　The sky shakes in thunder,   the rain brings darkness,

猨啾啾兮狖又夜鳴。the apes are all wailing,   in the night monkeys moan;

風颯颯兮木蕭蕭，　the whistling of winds   that rustle through the trees;

---

[174] Tang Bingzheng offers an interesting suggestion here, reading *ling* 靈 as its homophone 零, "to fall [as of rain or snow]." In favor of this interpretation is the fact that because *yu* 雨 rhymes in its nominal rather than verbal pronunciation. *Shen* 神, translated as "goddess," is used elsewhere in *Jiu ge* only for the spirits of dead soldiers in "Guo shang."

[175] Or "I stay for the numinous one." Gao Heng takes 憺忘歸 as what the shaman speaker hopes of the goddess, which is how it is translated here.

[176] The transitive use of *hua* 華 here is uncertain: perhaps "consider me splendid/ in the flower [of youth]." Ma Maoyuan paraphrases: "Who will love me?" I take it in parallel with *hua* in "Yunzhong jun." There it is also a verb-object construction (the third in a row), after bathing, dressing in flowered clothes to receive the god. Since this is a winter poem, flowers are not available.

[177] *Sanxiu* 三秀, "three-bud," is synecdoche for *zhi* 芝, which is supposed to form three times a year or have three formations.

[178] Some commentators want to take the *gongzi* 公子 as male, but it is not necessarily so. It is possible that this was the formula *dan wang gui* 憺忘歸, changed to *chang* 悵 to make it more appropriate for the "reproach."

[179] Ma Maoyuan takes *ran* 然 as "assent": "assent and doubt appear." He Jianxun argues that the sense is "doubt."

思公子兮徒離憂。　I long for the Lady,　fruitlessly encounter sorrow.[180]

Many of the Songs begin with a theophany: the Senior Master of Lifespans and the Lord of the East come riding clouds, and the Mistress of the Xiang descends from Heaven. The Mountain Nymph is the alpine version of the riverine goddesses; she does make an appearance in the first line, but elusively. She is set back in the irregular face of the mountain, literally clothed in vegetation. She is visible as a beautiful smiling face, looking at the speaker. That glance and smile she shares with the first appearance of the Lady of the Xiang (if we are correct in following Wen Yiduo's of *yixiu* 宜修).

It is, of course, possible to take *ren* 人 more specifically; that is, rather than "it seemed there was someone," the line may understood as "it seemed there was a human being"—but turned out to be a *gui* 鬼, translated in the title as "nymph," but also a ghost. Although Cao Zhi's 曹植 "The Goddess of the Luo," "Luoshen fu" 洛神賦, appears at least three centuries later, it rationalizes problems that may have their genesis here. "The Goddess of the Luo" elaborates the basic narrative of the earlier "The Goddess," "Shennü fu" 神女賦, which in turn grows out of the core narrative of the goddesses in *Jiu ge*. The goddess invites him, then spurns him. The conclusion in "The Goddess of the Luo," however, is a lesson from the goddess on the impossibility of a union between gods and mortals.

Whether this motif is or is not a nascent theme in the opening line, this is a ritual song and everyone knows what must happen from this apparently accidental encounter. "You yearn for me, good at being comely" 子慕予兮善窈窕. We cannot be entirely sure who is addressing whom, but since the narrative must involve the mortal's yearning for the goddess, it is easy to read it as the goddess's address to the man who beholds her. The deity, moreover, often speaks in the beginning of several Songs.

[180] *Liyou* 離憂 may also be understood as "troubled by separation," though that is clearly attested only later. Note that *liyou* is the compound that Sima Qian used to explain the meaning of "Li sao" 離騷.

It doesn't matter who speaks. That is the most difficult thing to accept. We want a narrative and some clarity in regard to who is speaking or being addressed. In some cases, it is clear, but the text seems to shift back and forth from mortal suitor to deity often; and we don't know where these shifts occur. This invites us to reflect on whether the obscurity might not be the consequence of our own desires. We have all the familiar elements, such as the equipage:

乘赤豹兮從文貍，　I ride the red leopards,   I have striped wildcats attend me,

辛夷車兮結桂旗。　with magnolia-wood wagon,   my flags, plaited cassia,

These lines from "Shan gui" may be, in purely technical terms, two of the most important lines in the Song, because the formulaic pattern remains the same (what the god rode, who was in the god's entourage) with the particulars filled in according to the nature of the divinity. In the sacred world of ancient China, the members of the god's or goddess' entourage play much the same role as "attributes" in Indian and Western mythology.

