

| Colloquia |



All under heaven (*tianxia*)

Cosmological perspectives and political ontologies in pre-modern China

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This essay examines historical transformations of the Chinese concept of *tianxia* (“all under heaven”) in pre-modern periods. More specifically, it attends to the diverse ways *tianxia* has been built out of relationships between cosmology and political organization. The subtitles of this essay—archaic *tianxia*, relatedness as virtue, conceptions of the world in the Warring States, empire, Neo-Daoist and Buddhist inversions, and ethnographic others—form the features of the moments that make up, in the present, the many-faceted conceptual history of *tianxia*. The essay engages with these historical moments in order to reconsider popular conceptions of “Chinese civilization” and situate *tianxia* perspectives in their social contexts. Continuing the line of thinking initiated by Granet, the essay goes on to argue for understanding *tianxia* in an accumulative and unified sense as well—as an “other” to Indo-European mythico-religious systems of thought as well as an epistemology where political ontologies and the cosmos are conflated.

Keywords: cosmology, political organization, *tianxia*, pre-modern China

Near the end of the nineteenth century, Liang Qichao, the pioneer of modern Chinese humanities and famous advocate of the political philosophy of nationhood, made two points regarding the meaning of the Chinese concept *tianxia* (often translated as “all under heaven”¹): (1) *tianxia* meant “the world” (*shijie*), understood to comprise all the realms on earth, and as such, it referred to a kind of polity radically different from the nation; and (2) *tianxia* not only meant a differ-

1 The word *tianxia* is composed of two characters: *tian* and *xia*. While the character *xia* is more easily translatable—it means “under,” “beneath,” and/or “below”—*tian* is more complicated, having many more varied connotations, including the “top [of the world]” (*dian*), the “oneness of the world” (*yi*), heaven, sky, nature, or the original form and temporality (or seasonality) of the world. The *tian* in *tianxia* is usually understood as “heaven.” Thus, a straightforward translation of *tianxia* would be “under heaven.” However, because what stands under heaven has often been perceived to be “all the things on earth,” a better translation of *tianxia* would be “all under heaven.” Even so, such a denotational translation only scratches the surface of what *tianxia* has meant—and what political realities it has informed—throughout Chinese history.

ent polity from the nation—which, as Liang rightly pointed out, was a European invention—but it also implied certain “conceptions of the world” (*shijie sixiang*) (Liang [1899] 1936).²

Regarding Liang Qichao’s first point, *tianxia* historically conveyed a certain supra-societal system in the classical and imperial periods; it thus referred to a political entity whose topographical scope was far greater than a kingdom (*guo*). When a political entity was “complete,” as Granet notes, it constituted “the unity of the Empire, identifying the frontiers of China with the limits of the Universe” (Granet 1930: 12). Being universal in this sense, *tianxia* included not only a hierarchy of local places, but also a range of kingdoms whose size, as postulated by late imperial and early modern Chinese thinker Kang Youwei ([1904–05] 2007: 60–67), was the same as any post-Roman absolutist states in Europe.

Liang’s second point concerns the interrelationship between cosmology and the perception of the “real world.” When Liang described *tianxia* as comprising certain conceptions of the world, he was arguing that as a cosmological totality, *tianxia* was given meanings in the varied activities of those who endeavored intellectually and politically to come to terms with an *asymmetrical relationship* between earth and heaven. This asymmetrical relationship, on one hand, refers to a proportional truth: the earth is smaller than heaven. On the other hand, in relation to *tianxia* as a polity, this asymmetrical relationship specifically referred to the gap between the *realistic geography* of the territorial coverage of *tianxia* as an actual political system and the *imaginary cosmography* in which *tianxia* was situated.³ The former is limited, whereas the latter is infinite. *Tianxia*, in other words, was a *world-scape*, built into the larger cosmology that covered earth, heaven, and everything in-between.

As a cosmological ordering of the world under heaven, *tianxia* also concerned Self and Other relations—not only in the sense of inter-cultural relations (Wu [1926] 1990), but also in the sense of cosmo-political alterity (i.e., internal, external, and intermediary others) (M. Wang 2011). The scope of such relations was not confined to the human world; rather, it went beyond it, perceived broadly in the form of structurally-related contraries—not only between notions of civilization and its alterity but also between persons and things, humans and divinities. Like any other cosmologies, the *tianxia*-related conceptions of the world were “frameworks of concepts and relations which treat the universe or cosmos as an ordered system,

2 When Liang Qichao made these observations concerning *tianxia*, he was thinking mainly of the limits of the tradition of “loyalty to the monarch” (*zhong jun*). By contrasting *tianxia* and the polities of the modern nations—which he called *guojia* (kingdom-families)—Liang sought to include the idea of the nation in the tradition of *tianxia* perspectives as part of his larger political projects (cf. X. Tang 1996; Zarrow 2006).

3 The conceptual pair of “realistic geographies” (*zhenshi dili*) and “imaginary geographies” (*huanxiang dili*) have been widely applied in Chinese history of geography, in which the former, understood as scientific descriptions, have been contrasted with their “imaginary” counterparts, supposedly characteristic of pre-Han Chinese cartographies and geographies of the country and the world (see C. Wang 2005). Elsewhere (M. Wang 2008: 39–48), I have critiqued these artificial contrasts between realism and illusion and between science and superstition (or mythology), which have been prevalent in modern Chinese academic discourse.

describing it in terms of space, time, matter, and motion, and peopling it with gods, humans, animals, spirits, demons, and the like" (Tambiah 1985c: 3).

Since Liang's time, Chinese scholars have adopted the term *shijie* in place of *tianxia* as a translation of the Western concept of "the world." The word *shijie*, formed from *shi* (generation or "this life") and *jie* (circle or boundary), misunderstood by some as an ancient Chinese concept (e.g., Brague 2003: 11–12), was in fact not created until the late Qing period; it described the modern world in which the Chinese world ceased to be the central place of *tianxia*. In the beginning, *shijie* still drew on the conceptual legacy of *tianxia*, implying (in the writings of late imperial reformers such as Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao) the "reversal of heaven" after the end of this life of the divided world of nations (Luo 2007). However, in the same process of transition, *tianxia* began to be encompassed by *shijie* (rather than vice-versa), which has been more and more closely related with the *open time* of China's "going to the world" (*zouxiang shijie*) (Zhong 1985). Instead of being beholden to the cosmology of *tianxia*, *shijie* has been understood, in most of its usages, as the physical system of modern "warring states," more or less the same notion as that of the world system as imagined by Immanuel Wallerstein (1974; cf. Sahlins 1988, Wolf 1982).

Taking Liang's two observations about the meaning of *tianxia* as inspiration, I have conceived this essay as a reflexive response to the conceptual transition from *tianxia* to *shijie* (seen as a world with many new "warring states") in order to ask how earlier cosmological perspectives of *tianxia*—in their unity and diversity—might serve as a standpoint from which to critique and interrogate contemporary modes of political organization. To this end, I offer an assortment of historical narratives that situate various perspectives of *tianxia*: the making of the archaic cosmos of the late Neolithic age, the evolution of kingship and king-noble relationships, center-margin levelings in the centuries before the seventeenth century BCE, the "moral revolution" (G. Wang [1921] 2001: 287–303) and the making of a cosmology of heaven in the following period, the creativities of the axial age schools of thought, the politics of culture of the early empires, and the Neo-Daoist and Buddhist reinventions of *tianxia* in the "age of chaos" (*luanshi*, or post-Han periods of "disintegration") (Ji 1936). I also offer a consideration of Chinese ethnographic accounts of the societies beyond the Chinese world, which united empiricism with imperialism in the age of China's maritime expansion (between the ninth and the fourteenth centuries CE). In their temporal dimensions (cf. M. Wang 2009a, 2010a), these narrative shifts and turns of *tianxia*-related world conceptions were themselves historically contingent, cosmologically engaging, and central to the making of *tianxia*—as well as the reflexive making of what many call "Chinese civilization."

Archaic *tianxia*

In the late sixteenth century, in Matteo Ricci's house in Zhaoqing, there was a map of the world hanging on the wall in his sitting room. Printed with European inks and illustrated in Latin letters, the map depicted the earth as a globe, which seemed odd—if not improbable—to many Chinese visitors. Upon the request of the prefect, the Italian Jesuit Ricci translated it into Chinese and added extra Chinese characters that emphasized the importance of key locations, especially the most holy Christian places (Huang and Gong 2004). In the Chinese version he pro-

duced, Ricci maintained the shape of the earth as a globe—regarded in Europe as the correct image of the world—in the hope that it would correct Chinese misconceptions of the earth as a square (or a system of concentric squares) under a round heaven.⁴

Although there were (and remain) various intellectual interpretations of the actual shape of the cosmos in pre-modern China, the shared understanding seems to be that the “the world” was a territorial-cum-celestial totality. This was perceived as comprising three levels: heaven above, earth below, and mountains, rivers, seas, trees, and divinities in the middle. Ordinary humans, together with their created things, were also seen as situated in the middle; but they were believed to be necessary for all the other intermediary forms of existence to relate themselves with heaven and earth. In the age of antiquity, the cosmo-geography of *tianxia* was built around the Central Kingdom and pictured the territorial realms as enclosed by seas (or perhaps lakes). Beyond the territorial boundaries, the lesser humans and non-humans—some of which, because of their closeness to heaven and earth, were seen as higher in cosmological and moral achievements than humans—had their residences.

How might we speculate, then, about the origins of the image of a square earth under a round heaven? Although modern Chinese scholars such as Gu Jiegang ([1924] 1982) have placed serious doubt upon the old historical accounts that trace the cosmo-geography of *tianxia* back to archaic royal dynasties, archaeologists have discovered numerous data which suggest that the models of the round-shaped heaven and the square-shaped earth were in fact much older. In the long millennia prior to the inauguration of the legendary dynasty of Xia (conventionally believed to be before the Shang dynasty [1600–1046 BCE]) there was no Central Kingdom; instead, there were several kingdoms distributed among the southeast, northeast, and northwest. One of the shared characteristics of these kingdoms seems to be the role of sacrificial ritual. Although the kingdoms were created in different geographic and sociological situations, their religious centers were all located in sacrificial platforms and enclosures situated outside the villages and towns. The platforms were, in most cases, square in shape, while the enclosures, either composed of walls or smaller altars, formed circular lines. Often, in-between the platforms and enclosures were intermediary lines of altars. At these sites, various jade items have been discovered, many of which are vivid statues of animals, and others carved as abstract forms—chiefly, the circular shape *bi*, and the square-shape *cong*. Lu and Li remark that these abstract forms of *bi* and *cong*—symbolizing heaven and earth respectively—were used, in the archaic age, as astro-nomic and magical instruments for the purpose of knowing about the space above humans and for forging magical connections between the human and supra-human worlds (Lu and Li 2005: 32–52; cf. Dematté 2006).

While astronomical archaeologists have presented the above as evidence for the Neolithic origins of the Chinese sciences of heaven and earth (Needham 1981a, 1981b; cf. S. Feng 2007), I take their findings alternatively to support an argument that the archaic cosmos was a prior condition for the emergence of *tianxia*. For me, the sacrificial platforms and enclosures, together with their jade astronomical-cum-

4 For a consideration of the different “worlds” manifested in Sino-Christian cultural contacts, see Gernet (1979).

magical instruments, form certain counterparts to what Mircea Eliade (1961) has called “sacred space.” As Eliade (1961: 21) postulates, sacred space was present in “primary religious experiences,” preceding “all reflections on the world,” and it was the break between the sacred and the profane, which it created out of the ambiguous life world, that allowed the world itself to be constituted.⁵ To understand the archaic composition of the cosmos, we would thus do well to examine the archaic composition of the sacred.

Countering the myth of conventional Chinese history, according to which the Great Unity of *tianxia* was first achieved under the Xia, Shang, and Zhou Dynasties, Gu Jiegang and Shi Nianhai argue that the spheres of control of these kingdoms were restricted to the lower Yellow River valley (Gu and Shi [1938] 1999: 1).⁶ Though struggling within their territorial confines, both Shang and Zhou nevertheless claimed to be universal kingdoms, and this narrative claim needs to be understood as part of the archaic making of *tianxia*. Prevalent in the two dynasties was a triple composition of the sacred, comprising three kinds of divinity: supremacy (*shangdi*), heaven (*tian*), and the ancestors (*zuxian*). It was this compositional world-scape that enabled both the Shang and Zhou kings to imagine themselves as the centers of the world.

For the Shang, *supremacy* was a cosmic force that maintained the interrelationships among tribes, chiefdoms, and kingdoms. It was believed to be responsible for the selection of those who were fit to rule, and it directly intervened in human worlds. *Heaven* was regarded as an abstract force, which people simply had to obey, and it judged fate (*ming*). *Ancestors* were more or less benign forces that protected human lives, especially those of royal descent. The name of the king of the Shang was always coupled with the character *xi* (the Sun), which had the

5 In tracing the origin of the models of heaven and earth back to the archaic cosmos deployed in late Neolithic kingdoms outside the Central Plains (Xia 1985), I do not intend to suggest—as Paul Wheatley (1971) has in his study of the Chinese city—that the concept of “sacred space” explains all subsequent changes in local ways of constituting the world. A comparison between the model of the Eliade’s *axis mundi* and that of archaic Chinese world-scapes, such as that of the concentric five zones (*wufu*), would suggest both important similarities and differences. Ancient Chinese world-scapes did share an emphasis upon *consecration* with other Eurasian cosmic axis models. But between the cosmos as deciphered by Eliade—who perhaps derived it mainly from Indo-European models—there is also a major difference. While the activity of *centering* was certainly an important aspect of cosmos-making overall, cosmos-making in China was also dependent upon the intermediary levels of existence between heaven and earth: those of up (*shang*) and down (*xia*), inside (*nei*) and outside (*wai*), subject (*zhu*) and object (*ke*).

