

A COMPARISON OF THE REPRESENTATIONS OF WOMEN  
IN *ZUOZHUAN* AND *SHIJI*

by

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## DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

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From *Chunqiu* and *Zuozhuan* to *Shiji*, women have experienced a downgrade of their formal status in historical records. In *Shiji*, women, the wives of dukes, lost their formal equality with their duke husbands in terms of being written into state history, as we see in *Chunqiu*. Their activities, including marriage, returning home, visits, and death, disappeared from Sima Qian's history for the Spring and Autumn period, which focuses on the activities of male members of ruling lineages. A positive representation of women's wisdom, eloquence, and authority is no longer in the interest of nor taken as a ritual part of history writing in *Shiji*.

In the terms of representation of women, especially those from the Spring and Autumn period, in *Zuozhuan* and *Shiji*, *Zuozhuan* gave fuller representation of women than *Shiji* and its attitude toward women was more positive in comparison to the latter. First, *Zuozhuan* in many examples presented women as having authority, agency and initiative; in the *Shiji* versions of these stories, the roles of women were reduced in order to strengthen the agency of and focalization through the male members of a ruling lineage toward a goal of a linear logic of succession. Second, *Shiji* stressed the disruptive role of women in state affairs by intensively preserving the stories in *Zuozhuan* that associated women with political disasters and emergencies. Third, *Zuozhuan* had a non-gendered

approach to the effect of women's wisdom, knowledge and eloquence; it left space for complexity of characterization for women. In contrast, *Shiji* and *Lienü Zhuan*, where these stories in *Zuozhuan* were transmitted, emphasized a patterned understanding of women and produced gender role types.

With the representation of women in *Shiji*, the effect of the agency of women in history is patterned. In *Shiji*, women's agency is more closely connected to political disasters and negative political situations. In the limited representation of positive heroines, their good roles came from their virtue in being self-restrictive and submissive. It implies as a historical teaching in *Shiji* that the limitation of the political autonomy of women is a way to promise the success of lineage and tradition.

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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

*Zuozhuan* 左傳 (*Zuo Tradition*) and Sima Qian's *Shiji* 史記 (*Records of the Grand Historian*) are two of the most important historical works from early China.<sup>1</sup> It has long been recognized that Sima Qian adopted abundant historical materials from *Zuozhuan* while writing the part of his history which concerns the Spring and Autumn period, but few people recognize how greatly Sima Qian deviated from this source text in his rewriting of the past. This dissertation is an attempt to discover differences between *Zuozhuan* and *Shiji* in tackling the same stories or topics in terms of the representations of women.

### *Introduction of Zuozhuan and its relation with Shiji*

*Shiji* was composed by the Western Han historian Sima Qian 司馬遷 (145-86? BCE). Some scholars, such as Wang Guowei 王國維 and Gu Jiegang 顧頡剛, have argued that some chapters in *Shiji* might have been composed by Sima Tan, but these disputed chapters are not in the focus of my dissertation.<sup>2</sup> In my dissertation, I will take Sima Qian

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<sup>1</sup> The reference of the Chinese texts of *Zuozhuan* and *Chunqiu* is Yang Bojun 楊伯峻, *Chunqiu Zuozhuanzhu* 春秋左傳注 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1990). This work will be referred to as CQZZZ in this dissertation hereafter. All the translations of *Zuozhuan* and *Chunqiu* in this dissertation come from a not-yet-published manuscript completed by Stephen Durrant, Wai-yee Li and David Schaberg with some minor changes. This manuscript is going to be published by University of Washington Press. My great thanks to these authors and especially to my advisor, Stephen Durrant, for offering me access to it. The referee of Chinese text of *Shiji* is the 1959 version of *Shiji* 史記 published by Zhonghua shuju 中華書局.

<sup>2</sup> See Wang Guowei, “Taishigong xingnian kao” 太史公行年考, in *Guantang jilin* (Shanghai: Shanghai

as the author of *Shiji*.<sup>3</sup>

*Zuozhuan* was generally considered as a commentary to *Chunqiu* 春秋 and the earliest record of the close relationship between these two texts is in *Shiji*:

(Confucius) went west to examine the writing of the Zhou house, discoursing on historical records and former accounts. Starting from Lu, he arranged *Chunqiu*. ....The seventy disciples passed on its ideas and concerns by oral transmission, because there were words and phrases of criticism and negative judgment, praise and taboo, diminution and attack that could not be written down. Zuo Qiuming, a noble man from Lu, feared that the disciples [of Confucius] were all of different persuasions, each followed his inclinations and lost the real meaning of the sage's teachings. He thus followed Confucius's historical records, elaborating and discussing its words to complete *Mr. Zuo's Annals*.

是以孔子明王道，幹七十餘君，莫能用，故西觀周室，論史記舊聞，興於魯而次春秋，上記隱，下至哀之獲麟，約其辭文，去其煩重，以制義法，王道備，人事浹。七十子之徒口受其傳指，為有所刺譏褒貶，挹損之文辭不可以書見也。魯君子左丘明懼弟子人人異端，各安其意，失其真，故因孔子史記具論其語，成左氏春秋。<sup>4</sup>

According to this passage, *Zuoshi Chunqiu* (an earlier version of *Zuozhuan*) was composed by a Confucian gentleman in Lu, Zuo Qiuming, to correct oral transmission of Confucius that surrounded his teaching of *Chunqiu*. Bernhard Karlgren questions the authorship of *Zuozhuan* as a Lu gentleman and suggests: “It [*Zuozhuan*] has nothing to do (at least directly) with the school of Lu, as its grammar is totally different from that of

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Shudian, 1992), j.11. Gu Jiegang, “Sima Tan zuoshi”司馬談作史, in *Renjian shanhe: gujigang suibi* 人間山河: 顧頽剛隨筆 (Beijing: Beijing Daxue Chubanshe, 2009).

<sup>3</sup> *Shiji*, 130.3295. A detailed discussion of the chronology of Sima Qian is provided in Zheng Hesheng's *Sima Qian Nianpu*. After Sima Qian's death, Chu Shaosun 褚少孫 made some additions to *Shiji*. But, according to Chavannes, such additions do not bring significant changes to *Shiji*. See Chavannes: *Les Mémoires Historique de Se-ma-Ts'ien* (Paris: E. Leroux, 1895-1905), CCII.

<sup>4</sup> *Shiji*, 14.509. The English translation is from Wai-yee Li, *The Readability of the Past in Early Chinese Historiography* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2007), 39.

Confucius and his disciples and of Mencius.”<sup>5</sup> Yang Bojun 楊伯峻 also suggested that the author of *Zuozhuan* “should have belonged to a sect in the school of Traditionalism (儒家rujia) that was different from Confucius” and he dated the final compilation of the text to between 403 BCE and 389 BCE according to the accuracy or inaccuracy of its predictions.<sup>6</sup> David Schaberg and Li Wai-yee argue that *Zuozhuan* is a collective artifact and had experienced a gradual, both oral and textual, sedimentation and formation.<sup>7</sup>

In particular, Li Wai-yee suggests it is based on various *chunqiu*, the “histories of states” 國史, that an oral and textual tradition developed and formed the materials to be the foundation of the compilation of *Zuozhuan*.<sup>8</sup> This idea was originally suggested by Ban Biao 班彪 in his “Luelun” 略論 according to *Hou hanshu* 後漢書.<sup>9</sup> It is very possible that these “histories of states” were not just in the format of annals that we see in our received *Chunqiu*, but that a part of them were also in the format of episodic narratives similar to what we see in *Zuozhuan*. These two formats of history writing may have coexisted as two different styles of writing in histories of the states according to a later hypothesis:

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<sup>5</sup> Bernhard Karlgren: *On the Authenticity and Nature of the Tso Chuan*, (Goteborg: Elanders Botryckeri Aktiebolag, 1926), 65.

<sup>6</sup> Yang Bojun, *Chunqiu zuozhuan zhu* 春秋左傳注 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1990), 36, 41. This work will be referred to as CQZZZ in this dissertation hereafter.

<sup>7</sup> For instance, Gu Jiegang claimed that *Zuozhuan* is “a multi-layer text, written by numerous authors over generations,” as noted by Yuri Pines. Li Wai-yee adduced Yao Nai’s similar claim in her book. See Yuri Pines, *Foundation of Confucian Thought*, 257; Li, *The Readability of the Past in Early Chinese Historiography*, 55.

<sup>8</sup> Li, *The Readability of the Past in Early Chinese Historiography*, 55.

<sup>9</sup> Fan Ye 范曄, “Ban Biao liezhuan” 班彪列傳, *Hou hanshu* 後漢書 (Taibei: Dingwen Shuju, 1981), 1325.

[Kong Yingda's] *Shu* claims that big events were written on *ce*, those were what *Chunqiu* writes out; small events were written on *jian*, those were what *Zuozhuan* has records about. From the Jin historian's writing of Zhao Dun and the Qi historian's writing of Cui Zhu and Ning Zhi, it is clear that the writing style of what was registered in the records of the various feudal states is consistent with *Chunqiu*. *Mozi* claims that the *Zhou Chunqiu* recorded the story of "Dubo," *Yan Chunqiu* recorded the story about "Zhuangzi Yi," the *Song Chunqiu* writes about "Guan Gu," and *Qi Chunqiu* writes about "Wangli Guozhongli." The writing style of all those mentioned is consistent with *Zuozhuan*. Both *Chunqiu* and *Zuozhuan* were compiled based on histories of states. This is the demonstration.<sup>10</sup>

“疏稱大事書於策者，經之所書；小事書與簡者，傳之所載。觀晉史之書趙盾，齊史之書崔杼及寧殖，所謂載在諸侯之籍者，其文體皆與經合。墨子稱周春秋載「杜伯」，燕春秋載「莊子儀」，宋春秋載「觀辜」，齊春秋載「王里國中里」。其文體，皆與傳合。經、傳同因國史而修，斯為顯證。”<sup>11</sup>

Yang Bojun also pointed out the records in *Zuozhuan* and records in *Chunqiu* rely on each other to bring out the full meaning, which, in my view, indicates the necessity of the coexistence of these two styles of writing at the same time (CQZZZ, 23).

There is also textual evidence of the circulation of this kind of textual source for *Zuozhuan*. William Boltz used “isocolometrical analysis” to compare passages from *Guoyu* and *Zuozhuan* and hypothesized that the textual relations between these texts indicates that they drew on a common third source text or texts.<sup>12</sup> In his later study, Boltz further hypothesized a composite nature for all early Chinese texts based on his exploration of textual variations in excavated manuscripts and in our received texts of

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<sup>10</sup> English translation of the quotes from this chapter is mine. It is a rule in this dissertation that the English translation of a quote is mine if no reference is provided. The only exception is the English translation of *Zuozhuan*.

<sup>11</sup> The preface to *Chunqiu zuozhuan zhengyi* 春秋左傳正義, in *Qinding siku quanshu* 欽定四庫全書, 2, in *Shisanjing zhushu* 十三經注疏, 13.

<sup>12</sup> William Boltz, “Notes on the Textual Relation between the 'Kuo yu' and the 'Tso chuan',” in *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, University of London, 53. 3 (1990): 491-502.

*Mengzi* and *Zuozhuan*.<sup>13</sup> Boltz's research indicates that the common source texts for the current received texts, such as *Zuozhuan*, *Mengzi*, *Guoyu*, might have been in an episodic format with textual blocks and were able to be combined and organized according to the needs of later authors and editors. I think this hypothesis is consistent with the limit of the material on which the source texts were written, unconnected bamboo strips and wooden boards (*jiandu*) 簡牘.<sup>14</sup> According to Kong Yingda's interpretation, "The single strip held in hands is called *jian*, those connected strips were called *ce*. The *jian* can only contain one line of words. *du* is a square wooden board, which is broader than bamboo strips and could contain several lines of words" 單執一札謂之簡，連編諸簡乃名為策...簡之所容，一行字耳。牘乃方版，版廣於簡，可以並行數行。<sup>15</sup> It is very possible that records on separate strips and bamboo boards remain independent and could have various combinations to tell stories with different foci. The *Zuozhuan* was possibly compiled based on the records on these separate, independent strips and boards.

Yet, the broken-down classic-commentary format of the text that we see in our received *Zuozhuan* is a result of later restructuring. According to Li Wai-yee, *Zuozhuan* and our received *Chunqiu* were initially circulated as two separate texts; the exegetical affiliation of the former to the latter was only established by Liu Xin 劉歆, Du Yu 杜預

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<sup>13</sup> William Boltz, "The Composite Nature of Early Chinese Texts," in Martin Kern, ed., *Text and Ritual in Early China* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2006).

<sup>14</sup> Du Yu claims: "Big events were written on *ce*, small events were written on *jiandu*." 大事書於策，小事書於簡牘而已. See *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhushu* 春秋左傳注疏, in *Shisanjing zhushu* 13, 1.9.

<sup>15</sup> See *Chunqiu zuozhuan zhushu*, 1.9.

and others from the first century to the third.<sup>16</sup> In particular, Du Yu put *Zuozhuan* and *Chunqiu* together to form one single text: “I have separated the years of *Chunqiu* and attached [the parts of it] to the years of the commentary, making those similar in meanings parallel. 分經之年，與傳之年相附，比其義類，各隨而解之.”<sup>17</sup> This indicates that, first, the *Zuozhuan* that Du Yu worked on was already in the format of discrete episodes arranged according to years and easy to be separated apart; second, it is *Chunqiu*, instead of *Zuozhuan*, which was broken down to insert into *Zuozhuan* to be an internal part of *Zuozhuan*.

Nevertheless, the text of *Zuozhuan* to which Sima Qian referred might have been in a format in which discrete episodes were loosely connected. In “Yiwen zhi” of *Hanshu*, Ban Gu (32-92 CE) referred to *Zuozhuan* as “Twelve *pian* of old classics” 古經十二篇 and referred to *Gongyangzhuan* and *Guliangzhuan* as “Eleven *juan* of classics”十一卷 (*Hanshu*, 30.1712). According to Yang Bojun, the word *pian* 篇 is used for *Zuozhuan* because the text of *Zuozhuan* is written on bamboo strips and wooden boards which were combined with white silk or green silk. In contrast, *Guliangzhuan* and *Gongyangzhuan*, which were composed in the Han, were written on rolls of silk or “paper” and referred to as *juan* (rolls).<sup>18</sup> It is very possible that the text of *Zuozhuan* Sima Qian saw is also the

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<sup>16</sup> Wai-yee Li, *The Readability of the Past in Early Chinese Historiography*, 36.

<sup>17</sup> The preface to *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhengyi liushijuan* 春秋左傳正义, 1:2, in *Shisanjing zhushu* 十三經注疏, 13.

<sup>18</sup> Yang Bojun, CQZZZ, 23. Although proper paper was created by Cai Lun 蔡倫 (63-121 CE) in Eastern Han dynasty, both archeological evidence and transmitted texts have suggested that as early as the early Han period, a certain kind of “paper” which was made of silk trash or hemp had circulated as writing material. See Tsien Tsuen-hsui 錢存訓, *Zhongguo gudai shushi* 中國古代書史 (Xianggang: Xianggang Zhongwendaxue, 1975), 124. Or see its English edition: *Written on Bamboo and Silk* (The University of

one that Ban Gu referred to here, which is composed of independent episodes on bamboo strips and wooden boards and externally connected by a string of silk.

It is evident that the discrete nature of earlier narrative histories like *Zuozhuan* triggered Sima Qian's ambition of reorganizing earlier records and connecting them to a unified whole. Sima Qian distinguishes his historical project from various historiographical traditions before him in his preface to "Shi'er Zhuhou Nianbiao" 十二諸侯年表 in *Shiji*:

The Grand Historian says: The Traditionalists are concerned with discerning moral significance; the rhetoricians give free rein to their eloquence; neither is concerned with connecting its beginning and ending; the calendarians draw out their dates, astrologers thrive on the spiritual fortune, Pedigrees only record genealogies and posthumous titles, their words are short and one is unable to see from them essential meanings. Thus I account twelve feudal lords, from the Gonghe period to Confucius, to illustrate the great essential meaning of success and failure that scholars criticized in *Chunqiu* and *Guoyu* on connected strips, to serve as essential for those who want to accomplish learning and understand old texts.

太史公曰：儒者斷其義，馳說者騁其辭，不務綜其始終；曆人取其年月，數家隆於神運，譜謀獨記世謚，其辭略，欲一觀諸要難。於是譜十二諸侯，自共和迄孔子，表見春秋，國語學者所譏盛衰大指著於編，為成學治古文者要刪焉。<sup>19</sup>

First, this passage indirectly indicates various source materials Sima Qian had utilized to rewrite the history of various feudal states.<sup>20</sup> Among the source materials, the works by the Traditionalists, who excelled in discerning moral significance, should include *Zuozhuan* (referred to as *Chunqiu*) and *Guoyu* which he referred to later in this

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Chicago, 1962).

<sup>19</sup> *Shiji*, 14.509. Translation is mine.

<sup>20</sup> According to Ban Gu and Ban Biao, Sima Qian adopted materials from *Zuoshi Chunqiu* (*Zuozhuan*), *Guoyu*, *Shiben*, *Zhanguoce*, *Chuhan Chunqiu* to complete his historical project. See "Sima Qian zhuan," in *Hanshu*, 62. 2737; or Fan Ye, "Ban Biao liezhuan," in *Hou hanshu*, 40.1325.

passage.<sup>21</sup> The work by rhetoricians refers to an earlier version of *Zhanguo Ce*, which has evidence of being used by Sima Qian in *Shiji*.<sup>22</sup> Second, Sima Qian criticized these two categories of writing for lacking connection among their different parts: “neither is concerned with connecting its beginning and ending” 不務綜其始終. In contrast, the works by calendarians and astrologers, who excelled in delineating lineages, were criticized for lack of meaning. Sima Qian distinguished his project from these mentioned above by highlighting the principle of “gathering up their beginnings and endings” and illustrating “the great essential meaning of success and failure” 盛衰大指 in his historical writing.

These two principles were paraphrased once again in Sima Qian’s letter to Ren An and in his “Taishigong Zixu”太史公自序, explaining the purpose of his work *Shiji*. In “Zixu,” Sima Qian summarized what he had done to the old records as “tidy[ing] up the genealogy and tradition through relating old stories” 述故事, 整齊其世傳 (*Shiji*, 130.3299). Thus, a neat succession of genealogies and traditions, which was the advantage of the works by calendricists, was the expected result in Sima Qian’s endeavor of retelling the stories that we see in the works like *Zuozhuan*, *Guoyu* and *Zhanguoce*. This explains the construction of history according to a chain of rulers and forefathers in the “hereditary households” and “basic Annals” in *Shiji*. If one recalls that *Zuozhuan* is

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<sup>21</sup> See Jin Dejian’s 金德建 article “Sima Qian suocheng Chunqiu xizhi Zuozhuan kao” 司馬遷所稱《春秋》系指《左傳》考, in *Sima Qian suojian shu kao* 司馬遷所見書考 (Shanghai: Shanghai Renmin Chubanshe, 1963).

<sup>22</sup> See the discussion of the relationship between *Shiji* and *Zhanguoce* in Zheng Liangshu 鄭良樹, *Zhanguoce yanjiu* 戰國策研究 (Taipei: Taiwan Xuesheng Shudian, 1975) or "Lun 'Shiji' yu 'Zhanguo ce' de guanxi" 論史記與戰國策的關係, in Zhang Dake and Zhao Shengqun ed., *Shiji yanjiu jicheng* 史記研究集成, Vol. 11.

characterized by loosely connected entries and its single entries are characterized by episodic narrative blocks as we see in our received *Zuozhuan*, one wonders how Sima Qian fit those discrete materials in *Zuozhuan* into his historical scheme, with connections and linear tracings as its structuring principles. This meant that all material was subject to the rein of a linear thread demanded by the principle of “tracing and connecting beginnings and endings.” In other words, it overemphasizes the parts in the historical material which share more relevance with later rulers and dismisses those which share less or no direct relevance with them. What is implied in this is a possibility that Sima Qian has to sacrifice historical abundance to the order of linear determinism.

But this is only part of Sima Qian’s endeavor. Sima Qian distinguishes his emphasis upon genealogy and traditions from general pedigree books 譜譜 by combining their goal with another principle, the principle of illustrating “the great essential meaning of success and failure.” The second principle is explained in more detail in his letter to Ren An:

I, covertly being immodest, devoted myself to useless words, collected dissipated old accounts over the world. I confirmed their deeds, explored principles of their success and failure, their flourish and ruin, to form in total one hundred and thirty volumes. I wanted to delve into the interplay of Heaven and humans, to penetrate in the changes from ancient to nowadays, and to form the words of a single school.

僕竊不遜，近自托於無能之辭，網羅天下放失舊聞，考之行事，稽其成敗興壞之理，凡百三十篇，亦欲以究天人之際，通古今之變，成一家之言。  
(*Hanshu*, 62.2735)

The principle of illustrating “the great essential meaning of success and failure” is paraphrased to “explore[ing] the principles of their success and failure, their flourish and ruin.” With lineages and traditions as the concerned objects, the index of “the success and failure” and “the flourish and ruin” can only be presented in the succession and cessation

of genealogy and tradition. The way to understand the causes of succession and cessation of lineages and traditions, according to Sima Qian, is to “delve into the interplay of Heaven and human, and penetrate the changes from the ancient to today.” An appropriate understanding of this paralleled sentence becomes the key to the understanding of Sima Qian’s pursuit in the terms of historical teaching. A crucial concept in the sentence is the “interplay of Heaven and human.” What also is implied in the sentence is that certain common causes could be discerned in various “changes” to lineages and traditions by delving into the final truth in the interplay of Heaven and human.

The phrase “interplay of Heaven and human” comes from Dong Zhongshu 董仲舒 (179?-104 BCE?). It also resonates with the concern of “spiritual fortune” by astrologers whose legacy Sima Qian also inherited according to the passage from the preface to “Shi’er Zhuhou Nianbiao.” The next section of my introduction is an attempt to understand Sima Qian’s idea of the interplay of Heaven and human and the common causes for the changes to lineages and traditions by relating these two issues to the *yin-yang* theory in the early Han and to the topic of doctrines surrounding woman. My basic argument is that, based on *yin-yang* theory, Sima Qian took it as ritually appropriate to glorify the importance of the force of *yang*, including that of the rulers, forefathers, and masters, for the success of lineages and traditions; he also took the free display of *yin*, especially the power of the consorts and their native families, as the cause of change and end to lineages and traditions, although *yin* could also play a good role in a self-restrictive fashion. After this introduction, my dissertation will demonstrate that, with this

metaphysical teaching that he aimed to offer, Sima Qian wrote history in a way that is more negative to the representation of women compared to the authors of *Zuozhuan*.

### *The yin-yang theory and Sima Qian*

Current scholarship considers the Western Han as a crucial period in the development of the status of women in Chinese history. According to Bret Hinsch, in the Western Han, there is “a major turning point in the history of Chinese discourse about women...a small number of influential scholars began to propagate systematic ideologies denigrating women.”<sup>23</sup> I argue that the *yin-yang* theory, which produced analogies between such natural phenomena as heaven and earth, male and female and such astrological pairs as *qian* and *kun*, *yin* and *yang* in a systematic unity, is the underlining metaphysical background to support various systematic ideologies denigrating women.

Preceding the discussion of the systematization of the *yin-yang* analogies, it is important to set the right tone for the relationship between the idealized ideologies and the actual life of women: the intellectual conception of women should not be confused with the actual status of women in the context where these intellectuals lived. This is particularly true for the early Han when women still held a great degree of freedom and rights. Although some important books or sections of books that idealized the role of

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<sup>23</sup> Bret Hinsch, "The Criticism of Powerful Women by Western Han Dynasty Portent Experts," in *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 49, no. 1 (2006): 96-121. Other scholars, such as Paul Rakita Goldin, Lisa Raphals, Robin Wang and Li-hsiang Rosenlee all have contributed to this understanding. See Chenyang Li, ed. *The Sage and the Second Sex: Confucianism, Ethics, and Gender* (Chicago and La Salle: Open Court, 2000); Robin Wang, "Dong Zhongshu's Transformation of 'yin-yang' Theory and Contesting of Gender Identity," *Philosophy East and West*, 55.2 (Apr., 2005): 209-31; Li-Hsiang Rosenlee, *Confucianism and Women: A Philosophical Interpretation* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2006). Bret Hinsch gave an systematic introduction of the social and intellectual contexts of the situation of women in the early imperial China in his book *Women in Early Imperial China* (Lanham, Boulder, New York and Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2002).

women, such as the “Xici” 繫辭 chapter of *Yijing* 易經, *Liji* 禮記, *Chunqiu Fanlu* by Dong Zhongshu, as well as *Lienüzhuan* by Liu Xiang 劉向 (77-8 BCE), started to circulate, they did not yet play an important role in determining the actual lives of women.<sup>24</sup>

The foundation of the systematization of the *yin-yang* analogies in Sima Qian’s understanding of the role of women and their families in the success and failure of lineage and tradition is evident in the statement at the beginning of “The Hereditary Household of Marital Relatives” 外戚世家. Sima Qian assigned an important role to the consorts of rulers and their families in the success and failure of a ruling lineage by relating them to both the rise and the fall of the Three Dynasties.

From antiquity those emperors and kings received the Mandate, and those rulers succeeded to rule and preserved the culture not just because their interior virtue was robust, but also because they got assistance from their external relatives. The Xia dynasty flourished by relying on Tushan, whereas Jie was exiled because of Moxi. The Yin (Shang) flourished by relying on Yousong, whereas Zhou was killed because of favoring Da Ji. The Zhou flourished by relying on Jiang Yuan and Grand Ren, whereas King You was captured because of being enamored of Bao Si.

自古受命帝王及繼體守文之君，非獨內德茂也，蓋亦有外戚之助焉。夏之興也以涂山，而桀之放也以末喜。殷之興也以有娀，紂之殺也嬖妲己。周之興也以姜原及大任，而幽王之禽也淫於褒姒 (*Shiji*, 49.1967).

This patterned account of the relationship between the maternal relatives of a lineage and the succession of the lineage was based on Sima Qian’s solid belief in the function of the binaries of *qian* (乾)-*kun* (坤),<sup>25</sup> *yin* (阴, dark, shady)-*yang* (阳, bright

<sup>24</sup> *Chunqiu fanlu* was attributed to Dong Zhongshu, but compilation might have lasted until the fourth century. According to Sarah A. Queen, the *yin-yang* chapters, containing most of the ideas I am concerned with here, are probably written by Dong Zhongshu himself. See Queen, Sarah A., *From Chronicle to Canon: the Hermeneutics of the Spring and Autumn, According to Tung Chung-shu* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 101.

<sup>25</sup> *qian* and *kun* are first two hexagrams in the *Book of Changes*.

and sunny) and *nan* (masculine)-*nü* (feminine) in the cosmos and the human world. Sima Qian considered it the common teaching of all important Chinese classics that the *yin-yang* analogies were functioning as the base for the cosmos and the human world:

So *Yi* (*Changes*) is based on *Qian* and *Kun*, *Shi* (*Poetry*) begins with “Guanju,” *Shu* (*Documents*) praises the offer of two wives to Shun, *Chunqiu* (*Spring and Autumn*) criticizes the fault of not receiving the bride in person. The interaction between husband and wife is the grand moral in the way of humans. In the application of *Li*, the marriage ceremony is the one that one needs to take seriously and prudently. If *Yue* (the music) is well-tuned, then the four seasons are harmonious. The interchange of *yin* and *yang* is the source of the coordination of all things.

故易基乾坤，詩始關雎，書美釐降，春秋譏不親迎。夫婦之際，人道之大倫也。禮之用，唯婚姻為競競。夫樂調而四時和，陰陽之變，萬物之統也  
(*Shiji*, 49.1967).

Here the teachings of all the Classics are taken as support of the belief in the fundamental working of the binaries of *qian-kun*, *yin-yang* and *masculinity-femininity* in the cosmos and the human world. This passage first emphasizes the binary of *qian* and *kun* as the basic teaching in *Yijing* and then takes the extolling of the appropriate conjugal relationship as the general key theme in *Shijing*, *Shujing*, *Chunqiu* and *Li*. It further implies a mutual correspondence between the human world and the cosmos by correlating the harmony of music with the seasonal cycle, where *yin* and *yang* are working.<sup>26</sup> The last sentence takes the working of the *yin-yang* binary as the foundation of coordination of everything in the world. This passage from “The Hereditary Household of Marital Relatives” provides us a perspective on Sima Qian’s idea of the interplay of Heaven and human, which he takes as the essential teaching for the success and failure of lineage and tradition. It suggests that the working of the *yin-yang* analogies

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<sup>26</sup> For instance, in “Ciguo” 辭過 in *Mozi*, it says, “with regard to the four seasons, they spoke of *yin* and *yang*” 四時，則曰陰陽.

as the fundamental principle in both the cosmos and the human world assures the relevance of the maternal relatives of a lineage to the success and failure of a lineage.

There are two points I particularly want to stress for this passage from “The Hereditary Household of Marital Relatives”: first, not only royal women, but also their natal families, are considered as *yin* in the relationship to the ruling lineage, the *yang*; second, this theory actually gives huge importance to the role of women in politics by relating them to both the success and the failure of a ruling lineage.

However, Sima Qian’s dating of the systematization of *qian-kun*, *yang-yin* and *masculinity-femininity* to the oldest Chinese tradition is problematic. The systematization of *qian-kun*, *yang-yin* and *masculinity-femininity* does not occur in any of the six classics except in *The Book of Change*, whose core text is dated to the early Zhou dynasty, and *Liji*, which was composed in early Han. However, as pointed out by Michael Nylan, the *yin-yang qian-kun* binaries do not appear in the core text of *Change* but underlie the “Commentaries to *Changes*” 易傳 (or “Ten Wings” 十翼).<sup>27</sup> Li-Hsiang Rosenlee agrees with Michael Nylan’s argument and quotes A. C. Graham to point out that the commentaries of *Yijing*, where the *yin-yang* and *qian-kun* were taken as ultimate binaries, were most likely compiled in “a few decades on either side of 200 BCE”<sup>28</sup> She also points out that the integration of the *qian-kun yin-yang* theory into *Yijing* was probably influenced by the invention and popularity of the *yin-yang Five-Phases* theory of Zou

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<sup>27</sup> Michael Nylan, *Five “Confucian” Classics* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2001), 221.

<sup>28</sup> Li-Hsiang Lisa Rosenlee, *Confucianism and Women: A philosophical Interpretation* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2006), 58. Cao Daoheng 曹道衡 also dates the “Ten Wings” to the middle to late Warring-states period. See Cao Daoheng, Liu Yuejin: *Xianqin lianghan wenxue shiliao* 先秦兩漢文學史料集 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 2005), 47.

Yan (ca.305-240 BCE) from the mid-third century BCE on.<sup>29</sup> Particularly considering that *Yijing* was the exceptional classical work that was not forbidden from public circulation in the Qin, it was possible, then, for it to undergo transformation by the current trend of the *yin-yang* Five Phases theory, which was popular among many rulers in the Warring states period and was incorporated into his political scheme by the First Emperor of Qin. As a matter of fact, Michael Nylan dated the final formation of “Commentaries to *Changes*” as a single corpus to the time when the *yin-yang* Five Phases correlations were systematized which he considered to be as late as the first century BCE.<sup>30</sup>

Sima Qian’s acceptance of the systematization of the *yin-yang* analogies is a result of the impact of the circulation of a new layer of teaching attached to the classics, particularly the commentaries of *Yijing*, Dong Zhongshu’s 董仲舒 commentaries to *Chunqiu*, and the formation of *Liji* in early Han, all of which resonate with each other in their common imagining of the world as a unity with parallel binaries. Sima Qian’s official position as an astrologer, who participated in the design of the calendar and timing of events, makes reasonable his close association with *Yijing*; the possible teacher-student relationship between Dong Zhongshu (ca.179 BCE-104 BCE) and Sima Qian also assures the influence of the *yin-yang* theory on him through Dong Zhongshu.<sup>31</sup> Below I

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<sup>29</sup> Rosenlee, *Confucianism and Women*, 58.

<sup>30</sup> Nylan, *Five “Confucian” Classics*, 221.