This is followed by the template line: "mantled in rock orchid, girded with asarum" 被石蘭兮帶杜衡. These are the same verbs of wardrobe as in the second line, but we don't know whether this is what the suitor wears or she has changed her clothes. I hope it is obvious that, when we reach this level of interrogating the text, the absurdity of our question is obvious.[181]

We must have some flower or aromatic plucked and given as a gift to the deity, using the verb *wei* 遺: galangal in "Xiang jun" and "Xiang furen," hemp flowers in "Da siming," and here, a categorical sweet fragrance. The pursuit of the goddess depends on where she is located; the Lady of the Xiang is pursued by water, but here it is the difficult ascent of a bamboo covered mountain. This prepares us for the second theophany; here the goddess is no longer a shy nymph in the forest, but appears in her full majesty on the mountaintop, with roiling clouds and wind, and then "rains." This is reminiscent of the second theophany in "Xiang furen" with the goddess coming to meet her suitor once the temple has been prepared with aromatics. Note that in the present Song she is referred to as *shen* 神, "goddess," even though the title demotes her to a mere *gui* 鬼. Her raining

[181] In the study of English literature such questions are usually referred to by the satirical title of L.C. Knights's 1933 essay entitled "How many children had Lady Macbeth?"

comes as “daylight dims,” and it is very difficult not to see here the “goddess,” 神女, of Wu Mountain who is rain specifically in the evening. Her demotion to a mere *gui*, our “nymph,” seems to follow the need to establish the descending hierarchy, and it may be a judgment on her promiscuity in visiting the King of Chu.

We have the formulaic line on getting the deity to stay, but in this case failing because it is late in the year and he can’t wear the necessary flowers and aromatics. The translation adds “would” (“would make her stay”) to clarify the situation, but in Chinese it is clear from context—and it doesn’t matter because the familiar words have been said. The goddess belongs to a small society of deities in which “distinction” is marked by certain categories of attributes. Though distinct, they are, however, managed by mortals in much the same way—the deities are baited by fragrance, flowers, and adoration.

In the last part of the Song, the breakdown of the stanza form may suggest fragmentary survival; but it touches two of the important components: the rejection (“not having time”) and the hesitation. Here again we have the *wang gui* 忘歸 formula for the second time in the Song, here given as *chang wang gui* 悵忘歸, as in “He bo.” This is a touchstone case. Give the statement of reproach, this would be an exemplary case for modifying the formula *dan wang gui* 憺忘歸 to suit the context.

The last lines, broken stanzas, return to the beginning, recapitulate the rainstorm, and close with *li you* “encounter sorrow,” a phrase as close as we can find in the Songs to “Li sao,” “encountering sorrow,” and it is, as mentioned in the notes, Sima Qian’s gloss for “Li sao.”

國殤 The Kingdom’s Dead

操吳戈兮被犀甲， Our great-shields we grasped, donned jerkins of leather,[182]
車錯轂兮短兵接。 battle-wagons tangled wheel-hubs, short- swords met.

旌蔽日兮敵若雲， Banners blocked sunlight, foemen like clouds,[183]
矢交墜兮士爭先。 bolts crossed and fell, warriors pressed forward.

凌余陣兮躐余行， They break through our ranks, they crush down our line,[184]
左驂殪兮右刃傷。 the left horse has fallen, the right horse takes wounds.