6 As Fu Sinian (1933) argued long ago, none of the three classical *tianxia* of Xia, Shang, or Zhou were from the Central Plains (Zhongyuan). Prior to the beginnings of empire, the political history of China could be said to consist of the alternation between the eastern Yi (usually translated as “Barbarians of the East,” but as Fu pointed out, the label was also applied to other groups importantly involved in the process of ethnic fusion which made the Chinese) and the western Xia (usually translated as Chinese or the “civilized”). While the legendary dynasty of Xia was said to have emerged from a super-alliance of tribes from the west, Shang was created by peoples from the east, and Zhou (dated 1046–221 BCE) was once again founded by an alliance of the peoples from the west.

connotation of “Heavenly Stems” (*tian gan*) in later derivations. The king was the medium between the divinities and men and a leading member of the noble class who held the exclusive right to make sacrifices and wage war. The king was not only the ruler of the country but also the chief priest who led an extensive group of religious specialists who divined for state affairs.⁷

The kingdom of Shang maintained the line of royalty, making marked distinctions between royalty, lords, supervisors, the masses, and captives. While the lords were allowed to commemorate their own ancestors, it was the king who was deemed the central medium of *vertical* communication between humans and forces of heaven and supremacy. Structural anthropology (Lévi-Strauss 1997), as well as studies of ancient Roman religion (Dumézil 1970), have aided archaeological interpretations of Shang civilization in this regard. K. C. Chang (1980: 201–211), for example, has argued that the social integration of Shang civilization depended upon the verticality of the “mystic oneness” of the King.⁸

While the Shang polity could be considered to be similar to sovereign kingdoms in the early Eurasian civilizations in this regard, the newly created dynasty of Zhou (founded 1046 BCE) was something quite different.⁹ Wang Guowei ([1921] 2001: 1: 287–303) conceptualized the transition from Shang to Zhou in terms of a “moral revolution” (*daode geming*).¹⁰ Wang listed three aspects of the revolution: the establishment of systems of official lineages and funerary rites along with feudalism, the inauguration of the institution of temple worship, and the invention of a marriage law. All of these were considered to be “moral instruments” (*daode qixie*), which required people to respect the nobles (*zunzun*), to love their relatives (*qinqin*), to trust the capable (*xianxian*), and to differentiate between the genders (*nannü youbie*).

Further to Wang’s points about the virtues (*de*) of Zhou, it should be noted that such virtues were bound up with a new world order created on the basis of a more extensive cosmo-geographic scope, which, unlike the former order of Shang—with its notion of a vertical mystic-oneness associated with the Shang king—was more horizontal and comprehensive. This new world order was different from the old one also in the sense that in Shang prestige garnered from sacrifice was the predominant ritual theme; by contrast, in Zhou, more importance was given to the exchange of gifts and the official ethic became more oriented toward the horizontal planes of interaction and transaction—the going and coming of gifts as equally essential aspects of rites (Gernet and Vernant 1996: 81).

7 Internally, the kingdom was divided into the royal family and the lords, the supervisors, and *zhong* (the masses), and the captives of Qiang origin. Externally, the Shang sought numerous objects of conquest, which were often potential captives that stimulated the king’s interest in warfare. But the powerful king willingly surrendered himself to the divinities for determination (Fu [1940] 2006: 71–81).

8 The absolutist kingship of the Shang came into crisis when an alliance closely related to the lowest class—the Qiang captives—emerged from the west and took over the Central Kingdom’s power in the early eleventh century BCE.

9 For detailed narratives of the history of Zhou, see Yang (1930, 1999).

10 Contrary to the Zhou “moral revolution” thesis I partly adopt, Keightley (1978) and Puett (2002), among others, have considered late Shang and Western Zhou as a period of continuity.

The ritual emphasis on horizontal relations also mirrored the territorial and political organization of the Zhou dynasty. In the earlier phases of Zhou, “many internal parts of China were independent states and tribes” (Gu and Shi [1938] 1999: 52), through which Zhou kings sought to extend their frontiers. The state—as configured in the Zhou period—was not perceived at the time to be the polity of the sovereign in a purely vertical arrangement; rather it was seen to be one part of a much greater entity. As a classical example of what the founder of the so-called “Chinese school of sociology,” Wu Wenzao ([1926] 1990), has called the “political oneness of plural nations”—or what we may alternatively call the “union of plural kingdoms”—the Zhou’s so-called Great Unity was founded upon an asymmetrical political ontology: while the *realistic geography* was limited by the territorial margins that the “son of heaven” (King Wu) already reached, the *imaginary geography* broadly covered “all under heaven.” Yet, because the king of Zhou lived neither in an age of nation-states, nor possessed, for that matter, any corresponding theory of national borders, he did not place clear-cut lines of demarcation between inside and outside, nor was he anxious to separate the “realistic” from the “imaginary.” Rather, the Zhou son of heaven saw the realistic and the imaginary (i.e., particular restraints and universal virtues) as two sides of the same coin.

Relatedness as a Virtue

Whatever unifying or imperial ambitions the Zhou king might have had, the Great Unity he is said to have achieved was a *symbolic empire* brought about by means of ritual. Thus, Zhou might be compared to the Balinese “theater state” (Geertz 1980), in which ceremonial performances were cardinal and the political was bound up with ritual enactments of authority and hierarchically ordered relationships. Or, one might associate it with the “galactic polity” (Tambiah 1976: 102–131), it being a center encompassing other centers, or a Kingdom of kingdoms.

With the concept of a “galactic polity,” Tambiah brings to light a concentric-circle system: “In the center was the king’s capital and region of its direct control, which was surrounded by a circle of provinces ruled by princes or governors appointed by the king, and these again were surrounded by more or less independent ‘tributary’ polities” (1976: 112). The Zhou polity was ordered according to a similar political topography. However, unlike the galactic polity, whose founding cosmology was that of the Indian-Buddhist mandala, and whose politics was oriented toward the synthesis of monastic missions and kingly conquest, Zhou’s son of heaven and his advisors (*shu*) held a much more double-sided view of hierarchy.

With heaven-earth linkages in mind, the Zhou kings constituted a different kind of center-periphery relation. On the one hand, like the kings of the galactic polity, they constructed *tianxia* as a concentric system consisting of zones, which presented the outlying and lower levels as “progressively grosser in constitution as well as more involved and imprisoned in the pursuits and motivations of sensory worldly desires,” and by virtue of the tributary mode of redistribution, “extract[ed] goods and services and . . . mobilize[d] the commoners for spasmodic and short-lived public activities” (Tambiah 1985a: 322). On the other hand, not confined to the model of a kingdom *per se*, they sought to encompass the “worlds” beyond the realms of the polity in ways quite different from those that merely required the

lower centers to pay tribute. For example, the son of heaven would engage in sacrifice-tours (*zheng*) to the holy mountains far away from the palace, where the linkages between heaven and earth were believed to be present, in order to further encompass the cosmos (M. Wang 2007: 19–38).

Rather than depending solely on the vertical way of linking with the “above,” the Zhou polity asserted its centrality by means of infusing itself both vertically and horizontally with the “beyond” —not only with the “above”—which often countered its own ideology of centrality.¹¹ In so doing, Zhou remained dependent upon the Xia-related myth of Xi and He, who are credited in legend as inventing astronomy with the creation of Chinese space-time.

The myth of Xi and He is found in one of the oldest classics of history, compiled between the seventh and eighth century BCE. They are said to have been two brothers¹² commissioned by the legendary emperor Yao to invent the calendar. The story goes:

[Yao] commanded the (brothers) Hsi [Xi] and Ho [He], in reverent accordance with the august heavens, to compute and delineate the sun, moon and stars, and the celestial markers, and so to deliver respectfully the seasons to be observed by the people.

He particularly ordered the younger brother Hsi to reside among the Yü barbarians (at the place called) Yang-Ku and to receive as a guest the rising sun, in order to regulate the labours of the east (the spring).

He further ordered the youngest brother Hsi to go and live at Nan-Chiao in order to regulate the works of the south and pay respectful attention to the (summer) solstice.

He particularly ordered the younger brother Ho to reside in the west (at the place called) Mei-Ku, and to bid farewell respectfully to the setting sun, in order to regulate the western (autumnal) accomplishment.

He further ordered the youngest brother Ho to go and live in the region of the north (at the place called) Yu-Tu, in order to supervise the works of the north (Needham 1981a: 73–75).

The myth of Xi and He was basically an explanation of the cosmic movements taking place in the space-time between the round heaven and the square earth. It rendered a cosmogonic explanation for the constitution of the world, out of which came a cosmography and a corresponding system of ritual.

11 As *The book of rites* records, the change was achieved in Zhou Gong’s invention of a ritual institution, which replaced the cannibalism of Shang: “Formerly, when Zhou of Yin was throwing the whole kingdom into confusion, he made dried slices of (the flesh of) the marquis of Gui, and used them in feasting the princes . . . During the six years of [his rule], Zhou Gong . . . instituted ceremonies to show respect to the feudal princes” (Sun 1989: 839).

12 As Joseph Needham puts it, Xi-He [Hsi-Ho] “is not the name of two or six persons, but a binome, the name, in fact, of the mythological being who is sometimes the mother and sometimes the chariot-driver of the sun” (1981a: 75). At a certain stage, the name “became split up and applied to four magicians or cult-masters who were charged by the mythological emperor to proceed to the four ‘ends’ of the world in order to stop the sun and turn it back to its course at each solstice, and to keep it going on its way at each equinox” (ibid.: 75).

Cosmo-geographically, the basic framework of the Zhou worldview was a reformulated system of “five zones” which was, at the same time, both centrifugal and centripetal. In political-geographic terms, these zones (invented, in legend, in *The Tributaries of Yu the Great* [Yu Gong] of Xia) referred to the five levels of the Zhou’s mapping of their own world.¹³ But as an *imaginary cosmography*, the five zones comprised a worldwide order.¹⁴ The founding king of Zhou established these different zones (*fu*), whereby the inner domain of the capital was defined as *dianfu* and the outer domain of the princes as *houfu*. Surrounding the princely domains and protecting them, was the zone of pacification (*binfu*), which was in turn surrounded by the allied groups of the Yi and the Man who form a semi-cultured zone (*yaofu*), and by the Rong and the Di who formed a deserted zone (*huangfu*) of savagery (Needham 1981a: 237–285).

The five zones could be said to comprise a “world system” of outspreading levels of culture that were at the same time the extensions of civilization radiating from the center and the degrees of closeness to it oriented toward civilization in a centripetal manner (Fairbank 1973; Smith 1996). However, this concentricity was only one side of two mutually complementary aspects of the system. For the Zhou rulers, the five zones constituted a complex system of relationships, a catalogue of peoples, and a structure of hierarchy deployed to know, to describe, and to manage the whole world beneath heaven. They marked out the cultural boundaries between the son of heaven and the lords of principalities, and between the principalities and the semi-cultured others.¹⁵

The most well known example of this concentric cosmography was the *Mingtang* palace. This building was surrounded by a circular pool and covered

13 The model of “quarters surrounding the center” had already existed in Shang’s notion of the *sifang* (four directions). In Shang, the *sifang* served as “a cosmological structure for classifying all forces in the universe, and as a ritual structure for communication with the spiritual world” of the supremacy (A. Wang 2000: 25). For me, this is not surprising; as I indicated earlier, a primary cosmos had already existed in the late Neolithic age, thus Shang and Zhou were only re-inventing tradition. Nonetheless, I cannot easily agree with the suggestion that in assimilating the *sifang*-centered cosmology from the Shang, Zhou placed even more emphasis on the importance of the centre (ibid.: 67). In any political cosmology, the making of the axis mundi is, perhaps, inevitable; and Zhou’s difference was that the dynasty gave more weight in its politics and ceremonies to the *sifang*.

14 Politically and geographically, the zones denoted not more than a few square Chinese miles within the Zhou’s territory. Nevertheless, they were also modeled on the squared Earth, “a disc-shaped world” with cosmological constituencies of the Earth (Needham 1981a: 238–239).

15 On the one hand, the concentric squares constituted a unity comprising diversity, a system of “rites and styles” defined in terms of hierarchy. In such a hierarchy, different from that of Shang, the institution of *gong* (or tribute-paying), essential to the later “tributary mode of production” (Gates 1995), was merely applied to describe the interrelationship between the barbarians and princes. The other sorts of relationship were instead described as various levels of ceremony: the great sacrifice (*ji*), worship (*sh*), and offerings (*xiang*). Thus, on the other hand, the concentric squares were also positions within which the son of heaven was required to pay tributes, not only in the form of sacrifice—to heaven, earth, and other divinities—but also to his underlings.

with a round roof and it was where the cyclical work of the official calendar was supposed to be consummated. The *Mingtang* had four oriented sides and, within its enclosures, the vassals were placed according to aristocratic ranking in all directions other than the north—the position occupied by the son of heaven. Outside the enclosure, the barbarians of the four frontiers and four seas in the four quarters would form four squares. The building had a square design, containing nine square rooms that represented the nine divine prefectures of which the confederation of feudal China was composed. To promulgate the calendar, in the months in the middle of each season, the son of heaven would stand in the central rooms facing the four directions, and move as if he himself was performing the rhythms of the universe. The whole country, enacted by the movements of the son of heaven in accordance with the constantly changing “moods” of the universe, was understood to conform with the rules of the calendar (Granet [1922] 1975: 67–68; cf. Granet 1930: 381–382).

Because the political body of the son of heaven was understood to be the locus in which the virtues of relatedness should be most concentrated, the king’s physical body was restricted in its movements by astrologists and necromancers, or superior sages, who were recruited into the court to instruct and inspect it. The imperial capital was not constructed to isolate the imperial realm from the other worlds. In fact, the four quarters around the center were not only seen as the squares in which the nobles and the barbarians—who were obviously subordinate to the son of heaven—were distributed, but were also understood to be the positions of the holy mountains (*shan*) and rivers (*chuan*) where the son of heaven could perform the mediating role of linking heaven and earth.