<sup>31</sup> Scholar Zhang Dake 張大可 points out that Sima Qian’s interpretation of *Chunqiu* resonates with Dong Zhongshu’s commentaries and he also personally put Dong Zhongshu at a high position in the Gongyang tradition. These aspects demonstrate a close relationship between them spiritually, if not a direct teacher-student relationship. See Zhang Dake, *Sima Qian pingzhuan* 司馬遷評傳, in *Shiji yanjiu jicheng* 史記研究集成 (Beijing: Huawen Chuanshe), vol.1, 59-62.

will discuss some important ideas from the works I have mentioned above that are a part of the systematic theory of *yin-yang* which relate to women.

The first important idea is the hierarchy between men and women in *yin-yang* theory. According to Lisa Raphals's research, the association of *masculinity-femininity* and *yin-yang* as close analogies happens toward the end of the second and beginning of the first centuries, notably in *Chunqiu Fanlu* and *Liji*, and meanwhile, as a result of this process, an explicit hierarchical relationship between man and women was forged.<sup>32</sup> Lisa Raphals notes that the parallel of *yin-yang* with *masculinity-femininity* in earlier texts, in *Huainanzi* and *Mozi*, stresses the importance of the distinction in different phenomena, including the distinction between *nan* and *nü*; it proposed neither a hierarchical relationship between *nan* and *nü* nor a close analogy between *yin-yang* and *nan-nü*.<sup>33</sup>

Several records in *Zuozhuan* also indicate that social distinction in sexes and sexual segregation was central to ritual propriety in the Eastern Zhou but that there was no clear gender hierarchy as it came to be in the later period. For instance, when the sister of Xu Wufan 徐吾犯 in Zheng was asked to select a husband for herself, she chose between two candidates based on an idea that “For the man to be manly and the wife wifely: that is what is regarded as fitting.”夫夫婦婦，所謂順也 (*Zuozhuan*, Zhao 1.7).

The word “shun” 順 (fit; submit) is used to mean each gender’s fitness for one’s own identity, rather than to imply the submission of one to another. In another story, after the

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<sup>32</sup> Lisa Raphals, *Sharing the Light: Representations of Women and Virtue in Early China* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998), 163.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 162, 168.

younger sister of King Zhao of Chu, Ji Mi 季芈, was carried by Zhong Jian across a river, she refused to marry any man other than Zhongjian because of woman's propriety of keeping men at a distance.<sup>34</sup> Keeping distance from the other sex has no implication for relative status. Particularly, in both these two cases about sexual distinction and segregation, it was a woman, rather than a man, who was choosing her companion among candidates based on their understanding of ritual propriety.

The sexual segregation also associates woman with internal space and man with external space. For instance, when the wives of Duke Wen of Zheng sent off the King of Chu, who was probably their relative, beyond their household threshold, the King of Chu was criticized for violation of the ritual of sexual segregation.<sup>35</sup> However, sexual segregation in space does not mean a division between these two realms in their association with politics. After discussing the story about the mother of Wenbo in *Guoyu*, Paul Rakita Goldin argues that the categories of *nei* and *wai* are not a clear division in early texts: “For it is never clear in any early text how the authors conceive of the difference between *nei* and *wai*, and consequently what they consider to be appropriate subject for women to discuss.”<sup>36</sup> I argue that, in the *Zuozhuan* world, the division of *nei*

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<sup>34</sup> “...Jimi refused: ‘What one must do as a woman is keep men at a distance. Yet Zhong Jian once carried me on his back’...”...季芈辭曰：「所以為女子，遠丈夫也。鍾建負我矣」. See *Zuozhuan*, Ding 4.3.

<sup>35</sup> ...A noble man said, “This is not the proper ritual. In sending off or in greeting guests, women do not go beyond the gate; in meeting with their brothers, they do not cross over the threshold; and military matters are not brought near a woman’s realm.”... Shu Zhan said, “I expect the King of Chu will not die a natural death! In performing the proper ritual, he ends by making no distinctions between male and female. What lacks appropriate distinctions cannot be considered the proper ritual. How will he die a natural death?” The princes knew by this that the Master of Chu would not achieve his goal of becoming overlord. 君子曰：「非禮也。婦人送迎不出門，見兄弟不踰闈，戎事不邇女器。」...叔詹曰：「楚王其不沒乎！為禮卒於無別。無別不可謂禮。將何以沒？」諸侯是以知其不遂霸也。See *Zuozhuan*, Cheng 2.3.

<sup>36</sup> Paul Rakita Goldin, *The View of Women in Early Confucianism*, in Chenyang Li, ed., *The Sage and the*

and *wai* is a spatial one, not one of intellectual concern. A woman is assumed to have equal potential in ability, wisdom, knowledge and saneness as a wise man to propose appropriate political decisions. There is not any apolitical connotation for the inner space, although the limitation to the inner space itself denied women the access to public positions; despite this, woman's concern for politics was expected and valued. Furthermore, a woman was expected to have the autonomy to act on her own judgment when deciding between the necessity of the situation and ritual propriety. This is illustrated by the story of Gongji of Zheng 宋共姬 who was criticized for lack of behavioral autonomy and flexibility during a fire in *Zuozhuan* (*Zuozhuan*, Xiang 30.7).

The invention of *yin-yang masculinity-femininity* analogies in commentaries to *Yijing*, *Chunqiu Fanlu* and *Liji* not only produces a rigid hierarchical relationship between men and women, but also produces a difference in nature between men and women and a fundamental difference in their ways of functioning in the human world.

The textual evidence that *Chunqiu Fanlu* takes *masculinity-femininity* as the analogy of the heavenly binary of *yin-yang* in humanity is that: “The *yin-yang* of Heaven and Earth is equivalent to the *masculinity-femininity*; the *masculinity-femininity* of humankind is the *yin-yang*. Therefore, the *yin-yang* can be called the *nan-nü*, and the *masculinity-femininity* can be called the *yin-yang*.” 天地之陰陽當男女，人之男女當陰陽。陰陽亦可以謂陰陽，男女可以謂陰陽。<sup>37</sup> A basic hierarchy between men and women is produced, since there is a basic hierarchy between *yang* and *yin* as well as strict

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*Second Sex*, 147.

<sup>37</sup> Dong Zhongshu 董仲舒, *Chunqiu fanlu jiaoshi* 春秋繁露校釋 ( Shijiazhuang: Hebei renmin chubanshe, 2005), j.16, 77.1034.

fixation of women to *yin* and men to *yang*. Meanwhile, the flexibility of the designation of *yin-yang* provides further discrimination between the two genders with the index of social positions. These two aspects are illustrated in the passage below from the chapter “Yangzun yinbei” 陽尊陰卑 (“Yang is noble and Yin is base”):

A man, no matter how low his status might be, is *yang*; a woman, no matter how prestigious her status might be, is *yin*. Among *yins* one *yin* could be *yin* to another *yin*; among *yangs* one *yang* could be *yang* to another *yang*. All those at superior positions are *yang* to those at inferior positions; all those at inferior positions are *yin* to those at superior positions.

丈夫雖賤皆為陽，婦人雖貴皆為陰。陰之中亦相為陰，陽之中亦相為陽。諸在上者皆為其下陽，諸在下者皆為其上陰。<sup>38</sup>

This means that sex is the most basic index of social status in Dong Zhongshu’s scheme of hierarchy for human beings. Thus a strict hierarchy is produced for all human beings: the man at the highest social position is the “*yangest*” *yang*; the woman at the highest social position is the “*yangest*” *yin*. All the *yins* are situated below *yangs* regardless of their respective social background in Dong Zhongshu’s scheme of hierarchy.

Furthermore, the superior status of *yang* and the inferior of *yin* is not just a matter of fact, but, more importantly, it is a conscious pursuit with human effort. Dong Zhongshu argues that it is ritual propriety to glorify *yang* and to downplay *yin* and this principle is practiced by *Chunqiu* in history writing:

So in the ritual propriety of the marriage ceremony, *Chunqiu* recorded Duke of Song but not the mother of the Duke of Ji. The mother of the Duke of Ji is suitable for praise but is not presented; the Duke of Song is not suitable for praise but is presented. To present *yang* but not to present *yin* is to compose in the way of Heaven... So in *Chunqiu* the rulers will not be named for evilness, and subjects are not named for goodness. All the good is attributed to the ruler; all the bad is attributed to the minister.

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<sup>38</sup> Dong, *Chunqiu fanlu jiaoshi*, j.11, “Yang zun yin bei” 陽尊陰卑, 43.722.

是故《春秋》之於昏禮也，達宋公而不達紀侯之母。紀侯之母宜稱而不達，宋公不宜稱而達，達陽而不達陰，以天道制之也…是故《春秋》君不名惡，臣不名善，善皆歸於君，惡皆歸於臣。<sup>39</sup>

The doctrine of the “three bonds” (*sangang*三綱), which emphasizes the subordination of the inferior to the superior within three social relationships as ritual propriety, is also based on the subordination within the *yin-yang* binary through Dong Zhongshu.<sup>40</sup> Robin Wang points out that Dong Zhongshu added the relationship of husband and wife into Confucius’s doctrine of rectifying names, which only addressed the relationship between ruler and minister and that between father and son, to form the three bonds. Furthermore, while Confucius characterized two relationships with mutual obligations, Dong Zhongshu underscores only a one-way obligation by stressing the subordinate's duty in his doctrine of three bonds.<sup>41</sup> To add to Robin Wang’s discussion, I stress here that Dong Zhongshu’s interpretation of the principles of these three relationships is based on his idea concerning the *yin-yang* binary:

The principle of being ruler and subject, father and son, husband and wife all draws from the way of *yin* and *yang*. A ruler is *yang*, a subject is *yin*, a father is *yang*, a son is *yin*; a husband is *yang* and a wife is *yin*. The *yin* could not perform alone. Its beginning could not be alone, and its ending could not separate the merit for its own. It has the principle of being paired.

君臣、父子、夫婦之義，皆取諸陰陽之道。君為陽，臣為陰；父為陽，子為陰；夫為陽，妻為陰。陰道無所獨行。其始也不得專起，其終也不得分功，有所兼之義。<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> According to Robin Wang, “the doctrine of three bonds was not part of early Confucian teaching” and “it was Dong Zhongshu who developed the Confucian rectification of names (*zhengming* 正名) and Mencius’s five relationships (*wulun* 五倫) into the simple formula of three-bond theory.” See Robin R. Wang, 217.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Dong Zhongshu, *Chunqiu fanlu* (Taibei: Taiwan Shangwu Yinshuguan. 1976), “Jiyi”基義, j.12, 53.199.

In a word, the submission of a subject to a ruler, a son to a father, and a wife to a husband is based on the basic submission of *yin* to *yang*. Although the representatives of *yang* and *yin* are not limited to man and woman as this passage suggests, the doctrine of the subjective status of all these *yin* representatives leads to a general low status of women in historical representation. This is because the central male members of a ruling lineage were constant representatives of *yang* in history; whereas, the wives, the consorts, the marital families of a ruler, the sons by concubines of rulers were various representatives of *yin* in their relationship with the members of the central ruling lineage. The image of the group of representatives of *yin* together decides the status of women in the sections of “hereditary household” and “Basic Annals” in *Shiji*, which focuses on the activities of the male members of the ruling lineage.

In addition to the doctrine of hierarchy between *yin* and *yang*, another big transformation Dong Zhongshu brought to the *yin-yang* theory is that he associated *yin/yang* with *qing/xing* 情性 (sentiments /nature) in the discussion of human nature. According to Robin Wang, Dong Zhongshu connected *yin* with *qing* (情), bad nature, and connected *yang* with *xing* (性), good nature, as pointed out by Wang Chong (27CE-ca.97CE) in his *Lunheng* 論衡.<sup>43</sup> Wang Chong suggested, in Dong Zhongshu’s theory, “*Xing* is born from *yang*, and *qing* is born from *yin*. *Yinqi* is low and greedy, and *yangqi* is high and benevolent (ren). To say that human nature is good, is to make visible its *yang*; to say that it is bad, is to make visible its *yin*. 性生於陽，情生於陰。陰氣鄙，陽氣仁。

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<sup>43</sup> Wang, “Dong Zhongshu’s Transformation of ‘yin-yang’ Theory and Contesting of Gender Identity,” 222.

曰性善者，是見其陽也；謂惡者，是見其陰者也。”<sup>44</sup>

In a confirmation of Wang Chong's observation, Dong Zhongshu takes the exhibition of oppositional external emotions and behavior of human beings as the respective function of *yinqi* and *yangqi*: “*Yangqi* offers; *yinqi* grabs. *Yangqi* is benevolent; *yinqi* is cruel. *Yangqi* is at ease; *yin qi* is anxious. *Yangqi* loves; *yinqi* hates. *Yangqi* gives birth; *yin qi* kills” 陽氣予而陰氣奪，陽氣仁而陰氣戾，陽氣寬而陰氣急，陽氣愛而陰氣惡，陽氣生而陰氣殺.<sup>45</sup> The *yinqi* is associated with irrational, immoral emotions and behavior; whereas, the *yangqi* is associated with moral, rational emotions and behavior. Indeed, Dong Zhongshu produces a moral opposition between *yin* and *yang* which was originally a neutral pair of two forces in the cosmos: “All the badness is in the category of *yin*; all the good is in the category of *yang* 惡之屬盡為陰，善之屬盡為陽. the good is in the category of the two forces in the cosmos, immoral emotions and behavior with a *yin* representative, such as a woman in relationship with a man, or a favored concubine and her son in relationship to the legitimate heir of a ruler. The connection between *yin* and immoral, irrational things also implies a necessity of restricting *yin* in order to attain a moral world. This is just what Dong Zhongshu proposed in his ritual doctrine of honoring *yang* and debasing *yin* which is discussed earlier.

However, despite the hierarchical, oppositional relationship between *yin* and *yang*, a complementary relationship also existed between them. Rosenlee stresses this point

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<sup>44</sup> Wang Chong 王充, *Lunhun* 論衡 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1990), “Benxing”本性, 3.140.

<sup>45</sup> Dong, *Chunqiu fanlu*, j.11, 43.180.

with evidence from this passage from the commentary to *Yijing* in “Xici”<sup>46</sup>:

The way of *qian* completes man,  
The way of *kun* completes woman.  
*Qian* knows the great beginning,  
*Kun* performs the completion of things.  
*Qian* is famous for being at ease.  
*Kun* excels in being simple.  
What is at ease is good at knowing,  
What is simple is good at following.  
乾道成男，坤道成女。  
乾知大始，坤作成物。  
乾以易知，坤以簡能。  
易則易知，簡則易從。<sup>47</sup>

The complementary relationship between *qian/yang* and *kun/yin* is presented as their co-operation in the accomplishment of a matter. This passage also indicates that the *yin* plays the good role of bringing something to completion by following *yang* and being simple in action. This means that, in order to be the good force, *yin* gives up its initiative and restricts its action to simplicity and submission. This idea that appropriate cooperation of *yin* and *yang* based on the leadership of *yang* with its wisdom and *yin*'s following with its simplicity in action in this passage is consistent with the doctrine of “threefold following” (*sancong*三從) for women in *Liji*.<sup>48</sup>

In passing through the great gate of her father's house, the man leads the woman and the woman follows the man. This is the beginning of the proper relation

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<sup>46</sup>Rosenlee, *Confucianism and Women*, 63.

<sup>47</sup> Wangbi 王弼, Kongyingda 孔穎達, *Zhouyi zhengyi* 周易正義, j.7, “xici”繫辭, in *Shisanjing zhushu* 1(Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2000), 305. Translation is mine. Alternative translation sees in Richard John Lynn, *The Classics of Changes, A New Translation of the I Ching as Interpreted by Wang Bi* (New York: Columbia University Press), 48.

<sup>48</sup> According to Li-Hsiang Rosenlee, “the Doctrine of Threefold Dependence” first appeared in *Liji* and frequently quoted by subsequent instruction books for women as well as commentaries on canonical texts such as the *Lienüzhuan*, *Baihu tongyi*, and *Kongzi Jiayu*. See Rosenlee, 90.

between husband and wife. Women are the ones who follow others: when they are little they follow their fathers and elder brothers, when they are married they follow their husbands, and when their husbands die they follow their sons.

“Husband” denotes supporter. A husband uses wisdom to lead others.

出乎大門而先，男帥女，女從男，夫婦之義由此始也。男帥女，女從男，夫婦之義由此始也。婦人，從人者也；幼從父兄，嫁從夫，夫死從子。夫也者，夫也；夫也者，以知帥人者也。<sup>49</sup>

Again, woman’s following of man in action and man’s leadership with his wisdom is underlined. As a matter of fact, the binaries of *heaven-earth*, *yin-yang* and *masculinity-femininity* occurred in the context of this passage from “Jiao Tesheng” 郊特牲 in *Liji*, which implies that the *yin-yang masculinity-femininity* systematization is also the underlying layer of the doctrine of “threefold following”.

Nevertheless, the idea that “women are the ones who follow others” first occurs in *Zuozhuan* before its appearance in *Liji*. It occurs when the commentator criticizes the state of Qi’s execution of Ai Jiang to punish her involvement in the succession upheaval in the state of Lu. It stresses that the state of Qi has gone beyond its appropriate zone to punish his daughter Ai Jiang for her crime in her marital state.<sup>50</sup> What is absent in the *Zuozhuan* passage is the criticism of Ai Jiang for her unrestricted behavior. In contrast, the discipline of woman’s behavior in daily life became the focus in the interpretation of the *Liji* passage.

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<sup>49</sup> *Liji zhengyi*, j. 26, “Jiao tesheng” 郊特牲, in *Shisanjing zhushu*, 951.

<sup>50</sup> *Zuozhuan*, Xi 1.7 The funeral cortege of the wife of Lord Zhuang arrived from Qi. A noble man considered the Qi leaders’ execution of Ai Jiang extreme. Women are those who follow others 夫人氏之喪至自齊。君子以齊人之殺哀姜也為已甚矣，女子，從人者也. See CQZZZ, 279.

The complementary relationship between *yin* and *yang* that we see in “Xici” is also proposed by Dong Zhongshu in *Chunqiu Fanlu* when he addresses the respective roles of *yin* and *yang* in governance.

*Yang* is governing by virtue; *yin* is governing by punishment. Governing by punishment goes against governing by virtue but submits to governing by virtue, and hence it is akin to contingency. Though it is called contingency, it is all for expedience. So *yang* acts in a smooth situation, and *yin* acts in a reverse situation. Who goes against the smooth trend is *yin*. So Heaven takes *yin* as contingency and takes *yang* as constancy...

陽為德，陰為刑。刑反德而順於德，亦權之類也。雖曰權，皆在權成。是故陽行於順，陰行於逆。順行而逆者，陰也。是故天以陰為權，以陽為經...<sup>51</sup>

By associating *yang* with virtue and *yin* with punishment, this passage elucidates the different roles of virtue and punishment in governance. That is, benevolent governance should be the constant way in governing; punishment is only expedient for contingent situations. However, with the close association of the *yin-yang* binary with the *masculinity-femininity* binary, this passage also carries implications for the different roles of women and men in governance. First, this passage establishes a constant connection between the movements of *yin* and reverse situations in politics, whereby it implies women's actions are associated with political disorder or political changes in general. Second, it crystallizes a submissive position for *yin/woman* in relation to *yang/man* and takes *yin/woman*'s submission as the appropriate way for smooth governance; meanwhile, *yin/woman*'s dominance in politics is expedient in contingent situations, which should be rectified to go back to normalcy. The associations of *yin* with reverse political situations and with evilness together provide rationale for the association of women with political disaster and upheaval. This may explain why the representation of the agency of women in a non-restrictive sense in *Shiji* is associated with political disasters and emergencies as

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<sup>51</sup> See Dong, *Chunqiu fanlu*, j.11, 43.727.

I will demonstrate later in my dissertation.

The discussions above about the commentary to *Yijing*, Dong Zhongshu's *yin-yang* theory, and *Liji* all help explain why woman's virtue is defined as self-restriction and submission from the Han onward in Chinese history. The demonstration of women's wisdom, autonomy and initiative, which were equally valued for female characters as for male ministers in the *Zuo zhuan* world, do not have a legitimate locus in this theory about a hierarchical *yin-yang* binary, in which the smooth working of *yin* and *yang* as an accomplishing unity relies on the dependence and submission of *yin* to the leadership of *yang* based on the latter's knowledge and wisdom. Even in a Han work like *Lienü Zhuan*, where a lot of stories about women with wisdom, bravery and knowledge are recorded, the last section of the text, which is the most important section in the whole text, is completely devoted to attributing the cause of disaster not only to women's attractiveness, but also to their wisdom and the free rein of their desire and action. *Lienü Zhuan* is, as Bret Hinsch argues, "the first extended ideological statement advocating strict limits on female autonomy."<sup>52</sup> A major scholar in the study of *Lienü Zhuan* Lisa Raphals also argues that the Warring States and Han narratives in *Lienü Zhuan*, where women were presented as possessing the same virtues valued in men, "predate the establishment of Confucianism either as a hegemonic ideology or as a prevailing social practice," and do not represent the personal ideological affiliation of its author Liu Xiang.<sup>53</sup>

It is evident that Sima Qian inherited Dong Zhongshu's idea of honoring *yang* and debasing *yin* and modified it to address his idea of moral principles. In "Lishu" 禮書

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<sup>52</sup> Hinsch, *The Criticism of Powerful Women by Western Han Dynasty Portent Experts*, 105.

<sup>53</sup> Lisa Raphals, "Gendered Virtue Reconsidered," in Chenyang Li ed., *The Sage and the Second Sex*, 237.

(*Shiji*, j.23), Sima Qian considers the clarification of the social hierarchy as the base of ritual propriety: “So from the order of the honored and the debased as well as high and low between the ruler and the subject at the court, to the divisions of carts, clothing, food and marriage ceremonies, sacrificing ceremonies among the commoners, every matter has a propriety and everything has a regulated pattern.” 是以君臣朝廷尊卑貴賤之序，下及黎庶車輿衣服宮室飲食嫁娶喪祭之分，事有宜適，物有節文 (*Shiji*, 23.1158). In the later discussion, Sima Qian asserted the propriety of the Qin practice of “honoring the ruler and restricting the subject” 尊君抑臣, which reveals Sima Qian’s support of Dong Zhongshu’s doctrine of honoring *yang* and debasing *yin*. In his articulation of ritual propriety for his time, Sima Qian considered it ritually appropriate to glorify ruler, forefather and master, who constituted the central paternal lineage for a household or a tradition and were the usual representatives of *yang* in the stories in *Shiji*: “So Ritual Propriety is to serve Heaven up above, to serve the earth down below, to respect ancestors and to honor rulers and masters, which are three basic principles of the rites.” 故禮，上事天，下事地，尊先祖而隆君師，是禮之三本也 (*Shiji*, 23.1167). This attitude agrees with Dong Zhongshu’s proposal of honoring *yang* and debasing *yin* as ritual propriety which was practiced by *Chunqiu* in its composition of history. This indicates, also, that it is considered by Sima Qian as a moral pursuit to write history along lineages, glorify the roles of male members of a lineage and downplay the roles of their consorts and their ministers.

Sima Qian’s support of restricting *yin* is also demonstrated in his glorification of the female virtue of submission and self-restrictiveness in women’s dealings with their sons, fathers, and husbands. This dissertation will show that the representations of

women, including their speech and actions, tend to be much more abbreviated in *Shiji* compared to *Zuozhuan*. However, there are four stories about women where the representation of women's speeches are soundly preserved and even expanded. These four stories concern Jie Zhitui's 介之推 mother, Huai Ying 懷羸, Lord Wen of Jin's wives Qi Jiang 齊姜 and Ji Kui 季隗. In these stories, Jie Zhitui's mother followed Jie Zhitui to live a reclusive life in the mountains (*Zuozhuan*, Xi 24.1; *Shiji*, 39.1662). Huai Ying concealed her husband Yu's 墓 escape for his sake and meanwhile remained loyal to her father by refusing to flee with him (*Zuozhuan*, Xi 22.5; *Shiji*, 39.1665). Ji Kui followed the request of her husband Chong Er, the future Duke Wen of Jin to wait for him for twenty five years, although she knew this would prevent her from remarriage for life (*Zuozhuan*, Xi 23.6; *Shiji*, 39.1657). Qi Jiang criticized Chonger's attachment to her sexual attractiveness and plotted with his followers to drive him away from their home so he could pursue his political goal. These women illustrate the female virtue of being submissive and self-restrictive that is anticipated for *yin* in the *yin-yang* theory: Jie Zhidui's mother, Huai Ying and Ji Kui practiced the doctrine of "threefold following" in the relationships with their son, father and husband. Huai Ying and Qi Jiang show their sense of self-restriction to help their husbands attain their accomplishments. The preservation and expansion of these stories could be attributed to the fact that all these stories are in the famous romance of Chonger's odyssey, which is glorified in *Zuozhuan* and even more in *Shiji*. However, in the same series, another story about Huai Ying and the story about the wife of Xi Fuxi 僖負羈, where the husbands willingly submitted to the wives' wills, are radically modified to downplay women's roles in *Shiji*.<sup>54</sup> This

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<sup>54</sup> These two stories will be discussed in the second chapter of the dissertation.

indicates that these four stories were preserved and glorified by Sima Qian to illustrate the propriety of women as *yin* to help men in their accomplishments.

### *A summary of chapters*

After this introduction, there are four chapters in my dissertation. The first chapter addresses the change of the relationship between the natal family and the marital family of a royal woman from the Spring and Autumn period to the imperial Han as well as the impact of this change on the historiographical attitude toward women as seen in *Chunqiu* and *Shiji*. This chapter demonstrates that women could parlay their identity as the symbol of an alliance into political agency and their political contribution is acknowledged by the state history. This chapter also gives a perspective to major events in the early Han which may have influenced Sima Qian's approach to imperial consorts and their natal families. The constant excessive power of the royal marital relatives and the disruptive effect of this power on the smooth succession of lineage and tradition are the historical background for Sima Qian's effort of negating them in his historical narrative.

The second chapter addresses how Sima Qian reduces the representation of agency of women in comparison to the versions of these stories that appear in *Zuozhuan*. This textual maneuver in *Shiji* strengthens the agency of and focalization through the male rulers in order to produce clear succession lines for ruling families.

The third chapter examines stories that have similar accounts in *Zuozhuan* and *Shiji* and argues that all these stories, except four stories about virtuous women discussed above in this introduction, address the association between women and political disaster

and emergencies. This produces a patterned perception of the role of women in politics: that is, they tend to be troublemakers.

The fourth chapter discusses the attitude toward women's speech and attractiveness, which are the two key issues in the discourse of "female disaster" in *Zuo zhuan*, *Shiji*, and *Lienü zhuan*. This chapter presents how *Shiji* and *Lienü zhuan* participated in the development of the discourse of "female disaster" by highlighting female attractiveness and womanly slander as the cause to political catastrophes, particularly in the stories about the falls of three dynasties. This chapter then discusses how stories in *Zuo zhuan* convey an alternative message to the understanding of female attractiveness and speeches from that of the discourse of "female disaster."

My conclusion is that, from *Chunqiu* and *Zuo zhuan* to *Shiji*, women have experienced a downgrading of their formal status in historical records. Sima Qian has readjusted the representation of women in *Shiji* to offer a teaching that the limitation of the political autonomy of women is a way to the success of lineage and tradition.

## CHAPTER II

### FROM WEN JIANG TO EMPRESS LÜ

This chapter will discuss the structural change of the roles of royal consorts and their natal families for the ruling lineages from the Spring and Autumn period to early Han China and speculate on the impact of this change on historians' attitudes toward royal consorts and their natal families as displayed in *Chunqiu*, *Zuozhuan* and *Shiji*. The most significant historical change from the Spring and Autumn period to Han China is the change of polity from multiple feudal states to one united empire. This chapter will consider the impact of this change of polity on the roles of women in the state and its association with the differences in attitudes toward their roles in politics that can be traced in the writings of the historians under consideration here.

Three time epochs are intertwined with each other in this discussion of the stories about women from the Spring and Autumn period in *Zuozhuan* and *Shiji*. The first is the Spring and Autumn period (722 BCE-476 BCE) when the heroines in *Zuozhuan* actually lived. The second epoch is the mid-Warring States period around 350 BCE when the compilation of *Zuozhuan* was largely complete. The third time period is early Han China when *Shiji* was written. These different epochs intertwined with each other when the authors of *Zuozhuan* and *Shiji* dealt with women from the Spring and Autumn period in their works. They unavoidably were engaged in their own contemporary issues and thus projected onto the past the perspectives they drew from their own time. The ideas about women could be quite different or even contradictory to one another among the three time layers. In this chapter, I will use the representations of Wen Jiang 文姜 as an

example to present the different attitudes toward women between *Chunqiu* and *Zuozhuan* although the two texts are mixed as one in the current textual format of *Zuozhuan*.

On the other hand, Sima Qian's attitude towards women from the Spring and Autumn period can not be fully understood without measuring the significance of important moments in the early Han in which women and their families were deeply involved. I will particularly discuss two problems related to palace women and their families in the early Han: the first problem is the extreme power of the maternal relatives of the emperor from the beginning of the Han to the early years of the reign of Emperor Wu. I will present how troubling this extreme power is among the pro-emperor Han intellectuals by looking at how Sima Qian narrates the dominance and the fall of clan of the Empress Lü. The second problem is Emperor Wu's favoritism of marital relatives. I will display that Emperor Wu's favoritism of certain consorts and certain marital relatives produce tension and competition between different groups of people at court: first, a competition between the favored marital relatives of the emperor and hereditary houses around the case of Li Ling; second, a competition between the consorts of the emperor and between their families as represented in two witchcraft incidents. I argue these contemporary issues around palace women and their relatives explains why Sima Qian would take it appropriate to limit the agency of women and their relatives in and featured favored concubines negatively in general in his adaptation of stories from *Zuozhuan*.

### *Women in the Spring and Autumn period*

Within proper rituals of the Zhou dynasty, some aristocratic women from ruling families were married to other states of a different clan in the Spring and Autumn period.

The importance of interstate marriages is indicated by the fact that they are so often recorded in *Chunqiu*. According to Van Auken, there are as many as thirty-seven records of interstate marriages in the first half of the text *Chunqiu* (from 711 BCE to 573 BCE), though there is no record of marriage after the end of Duke Cheng.<sup>55</sup> These records could contain a short summary of the marriage itself, in the form of “someone goes (comes) to her home” (歸於/來歸), or they could be a record of one of its procedures, like “presenting betrothal gifts” (納幣), “sending off the bride” (送), “welcoming and escorting back the bride” (逆), “offering an accompanying concubine” (媵) or “inquiring after the bride” (致).<sup>56</sup> The random records of specific marriages suggest that marriage was not an event necessary to be recorded, but the record of these specific procedures of the marriage in the *Chunqiu* indicates that they were all potentially considered as achievements or merits for the state and for the ministers who were involved. In addition to the records of the procedures of marriage, a divorce of a daughter of the state of Lu from a duke of another state was also recorded in *Chunqiu* as a symbol of a big change in the interstate relationship (*Zuozhuan*, Xuan 16.3).

The significance of interstate marriage is related to the feudal system of the time. The feudal system in the Spring and Autumn period was characterized by a formal equality of the feudal states and the principle of a bond of family ties among states. Choyun Hsu describes the formal equality in the Spring and Autumn period this way: “In the Chunqiu period all the states enjoyed *de facto* sovereignty, and their rulers were equal in

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<sup>55</sup> See Newell Ann Van Auken, *A Formal Analysis of the Chuanchiou (Spring and Autumn Classic)* (dissertation, University of Washington), 110.

<sup>56</sup> Van Auken, *A Formal Analysis of the Chuanchiou*, 114.

this respect despite differences in their titles, e.g. *kung* (duke), *hou* (marquis), *po* (earl), *tsu* (viscount), and *nan* (baron).<sup>57</sup> On the other hand, this feudal system was based on the principle of familial ties, including both blood ties and marital ties, which created permanent bonds among these formally equal states:

This system was built up by the installation of Chou princes and royal kinsmen as feudal Dukes in the lower Yellow River valley among their former enemies. By integrating familial relations with the feudal system, the Chou kings identified political leaders with family heads. The terms of address used by the king to his dukes and vice versa are those of the family. Dukes possessing the same surname as the royal house were addressed by the king as paternal uncles; dukes with other surnames were addressed as maternal uncles.<sup>58</sup>

Following this initial design, interstate marriage became a significant way for the feudal states to maintain order and reinforce familial ties, both paternal and maternal, among states. Two ritual regulations for ducal marriages were meant to help fulfill this purpose. The first principle is exogamy: a feudal duke should marry a woman from a state of a different surname, which worked to reinforce marital ties between states.<sup>59</sup> Conventionally states maintained hereditary marital ties between each other. For instance, the state of Lu with the surname Ji and the state of Qi with the surname Jiang had hereditary marital bonds. All the dukes of Lu, from Duke Huan to Duke Cheng married daughters of the dukes of Qi.<sup>60</sup> Second, when a duke married off his daughter to another

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<sup>57</sup> Cho-yun Hsu, *Ancient China in Transition, An Analysis of Social Mobility*, 722-222 B.C. (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1965), 5.