霾兩輪兮縶四馬， We dig in both wheels and tie the four horses,[185]
援玉枹兮擊鳴鼓。 grasp the jade drumstick, strike the great drum,
天時墜兮威靈怒， The moment slips away, the intimidating gods are angry,[186]
嚴殺盡兮棄原壄。 all the stout lads lie dead, left behind in the meadows.[187]

出不入兮往不反， We marched out but not back, we went forth but not home,

[182] Many commentators prefer to take *wu ge* 吳戈 as “Wu pikes”; however, one old reading is 吾科 (吳科, 吳魁), a flat body-shield. *Xijia* 犀甲 is armor of rhinoceros hide.
[183] Jiang Tianshu and Wang Siyuan make the plausible argument that in context the banners are those of the enemy. Note the shamaka dancers “covering the sun” in “Dong jun” and the arrival of the “numinous ones” to greet the goddess being “like clouds” in “Xiang furen.” We scarcely need to mention the ubiquitous “cloud banners,” *yunqi* 雲旗 appearing five times in *Chu ci* and very common in allied texts. If, as may be the case, the Song text is linked to ritual choreography, we have a familiar move transferred to a new context.
[184] Jiang Liangfu prefers *chen* 陳, “deployment,” to *zhen* 陣, “battle line.”
[185] *Mai* 霾 is the same as 埋.
[186] Hong Xingzu reads *zhui* 墜 and gives *dui* 懟 as a variant; Zhu Xi reads 懟, which is glossed as “wroth” (怨), though this sense probably derives from the “opposition” of 對. Jiang Liangfu he says that *zhui* (*drwijH*<m.lru[t]s) and *dui* (*drwijH*<[d]r[u][p]-s) are homophonous; this is true in MC, but it is hard to know exactly how far the sounds had evolved in Western Han. However, the variant was probably produced by MC homophony—we just don’t know which was the original and which, the variant. There is a question how to take *tianshi* 天時: Wen Yiduo takes it literally as sunset; Jiang Liangfu takes it as 天命, “fate”; it can also be “the propitious moment,” essentially “fate” without divine agency. *Wei* 威 is used only one other time in the *Chu ci*, toward the end of *Da zhao*, in the phrase *xian wei hou wen* 先威后文, roughly “first intimidating might, then civil graces.”
[187] Wen Yiduo argues that the text here was originally *zhuang* 壯, used as a loan for *qiang* 戕, and that 壯 was changed to 嚴 to observe the taboo on Han Mingdi’s name. Other scholars accept that 嚴 is a substitution for 壯 but interpret the 壯 as “stout [soldiers].” I have kept this latter interpretation but suspect that *qiang* is correct.

平原忽兮路超遠。 the plains stretch on far, the journey, too distant.[188]

帶長劍兮挾秦弓， Long-swords at waists, Qin bows under arms,[189]
首身離兮心不懲。 heads cut from bodies, hearts never subdued,[190]
誠既勇兮又以武， brave you were truly, stout fighters too,[191]
終剛強兮不可凌。 hard to the last, not to be conquered,
身既死兮神以靈， your bodies are dead, your spirits are now numinous ones,
子魂魄兮為鬼雄。 your souls are heroes among the wraiths.[192]

"Guo shang," whose title has no analogue in Han or pre-Han texts, is unique in *Jiu ge* as a purely state function, a collective tribute to and propitiation of those dead in battle, and probably those who could not be brought home to be properly buried by family and thus presented a serious problem in the relation between the human and spirit world. There is no notice of this being among the rites instituted by Liu Bang, but 201 BCE would have been a time when this would have been particularly urgent. No doubt the same was true in Emperor Wu's Xiongnu wars.

If one seeks clear distinctions in the spirit world, the last lines of the Song should offer a caution on the blurred overlap of terms that we might like to be clearly distinguished: the one clear thing is that the body is dead, but posthumous existence is described as *shen* 神, *ling* 靈, *hunpo* 魂魄, and *gui* 鬼. The most troubled moment is the use of *yi* 以 in the penultimate line: this may suggest that *shen* 神 is the given "spirit," and that *ling* 靈, translated as "numinous ones," is an attribute acquired by the way in which the soldiers died (the same transformation as in the final line). It is worth noting, however, the progressive downward hierarchy of the Songs, from an "Emperor,"