During Zhou, in order to perform this role of linkage, apart from all the movements within the confines of the *Mingtang*, the son of heaven also regularly made pilgrimages (*zheng*) to the four quarters. *Li ji* (*The book of rites*) contains a description of such *zheng*. It suggests that *zheng* referred to events in which the son of heaven went out for his five annual tours of inspection. Such tours of the son of heaven were related to the official calendar of space-time regularities. When he went on these tours, the son of heaven moved in accordance with the seasons, corresponding to the four directions. He performed different ceremonies at different times at places all year round (Legge [1885] 1998: 216–218), and through sacrifices, he observed the customs of other peoples and performed the role of the model of virtue. As depicted in *The book of rites*, *zheng* was an activity aimed at making relations with other quarters and peoples of the world, and as such, it was complementary to the son of heaven’s activities within the *Mingtang*.¹⁶

In the process of the Zhou making of *tianxia*, a stratum of the *shi* emerged as those who authorized ceremonies and/or made laws (*fa*, also “methods”). In the whole of the Zhou dynasty, the *shi* relied heavily on lineage regulations (*zongfa*) to gain their social statuses and they were keenly involved in political affairs of the state. They asserted their distinctions through the dual task of “ruling the family and the country” (*zhiguo yu zhijia*). As authorizers and bearers of civilization, they

16 Neither *Mingtang* activities nor *zheng* were separable from the king’s more down-to-earth labors of administration; rather, both were related to *tiguo jingye* (literally, “embodying the city and ordering the wilderness”), which was concerned with ensuring close connections between the king and the world of the wilderness (Zhou 2009).

were also known as *junzi* or “gentlemen,” who wrote both *li* (rites) and *su* (customs) and their distinctions into history. Responsible for the functions of the state and of lineages, and in charge of both moral and intellectual endeavors, the *shi* promoted the virtues of respecting the respectable, loving the beloved, and recognizing the virtuous and capable (*zunqun*, *qinqin*, and *xianxian*). The *shi* also compiled the “three books on rites” (*san li*): the *Zhou li* (*Zhou scripture of rites*), *Yi li* (*Styles and ceremonies*), and *Li ji* (*The book of rites*),¹⁷ the concern of which was always directed toward the cosmological integrity of *tianxia*. For the *shi* in the Zhou period, rituals were invaluable devices whereby “the world” as perceived by the Chinese could be orchestrated toward a higher harmony or Great Unity (*Datong*).

Conceptions of the world in the Warring States

In traditional historiography, the history of Zhou is divided into two phases: Western Zhou (Xi Zhou, from the end of the eleventh century BCE to the year 771 BCE) and Eastern Zhou (Dong Zhou, from the transfer of the capital to present-day Luoyang in 771 BCE to the end of the Zhou in 256 BCE).

In Western Zhou, the royal palace was the source of ritual, political, military, and economic dynamics, on which the surrounding principalities relied. In the ideal cosmo-geography of the Zhou *tianxia*, the royal palace (as the “summit”) encompassed the principalities of lower places, and like the high center in the galactic polity, it could take on “a more potent manifestation than the lower in order to vanquish it” (Tambiah 1985a: 322). However, the Zhou version of the galactic polity—even if we could call it such—was rather different. As we have encountered it earlier, it placed an extraordinary emphasis upon the virtue of conflating horizontal and vertical linkages, which is less obvious in the mandala-based theory of kingship. Moreover, in encompassing all of the lower places, the Zhou polity further demonstrated its difference in that it also encompassed the dynamics of its own inversion (i.e., the “down-grading” of its heavenly cosmos to the lower level of the feudal kingdoms or principalities).

Within the period of Eastern Zhou, historians further distinguish between the period of the Spring and Autumn (Chunqiu, 722–481 BCE) and that of the Warring States (Zhanguo, the age after Chunqiu and preceding the unification, in 221 BCE). Beginning in Chunqiu, the configuration of the Zhou *tianxia* began to change. No longer content with being confined to the “lower places,” the principalities gradually raised themselves by means of mimetic reproduction of the world of Zhou, and sought to compete among themselves for the perfection of kingship. They took on the model of the Zhou royalty in order to localize their power systems. For example, in each principality, the chief bore the title of lord (*gong*). He assembled different sorts of *shi* in his own palace and monopolized military power in his own domains. In due course, a system of aristocratic cities known as *guo* (literally meaning “cities enclosed by walls,” and later meaning “states”) replaced the form of archaic royalty.

17 These classics were compiled in the periods prior to the Han dynasty. There have not been clear indications of their authorship and dates of completion, but it is agreed among Chinese scholars that each was composed by more than one author and added with more contents at later stages.

Prior to the expansion of the principalities, Zhou relied on the system of hierarchies of rites to ensure the cohesion of *tianxia* and the preeminence of the royal line within it. By the Chunqiu period, the monarchy declined along with principalities, which were thinly held together by means of rites. In turn, the tendency of the principalities to compete over the extension of territories impaired the balance between the cities, which had now become city-centered states. The hierarchy based on kinship, political, and cosmological ties, gave way to the establishment of separate states conflicting with each other during most of the Chunqiu and Warring States periods.

During the same periods, the Zhou court was faced with frequent invasions by the chiefdoms from the barbarian peripheries. By the Chunqiu period, the Zhou court lacked the power to resist barbarians, especially the Qiang. To survive, the royal family leaned on several major principalities—namely Qin and Jin—in order to see off these incursions. This action of the Zhou court presented an opportunity for the large principalities to pursue the expansion of their own territories. Both Qin and Jin launched campaigns to “revere the king and resist the barbarians” (*zunwang rangyi*). The actual result of these campaigns was that many of the barbarian kingdoms were thereby incorporated into the principalities. The Jin took seventeen such kingdoms by military action and made a further thirty-eight surrender. The Chu and the Qin annexed thirty-nine and twenty respectively (Gu and Shi [1938] 1999: 44–45). To rule these extended territories, the lords of the principalities invented the system of prefectures and counties (*junxian zhi*), whereby the Zhou’s orthodox zones of relationship were turned into something that was merely ceremonially useful. As a result, the system of the nine prefectures (*jiu zhou*), which had probably existed already in early Zhou, was redefined and deployed to cover the new territories of the loosely united Central Kingdoms (ibid.: 53).¹⁸

When the principalities, princes, and *shi* created conflicting states that did not obey the rules set up by the Zhou court, they were regarded by thinkers like Confucius as being responsible for “the collapse of rites and the destruction of music” (*libeng yuehua*). Nevertheless, these contesting, expansive principalities also created a condition for regional integrative revolutions. They assimilated the other ethnic groups, and thereby produced a new phase of so-called “Chinese civilization.” In this new phase, population mobility, inter-ethnic alliances, and military competitions gave rise to the extension of the territory of the Huaxia and increased Huaxia knowledge about other kingdoms and peoples (Lin [1939] 1993: 26–27).

During the period of the “disintegration” of the Eastern Zhou, the role of the *shi* had also changed. In the earlier period, the *shi* were selected from aristocratic families. By the Chunqiu, they could come from the lower classes, including the class of commoners (*shumin*). In the past, the *shi* were chiefly concerned with the construction and recording of ceremonial rules, which encompassed the regulation

18 During these periods, the barbarians served as models to emulate, both for the sake of conquering other principalities or barbarian territories and for furthering the encompassment of *tianxia*. As an example of a Self-Other mutual disposition, several principalities practiced the so-called *hufu qishe* (to wear barbarian uniforms and use their cavalry in battle), which involved the training of their soldiers in the barbarians’ ways. For example, they made them dress up, ride, and shoot like the Hu (the Northern barbarians) (G. Wang [1921] 2001: 662–680).

of rites, law, and politics (Yu 2003). The *shi* now re-emerged as classical historians who had the role of orchestrating *li* (rites), which combined the functions of historical judgment, political service, and administration.¹⁹ In advancing their expansion, the lords and the *shi* of different principalities also inscribed their relationships with each other into history. From time to time, the antagonism between their own countries and others became emphasized. But it was emphasized with reference to what they could learn from each other.²⁰

While Zhou conceptions of the world were at first immanent in the mythos of ceremonial practice, they came to be more progressively articulated, emerging into distinct discourses, which paved the way for the emergence of the Great Unity as an *empire*. Indeed, the portrait of an “eternal empire” had already been painted prior to its ideological inauguration during the Warring States period (Pines 2009). Under the conditions of “the collapse of rites of the destruction music,” the *shi*—having been emancipated, as it were, from their ritual and administrative burdens—further considered the issue of how to make a better and more unified world. Thus, in the Warring States, conceptions of the world became central to the con-

19 Along with such changes, the scope of *shi* political knowledge extended from the pursuit of the ceremonial order into the fields of law, politics, and ethics, and came to cover many schools of thought. Thinkers such as Confucius and Mencius promoted the archaic model of *shanrang*, seeking to encourage the sovereign to imitate legendary kings like Yao and Xun and to abdicate and hand over authority to those who were more capable. Meanwhile, explorations in different parts of the world expanded knowledge about other, non-Huaxia “races” (*zhong*) and “customs” (*leng* or *su*).

20 In the separate syntheses of the *Annals of spring and autumn* (*Lushi Chunqiu*) and the *Stories of the countries* (*Guo yu*), much is also spoken about the barbarians who sought to revitalize their own tribes in the power play between the principalities. For instance, as recorded in *Zuo zhuan*, in the thirty-third year of Lord Xi’s reign, the Jin defeated the Qin by mobilizing the Rong tribes. In the fourteenth year of the Xianggong reign, Jin generals captured Juzhi of the Rong; a *shi*, Fan Xuanzi, went to the court in person and said to Juzhi:

Come on, man of the Qiangrong clan. Before, the Qin people forced our ancestors to leave Gua prefecture. Your ancestor Wu underwent great ordeals to come and join our ancestors. One of our ancestors Lord Hui divided his fertile land between him and your ancestors.

Juzhi responded:

In the past, the Qin used its massive armies to take land voraciously. They pressed us, the Rong, into corners. Your ancestor Lord Hui was gracefully virtuous. He regarded us as some of the descendants of the four mountains and did not abandon us. He presented us with some infertile fields in the south where our ancestors had to settle with beasts and foxes, and bear their threatening noises. We, the Rong, have worked hard, we have carved out new fields and driven away the beasts. We regard your ancestors as those who did not invade and surrender. Until today, we had high regard for you. In the past, Lord Wen joined the Qin to attack the Zheng. The Qin secretly allied with the Zheng, and abandoned the Rong. Thus, the ethnic elements of the armies are now quite mixed and confusing. Yet the Jin continue to be proud of themselves. You treat yourselves as the “upper” (*shang*) and us as the “lower” (*xia*). If the army of the Qin has not returned to attack you, you would still be biased against us, all the tribes of the Rong (*Zhu Rong*) (Yuan 1984: 419–420).

test of political ideas. While it is probable that the unitary perspective of *tianxia* gradually replaced the more pluralist perspectives of earlier periods (see Pines 2010), the conflict between different world conceptions was what characterized the overall state of knowledge and philosophy during the Warring States.²¹

Different *shi* entertained various visions of what would constitute a better world. Many such diverse schools of thought were initially influenced by regional cultural characteristics: Lü in the east produced Confucius, Chu in the south produced Taoists, and Qin in the west produced legalists. These schools from different regions were rivals—the Confucians or the Northern School were more politically engaged, whereas the Southern School, including the Daoist philosophers and magician-hermits such as Qu Yuan, were, by contrast, “renouncers” (*yin*) and poets. But they all critically absorbed intellectual benefits from each other, forging creative, artistic, and scholastic combinations, characteristic of Chinese philosophical and poetic knowledges (G. Wang [1906] 2005: 130–133). Furthermore, during this period of frequent interactions, different thinkers in different regions also embarked on “imaginary travels” beyond their own worlds. The Southern School of Zhuangzi and Qu Yuan creatively and critically engaged with the thinking of the north, while the Confucians conceived their social philosophies with reference to the “otherworldly” pursuits of Daoist and shamanic poets in the south.²²

The period of the Warring States also coincided with what has been called the “axial age” (Jaspers 1961). In the Hellenic axial age, drawing on the religious symbols and mythical narratives of the previous ages, philosophers developed world conceptions that set human imagination apart from the pre-existing religious cosmography. The new world conceptions were geometrical in character; they were refined in spatial terms to represent a balanced distribution between contrary powers, and thus created a break with what could only be said to be “traditional religious beliefs” (Vernant 2006: 157–261). By contrast, the Chinese philosophers in the Warring States, in offering their new perspectives of cosmology, did not see the break with tradition to be necessary (as it was in the Hellenic world). The kind of geometrically patterned cosmos and topography they needed to elaborate their own cosmologies had already been familiar to their ancestors living in the late Neolithic age and afterwards; and the so-called traditional religious beliefs, which were characteristic of Shang, had already been revolutionized in Zhou. These geometrical conceptions were entirely different from their Greek counterparts. Being hierarchically reciprocal instead of egalitarian, they formed a tradition to which different philosophers of the Warring States took different routes to return. Thus,

21 As Mencius (B. Yang 1960: 1: 63) observed, by then the *shi* had become divided into (1) those who were actively involved in secular affairs under either favorable or unfavorable political conditions, (2) those who become active participants in politics only under favorable political conditions (that is, when the son of heaven or emperor was deemed wise enough, resigning when conditions grew worse), and (3) those who were always inactive.