<sup>58</sup> Hsu, *Ancient China in Transition, An Analysis of Social Mobility*, 3.

<sup>59</sup> According to *Guoyu*, the concern for the principle that “marriage avoids those who have the same surname” 娶妻避其同姓” is the fear of offending the ancestors who would send down punishment as bad luck in childbirth. See *Guoyu*, “jinyu”4, 356.

<sup>60</sup> According to Xu Jieling 徐杰令, Jin and Qi, Jin and Qin, Qi and Wei, Wei and Song, Song and Chen,

state, the states of the same or a closely related surname would send ministers with gifts, servants or concubines to accompany the bride. This is the so-called practice of *ying*媵.

There were not only *yingqi*媵器 (accompanying gifts) and *yingqie*媵妾 (accompanying concubines), there were also *yingchen*媵臣 (accompanying ministers) who came with the bride to serve in the marital state.<sup>61</sup> *Zuozhuan* tells us that when a duke marries off a daughter the states of the same surname should practice *ying* and those of other surnames do not need to.<sup>62</sup> However, the records in *Chunqiu* indicate that when Bo Ji, the daughter of Duke Xuan of Lu and Mu Jiang, got married, not only Wei and Jin, those states with the same surname Ji, came to *ying* the bride, but the state of Qi, which was the native state of her mother Mu Jiang, also came to practice *ying*. Excavated *ying* gifts of bronze vessels with introductory inscriptions also attest to the fact that the practice of *ying* was not limited to states of the same surname. Hence, interstate marriages became important occasions for the states to reinforce both the paternal and maternal ties among one another. These ritual specifications of interstate marriage worked for the two patrilines involved in the marriage to enhance reciprocal relationships and to confirm their identity as allies.

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Zhen and Xu all had hereditary marital bonds. See Xu Jieling, *Chunqiu bangjiao yanjiu* 春秋邦交研究 (Beijing: Zhongguo Shehui Kexue Chubanshe, 2004), 203.

<sup>61</sup> Cai Feng mentions that several excavated bronze vessels have inscriptions indicating they were used as accompanying gifts for the daughter of another state. See Cai Feng, 194. *Zuozhuan* Xi 5.8 mentions that the duke of Yu and his ministers were taken as the accompanying ministers for Muji of Qin, who was a daughter of Duke Xian of Jin, after the state of Yu was destroyed by Jin (CQZZZ, 311). *Shouyuan* mentions that Yiyin 伊尹 comes to serve Emperor Tang as the accompanying minister 婕臣 for the Youshen clan. See Zuo Songchao 左松超, *Shouyuan duben* 說苑讀本 (Taibei: Sanmin Shuju, 1996), “Zunxian” 尊賢, 258.

<sup>62</sup> See *Zuozhuan*, Cheng 8.2, Cheng 9.6, Cheng 10.4, Xiang 23.3.

In contemporary politics, interstate marriages produced an alliance between the bride's natal state and the marital state, which provided legitimacy for a state to interfere in another state's politics on special occasions. As recorded in *Zuozhuan*, a powerful natal state of a woman would impact her marital state by bringing the son of its own daughter to the seat of the Dukeship (*Zuozhuan*, Min 2.3). A lesser state like Lu was also willing to establish the heir by a mother from a great state like Qi to draw upon protection or to avoid offence. On the other hand, the state with maternal ties provided a secondary home for the son of the duke and it was a conventional choice for a son of the duke to flee to that home in situations of emergency.

My interest in interstate marriage is: did a woman play any functional role? Was her personal interest a concern for the bond of the interstate marriage? Or was she simply the object of exchange between two patrilineages without her own agency or interest? Judith Butler's answer to the first question, in her criticism of Levi-Strauss's construction of a universal structure of the gift exchange in all systems of the kinship, is "no":

According to the *Elementary Structures of Kinship*, the object of exchange that both consolidates and differentiates kinship relations is women, given as gifts from one patrilineal clan to another through the institution of marriage. The bride, the gift, the object of exchange constitutes "a sign and a value" that opens a channel of exchange that not only serves the functional purpose of facilitating trade but performs the symbolic or ritualistic purpose of consolidating the internal bond, the collective identity, of each clan differentiated through the act. In other words, the bride functions as a relational term between groups of men; she does not have an identity, and neither does she exchange one identity for another. She reflects masculine identity precisely through being the site of its absence.<sup>63</sup> Judith Butler considers that woman's role in a marriage between patrilineal clans is simply being a symbol, a "relational term between groups of men." The identity of the

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<sup>63</sup> Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 49.

woman is absent and irrelevant in this exchange. She further argues for the lack of a relation between women or reciprocity between men and women in a marriage between patrilineal clans: “The relation of reciprocity established between men, however, is the condition of a relation of radical nonreciprocity between men and women and a relation, as it were, of nonrelation between women.”<sup>64</sup> Although she criticizes the presumptions of universality of all systems of kinships in Levi-Strauss’s work and points out “the potentially limitless displacement” of specific cultural context in his universal structure, she herself produces a new overbearing universality which denies women’s identity or interest in any marriage between patrilineal clans based on Levi- Strauss’s anthropological observations.

Nevertheless, her mistake is forgivable in her analysis as philosophical speculation without much historical investigation of any specific culture. Here, I would argue that the marriage system based on reciprocity of patrilines in Eastern Zhou China does incorporate the woman’s interest, does anticipate a woman’s production of her own identity and does create a bond among women in the act of marriage.

The first support for my argument is the practice of *zhi/di* 妃娣 concubines and the *zheng* 燕 relationship in the marriage system in the Spring and Autumn period. *Gongyang Zhuan* mentions the company of *zhi/di* concubines in its discussion of the practice of *ying*.

What is *ying*? When a feudal duke marries a woman from one state, two states would (send someone to) accompany her, by the name of *zhi* and *di*. What is *zhi*? It is an elder brother’s child. What is *di*? It is a younger sibling. Once a feudal duke gets married, he will get nine women at a time and he will not marry again.

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<sup>64</sup> Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 52.

媵者何？諸侯娶一國，則貳國往媵之，以侄娣從。侄者何？兄之子也。娣者何？弟也。諸侯壹聘九女，諸侯不再娶。<sup>65</sup>

This passage tells that a nephew (*zhi*) or a younger sister (*di*) of the bride of a feudal duke would accompany the bride to the marital state and become a concubine of the duke; meanwhile, a daughter from another state of the same surname could also be considered as a nephew or young sister to accompany the bride. This indicates that the *zhi/di* concubines accompanying the bride were not necessarily related to the bride directly, but could have distant relationships with her as remote as relatives from another state. The contemporary scholar Cai Feng considers the description of *ying* in *Gongyang Zhuan*, especially the numbers of the consorts, to be an idealization of the marriage system by the Han Confucian scholars in the *gongyang* tradition and not representative of the actual practice of marriage in the Spring and Autumn period. He admits the existence of *zhi* concubines and *di* concubines, which were supported by multiple examples in *Zuozhuan* but denies the existence of *ying* concubines.<sup>66</sup> But, as interpreted above, what *Gongyang Zhuan* suggests is that the *ying* concubines were incorporated in the category of *zhi/di* concubines as those who have remote relations with the bride from other states. For example, the dictionary *Shiming* 釋名 by the Eastern Han scholar Liu Xi 劉熙 equates *zhidi* with *ying*: “the *zhi* and *di* concubines are called *ying* concubines and they serve the bride” 媞娣曰媵，媵承事嫡也.<sup>67</sup> The existence of *ying* concubines is

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<sup>65</sup> *Chunqiu gongyangzhuan*, Zhuang 184.

<sup>66</sup> Cai Feng, *Chunqiu shiqi guizu shehui shenghuo yanjiu* 春秋時期貴族社會生活研究 (Beijing: Zhongguo Shehui Kexue Chubanshe, 2004), 192.

<sup>67</sup> Liuxi, *Shiming* 釋名, “Shi qinshu” 釋親屬.

supported by other early texts, such as *Hanfeizi* (ca. 280 BCE-233 BCE) and *Lienüzhuan*.<sup>68</sup>

The existence of *zhidi* concubines and the practice of *ying* in the interstate marriage creates a bond among women and has the potential to make the group of people around the bride a new strand of power in the marital state. The depiction of the marriage ceremony in *Shijing* emphasizes the multitude of people on the side of the bride who were accompanied by *di* concubines and the reinvigoration of the marital house with this new group of people.

The multiple sisters followed the lady,  
Leisurely like a beautiful cloud.  
The marquis of Han looked round at them,  
Who filled his gate with their splendour.  
諸娣從之、祁祁如雲。  
韓侯顧之、爛其盈門。<sup>69</sup>

*Chunqiu Guliangzhuan* suggested the benefit of the company of *zhidi* concubines for the bride who was married into a completely strange household: “The *zhidi* concubines are meant to avoid the loneliness of the bride. Once one woman gave birth to a son, all three women are relieved” 侄娣者，不孤子之意也，一人有子，三人緩帶。<sup>70</sup> In addition to repeating the same function, *Baihu Tongyi* 白虎通義 (ca. 79 CE) also points

<sup>68</sup> *Hanfeizi* mentions a marriage between Qin and Jin where the bride was accompanied by seventy *ying* concubines who were well-dressed 從文衣之媵七十人; as a result, the duke of Jin favored a concubine over the bride. See *Han Feizi* 韓非子, “wai Chushuo zuoshang” 外儲說左上. *Lienüzhuan* has a story about Zheng Mao 鄭瞀 who was a *ying* concubine with the surname Ying for the bride from the state of Zheng who married King Cheng of Chu. Zheng Mao was chosen as the wife by the king because of her observation of ritual propriety. These two cases indicate the practice of *ying* consorts did exist but was not strictly in accordance with the ritual articulations mentioned in *Chunqiu Gongyang Zhuan*.

<sup>69</sup> *Shijing*, “Hanyi” 韓奕, in *Duanju shisanjing jingwen* 斷句十三經經文 (Taibeing: Taiwan Kaiming, 1991), 76.

<sup>70</sup> *Chunqiu guliangzhuan* 春秋穀梁傳, Wen 18, in *Shisanjing zhushu* 22, 213.

out this practice works to prevent jealousy which was a common problem with multiple consorts: “To harness the bride with followers of *di* and *zhi* concubines is so they would not be jealous with each other. Once one person gives birth to a son, all three of them nurture him together as if they had given birth to him themselves” 備侄娣從者，為其必不相嫉妒也。一人有子，三人共之，若已生之。<sup>71</sup> *Lienüzhuan* idealizes the bond between the formal wife and the accompanying concubine as similar to the one between a master and a follower in the story about the concubine of Zhou Zhuzhong周主忠妾. The concubine is depicted as keeping loyalty to the formal wife even under the threat of death.<sup>72</sup> Although the amity between the formal wife and the accompanying concubines might be idealized by the Han Confucian scholars, *Zuo zhuan* does contain multiple examples where the formal wife did not produce a son and the son by the *di* concubine was established as the heir.<sup>73</sup> The preference given to the son by the *di* concubine over the sons by other concubines was more a conventional practice than ritual propriety. This point is implied in the passage below where a minister disputed its legitimacy.

On the jihai day (17), Meng Jie died. Gongzi Chou, born of Jing Gui’s younger sister Qi Gui, was instated. Shusun Bao opposed this, saying, “When the heir apparent dies, if he has a full younger brother, he should be instated; if he does not, then the oldest among the Duke’s sons should be instated. If the sons are of the same age, the worthy one is chosen; if they are equally dutiful, then divination is used. This was the way of the ancients. Ziye was not the heir born of the principal consort, why must we instate the son of a *di* concubine?

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<sup>71</sup> Ban Gu, *Baihu tongyi* 白虎通義, “jiaqu” 嫁娶, in *Siku congkan chubian* 四庫叢刊初編, [Yuan] Shuangjianlou edition.

<sup>72</sup> *Lienü Zhuan*, Zhouzhuzhongqie 周主忠妾.O’Hara, *The Position of Woman in Early China: According to the Lie nü Chuan* (Taipei: Mei Ya Publications, Inc, 1971), 143.

<sup>73</sup> *Zuo zhuan*, Min 2.3, Xiang 19.5, Xiang 23.5, Xiang, 31.4.

己亥，孟孝伯卒，立敬歸之娣齊歸之子公子禡，穆叔不欲，曰，大子死，有母弟則立之，無則長立，年鈞擇賢，義鈞則卜，古之道也，非適嗣，何必娣之子？(*Zuozhuan*, Xiang 31.4)

This passage indicates that the establishment of the son by the *di* concubine was not the way of the ancients. More likely, it is a result of the momentum generated by the faction of the formal wife. This momentum partly comes from the strength of their native states. Support for this point can be seen in *Baihu tongyi* 白虎通義 which argues that establishing the *di* concubine as the formal wife after the death of the previous formal wife is a gesture of showing respect to the great state, which implies the natal state of these two women.<sup>74</sup>

In the Spring and Autumn period, a woman had more flexibility in her choice within marriage, since the interstate marriage is more a bond between two states than a bond between a man and a woman. The existence of the practice of *zheng* is an illustration of this point. *Zheng*烝 is a practice where a woman, after becoming a widow, marries a son or a brother of her husband.<sup>75</sup> *Zheng* was defined as a “licentious behavior with one’s elders” 上淫 in the notes of the Eastern Han scholar Fu Qian 服虔.<sup>76</sup> This practice could be a result of the personal will of the duke who was attracted to the widow.

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<sup>74</sup> 適夫人死後更立夫人者，不敢以卑賤承宗廟。自立其娣者，尊大國也。See “Jiaqu”嫁娶 in Ban Gu 班固, *Baihutong Delun* 白虎通德論. Siku Congkan Chubian, 431-2, Shuangjianlou edition.

<sup>75</sup> There are several important discussions about the practice of *zheng*: Gu Jiegang, “You ‘zheng’ ‘bao’ deng hunyin fangshi kan shehui zhidu de bianqian” 由“烝”“報”等婚姻方式看社會制度的變遷, in *Wenshi* 文史, Zhonghua shuju, 1982, vol. 14; Lü Yahu 吕亚虎. “Dongzhou shiqi ‘zheng’ ‘bao’ hun xianxiang kaobian” 东周“烝”“报”婚现象考辨, in *Renwen zazhi* 人文雜誌, 2004, vol. 6; Chen Xiaofang 陳筱芳, “Zheng bao yin: fei Chunqiu shiqi gongren de hunzhi” 禧報因: 非春秋時期公認的婚制, in *Xinan minzu xueyuan xuebao* 西南民族學院學報, 1998, 8.

<sup>76</sup> Gu Jiegang, “You ‘zheng’ ‘bao’ deng hunyin fangshi kan shehui zhidu de bianqian,” 8.

An example of this situation is Duke Hui of Jin who has a *zheng* relationship with Jia Jun 賈君, who was possibly the ex-wife of his half brother, the former Heir Apparent Shen Sheng, against the will of his elder sister Mu Ji of Mu (*Zuozhuan*, Xi 15.4; CQZZZ, 351). It also could be driven by the will of the widow's natal state who wanted to maintain the marital bond and continue its influence over the marital state of the widow. As an example, according to *Zuozhuan*, when Duke Xuan of Wei passed away, the state of Qi forced the son of Duke Xuan, Zhao Bo, to have a *zheng* relationship with Xuan Jiang, a daughter of the Duke of Qi, in spite of Zhao Bo's unwillingness (*Zuozhuan*, Min 2.5). This *zheng* marriage produced two subsequent dukes of Wei. With Xuan Jiang's remarriage, the state of Qi kept its close tie with the state of Wei over several generations. Undeniably, in the practice of *zheng* women were disposed according to the will of different men, however, this *zheng* practice also provided the possibility of security for a widow who was left childless in a marriage. As pointed out by Tong Shuye, women in the *zheng* relationship could have a status similar to a formal wife and a son born in this relationship could be the heir of her second husband.<sup>77</sup> With the practice of *zheng*, women had the possibilities of remarriage within the same marital clan. One more example is Shuji of Ji 紀叔姬 who was remarried to another branch of her husband's clan after she had been widowed (or abandoned) by her husband (*Chunqiu*, Zhuang 12.1). This example also indicates there was no requirement that a widow stay chaste.

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<sup>77</sup> Tong Shuye, *Chunqiu zuozhuan yanjiu* 春秋左傳研究 (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1980), 210.

The formal equality of the marital state and the natal state promised that a woman could have her natal state as the protector of her interests when her status in the marital state was under threat. For instance, *Chunqiu* has two records about Zishu Ji 子叔姬:

*Chunqiu*, Wen 14.13 The Qi leaders arrested Zishu Ji.

*Chunqiu*, Wen 15.11 In the twelfth month, a Qi delegation came to return Zishu Ji.

(經十四·十三) 齊人執子叔姬。

(經十五·十一) 十有二月，齊人來歸子叔姬。

*Zuo zhuan* provides stories which interpret these records. Zishu Ji was the consort of Duke Zhao of Qi and gave birth to She. Her son She was killed by the usurper Shangren not long after he succeeded to the throne. On this occasion, the state of Lu wanted Zishu Ji back home and used the following discourse: “You killed her son; what use do you have for his mother? I request we receive her and charge her with crimes.”<sup>78</sup>殺其子，焉用其母？請受而罪之 (*Zuo zhuan*, Wen 14.14). Although this discourse reveals on the surface a desire to punish Zishu Ji in her natal state, the real purpose is to rescue her from being killed by the new Duke of Qi, the usurper Shangren. This act of rescue only succeeded after they sent emissaries to make requests both in the Zhou court and in the state of Jin (*Zuo zhuan*, Wen 14.3, 14.6, 14.14, 15.1). This story indicates that the natal state took into consideration the well-being of its daughter in her marital state and sought ways to protect her with diplomatic missions when she was in a dangerous situation.<sup>78</sup>

The way women were addressed in *Chunqiu* and *Zuo zhuan* also suggests that women’s identity is more defined by their permanent belonging to their native clan than by their flexible association with their husbands or their marital clans. The way women

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<sup>78</sup> Two similar examples could be seen in *Chunqiu*, Zhuang 3.3, CQZZZ, 161; *Zuo zhuan*, Zhao 18.4, 19.3.

were addressed was fluid with the possible combination of her surname, her birth order in the family, the name of her natal state or marital state, and her or her husband's posthumous title. Examples of names are: Boji of Qi 杞伯姬 (the marital state, her birth order, her surname), 秦穆姬 (the marital state, the posthumous title of her husband, her surname), 文姜 (her posthumous title, her surname), 卫姬 (her natal state, her surname), etc. While the manner of addressing a woman varied according to different occasions, what remained with her was her surname, the name of her native clan. This indicates her permanent identification with her native clan regardless of her marital status. In contrast, Sima Qian misinterprets the common surnames of these palace women, especially Ji, as official titles for the Duke's concubines. In general situations, Sima Qian tended to name palace women according to their relation with a certain man, indicating whose mother, wife or daughter they might be, without leaving any trace of identity of their own.

This change in how women were named reflected the possibility of woman to represent either her native state, her marital state, her husband or herself depending on the need of specific occasions.

Although interstate marriage was a bond between two patrilineal clans and women were the “relational term” between two patrilineal clans, several records in *Chunqiu* and *Zuozhuan* indicate that women also played an active role of intermediary between two patrilineal clans on occasions of emergency.

1.     *Chunqiu*, Xi 5.2 Bo Ji of Qi came to introduce her son at court.  
(經僖五·二) 杞伯姬來朝其子。
2.     *Chunqiu*, Xi 3.1 In winter, Bo Ji of Qi came to seek a wife for her son.  
(經三一·五) 冬，杞伯姬來求婦。
3.     *Chunqiu*, Xi 14.2 In summer, in the sixth month, Ji Ji met the Master of Zeng at Fang. She had the Master of Zeng come to court.  
*Zuozhuan*, Xi 14.2 When Ji Ji of Zeng came to Lu to visit her parents, the Duke

was angry and detained her because the Master of Zeng had not come to court. In summer, she met him at Fang and had him come to court.

(經僖十四·二) 夏，六月，季姬及鄆子遇于防。使鄆子來朝。

(傳十四·二) 鄆季姬來寧，公怒，止之，以鄆子之不朝也。夏，遇于防，而使來朝。

4. *Chunqiu*, Xi 17 In autumn, Lady Jiang, the Duke's wife, met with the Prince of Qi at Bian.

*Zuozhuan*, 17.3 The army destroyed Xiang. At the meeting of Huai, the Duke had official business with the princes and had not yet returned to Lu, when we seized Xiang. The Qi leaders chastised us on that account and detained the Duke.

*Zuozhuan*, Xi 17.4 In autumn, Sheng Jiang, because of the circumstance concerning her husband, the Duke met with the Prince of Qi at Bian. In the ninth month, the Duke arrived. That the text says “He arrived from the meeting” is because he still had official business with the princes. The text is also concealing what had happened.

(經僖十七·三) 秋，夫人姜氏會齊侯于卞。

(傳十七·三) 師滅項。淮之會，公有諸侯之事，未歸，而取項。齊人以為討，而止公。

(傳僖十七·四) 秋，聲姜以公故，會齊侯于卞。九月，公至。書曰「至自會」，猶有 諸侯之事焉，且諱之也。

These four *Chunqiu* entries concern three women who mediated between their marital and natal states on behalf of one state. Two of them were provided with more details in *Zuozhuan*. Interestingly, all four records of this kind were in the reign of Duke Xi of Lu. In the first two examples, Bo Ji of Qi came on behalf of the state of Qi to introduce her son at the court of Lu and then sought marital alliance with Lu. In the third example, Ji Ji of Zeng met with her husband to persuade him to pay a visit at the court of Lu on behalf of Lu. In the fourth example, Sheng Jiang met the duke of her natal state Qi and asked for forgiveness on behalf of her husband Duke Xi of Lu. In these four cases, each woman was the emissary either on behalf of her natal state or of her marital state in dealing with the other party. In the last two cases, each woman acted when her marital state and natal state were in a diplomatic stalemate with conflicts of interest between each of them. In both stories they successfully fulfilled their mission of resolving the conflict

between marital state and natal state. These cases indicate that these ladies were the natural intermediaries between the two states which were bound together as alliances through them. In other words, they were not just a passive symbol of alliance between two states; they maintained this bond or alliance through their political actions. There are more examples of such roles played out by ladies in the *Zuozhuan*, but what is important with these four examples is that they were recorded in *Chunqiu*, records probably made by their contemporary state historians. The fact of being recorded in *Chunqiu* itself is an indication of the importance of these acts by these women. It seems there was no clear indication in either *Chunqiu* or *Zuozhuan* that the three women who took up these diplomatic missions were criticized. Only the latest commentary *Guliangzhuan* criticized Bo Ji of Qi in the first two cases with the same argument that “a woman could not cross the border after being married.”<sup>79</sup> In contrast, *Gongyangzhuan* neutrally interprets the wording in these two entries and does not direct any criticism toward Bo Ji.<sup>80</sup>

Then an important question comes up: what is the attitude of the contemporaries toward these women who carried out diplomatic missions? In their assessment of these women, did they put emphasis on the ritual propriety of their behavior or their political contribution? I will use the record about Wen Jiang as an example to discuss this problem in the next section.

Before proceeding to the discussion about Wen Jiang, let me summarize what has been discussed above. Basically, I argue that interstate marriage in the Spring and Autumn period incorporates several meaningful aspects for the status of women. First,

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<sup>79</sup> A married woman could not cross a border; it was not considered appropriate to cross a border. 婦人既嫁不逾竟，逾竟非正也。See *Chunqiu guliangzhuan*, Xi 5, Xi 31, in *Shisanjing zhushu* 22, 123,178.

<sup>80</sup> See *Chunqiu gongyang zhuan*, Xi 5, Xi 31, in *Shisanjing zhushu* 20.

the symbolic significance of interstate marriage in interstate relations promises the symbolic significance of these women in the state. Secondly, interstate marriage creates a bond among women with the practice of accompanying the bride with *zhi/di* concubines. And thirdly, women had a more flexible bond with their husbands and retained closer ties with their natal clan or natal families. Lastly, the most important thing is that these women were expected to play out their role as the intermediary between their marital and natal states in diplomatic emergencies. This means that these women have the possibility of parlaying their symbolic capital to political agency.

### *The image of Wen Jiang in Chunqiu*

There are multiple entries about Wen Jiang in *Chunqiu* and *Zuozhuan*. Wen Jiang, or Lady Jiang as she was called in some places in the story, was the younger sister of Duke Xiang of Qi and according to *Zuozhuan*, they had sexual relations. Their adultery was discovered by Wen Jiang's husband, Duke Huan of Lu, in a meeting of the three of them. Duke Huan was subsequently killed by the Duke of Qi and Wen Jiang's son Duke Zhuang succeeded to the throne of Lu. After this, Wen Jiang had several meetings with the Duke of Qi which were recorded in *Chunqiu*. These meetings were considered as evidence of the continuing adultery between Wen Jiang and the Duke of Qi by commentators of *Chunqiu*.

*Chunqiu*, Huan 18.1 In the eighteenth year, in spring, in the royal first month, the Duke (the Duke of Lu) met with the Duke of Qi at Luo. The Duke and his formal wife, the Lady Jiang, then went to Qi.

*Zuozhuan*, Huan 18.1 In the eighteenth year, in spring, the Duke was about to leave the domain and then go to Qi with the Lady Wen Jiang. Shen Xu said, "When a woman has her home through her husband, and a man has his household through his wife, and the two do not encroach upon each other, we call this having ritual propriety. One who makes changes in this is certain to fall." The

Duke met with the Duke of Qi at Luo, and they then went to Qi together with Wen Jiang. The Duke of Qi had sexual relations with her. The Duke reproached her, and she reported this to the Duke of Qi. In summer, in the fourth month, on the bingzi day (10) a ceremonial entertainment was held for the Duke. The Duke had Gongzi Pengsheng help the Duke into a carriage, and the Duke expired in the carriage. The Lu leaders declared to Qi: “Our Duke feared the authority of your ruler and dared not stay at home in peace. He came to Qi to restore an age-old amity. But when the ritual was completed, he did not return. We have no reason to lay the blame on you, but we have been insulted in the eyes of the dukes. We request that you use Pengsheng to remove the insult.” The Qi leaders killed Pengsheng.

*Chuniu, Zhuang* 1.2 In the third month, the Formal Wife of the Duke retired to Qi.

*Zuozhuan, Zhuang* 1.2 In the third month, the Formal Wife of the Duke retired to Qi: it does not proclaim her “Lady Jiang” because she had been cut off and was not acknowledged as a parent. This is the proper ritual.

*Chunqiu, Zhuang* 2.4 In winter, in the twelfth month, Lady Jiang, the wife of Duke Huan, met with the Prince of Qi at Zhuo.

*Zuozhuan, Zhuang* 2.1 In the second year, in winter, Lady Jiang, the wife of Duke Huan, met with the Prince of Qi at Zhuo. This is recording an act of adultery.

*Chunqiu, Zhuang* 4.1 In the fourth year, in spring, in the royal second month, Lady Jiang, the wife of Duke Huan, offered a ceremonial entertainment to the Prince of Qi at Zhuqiu.

*Chunqiu, Zhuang* 5.2 In summer, Lady Jiang, the wife of Duke Huan, went to the Qi army.

*Zuozhuan, Zhuang* 6.2 In winter, a Qi delegation came to turn over treasures from Wei: it was Lady Wen Jiang who had requested this.

*Chunqiu, Zhuang* 7.1 In the seventh year, in spring, Lady Jiang met with the Prince of Qi at Fang.

*Zuozhuan, Zhuang* 7.1 In the seventh year, in spring, Wen Jiang met the Prince of Qi at Fang: this was Qi’s wish.

*Zuozhuan, Zhuang* 7.5 In winter, Lady Jiang, the main wife of Duke Huan, met the Prince of Qi at Gu.

*Chunqiu, Zhuang* 15.2 In summer, Lady Jiang, the wife of Duke Huan, went to Qi.

*Chunqiu, Zhuang* 19.4 Lady Jiang, the wife of Duke Huan, went to Ju.

*Chunqiu, Zhuang* 20.1 In the twentieth year, in spring, in the royal second month, Lady Jiang, the wife of Duke Huan, went to Ju.

(傳桓十八·一) 十八年，春，公將有行，遂與姜氏如齊。申繻曰：「女有家，男有室，無相瀆也。謂之有禮。易此必敗。」公會齊侯于灤，遂及文姜如齊。齊侯通焉。公謫之。以告。夏，四月丙子，享公。使公子彭生乘公，公薨于車。魯人告于齊曰：「寡君畏君之威，不敢寧居，來修舊好。禮成而不反，無所歸咎，惡於諸侯。請以彭生除之。」齊人殺彭生。

(經十八·一) 十有八年，春，王正月，公會齊侯于灤。公與夫人姜氏遂如齊。

(經十八·二) 夏，四月丙子，公薨于齊。  
(傳莊一·一) 元年，春，不稱即位，文姜出故也。  
(經莊一·二) 三月，夫人孫于齊。  
(傳莊一·二) 三月，夫人孫于齊，不稱姜氏，絕不為親，禮也。  
(經莊二·四) 冬，十有二月，夫人姜氏會齊侯于禚。  
(傳莊二·一) 二年，冬，夫人姜氏會齊侯于禚。書姦也。  
(經莊四·一) 四年，春，王二月，夫人姜氏享齊侯于祝丘。  
(經莊五·二) 夏，夫人姜氏如齊師。  
(傳莊六·二) 冬，齊人來歸衛寶，文姜請之也。  
(經莊七·一) 七年，春，夫人姜氏會齊侯于防。  
(經莊七·五) 冬，夫人姜氏會齊侯于穀。  
(經莊十五·二) 夏，夫人姜氏如齊。  
(經莊十九·四) 夫人姜氏如莒。  
(經莊二十·一) 二十年，春，王二月，夫人姜氏如莒。(CQZZZ,151-213)

An important question to note about Wen Jiang in *Chunqiu* is why *Chunqiu* kept such meticulous records of Wen Jiang's meetings with Duke Xiang of Qi if these were evidence of their adultery? Are the records there to reveal the shameful behavior by the wife of a duke in a text like *Chunqiu* which generally tends to hide the shameful facts for the sake of the duke?

In *Chunqiu*, ten entries directly record Wen Jiang's activities. It is a rare case in *Chunqiu* to have such a great number of entries about one woman's activities. Three commentaries on *Chunqiu* all agreed that *Chunqiu* was criticizing Wen Jiang in those entries. All commentaries take the form of the *Chunqiu* entry, especially the naming of Wen Jiang, as the evidence of its author's criticism toward Wen Jiang. *Zuozhuan* believes that the first record of the meeting between Wen Jiang and Duke of Qi at Zhuo in *Chunqiu* is to "record an act of adultery" 書姦. The *Gulianzhuan* also argues that *Chunqiu*'s criticism is obvious since Wen Jiang's behavior recorded in *Chunqiu* had gone far beyond any appropriate ritual boundary. *Chunqiu* also has three more entries about Wen Jiang's activities beyond the Lu border after her sexual partner Duke Xiang of Qi

died. Du Yu suggested that these entries implied, and were criticizing, another adulterous relationship. Further evidence for *Chunqiu*'s criticism drawn by the commentators is the manner of addressing her. According to *Zuozhuan*, *Chunqiu* does not use the title “Lady Jiang” in this entry. “The formal wife of the Duke retired to Qi 夫人孫于齊” is a way of criticism. This special naming is to cut Wen Jiang off and to refuse to acknowledge her as a parent on behalf of the Duke of Lu.