[188] Some take *hu* 忽 as "vague and unclear." *Pingyuan* 平原, "plains" is used almost exclusively in *Shi ji* and *Han shu* to refer to the place Pingyuan, and its lord, in the domain of Zhao, later a Han commandery. Note the variation in line 10 *pingye* 原壄, probably for the sake or rhyme. This suggests that here *pingyuan* is not a place name.
[189] Hong Xingzu reads *shen* 身; Zhu Xi reads *sui* 雖. Wen Yiduo persuasively argues that that *shen* is the better reading, with *shoushen li* 首身離 being a set phrase.
[190] The same usage occurs in Li sao 32: 豈余心之可懲.
[191] Wen Yiduo takes *cheng* 誠 as "in our hearts."
[192] The text above follows Hong Xingzu with a *zi* 子 at the beginning of the line. Other variants, preferred by Wen and Jiang, have *yi* 毅, either as 魂魄毅 or 子魄毅. While this makes sense, *yi* 毅 does not appear elsewhere in *Chu ci*.

huang 皇, to various lords and ladies, *jun* 君 and *furen* 夫人, to an "earl," *bo* 伯, then to *gui* 鬼, translated as "nymph" in "The Mountain Nymph," or, more commonly, "ghost." This lower margin of the numinous would seem to be the proper conclusion.

We should read "Guo shang" in conjunction with the *yuefu* "Zhan cheng nan" 戰城南 ("We Fought South of the Wall"), which has a reasonable claim to be a Western Han text. This too has an account of the battle, apparently with the dead soldiers speaking, and closes with praise of their courage. That text is explicit that these are the dead that defeat has left unburied. This suggests that both the Song and the *yuefu* are to propitiate the unquiet dead.

The Song begins apparently in the voice of the dead soldiers, which, as in most of the Songs, is an account of occurrences that an audience could not see—unless reenacted in performance. However, in this case the unseen world is not only elsewhere, it also involves a reenactment of a scene in the past. Such an intense and vivid description of battle is unlike anything else in early Chinese literature (with the exception of "Zhan cheng nan"); but like some of the other Songs, it is testimony to something extraordinary. It begins, like some other Songs, with speakers telling what they wear, what they carry, what they do. Although Jiang Liangfu tries to interpret these lines as describing a victory, it seems clear that this describes a serious defeat, with ghost warriors telling how they desperately tried to hold the line and did not retreat. The very quickness with which the opening scene moves from event to event, never lingering to elaborate, conveys the desperateness of the situation. In contrast to the inconclusion of many of the Songs, this event moves to one conclusion.

The line "We marched out but not back, we went forth but not home" 出不入兮往不反 finds a close parallel in the conclusion of "We Fought South of the Wall": "At dawn you went forth to attack, / and at evening you did not return" 朝行出攻，莫不夜歸. The distance of the journey home finds a parallel in "We Fought South of the Wall," in the perhaps corrupt lines on the inability to travel and the inability to go back and help with the harvest. It is hard not to think of the deification of Wu Zixu and how fierce determination in death raises the soul to godhood, albeit low-status godhood.

If we read *zi* 子, "you," in the final line, following the oldest text, the voice seems to switch to the officiants addressing the dead. The spirits tell of their death; the community responds, appreciating/ rewarding (*shang* 賞) their sacrifice, raising their status in afterlife and placating the unquiet, unburied souls. This completes the journey of the Songs through the deities of imperial space (and, perhaps, beyond that space into campaigns in Central Asia), following a hierarchy from the highest to the lowest elite in the spirit world. If we understand this as a ritual cycle from Emperor Wu's reign, probably drawing on court performances of local rituals established in Liu Bang's reign, the suite makes sense as a whole.

The concluding Song is the shortest. It is often taken as a "coda" to the Songs, but we should note that the title refers to the most general category of the spirit world, the *hun* soul. If "Guo shang" are "souls," *hunpo* 魂魄 that have become *ling* by their bravery, these are just souls of the dead, and may be here as representing the bottom of the hierarchy. They have no wondrous attributes to celebrate and the Song is entirely about the performance itself.