22 Those who took up Daoism considered a peaceful world to be impossible without the mysticism of the universal oneness; those, such as Qu Yuan, having given up active participation in politics, became renouncers and retreated to the “shamanic poetic worlds” of the mountains; and those who belonged to the Confucian School, while not wholly giving up the tradition of naturalism or mystic-oneness, paid more attention to ethico-political affairs (Fung [1934] 1983).

although the Chinese philosophers competed in their differing conceptions of the world and in their different relationships to traditional thought, in the axial age they inclined toward “organic materialism” (Needham 1981a: 14), which applied the cosmic order to the human one and gave independence to neither.

Empire

In the Warring States period, the kingdoms built upon the basis of fiefs gradually developed different theories of a centralized state. Previously, the foundation for the authority of the son of heaven was the monarchical mode of worship and the principle of descent, conceptualized in terms of heavenly fortune (*tianming*) and the extended (and interlinked) cosmo-geography of the five zones. In their contests for dominance in the Chinese world, the princes now struggled to master territorial resources, military forces, and human capital.

Out of this historical process emerged the system of *xian* (counties) and *jun* (commanded prefectures). Many historians associate these terms—which concern administration—with the empire of Qin. However, as Gu and Shi ([1938] 1999) have convincingly argued, they appeared as early as the seventh century BCE. During the Chunqiu, each fief-turned kingdom, having conquered a new territory, would then place it under the control of one of the upper rank nobles and designate it as a *xian* (ibid.: 49). *Jun* were mostly established near the frontier-lines, and some could be said to be “garrisoned counties,” while others comprised several *xian* (ibid.: 51). By the fourth century BCE both ideas evolved into institutional measures of territorial control. In the kingdoms of Qin and Chu, they gradually emerged as a new territorial power system for the management of the country—administrative districts controlled by the representatives of the central power. As such, the system brought about a radical transformation in China’s political organization.²³

From 314 BCE onwards, the Qin won extensive territories in a series of victories over the nomads of the north. By 249 BCE, the Qin finally put an end to the small realm of the Zhou. In 247 BCE Prince Cheng came to power and eliminated all the other major kingdoms. With the support of his Legalist advisors, Cheng—later known as the “First Emperor” or *shi huangdi* of Qin—deployed a series of unifying measures to turn the whole of the Chinese world into a centralized state. The unification of writing, transportation, money, and ways of measurement was forcefully imposed on the *jun* and *xian*. Apart from such unifying measures, the Qin also constructed the Great Wall on the foundations of ancient fortifications. Extending from Gansu to the Eastern part of Liaoning, the wall was intended to protect the empire against incursions from the Xiongnu (the Huns) in the North

23 This novel territorial power was coupled with—if not preceded by—the invention of Legalism (*fajia*) in the rapidly expanding kingdoms, especially the Qin. The concept of law (*fa*) that the legalists adopted connoted a powerful state-governed instrument deployed to control social activities in accordance with the state’s envisaged pattern of order. However, *fa* as law did not refer to the resolution of disputes but gained its meaning chiefly by differentiating itself from the earlier Confucian moralistic and ceremonial social theories, developed in the Qi and the Lu kingdoms. While Confucians emphasized *li* or rites, the Legalist theory of political order aimed at building a new institution by way of destroying the multiplicities in rites, rights, statuses, and customs, which characterized the old Zhou regime (Fung [1934] 1983: 212–332).

(Chen [1989] 2007). But in places far from the wall, Qin armies conducted extensive military operations from Gansu to Korea and from Fujian to Vietnam, expanding the territorial reach of the empire (Gu and Shi [1938] 1999: 60–62). Within the central regions, the government undertook extensive public works to construct towns, roads, post houses (*yizhan*), canals, palaces, and so on. An extremely severe penal system was also imposed on the country.

The harsh work conditions, severe penalties, and overall repression created the counter-effects of popular discontent, accompanied by disaffection among aristocrats who had lost their properties and privileges. Meanwhile, scholars began to criticize the emperor. To eliminate his opponents, the First Emperor banned all their books and executed a great number of scholars in Xianyang who were supposedly *shi* adherents of Confucius. But popular resistance continued to grow. Soon after the First Emperor's death, Chen Sheng and Wu Guang led a peasant uprising joined by an old aristocratic family, the Xiang, in the old Chu kingdom. Xiang Yu, a patriarch of this family, became a strong force in the South; he created eighteen fiefs, among which the Kingdom of Han was given to the command of Liu Bang, who gradually gained wide recognition. Along with the growth of his fame, Liu Bang enlarged his military power. In 206 BCE he defeated the Qin army and thenceforth founded the Han dynasty.²⁴

The new dynasty claimed its authority by promising to found a non-Legalist state under looser control and organized according to a more ethical politics. Throughout the Han, a new synthesis of cosmological and ethical philosophies was made in the name of revitalizing the Zhou system of rites. Meanwhile, the fiefs (principalities) that Liu Bang distributed to his companions during times of war had to be properly situated in the political hierarchy. These fiefs and their aristocracy constantly became an issue for the emperor. Most of their rulers were descendants of the six old principalities of the late Zhou that abolished by the Qin. As in former times, the aristocrats that had now regained their old estates and palaces began to fight amongst themselves.

In spite of the great political tension within the empires, both Qin and Han managed to maintain themselves as unified dynasties and, together, constituted a period of the Great Expansion in Chinese History. From the perspective of political geography, prior to the Qin Dynasty, the Chinese world was limited to the central principalities surrounding the capital and its royal zones. From Qin to Han, it extended northward into Mongolia and Central Asia, eastward into Manchuria and Korea, and southward into Yue and the territories of the tropical tribes and kingdoms in many parts of Southeast Asia (see Lin [1939] 1993: 26–29; Gu and Shi [1938] 1999: 79–82). In these two considerably different dynasties, the search

24 The Han dynasty founded by Liu Bang lasted for some two hundred years, ruled over by twelve successive emperors who inherited in accordance with the royal line of descent of the Liu. In 8 CE, Wang Mang, who had built up his architecture of power with the support of the empresses' families and eunuchs, finally proclaimed himself emperor and gave a new name to the empire, the Xin, which lasted for only fifteen years (8–23 CE). Wang Mang's regime was ended by a provincial landed family, which benefited from peasant revolts against the state. Liu Xiu, who claimed descent from the royal line of the Han, thus re-established Han rule. This new empire is known in Chinese history as the Later (Hou) or Eastern (Dong) Han. In 220 CE, having undergone several rebellions, the Later or Eastern Han came to an end.

for a unified *tianxia* was deemed important to the emperors, who were eager to construct a country of prolonged order and peace (*changzhi jiu'an*).

During Qin and Han, the diversity of classical worldviews in the preceding periods was replaced by a new orthodoxy that fed on earlier textual representations of ritual and society (X. Yang 1997). A general instance of this transformation can be observed in the fact that previously plural traditions of ritual, mythology, and regional seasonal rhythms—partly developed by the *shi* in different Zhou principalities—were re-organized into a new politics of culture. This politics was based upon “a vague belief that there was a connection between abnormal natural phenomena and social life,” and it was mainly concerned with the “practice of utilizing this belief as a tool in the political struggle” (Eberhard 1957: 70).

Central to this politics of culture was the transformation of the spring festival as a cosmological metaphor. Spring festivals first originated in rural communal celebrations of the seasons, which partly through the conjunction of sexual orgies, enhanced inter-group relationships and communal renewal in different countries (see Granet 1932). These celebrations were deeply rooted in inter-village contests in which the sexes were first divided and then ritually united to form a generic relationship. The conceptual framework of the festival further defined the constructive relations between neighboring villages.

During later Zhou, in the Chunqiu and Warring States periods, the spring celebrations had been reformed through “impoverishment and specialization” into a simplified cycle of seasonal rhythms of the royal clan of the regional states. The *royal* cycle of sacrifices transcended the communal confines of these festivals, transforming them into celebrations of a wider cosmological order, while paradoxically locking them into more tightly delimited spaces.²⁵ In reinventing the tradition of festivals, the princes standardized the calendar, which in turn, paved the way for the son of heaven’s authority in regulating the activities of the empire. In creating their own unified “divine” order encompassing diversity, the courts of the early empires of Qin and Han assumed both political and cosmological roles; they did so by authorizing a system of ceremonial centers for the world in a campaign known as *fengshan*.

25 Outlining this transformation, Granet says the following:

The ancient festivals [of the spring], the record of which has been preserved for us by the *Shi qing* [*Shi Jing*], appear as festivals of union which, in the ordered life of the Chinese peasants, marked the periods of the assemblies of local and sex groups. They made clear the social compact, which, to the local communities, was a source of strength and stability. They ordered the course of social life. But, because their order happened, as a matter of fact, to coincide with the natural order of seasons, they were also credited with having power to insure the normal course of things and the well-being of nature. Thus their potency expanded and took various forms. Their sanctity and all their virtues extended to the traditional places where they were held. Then, when the alliance, which, to begin with, was revived at periodical intervals in the holy places, came under the control of a princely family, the faithful were provided with human mediators in close touch with the powers, which they had originally externalized in things, and with which the power of the prince was then identified. At the court of the prince, the leader of the worship, a process of elaboration of the original material went on, and from it issued an official ritual, so distorted that it is not possible at first sight to discover the origins of the practices which somehow survived in the guise of popular customs (1932: 205–206).

The origin of *fengshan* was in the kings' pilgrimages to the holy mountains and its ritual traditions were concerned with the worship of the great mountains and the Heaven-Earth-Man continuum. Many ideas of this ritual system can be traced back to the Zhou "rule of rites," but *fengshan* was more closely related to the Great Mountain that divided the two Zhou states Qi and Lü. The kings of both Qi and Lü did not travel far enough to know that the Great Mountain was not the highest peak of the world, so they regarded it as the "reach of the vision" (*wang*) of the world and invented the tradition of *fengshan*. To kings of Qi and Lü, *fengshan* consisted of higher-level ceremonies of *feng*, or worship (*jì*) on the top of the Great Mountain, and lower-level ceremonies of *shan*, or worship at the hills below it.

During the time of Chunqiu, the kings of different states had to make sure that they were "really" gifted by heaven to be kings. They had to ask necromancers and astronomers (*fangshi*) for advice on the matter. In the Qi and Lü states, the necromancers and astronomers viewed the Great Mountain as the ultimate source of authority. They thus led the kings to perform magical rituals towards heaven on the "peak of the world." In fact, the kings were sometimes overthrown if heaven despised their political conduct and personality. In the beginning, then, the culture of *fengshan* amounted to certain divination ceremonies devised to judge, through the spirit-medium of the necromancer and astronomer, the fitness of the rulers. In most cases, before a *fengshan* ritual was organized, the kings had to have already observed fifteen kinds of auspicious signs, including the rich grains (*jiagu*), the flying phoenix (*feifeng*), and so on, which all expressed heaven's authorization of the king's fitness for his kingship.

In Qin, the institution began to change. Trying to make earlier ideas of *fengshan* useful for the making of his own emperorship, the Qin *shi huangdi* first designated the Great Mountain as a sacred location for his own communication with heaven. When he became emperor, he no longer had to demonstrate to others his gift of fitness. Thus, the legacy of *fengshan*, which once offered a range of transcendental determinations for kingship, became an astrological means by which the emperor's legitimacy was re-affirmed through ritual. Along with the change, necromancers and astronomers who had been a highly respected stratum in previous periods became subordinated to the cosmological power of the emperor.²⁶ In the Han dynasty, Wu Di (in his reign between 140 to 135 BCE) of the Han planned *tianxia* with the ideal model of five sacred mountains, located in five directions, East, South, West, North, and Central. At the same time, with the assistance of the *shi*, Wu Di re-designed the *Mingtang*, the Palace of Brightness, a microcosm of the whole world. He also treated the five sacred mountains far away from the capital as the great altars on which he paid tribute to heaven in the name of *feng* or "authorization."²⁷

26 To a certain degree, *fengshan* became associated with the lordship system of *fengjian* (feudalism). *Fengjian* referred to the imperial divisions of the provincial compartments—principalities—under the son of heaven. Originating in the Zhou dynasty, *fengjian* also related to the political reconstruction of royal descent and administrative domains. It was the official imperial reconstruction of the cults of divinities and channels of communication between heaven and earth.

27 *Fengshan* rites shared the characteristics of Christian pilgrimages as being bound up with the cults of centers. Yet in *fengshan* rituals, the sense of the "anti-structure" aspect of *communitas* (Turner and Turner 1978) seemed to be trivial. Instead, emphasis was

After Wu Di, alongside the growth of imperial cosmology, *fengshan* became re-defined as a part of the ceremonial institution of *she* and *jiao*. The *she* and *jiao* systems had their origins in earlier folkloric traditions. Originally, *she* included *jiao* and referred to the place of a community where sacrifices were made to heaven, earth, local deities, ancestors, spirits, and other divinities. Later, *she* and *jiao* were separated. *She* became the place where the Earth God and the God of Grain were worshipped and *jiao* was added to the institution of worship and chiefly referred to sacrifices to heaven and earth (see Ling 1963, 1965). To a great extent, *she* and *jiao* were derived from the *fengshan* of the Great Mountain. *She* was a derivative of *shan* (worship of the enclosed earthly deities and spirits), whereas *jiao* was a derivative of *feng* (worship of un-enclosed heavenly divinities). In the pre-Qin periods, *she* and *jiao* had been worshipped by different levels of governmental organizations to define the authority of the state from the inside (*she*) and the outside (*jiao*). In even earlier periods, in the countryside, the *she* and *jiao* ceremonies respectively represented two great events in the annual cycle, one marking the territorial integrity of central places, the other celebrating the interconnectedness of the country. But *she* and *jiao* were developed as a ceremonial culture for the court in the later periods of the Han dynasty, in which a systematic imperial cosmology leaped forward to distinguish the court from the country, the inside from the outside.²⁸

The Qin and Han politicization of ritual and cosmology marked a departure from a tradition of cosmological action (Loewe 2005). In imperial Chinese history, we observe cycles of dynasties, whereby new leaders emerged to replace old “confused emperors” (*hunjun*) and their disintegrating empires, in the pattern of which the growth and decay of politics became associated with life cycles of the world.²⁹ For the dynasty of Han, the return of the Zhou Dynasty’s model of heaven

placed on the meaning of finding a source of authorization from the “above” (the level of heaven) for an order of relations “below” (the level of this world). Such ceremonial journeys to the locations of what were in-between heaven and the earth shared with Western pilgrimages the sense of the transcendence of local social structure. But *fengshan* was an outcome of the process of empire-building, through which *transcendence* had gained a different meaning and efficacy.