Contrary to these commentaries, I would argue that these arguments are not well founded. It is disputable whether it is the true intent of *Chunqiu* to criticize Wen Jiang’s adultery by recording meetings or her outbound activities. If that is really the case, it is interesting that *Chunqiu* repeatedly records such unfavorable things for the state of Lu and makes them so detailed and accurate in time, place, and manner. Such recording strategy toward a formal wife of a duke does not go along with the strategy of hiding negative events for the sake of the state of Lu.<sup>81</sup>

Second, we could not see any sign of deviation from the recording propriety in these entries about Wen Jiang’s activities. As a highly formal text, *Chunqiu* implies immoral or irregular situations by deviating from appropriate recording form. This was celebrated by its commentators as its special way of offering criticism or teaching moral lessons. But, those entries about Wen Jiang’s meetings with Duke Xiang of Qi comply with the regular format of meetings in *Chunqiu*. According to Van Auken, the formal pattern for recording meetings that involve a Lu ruler or a Lu nobleman is “[Lu

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<sup>81</sup> As argued by Newell Ann Van Auken, *Chunqiu* has a tendency to avoid unfavorable facts about the state of Lu or the Duke of Lu. See Van Auken, *A Formal Analysis of the Chuenchiou*, 364.

representative]會 [representatives of other states 於 location]”.<sup>82</sup> This is exactly the form of the entry which is noted as being about adultery by *Zuozhuan* and other entries about their meetings. These records about Wen Jiang’s meetings with Duke Xiang of Qi are ambiguous in terms of their specific purpose. One may suggest that not recording their purpose is a way of revealing a shameful purpose. But in *Chunqiu* sometimes the purpose of meetings is not specified. I cite two other entries which follow the same pattern to compare with the entries about Wen Jiang.

1. *Chunqiu*, Huan 15.7 The Duke met with the Duke of Qi at Ai.
2. *Chunqiu*, Xi 17.3 In autumn, Lady Jiang, the Duke’s wife, met with the Prince of Qi at Bian.  
(經桓十五·七) 公會齊侯于艾。  
(經僖十七·三) 秋，夫人姜氏會齊侯于卞。  
(經莊二·四) 冬，十有二月，夫人姜氏會齊侯于禚。
3. *Chunqiu*, Zhuang 2.4 In winter, in the twelfth month, Lady Jiang, the wife of Duke Huan, met with the Duke of Qi at Zhuo.

The first record from *Chunqiu* tells that Duke Huan of Lu had a meeting with the duke of Qi in the fifteenth year at Ai but does not indicate the purpose of the meeting. We only learn from *Zuozhuan* that it was for settling a disorder in Xu (*Zuo*, Huan 15.5), which was mentioned in the previous entry in *Chunqiu*. The purpose of the meeting in this case is not shameful at all but it is not made explicit in *Chunqiu*. The second record about Sheng Jiang 聲姜, which was discussed above, also has exactly the same recording pattern with the one about Wen Jiang. *Zuozhuan*’s note on Wen Jiang’s meeting is to offer new information about that meeting rather than to criticize the behavior of Sheng Jiang. With exactly the same format, the common information conveyed in these entries is that the duke or the wife of the duke met with the duke of another state. There is no

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<sup>82</sup> Van Auken, *A Formal Analysis of the Chuanchiou*, 192.

indication in the recording format to suggest a difference in the participator or in the connotation of the meeting.

Another group of disputable entries about Wen Jiang is the series about her interstate travels beyond the border of Lu. These entries are also in the regular form “[Lu representative] 如 [some place].” This group of records continues after Duke Xiang passed away on the ninth of Duke Zhuang’s years (685 BCE). These records of Wen Jiang’s outbound activities are also ambiguous in terms of their purposes. But such ambiguity is also regular in this category of record with the verb “如” in *Chunqiu* and the real purpose could only be seen from *Zuozhuan* as in the examples listed below:

*Chunqiu*, Xi 33.9 In winter, in the tenth month, the Duke went to Qi.

*Zuozhuan*, Xi 33.7 In winter, the Duke went to attend court in Qi and moreover condoled with them about the actions of the Di army. Upon his return, he expired in the small chamber: this was because he had gone there to rest.

*Chunqiu*, Wen 1.11 Gongsun Ao went to Qi.

*Zuozhuan*, Wen 1.8 Gongsun Ao went to Qi: this was the first official visit there under Duke Wen and was the proper ritual.

*Chunqiu*, Xuan 10.1 In the tenth year, in spring, the Duke went to Qi.

*Zuozhuan*, Xuan 10.3 The duke went to Qi to attend the funeral [of Duke Hui].  
(經僖三三·九)冬，十月，公如齊。

(傳僖三三·七)冬，公如齊朝，且弔有狄師也。反，薨于小寢，即安也。

(經文一·十一)公孫敖如齊。

(傳文一·八)穆伯如齊，始聘焉，禮也。

(經宣十一)十年春，公如齊。

(傳宣十三)公如齊奔喪。

Van Auken has pointed out that in *Chunqiu* the omission of the specific purpose of the interstate visit by the duke of Lu or Lu noblemen is a common phenomenon.

The Lu ruler certainly must have dispatched emissaries to make “visits of friendly inquiry” and also to “pay court respects,” despite the fact that no explicit record of such activities appears in the *Chunqiu*. As we saw in the discussion of Lu diplomatic activity, reasons for Lu diplomatic travel were regularly omitted from the record, and it is possible that some of the travel by the Lu ruler and Lu

noblemen to other states was in fact for the purpose of making a *Pin* or *Chao* visit.<sup>83</sup>

Apparently, if the Lu representative were going to another state for a *Pin* or *Chao* visit, *Chunqiu* will only record in the form “[Lu representative] 如 [some place]” without specifying the purpose. From this perspective, the unspecified purpose of visiting in these entries about Wen Jiang did not necessarily imply a sexual affair.<sup>84</sup>

There is no sign that *Chunqiu* is being critical in these records by deviating from formal recording propriety. As a matter of fact, with these records, Wen Jiang gained the same honor that the Duke of Lu or high ministers have in *Chunqiu*. Her outbound activities were recorded in the same way that *Chunqiu* recorded the outbound activities of dukes of Lu and important high ministers. Based on the manner of recording Wen Jiang’s activities in *Chunqiu*, if adultery did happen, it seems to be an unimportant matter for the state history.

On the contrary, the attitude of the contemporaries in Lu toward Wen Jiang seems to be quite positive, as seen from the posthumous name Wen Jiang gains after her death. According to the last entry about Wen Jiang in *Chunqiu*, upon her death Wen Jiang was not called after her husband’s posthumous name “Huan” but received a posthumous name on her own, “wen”文. “Wen”文 is the most honorable posthumous name that one could ever gain. Only adored and memorable leaders like King Wen of Zhou or Duke Wen of Jin have received this posthumous name in history. According to the method of

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<sup>83</sup> Van Auken, *A Formal Analysis of the Chuanchiou*, 269.

<sup>84</sup> Yang Bojun suggests that, these records of outbound visits were unlikely about another sexual relationship as suggested by Du Yu, considering that the last two visits happened when Wen Jiang was well beyond fifty. See CQZZ, 210.

bestowing posthumous names recorded in Zhang Shoujie's 張守節 *Shiji Zhengyi Yifajie* 史記正義謚法解, under one of the these several conditions a person can receive the posthumous name “Wen”文:

- a. Who took Heaven as warp and earth as weft is called Wen
  - b. Who was moral and erudite is called *Wen*
  - c. Who studied hard and was willing to inquire is called *Wen*
  - d. Who was benevolent and loved people is called *Wen*
  - e. Who was sympathetic to people and was knowledgeable with ritual is called *Wen*
  - f. Who gave people reward titles is called *Wen*
- 經天緯地曰文；  
道德博聞曰文；  
學勤好問曰文；  
慈惠愛民曰文；  
愍民慧禮曰文；  
賜民爵位曰文；<sup>85</sup>

The features in this list summarize the image of a benevolent leader who performed virtuous deeds (施德) for people. These features of *Wen* go against the audacious, degenerate image of Wen Jiang in *Zuozhuan*. We might guess based on the items in the list that Wen Jiang may have received this posthumous name simply because of her talent or knowledge in literature. But we did not see any record about her talents in literature in either the *Chunqiu* or *Zuozhuan*. More importantly, people from the Spring and Autumn period would not separate one's literary talent from an evaluation of the whole personality. The only possibility left is that this proclaimer was to praise Wen Jiang for her virtuous deeds for the state of Lu. We are not sure who might have participated in the decision of her posthumous name, but we are sure at least that the people of Lu did not criticize Wen Jiang at all at the point of her death. Instead, her

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<sup>85</sup> *Shiji pingling* 史記評林 (Dongjing: Fengwen Guan, Miji 15 edition), 1:64.

contribution to the state was highly esteemed and memorialized. Even if these bestowers were forced to give her such a name, it still proves that the status of Wen Jiang was high enough in the state to make them silently pass over her illicit sexual behavior in the overall assessment of her life.

In addition to my argument that Wen Jiang, upon her death, was highly regarded in terms of her contribution to the state, I would continue to argue that Wen Jiang played the role of regent for her son Duke Zhuang in the early years of his reign and the multiple entries about her in *Chunqiu* were a direct result of this role.

Her status of regent is understandable in several aspects. First, when Wen Jiang's husband Duke Huan died, her son Duke Zhuang was only twelve years old and was not ready to rule the state on his own.<sup>86</sup> Second, Wen Jiang was supported by her natal state which was the strongest state in the region and liked to take advantage of its neighboring states. What happened to the state of Ji 紀 is an illustration of this. Because the Duke of Ji was not able to handle the relationship with the state of Qi, he gave up his throne to his brother.<sup>87</sup> In this context, it is reasonable that the people of Lu did not dare to go against the state of Qi to avenge the murder of Duke Huan. They simply sent a formal letter to the state of Qi to request Peng Sheng be killed to cover up the rumor. Lastly, Wen Jiang had a strong tie with her natal state. She was a favorite daughter of her father, Duke Xi of Qi, who escorted her over the border of Qi in person when she got married. She also had

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<sup>86</sup> *Chunqiu* has an entry recording the birth of Duke Zhuang, whose name is Tong, in the sixth year of Duke Huan (706 BCE) and Duke Huan died in the eighteenth year (694 BCE). This indicates that Duke Zhuang was twelve years old when he succeeded the throne.

<sup>87</sup> “The Duke of Ji was unable to submit to Qi, so he gave the domain of Ji to a younger brother. In summer, the Duke of Ji quit his domain forever: this was to avoid a calamity with Qi.” see *Zuozhuan*, Zhuang 4.2. Another related entry is Zhuang3.3.

a close relationship, albeit it was a sexual one, with the reigning duke of Qi, Duke Xiang. In such circumstances, the young Duke Zhuang would rely heavily on his mother and her natal state for protection to seal his status in the state of Lu, even if her behavior was morally questionable.

The irregular record of Duke Zhuang's accession indicates that Wen Jiang was reigning when her son Duke Zhuang succeeded to the throne. In *Chunqiu*, under the first year of Duke Zhuang there is no record about the duke's ascension. According to *Zuozhuan*, *Chunqiu* does not proclaim the accession because Wen Jiang was still abroad. Such an emphasis on the role of Wen Jiang in the state is disturbing to later commentators. Both *Gongyangzhuan* and *Guliangzhuan* disagreed with *Zuozhuan*, arguing that it was because Duke Zhuang was acceding after a murdered Duke.<sup>88</sup> However, this explanation is not satisfactory because the ascension of Duke Zhuan was recorded in *Chunqiu*, although he succeeded Duke Yin who was murdered.<sup>89</sup> The first event in the first year of Duke Zhuang indicates Wen Jiang's activities were the focus of the state at that point: "In the third month, the formal wife of the Duke is withdrawing in Qi." (*Chunqiu*, Zhuang 1.2). Early commentators have noticed the irregular way of addressing Wen Jiang in this entry. *Chunqiu* did not proclaim Wen Jiang with her family name. *Zuozhuan* notes that this special proclaimer is to show that Duke Zhuang of Lu refused to acknowledge Wen Jiang as his parent. *Zuozhuan* has noted on another occasion that to proclaim someone with a family name in *Chunqiu* is an honor: "To proclaim someone with

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<sup>88</sup> See *Chunqiu Gongyangzhuan*, *Shisanjing zhushu* 20, 130.

<sup>89</sup> See *Chunqiu Gongyangzhuan*, *Shisanjing zhushu* 20, 78.

one's clan name is to honor the duke's decree" 稱族尊君命也. But according to the same passage in *Zuozhuan*, to proclaim someone without clan name, or family name, is not necessarily to debase that person (*Zuozhuan*, Cheng 14.4). In the case of Wen Jiang, the address "the formal wife of the Duke" 夫人 is not her given name, but her honorific noble title. Indeed, this signifier for Wen Jiang in this entry is unique among entries about her. In all the other entries about her, her appellation is ritually regular. *Zuozhuan*'s explanation of the signifier is not satisfactory because it is unlikely the state scribe would take the chance to criticize Wen Jiang by the terms of naming in this entry pertaining to the duke of Lu but not in all the other entries directly about her actual illicit meetings.

Against *Zuozhuan* and other commentaries, I would argue the address as "the formal wife of the Duke" puts her in a status similar to the reigning sovereign. It is routine in *Chunqiu* that when it refers to the current sovereign of Lu, it does not specify the address as "the Duke of Lu 魯侯" or "Duke Huan" but simply uses the honorific noble title "the Duke" 公. By the same token, Wen Jiang was honored simply with the title "the formal wife of the Duke" 夫人 to indicate the importance of her role in this transitory period. The address "the formal wife of the Duke" as well as the absence of the record of the ascension of Duke Zhuang indicates that *Chunqiu* does not take the first year of Duke Zhuang as the beginning of the rule by the minor duke; instead, it is the beginning of the regency of the formal wife of Duke Huan, Wen Jiang. That is why in the following years of Duke Zhuang, Wen Jiang's outbound activities, including her meetings with the Duke of Qi, were featured in *Chunqiu*.

Another issue related to the omission of Wen Jiang's family name in the address is the uniqueness of the event under record. As a matter of fact, Wen Jiang did not formally retire to Qi at that time. The record of her later activities in *Chunqiu* demonstrated that she came back to Lu not long after this record. All the records of her activities suggest that she lived and died in the state of Lu. Meanwhile, as we were told in *Zuozhuan*'s commentary to the last entry, Wen Jiang had been staying in Qi since Duke Huan's death and had not come back yet when the first year of Duke Zhuang begins. This fact is also acknowledged by *Gongyangzhuan*.<sup>90</sup> So this entry does not record a change in Wen Jiang's status, but merely records the situation that Wen Jiang was still in Qi for the time being. This entry is thus not about any event in action that occurred at the point, but it is better to be considered as a record of an emotional event. As suggested by *Gongyangzhuan*: this entry is about "missing the mother 念母," a need of the minor duke for the mother. Both *Gongyangzhuan* and *Guliangzhuan* argued that it was ritually appropriate to devote first a record to his mother of the duke who became the new parent of the whole state. This emphasis on the intention of longing for the mother rebuts *Zuozhuan*'s suggestion that the unique way of addressing Wen Jiang is a gesture that Wen Jiang "had been cut off and was not acknowledged as a parent" by the duke.

To argue further, the address of "the formal wife of the Duke" is to show the quality of the record as an emotional event. If the address of Wen Jiang in the entry was as formal and complete as the one "the formal wife of the duke Lady Jiang," this entry would sound like a formal record of an actual event. As I pointed out above, Wen Jiang did not formally retire to Qi but was just still staying there after the accidental death of

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<sup>90</sup> *Chunqiu gongyang zhuan*, 131.

her husband. It is more reasonable that the duke, as young as twelve years old, was longing for his mother and did not show the required maturity to deal with his new position at this crucial point. The peak of the duke's longing for his mother, along with the chaos around it in the Lu court, could have created emotional turmoil for the state in transition. This entry conveys the emotion of longing for Wen Jiang both by the duke and by the people of Lu. The people of Lu could be hoping that Wen Jiang would come back to stand with her son to ensure his smooth ascension, rather than stand with her natal state to bring more resentment upon the young duke. Duke Zhuang had brothers, Ji You, Qingfu and Shuya, who would play important roles in the state of Lu and could have been his competitors for the throne.<sup>91</sup> From the perspective that this entry records the emotional event of longing for Wen Jiang on the side of Lu, the informal address "the formal wife of the Duke" without mentioning her surname could be understood to be the result of a twist toward informality in order to convey the association with personal emotion in the recording of Wen Jiang's situation. This conjecture is to dispute the taken-for-granted association made by commentators of *Chunqiu* between the informal address of Wen Jiang and a negative attitude of the author. Of course, pending further textual discoveries, we will probably never know exactly what the circumstances actually were.

Other records in *Chunqiu* also show that Duke Zhuang and the state of Lu did not alienate Wen Jiang or her natal state against the suggestion by *Zuozhuan*. Duke Zhuang did not take any action to revenge his murdered father throughout his life, although he was one of the most successful rulers in the history of Lu. Duke Zhuang did take action to stand against Qi years later, but it was to pacify the succession chaos in Qi. I would like to

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<sup>91</sup> See *Zuozhuan*, Zhuang 32.4.

point out that his father's murder was carried out partly for his own benefit. According to *Gongyangzhuan*, Duke Xiang of Qi killed Duke Huan of Lu because the latter made the accusation that Wen Jiang's son, Tong, the future Duke Zhuang, was not sired by him, but by Duke Xiang of Qi.<sup>92</sup> From the perspective of this comment, the duke of Qi killed Duke Huan of Lu so that Tong would not have been removed from his heirship because of his father's anger toward his mother. The records in *Chunqiu* also suggest that the young Duke Zhuang had a close relationship with the leaders of Qi after his father's death. The leaders of Qi took the young Duke Zhuang hunting in the winter, which was a form of military training for noble youngsters for real wars, when he was sixteen years old.<sup>93</sup> They then took him to a real war against the state of Wei the next year.<sup>94</sup> Apparently, the leaders of the state of Qi played the role of fathers for Duke Zhuang when he was still a teenage duke.

A cross-reading of the entries about Wen Jiang and other neighboring entries suggest that Wen Jiang's outbound activities had political significance. Though illicit sex might have been involved, the meetings between Wen Jiang and Duke Xiang were part of the political cooperation between the state of Lu and the state of Qi. As we could learn from *Chunqiu*, closely following Wen Jiang's first meeting with the Duke of Qi, the state of Lu sent a high minister Ni to go with the army of Qi for an attack of Wei. In the same year that Wen Jiang feasted Duke Xiang of Qi, Duke Zhuang went hunting with the

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<sup>92</sup> *Chunqiu Gongyangzhuan*, 131.

<sup>93</sup> *Zuozhuan*, Zhuang 4.7.

<sup>94</sup> *Zuozhuan*, Zhuang 5.4.

leaders of Qi.<sup>95</sup> In the following year, Wen Jiang went to the Qi army and later Duke Zhuang participated in the war against Qi with the Qi army. In a word, Wen Jiang's meetings with the Duke of Qi as well as other outbound activities were interwoven with Lu's military cooperation with the state of Qi. There were no other records that the duke himself or other Lu high ministers met with the representatives of Qi to discuss the details of their military cooperation. It is certain that Wen Jiang's meetings with the duke of Qi were, even just partly, to discuss those military co-operations.

Wen Jiang's role in the military cooperation between Lu and Qi is especially revealed in the *Zuo zhuan* entry about the treasures from Wei. According to *Zuo zhuan*, the division of the booty to the benefit of the state of Lu was a result of Wen Jiang's request. “*Zuo zhuan*, Zhuang 6.2 In winter, a Qi delegation came to turn over treasures from Wei: it was Lady Wen Jiang who had requested this. (傳莊六·二) 冬，齊人來歸衛寶，文姜請之也。” Seen from this entry, Wen Jiang's meeting with the duke of Qi brought practical benefit to the state of Lu. This record proves how significant Wen Jiang's role was in the military cooperation between these two states.

I argue that Wen Jiang's travels might have involved sex but were of great political significance and it was the latter that made them worthy of record in *Chunqiu*. Wen Jiang's outbound activities recorded in *Chunqiu* were not limited to the meetings with Duke Xiang of Qi. The record about her trips to the state of Qi continues after the death of Duke Xiang of Qi. They were also not limited to the relations with the state of Qi. Her last two outbound trips to the state of Ju, which were considered by Du Yu as involving another sexual affair, were undertaken when she was beyond fifty. These two

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<sup>95</sup> *Chunqiu*, Zhuang 4.1, Zhuang 4.5.

trips to Ju probably also had some political significance, although we are unable now to discover precisely what that significance might have been.

To summarize my argument, the records about Wen Jiang in *Chunqiu* were not to criticize Wen Jiang for the illicit sexual relationship with her brother. Instead, they were to give Wen Jiang credit for her political contributions to the state with her outbound activities. The commentators of *Chunqiu*, who were too concerned with ritual propriety and the moral requirement toward women, could not acknowledge the political contribution of a complex woman as her contemporaries could.

This tolerance of *Chunqiu* for Wen Jiang is related to the polity of the Spring and Autumn period. Multiple states with various levels of power coexisted and were pitted against each other. Within such a political structure, the prosperity of a state did not represent itself only in the smooth succession of the bloodline of the ruling family, but also in its survival in multiple-state politics. The role of women in an interstate marriage was not only to bear progeny for the ruling family, but also to act as the representative of the alliance between two states. Their status in the state was not just decided by their relations with their husbands and their sons, but was also defined by the power of their natal states. Even though Wen Jiang brought disaster to her husband and made the state lose a duke, her contribution to the state of Lu was acknowledged and neatly recorded by her contemporaries in *Chunqiu*.

### *Palace women in the early Han*

I intend to illustrate in this section the distinctive features of the new power structure in the early Han and its relation with the status of palace women and their

families in comparison with the features and relations I found for the Spring and Autumn period earlier in this chapter. I use the story of Empress Lü and the crackdown on her clan as my primary example.

The power structure of this new empire redefined the relationship between the marital family and the natal family of the palace women. The formal equality between the marital family and the natal family that we see in the Spring and Autumn period no longer existed in the imperial China once there was a single dominant royal family. The relationship between the emperor and his marital relatives became a hierarchical relationship as that between supreme sovereign and subjects. In particular, real autocracy reemerged in the reign of Emperor Wu of Han. With the application of the policy “The extension of gratitude by dividing the feudal state for sons and brothers” 推恩分子弟国邑, Emperor Wu resolved the problem of the threat from large feudal states which had troubled all the previous Han emperors.<sup>96</sup> For the first time, the emperor took control over the whole empire with centralized power. In the reign of Emperor Wu, the identity of subject is fully embodied by Wei Qing, the brother of Empress Wei. He refused to accumulate his own power by taking talented people under his patronage against the will of Emperor Wu and considered his appropriate position to be just as subject.<sup>97</sup>

This new power structure also redefines the source of status for women. In the Spring and Autumn period, the status of a woman in her marital family is, in a great sense,

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<sup>96</sup> See *Hanshu*, j.6, “The Annals of Emperor Wu” 武帝紀. Read the discussion about the absolutism in the reign of Emperor Wu in Lu Yaodong 遼耀東, *Yiyu yu Chaoyue: Sima Qian yu Han wudi shidai* 抑鬱與超越——司馬遷與漢武帝時代.

<sup>97</sup> See “Wei jiangjun piaoji liezhuan” 衛將軍驃騎列傳, in *Shiji*, 111.2946.

related to the power of her natal state or the natal family. A daughter of the duke of a greater feudal state was more likely to be taken as the formal wife for the duke and hold power in her marital family. Under just that circumstance, the state of Qi was taken as the marital state by the state of Lu over several generations. An heir was also chosen depending on the status of his mother and his connection with other strong states.<sup>98</sup> In imperial China, the status of a woman was dependent on the status of her son. In the practice of the Han, a consort of the emperor was brought up to the status of empress often because her son had been appointed as the heir apparent. Emperor Wen's consort, Empress Dou, and Emperor Jing's consort, Empress Wang, became empresses because of the heirship of their sons. Sima Qian's narrative of the story that predicts the fate of Empress Lü also provides illustration for this point. In "The Basic Annals of Gaozu," an elder recognized the noble physiognomy of Empress Lü. When he saw Emperor Hui, he claimed Empress Lü would be noble because of her son, Emperor Hui, although Empress Lü became the wife of the future Emperor Gaozu before she had given birth to a son. When he finally saw Emperor Gaozu, he claimed Gaozu was the source of the noble physiognomy for the whole family. This story emphasizes that nobility was passed down along the male bloodline while women achieved nobility by giving birth to a son of this bloodline. This narrative neglects the biological fact that Emperor Hui would inherit his facial features from Empress Lü, not vice versa.

The relationship among palace women was defined more by competition and jealousy in the imperial period than in the Spring and Autumn period. In the Spring and Autumn period, the rank of ladyship was relatively stable and tended to be decided from

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<sup>98</sup> An illustration of this point is the discussion of the replacement for the future Duke Ling of Jin in *Zuozhuan*, Wen 6.5.

the beginning of marriage. The *zhi/di* marriage also promised a kind of sisterhood among some consorts of the duke. In the imperial period, however, the status of women and the choice of heir depended on the personal choice of the emperor. Emperor Jing and Emperor Wu had replaced the empress and the heir apparent because of fluctuations in their emotions. In the case of Empress Lü, although she and her family had made significant contributions in the war against Xiang Yu and in the stabilization of the throne for Emperor Gaozu, the status of her son as the heir apparent was not yet a thing that was set in stone. According to “The Basic Annals of Grand Dowager Lü,” Emperor Gaozu wanted to replace the heir apparent several times because he personally favored another son. The fragility of the status of women in the imperial period led to fierce competition among them and jealousy toward one another. Empress Lü’s inhumane treatment of Lady Qi is a good example of how a powerful and harsh woman avenged her love competitor.

One important issue related to the status of women in the early Han is that, from the beginning of the Han until Sima Qian’s time, the dynasty was continuously troubled by the extreme power of empress dowagers and their families -- beginning from the regency of Empress Dowager Lü and the dominance of her clan, continuing with the regency of Empress Dowager Dou and the favor of her family members, and then on to the overriding influence of Tian Fen, the maternal uncle of Empress Wu, in the early years of Empress Wu. In the mature reign of Emperor Wu, the marital relatives of the emperor, such as the family members of the Empress Wei and the brothers of the Lady Li, accumulated power and were entitled as dukes. How the extreme power of the empress dowager and her family infringed on the interests of the ruling Liu family is best represented in the so-called riot of the Lü clan.

The story of Empress Dowager Lü epitomizes the power that a palace woman could wield at that time. In *Shiji*, Empress Dowager Lü occupies a Basic Annals similar in status to an emperor while her sons, Emperor Hui and the infant Shaodi do not have one. The acknowledgement of the reign of Empress Dowager Lü was a general phenomenon in the early Han.<sup>99</sup> In *Hanshu*, there is also a Basic Annals for Empress Lü, although there is a Basic Annals for Emperor Hui as well. According to “The Basic Annals of Grand Dowager Lü” in *Shiji*, when Emperor Hui was on the throne, Empress Lü took charge of the administration for him. Empress Lü even directly claimed her mandate when the two Young Emperors were the titular rulers after Emperor Hui died. Recent archeological discovery attests to this. The Silk book *Wuxing Zhan*五星占, which was found in the Han tomb at Mawangdui马王堆, recorded the moving positions of Jupiter, Saturn, and Hesper. The chronology in the book has records noted under the first year of Han, the first year of Emperor Xiao Hui and also from the first year of Empress Gao (another title used for Empress Lü) to its eighth year. It suggested that when Empress Lü proclaimed her regency, her reginal years were acknowledged by the public. This is again witnessed in the Han bamboo strips found at Zhangjiashan张家山. The text *Lipu*历谱 on bamboo strips number 247 had records of events noted from the first year of Han to the second year of Empress Lü.<sup>100</sup> These discoveries indicate that the public

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<sup>99</sup> Hans Van Ess argues that Sima Qian and Ban Gu were not really interested in the character of Empress Lü; “they were rather writing about a political system in which power in the hands of women almost inevitably led to disaster.” For Sima Qian’s attitude toward Empress Lü, he emphasized that, in *Shiji* “at no point is Empress Lü reviled, nor is it said that she tried to usurp authority.” See Hans Van Ess, “Praise and Slander: The Evocation of Empress Lü in the *Shiji* and the *Hanshu*,” in *Nan Nü*, 8.2 (2006): 221-54.

<sup>100</sup> See Tengtian Shengjiu, *Shiji zhanguo shiliao yanjiu*, 45.

calendar used during Empress Lü's reign proclaimed her name instead of the two Emperor Shao's names.

The reign of Empress Lü gave great power to her family branch at court. As reported in “The Basic Annals of Grand Dowager Lü,” Empress Lü conferred the ranks of king upon sons of her brothers and a son of her daughter. She even conferred the rank of state Duke upon her sister. She gave her daughter “bath-town” 湯沐邑 and the title of “kingly empress dowager 王太后.” More shockingly, she set up two children as emperors who were not considered the legitimate descendants of the Liu family, for the sake of keeping Lüs in the power centre.<sup>101</sup> Some enfeoffments in Empress Lü's years were extraordinary in the perspective of later Chinese history, especially her sister and her daughter receiving titles and lands in their own names.

The shift to delegitimize the extreme power of marital relatives of the royal family started with the crackdown on the Lü faction. Descendants of the Liu family and followers of Liu Bang managed to remove the Lü faction by claiming they were illegitimate. The narrative in *Shiji* also conveys a message that Empress Lü's patronage of her branch family was morally and juridically invalid. If we read “The Basic Annals of Grand Dowager Lü” carefully, we will discover that the problem that led to the crackdown on the Lü faction was not that they started a riot, but that they enjoyed extreme high status at court. In Sima Qian's report of the story about the removal of the Lü faction elsewhere in *Shiji*, the blame is put entirely on the Lü faction. The short version of the story is that the Lü family branch started a riot which was crushed by

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<sup>101</sup> However, the historicity of Sima Qian's account of this is disputable. More possibly, these two young emperors were sons of ordinary palace women sired by Emperor Hui.

righteous force. But according to “The Basic Annals of Grand Dowager Lü,” the Lüs had not yet initiated any military action when their enemies took action against them. While the Lü were still hesitating, King Ai of Qi and his brothers took up against them and Zhou Bo and Chen Ping set a trap for them.

The narrative of a later development of the event actually provides opposite details from Sima Qian’s report about the Lü’s intention to riot. We are told later in the chapter that Lü Lu 吕禄 was persuaded by Li Shang 邸商 to give up his powerful position in the military force in order to pacify ministers and princes. He even brought the idea of withdrawal from the court to the whole Lü family for them to consider. The family was still hesitating on their final decision when the anti-Lü forces acted. Nevertheless, Lü Lu was intrigued enough to give up military power voluntarily.

The only evidence for the riot in the narrative is the anecdote about Lü Chan 吕产 although the report of his intention is suspicious.

Lü Chan did not know that Lü Lu had already left the Northern Army and he entered the Wei-yang Palace, intending to make rebellion, but at the gate to the residence halls he was not allowed to enter and paced back and forth.

呂產不知呂祿已去北軍，乃入未央宮，欲為亂，殿門弗得入，裴回往來。  
<sup>102</sup>

The narrative reports that Lü Chan was at the palace gate to make rebellion. The inconsistency in detail with this reported intention is that Lü Chan was only wandering back and forth in front of the closed court gate and kept at bay from any further action. Although the historical truth is unknown, it seems also possible from the narrative that Lü Chan was armed outside of the gate in order to protect the young emperor in the palace, who was the titular head of their faction, from possible attack by the competitor to the throne. This hypothesis meshes well with Empress Lü’s suggestion to Lü Lu and Lü Chan before she died.

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<sup>102</sup> William Nienhauser, *The Grand Scribe's Records* (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994), II:133; *Shiji*, 9.409.

In the middle of the seventh month, Empress Lü's illness grew worse, and she ordered Lü Lu, the King of Zhao, to become Commander in Chief, in command of the Northern army; Lü Chan, the King of Lü assumed the post of Commander of the Southern Army. Empress Lü cautioned Chan and Lu: "...As I am about to pass away and the emperor is young, the great ministers, I fear, will try to cause changes. You must hold your troops firmly in hand, guard the palace, be cautious, and do not accompany the funeral procession. Do not be restrained by others."

七月中，高后病甚，乃令趙王呂祿為上將軍，軍北軍；呂王產居南軍。呂太后誠產、祿曰：「...我即崩，帝年少，大臣恐為變。必據兵衛宮，慎毋送喪，毋為人所制。」<sup>103</sup>

This passage indicates that Lü Chan might very well have been following Empress Lü's suggestion to guard the palace when he was pacing back and forth in front of it.