It is probably better not to take the title here too literally. It is hard to imagine a ritual venue that would honor all anonymous souls, and we should take note that in the brief text itself there is no mention of souls. We are clearly not in an age of Buddhism, and "rites for souls" would have been a family matter for particular souls. Hong Xingzu suggests that these are the souls of the virtuous, which might conceivably be a state function—though it is a stretch. My best guess is that, just as the deities would never be celebrated together except in an imperial confection, so the hierarchical order of the spirit beings celebrated might require the closure of the roster of divinity, presided over by Taiyi, by returning it to the ordinary souls—if only a mentioned in the coda's title. And it should be stressed that this is just through the title; if the title were added later, this would be simply a coda to the performance of the suite.

禮魂 Rites for the Souls[193]

[193] Many commentators want to identify *hun* 魂 with *shen* 神, thus making this coda a coda to *Jiu ge* as a whole. The problem is that the equation of *hun* and *shen* in the sense of "deity" is not normal.

成禮兮會鼓，	The rites are done now, drums beat together,
傳芭兮代舞。	the blooms are passed on, new dancers take our place.[194]
姱女倡兮容與，	Fairest maidens sing, taking their ease,
春蘭兮秋菊，	in spring the eupatorium, chrysanthemums in fall,[195]
長無絕兮終古。	forever and unceasing for all time.

The last line is the only moment in *Jiu ge* affirming permanence and continuity, though we cannot know whether it is the continuity of the rites themselves (a function of the eternal empire) or the continuity of the seasonal alternation of flowers. The seasonal alternation of flowers, however, echoes the alternation of the dancers, and permanence within change is thus linked to the ritual. "Sheng min" 生民 ("She Bore the Folk") in the *Classic of Poetry* celebrates the harvest by telling the story of Hou Ji and the gift of millet to the folk; it closes in the optative, hoping that there never will be a flaw in the rite. This is the mark of anxiety that the proper ritual could be broken, just as the agrarian cycle could be disrupted if the folk forgot to do the right things in the right order. Such anxiety is absent in *Jiu ge*. Here the model of continuity is the natural cycle of flowers that transcends the rite, and in passing the blossoms from one dancer to another, the ritual performers imitate or participate in the alternations of natural process.

The song begins with a moment of completion; but rather than an end, we have instead a moment of transfer: the blossoms, *pa*, are passed on and a change of dances or dancers occur. This suggests temporal continuity and a physical contiguity, yet the figure of replacement turns out to be "in spring eupatorium, chrysanthemums in fall." That is, long-term seasonal sequences of alternation are superimposed upon short-term alternations (one rite to another, a change of dancers), suggesting an unbroken and continuous sequence of performance, which is exactly what is implied in the final line. In pragmatic terms, perhaps, the ritual performance cannot be kept up forever, but its representation here corresponds exactly to the lack of particular seasonal occasion throughout

[194] *Pa* 芭 is understood as 葩, flowers coming into bloom. Pronounced *ba*, 芭 is explained by Wang Yi as a particular aromatic used in the rites.
[195] The Chinese eupatorium is most fragrant in spring but does not bloom until mid- to late summer or early fall; hence we are talking about aromatics in this line.

the *Jiu ge*; in contrast to Liu Bang's institution, in which each deity was celebrated at the proper time, these are performed as a suite. The celebrants in "Sheng min" eat the ritual meat, drink the ale, and then go back to work to begin the cycle of production anew. But these dancers seem to go on forever, from spring to autumn to spring again.

The term that describes the singers is *rongyu* 容與, "taking one's ease," which is the term for the pleasures to be shared by the shaman lover and the god or goddess. It is a quasi-erotic term, here not applied to the experience as they sing. And if they are singing the *Jiu ge*, they are also singing "about" *rongyu*, "taking one's ease." Insofar as the erotic encounter with divinity is theatrical performance, it shares a common language with ritual performance per se.

The Songs of *Jiu ge* are in the moment; old age and death hover in the background as something for which there is no consolation, as in "Da siming", but as "Shao siming" says:

夫人兮自有美子， Since mortal men have children so fair,
蓀何以兮愁苦。 why should Lord Sweet Flag be troubled so?

There will always be: "Fairest maidens sing, taking their ease" 姱女倡兮容與.

長無絕兮終古。 forever and unceasing for all time.