28 By the middle Han dynasty, *jiao* was conjoined with *she*, and became “*jiashen*” which referred to the *tan* and *shan* system located in suburbs of the capital. These suburban altars (or enclosures) included Heaven Altar (*tiantan*) in the Southern suburb, Earth Altar (*ditan*) in the Northern suburb, Sun Altar (*ritan*) in the Eastern suburb, and Moon Altar (*yuetan*) in the Eastern Suburb. For the inventors of imperial rites (such as *fangshi*), the making of altars in the suburbs of an imperial capital was aimed to bring the distant to the close at hand, for purpose of fulfilling the task of authorization.

29 In fact, in having the astronomers as their advisors, the emperors also subjected themselves to the command of the astronomers who served in their courts to judge the good and bad of their own conduct. One thing that the astronomers did was, as in the case of establishing *Mingtang*, to help regulate the temporal trajectories of the kings’ or emperors’ daily bodily movements with the rules of sacred almanacs. The other thing was to determine, for the sake of the emperor, how misfortunes of the world could be avoided through ritual actions, which even included correcting the irregular aspects of the emperors’ bodily-cum-mental motions and the strategic arrangement of ceremonial and political propensities of human beings and things.

is often elaborated in these terms. However, the historical traces the Han left behind have suggested something different. In the name of “revitalization,” Han civilizing projects also facilitated something very new: the realization of unity in the redistributive order of ceremonial practices. For the Han imperial court, the pursuit of a unitary cosmology and political order took precedence over other matters. This pursuit led to new conceptions of *tianxia* as much as it extended the territorial scale and reach of empire.

Neo-Daoist and Buddhist Inversions

In the Han Dynasty, the emperors accorded great honors not only to those who assisted the astrologists, ritual experts, and ideologues in their attempts of gaining intimacy with heaven (Gu [1955] 1998), but also to the explorers who “chiseled through” (*zaotong*) the roads leading to the extreme ends of *tianxia*. Of those falling into the latter category, Zhang Qian and Gan Ying became legendary, appearing in the great histories of *Shi Ji* (*The records of the historian*) and *Han Shu* (*The history of Han*) (Zhong 1985: 2-7). They were seen as deserving extended biographical treatment precisely because they took the emperor’s perspective of *tianxia* with them while undergoing all the ordeals in their expeditions and diplomatic journeys.

In the first period of unification, *tianxia* was greatly altered: while using the concept, the emperors and their advisors were greatly more at ease with the asymmetrical relationship between heaven and earth involved in it, believing that by their own efforts, the gap could be bridged. However, no empire could really fulfill the dream of equalizing its own territory with the concentric squares of *tianxia*. Beginning almost at the same time as Wu Di’s expansion, Xiongnu (Huns) emerged in the West as a challenge. To deal with all the problems created by these militarily powerful barbarians, and after a number of major military failures, Han resorted to non-military means. The old kingly virtue of linkage was reformulated in new terms. Called *heqin* (peaceful kinship), it was deployed as a kind of diplomatic strategy (Chen 2007). With the strategy, the emperor “lowered” himself into the wife-giving party of the royal marriage, helping to further substantiate Owen Lattimore’s (1967) point that the Central Kingdom could not sustain itself through its own lineages.

Ji Chaoding (1936) divides imperial history (spanning from 255 BCE to 1842 CE) into several periods, and he argued for the traditional classification of history into alternating periods of “order” and “chaos.” As Ji brilliantly shows, the “unification and peace” of Qin and Han was followed by “the first phase of splits and struggles,” including the Three Kingdom period (220–280 CE), the Jin dynasty (310–420 CE), and the Southern and Northern dynasties (317–589 CE).³⁰ During the long “age of chaos,” the non-Han kingdoms took advantage of the disintegration of the Chinese world, and established their own centers in the Central Plains.³¹

30 The period of splits and struggles did not end until the arrival the second phase of unification and peace in the sixth century CE, which was in turn replaced by the second phase of splits and struggles” (including the Five Dynasties (907–960 CE), Song Dynasty (960–1279 CE), Liao Dynasty (915–1125 CE) and Jin Dynasty (1115–1234 CE).

31 The ideal of “literati government” was partly realized in Han but was soon abandoned. Aristocracy, bound up with the new “warring states” was revitalized in the age of

Regarding the change to conceptions of the world, Chang Naihui ([1928] 2005: 5) complained that, in the phase of splits and struggles:

[Chinese] thought was in its dark age. . . . Demonic practices of magicians were widely accepted by the commoners and deeply influenced them. All this caused the rebellion of Huangjin, a disaster that marked the beginning of the fragmenting of the unified empire which had just enjoyed four hundred years of peace. In such a state of chaos, society was full of agitation and social thought was changing quickly. Social and cultural changes fostered a certain skepticism in which traditional thoughts were radically critiqued. . . . However, it was only the beginning of skepticism. For, there were unlimited numbers of groups that held dubious ideas. While ancient ideas were critiqued, hardly any new ones were generated. It was an age of chaos, and people living during that time all led a hard life. For this reason, decadent thoughts easily prevailed. In *Liezi*, a superficial philosophical work, there is an article called 'Treatise on Yang Zhu' which is very typical of such decadent thoughts. However, the situation did not change much, ideas remained old. Creativity would have been possible, had the thinkers associated their decadent thoughts with the theories of Laozi and Zhuangzi, whose concepts and theories were mature. But the thinkers were allowed little time. Time moved on quickly. Soon, the roads linking China to the Western territories (Xiyu) were crowded with travellers. Buddhism was imported from India, exhilarating the thirsty and decadent minds in the Central Kingdom.

Though Chang wrongly discriminated against the creativities of the non-Confucian thinkers, he was correct in pointing to the two important trends in Chinese world conceptions in the age of chaos: Neo-Daoism and Buddhism.

Tang Yongtong ([1957] 2001: 120) argues that in terms of the history of ideas, the age of chaos began with the revival of Daoism, which gradually transformed into Neo-Daoism and was followed by the great expansion of Buddhism. Active in separate quarters, Neo-Daoists and Buddhists all reacted differently to this same situation of so-called "chaos." In post-Han periods, Neo-Daoists antagonized themselves against the Confucian views. They adhered themselves to the cosmological and philosophical principles of the organic unity of Man and Nature. Seeing Confucian ideas of civility as unnecessary, many Neo-Daoists instead actively escaped into the fields of the arts and literature. To Neo-Daoists, civility was a means of rule that prevented human beings from becoming happy. Thus, a happier way of life could only emerge from the re-orientation of the individuals toward mountains and rivers. In wishing to join heaven by entering the "realms" of universal oneness, the legendary Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove (*zhulín qixian*)—a group of Neo-Daoist scholars, writers, and musicians—saw the Confucian dynasty of Jin as a threat to their lives. They came together in the third century as a group to escape the intrigues and stifling atmosphere of court life. If *transcendence* refers to the becoming of the Absolute Other (God), then it was not the process

disintegration. During Wei, Jin, and the Southern and Northern dynasties, the famous scholars and the noble families led their private and peaceful lives in fast changing societies. To overcome their own feelings of alienation, "they had to also live their lives in philosophical contemplation and spiritual relief" (Qian [1940] 2006: 359).

the Sages sought to be a part of. Rather, the Sages immersed themselves in nature by means of remaining in the realms of the wild—at the limits of *tianxia*.³²

In the Buddhist quarters, a different mode of ideological negation was being developed. By the time Buddhism “conquered China” (Erich 1997), the orientation of popular religion was directed towards the west, in complete contrast to the orientation of imperial sacrifices, which were performed in the direction of the east. Because of that, the greatest stories of Buddhism in the age of chaos were the monks’ journeys to the West. Such journeys became highly-regarded practices between the fourth and seventh centuries. Among them, the most well-known example is Fa-Hsien’s “long march” to India, in which the monk made history by “crossing the faraway sands and oceans to learn the Truth and returned with records of their experiences” (Cen [1964] 2004: 2, 741).

When he was twenty years old, Fa-Hsien underwent the abstinent rituals of a Bhikku (monk). Fa-Hsien was determined to clarify monastic rules and regulations when he found the theories and rules of Buddhism in China to be imperfect (Tang [1957] 2001:116–20). Accordingly, in 399 CE, he set out for India at the age of sixty-five. He travelled for fourteen years, covered more than 40,000 miles, documented his travels across thirty kingdoms on the way to India, and edited all the materials into one volume—*The travels of Fa-Hsien* (Legge [1886] 1998).³³ Fa-Hsien’s pilgrimage was an ideal search for the authentic source of Buddhism. His travels displayed an “Other-Centric” imaginary of the West—the hard to reach, wonderful homeland of Buddha.³⁴

In their inactions and actions, Neo-Daoists and Buddhists, the two new kinds of *shi* in the age of “splits and struggles,” remade the pre-imperial tradition of traveling (*you*). By traveling to the uninhabited mountains, Neo-Daoists departed from the social world. Remaining either in solitude or small groups, they created a different way of life from the “civilized.” The mountains to which they went and stayed were perhaps not very distant; yet they were seen as remote, at a level beyond the profane. Buddhists also traveled extensively. The mountains, deserts, rivers, lakes, and seas, formed the obstacles on the monks’ journeys and they endeavored to “chisel through” these obstacles, effectively paving the way to the Western Heaven (Beal 1980), the remote source of the sacred, which could consecrate the locally profane.

In different traveling activities, Neo-Daoists and Buddhists both re-constituted Self-Other relations for *tianxia*. In the Han period, the *official* perspective of the

32 Partly because of the influence of the Seven Sages, landscape paintings substituted anthropocentric art works to express the Neo-Daoist sense of oneness of Man and Nature. In such artistic expressions, mountains and rivers were conceptualized as natural substances and they became useful for the (re-)inculcation of the Self. The Neo-Daoists perceived such substances and shapes as “images” (*xian*) to be “played with in order for the Sages to become fused with the Way (Dao)” (Xu 2001: 140–142).

33 This book, belonging to the genre of autobiography, records the history, geography, religions, and folklores of different countries in the Western Territories (Xiyu), South Asia, and Southeast Asia (C. Feng [1937] 1987: 21).

34 Starting from the Jin Dynasty, through the Northern and Southern Dynasties to early Tang, such a sense of the West became a remote mirror with which the moral flaws of local cultures were reflected.

world had consisted of a rather narrow dichotomy of Self-Other distinctions. To order this world, the emperors and their servants cosmicized their own world as ordered squares contrasted with the “chaos” of the Other. Around 121 CE, the Han compiler Xu Shen finished *Shuowen Jiezi*, the first Chinese work on philology. According to Xu Shen, the Chinese character for Self (*Ji*) “refers to the central palace,” and “the iconography of the character is a human stomach” that “shows an image which encompasses ten thousand kinds of things” (1982: 309). In the lexicon, there is also an entry for the Other (*Ta*), which is said to have originally referred to a “long insect” (*chong*), which looks like the curled body of a snake. Xu Shen further explains why the image of the snake was applied in describing the Other. He says: “In ancient times, human beings lived among plants and they were so afraid of snakes (*Ta*). So they greeted each other with the sentence: Snake is out of place” (1982: 285). To Xu Shen, the character for the Other (*Ta*) expressed the way in which any reptile creeps. The idea of *creeping* represented a certain way of conduct that was different from “the right way.” The Self was thus the “stomach” that “digests the world,” and Others were the snakes that creep behind human beings.

Xu Shen’s contrast between Self and Other was unthinkable during the “axial age” of Chunqiu and the Warring States. Among the contesting schools of thought, Self-Other relations formed a focus for debates. Confucius confined his perspective of Self-Other relations to ethical and social realms, referring to the human others (*ren*), and considering the Self as the bigger “I” (*da wo*). Daoists such as Zhuangzi conceived the Self as only meaningful when it was unified with heaven (Nature). Qu Yuan saw the Other as the “Perfect Lady” or the mountains spirits (*shan gu*) (G. Wang [1906] 2005: 130–133). None of these thinkers antagonized the Self over-against the Other.

Neither was the Han-centric notion of *tianxia* as composed of the “digesting stomach” of empire and the “creeping things” of the Other accepted among Neo-Daoists and Buddhists in the age of chaos. Contrary to the orthodoxy, the new “traveling *shu*” of the post-imperial times re-oriented the Chinese world toward the Other. In infusing the Self with the Other of the uninhabited mountains or with the Other of a divinity of external origins (i.e., Buddha) they contributed to a new perspective of *tianxia*.

Ethnographic Others

Sinologist Jacques Gernet’s (1994: 56–69) point that certain “wisdoms of anthropology” had been developed in ancient China might strike the critical historians of the discipline as disconcerting, as it seems at odds with a different conclusion they have drawn—that anthropology only began to exist in the post-Renaissance West (e.g., Fabian 1983; Stocking 1987; McGrane 1989).³⁵ However, the “wisdom” of including the Other—in this case, broadly including other humans, other divinities, and other things—and the “colonial situations” (Asad 1990) of empire both exerted their influences on pre-modern Chinese politics and world conceptions of *tianxia*. In a manner of speaking, the cosmo-politics of pre-modern China did indeed make “ethnographic others” in service of its own ends.

35 More recently, a number of histories of Chinese cartography and ethnography have acknowledged that certain representations of the Other existed long before China’s “Europeanization” (Smith 1996; Hostetler 2001: 87–97).