The analysis in the passages above indicates that the narrative details about the actions of the Lü faction do not support the report of a "riot" by Lü faction. It is possible that Sima Qian had sided with the anti-Lü forces in his writing in order to delegitimize the Lü clan.

There is important evidence that Sima Qian supported the delegitimization of the extreme power of the marital relatives of the royal family regardless of historicity of the covenant of forbidding the entitlement of non-Liu kings and dukes. The problem of Empress Lü's rule featured in "The Basic Annals of Grand Dowager Lü" is that Empress Lü made her kin members kings 王 and dukes 侯. In multiple places, *Shiji* claims that the entitlement of her family members goes against a covenant that Emperor Gaozu made with his followers in his last years. This covenant is mentioned several times in "The Basic Annals of Grand Dowager Lü" as the judicial sanction for the removal of the Lü clan.

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<sup>103</sup> Nienhauser, II: 127; *Shiji*, 9.406.

However, the historicity of the covenant is suspicious. I would like to argue that the covenant was a product of Sima Qian's imagination based on a decree of a different message. The covenant was mentioned twice in "The Basic Annals of Grand Dowager Lü." It first appears in the conversation between Wang Ling and Empress Lü:

The empress caused her orders to be called decrees and caused the question of whether to enthrone the Lü's as kings to be deliberated, questioning the Chancellor of the Right, Wang Ling. Wang Ling said, "The vow we all made when Gaodi slaughtered a white horse read, 'If someone who is not of the Liu Clan is made king, the world will join together to attack him.' To now make kings of the Lü clan would be to go against the covenant."

太后稱制，議欲立諸呂為王，問右丞相王陵。王陵曰：「高帝刑白馬盟曰『非劉氏而王，天下共擊之』。今王呂氏，非約也。」<sup>104</sup>

The covenant also appears in Empress Lü's conversation before her death with her nephews who were entitled as kings.

Lü Taihou cautioned Chan and Lu: "When Gaodi [Emperor Gaozu] had already stabilized the world, he made a covenant with his great minister which read: 'If someone who is not of the Liu Clan is made king, the world will join together to attack him.' Now the Lü Clan has been made kings and the great ministers are not at peace with this..."

呂太后誠產、祿曰：「高帝已定天下，與大臣約，曰『非劉氏王者，天下共擊之』。今呂氏王，大臣弗平。」<sup>105</sup>

These two references together imply that it was common knowledge to both sides that this covenant was a great discursive threat against the Lü branch. We learn here that Emperor Gao had made this covenant with his followers after he finally established peace.

It is suspicious that such an important covenant was not recorded in "The Basic Annals of Gaozu" in *Shiji*. With the power of non-Liu kings seen as the major problem in Emperor Gao's reign, this covenant would be very important; moreover, its dramatic

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<sup>104</sup> Nienhauser, II: 115; *Shiji*, 9.400.

<sup>105</sup> Nienhauser, II: 115; *Shiji*, 9.406.

swearing scene would be a compelling event. But there is no direct record of the covenant or the scene of its signing in "The Basic Annals of Gaozu" or other place in *Shiji*. Indeed, it would have been impossible for Emperor Gaozu to swear such a covenant at the beginning of his reign when those non-Liu kings still held their titles and were still very powerful. Emperor Gaozu did not remove those threatening non-Liu kings until the last year of his reign. The last non-Liu king, the King of Changsha, continued to hold his position even after Emperor Gaozu died. It is surprising that King of Changsha was not removed when the covenant was sworn if it did occur.

The historicity of the covenant is suspicious considering how mutable the descriptions of the covenant are in *Shiji*. This covenant was mentioned again in "The Household of Marquis Jiang Zhou Bo" 繯侯周勃世家 , the chapter on the house of Zhou Bo, who was one of the leading characters in the anti-Lü force. In "The Household of Marquis Jiang Zhou Bo," the covenant was put into the mouth of his son, Zhou Yafu. This covenant was recalled by Zhou Yafu in a scene where he argued against Emperor Jing's plan of conferring the title of duke upon the empress's brother.

Emperor Gaozu made the covenant that "the non-Liu could not be made kings and those of no contribution could not be made dukes. If someone does not follow the covenant, the world should join together to attack him."

高皇帝約‘非劉氏不得王，非有功不得侯。不如約，天下共擊之’。*(Shiji, 57.2077)*

Compared to the two earlier versions, this version of the covenant is slightly expanded to contain the prohibition of the offering of the title of duke to those without contribution. This amendment served the covenant on the particular occasion when Zhou Yafu mentions it. Similar to that in "The Basic Annals of Grand Dowager Lü," the covenant was used here to prevent the inflation of the power of the marital relatives of the

emperor. It seems as if Zhou Yafu had inherited from his father the good tradition of protecting the dominance of the power of the royal patriline. According to both historical occasions where the covenant was recalled, the concern of the covenant was conferral of noble titles upon unqualified persons, with the marital relatives of the royal family as the major potential target.

However, this concern over the entitlement of kings and dukes in the covenant is not evident in yet another version of this covenant in *Shiji*. In the introduction to the form for kings in the Han in “Han Xing Yilai Zhuhouwang Nianbiao”漢興以來諸侯王年表, the covenant mutates again.

In the last year of Emperor Gaozu, “If a non-Liu person becomes a king, if a person without contribution becomes a duke without being established by the emperor, the world should attack him.”

高祖末年，非劉氏而王者，若無功上所不置而侯者，天下共誅之。(Shiji, 17.801)

Although most of the wording in this version is the same as the one we see in “The Household of Marquis Jiang Zhou Bo” spoken by Zhou Yafu, the meaning of this version is quite new. This covenant preserves the command that the world attack the target together. The concern for the qualification for the entitlement of duke and king remains, but the final target of the attack switches to someone who claimed himself duke or king without the emperor’s permission. The new amendment in this record makes this covenant appear to be targeting someone who stands up against the central power and wants to proclaim his own sovereignty. The layers of meaning of the covenant are not equivalent to its counterparts in the earlier contexts, where it is used to reject the inappropriate entitlement of duke and king by the emperor or the empress dowager.

The variation and contradiction in the content of the covenant in different contexts suggest that Sima Qian varied the covenant according to different occasions. Obviously, none of these records are a direct registration of the covenant. We can't find a direct record of the covenant anywhere in *Shiji*. Sima Qian tells us in “Hanxing Yilai Zhuhouwang Nianbiao” (*Shiji*, j.17) that the covenant was signed in the last year of Emperor Gao’s reign. In *Hanshu*, a decree sanctioned by Emperor Gao in his last year looks similar to this covenant. It is a common compiling strategy in *Hanshu* that actual decrees were copied into the book because Ban Gu and Ban Zhao had access to the central library and the central bureau of documents when they composed *Hanshu*. They could register the decree as it was in *Hanshu*. This decree was the only important decree under the last year in the reign of Emperor Gaozu, which was the year that Sima Qian dated the covenant.

In the third month an imperial edict said, “I have been made the Son of Heaven, and as Emperor have now possessed the world for twelve years until the present. Together with the brave officers and talented grandees of the empire I have subjugated the empire; together we have pacified and reunited it. Among those [of my followers] who have distinguished themselves, I have established the best as kings, the next best as dukes, and the least have moreover been given the income of towns. Moreover some of the relatives of my important subjects have become marquises. All have been themselves authorized to establish their officials and levy taxes. Their daughters have become princesses. The marquises who have the income of towns all wear seals; we have granted them large residences. The officials [of the rank of ] two thousand piculs we moved to Chang'an to receive small residences. Those who went to Shu and Han and subjugated the three [parts of the state of ] Qin are all exempted from taxes and services from generation to generation. Toward the worthy officers and meritorious officials of the empire I may be said not to have been ungrateful. Let those who unarbitrarily raise troops be punished by the united military force of the empire and be executed. Let this be published and announced to the world to let it clearly understand Our intention.”  
三月，詔曰：“吾立為天子，帝有天下，十二年于今矣。與天下之豪士賢大夫共定天下，同安輯之。其有功者上致之王，次為列侯，下乃食邑。而重臣之親，或為列侯，皆令自置吏，得賦斂，女子公主。為列侯食邑者，皆佩之印，賜大第室。吏二千石，徙之長安，受小第室。入蜀漢定三秦者，皆世

世復。吾於天下賢士功臣，可謂亡負矣。其有不義背天子擅起兵者，與天下共伐誅之。布告天下，使明知朕意。”<sup>106</sup>

This decree shared with the covenant a common command that the world should punish a rebel together. But the target of the punishment was not those non-Liu kings or noncontributory princes. Instead, it was generally someone who raised troops against the central court. This decree is similar to the version of the covenant in “Hanxing Yilai Zhuhouwang Nianbiao” (*Shiji*, j.17) in the common goal against riots. But this decree lacks any specific detail about the entitlement of kings and dukes. Nevertheless, the decree makes a long list of the entitlements that the emperor had made before the final command. It implies that people should be satisfied with their current status and should not claim for themselves a higher status without permission from the emperor. In this way, this decree conveys a similar message to that in “Han Xing Yilai Zhuhouwang Nianbiao.” But from this decree to the covenant in “The Basic Annals of Grand Dowager Lü,” the difference in meaning is striking. This decree does not criticize the entitlement of non-Liu kings by the central court while in “The Basic Annals of Grand Dowager Lü,” this becomes the primary target.

It seems that Sima Qian had imagined a scenario of the covenant from this decree. In Sima Qian’s transformation, the decree focuses on reserving the titles of kings exclusively for the male descendants of Emperor Gaozu and rejecting the entitlement of marital relatives of the royal family. In order to sanctify the message, Sima Qian even made up a dramatic scenario that it was sworn as a covenant over the blood of a horse. There is a contrast of targets between this decree and Sima Qian’s versions of the covenant. This decree speaks to external threats toward the patrilineal succession of the

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<sup>106</sup> Dubs, *History of the Former Han Dynasty*, 141; *Hanshu*, 1.78.

reign. Sima Qian's revision makes it speak to the internal threats. Sima Qian follows Emperor Gao's goal of protecting the inviolable position of his male descendants. But Sima Qian switches the target to a more frequent but implicit threat after the time of Emperor Gaozu: the marital members of the royal family who tend to be offered the title of kings and dukes by the emperor and emperor dowager. We should recall that this fictive covenant was quoted in *Shiji* when the power of the natal family of the empress dowager was a concern. Sima Qian shows his concern with the inflation of power of those *waiqis* 外戚 by making the message an inviolable command to the descendants of Emperor Gao in his historical account.

If Emperor Gao's decree were followed exactly, the Lüs were not legally subjected to punishment. Instead, the forerunners in the military actions toward the Lüs, like King Ai of Qi Liu Xiang, should be punished. Their military actions with the ambition of claiming King of Qi to be the new emperor was exactly what the decree spoke to. But in the chapter "The Basic Annals of Grand Dowager Lü," Sima Qian consciously brought the Lü branch to an illicit position that was susceptible to attacks by reinterpreting the decree so that the anti-Lü force's attack could be legalized. Sima Qian put the blame on the Lü branch for their ambition for central power, which was actually the ambition of pro-Liu force. As I mentioned above, Sima Qian did not, and could not, actualize the Lü' intent of a riot in his account. Since they were already in the power center and had controlled the military force, it is unrealistic to think that they needed to start a riot. The real problem at this point was the extreme power of the Lü clan, thanks to the long regency of Empress Lü.

Though Sima Qian did not register his direct criticism towards Empress Lü's reign, his hostility was evident in his highlight of a covenant that lacks historicity and presenting a biased report on the removal of the Lü branch. It is worthwhile to recall the physiognomy story in "The Basic Annals of Gaozu." The story shows that for Sima Qian, Empress Lü had borrowed her power from her son, although he acknowledged her factual reign rather than her son's. Empress Lü, in her nature, was not noble enough for a heavenly mandate. She should not have been able to pass on the noble nature to her descendants either. This may explain why Sima Qian tried so hard to delegitimize all remnants of her influence, including the two young emperors.

### *The case of Li Ling and two witchcraft incidents*

The last section of this chapter will relate Sima Qian's attitude toward women and marital families of the emperor with two issues in the reign of Emperor Wu: first, competition between the favored marital relatives of the emperor and hereditary houses around the case of Li Ling; second, competition between the consorts of the emperor and between their families in two witchcraft incidents.

Sima Qian's attitude toward marital relatives of the royal family is related to his personal involvement in the case of Li Ling 李陵, which exemplifies the conflict of interest between groups of new nobilities held in favor by the emperor and groups of hereditary houses who inherit their talent and profession from their ancestors.

Lu Yaodong's 邰耀東 book *Yiyu he chaoyue: Sima Qian and Hanwudi shidai* 抑鬱與超越：司馬遷與漢武帝時代 introduces the conflict between the family of Li Ling and the favored marital relatives of Emperor Wu. Lu argues that Wei Qing 衛青, Huo

Qubing霍去病 and later Li Guangli李廣利 achieved nobility through military successes at the sacrifice of the interests of more capable generals. He points out they were selected as commanders-in-chief in the expedition against Xiongnu and Dawan not because of their military talents but rather because of Emperor Wu's favor of these marital relatives and his intention of bringing them to nobility through their military contributions. Their success in the battlefield was established on grounds of the blood and tears of the generals who were sons of well-behaved families from six border counties六郡良家子, a region of good military training.<sup>107</sup> Li Guang李廣, the grandfather of Li Ling, was a representative of this group of soldiers. To add to Lu's discussion, more importantly, Li Guang represented the descendants of a hereditary house of military tradition. He is the descendant of the Qin general Li Xin李信 and his family was famous over generations for skill in archery. However, although Li Guang's military talent was well known, he committed suicide in an expedition to Xiongnu with Wei Qing without having attained the title of duke. Lu Yaodong suggests Li Guang's unfavorable encounter in this expedition was related to Wei Qing's favoritism of his own associate and his replacement of Li Guang from his original position.<sup>108</sup> Li Guang's son, Li Gan李敢, avenged his father by attacking Wei Qing on a later occasion. Huo Qubing, the nephew of Wei Qing, killed Li Gan during their trip following the emperor in a hunting expedition. Emperor Wu covered up the truth to protect his favorite, Huo Qubing.<sup>109</sup> The enmity between the

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<sup>107</sup> Lu Yaodong, *Yiyu he chaoyue: Sima Qian and Hanwudi shidai*, 188.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., 192.

<sup>109</sup> *Shiji*, “Li Jiangjun liezhuan,” 70.2877.

Li family and the family of Wei Qing represents the conflict between a military hereditary house with established fame and the new nobility based on favoritism by the emperor. Lu pointed out that Wei and Huo were favored because they were the marital relatives of the emperor and considered by the emperor as close associates.

Wei Qing and Huo Qubing were not the only favored marital relatives who rose up through military ranks. Li Guangli is another example. Emperor Wu's favoritism of Li Guangli is related to his obsession with Li's sister, Lady Li. According to *Hanshu*, Lady Li was beautiful enough to "destroy a state." Emperor Wu liked her so much that he even made a painting of her and stored it in his palace after she died. In order to please Lady Li as he promised before she died, Emperor Wu gave Li Guangli opportunities to win military success although he had no military training.<sup>110</sup>

As Lu Yaodong pointed out, Emperor Wu's expedition to Dawan was for the purpose of entitling Li Guangli, the brother of Lady Li, as a duke. The evidence is in "Dawan Liezhuan" in *Shiji*.

[The emperor] wanted to entitle the family member of the favorite concubine Lady Li as duke, so he took Li Guangli as Ershi General and sent six thousand cavalry of the states and ten thousand unworthy young men with him to attack Wan.

欲侯寵姬李氏，拜李廣利為貳師將軍，發屬國六千騎，及郡國惡少年數萬人，以往伐宛。(Shiji, 123.3174)

Lu Yaodong emphasized that the tragedy of the family of Li Guang and the success of Wei Qing and Li Guangli were related to the emperor's favoritism of his

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<sup>110</sup> *Hanshu*, "Waiqizhuan" 外戚傳, 97.3951.

marital relatives which sacrificed the interest of a real military genius like Li Guang.<sup>111</sup>

Sima Qian was personally involved in this conflict between the favored marital relatives of the emperor and the hereditary house in the case of Li Ling 李陵, the grandson of Li Guang. In an expedition to Xiongnu under the command-in-chief Li Guangli, Li Ling led five thousand soldiers to a region to distract the Xiongnu army away from the major force of the Han but they encountered about eighty thousand soldiers the major force of Xiongnu led by the Xiongnu ruler. After a fierce combat with the enemies, Li Ling lost most of his army, was cut off from provisions and could not receive any backup support. They thus submitted to the Xiongnu.<sup>112</sup> After Li Ling submitted to the Xiongnu, Sima Qian spoke up for him at court and because of this was punished with castration. Sima Qian's judgment of Li Ling was based on a belief in his good nature as a state gentleman 國士 and his qualities equal to famous generals of the old days 古名將 regardless of his presumed betrayal of his country. This incident indicates that Sima Qian valued someone's nature and qualities over his temporary behavior. This also reveals that Sima Qian had greater respect toward generals like Li Ling who had military talent in his blood, than toward those like Wei Qing and Li Guangli who had gained sudden success out of political favoritism. Sima Qian's sympathy with Li Ling could be explained partially by his own background. Sima Qian himself was born into a hereditary house whose members held the position of Grand Scribe over generations. It was natural for

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<sup>111</sup> Lu, *Yiyu yu caoyue*, 193.

<sup>112</sup> Li Ling's submission to Xiongnu is recorded in "Li Jiangjun liezhuan" 李將軍列傳 (*Shiji*, j.109), "Xiongnu liezhuan" (*Shiji*, j. 110).

him to believe in the way of passing down traditions and good qualities in a profession that was carried in one's blood.

Lu Yaodong pointed out that Emperor Wu's punishment of Sima Qian was related to Emperor Wu's favoritism of Ershi General, Li Guangli.

At the beginning, the emperor sent Ershi General out with a huge army, and then sent Li Ling to assist him. After Li Ling engaged Chanyu [the leader of Xiongnu] in combat, the efforts of Ershi General were lesser. The emperor regarded Sima Qian's words for Li Ling as stigmatization for dejecting Ershi General. He thus punished Sima Qian with castration.

初，上遣貳師大軍出，財令陵為助兵，及陵與單于相值，而貳師功少。上以遷誣罔，欲沮貳師，為陵游說，下遷腐刑。<sup>113</sup>

According to this passage, the emperor intended to highlight Ershi General's contribution in the expedition and considered that Sima Qian's praise of Li Ling prevented him from doing this. Consequently, Emperor Wu turned Sima Qian over to the courts where he was finally sentenced to a shameful punishment, castration.

Sima Qian's personal tragedy, related to imperial favoritism of a marital household, explains the personal dimension that leads to Sima Qian's negative attitude toward a ruler's favoritism of a woman and her family. As pointed out by Lu Yaodong, it is meaningful that Sima Qian placed the submission of Li Guangli to the Xiongnu in 90 BCE as the last event in *Shiji*.<sup>114</sup> In my understanding, it is Sima Qian's way of telling future generations that, in loyalty toward the emperor, the favorite general, Li Guangli, was no better than Li Ling whose earlier submission caused Sima Qian's punishment.

Another big issue in the reign of Emperor Wu that related to Sima Qian's attitude toward the consorts of the emperor and their families were the witchcraft incidents. There

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<sup>113</sup> *Hanshu*, “Li Guang Su Jian zhuan” 李廣蘇建傳, 54.2456.

<sup>114</sup> Lu, *Yiyu yu chaoyue*, 233.

were two main witchcraft incidents in the reign of Emperor Wu: the first witchcraft incident, happened in 130 BCE, centered around Empress Chen and led to her dismissal and the death of more than three hundred people; the second witchcraft incident, which happened in 91 BCE, involved many people and led to the massacre of multiple houses, including the entire branch of the Heir Apparent Li 灲太子 and his mother Empress Wei.

The occurrence of these two witchcraft incidents was related either to the competition between two consorts of the emperor or that between the two factions at court around the royal sons by different consorts of the emperor. In the first incident, Empress Chen, who lost the favor of the emperor and could not bear a son, was frustrated by the fact that Lady Wei had borne a son so she resorted to witchcraft for extra help.

(She) was established as empress and was arrogant relying on her favoritism. She bore no son in more than ten years. When she heard Lady Wei was favored, she wanted to die several times. The emperor became angry with her. The empress then made use of women's witchcraft and it was partly leaked out. The fifth year of Yuanguang (BCE130), the emperor dealt with it with great effort. A woman Chufu was put into prison because she made a sacrifice and put a curse at a temple with witchcraft on behalf of the empress. This practice seriously deviated from the appropriate way. More than three hundred people were involved and killed because of it. Chufu was beheaded at the market. The emperor sent a notice to the empress proclaiming: "The empress deviated from propriety and was captivated by witchcraft. You are not able to receive the mandate of heaven. Please return the seal and retire to Changmen Palace."

…立為皇后，擅寵驕貴，十餘年而無子，聞衛子夫得幸，幾死者數焉。上愈怒。后又挾婦人媚道，頗覺。元光五年，上遂窮治之，女子楚服等坐為皇后巫蠱祠祝詛，大逆無道，相連及誅者三百餘人。楚服梟首於市。使有司賜皇后策曰：「皇后失序，惑於巫祝，不可以承天命。其上璽綬，罷退居長門宮。」<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> *Hanshu*, “Waiqi zhuan” 外戚傳, 67.3948.

According to Qian Zhongshu, the so-called women's witchcraft 婦人媚道 was a way to sexually attract the emperor.<sup>116</sup> The great number of people that were punished in this incident indicates that witchcraft was a popular practice in the palace at the time. This may partly explain the occurrence of an even more serious witchcraft case in 91 BCE. This case lasted for three years and involved many high officials and royal family members. Emperor Wu's own suspicion caused the search for the practice of witchcraft: “The Emperor was very old and disliked a lot of things and people; he considered that all the people around him were practicing witchcraft to place a curse (on him)”<sup>117</sup> 上春秋高，意多所惡，以為左右皆為蠱道祝詛。 Although different groups of people were accused of or revealed to be practicing witchcraft, the most important groups of people involved in the case were the two major factions at court: the one around Heir Apparent Li, the son of Empress Wei, and the one around King Changyi, the son of Lady Li and the nephew of Li Guangli. In other words, the witchcraft case involved competition between two branches of the royal family for the throne. The family of Heir Apparent Li was framed by Jiang Chong and accused of practicing witchcraft. Prime Minister Liu Qu'ao, who belonged to the faction of King Changyi, took this opportunity to crack down on the power of the heir apparent. However, his own family was discovered to be practicing witchcraft in the following year.

In the seventh month, the messenger of the emperor Jiang Chong dug out witchcraft evidence in the palace of the heir apparent. The heir apparent and his mother, the empress, were afraid that they could not clear themselves. They killed Jiang Chong and gathered an army to combat Prime Minister Liu Qu'ao. Tens of

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<sup>116</sup> Qian Zhongshu, *Guanzhuibian* 管錐編, 297.

<sup>117</sup> *Hanshu*, “Wu wuzi zhuan” 武五子傳, 63.2742.

thousands of people died and the heir apparent fled and committed suicide by the side of the lake. The following year, Liu Quao was sentenced to piecing-apart-in-the-belly for being discovered practicing witchcraft and his wife was beheaded.

七月，使者江充掘蠱太子宮，太子與母皇后議，恐不能自明，乃殺充，舉兵與丞相劉屈釐戰，死者數萬人，太子敗走，至湖自殺。明年，屈釐復坐祝驗要斬，妻梟首也。<sup>118</sup>

This passage indicates that Liu Qu'ao's severe crack-down on the force of the heir apparent was not an action for achieving order; instead, he used the charge of witchcraft as an excuse to remove the major competitor of King Changyi for the throne. The association of Liu Qu'ao with King Changyi and Li Guangyi and their ambition to establish King Changyi as the emperor was revealed in his biography in *Hanshu*.

The next year, Ershi General Li Guangli led the army to attack Xiongnu. The prime minister set up a *zu-dao* ceremony for him, sent him off at Wei Bridge and took his leave from Li Guangli. Li Guangli said :“I hope you could ask early to establish King Changyi as the heir apparent. If he became the emperor, would there be any worry of you for becoming a duke?” Liu Quao consented. King Changyi was the nephew of Ershi General. The daughter of Ershi General was the daughter-in law of Liu Qu'ao so both of them wanted to establish King Changyi. At the time, the search for witchcraft was strict. The messenger of the emperor Guo Xiang reported that the wife of the prime minister and the prime minister had reprimanded the emperor several times. They let a witch make sacrifice at a ceremonial hall and made curses toward the emperor and had bad words. They even pledged with Ershi General and wanted to establish King Changyi as the emperor. The office reported that the case was testified and their crime was severely against the appropriate way.

其明年，貳師將軍李廣利將兵出擊匈奴，丞相為祖道，送至渭橋，與廣利辭決。廣利曰：「願君侯早請昌邑王為太子。如立為帝，君侯長何憂乎？」屈釐許諾。昌邑王者，貳師將軍女弟李夫人子也。貳師女為屈釐子妻，故共欲立焉。是時治巫蠱獄急，內者令郭穰告丞相夫人以丞相數有譴，使巫祠社，祝詛主上，有惡言，及與貳師共禱祠，欲令昌邑王為帝。有司奏請案驗，罪至大逆不道。<sup>119</sup>

It is clear that what goes along with the practice of witchcraft and the search for witchcraft evidence is the competition for the throne. The faction of King Changyi was

<sup>118</sup> *Hanshu*, “Wuxing zhi” 五行志, 27.1334.

<sup>119</sup> *Hanshu*, “Gongsun Liu Tian Wang Yang Cai Chen Zheng Zhan”公孫劉田王楊蔡陳鄭傳, 66.3583.

placed in a negative light by their actions of cracking down on the faction of the heir apparent with the excuse of witchcraft and by their own attested crime of the practice of witchcraft. This incident illustrates how a favored branch could threaten the orthodox patriline of the royal family, which the house of the heir apparent represents.

It is also noteworthy that the persons who were practicing witchcraft tended to be women. The word “wu”巫 literally means sorceress.<sup>120</sup> The sorceress Chufu in the Empress Chen’s case is an example. In the record of the practice of witchcraft in the family of Prime Minister Liu Qu’ao, his wife’s name appears before his name which indicates that his wife was the person in charge of the practice of witchcraft. Many female royal members were punished in this political incident which indicates they had played important roles. Emperor Wu also identified witchcraft as a *yin* devil 險賊.<sup>121</sup>

The witchcraft incidents may have influenced Sima Qian’s understanding of palace women and competition between them and between their families. When the second witchcraft incident occurred, Sima Qian was serving as a messenger by the side of Emperor Wu and had closely observed the development of these events. Furthermore, Sima Qian’s best friends Tian Ren and Ren An were sentenced to death for being involved in witchcraft on the side of Heir Apparent Li.<sup>122</sup> Lu Yaodong argues that this

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<sup>120</sup> “The deity may descend upon these people whose mind is clear and who are bright and serious, those male are called *chan*, those female are called *wu*”民之精爽不貳，齊肅聰明者，神或降之，在男曰覲，在女曰巫, in *Hanshu*, “Jiaosi zhi” 郊祀志, 25.1189.

<sup>121</sup> “Until now the witchcraft practitioners escaped without being stopped, the *yin* devil invaded my body, and those close and far were practicing witchcraft.” 至今餘巫頗脫不止，陰賊侵身，遠近為蠱. *Hanshu*, 66.2885.

<sup>122</sup> Lu, *Yiyu yu chaoyue*, 309.

witchcraft incident had strong impact on Sima Qian and he made revisions to his work *Shiji*, which was already finished, after the incident: “Because of the surrender of Li Guangli and the ‘disaster of the witchcraft’, Sima Qian made appending and cutting to his finished work *Shiji* which is of one hundred and thirty chapters and of five hundred and twenty six thousand and five hundred characters.”<sup>123</sup> In this revision, Li Guangli's surrender to Xiongnu, which is a consequence of the second witchcraft incident, was added into *Shiji*. I conjecture that Sima Qian might also try to incorporate the teaching from the two witchcraft incidents into his book during the last revision to stress the danger of favoritism of a side branch of the lineage and its associated maternal relatives to the stability of the power structure. Moreover, the connection between Sima Qian's personal tragedy and Emperor Wu's favoritism of the branch of Li Guangli may have intensified Sima Qian's hostility toward the ruler's favoritism of certain palace women and their relatives.

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<sup>123</sup> Lu, *Yiyu yu chaoyue*, 305.

## CHAPTER III

### EMPLOTMENT AND AGENCY

Among the five sections in *Shiji*, the sections of “basic Annals” (*Benji* 本紀) and “hereditary households” (*Shijia* 世家) offer the most historical material from *Zuozhuan*. It is easy to recognize that the historiographical pursuit for Sima Qian in the “Basic Annals” and the “Hereditary Household” chapters is to delineate blood lineages for ruling families. The blood lineage in Chinese culture is formed through a line of male rulers; women do not have a legal position in such a power structure. I would like to consider how Sima Qian’s historiographical concern in these sections affects his adaptations of *Zuozhuan* stories about women. In this chapter, I will show that, in order to establish a linear unity and make male members of ruling lineages exclusive agents in a “Basic Annals” or “Hereditary Household,” Sima Qian replaces women with men in active roles in his rewriting of the stories from *Zuozhuan*. We can see women’s agency in history from *Zuozhuan* as we see that women could hold various functional roles in the *Zuozhuan* narratives, including roles as change motivators, functional actors and powers for other actors in historical events.<sup>1</sup> In the *Shiji* adaptation of the *Zuozhuan* stories, the motivations of women, their functional actions and authorities are displaced onto ruling lineage members. Hence, the ruling lineage members are rewritten into exclusive agents of history. I would argue that Sima Qian’s rewriting, though serving a broader historiographical goal, forms a stereotype for women in *Shiji*: women are obedient to men and only serve a decorative role in historical events, when they do not play negative roles.

In this chapter, I will discuss ten stories involving women. I use one individual story to present the different narrative structures and different focalizations in the *Zuozhuan* version and the *Shiji* adaptation. Then I discuss three groups of stories involving women, with three stories in each group, to address the issue of displacement of agency. These three groups are concerned with displacement of motivation, displacement of action and displacement of authority.

Stephen Durrant, in his work about Sima Qian, has mentioned a distinct feature of Chinese civilization, a tendency toward “fragmentation” in a whole array of Chinese cultural expressions.<sup>124</sup> It is a cogent observation about Chinese civilization and works particularly well for articulating the narrative features of the early historiographical works, such as *Chunqiu (Spring and Autumn Annals)*, to which *Zuozhuan* has been transmitted as commentary, *Zuozhuan*, and *Shiji*. But I would also add that there is a tense effort to counter this “fragmentation” in the historiography throughout time. To explicate, the entries in the *Annals* are totally discrete without any discernable effort made to connect them. Yet the entries in *Zuozhuan* also consist of discrete narrative episodes which are not unified into causal sequences. But episodes in the *Zuozhuan* entries are sporadically clustered to be coordinate parts of a certain event. Such emplotment presents a focalization of the narrative in such a way that the narrative focus in the *Zuozhuan* is continuously moving from one character to another. The *Shiji* adaptations show a further stronger tendency to counter the fragmentation. The *Shiji* narratives take advantage of transitional words as devices to connect events. In his conclusion to the “Forms of Dukes in Twelve Fief States” 十二諸侯年表, Sima Qian

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<sup>124</sup> Stephen Durrant, *The Cloudy Mirror: Tension and Conflict in the writings of Sima Qian* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), 124.

reveals that his major pursuit in his history of these fief states is to create unity of historical occurrences for them -- in his words, “to gather up the beginnings and the end of events” 綜其終始(*Shiji*, 14. 511). Sima Qian thinks such pursuit could distinguish his work from earlier Confucian historical works about these fief states which are focused on producing discrete moral messages. Apparently, commentaries to *Chunqiu*, including *Zuozhan*, are the Confucian historical works that he is talking about. Here, the verb Sima Qian uses is “zong綜,”<sup>125</sup> Here, the verb Sima Qian us “to arrange threads for weaving.”<sup>i</sup><sup>125</sup> This verb indicates, for Sima Qian, that unity should present in the form of thread. Such a linear order is evident in the overall structure of the “Basic Annals” or the “Hereditary Household” chapters in *Shiji*, which tackle the history of ruling lineages. These “Basic Annals” and “Hereditary Household” chapters are organized along the lineage from its first duke or king to its last one. More relevantly, Sima Qian also pursues such linear order within individual narratives in the “Basic Annals” or the “Hereditary Household” chapters. I will show that Sima Qian pursues linear unity in specific narratives in two ways. One way is to form cause-and-effect sequences out of originally disjunctive episodes. Another way is to establish male members of the ruling lineage, mostly kings and dukes, as consistent foci in the narratives. Sima Qian abandons the *Zuozhuan* authors’ way of a moving focalization and adopts a uniform focalization in *Shiji*.<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> See online *Handian* 漢典 at <http://www.zdic.net/zd/zi/ZdicE7ZdicBBZdicBC.htm>.