Chinese narratives of the Other formed an archaic literature, in which a sense of ethnocentrism—what is often referred to as characterizing Western anthropology—can be detected. According to Richard Smith (1996: 7),

Chinese scholars have long included accounts of foreigners (most often described generically as *yi*, “barbarians”) and foreign lands in their histories, encyclopedias, and other compendia, both official and unofficial. From a practical standpoint, this information—ranging from local customs, agricultural and other products, and topography to military capabilities and economic activities—alerted the Chinese to external conditions that might affect the country’s trade and security. From a more theoretical perspective, records of “foreign countries” (*waiguo*) documented in detail a fundamental Chinese cultural conceit: the idea of China’s superiority over all other peoples of the world.

More or less precise descriptions and comparisons of the “barbarians” formed an important part of historiography, geography, astrology, and cartography. In these genres, a lower human species (such as *fan*, *yi*, etc.) was usually represented as a section of the world, located in the outer zones of the earth, and the barbarians tended markedly to correspond with the geography of the wilderness (*ye*), the condition contrary to civilization (*wen*).

In his *History of anthropology*, Alfred C. Haddon (1910) offered a long view of European anthropological science, where he argued that certain anthropological concerns and knowledge had already developed in the Greek world.³⁶ From the fifth century BCE Hippocrates, Aristotle, Herodotus, Strabo, etc. had paid attention to the physical evolution of mankind as a natural historical process. They also advanced their perspectives of civilization on some comparative ethnological grounds that also covered the study of so-called primitive conditions.

Sixteen years after Haddon wrote, a renowned Chinese scholar and educator Cai Yuanpei also wrote to validate this long history of anthropological thought. Cai suggested that similar sorts of knowledge existed in a counterpart historical period of time in China.³⁷ Admitting the Greek roots of the words *ethnos* and *logos*, Cai said that anthropology also had roots in the classics of ancient China:

Descriptive ethnology emerged quite early. In our country, [in the ancient times] there was a book called *Shan Hai Jing*. It is said that it was Yu Yi who compiled it. Evidence for this is not clear. But we do know that the book was written in a period prior to the Han dynasty. Though the core content of the book was geographic, [it] contained numerous materials on ancient mythology, and some of these materials were full of ethnological contents. (Cai [1926] 1993: 2: 1112)³⁸

36 The same view of history of Western anthropology did not cease to be acceptable until the 1960s (see Kluckhohn 1961).

37 Cai Yuanpei, then the principle of Peking University, had just returned from his journey to Germany where he studied ethnology at the University of Leipzig for a year. Like his German teachers, Cai Yuanpei regarded anthropology as composed of descriptive ethnography and comparative ethnology (Hu 1981).

38 Cai also said, that “comparative ethnology seeks to compare the similarity and difference between different patterns of behavior among different nationalities

Many contemporary Western anthropologists, who have mostly been engaged in revealing the connection between anthropology and the Western-centered “colonial situations,” might regard what Cai wrote as confused. However, Cai’s argument is, in a way, quite supportive of the idea that the epistemological and methodological particulars of anthropological science were not necessarily inventions of the West.³⁹

Indeed, rich descriptions and comparison were included in *Shan Hai Jing*. Strictly speaking, the book is not a specialized ethnological work. Instead, it covers areas such as the geology and geography of the world known to the Chinese. Dispersed here and there throughout the book are legends of the Xia, Shang, and Zhou’s conflicts and dynastic successions. However, the structure of the narrative is constituted more or less in terms of the non-Huaxia worlds. The book describes races, animal species, geography, commodities, customs, and ritual practices in 135 countries (*guo*)⁴⁰—or in fact enlarged descent groups—in the zones outside the royal domains. The three sections of the book are the “scripture of the overseas” (*haiwa jing*), “the scripture of the inland” (*hainei jing*), and the “scripture of the great wilderness” (*dahuang jing*). Each part is divided in accordance with the directions of south, west, north, and east. In the survey of places in each direction, several—from three to seventeen—countries (or enlarged descent groups) are included. Each of the eighteen chapters of each scripture focuses upon a specialized area (defined in terms of a direction) (Hu 1981).

Shan Hai Jing undoubtedly involved a certain *imaginary geography*—it is a source of Chinese mythology, for instance—but the book is also hyper-empiricist, comprising good records of the widely distributed countries. One other interesting aspect of *Shan Hai Jing* was that it involved a map of the sacred mountain-residences of spirit-media or Shamans who had closer linkages to heaven than the kings. These mountain residences—such as Xi Wangmu’s Kun Lun—were situated outside the royal domains. However, the gods and goddesses who resided in them were described as divinities to which the son of heaven offered sacrifices. The locations of mountains and seas (lakes) serve the cardinal points for the mapping and descriptions.⁴¹ All the countries, produces, animals, and mines are spotted in terms of geographic distance from the center and its surrounding points of spatial references and in close linkages to the topographic locations. In *Shan Hai Jing*, the important thing is thus not the Central Kingdom but the peripheral worlds of humans, semi-humans, and things.

As Needham (1981a: 240) has argued, compared with Greek writings about the barbarians, *Shan Hai Jing* is “more detailed and elaborate” than its Western counterparts and is less centered on civilization. Further, according to

(*minzu*) . . . Our ancient Chinese people also knew of the issue of comparison,” (Cai [1926] 1993: 2: 1119; cf. Cai 1962).

39 Needham also perceives *Shan Hai Jing* as a source of “anthropological geography” (Needham 1959: 497–590).

40 Some nineteen of them are overlaps.

41 The directional geographic representations in *Shan Hai Jing* are quite similar to *Yu Gong* in *Shang Shu* (*Supreme Book*) that first patterned out the radiating five zones and the nine prefectures in Chinese cosmo-geography (Needham 1981a: 237–239).

Cai Yuanpei, a chapter entitled “Records of kingship” (*wangzhi*) in *The book of rites* offers the following comments on what we might call “comparative ethnology”:

People who live in different places have different institutions (*zhi*) and live different lives in different customary patterns, which are conditioned by the situations of Heaven, Earth, coldness, warmth, humidity, and wetness, and by different shapes of plains and valleys. Thus different peoples developed different personalities and capabilities. Some are softer, some are tougher; some move slower, some move faster. They have different tastes of food, use different instruments, dress in different costumes. The central kingdom (*zhongguo*) . . . take the same measures to rule these peoples; but it does not seek to change what they are accustomed to. . . . The central kingdom and the Rong and Yi are distributed in the five directions. Each of them has its nature. One should not deploy his own rule to judge the others. In the east, there are peoples who are known as the Yi. They keep long hairs and tattoo their bodies and they do not grow grains for food. In the north, there are peoples who are known as the Di. They dress up in birds’ feathers and live in caves. Some of them do not grow grains. Both the central kingdom and the four sorts of the barbarians (*yi man rong di*) feel at ease when they are settled. They are all dressed and capable of applying different kinds of equipment. Yet peoples in the five different directions (*wu fang zhi min*) do not share the same language and same hobbies (*shu*) and desires (*yu*). If we really want to express the differences, then we can say that relatively the eastern peoples express themselves with more conveyance (*ji*), the Southern peoples express themselves with more imageries, the Western peoples express themselves with more warrior action, and the Northern people express themselves with more mutually translatable messages (Cai [1926] 1993: 2: 1116–1117).

In the Qin and the Han dynasties, the centralized empire of China not only produced elaborate ceremonies to authorize mountains as sacred sites of royal pilgrimages, but also extended the ethnographic genre to historiography. During this period, comparative descriptions of other peoples were included in the great dynastic histories. In the period of Great Unity during Wu Di’s reign, the “record of foreign kingdoms” (*waiguo liezhuan*) was invented as an important component of official history (C. Wang 2005: 69–98), and a certain *realistic geography* of the realms beyond the Chinese world was initiated. Gradually, the perspective of the world with China as a non-center, once available in the time of *Shan Hai Jing*, became further reformulated.

Due to the ascending influences of Neo-Daoism and Buddhism, the orthodox cosmology of *tianxia* was fundamentally altered with respect to ethnographic others. The Seven Sages’ renouncing practices and Fa-Hsien’s journey to the West were two of the many examples of intellectual inversions.⁴² While Neo-Daoism

42 An earlier example of such renouncing “sages” could be said to be Qu Yuan. This was a senior advisor to the Chu king. He wrote poetic representations of *Li Shao* (*Poetic Excursions*) and *Tian Wen* (*Heavenly Questionings*) to describe barbarian and demonic beings (Hawkes 1985). Exposed to nature, history, and the demonic existence in the mountains, Qu Yuan engaged in a reflexive interaction with the question of the above, the remote, and the Other. Learning much from liturgies of the mask dancers in his home country, Qu Yuan enriched his world with poetic narratives (C. Zhou: 1986). In his narratives, the purity of the royal descent lines of all the Huaxia sage-kings

continued to convert its followers, many high Buddhist monks re-enlivened Fa-Hsien's legacy. For instance, in the transitional period between Sui and Tang, Xuan Zang departed from the capital city Chang'an to conduct a journey to India in 627 CE. Being discontent with Chinese perspectives of ontology and cosmology, the Tang Monk threw himself into a sequence of adventures toward his destination. After nineteen years of travel, he returned to the Chinese capital with 657 sacred books, numerous Buddha statues, and plant seeds. Within a year, he also completed a book known as *Datang Xiyu Ji* (*Notes on the Western Territories of the Great Tang*). The twelve volumes of the book described 150 city-states and tribes that he visited. The book was a comprehensive system of travelogues and ethnographic descriptions. It catalogued and compared the politics, warfare, local products, and religiosities of different countries along his journey. Paying special attention to Buddhist spirituality, the book also created a mental map in which the *Truth* among the *Other* (India) was offered as a viable alternative to secular Confucian ideology (X. Ji: 1995).

Throughout the imperial periods (i.e., from Qin to Qing, ending in 1911), China experienced many political changes and unity was not always established according to a "realistic geography." For almost half of the time between Han and Tang, the Central Kingdom fell into disintegration due to internal rivalries and external challenges. In several periods, the military aristocracy advanced, forced the emperor to his downfall, suppressed the role of the *shi*, and then elevated them again when they assumed the crown. Whenever the Chinese world was reintegrated, imperial cosmo-geographies were remade to assert the Great Unity of *tianxia*. The cosmo-geographies were re-inscribed in imperial ritual theories and practices, and recorded in the ethnographies of the foreign.

In the later dynasties of Song and Yuan (960–1368 CE), the development of China's maritime trade on the Southeast and South coasts facilitated the creation of a China-centered "tributary world system" (C. Feng: [1937] 1987).⁴³ Human capital within the dynastic confines was indeed an important component of the system. But an even more important component was the relationship with "overseas countries" (*haiguo*) or the "foreigners" (*fau*), about which many Chinese scholar-officials (throughout the periods of Song, Yuan, Ming, and Qing) were keenly gathering ethnographic data.

In 1178, Zhou Qufei who lived in Guangxi wrote a book entitled *Lingwai Daida* (*Some answers from outside the southern mountains*) in which he described the legal institutions, products, tribal life, and trade among the frontier peoples of

and ancestors, Yao, Xun, Yu, the Shang, and the Zhou kings were brought into a complex conjuncture with the barbarian and the demonic. For a consideration of Qu Yuan's sense of the Self in comparison to Confucian sociologies of the person, see Elvin (1985).

43 A reading of Gernet's *History of Chinese Civilization* (1982) can show that the six centuries of history from 960 onwards was one such cycle of open (the Yuan), enclosed (the Ming), and open (the early Qing) dynasties. The lengthy centuries between the ninth and the fourteenth century belonged to the phase of the open tributary empire, though coupled sometimes by separatist regimes, whereas the later centuries, particularly the three hundred years of the Ming, was more closed. The condition of closure did not change until the early eighteenth century.

China and Southeast Asian countries. An emergent tributary mode was applied as one of the main plots of his narrative (Zhou: [1178] 1999). In 1225, Zhao Rugua, a customs inspector on the southeast coast published his *Gazetteer of all foreigners* (*Zhufan Zhi*), on the basis of details supplied by Chinese and foreign merchants (Zhao: 1996 [1125]). A century later, Wang Dayuan, who traveled right round the Indian Ocean on two merchant voyages in the 1330s and reached as far as East Africa Coast, published his *Brief gazetteer of island savages* (*Daoyi Zhilue*). Both Zhao Qufei and Wang Dayuan's works focused on the non-Chinese territories and peoples in Southeast Asia, India, the Middle East, and, to a much lesser extent, East Africa (D. Wang: [1349] 1981). The two most important aspects of description were peoples and products.

By the time these gazettes of foreign places emerged, Chinese representations of the outer zones of human worlds had undergone important transformations.⁴⁴ Nonetheless, the emphasis on the transitional points in space did not lead to an ideology of cultural relativism. Rather, such gazetteers of foreign countries were *imperialist* by character. Conceived as certain "articulated set of relationships to the dominant culture" (Said 1978: 22), together they created a system of hierarchical levels that culminated in the cosmology of heaven. In all these works, the subjectivity of the Other was recognized as the holder of the diversity of local products or as mountain monsters, ocean chieftains, and half-humans. Perspectives on trade relationships in the world were presented according to the model of a tributary system. The exchange between China as the center of the world and the peripheries of other countries was defined in terms of the son of heaven's obligation to pay greater gifts to the tribal chieftains, who were, in turn, the "sons" of their emperor "father."