<sup>126</sup> My argument about linear unity in *Shiji* narratives does not contradict Stephen Durrant’s argument concerning the fragmentation tendency in Sima Qian in terms of kaleidoscopic characters (Durrant, 143). I would like to emphasize that kaleidoscopic characters, which I believe signify a lack of dynamic development in characterization, is one of the consequences of Sima Qian’s urgent pursuit of mechanical unity in the narratives in a “Basic Annals” or a “Hereditary Household.”

## *Replacement of motivators*

In the following passages, I would like to use an example to indicate the different structural features of a *Zuozhuan* passage and *Shiji* passage. The example I use here is the record about Duke Jing of Qi's 齊景公 establishment of Tu 茶. I would like to separate both comparative passages into four episodes which I have marked out with Arabic numerals in parentheses.

*Zuozhuan*, Ai 5.3: (1) Yan Ji of Qi gave birth to a son, but he died before he reached maturity. (2) Of all the concubines' sons, the son of Yu Si was the favorite, and all the high officers feared that he would become the heir. They said to the duke, "My duke, you are getting on in years, and you do not yet have an heir. What do you propose to do about it?" The duke said, "My men, if you share in my worries, then you will fall ill. For the time being just plan for pleasures. Why worry that you will have no ruler?" (3) When the duke grew sick, he had Guo Huizi and Gao Zhangzi set up Tu and settle the other noble sons at Lai. (4) In autumn, Duke Jing of Qi died.

齊燕姬生子，不成而死。諸子鬻姁之子荼嬖，諸大夫恐其為太子也，言於公曰：「君之齒長矣，未有太子，若之何？」公曰：「二三子間於憂虞，則有疾疢，亦姑謀樂，何憂於無君？」公疾，使國惠子、高昭子立荼，寘群公子於萊。秋，齊景公卒。(CZZZ, 1630)

*Shiji*, 32: (1) In the summer of the fifty-eighth year (490 B.C), the legitimate heir, Duke Jing's lady Yan Ji's son, died. (2) Duke Jing's favorite concubine, *Rui Ji*,<sup>127</sup> had given birth to a son, Tu. Tu was young, his mother was lowly and had no standard of conduct. All the high officers feared that he would become the heir. Then they said they hoped an older and worthier one would be selected from among the sons to be made heir. Duke Jing was old, and he loathed any talk about the matter of succession. Moreover, he loved Tu's mother and wanted to establish him, but he dreaded speaking about it. Then he spoke to all the high officers, saying: "Just make merry. Why people of the state worry that they will have no ruler?" (3) In autumn, Duke Jing became ill. He ordered Guo Huizi and Gao Zhaozi to set up Tu and to drive out other noble sons and move them to Lai. (4) When Duke Jing expired, the heir Tu was invested and he was Yan Ruzi.<sup>128</sup>

五十八年夏，景公夫人燕姬適子死。景公寵妾芮姬生子荼，荼少，其母贱无行，諸大夫恐其為嗣，乃言願擇諸子長賢者為太子。景公老，惡言嗣事，又

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<sup>127</sup> Tu's mother has a different name here than in *Zuozhuan*.

<sup>128</sup> Nienhauser Jr.ed., *The Grand Scribe's Records*, Vol.V, Part I (Indiana University Press, 2006), 110, modified (In brief, Nienhauser, V.1: 110). All the English reference of *Shiji* in this dissertation is from the same series of translations as this one with exceptions specially noted.

爱荼母，欲立之，惮发之口，乃谓诸大夫曰：“为乐耳，国何患无君乎？”  
秋，景公病，命国惠子、高昭子立少子荼为太子，逐群公子，迁之莱。景公卒，太子荼立，是为晏孺子(1505).

These two passages are both comprised of four episodes and the basic information of each episode in two passages remains the same. But the two passages above, while tackling the same series of events, present different narrative features. The most important difference is the distinct mode of focalization. In the *Zuozhuan* passage, though Duke Jing alone decides on the heirship, the narrator does not put the focus on him. Instead, focalization shifts here from somewhere else. It starts from Yan Ji, Duke Jing's wife, moves to her son, then moves to other concubines' sons, and then moves to high officers of the state, and finally to the duke. We can see this moving process from the continuous change of the subjects for the main verbs throughout the passage.

The moving focus results in disjunctive episodes in the passage. These episodes are coordinate records and share no cause and effect connection among them. It appears that the narrator is not interested in tracking the temporal-and-causal development of any particular event. To explicate, for instance, in the second episode, it remains mysterious why the high ministers fear the duke's favorite son would become the heir. It is also unstated in the third episode how the duke makes his decision of establishing Tu as the heir. Their contextual episodes do not provide explanations, or causes, for these mysterious aspects in the story. Besides, this structure also offers no priority to any character's action. It seems for reader that Yanji's loss of a child is as important as Duke Jing's personal decision of establishing Tu. At last, the duke's perspective is not at all privileged in the narrative. The duke's speech does not figure more significantly than high ministers' speech. The narration remains on a superficial level of this character and

does not present any of his emotion or psychology behind his deeds. These situations completely change in *Shiji*.

The *Shiji* narrative establishes a linear connection among four episodes by adjusting the focalization in each episode. Significantly, in the second passage, Duke Jing is the only focus -- the focus of narrative is right on him from the beginning of the passage. Other characters, Yan Ji and Tu, are introduced in the passage in their relationship with him. Also, we can see the duke's status as the focal character from the privilege of his perspective in the narrative. He is the only character whose psychology is presented and analyzed. He is also the only character whose direct speech is recorded in the second passage. Note in particular that the high officials' direct speech which appears in the *Zuozhuan* passage is presented in indirect speech in the *Shiji* passage. Hence, Duke Jing is singled out as the focal character for the passage from *Shiji*.

Another feature of the *Shiji* passage is that the relation among episodes is linearly subordinate instead of coordinate. Four episodes form a clear temporal-and-causal sequence in the *Shiji* passage. First of all, the narrator makes use of materials in the previous episodes to provide explanations for the mysterious aspects that are not explicated in the *Zuozhuan* passage. For example, Sima Qian adds a statement to explicate why the high minister fears Tu's establishment as heir. Another added statement uses the duke's psychological characteristics to explicate his behavior. The author, Sima Qian, creatively elaborates on information which is either mentioned (the duke's favor of Tu) or hinted at (the low status of Tu's mother) in previous episodes to fill in gaps in following episodes. As a result, previous episodes provide the following episode with explicit causes. On the other hand, the *Shiji* passage also weaves four

episodes more closely into a chronological sequence. In *Zuozhuan*, it is not stated in the first episode when the legitimate heir, Yan Ji's son, died. It is also unclear in the second episode when high officials had their conversation with the duke about heirship. But in the *Shiji* equivalent passage, of the first episode, the narrator dates the death specifically to the summer of the year that the duke would die. As a result, all events in the four episodes happen in a compressed period of time and form a close chronological sequence. When these two aspects are combined, the second passage becomes a tight temporal-and-causal sequence which explicates the final episode about the establishment of Tu as heir.

I would argue that the change of structure from coordinate to linearly-connected has a double significance. In terms of formation of narrative, the *Shiji* passage is more developed as a narrative than the *Zuozhuan* passage, since narrative is a mode of expression whose form is its content. The structural change represents a development in historiography, a tendency toward formal coherency in narratives. . But I would like to emphasize the ideological significance of this structural change, especially for women. I believe episodic narrative as we see in *Zuozhuan* has its own advantages. Maram Epstein's point on the episodic nature of the Chinese fictive narrative also works for Chinese history narratives: "The 'episodic' nature of the Chinese novel, long taken to be a weakness of the genre by critics steeped in Western aesthetics, can also be seen as adding a heteroglossic breadth by allowing a variety of voices to speak with equal authority."<sup>129</sup> I would like to argue for such a heteroglossic breadth in the *Zuozhuan* narratives where episodes tend to coordinate to each other and various characters receive equal focalizations. Such an episodic nature of *Zuozhuan* narratives makes for a formal

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<sup>129</sup> Maram Epstein, *Competing Discourses, Orthodoxy, Authenticity, and Engendered Meaning in Late Imperial Chinese Fiction* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Asia Center, 2001), 2.

equivalency among different episodes of an event and, further, a formal equivalency among characters who are entitled with these records. This formal equality among characters is critical to the status of women in *Zuozhuan*. It gives considerable significance to women's activities, making them at times the equivalent of the activities of dukes and powerful ministers.

My above argument could be demonstrated by the status of Yan Ji in the history records. The first episode in the *Zuozhuan* is a freestanding record about Yan Ji. The emplacement in the *Zuozhuan* reflects its authors' endorsement of Yanji's formally independent status in the history record of the state. In the first episode, Yan Ji is the focalized character, the subject of the sentence, and her childbearing is the main event, the predicate. Especially, due to the lack of differentiation of sentence tenses in classical Chinese, the predicate “*sheng zi*/ gave birth to a son” could be understood in the present tense. It seems that the narration starts right from the point of Yan Ji's delivery and then tracks its development with a record of the death of the child. As a freestanding record which only analogically connects to its following episode, the first episode is self-interested and emphasizes the message within itself, which is about Yan Qi's life experience. The title, “*Qi Yan Ji*” also represents Yan Ji's freestanding status in the historical record: her identity is not defined by her husband. Instead, she is identified by the names of states, Qi and Yan, for which she made an alliance with her marriage and her natal clan name, Ji. Contrarily, in *Shiji*, Yan Ji becomes an attributive element for the record about her son. Yan Ji is also identified by her relationship with her husband and she is to modify her deceased son, who is also a ruling lineage member. In the first episode in the *Shiji* passage, the main verb “*si/died*” for the first sentence also indicates

that the first crucial event is the death of the child, not Yan Ji's delivery of the child. Yan Ji becomes attributive element for the record about her son and her action is no longer the predicative element in this episode.

The above case of Duke Jing demonstrates exclusive focalization around rulers in a “Hereditary Household” in *Shiji* with rewriting of the *Zuozhuan* passage. This tendency is evident in most stories that are incorporated in the “Basic Annals” or “Hereditary Household.” This exclusive focalization establishes a linear unity for a “Basic Annals” or “Hereditary Household” whose purpose is to record the history of a ruling lineage. However, in order to establish such linear order, in many stories involving women, Sima Qian (or his father) has to take materials from other characters to furnish his focal character. I will demonstrate this point with multiple stories below.

In two later stories, the motivation of women characters to render change is displaced and grafted onto a ruling lineage member in order to establish the latter as a focal character. The first case is about Li Ji 驪姬 who is a favored concubine of Duke Xian of Jin.

*Zuozhuan*, Zhuang 28.2: Duke Xian of Jin took a wife in Jia. She had no sons. He *consorted* with his father’s concubine Qi Jiang, and she bore the wife of Duke Mu of Qin and the heir apparent Shensheng<sup>130</sup>. He also took two women from the Rong. Hu Ji of the Greater Rong bore Chong’er, and the child of the Lesser Rong bore Yiwu. When Jin attacked the Li Rong, the Husbandman of the Li Rong presented his daughter Li Ji. After they returned to Jin, she bore Xiqi, and her younger sister bore Zhuozi. **Li Ji enjoyed the duke’s favor and she wanted to install her son as heir. She bribed the duke’s male favorites Liangwu and Dongguan Biwu and had them say to the duke**, “Quwo is the place of my duke’s ancestral temple. Pu and the two Qu are on my duke’s borders. ....(part of the speech omitted)...If you send the heir-apparent to rule over Quwo and Chong’er and Yiwu to rule over Pu and Qu, then you can make the people stand in awe of your authority, instill fear among the Rong, and also make your merit manifest.” **Li Ji had them both say**, “The vast lands of the Di could be Jin cities.

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<sup>130</sup> The Chinese word for their relationship is “zheng” 鄭 which indicate Qi Jiang was a concubine of Duke Xian’s father before she married Duke Xian.

Would it not be fitting for Jin to open new lands?" The Prince of Jin was pleased with this. In summer, he sent his heir apparent to dwell in Quwo, Chong'er to dwell in Pucheng, and Yiwu to dwell in Qu. All the noble sons were kept in lowly rank. Only the sons of the two Ji women remained in Jiang. **The two Wu in the end joined with Li Ji to slander all the noble sons and designate Xiqi as heir**<sup>131</sup>. The Jin men called them "the two-Wu clique."

晉獻公娶于賈，無子。烝於齊姜，生秦穆夫人及太子申生。又娶二女於戎，大戎狐姬生重耳，小戎子生夷吾。晉伐驪戎，驪戎男女以驪姬，歸，生奚齊，其娣生卓子。驪姬嬖，欲立其子，賂外嬖梁五與東關嬖五，使言於公曰：

「曲沃，君之宗也；蒲與二屈，君之疆也；不可以無主。…若使大子主曲沃，而重耳、夷吾主蒲與屈，則可以威民而懼戎，且旌君伐。」使俱曰：「狄之廣莫，於晉為都。晉之敵土，不亦宜乎！」晉侯說之。夏，使大子居曲沃，重耳居蒲城，夷吾居屈。群公子皆鄙。唯二姬之子在絳。二五卒與驪姬譖群公子而立奚齊，晉人謂之二五耦. (CQZZZ, 239)

*Shiji*, 39: In the fifth year, the duke Xian led an expedition against the Li Rong and obtained Li Ji and Li Ji's sister. He loved and favored both of them. ...In the twelfth year, Li Ji bore Xi Qi. **Duke Xian wanted to remove the Heir**, thus he said, "Qu Wo is the place where my ancestral temple is located, Pu borders Qin, and Qu borders the Di. If I do not charge my sons to reside at these places, I would fear their loss." At this time, he sent the Heir, Shen Sheng, to dwell in Qu Wo; Noble son Chonger to dwell in Pu, Noble son Yiwu to dwell in Qu. The Duke Xian and Li Ji's son Xi Qi, dwelled in Jiang. Because of this, the people in Jin's capital knew that the Heir (Shen Sheng) would not be invested. (Nienhauser, V.1:305-7)<sup>132</sup>

五年，伐驪戎，得驪姬、驪姬弟，俱愛幸之。十二年，驪姬生奚齊。獻公有意廢太子，乃曰：“曲沃吾先祖宗廟所在，而蒲邊秦，屈邊翟，不使諸子居之，我懼焉。”於是使太子申生居曲沃，公子重耳居蒲，公子夷吾居屈。獻公與驪姬子奚齊居絳。晉國以此知太子不立也. (*Shiji*, 39.1640-1)

These two passages both tackle the replacement of the heir in Duke Xian's reign.

However, in *Zuozhuan*, it is the outcome of several different characters' interactions and collaboration and in the *Shiji* passage, it is Duke Xian's personal decision-making. The motivator of the change is especially different in two passages. In *Zuozhuan*, the concubine Li Ji is the change motivator who “*wanted* to install her son as heir.” She is

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<sup>131</sup> The bold type in the citations is not in the original but put by me to emphasize comparative sentences in *Zuozhuan* and *Shiji*. The words in italics in the parentheses are added by me to indicate the omission in citation.

<sup>132</sup> Nienhauser, V.1 is an abbreviation for Nienhauser, William H., Jr., ed., *The Grand Scribe's Records*, (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994), Vol. V, part 1.

also the string-puller behind the screen for the scene where the two ministers persuade the duke to send his other several sons out of the capital. In contrast, in the *Shiji* passage, it is the duke himself who “wanted to remove the Heir.” Meanwhile, the elaborate speech which is made by two ministers originally in the *Zuo zhuan* passage is attributed to the duke himself in the *Shiji* passage. In light of these changes, Sima Qian, in his adaption of the *Zuo zhuan* passage, has displaced motivation and speeches from the concubine Li Ji and ministers and grafted them onto the duke. In this way, Sima Qian emphasizes the duke’s own agency in establishing a new heir. However, with these displacements, a woman, Li Ji in the *Shiji* passage, has lost agency and the ability to render the change that she presents in the *Zuo zhuan* passage. She becomes a decorative character in the *Shiji* passage who passively accepts actions and decisions made by her husband.

Undoubtedly, loaded with motivation and speeches, Duke Xian becomes the single focal character in the *Shiji* passage. However, such a mechanical way of borrowing materials from one character to another results in a lack of mimetic effect for the *Shiji* narrative. For instance, it is odd in the *Shiji* passage that the duke’s speech does not have an addressee. The speech itself seems as if the duke is presenting his argument in front of someone whom he needs to persuade. But as a matter of fact, as the authority in the state, he does not need to argue with, or persuade, anyone else on this decision.

The following story about Ai Jiang 哀姜 also could demonstrate displacement of motivation in the *Shiji* adaptation of *Zuo zhuan*. More importantly, it will also show how a woman loses her status as one of the focalized characters in Sima Qian’s equivalent narrative of the *Zuo zhuan* passage. Ai Jiang was the lady of Duke Zhuang of Lu 魯莊公 and she had no son. Duke Zhuang chose a concubine’s son Ban as the heir but Ban was

later murdered.<sup>133</sup> Ai Jiang's nephew was established as Duke Min of Lu. But succession chaos continued as Duke Min's uncle Gongzi Qingfu, who was in a licentious liaison with Ai Jiang, murdered Duke Min. *Zuozhuan* and *Shiji* offer quite different accounts about the succession upheavals in Lu and they also ascribe different roles to the characters and states involved in the story.

*Zuozhuan*, Min 2.3: (1) Sometime earlier, the duke's (Duke Min) tutor had appropriated Bu Yi's fields, and the duke had done nothing to stop him. In autumn, in the eighth month, on the xinchou day, Gongzi Qingfu (Duke Min's uncle) had Bu Yi murder the duke at the palace gate. Gongzi You (Duke Min's other uncle) took the future Duke Xi (Duke Min's brother) and went to Zhu. But after Qingfu fled to Ju, You re-entered the domain and instated Duke Xi. (2) With gifts they sought after Qingfu in Ju, and the Ju leaders returned him. When he reached Mi, Qingfu sent Gongzi Yu to beg for forgiveness. When forgiveness was not granted, Yu returned to Qingfu crying aloud. Qingfu said, "That is the voice of Yu," then he hanged himself. (3) Duke Min was the son of Ai Jiang's younger sister, Shu Jiang. It was for this reason that the Qi leaders had instated him. **Qingfu had had a sexual liaison with Ai Jiang, and Ai Jiang had wanted to instate him as duke.** Ai Jiang had foreknowledge of the death of Duke Min, and that is why she withdrew to Zhu. But the leaders of Qi captured her and put her to death at Yi, bringing her corpse back with them to Qi. Duke Xi requested her corpse and buried her.

初，公傅奪卜齡田，公不禁。秋，八月辛丑，共仲使卜齡賊公于武闈。成季以僖公適邾。共仲奔莒，乃入，立之。以賂求共仲于莒，莒人歸之。及密，使公子魚請。不許，哭而往。共仲曰：「奚斯之聲也。」乃縊。閔公，哀姜之娣叔姜之子也，故齊人立之。共仲通於哀姜，哀姜欲立之。閔公之死也，哀姜與知之，故孫于邾。齊人取而殺之于夷，以其尸歸，僖公請而葬之。

(CQZZZ, 263)

*Shiji*, 33: **In the past, Qingfu had illicit relations with Ai Jiang and he wanted to enthrone Kai (Duke Min), the son of Ai Jiang's younger sister.** On the Jiwei day of Tenth month, Qingfu sent Luo, the groom, to kill Ban, a Gongzi of Lu, at the Chang clan. Gongzi You fled to Chen. Qingfu eventually enthroned Kai, the son of Duke Zhuang. This was Duke Min. In the second year of Duke Min (660 B.C.), Qingfu's relations with Ai Jiang became more and more wanton. Ai Jiang and Qingfu plotted to kill Duke Min and to enthrone Qingfu. Qingfu had Bu Yi murder the duke at the palace gate. When Gongzi You heard about that, he went from Chen to Zhu along with Duke Min's younger brother Shen, requesting the state Lu to let them in. The people of Lu intended to execute Qingfu. Qingfu was afraid and he fled to Ju. At this Gongzi You entered the capital with duke's son

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<sup>133</sup> The following *Shiji* passage mentioned how Ban died. I am going to discuss the story about Ban's death in detail in the next chapter.

Feng, and enthroned him. He was Duke Xi. Duke Xi was also a younger son of Duke Zhuang. Ai Jiang was afraid, and she fled to Zhu. With gifts *Gongzi* You sought after Qingfu in Ju, and the Ju leaders returned him. After Qingfu returned, You sent someone to kill Qingfu. Qingfu requested to flee, but *Gongzi* You would not listen to him, he then sent *Gongzi* Yu, a minister, to go there, crying as he walked. Qingfu heard Xisi's voice, he then committed suicide. Duke Huan of Qi heard Ai Jiang had a licentious liaison with Qingfu and thereby endangered Lu, he then summoned her at Zhu and killed her, bringing her corpse back to Lu and displaying it publicly. Duke Xi requested her corpse and buried her. (*Shiji*, 33.1533)

先时慶父與哀姜私通，欲立哀姜弟子开。及庄公卒而季友立斑，十月己未，慶父使圉人革殺魯公子斑於党氏。季友奔陳。慶父竟立莊公子开，是為湣公。湣公二年，慶父與哀姜通益甚。哀姜與慶父謀殺湣公而立慶父。慶父使卜麟襲殺湣公於武闈。季友聞之，自陳與湣公弟申如邾，請魯求內之。魯人欲誅慶父。慶父恐，奔莒。於是季友奉子申入，立之，是為釐公。釐公亦莊公少子。哀姜恐，奔邾。季友以賂如莒求慶父，慶父歸，使人殺慶父，慶父請奔，弗聽，乃使大夫奚斯行哭而往。慶父聞奚斯音，乃自殺。齊桓公聞哀姜與慶父亂以危魯，及召之邾而殺之，以其尸歸，戮之魯。魯釐公請而葬之。  
(Nienhauser, V.1:149, modified)

If we only look at the sentences in bold in these two passages, there is an interesting comparison between them. Though in both sentences the adulterous relation between Qingfu and Ai Jiang is the cause for a motivation to replace the duke, the agent of this motivation is switched. In the *Zuozhuan* passage, it is Ai Jiang who *wanted* to establish Qingfu; whereas in the *Shiji* passage, it is Qingfu who *wanted* to establish Ai Jiang's nephew. This produces a change in power between Ai Jiang and Qingfu. Namely, in the *Zuozhuan* passage Ai Jiang is more powerful to render change to state power, but in *Shiji* Qingfu is the more powerful one. The *Zuozhuan* passage also implies Ai Jiang's power comes from her bond with her natal state, one of the most powerful states at the time, Qi. However, it seems Sima Qian would rather make Qingfu, a male member of the ruling lineage of Lu, more important than a woman for this crucial event of establishing a new duke of Lu.

Next let us examine the change of Ai Jiang's status from the *Zuozhuan* to *Shiji*. In *Zuozhuan*, Ai Jiang is entitled with a freestanding record which is a privilege she does not have in *Shiji*. I break down the *Zuozhuan* passage into three episodes. The last episode is completely about Ai Jiang's fall, with the first two episodes about transition of rule and Qingfu's fall, respectively. In the third episode, the narrator indicates its purpose of explicating why Lady Jiang withdraws to Zhu. This clarification reveals the third episode's function as commentary for an entry, *Min 2.4*, in *Chunqiu*. As a matter of fact, the other two episodes also correspond to neighboring entries of *Min 2.4* in *Chunqiu*:

Min 2.3: In autumn, in the eighth month, on the *xinchou* day (24), the duke expired.

Min 2.4: In the ninth month, Lady Jiang (Ai Jiang), the wife of the former duke, withdrew to Zhu.

Min 2.5: Gongzi Qingfu left the domain and fled to Ju.

These three entries represent three episodes in the *Zuozhuan* passage, namely, transition of rule, Ai Jiang's fall and Qingfu's fall. The correspondence between the episodes in the *Zuozhuan* passage and the entries in *Chunqiu* confirm the freestanding status of each episode. The freestanding status of the first two episodes is confirmed by the narrative rupture between them. The second episode about Qingfu is started from an event, the exile of Qingfu, which is not mentioned in the first episode but recorded in *Chunqiu*. It indicates the second episode is to trace Qingfu's fate after what is recorded in *Chunqiu*. By the same token, the third episode is to explain Aijiang's withdrawal and further trace her fate. It is relevant to point out the entry *Min 2.4* is a record exclusively about Ai Jiang and the third episode revolves around Ai Jiang. Though the third episode refers to different parties and different events, Ai Jiang is the consistent clue for every single statement. More importantly, the narrator resorts to an internal cause to explicate Ai

Jiang's fall. The narrator recounts Ai Jiang's desire and her foreknowledge of the upheaval and considers them the cause of her withdrawal. In this way, the third episode establishes Ai Jiang as an agent who is exclusively responsible for her own fate.

In contrast, the *Shiji* passage is organized to be revolving around two central male characters, Qingfu and Gongzi You, as protagonist versus antagonist in competition and conflict. Both of them are brothers of Duke Zhuang of Lu, which means that both of them are ruling lineage members. To establish Qingfu as a focal character of the narrative in the *Shiji* passage, Sima Qian, most importantly, makes use of his licentious liaison with Ai Jiang in his narration. In the *Zuo zhuan*, the adulterous relationship between Qingfu and Ai Jiang is introduced with the concern of explaining Ai Jiang's withdrawal and death in the *Annals*. In contrast, in *Shiji* the adultery between Ai Jiang and Qingfu constitutes the essential element for the development of the transition upheavals. The *Shiji* narrative first introduces this relationship in the passage and it works as the first cause for following events. Sima Qian repeatedly tracks Qingfu's multiple regicide actions and the fate of the two persons involved to the existence, development and punishment of this adulterous relationship. The succession disorder, Qingfu's death and Ai Jiang's death are all recounted as effects of this adulterous relationship. By making use of this element, Sima Qian finds Qingfu's regicide a motivation in his personal life and establishes a parallel between a moral transgression and a political transgression.<sup>134</sup> This passage is thereby tightly woven into a temporal-causal chain of events, in contrast

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<sup>134</sup> In contrast, the adulterous relationship is not the most important cause for Qingfu's political transgression in *Zuo zhuan*. According to an earlier entry, Qingfu was regarded by his brother Shuya as just a legitimate heir of Duke Zhuang as his brother (*Zhuang*, 32.4). With this claimed legitimacy, Qingfu commits multiple brazen transgressions.

to the original loosely episodic plot in *Zuozhuan*.

While the significance of Ai Jiang's adulterous relationship is strengthened in *Shiji* to establish Qingfu as a focal character, Ai Jiang's status in the narrative weakens. In the *Shiji* passage, the narrator only recounts events on a perceptible level, her licentious behavior, to account for her fall. Things on the imperceptible level, her desire and her psychology, are untouched. Consequently, Ai Jiang in *Shiji* is a character flattened into a superficial layer of existence. The killing of Ai Jiang, also, is included in the *Shiji* passage as a fitting result. *Shiji* even makes the punishment harsher by adding a *lu* punishment for her, which means her corpse is exposed publicly and thereby doubles her punishment. The narrator of *Zuozhuan* offers an opposite approach to Ai Jiang's execution. *Zuozhuan* explicitly criticizes the state of Qi for the execution of Ai Jiang, arguing that the punishment of a married daughter is extreme and is a transgression (*Zuozhuan*, Xi 1.7).

As the previous three stories have shown, in the issue of focalization, an important strategy Sima Qian applies is to account for the inner psychology of a character as a cause of his activities. He grafts such inner elements from other characters or makes them up for his exclusive focal character. However, should the focalized character be a woman in a *Shiji* passage, Sima Qian reduces the text about the inner situation and stays on a superficial level to relate the character. One example is found in the passage about Zhao Shuai's wife, Zhao Ji.

ZZ, Xi, 24.1: Zhao Ji, Zhao Cui's new wife, requested permission to go welcome Dun and his mother Shu Wei, but Zhao Cui declined her request. Zhao Ji said, "If you gain a new favorite but forget the old, how will you command others? I must go welcome her." She was so firm in her request that he allowed it. After they had come, Zhao Ji regarded Dun as talented. She firmly requested of the duke that Dun be made the legitimate heir and that her own three sons be made

subordinate to him, and that Shu Wei be made Zhao Cui's main wife and that she herself would be subordinate to Shu Wei.

文公妻趙衰，生原同、屏括、樓嬰。趙姬請逆盾與其母，子餘辭。姬曰：「得寵而忘舊，何以使人？必逆之！」固請，許之。來，以盾為才，固請于公，以為嫡子，而使其三子下之；以叔隗為內子，而已下之。（CQZZZ, 416）

*Shiji*, 43: After Zhao Cui returned to Jin, his wife in Jin insisted on conveying the wife in Di back to Jin. She let the son of the wife in Di, Dun, be the legitimate heir and her own three sons all serve him.

趙衰既反晉，晉之妻固要迎翟妻，而以其子盾為適嗣，晉妻三子皆下事之。  
(*Shiji*, 43.1782)

In the *Zuozhuan* passage, the narrator provides a vivid portrait of Zhao Ji's 赵姬 strong will and her sharp vision with the exposition of her speech, action and thought. In the *Zuozhuan*, she recognizes Zhao Dun's talent and insists on his establishment as the legitimate heir of the House of Zhao. In the *Shiji* passage, however, Sima Qian remains on a superficial layer of character to record Zhao Ji's deeds. He reduces the twists in her actions and totally omits her inner layers, such as her thought and her speech. This example demonstrates that, in terms of characterization by recounting inner situations, Sima Qian applies an opposite approach to his female focal characters. In his treatment of women characters, Sima Qian seldom explains the inner world. In these stories, a short tag for her emotional reaction is the best we could see.<sup>135</sup> This tendency strikingly contrasts with his emphasis on the inner aspects as the primary cause of actions for his male protagonists as I have shown in my discussions about Duke Jing of Qi., Duke Xian of Jin and Gongzi Qingfu of Lu. I would argue that Sima Qian's discriminative attitudes toward male characters and female characters in the emphasis of motivations forms a gender stereotype in *Shiji*. In this stereotype, men are frequently treated as autonomous actors and women are merely superficial decorative existence with no inner layer.

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<sup>135</sup> Even for important women characters such as Empress Lǚ 吕后, Zhuo Wenjun 卓文君, Ti Ying 缇萦 in the *Shiji*, there is seldom penetration into the inner layers of these woman characters.

## *Replacement of actors*

In the second part of this chapter, I will discuss stories that concern replacement of women actors with male actors in order to establish the agency of male lineage members for crucial events. Here for the category “actors,” I follow Mieke Bal’s understanding of that designation as a group of people who cause or undergo *functional* events. In other words, I limit my concerned subjects to the category of *functional* actors.<sup>136</sup> In the following three stories, we see in the *Zuozhuan* accounts women take surprising actions which lead to consequential events; in *Shiji*, they still take action, but their actions are no longer functional for the events that they are involved in. Replacing them in the roles of functional actors are male members of the ruling lineage.

The first story is about Mu Ji 穆姬 who was the wife of Duke Mu of Qin and the sister of Duke Hui of Jin. At the time, the state Jin had lost a war with Qin and Duke Hui was captured on the battlefield.

*Zuozhuan*, Xi 15.4: Qin captured the Duke of Jin and took him back with them. With disheveled hair, and pulling up their tents, the high officers of Jin followed after them. The Duke of Qin sent someone to dismiss them, saying, “Why are you gentlemen so gloomy? That I, the unworthy one, am accompanying your ruler and going toward the west is only to fulfill the portentous dream. How would I dare to sacrifice him?” Bowing three times and kneeling with their foreheads touching the ground, the high officers of Jin said, “You tread on Sovereign Earth and carry August Heaven on your head. August Heaven and Sovereign Earth: these have heard your words! We, your subjects, venture to submit like grass before the wind.” When Mu Ji heard that her half-brother, the duke of Jin, was about to arrive in Qin, she took the heir apparent Ying, her second son Hong, and her daughter Jianbi, ascended a terrace and stood atop a bundle of firewood there. She sent an emissary taking a mourning headband and hempen mourning garments to meet the Duke of Qin and furthermore to announce to him: “Heaven above has brought down a disaster and has brought it about that

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<sup>136</sup>Mieke Bal, *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*, translated by Christine Van Boheemen (Toronto, Baffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1985), 25.

my two lords have met one another not with presents of jade and silk, but with bristling weapons. If the ruler of Jin enters the capital in the morning, then I, your maidservant, and the children will die in the evening. And if he enters in the evening, then we will die in the morning. Only you, my lord, will decide this.” So he (the Duke of Qin) lodged the Duke of Jin in the Spirit Terrace. The high officers of Qin requested that the Duke of Jin be brought into the capital. The lord said, “We captured the Duke of Jin so we could return in abundance. But now if I return to a funeral, of what use would it have been? What do you, my high officers, have to gain from this? Furthermore, the Jin leaders have burdened me with their gloom and grief and have used Heaven and Earth to bind me with an oath. If I do not take Jin’s grief into account, I will increase their anger. And if I eat my words, I will be betraying Heaven and Earth. Increased anger will be difficult to bear; betraying Heaven will bring misfortune. I must return the Prince of Jin.” Gongzi Zhi said, “It would be better to kill him and not allow him to gather those of ill-will in his domain!” Zi Sang said, “If you return him but take his heir apparent hostage, you are certain to win very favorable terms. Since Jin cannot yet be destroyed, killing their ruler would only solidify their hatred. Moreover, there is a saying of the scribe Yi: ‘Do not instigate calamity, do not take advantage of rebellion, do not increase another’s anger.’ Increased anger will be difficult to bear and abusing others will bring misfortune.” And so the Duke of Qin agreed to make peace with Jin.

秦獲晉侯以歸。晉大夫反首拔舍從之。秦伯使辭焉，曰：「二三子何其惑也！寡人之從君而西也，亦晉之妖夢是踐，豈敢以至？」晉大夫三拜稽首曰：「君履后土而戴皇天，皇天后土實聞君之言，群臣敢在下風。」穆姬聞晉侯將至，以太子聳、弘與女簡璧登臺而履薪焉。使以免服衰絰逆，且告曰：「上天降災，使我兩君匪以玉帛相見，而以興戎。若晉君朝以入，則婢子夕以死；夕以入，則朝以死。唯君裁之！」乃舍諸靈臺。大夫請以入。公曰：「獲晉侯以厚歸也；既而喪歸，焉用之？大夫其何有焉？且晉人感憂以重我，天地以要我。不圖晉憂，重其怒也；我食吾言，背天地也。重怒難任，背天不祥，必歸晉君。」公子繫曰：「不如殺之，無聚慝焉。」子桑曰：「歸之而質其太子，必得大成。晉未可滅，而殺其君，祇以成惡。且史佚有言曰：『無始禍，無怙亂，無重怒。』重怒難任，陵人不祥。」乃許晉平。(CQZZZ, 356)

*Shiji*, 5: Thereupon Duke Mu of Qin captured the Duke of Jin, took him back with them, and issued an order: “Fast and be abstinent! I am going to offer the Duke of Jin as sacrifice to the Supreme Deity.” The Son of Heaven in the Zhou court heard of it and said: “We have the same clan name as Jin.” Thus he pleaded on the Duke of Jin’s behalf. Yi Wu’s (the Duke of Jin) sister was the wife of Duke Mu. When she heard of it, she wore the hempen mourning garments, bared her feet, and told the Duke: “It was because I could not hold my brother in check that you have been troubled to issue this order.” Duke Mu said, “I regard taking the Lord of Jin prisoner as my achievement. Now the Son of Heaven pleads for him, and my wife is troubled by this!” Thus he made a covenant with the Lord of Jin and promised to let him return home. (Nienhauser, I: 97-99, modified)

於是繆公虜晉君以歸，令於國，齊宿，吾將以晉君祠上帝。周天子聞之，曰：“晉我同姓”，為請晉君。夷吾姊亦為繆公夫人，夫人聞之，乃衰絰跣，曰：“妾兄弟不能相救，以辱君命。”繆公曰：“我得晉君以為功，今天子為請，夫人是憂。”乃與晉君盟，許歸之，更舍上舍，而饋之七牢。十一月，歸晉君夷吾，夷吾獻其河西地，使太子圉為質於秦。*(Shiji, 5.189)*

Compared to that in *Zuozhuan*, the significance of Mu Ji's action to the direction of the event is greatly reduced in *Shiji*. In *Zuozhuan*, Mu Ji's action has brought both direct and indirect consequences. Mu Ji's threatening behaviors directly stopped the Duke of Qin (Duke Mu) from taking the Duke of Jin into the capital and so he lodged him at Spirit Terrace instead. Indirectly Mu Ji's action throws a heavy shadow over Duke Mu of Qin and his ministers' decision-making regarding the treaty with the state of Jin. In contrast, in *Shiji*, Mu Ji's action is only a stimulus for Duke Mu of Qin's self-reflection upon his decision about the Duke of Jin. The *Shiji* narrative presents Duke Mu of Qin's self-reflective psychology as the decision-making process about the treaty with the state Jin. It indicates, in Sima Qian's rewriting, that the Duke of Qin is the single functional actor in the decision-making. Mu Ji's role is very secondary.

In a comparison of these two passages, the focalization style has changed from a continual moving focalization among multiple characters to a uniform focus on one character. Meanwhile, the decision-making has changed from a collective effort to a personal endeavor. In the *Zuozhuan* passage, although Duke Mu of Qin is an important character, he is not the only important one. Other parties, such as ministers of the state of Jin, Mu Ji, minister of Qin Gongzi Zhi, and Zisang all had a distinct presence in the story. The author switches the narrative focus from one party or character to another with no priority on any party. Each party's action and speech is presented fully and represents the interest of its unique standpoint. Hence the narrative in *Zuozhuan* presents the final

decision on the Duke of Jin as a compromise of competitive efforts of different parties. In contrast, in the *Shiji* passage, the narrator singles out Duke Mu's agency in the decision-making by constructing psychological movement for him and cutting actions and speeches for other characters. With such modifications, Duke Mu of Qin is established as an autonomous protagonist who makes decisions by his own will.

Mu Ji is the only character, other than the duke himself, who maintains her presence in the story both in the *Zuozhuan* version and in the *Shiji* version. However, in order to emphasize Duke Mu's autonomy in the event, the representation of Mu Ji experiences significant change in *Shiji*. This change could be analyzed from several perspectives. First, her behavioral trait changes from aggression in *Zuozhuan* to submission in *Shiji*. In *Zuozhuan*, Mu Ji uses the extreme means the threat of burning herself and her own children and forces her husband to give up his initial decision.<sup>137</sup> In sharp contrast, in the *Shiji*, Mu Ji completely accepts her husband's initial decision of sacrificing her brother and goes on to wear mourning for her brother. Secondly, her discourse strategy weakens significantly. In *Zuozhuan*, she is a rhetorical and cogent speaker and she refers to Heaven and the appropriate ritual between states to back up her request. She forces her husband to give up his decision with death threat.<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>137</sup> According to Lu Deming 陸德明, Mu Ji's action is a gesture of self-criminalization. See *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhengyi* 春秋左傳正義 in *Shisanjing zhushu* 十三經注疏, 14. 433.

<sup>138</sup> Lu Deming and Kong Yingda 孔穎達 find Mu Ji's words disturbing and consider them not authentic. They argue that they were not in the old version of the text which was noted on by Du Yu 杜預 based on the fact that Du Yu did not interpret the word “beizi” 婢子 (your maid-servant) which seems to appear for first time in the text. Yang Bojun disputed this argument by pointing out that both Liu Xiang's *Lienu Zhuan* and Sima Qian's *Shiji* directly and indirectly include these words from Mu Ji. See *Chunqiu Zuozhuan Zhengyi*, 14.433; CQZZZ, 359.

In *Shiji*, her speech is a plain and moderate statement of her own interest in this event. Third, the *Shiji* narrative greatly reduces Mu Ji's mobility. In the *Zuo zhuan* passage, Mu Ji not only manipulates her two sons, a daughter and an emissary, she also manipulates her husband. Besides manipulating such a wide range of people, she also has mobility in space. Mu Ji goes out of her harem and makes a striking scene in the open air on a terrace. Yet, in *Shiji*, Mu Ji could only put on appropriate garments and reflect on her own fault in her harem. Lastly, as I have mentioned at the beginning of this discussion, the consequence of her speech and behavior is reduced significantly. Indeed, with all these changes, Sima Qian has cut the sharp edges of the character Mu Ji and fit her into a conventional frame for woman.<sup>139</sup> Mu Ji in *Shiji* is quiet and obedient to her husband and she limits herself to inner space. This image of Mu Ji is more aligned with the ritual propriety of women in the Han period. The Han ritual text *Liji* 礼記 emphasizes the unparalleled importance of the obedience of women (*Fushun* 婦順) for the harmony in the household.<sup>140</sup> It also emphasizes the importance of maintenance of a clear boundary between inner space (women) and outer space (men), and that a woman should cease to go out from their apartments after she reaches ten years age.<sup>141</sup> Likewise, Ban

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<sup>139</sup> In my comparison of this set of two passages, I do not discuss how Sima Qian adapts the presence of Heaven and Earth in the *Zuo zhuan* to the character of the son of Heaven in his rewriting. This is a significant variation between these two versions but it is not relevant to my argument in this paper.

<sup>140</sup> See *Liji* 禮記, “*Hunyi*” 婚義, 44.9; trans. Based on Legge, *Book of Rites*, 2: 433-34. Cao Daoheng 曹道衡 and Liu Yuejin 劉躍進 discussed the dating of the text of *Liji*. Although several pieces in *Liji* are dated to various earlier times, it is definite that these different pieces were put together and rewritten in the Han. See *Xianqin lianghan wenxue shiliao xue* 先秦兩漢文學史料學, 111.

<sup>141</sup> See *Liji*, “*Neize*”內則, 14; 81.

Zhao 班昭 (45-116 CE) in her “Nü Jie” 女諱 emphasizes being inactive and quiet 清閒 貞靜 as the first qualification of the *female virtue* 女德.

Mu Ji is not the only female character whose status as a functional actor is replaced by a man in *Shiji*. In the following story of Huai Ying 懷嬴, she also loses her role as the functional actor and even withdraws to the background. Huai Ying was first married to Yu who was a short-time duke of Jin before Chong'er became Duke Wen of Jin. Now Huai Ying is married to Chong'er (Duke Wen of Jin) by her father, the Duke of Qin.

*Zuozhuan, Xi23.6:* The Duke of Qin presented him with five of his daughters, and Huai Ying was among them. She held a basin for him to wash his hands. When he had finished, he shook off water on her. She was angry and said, “Qin and Jin are equals. How can you demean me?” The noble son (the future Duke Wen of Jin) was afraid. He took off his outer garment and acted like a prisoner. On another day, the Duke of Qin offered him a ceremonial entertainment.  
秦伯納女五人，懷嬴與焉。奉匜沃盥，既而揮之。怒，曰：「秦、晉，匹也，何以卑我？」公子懼，降服而囚。他日，公享之(CQZZZ, 410).

*Shiji, 39:* When Chong'er arrived in Qin, Duke Mu married five ladies of his clan to him, the former wife of Zi Yu went with them. Chong'er did not want to accept her. Sikong Jizi said: “You are going to grab his state, why not his former wife? In addition, by accepting her and through her uniting with Qin by marriage you can seek to enter Jin. Would you adhere to trivial social conventions while forgetting the great shame?” Chong'er then accepted her. Duke Mu was greatly delighted and drank together with Chong'er... (Nienhauser, I:330)

重耳至秦，繆公以宗女五人妻重耳，故子圉妻與往。重耳不欲受，司空季子曰：“其國且伐，況其故妻乎！且受以結秦親而求入，子乃拘小禮，忘大醜乎！”遂受。繆公大歡，與重耳飲...(Shiji, 39.1660)

The beginning and ending of these two passages share a close textual similarity. Only the middle part is different in them. There is another version of the story in *Guoyu*, which is fuller and longer than both the *Zuozhuan* and *Shiji* versions.<sup>142</sup> It looks as if the *Zuozhuan* and *Shiji* retain two different episodes of the *Guoyu* version for their middle

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<sup>142</sup> See *Guoyu* 國語 (Shanghai: Shanghai Guji Chubanshe, 1978), “Jinyu” 晉語 4, 2:355.

parts. The *Zuozhuan* version has the episode of the confrontation between Huai Ying and Chong'er, and the *Shiji* version adapts the episode of Chong'er's decision-making on Huai Ying after their confrontation. What connects these two episodes in *Guoyu* is Duke Mu's explanation of the Huai Ying's situation to Chong'er which does not appear in either *Zuozhuan* or *Shiji*. This passage shows how much Huaiying was adored by her father Duke Mu of Jin.

The elder of Qin saw Chong'er and said: "She is the talented one among my children born to my formal wife. When Gongzi Yu was a prisoner here, she served him. I wanted to marry her to you, but I was afraid you would be affected by her bad title (as Yu's former wife). Except for this, there is nothing wrong with her. I dare not present her in appropriate ritual, that is because I adore her. If your highness was humiliated, that is my fault. I follow your choice."

秦伯見公子曰：「寡人之適，此為才。子圉之辱，備嬪嬙焉，欲以成婚，而懼離其惡名。非此，則無故。不敢以禮致之，歡之故也。公子有辱，寡人之罪也。唯命是聽。」<sup>143</sup>

Nevertheless, the two different versions in *Zuozhuan* and *Shiji* still deal with the common theme of Chong'er's attitude toward accepting Huai Ying as a consort. The crucial difference between them is what changes Chong'er's attitude. In the *Zuozhuan* narrative, Chong'er's acceptance of Huai Ying is rendered as a result of Huai Ying's fearless confrontation with him. Comparatively, in the *Shiji*, it is a result of Duke Wen following the advice of his follower Sikong Jizi. Sikong Jizi's speech in *Shiji* is slightly different from the *Guoyu* version. The sentence "Would you adhere to trivial social conventions while forgetting the great shame?" is completely absent in the *Guoyu* version. This sentence, in a sense, represents Sima Qian's personal obsession with the idea of redemption of great shame. In his letter to Ren An, Sima Qian points out that the great shame experienced by King Wen, Confucius, Quyuan and Zuoqiu Ming spurs them to do

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<sup>143</sup> See *Guoyu*, 355.

extraordinary work and encourages himself to make the same effort after he experiences the great shame of castration.<sup>144</sup> This evidence demonstrates that Sima Qian has rewritten the passage from the perspective of Chong'er's personal concern of redeeming the shame of a thirty-year exile.

With Sima Qian's rewriting, Huaiying changes from an outstanding actor in *Zuozhuan* to a faceless background character in *Shiji*. In *Zuozhuan* and *Guoyü*, Huai Ying not only displays her bravery in confronting the disrespect Chong'er shows toward her by shaking water on her, she also presents her vision of the broader political significance of her marriage. She makes Chong'er see what she represents in their marriage, i.e. her natal state, the state of Qin. Chong'er is smart enough to quickly assume a self-deprecating pose to make an apology. In *Shiji*, instead, the focal character is Chong'er. The episode is about his initial unwillingness and how he rationally changes his own mind following Sikong Jizi's advice and Huai Ying becomes completely absent in this decision-making in *Shiji*. She is only the passive object of the action of acceptance carried out by the focal character, Chong'er.

The status of Huai Ying in these two narratives varies in these two passages as seen from their emplotment. Two separate anecdotes about Chong'er's experience in the state of Qin are parallel to each other in the *Zuozhuan* version: the first concerns the meeting between Huai Ying and Chong'er and the second concerns Duke Mu of Qin offering a banquet to Chong'er. The second anecdote is not related to the first one as it begins from a random time -- "Another day." As I have argued, a freestanding form of the episode underlines the importance of the information it contains. In the case of the

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<sup>144</sup> *Hanshu*, 62.2735. Stephen Durrant has made a good argument on the connection between Sima Qian's personal experience and his historical writing. See Stephen Durrant: "*The Cloudy Mirror: Tension and Conflict in the Writings of Sima Qian*."

first episode, the representation of Huai Ying's distinct character as well as Chong'er's distinct virtue of receptivity is conveyed. In *Shiji*, Sima Qian weaves these two anecdotes into one. Duke Mu of Qin is delighted, in the second episode, because Chong'er accepts his daughter. With this change, the first episode comes to serve the second episode as its cause. It implies that Chong'er's practical considerations concerning Huai Ying bring him a reward which is realized as a banquet where Duke of Qin promises to help him go back to Jin. In this way, the character Huai Ying serves a function in the narrative only as an object of manipulation by a "real person," a person like Chong'er who has agency in making decision and taking action.

My last character in this section Zhao Zhuang Ji 趙莊姬 has unusual significance for the issue of woman's role as a functional actor because of her unusual multiple roles in the story about the House of Zhao in *Zuozhuan* and then because of the total absence of such multiplicity in the *Shiji* narrative. Both *Zuozhuan* and *Shiji* acknowledge that Zhao Zhuang Ji was a royal daughter and the wife of Zhao Shuo. Zhao Shuo was the son of a famous prime minister in the state of Jin, Zhao Dun. Zhuang Ji gave birth to another famous prime minister in Jin, Zhao Wu. The *Shiji* version of this portion of Spring and Autumn history is completely different from the *Zuozhuan* version; Sima Qian has deviated completely from the accounts in *Zuozhuan*. On the other hand, the story about the House of Zhao is very special in the sections of "hereditary household" in *Shiji*. Its over-extended narrative stands out in the sections of "hereditary household" which share an overall tendency of conciseness and simplicity in narration. Why Sima Qian adopted

other sources for this story when he almost certainly had access to the concise *Zuozhuan* story at hand is an ongoing issue.<sup>145</sup>

*Zuozhuan*, Cheng 8.6: Zhao Zhuang Ji of Jin, because of Zhao Ying's banishment,<sup>146</sup> slandered his brothers to the Duke of Jin, saying, "Zhao Tong and Zhao Kuo are about to rebel." The Luan and Xi clans confirmed the charge. In the sixth month, Jin put to death Zhao Tong and Zhao Kuo. Zhao Wu, following his mother Zhao Zhuang Ji, was raised in the duke's palace. The Jin ruler gave the Zhao clan's lands to Qi Xi. Han Jue said to the Duke of Jin, "...(speech omitted)." The Jin ruler thus established Zhao Wu as head of the Zhao lineage and returned the lands to him.

晉趙莊姬為趙嬰之亡故，譖之于晉侯，曰：「原、屏將為亂。」欒、郤為徵。六月，晉討趙同、趙括。武從姬氏畜于公宮。以其田與祁奚。韓厥言於晉侯曰：「...」乃立武，而反其田焉。(CQZZZ, 838)

*SJ*, 43: ...Zhao Shuo's wife was Lord Cheng's sister. She was already pregnant with a child. She escaped and hid in the duke's palace. Gongsun Chujiu was a follower of Zhao Shuo. Chujiu asked Shuo's friend Cheng Ying, "Why haven't you died?" Cheng Ying said, "Shuo's wife is bearing a child. If fortunately it is a boy, I will serve him; if it is a girl, I will die then." Before long, Shuo's wife delivered a boy. Hearing about it, Tu Angu searched for the baby boy in the duke's palace. The lady put the baby in her crotch and prayed, "If the clan of Zhao is going to be destroyed, cry out! If not, make no sound.." When being searched, the baby surprisingly stayed silent.<sup>147</sup>

趙朔妻成公姊，有遺腹，走公宮匿。趙朔客曰公孫杵臼，杵臼謂朔友人程嬰曰：“胡不死？”程嬰曰：“朔之婦有遺腹，若幸而男，吾奉之；即女也，吾徐死耳。”居無何，而朔婦免身，生男。屠岸賈聞之，索於宮中。夫人置兒叱鱣祝曰：“趙宗滅乎，若號；即不滅，若無聲。”及索，兒竟無聲。( *Shiji*, 43.1783)

In spite of great differences between the *Zuozhuan* narrative and *Shiji* narrative, they relate the same basic story: The House of Zhao is almost wiped out in a massacre. Only a boy Zhao Wu escapes and hides in the duke's palace following his mother. Later, Zhao Wu is established as the new heir to the House of Zhao. Although the story in *Shiji*

<sup>145</sup> Lu Deming disputed the *Shiji* version of the story and considers it artificial. See *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhengyi*, 15:843. Ma Su 馬驥 also considers the story in *Shiji* to lack credibility. See *Zuozhuan shiwei*, 186.

<sup>146</sup> She had a licentious liaison with Zhao Ying, who is the uncle of her husband. Zhao Ying was banished by his two brothers because of this relationship. See Cheng 5.1, CQZZZ, 821.

<sup>147</sup> The translation is mine. Earlier in this story, the House of Zhao was massacred by Tu Angu who was an adversary of Zhao Dun in the court.

introduces several important new characters, these two narratives share the same set of actants while relating the common basic event<sup>148</sup>. Those new characters in *Shiji* either replace or expand the functions of characters appearing in the *Zuozhuan* narrative.

Meanwhile, the functions of some original characters are readjusted in *Shiji*. The major effect of such readjustment of characters in the *Shiji* is a dichotomy of characters in terms of their values to the blood line of the House of Zhao. Both Zhao Zhuang Ji and the Duke of Jin are readjusted from having multiple roles to having a singular role in the fate of the House Zhao. Their negative behavior towards the House of Zhao is either cut or replaced by other characters. The dichotomy produces a form of competition for two antagonistic groups of characters and, at the same time, underlines the final glory of the House of Zhao. In particular, an expanded crew of characters of positive values to the House of Zhao in the dichotomy works to glorify the virtue/power gathered by the progenitors of the House of Zhao. What I want to emphasize here is that this readjustment of characters reduces the complexity of the characters, as we see in the case of Zhuang Ji of Zhao.

Zhuang Ji, I believe, is transformed in *Shiji* from being a complicated character of controversial action to being a plain insignificant character of no functional action at all. In *Zuozhuan*, Zhuang Ji plays a controversial role for the House of Zhao. She is, at the same time, the enemy and the major protector of the House of Zhao. In particular, the cause for the massacre of the House of Zhao is Zhuang Ji's slander in front of the duke of Jin, which results from her resentment. She resents that the head of the House has banished her lover as a punishment for their licentious liaison. In other words, the *Zuozhuan* narrator takes her personal emotion (of resentment) and action (of slander) to

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<sup>148</sup> I use the word “actant” to designate a certain function which is shared by different characters on the meta-narrative level. According to Gerald Prince, *actant* is a fundamental role at the level of narrative. Please see Gerald Prince's *Dictionary of Narratology*, 1.

account for the origin of a great disaster for a hereditary house. Although such emplotment in *Zuozhuan* is aimed at admonishing a ruler against following women's words, it still acknowledges women's potency and agency. In *Shiji*, Zhuang Ji's role of enemy is replaced by Tu Angu and her role of protector, mainly assumed by Cheng Ying and Gongsun Chujiu, also weakens significantly. The cause of the massacre is no longer relevant to Zhuang Ji personally. In *Shiji*, the House of Zhao encounters the massacre because Tu Angu, who was once a favored minister of Duke Ling of Jin, slanders Zhao Dun for his responsibility in the death of Duke Ling.<sup>149</sup> This means, in *Shiji*, Zhao Dun's former fault, or fake fault, in dealing with Lord Ling is drawn upon to interpret the massacre of the House of Zhao. This interpretation exposes Sima Qian's preference for correlating the fate of the House of Zhao with the male lineage member's own political behavior -- a more autonomous way of interpreting the cause of the massacre than that in *Zuozhuan*.

The reduction of Zhuang Ji's roles in the *Shiji* narrative, as a result, significantly reduces the image of Zhuang Ji as a character. In *Zuozhuan*, Zhuang Ji had a licentious liaison with another household member after being widowed. She avenges herself on a powerful house for their banishment of her lover. She raises her child without the presence of her marital house. With these details *Zuozhuan* presents Zhuang Ji as a woman of multiple dimensions and capabilities. However, in *Shiji*, the character of Zhuang Ji is flat and weak. The promiscuous image of Zhuang Ji completely disappears in the *Shiji* version and is replaced with the image of her as a virtuous, submissive mother. The narrator only sheds light on Zhuang Ji in the scene of the search for the newborn boy

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<sup>149</sup> See a detailed story about the death of Duke Ling of Jin at *Zuozhuan*, Xuan, 2.3 (CQZZZ, 654).

in her harem. Her life before that or her relation with her son afterwards is surprisingly absent in the story. Moreover, she is quite passive and static in this scene—that is, escaping, hiding and undergoing a harem search by a minister. She could hide her child only by withdrawing him back into his place of origin: her crotch.<sup>150</sup> The real, crucial actor in the search scene is the baby boy instead of his mother. It is the baby boy's own action, his mysterious silence, which protected him from being killed. Thus, in *Shiji* a weak and flat Zhuang Ji replaces a multi-dimensional one in *Zuozhuan*. However, the image of Zhuang Ji in *Shiji* fits better with female ideal in the Han period that a virtuous woman should be quiet and inactive, as articulated by Ban Zhao in “*Nüjie*.”

Another important issue in this example is that Sima Qian has produced a simplified linear logic for the events around the House of Zhao. Although the *Shiji* narrative tells a story much more complicated than that in *Zuozhuan*, it actually reduces the twists in the presentation of history and renders the story as a determinative in a linear logic of history. In the first place, the *Shiji* narrative has a distinct teleological tendency in emplotment. At the beginning of the story, it narrates that Zhao Shuo refuses to avoid the massacre but wishes to continue sacrifices for ancestors. The ending of the story turns out to be just what Zhao Shuo wants it to be. Second, the chapter “Hereditary House of Zhao” in *Shiji* takes Zhao Dun’s branch as the indisputable centre of the House of Zhao, as if it is without doubt that Zhao Wu is the legal heir of the House of Zhao at the time.

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<sup>150</sup> Commentators disputed the credibility of this action. Qian Zhongshu 錢鍾書 cited Qiao Songnian’s 喬松年(1815-1875) argument in *Luomoting zhaji* 羅摩亭札記 that it is impossible to put a baby back into the crotch and these words resulted from Sima Qian’s love of oddities 史公好奇之言. See Qian Zhongshu: *Guanzhuibian* (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1979), 292. *Shiji pinglin* 史記評林 also comments: “According to Kaoyao 考要, when Zhao Tong and Zhao Kuo were killed, Zhao Wu was already born. It is not the case that Zhao Wu was the unborn child with a dead father. Besides, this event was caused by Zhuang Ji and not related to Tu Angu. It is unknown what source Sima Qian followed.” See Ling Zhilong 凌稚隆, *Shiji pinglin* ([Japan] Seiyudo 世裕堂: Meiwa Edition, 1770), 13.

However, according to *Zuozhuan*, the structure of power in the House of Zhao at the time is not so simple. According to *Zuozhuan*, Zhao Kuo's branch is the main branch of the House of Zhao, the Governing Clan, and owns the household land when Zhao Dun is alive, although Zhao Dun's branch is the most powerful one in the state (*Zuo, Xuan* 2.4). So there is potential conflict between the leadership of these two branches. As we see in the case of the banishment of Zhao Yingqi, as the head of the house, Zhao Kuo and Zhao Tong have the power to punish a household member for inappropriate behavior.

Nevertheless, according to *Zuozhuan*, Zhuang Ji's son, Zhao Wu, would not be the legal heir of the House of Zhao and own its land if the massacre had not happened. The narrative in the *Shiji* story simplifies the situation of the House of Zhao by attributing the loss of all its crucial household members to the massacre. However, in *Zuozhuan*, Zhao Shuo should have died before the massacre and Zhao Yingqi has been banished before the massacre. The target of the massacre is Zhao Kuo and his full brother Zhao Tong. It is reasonable that Zhuang Ji slanders her son's competing branch in the household and still protects her son. In *Shiji*, instead, the target of the massacre is the entire House of Zhao, with Zhao Dun's son Zhao Shuo as the main target. Finally, *Shiji* significantly bloats the devotion that the affiliates of the House of Zhao have to the House of Zhao. It conveys the message that the virtue/power that the House of Zhao gathered over several generations promises its own maintenance of an orthodox blood line in the face of grave threats and that its future will flourish. In a word, a teleological design of plots, a simplified linear line of leadership of the household, and an emphasis on the linear momentum of the virtue of generations all work to render determinate the establishment of Zhao Wu. This simplified history of the House of Zhao reveals Sima Qian's pursuit of

establishing a linear logic of events for ruling families in the sections of “hereditary households” and “basic Annals” with his historiographical endeavor.

Such a pursuit of a simplified linear logic of history in *Shiji* has side-effects on our vision of women. From the *Zuozhuan* story, we could infer the different possibilities a woman has in her life. But in *Shiji*, she is an insignificant person without much role in history. She appears in history almost exclusively as the producer of a male heir for a household.

In the above three stories from *Shiji*, men take on women’s roles as functional actors in *Zuozhuan* and became autonomous actors. Such tendencies of replacing women’s active roles in *Shiji* will be observed again in the following discussion addressing stories about women’s roles as the power.

### *Replacement of the power*

I understand a woman’s role as “power” in two senses. Its first sense is a conventional understanding of this term. Namely, she is the political authority that other actors seek for assistance or permission. A second understanding of this term is that she is the power because her will is the driving force behind another or several other characters’ actions.<sup>151</sup>

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<sup>151</sup> I borrowed this term “power” from Mieke Bal. Bal’s definition is as follows: “a class of actors--consisting of those who support the subject in the realization of its intention, supply the subject, or allow it to be supplied or given---who we shall call the power.” I use this term in a little different circumstance. I am concerned with how this group of women supplies other actors with the “will” to act in a certain way in *Zuozhuan*.

A conventional understanding about woman's power would identify such power as coming from her role of being a mother.<sup>152</sup> As we will see in the following three examples, although being a mother to someone is an important source of her power, the exertion of her power is not limited to that over her son, but could extend to her husband, her brother, or even the state. Yet, in the *Shiji* adaptations, the husband or the brother displaces her in the powerful role. For instance, in *Zuozhuan*, a wife could be an overbearing counselor to her husband. In *Shiji*, such an active role of woman disappears and is replaced by an autonomous man who acts out of his own will. The story about Xi(Li) Fuji 僖負羈 and his wife is a good demonstration of this point.

In an episode in a series about Chong'er 重耳, the future Duke Wen of Jin, in his odyssey around China, he stops in Cao where Xi Fuji is a minister.

*Zuozhuan*, Xi 23.6: (1) Chong'er arrived in Cao. Duke Gong of Cao had heard that Chong'er had fused ribs and wanted to see him naked. While the noble son (Chong'er) was bathing, he watched him from behind a curtain. (2) The wife of Xi Fuji said, "I have observed that the followers of the noble son of Jin are all worthy to act as counselors to the domain. If he uses them as counselors, that fine man is certain to return to his domain. And when he returns, he is certain to achieve his ambitions among the princes. After he has fulfilled his ambitions among the princes, he will punish those who have been without proper ritual, and Cao will be at the top of this list! **Why don't you shift your allegiance early on?**" (3) So Xi Fuji presented the noble son with a plate of cooked cereal and placed a circular jade pendant on the plate. The noble son accepted the cooked cereal but returned the jade pendant.

及曹，曹共公聞其駢脅，欲觀其裸。浴，薄而觀之。僖負羈之妻曰：「吾觀晉公子之從者，皆足以相國。若以相，夫子必反其國。反其國，必得志於諸侯。得志於諸侯，而誅無禮，曹其首也。子盍蚤自貳焉！」乃饋盤飧、寘璧焉。公子受飧反璧。(CQZZZ, 407)

*Shiji*, 39: (1) When he passed by Cao, Duke Gong of Cao (652-617 B.C.) did not treat him with propriety, intending to get a look at Chong'er's fused ribs. (2) A

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<sup>152</sup> In Angela Zito's article "Silk and Skin: Significant Boundaries," in order to indicate the relative boundary between *yin* and *yang*, she argues that depending on the sex, age, and status of the people involved, a woman, as mother or head of household, could occupy the dominant *yang* position over her children or her servant. See in Angela Zito and Tani Barlow: *Body, Subject and Power* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 106; Also see Maram Epstein, *Competing Discourse*, 22.