Hierarchy was the defining characteristic of this Sino-centric "world system." It was projected in a civilizing line departing from the central zone and extending into the zones of the "savages." The latter were the peripheries that produced materials and fancy products to be extracted by the center. Included in the Chinese world, they were disposed in a catalogue of humans, animals, moral types, and monsters, whose co-presence was defined in terms of the harmony of difference in *tianxia*. Heaven was the ultimate power and judge of morality and civilization was both the highest authority and divinity. Gazetteers helped the center exert control over the world and create its self-portrait of Chinese civilization.⁴⁵ Meanwhile, unequal exchanges also existed, especially in the situations in which the son of heaven gave

44 In the classical books of rites, and in their later re-inscriptions, urban design was often combined with the design of *tianxia*. The authors mapped the zones of civilization and its lesser kinds onto the cities themselves. Contrastingly, in the gazettes compiled in the Song-Yuan period, the centers of tributary stations (such as maritime trade harbors on the coast) were emphasized as a new point of reference for measuring distances between China and other countries as well as new focal points for conceptions of *tianxia*.

45 I would nonetheless except Zhou Daguan from this critique. When deciphering the royal city of Angkor in his great ethnography *Zhenla Fengtu Ji* (*The customs of Cambodia*) ([1311] 2000), Zhou, who inherited more of the Other-Centric perspectives available in earlier phases, applied evaluative vocabularies. In several places, he included the term *tuli* (rules of civility) to show that in his eyes Cambodian social life was perfectly in line with archaic Chinese rules of ritual.

more rewards to what he gained from the tribal chieftains who paid him tributes. In terms of both “tributes” and “rewards” (*bao*), the gazettes of this period of *tianxia* were hierarchically conceived instead of being reciprocally arranged. Such a hierarchy was composed of a disc-shape cartography and cosmography of the centripetal zones in *The book of rites*, which had remained pervasive until late imperial periods.⁴⁶

Conclusion

In each of the historical moments discussed above, some of the perspectives on *tianxia* were more prevalent than the rest. But for those of us who consider them retrospectively in our own age, they appear as an historically accumulated *Tradition of traditions*, existing in our minds as a synchronic unity of diachronic diversity—as the “pre-modern” capable of re-enacting a contest of thoughts in the “modern.” While being diverse, this *Tradition of traditions* seems also to have an overall configuration. But what is it?

As Zhuangzi said long ago, “If there is no other, there will be no I” (Fung 1989: 41). *Tianxia*, as the “I,” the heavenly polity, and the variety of world conceptions, gained its identity in contemporary Chinese thought by virtue of being the “other” of the Indo-European mytho-religious systems. The form of such systems was the verticality of the so-called “Three Functions” (Dumézil 1970), constructed to make a hierarchical “society of the gods” built out of the opposing forms of the *ordered inside* and the *chaotic outside* (Eliade 1961; Tambiah 1985b).

In the Chinese world, the kings and sons of heaven likewise envisaged their own dwelling as the center of the world, and treated “verticality” as a major organizing principle of society.⁴⁷ A major aspect of Chinese cosmology and politics was thus, similarly, an *asymmetrical relationship* between inside and outside conceptualized in terms of the hierarchy of the “above” and the “below.” But the East was never identical with the West. In the former’s universe, cosmologies made the distinctions between inside and outside, subject and object, and order and chaos in greatly more relative and flexible terms, chiefly (but not only) for the purpose of forging mutual relations out of contrary oppositions.⁴⁸

46 When the Portuguese began to explore Africa, Southeast Asia, and Asia, Ming sent seven voyages led by Zheng He into the Western Ocean in the early fifteenth century. The fleets made of 30,000 officers went at different times in different directions. They visited many Southeastern Asian countries and reached as far as the Persian Gulf and East Africa (Needham 1981b: 128–159). Though Zheng He might have discovered a quite different shape of the world, the hegemonic account of cosmo-geography continued to be the theory of the “square Earth.”

47 For instance, during Qin and Han, indulging themselves in empire-making, the emperors resorted to a restricted model of vertical society. In so doing, they re-made themselves as “magician-kings.” The “unintended consequence” was that, as Max Weber (1951: 31) astutely observed, “the emperor had to prove his magical charisma through military success or at least he had to avoid striking failures. Above all, he had to secure good weather for harvest and guarantee the peaceful internal order of the realm . . . Thus, the Chinese monarch remained primarily a pontifex; he was the old rainmaker of magical religion translated into ethics.”

48 In relating this “logos” to contrary opposites of Left and Right hands, Granet (1973: 58) thus argues that “Never do we find absolute oppositions”: “a left-hander is not sinister,

From the sixteenth century BCE onward, “supremacy”—the abstract entirety of the gods—of Shang began to give way to the cosmos of heaven, in which gods were no longer seen as being external to nature and human world; alternatively, the natural order, conceptualized in terms of heaven-earth relations, itself was considered as *divine*. In Ancient Greece, however, the gods are “agents possessed of a superior strength to which men must submit,” and they “form, as it were, a society of Powers—who are both competitive and at the same time mutually supporting” (Vernant 1996: 94). Unlike this version of humanity’s relationship to divinity, in ancient China,

order can never result from the external intervention of a power of command, nor from an arbitrary authoritarian division of functions and powers, nor from a balance dependent upon an agreement reached between antagonistic forces. In short, it cannot proceed from anything that is arbitrary. The activity of the sovereign is similar to that of the farmer who does no more than encourage the growth of his plants and in no way intervenes in the process of germination and growth. He acts in accordance with the orders of Heaven (*t’ien*), and identifies himself with it. The principle of order is to be found only in the things that are. It cannot but be immanent in the world. (Gernet and Vernant 1996: 84)⁴⁹

Living in the tradition of “immanent transcendence,” Chinese sons of heaven imagined their *tianxia* as culminating on the summits of earth—the holy mountains (*yue*)—situated *out there* in the quarters surrounding the center; the Neo-Daoist reformed themselves into hermits, hiding in the mountains; and the Buddhist monks located the center of *tianxia* beyond the mountains, in the remote heaven of India.

In this *Tradition of traditions*, neither humanity nor the world was seen as created by God.⁵⁰ Thus, social control was derived from a relational understanding of ontological restrictions. The political ontology of the restrictions was close to what *Shan Hai Jing* outlined—the unity of diversity of peoples and kingdoms that, at once, both surrounded and limited the center.⁵¹ Or it was close to what *Li ji* outlined—the inseparability of family, kingdom, and “the world” in the Way of Humanity.⁵² But the ideas of restriction had their cosmological foundations, the most prolific of which has been the following epistemology:

and neither is right-hander. A multitude of rules show the left and the right as predominating alternately. The diversity of times and places imposes, at any point, a very delicate choice between left and right, but this choice is inspired by a very coherent system of representations.”

49 Kang Youwei ([1904–05] 2001) made the same point long ago, when he postulated that instead of depending upon the Way of God (*Shen Dao*) in envisaging their cosmologies for the world, the Chinese political thinkers continuously resorted to the Way of Humanity (*Ren Dao*) and Way of Heaven (*Tian Dao*).

50 Brague uses the concept “Way of God” to refer to the “perfect language” of the God—the Word (Brague 2003: 85–103).

51 Such a notion of the restrictions has continued to affect late imperial and modern Chinese ethnological imaginations of the “nation.”

52 A paragraph from *Li ji* deserves a quote:

Objects in nature are mutually related and at the same time mutually restrictive. When described in literature and art, the relationships and restrictions are usually disregarded, to make the realist writer or the artist seems idealist. But no matter how imaginary the poetic state (*xugou zhijing*) one may construct, the materials are bound to be sought in nature, and the construction must follow the laws of nature (*ziran zhi fazhe*). Thus an idealist is always also a realist. (G. Wang [1906] 2005: 2)

Like other cosmologies and cosmo-geographies, pre-modern Chinese perspectives of *tianxia*, as constructs of the human imagination, could not be fully achieved in political or social reality. But the ideal of *tianxia* in the variety of world conceptions remained the value of virtue (*de*), with which *tianxia* as a “real world” was accessed and inscribed in histories and myths.

Postscript

As a “native anthropologist” writing in the present, I have developed an “embodied awareness” (*tihui*) of the cosmological transformations of *tianxia* in their acceleration during the so-called “post-traditional age,” of which Liang Qichao’s advocacy of the modern kingdom (i.e., the nation) has come to play an active role. To further debate the value of re-thinking historical and cosmological perspectives of *tianxia* in the present (cf. Chang 2011), we must observe that this *acceleration* began long before the twentieth century.

In the later half of the sixteenth century, knowledge about China exploded in Europe. Jesuits such as Galeote Pereira, Gaspare da Cruz, Mendes Pinto, and Matteo Ricci had woven what they read and heard with what they saw into European narratives of China. Moreover, they not only combined their sciences with Chinese cosmology but also painted for the Chinese (and with a Chinese brush) their versions of the globe. In the early seventeenth century, the Italian Jesuit Giulio Aleni—known in China as Ai Rulue—completed in 1623, with his Chinese Jesuit associate Yang Tingjun, a Chinese book *Zhifang Waiji* (*An extra-register of geography*), which (supposedly) together with Ricci’s Chinese cartography of the globe, opened Chinese eyes to the outside world (Zhang [1933] 2000). In bringing the globe closer to the Chinese world, the Jesuits also sought to extend their mythico-religious systems (the Way of God) into the Chinese world (the Ways of Humanity and Heaven). But this was often interrupted by Chinese cultural revivals.

During the Qing Dynasty, for example, foreign embassies were received in the microcosm of the Chinese world, which was still represented as a squared tribute

Wishing to order well their States, they [the ancients] first regulated their families. Wishing to regulate their families, they first cultivated their persons. Wishing to cultivate their persons, they first rectified their hearts. Wishing to rectify their hearts, they first sought to be sincere in their thoughts. Wishing to be sincere in their thoughts, they first extended to the utmost their knowledge. Such extension of knowledge lay in the investigation of things. Things being investigated, knowledge became complete. Their knowledge being complete, their thoughts were sincere. Their thoughts being sincere, their hearts were then rectified. Their hearts being rectified, their persons were cultivated. Their persons being cultivated, their families were regulated. Their families being regulated, their States were rightly governed. Their States being rightly governed, the whole kingdom was made tranquil and happy. (Legge [1885] 1998: 357–359)

system. They were brought into the “Garden of Perfect Brilliance” (*Yuanming Yuan*) alongside many foreign elements on display as complementary to the cultural diversity of “all under heaven.” As Sahlins (1988: 22–24) notes,

[T]hese imperial gardens . . . signified a cultural politics, encompassing an economics that was likewise inclusive and exclusive and could thus adapt appropriately to the practical situation . . . the synthesis of diversity and conquest made these imperial retreats perfect microcosms. They represented the whole world as the work of the Emperor and within his power.

The Qing court’s negligence of the existence of the “real” external world was critiqued by Wei Yuan, a late imperial *shi*, who reformulated *tianxia* for its revitalization. In 1843, four months after the Chinese defeat in the Opium War, Wei Yuan published his *Mapped gazetteer of the maritime states* (*Haiguo Tuzhi*) (Wei [1843] 1998). He devoted forty-three chapters to six oceans in the world.⁵³ While being fully aware of the geographic divisions of continents, Wei nevertheless postulated that the Western maps of the world were not good because in being barbarian “techniques,” they did not live up to the Chinese spirituality of heaven. To fit the maps into the heaven-scape of China, Wei adopted what might be described as a mixed version of the mandala-styled galactic polity and Chinese *tianxia* in order to arrange the continents in the world into oceans that surrounded China.⁵⁴

Another cultural revival occurred during the transition between the nineteenth and the twentieth century when intellectual prophecies of the remade *tianxia* in the new world order dominated most of the intellectual and political discussions of China’s fate. In this period, the Chinese *shi* became grateful to Western sciences for revealing their enlightenments to them.⁵⁵ Works by Western evolutionary anthropologists in particular attracted much attention in late Qing. The translators were the first generation of Chinese “modernists” who viewed European biological metaphors for inter-societal conflicts as the medicine to cure Chinese “cultural illnesses.”⁵⁶ In the last three decades of the nineteenth century, Kang Youwei and his disciples Yan Fu, Liang Qichao, and many others began to engage themselves

53 Wei knew a lot about Western geography. He read both Matteo Ricci and Giulio Aleni’s maps of the world. He also read and translated many other maps in Western languages.

54 Wei paid much attention to the Western powers. However, strategically composed, his book argued for a regional world system that could benefit China. The oceans included in his view of the Chinese maritime empire included Southeast Asia. The China-Southeast Asian Civilization excludes Europe, Russia and America.

55 After the Chinese defeat in the 1895 anti-Japanese war, Kang Youwei, Yan Fu, and Liang Qichao engaged themselves in translating Darwin and Huxley. In 1902, a translation of the book by the Japanese Ariga Nagao, *The evolution of the family*, based on works by Spencer’s *Principles of sociology* was published. Before that, Edward Westermarck’s *History of human marriage* and Durkheim’s *Rules of sociological methods* were carried in serial form in newspapers.

56 However, it should be noted that modern Chinese nationalists were soon divided into constitutional monarchists and Republican revolutionaries (Duara 1995).

in synthesizing—often through Japan—Western evolutionist doctrines and Chinese cosmological concepts. Social Darwinism became the main focus of their attention. Yan Fu was the introducer of social evolutionism; Kang Youwei was both China's first prophet of progress and critique of Darwin; Liang Qichao was considered "a Chinese Huxley." They departed from different perspectives to interpret Western evolutionism, but the concern that first encouraged them to write about Darwin and evolution was shared by each of them. It was China's realization of its own geo-political weakness that drove them to look for the evolutionist way out. *How can we be strong?*⁵⁷ *How can we survive?*⁵⁸ These were questions that they sought to answer in common (Pusey 1983).

To revitalize China, early twentieth century Chinese social scientists made new journeys to the West. In the late 1920s, Chinese sociological anthropologists and culturological ethnologists turned themselves into "receivers" of the type of knowledge of the Western world and reconstituted Chinese anthropology. With Western tools in their hands, they began to subject the "internal others" (ethnic groups and peasantry) to their investigative projects.⁵⁹ Few Chinese anthropologists in their wake have studied the societies beyond the boundaries of the modern nation and few have sought to draw lessons from the "internal others" (including the historical Others of *tianxia*) for reflexive re-considerations of "Chinese civilization." Too many have been so busily involved in spontaneously applying scientific methods of dichotomizing the progressive and the backward, the traditional and the modern, and the present and the future.⁶⁰ To be sure, intellectual radicalization against tradition and against the surviving "backward peoples" has continued to empower the strong state. The sense of the Other⁶⁰ and the sense of scientific accuracy has been surrendered to nationalizing projects.⁶⁰

57 They borrowed from the West certain scientific methods, including methods for studying the Other. Having domesticated such methods into an integral part of the citizens' own modernizing project, Chinese anthropologists have so far been sacrificed to the enterprise of domestic politics (see M. Wang 2010).

58 The intellectuals' anxiety to modernize, civilize, or include the "internalized others" has overshadowed the anthropological respect for the more distant perspectives of the Other.

59 Even in the imperial cosmologies, the civilization-centric world-view was conflated with the emperor's tribute-paying visits to the great mountains where the emperor-as-pilgrim performed the inversion of "autocracy" and "alterity" and alternated centers and margins. In many of the great philosophies of ancient times, more Other-centric perspectives of the world were advanced. To add to the various examples already mentioned, as Zhuangzi tells us that Hui Shih once said: "I know the center of the world. It is North of Yen and South of Yue" (Fung 2008: 287). Yue was in the extreme South and Yen was in the extreme North. To say that the center of the world is either beyond the extreme North or beyond the extreme South is to reject the "common-sense" Chinese notion that the Central Kingdom was the center of the world. Or, it was to say that "The world has no limit, and therefore anywhere is the center, just as in drawing a circle, any point on the line can be the starting point" (ibid.: 287).

60 An additional history of the modernization sequel to this would be the transformations from *tianxia* to *Guojia* (a Chinese translation of "the state," whose original meaning is kingdom-family, composed of the two lower levels of existence under *tianxia*), world to nation, and empire to state. One of the core temporalities would be that of the

All these more contemporary cultural-historical transformations have made what we have often said about “Chinese civilization”; it is the Other of itself. Pre-modern Chinese cosmo-geographies were not unique exceptions in this regard; like other worldviews, they too were trapped in their own political and cultural institutions of discrimination. In this essay, I bore this point in mind; but the point did not hinder me from conveying a different argument: in pre-modern times, pursuits of knowledge were highly marked and political-cum-ceremonial linkages and alternations between centers and margins, insides and outsides, and other opposing contraries were constantly made. Historical ethnographers writing on *that* side of the world may investigate such archaic contraries in order to shed light on the “feeling for the contradictions that divide a man against himself” (Vernant 1996: 99–100). Writing on *this* side of the world, I have drawn from them a different lesson: the cosmologies of contraries, as practiced in politics, performed in ritual, and evoked in world conceptions throughout pre-modern times have made a contribution to the critique of our own time. Having been re-presented, the old world-scapes offer us a lesson. Because one civilization is no more the measure of the other, in this globalized age of a world of “warring states”—if I may so call it—further evocations and mutual understanding of different perspectives of the world, including different ideas of the Other in different societies, are urgently needed. As I believe, in spite of all its shortcomings, its sketchiness and partiality—for which I must apologize—and with all the diverse historical and cultural moments of *tianxia* yet to be fully understood, this brief outline has one merit: it fits into a framework of reflexive reciprocation in which our own ways of the world are situated in an ecology of relationships with other ways.

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transformation of “all under heaven” into the nation’s “self-awareness of culture” (Fei 2004) and ethno-autobiographies of self-redemption, bound up with the new concept of “the world”—*shijie*.

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« Tout-sous-le-ciel » (*tianxia*). Perspective cosmologique et ontologies politiques dans la Chine pré-moderne

Résumé : Cet essai examine les transformations historiques du concept chinois de *tianxia* (« tout-sous-le-ciel ») durant l'ère pré-moderne. Plus spécifiquement, il se penche sur les différentes manières par lesquelles le *tianxia* a été construit à partir de liens entre cosmologie et organisation politique. Les sections de cet essai — *tianxia* archaïque, la relation comme vertu, conceptions du monde durant les Royaumes Combattants, l'empire, inversion néo-taoïste et bouddhiste, et les autres ethnographiques — forment les caractéristiques des périodes qui ont bâties, pour le présent, les multiples facettes de l'histoire conceptuelle du *tianxia*. Cet essai questionne ces différentes périodes historiques afin de reconsidérer les conceptions populaires de la « civilisation chinoise » et de restituer les perspectives du *tianxia* dans leurs contextes sociaux. Poursuivant la réflexion intellectuelle initiée par Granet, il développe un argumentaire proposant de comprendre le *tianxia* de manière cumulative et unifiée, mais aussi en tant qu'« autre » pour les systèmes de pensées mythico-religieux indo-européens, et comme une épistémologie au sein de laquelle ontologies politiques et cosmologie se combinent.

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Glossary

Aiguo 爱国	Chao Cuo 晁错
Aiguo lun 爱国论	Chang'an 长安
Ai Rulue 艾儒略 (Giulio Aleni)	Changdi 长狄
Ba 巴	Changzhi jiu'an 长治久安
Baidi 白狄	Chang Naihui 常乃惠
Baiyue 百越	Chen Sheng 陈胜
Bao 报	Chidi 赤狄
Bi 璧	Chu 楚
Binfu 宾服	Chuan 川
Cai Yuanpei 蔡元培	Chunqiu 春秋

Ci 賜

Cicao zhichen 刺草之臣

Cishi 刺史

Cong 琮

Cong 虫

Da Ren 大人

Dahuang jing 大荒经

Da wo 大我

Dayuezhi 大月氏

Dao 道 the Way

Daode geming 道德革命

Daode qixie 道德器械

Dao wei wang 道未亡

Daoyi Zhilue 《岛夷志略》*Datang Xiyu Ji* 《大唐西域记》

Datong 大同

De 德

Dian 颠

Dianfu 甸服

Ditan 地坛

Dong 东

Dong Zhou 东周

Fa 法

Fa 伐

Fajia 法家

Fa-Hsien 法显

Fan 番

Fan Xuanzi 范宣子

Fangshi 方士

Feifeng 飞凤

Feng 风

Feng 封

Fengjian 封建

Fengshan 封禅

Fu 服

Fu 父

Fujian 福建

Fu Sinian 傅斯年

Fung Yu-lan 冯友兰

Gansu 甘肃

Gan Ying 甘英

Gong 公

Gong 宫

Gong 贡

Gu Jiegang 顾颉刚

Gua prefecture 瓜州

Guanz i 管子

Guangxi 广西

Guo Yu 《国语》

Guo 国

Guojia 国家

Guo Xiang 郭象

Guilin 桂林

Haiguo Tuzhi 《海国图志》

Haiguo 海国

hainei jing 海内经

haiwai jing, 海外经

Han Shu 《汉书》

Henan 河南

Hebei 河北

Hetao 河套

He 和

Heqin 和亲

Hequn 合群

He Yan 何晏

Houfu 侯服

Huacheng renwen 化成人文

Huangdi 皇帝

Huangfu 荒服

Huangjin 黄巾

Huanqiu 圜丘

Huanxiang dili 幻想地理

Huaxia 华夏

Hui Shih 惠施

Hufu Qishe 胡服骑射

Hunjun 昏君

Ji 寄

Ji 己

Ji 祭

Ji Chaoding 冀朝鼎

Jiagu 嘉谷

Jia Yi 贾谊

Jiaosi 郊祀

Jie 界

Jilie Pai 激烈派

Jin 晋

Jin 金

Jiu zhou 九州

Juzhi 驹支

Juan 卷

Jun 郡

Jun 君

Junxian zhi 郡县制

Junzi 君子

Kang Youwei 康有为

Ke 客

Kong Rong 孔融

Kun Lun 昆仑

Lao 劳

Laozi or *Laozi* 老子 (《老子》)*Li Ji* 《礼记》*Li Shao* 《离骚》

Li zhi, 礼制

Li 礼

Libeng yuehuai 礼崩乐坏

Liyun 礼运

Li Si 李斯

Liao 辽

Liaoning 辽宁

Liang Qichao, 梁启超

Lingwai Daida 《岭外代答》

Lin Huixiang 林惠祥

Ling Chunsheng 凌纯声

Liu Bang 刘邦

Liu Xiu 刘秀

Luan 乱 Chaos

Lushi Chunqiu 《吕氏春秋》

Lü 鲁

Luoyang 洛阳

Long'an 隆安

Manfang 蛮方

Mei-ku 昧谷

Meng Tian 蒙恬

Mixin 迷信

Miao 庙

Minzhong 闽中

Ming 命

Mingtang 明堂

Minzu 民族

Nannü youbie 男女有别

Nan-chiao (*nanjiao*) 南交

Nanhai 南海

Nei 内

Pangu 盘古

Qi 齐

Qiang 羌

Qin 寝

Qin 秦

Qin-Han, 秦汉

Qinqin 亲亲

Qin Shi Huang 秦始皇

Qing 清

Qu Yuan 屈原

Ren Dao 人道

Ri 日

Ritan 日坛

San li 三礼

Shan gui 山鬼

Shan Hai Jing 《山海经》

Shan 山

Shan 禅

Shang Shu 《尚书》

Shang 商

Shang 上

Shangdi 上帝

Shangsi 上祀

Shanrang 禅让

Shanshui 山水

Shandong 山东

Shaanxi 陕西

She 社

Sheji tan 社稷坛

Shen Dao 神道

Shi Ji 《史记》

Shi Jing 《诗经》

Shi 世

Shi 嗜

Shi 师

Shi 士

Shidaifu 士大夫

Shijie sixiang 世界思想

Shijie 世界

Shi Nianhai 史念海

Shuowen Jiezi 《说文解字》

Shuren, or *shumin* 庶人 (庶民)

Si 祀

Sichuan 四川

Sifang 四方

Sima Qian 司马迁

Song 颂

Song 宋

Song-Yuan 宋元

Su 俗

Sui-Tang

Ta 它

Taguo zhi ren 他国之人

Tang Yongtong 汤用彤

Taishan 泰山

Tian Dao 天道

Tian gan 天干

Tian Wen 《天问》

Tian 天

Tianming 天命

Tiantan 天坛

Tianxia 天下

Tianzi 天子

Tiguo jingye 体国经野

Tihui 体会

Tili 体例

Wai chen

Wai 外

Waiguo liezhuan 《外国列传》

Waiguo 外国

Wang 望

Wang Bi 王弼

Wang Dayuan 汪大渊

Wang Guowei 王国维

Wang Mang 王莽

Wangzhi 王制

Wei Yuan 魏源

Wen 文

Wenhe Pai 温和派

Wenming meibei 文明美碑

Wenzhi zhengfu 文治政府

Wei 魏

Wu fang zhi min 五方之民

Wu fu 五服

Wu Guang 吴广

Wusun 乌孙

Wu Di (汉) 武帝

Xi 羲

Xi'an 西安

Xi Wangmu 西王母

Xi Zhou 西周

Xia chen 下臣

Xia 下

Xia 夏

Xian 县

Xianyang 咸阳

Xianxian 贤贤

Xiang 象

Xiang 飧

Xianggong 襄公

Xiangjian li 相见礼

Xiang Xiu 向秀

Xiang Yu 项羽

Xiangjun 象郡

Xiasi 下祀

Xin Zhuangxue 新庄学

Xinan Man 西南蛮

Xiongnu 匈奴

Xitian 西天

Xiyu 西域

Xu Fu 徐福

Xu Shen 许慎

Xuandi 宣帝

Xuanxue 玄学

Xuan Zang 玄奘

Xugou zhijing 虚构之境

Xun 舜

Ya 雅

Yan 燕

Yan fanshi 宴藩士

Yan fanwang 宴藩王

Yan 宴

Yan Fu 严复

Yang 阳

Yang-ku 阳谷

Yang Tingjun 杨廷筠

Yaofu 要服

Yao 尧

Ye 野

Yi Li 《仪礼》

Yi, Man, Rong, Di 夷, 蛮, 戎, 狄

Yi 一

Yi 译

Yizhan 驿站

Yin 吟

Yin 阴

You 游

Youshi 游士

Yongjia 永嘉

Yu-tu 幽都

Yu Gong 《禹贡》

Yu Yi (大) 禹 (伯) 益

Yu 欲

Yuan 元

Yuankang 元康

Yuanming Yuan 圆明园

Yue 岳

Yue 乐

Yue ling 月令

Yuetan 月坛

Yunnan 云南

Zaotong 凿通

Zhanguo 战国

Zhao 赵

Zhao Rugua 赵汝适

Zhao Tuo 赵拓

Zhaoqing 肇庆

Zhang Qian 张骞

Zhuangzi 庄子

Zheng 征

Zheng 郑

Zhengshi 正始

Zhenla Fengtu Ji 《真腊风土记》

Zhenshi dili 真实地理

Zhi 制

Zhi 治

Zhifang Waiji 《职方外纪》

Zhiguo yu zhijia 治国与治家

Zhiyi 直译

Zhong jun 忠君

Zhong 种

Zhong 众

Zhongguo 中国

Zhongsi 中祀

Zhou 周

Zhou Daguan 周达观

Zhou Gong 周公

Zhou Li 《周礼》

Zhou Yi 《周易》

Zhou Qufei 周去非

Zhu 主

Zhufan Zhi 《诸番志》

Zhufu Yan 主父偃

Zhulin Qixian 竹林七贤

Ziran zhi faze 自然之法则

Zongfa 宗法

Zouxiang shijie 走向世界

Zunqun, qinqin, xianxian 尊尊亲亲贤贤

Zunwang rangyi 尊王攘夷

Zunzun 尊尊

Zuxian 祖先

Zuo Zhuan 《左传》