Grand Master of Cao, Li Fuji said: “The Noble Scion of Jin is worthy and he also has the same cognomen as you. He passed by our state in strained circumstances. Why should he not be treated with propriety? ” Duke Gong did not follow this strategy. (3) Fuxi then secretly gave Chong’er food and put a jade ring under it. Chong’er accepted his food but returned his jade. (Nienhauser, V.1:327)  
過曹，曹共公不禮，欲觀重耳駢脣。曹大夫釐負羈曰：“晉公子賢，又同姓，窮來過我，柰何不禮！”共公不從其謀。負羈乃私遺重耳食，置璧其下。重耳受其食，還其璧. (*Shiji*, 39.1658)

In the *Zuozhuan* passage, the first episode relates Duke Gong of Cao’s inappropriate reception of Chong’er; the second episode Xi Fuji’s wife offering advice to her husband; the third episode Xi Fuji’s secretly providing hospitality to Chong’er. In the *Shiji* passage, the first and third episodes remain basically the same. But the second episode changes and concerns Xi Fuji offering advice to the Duke of Cao.

The discrepancy of narratives between these two passages could only partly be attributed to different sources for the *Shiji* passage. Another important source for *Shiji*, *Guoyü* 國語, does include an episode about Xi Fuji offering advice to Lord Gong of Cao. But in *Guoyü*, preceding that episode, the episode about Xi Fuji’s wife that I cited from *Zuozhuan* is also present in its entirety<sup>153</sup> The existence of the episode about Xi Fuji’s wife in both sources of *Shiji* indicates that its absence in *Shiji* would have been most likely a result of Sima Qian’s authorial choice.

With the deletion of the episode about Xi Fuji’s wife, the *Shiji* readers lose the opportunity to observe a woman displaying wisdom and gaining the upper hand in her relationship with her husband. In *Zuozhuan*, Xi Fuji’s wife not only correctly forecasts the success of Chong’er, she also makes a bold suggestion to her husband. She suggests that he should shift his allegiance early on lest he be punished in the future. Her attitude

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<sup>153</sup> See *Guoyu*, 2:346.

toward her husband is straightforward and forceful as seen in her speech which contrasts to the Han standard of submissiveness and tenderness for women's personality. These details show that she has the power to direct her husband's political action. The *Zuozhuan* presents her counseling role in a positive light and the same attitude remains in other cases about a wife's counseling role.<sup>154</sup> However, in *Shiji*, a husband becomes an autonomous actor and the influence of his wife over his political behavior disappears from the readers' view.

Emplotment in *Zuozhuan* and *Shiji* also informs Xi Fuji as a different type of actor. In *Zuozhuan*, only the last two episodes are explicitly connected with the conjunction “乃/so.” This grammatical connection implies that Xi Fuji's good treatment of Chong'er in the third episode is a result of following his wife's advice in the second episode. But the first episode is not explicitly connected to these two episodes. The narrator puts the episode about Duke Gong adjacent to the speech made by Xi Fuji's wife without any transitional words between them. In *Shiji*, both the first and the third episode are tightly connected to the new second episode about Xi Fuji offering advice to Duke Gong. The second episode has the purpose of admonishing Duke Gong for his inappropriate treatment of Chong'er recounted in the first episode. Preceded by the second episode, Xi Fuji's special hospitality toward Chong'er in the third episode shows his initiative after he failed in directing his master's behavior. This produces different images of Xi Fuji in the story. In *Zuozhuan*, Xi Fuji is a receptive actor who accepts wise advice from his wife. Noticeably, in the *Zuozhuan* world, receptivity, rather than being a

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<sup>154</sup> Other representations of a woman's counseling role to her husband include the case of Deng Man 邓曼, the lady of Duke Wu of Chu (*Zuozhuan*, Huan 13.1, Zhuang 4.1) and Zongbo's 宗伯 wife (*Zuozhuan*, Cheng 15.5). In these two examples, these women are also straightforward and forceful when offering their suggestions.

negative sign, is one of the important qualifications for an ideal ruler, whereas in *Shiji*, Xi Fuji is an autonomous actor who has his own sense of righteousness and propriety and acts of his own will.

The following story about Kong Bo Ji 孔伯姬 addresses the power in the relationship between a sister and brother. In the *Zuozhuan* account, the sister Kong Ji is the more powerful person in this relationship and her exiled brother seeks assistance from her. Interestingly, with a small change, she is written to be subordinate to her brother's order in *Shiji*.

*Zuozhuan*, Ai 15.5: Kong Yu of Wei married the elder sister of the heir Kuaikui. She bore Kong Kui. A page of the Kong family, Hun Liangfu, was tall and handsome, and after Kong Yu died, he had a licentious liaison in the inner quarters. When Kuaikui was in the city of Qi, Kong Ji, the widow of Kong Yu, sent Hun Liangfu as messenger to him. In conversation with him Kuaikui said, "If you can make it so that I enter and seize the domain, then you will wear an official's cap, ride in a carriage with a canopy, and, though you commit three capital offenses, you will not be incriminated." He (Hun Liangfu) made a covenant with him and presented a request to Kong Ji on his behalf.  
衛孔圉取太子蒯聵之姊，生悝。孔氏之豎渾良夫長而美，孔文子卒，通於內。太子在戚，孔姬使之焉。太子與之言曰：「苟使我入獲國，服冕、乘軒，三死無與。」與之盟，為請於伯姬。*(Zuozhuan, Ai 15.5)*

*Shiji*, 37: In the twelfth year. Earlier, Kong Yu, Wenzi, had taken an elder sister of the Heir Kuaikui as his wife. She bore Kong Kui. A page of the Kong family, Hun Liangfu, was handsome, and after Kong Yu died, Liangfu had licentious liaison with Kui's mother. When Kuaikui was in Su, Kong Ji, the widow of Kong Yu, sent Hun Liangfu as messenger to him. In conversation with Liangfu, Kuaikui said, "If you can make it so that I enter our domain, then I will repay you to ride in a carriage with a canopy, and, though you commit three capital offenses, you will not be incriminated." He swore a covenant with him, and allowed him to take Li's mother as his wife. (Nienhauser, V.1:256-57)

十二年，初，孔圉文子取太子蒯聵之姊，生悝。孔氏之豎渾良夫美好，孔文子卒，良夫通於悝母。太子在宿，悝母使良夫於太子。太子與良夫言曰：「苟能入我國，報予以乘軒，免子三死，毋所與。」與之盟，許以悝母為妻。  
*(Shiji, 37.1599)*

The passage from *Shiji* repeats almost the exact wording as the passage from *Zuozhuan*, except for the names of persons and places. It is clear in this case that Sima Qian is drawing upon an antecedent present in *Zuozhuan*. *Shiji* only diverges from the *Zuozhuan* passage on a narrative level in the last sentence. The sentence “He (Hun Liangfu) made a covenant with him (Kuaikui) and presented a request to Kong Ji on his behalf” is changed to “He (Kuaikui) swore a covenant with him(Hun Lianfu), and allowed him to take Li’s mother (Kong Ji) as his wife.” Indeed, this small change reverses Kong Ji’s status in the story. With the original sentence, Kong Ji figures as the political authority that both her servant-lover and her exiled brother look up to and seek political aid from. In the *Shiji* story, Kong Ji is only a chip in the political bargain between these two men. In its adaptation, the *Shiji* has switched Kong Ji’s status from being an authority to being a manipulated object. With this rewriting, the relation of power between Kong Ji and her brother Kuaikui reverses. The *Zuozhuan* convinces us Kong Ji has greater political power as the mother to a powerful minister in the state than her exiled former-heir-apparent brother. Yet it seems Sima Qian finds this disturbing. The *Shiji* passage emphasizes Kuai Kui’s absolute power over his sister, even though he is in exile and has no official status in the state. In *Shiji*, it seems Kuai Kui has been empowered by the structural positioning of sexes in the family. In other words, a brother by all means exceeds his sister in the status of power no matter the political situation. Such an absolute positioning of sexes represents a schema of the male (yang)/female (yin) relationship in Han period, where the absolute hierarchy between *yin* and *yang* rather than their dynamic correspondence is emphasized.<sup>155</sup>

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<sup>155</sup> Lisa Raphals discusses the emergence of such a new schema of female (yin)/male (yang) relationship in Han period and she attributes this change in metaphysical rhetoric especially to the impact of the thought of

My third example for women's role as political authority is the story about King Hui's queen, Queen Hui 惠后. The story concerns Queen Hui's role in the conflict between King Xiang and his brother Prince Dai. Prince Dai has been a long-term source of trouble for King Xiang and their relationship spans many entries in *Zuozhuan*. Here, I only cite the episodes where we can see clues of Queen Hui's role in this competition between King Xiang and Prince Dai. In *Zuozhuan*, the mother Queen Hui's favor of Prince Dai is the source of the competitive relationship between King Xiang and his brother. However in *Shiji*, the father King Hui displaces the mother to be the producer of this competitive relationship. What is particular in this story is that, in *Zuozhuan*, Queen Hui's powerful role as the support to Prince Dai is recognized by King Xiang and the ministers. But in *Shiji*, Queen Hui is rewritten to be a partisan member in Prince Dai's sector.

*Zuozhuan*, Xi 24.2: Sometime earlier, *Prince Dai had gained favor with King Hui's queen*. The Queen was going to establish him as king, but before she could accomplish this, she died. Prince Dai fled to Qi. The king brought him back into the domain, but then he had a sexual relationship with Lady Wei, the king's Di consort. The king put Lady Wei aside. Tui Shu and Taozi said, "We were the ones who gave the Di their mission. The Di are sure to feel resentment against us." They then gave Prince Dai the support of a Di army to attack the king. The king's royal guard was going to resist the attack, but the king said, "*What will the former queen say of me?* I would rather have the princes decide what to do." The king then left the domain, reaching Kankan. But the leaders of the domain brought him back. In autumn, Tuishu and Taozi gave Prince Dai the support of a Di army to attack Zhou. They soundly defeated the Zhou army and captured the Zhou Duke Jifu, Yuanbo, Maobo, and Fu Chen. The king left the domain and went to Zheng, where he dwelled at Fan. Prince Dai took the Lady Wei and lived in Wen. 初，甘昭公有寵於惠后，惠后將立之，未及而卒。昭公奔齊，王復之，又通於隗氏。王替隗氏。頽叔、桃子曰：「我實使狄，狄其怨我。」遂奉大叔以狄師攻王。王御士將禦之，王曰：「先后其謂我何？寧使諸侯圖之。」王遂出，及坎飲，國人納之。秋，頽叔、桃子奉大叔以狄師伐周，大敗周師，

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Dong Zhongshu. See *Sharing the Light: Representation of Women and virtue in early China* (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, c1998).

獲周公忌父、原伯、毛伯、富辰。王出適鄭，處于氾。大叔以隗氏居于溫。  
( CQZZZ, 425)

*Shiji*, 4: In the twenty-fifth year, King Hui passed away. His son, Zheng, King Xiang, was enthroned. King Xiang's mother died early. His step-mother was Queen Hui. Queen Hui gave birth to Prince Dai, who was favored by King Hui. King Xiang was in dread of him. ... Earlier, Queen Hui wanted to enthrone Shu Dai, therefore she let her clique clear the way for the Di people. The Di people then entered the Zhou capital. (Nienhauser, I: 76)

二十五年，惠王崩，子襄王鄭立。襄王母蚤死，後母曰惠后。惠后生叔帶，有寵於惠王，襄王畏之。...初，惠后欲立王子帶，故以党开翟人，翟人遂入周。 (*Shiji*, 4.152)

There are some important discrepancies in the presentation provided by the *Zuozhuan* and *Shiji* passages. First, we see a different interpretation of the relationships among characters in *Zuozhuan* and *Shiji*. In *Shiji*, Queen Hui is the stepmother of King Xiang and biological mother of Prince Dai. However, according to *Zuozhuan*, Prince Dai is a full younger brother 母弟 of King Xiang and Queen Hui is the biological mother of both of them (See *Zuo*, Xi 24.5).<sup>156</sup> This switch of relationships among King Xiang, Prince Dai and Queen Hui makes Queen Hui's favoritism of Prince Dai to be a result of her selfishness. Second, in the *Zuozhuan*, the narrator emphasizes that Prince Dai is favored by their mother, but in *Shiji*, the narrator emphasizes Prince Dai is favored by their father, King Hui. Sima Qian's rewriting makes the story align with the typical story theme of succession chaos: a succession disorder takes place when a ruler favors his favorite concubine's son and dislikes the legitimate heir born by his original wife. In addition, with his rewriting, the source of political authority, in the form of the creator of

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<sup>156</sup> In Xi 24.5, King Xiang made a pronouncement which includes the following sentence “I, the inadequate one, did not act virtuously and have offended Prince Dai, the favored one among my full younger brothers 不穀不德，得罪于母弟之寵子帶。” Latter this entry says: “For the Son of Heaven, there is no ‘leaving the domain.’ The text says, ‘The heaven-appointed king left the domain and dwelt in Zheng.’ This was to avoid mention of the trouble with his full younger brother.” 天子無出，書曰「天王出居于鄭」，辟母弟之難也。

the competitive relation between King Xiang and his brother, also switches from the queen mother to the king father.

Although in both *Zuozhuan* and *Shiji* Queen Hui plays a significant role in the competition between King Xiang and Prince Dai, the layout of her power is contrastive in these two texts. In *Zuozhuan*, Queen Hui died before King Xiang ascends the throne. But her unfulfilled desire to establish Prince Dai remains as a call among ministers. More importantly, she casts a shadow over King Xiang's perception of this relationship. As we see from the King's speech, when he considers the choice of resisting his brother's attack, his dead mother's feeling is the reason for his withdrawal from any direct combat with his brother (or at least the author of *Zuozhuan* presents it this way). In *Shiji*, however, Queen Hui is alive and participates in the movements to replace her stepson, King Xiang, with her own son Prince Dai. In short, a dead mother's lagging power over the political situation in *Zuozhuan* is rewritten as a stepmother's direct participation in the riot against the legal king in *Shiji*. With this replacement, Queen Hui's power in the story is changed from neutrally overriding to negatively partial.

In all of these three examples concerning women's power, a man displaces a woman in *Shiji* in the latter's exercise of power. Specifically, Xi Fuxi displaces his wife for the role of offering wise advice, Kuaikui displaces his sister as the powerful one in their relationship, and King Hui displaces Queen Hui to be the source of Prince Dai's insubordination against his elder brother King Xiang. Sima Qian's way of elevating men to a more powerful position resonates with Dong Zhongshu's statement about the appropriate way in dealing with female/male relationship in *Annals*. According to Dong Zhongshu, the *Spring and Autumn Annals* pursues ritual propriety by following the way

of Heaven to elevate *yang* and demean *yin*; and any man, no matter how lowly he is, is *yang* and any woman, no matter how noble she is, is *yin*.<sup>157</sup> Sima Qian's elevation of male characters over their female associates in power in his resonates with Dong Zhongshu's words about the way of the Spring and Autumn *Annals*, the classic of history writing.

In this chapter, I have discussed ten stories about women for which *Zuozhuan* and *Shiji* offer different narratives. These differences form contrasting structures of plots between these two books, namely, episodic narratives in *Zuozhuan* vis-à-vis linearly connected narratives in *Shiji*. Although the emplotment change from *Zuozhuan* to *Shiji* is a progress in narrative construction, I am more concerned here with how the change in emplotment affects woman's status in the presentation of history.

First, such structural differences convey different conceptions of the logic of history in these two texts. History narratives of coordinate episodes in *Zuozhuan* convey a conception of history that everything is in the same network and everything is incomprehensively significant. Li Wai-Yee's interpretation of this phenomenon is well addressed when she uses the term “pan-signification” to describe the significance of such lateral continuity among things in *Zuozhuan*, “every human and non-human sign and action leads to consequences which may exceed human comprehension and control and become knowable only through divination.”<sup>158</sup> This acknowledgement of the momentum of trivial things and trivial persons boosts the status of women in *Zuozhuan*. Formally,

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<sup>157</sup> 是故《春秋》之於禮也...達陽而不達陰，以天道製之也。丈夫雖賤皆為陽，婦人雖貴皆為陰。 See the chapter “Yang Zun Yin Bei” in Dong Zhongshu, *Chunqiu fanlu* (Taipei: Taiwan Shangwu Yinshu Guan, 1976), 43:180.

<sup>158</sup> Li Wai-yee, “Skepticism in Ancient Chinese Historiography,” in *The Limits of Historiography: Genre and Narrative in Ancient Historical Texts*, 33.

women are as important actors in history as their husbands, their rulers and their sons in terms of the significance of their actions and their existence to history. Conversely, in *Shiji*, in order to delineate the history of hereditary houses and imperial houses in sections of “hereditary households” and “basic Annals,” Sima Qian promotes a linear logic of history with linearly connected narratives. The narrative construction subordinates an earlier episode to its following episode for its significance in history. It produces a hierarchy of importance among episodes in a single narrative. It leaves less space to consider the meaning of a small episode itself other than its direct effect on the following episode. In narratives from a “hereditary household” or a “basic Annals” whose purpose is to delineate the succession line of rulers, women’s activities themselves are irrelevant and even violate the interest of historiography.

In particular, for a linear unity of an event, the *Shiji* narratives have to rely on uniform focalization in the process of narration. This focalization establishes a male-focused narrative of history. Male members of ruling lineage become the consistent agents of important history events in *Shiji*. However, it is evident that the important position of these agents comes from Sima Qian’s consciously focused adaptations. As I have shown with my stories about women, ruling male members displace women from all their important roles presented in these *Zuozhuan* stories, including as change motivator, functional actor and power over other actors.<sup>159</sup> Ten stories discussed here appear numerous enough to demonstrate that the reduction of women’s roles in *Shiji* is no insignificant. It produces a new stereotype for women’s role in history: women are insignificant actors and they are subjects to men’s actions and orders. Women only have

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<sup>159</sup> As a matter of fact, women are not the only party that is pushed aside in narrative for the purpose of linear unity in a “hereditary household” and “basic Annals.” Multiple trivial and less important ministers are also less visible in *Shiji* than in *Zuozhuan*. Their actions are displaced by their rulers in the adaptation.

a secondary role for the development of history when they are not playing a negative and disruptive role. The negative and disruptive role of women in history is the focus of representation in *Shiji* and this will be shown in the following chapter.

The narrative features in *Zuozhuan* and *Shiji* are not coincident. They respectively parallel the political environments in which they were situated. A conception of an event as coordinate episodes in history in *Zuozhuan* corresponds to a polity of multiple formally-equal states in the Eastern Zhou period. A conception of an event of linear causal structure in *Shiji* corresponds to an imperial centralistic system in the Han dynasty where the emperor alone represents the central power. Following this, the status of women in these historical narrative structures is related to women's status in the political structure. Acknowledgement of women's role in history in *Zuozhuan* is supported by the existence of women's functional roles as an interstate knot in multiple-state circumstances and the alliances they enabled between their marital states and natal states as my discussion in the first chapter shows. Sima Qian's reduction of women's roles in *Shiji* is a projection of women's loss of any functional political role in a power organization constituted by the male descendants of Liu Bang in the Han dynasty.

## CHAPTER IV

### THEMES AND VARIATIONS

This chapter examines stories about women that are similar in *Shiji* and *Zuozhuan* and speculates on the significance of the variations in these two versions. Surprisingly, the stories that have similar versions in *Shiji* and *Zuozhuan* have great thematic similarity among themselves. Out of the twenty-one stories about women, seventeen of them address the connection between women and political disorder.<sup>160</sup> These seventeen stories could be divided into three types in terms of themes. In the first type, which includes four stories, a woman's indiscreet behavior leads to political disorder. In the second type, containing five stories, a woman's partiality toward one of two males likewise leads to political disorder. In the third type, with eight examples, governmental chaos derives from a duke's favoritism of a woman. This chapter will be divided into three sections, according to these themes. Such a great thematic similarity of these stories, I believe, reveals that *Shiji*'s selection of stories about women from *Zuozhuan* is mainly to show the connection between women and political disorder. The discussion in this chapter will further demonstrate this by showing how the variations of the *Shiji* versions from *Zuozhuan* work to intensify this connection as well as to negate other qualities that a woman character possesses as she appears in *Zuozhuan*.

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<sup>160</sup> The remaining four stories are about virtuous women and they are discussed in the first chapter.

## *Women's indiscreet behavior and political disasters*

There are four stories in which women's indiscreet behavior leads to political disaster. This category includes stories about Ji Ji 季姬, Cai Ji 蔡姬, the mother of Duke Qing of Qi 齊傾公 and Tang Jiang 堯姜. In the first three stories, *Shiji* features women's roles in interstate wars by evincing and intensifying the negative connections between women and wars which are not essential or apparent in *Zuozhuan*. These three stories will be discussed in succession below.<sup>161</sup>

In the first case a woman named Ji Ji triggers an interstate war through engaging in illicit pre-marital sex with a man from her native state. In *Zuozhuan*, Ji Ji's role in the interstate relationship between Lu and Qi is contextualized in a series of separate episodes and has both positive and negative sides. By merging the narrative episodes in *Zuozhuan* to a single continuous narrative, *Shiji* conveys a single, general message about the connection between women and political change.

*Zuozhuan*, Ai 8.3: (b) When Duke Dao of Qi came, Ji Kangzi gave him his younger sister in marriage; (c) he sent an escort for her once he had secured the succession. (d) Ji Fanghou had had an affair with her, and the woman told the truth about it; she could not presume to be betrothed to him. The Duke of Qi was infuriated. (a) In summer, in the fifth month, Bao Mu of Qi led an army in an attack upon us, taking Huan and Chan.

齊悼公之來也，季康子以其妹妻之，即位而逆之。季鮪侯通焉，女言其情，弗敢與也。齊侯怒。夏，五月，齊鮑牧帥師伐我，取讙及闔。

*Zuozhuan*, Ai 8.6: (e) In autumn, we made peace with Qi. In the ninth month, Zang Binru went to Qi to attend the covenant ceremony. Lü Qiuming of Qi came to attend the covenant ceremony, and also escorted Ji Ji back with him; she won favor. Bao Mu, in keeping with his past behavior, said to the several Duke's Sons .....

秋，及齊平。九月，臧賓如如齊蒞盟。齊閭丘明來蒞盟，且逆季姬以歸，嬖。鮑牧又謂群公子曰...(Some episodes about Bao Mu omitted here.)...

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<sup>161</sup> See Tang Jiang's story in *Zuozhuan*, Xiang 25.2 (CQZZ, 1096) and in *Shiji*, 32.1500; Nienhauser, V.1: 102.

*Zuozhuan*, Ai 8.7: (f) In winter, in the twelfth month, the people of Qi returned Huan and Chan. This was because of the favor Ji Ji enjoyed.

冬，十二月，齊人歸讙及闔，季姬嬖故也 (CQZZZ, 1650).

*Shiji*, 32: (a) In the first year of Duke Tao (488 B.C.), Qi launched an attack against Lu, taking Huan and Chan. (b) Earlier, when Yang-sheng was in exile in Lu, Jisun Fei gave him his younger sister in marriage. (c) When he returned and ascended the throne, he sent an envoy to receive her. (d) Ji Ji had had an affair with Ji Fanghou, and told the truth about it. Lu dare not give her to Qi. (a) For this reason, Qi launched an attack against Lu, (e) and in the end received Ji Ji. (f) Ji Ji was favored, and Qi again returned Lu's captured territories. (Nienhauser, V.1: 114)

悼公元年，齊伐魯，取讙、闔。初，陽生亡在魯，季康子以其妹妻之。及歸即位，使迎之。季姬與季鮒侯通，言其情，魯弗敢與，故齊伐魯，竟迎季姬。季姬嬖，齊復歸魯侵地。(Shiji, 32.1507)

The content of the story is the same in *Shiji* and *Zuozhuan*; the concern with Ji Ji's role is also explicit in both of them. In both versions the moral message of the connection between Ji Ji and the war is latent. Nevertheless, the different narrative forms of these two versions convey different connotations about Ji Ji's role. The first *Zuozhuan* passage makes explicit that Ji Ji's adultery and refusal of marriage is the cause of Qi's attack upon Lu; the second passage mentions that Ji Ji's marriage is part of the peace-making process between two states; the third passage makes explicit that Duke of Qi returns land to Lu as a reward for Ji Ji's favor. In the third episode, the favor itself is not in the foreground to convey satirical effect but is added to provide a reason for returning the land. Ji Ji is thus shown in *Zuozhuan* to have both negative and positive effects on the interstate relationships of Lu. More specifically, the events concerning these different effects are recorded in their appropriate, specific time slots when they occurred and amongst a stream of events related and unrelated to the interstate relationship between Lu and Qi. They are separated by other events which come between them.<sup>162</sup> For instance, between *e*

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<sup>162</sup> My comparison of the narratives between these two texts is also grounded on an elementary processing of the records in *Zuozhuan*. I bring separate entries together as representatives of *Zuozhuan* narratives, but

and *f*, there is an episode about Bao Mu 鲍牧 which is irrelevant to the current story about Ji Ji. As a result, the two contrasting changes brought by Ji Ji upon Lu appear to be separate and independent in *Zuozhuan*. Each episode about Ji Ji is immersed in its own context and the judgment of her is specific in each context. As a result, the positive effect in the third episode is much more apparent by standing on its own and being disconnected with the negative effect in the first episode. With the combination of discrete narrative episodes, the role of Ji Ji in history is fluid, changing and inconclusive just like every other character in *Zuozhuan*.

In contrast, the *Shiji* passage brings events in *Zuozhuan* belonging to different time slots together to form a narrative and fills a single time slot in the chronicle of a state. These discrete entries are merged into one unified narrative which tends to convey a single and uniform message. Although the overall structure of a chapter from the “hereditary household” (*shijia*) section of *Shiji*, such as has been quoted above, is also generally chronological, the complete narratives are formed by transcending the temporal order which is strictly followed by *Zuozhuan*. The narrative order of this *Shiji* version is complicated in relationship to the temporal order. As marked in the passages above with the letters *a,b,c,d,e*, and *f*, there are six narrative episodes in *Shiji* passage. If we mark the temporal order of the events with Arabic numbers, then, the narrative order and temporal order of the narrative episode respectively are,

*a4, b1, c2, d3, a4, e5, f6*

The first event *a* is presented as the proper event under the noted year. The following sequence makes a record of events that both precede and follow the proper

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as a matter of fact, these selections break down the original structure of the text for my current interest.

event *a* to form a round narrative. As the time word *chu* (at the beginning) and the conjunction *gu* (so) indicates, the episodes *b* to *d* are provided as the cause of the event *a*. Meanwhile, the events *e* and *f*, which happened after *a*, are brought up from an uncertain time in the future to give a follow-up for the crucial event *a*. By reversing the temporal order twice, *Shiji* brings together discrete events and provides a complete story. The reversal of the temporal order of a chronicle is an attempt to make sense out of these related events.

In this unified narrative, the central character Ji Ji is in a sense “flattened” and given a kind of constancy that she does not have in the *Zuozhuan* episodes. Ji Ji is constantly associated with inappropriate behaviors, including her illicit sex and the favoritism of the duke. Her negative and positive effects combine into one and the same thing, the whimsical change of the relationship between Lu and Qi. *Shiji* hence offers a single message with this complete narrative: that is, Ji Ji, who is affiliated with inappropriate behaviors, is the cause of the volatile relationship between Lu and Qi.

*Shiji*’s strategy of foregrounding the connection between women’s inappropriate behavior and political disaster is not limited to simply putting together discrete episodes in *Zuozhuan*. In the following example of Cai Ji of Qi 齊蔡姬, *Shiji* adds conjunctions to make explicit a connection between Cai Ji and an interstate war that is only implicit in *Zuozhuan*. This strategy is used in both of two versions of the story that can be found in *Shiji*.

*Zuozhuan*, Xi 3.5: As the Duke of Qi and his wife Cai Ji were riding a boat in the royal park, she rocked it. He blanched in fear and told her to stop, but she refused. The Duke was angry and sent her back to Cai, but he had not cut off relations with her. The men of Cai married her to another. (傳僖三·五) 齊侯與蔡姬乘舟于囿，蕩公。公懼，變色；禁之，不可。公怒，歸之，未絕之也。蔡人嫁之。 (CQZZZ: 287)

*Zuozhuan*, Xi 4.1: In the fourth year, in spring, the Duke of Qi invaded Cai with an army of the dukes. Cai collapsed, and Qi then attacked Chu. The Master of Chu sent an emissary to speak with the Qi army: (*The diplomatic conversation between Chu and Qi is omitted here*)... (傳四·一)四年，春，齊侯以諸侯之師侵蔡。蔡潰，遂伐楚。楚子使與師言曰：…… (CQZZZ, 288)

*Shiji*, 32: In the twenty-ninth year (657 B.C.), Duke Huan and his lady, Cai Ji, were frolicking in a boat. Cai Ji was adept in water and she rocked the duke. The Duke became frightened and told her to stop, but she did not stop. When the duke got out of the boat, he was angry. He sent Cai Ji back to Cai without divorcing her. The Duke of Cai was also angry and had the woman remarried. Duke Huan heard of this and became angry. He mobilized his forces and went to attack (the state of Cai). (Nienhauser, V.1:66, modified.)

二十九年，桓公與夫人蔡姬戲船中。蔡姬習水，蕩公，公懼，止之，不止，出船，怒，歸蔡姬，弗絕。蔡亦怒，嫁其女。桓公聞而怒，興師往伐。

(*Shiji*, 32.1489)

*Shiji*, 35: Mu Hou (of Cai) had his younger sister become the Wife of Duke Huan of Qi (r.685-646 B.C.). In the eighteenth year of (Mu Hou), Duke Huan of Qi and the woman from Cai were frolicking in a boat. The Duke's wife rocked the boat, and Duke Huan tried to stop her. She did not stop. The Duke was angry and sent the woman from Cai back home without divorcing her. The Duke of Cai was angry and had his sister remarried. Duke Huan was angry and attacked Cai; Cai collapsed and then he captured the Duke Mu. He went south as far as Shao-ling in Chu. Soon afterwards, the feudal Dukes on behalf of Cai made an apology to Qi and the Duke of Qi let the Duke of Cai return. (Nienhauser, V.1:198, modified)

繆侯以其女弟為齊桓公夫人。十八年，齊桓公與蔡女戲船中，夫人蕩舟，桓公止之，不止，公怒，歸蔡女而不絕也。蔡侯怒，嫁其弟。齊桓公怒，伐蔡；蔡潰，遂虜繆侯，南至楚邵陵。已而諸侯為蔡謝齊，齊侯歸蔡侯。(Shiji, 35.1566)

In the current form of *Zuozhuan*, the entry Xi 3.5 appears as an independent entry which is not affiliated with any *Chunqiu* entry, while the entry Xi 4.1 appears as a commentary for the *Chunqiu* entry Xi 4.1 in the following year. They are independent records under two different years. However, these two entries are explicitly related as one event in other versions of this story, such as in *Han Feizi* 韩非子 and *Chuniu Shiyü* 春秋事語 earlier than *Shiji*. Thus, Yang Bojun argues these two narrative episodes from *Zuozhuan* should originally have been in the same entry (CQZZZ, 286). Even if these two episodes were in the same entry under the same year, it still takes an engaged reading to

see the causal relation between these two episodes in *Zuozhuan*, for the narrator does not make explicit the causality between the change in Cai Ji's circumstance and Duke Huan of Qi's attack in the south. The relation between these two events could be as vague as many other adjacent entries or episodes in the same entries in *Zuozhuan*. This is especially so since the attack upon Cai is not the major concern in the second episode; instead, its focus is on the rationalization of the following attack on Chu given in the speech of the Qi envoy. In this perspective, *Zuozhuan* neither foregrounds the conflict between Qi and Cai nor the connection between the incident concerning Cai Ji in Xi 3.5 and Qi's attack upon Cai in Xi 4.1. The apparent disconnectedness between these two entries in *Zuozhuan* makes these two events independent and parallel to each other. The first entry explicates its last episode, Cai Ji's remarriage, which itself becomes a crucial, notable event. This entry could be connected with Qi's expedition to Chu, which appears in *Zuozhuan* in the following entry; however, it also could be connected to many other entries in *Zuozhuan* if one could find some bonding glue among them.

Nevertheless, if *Zuozhuan* is hinting at a causal relationship between these two entries by putting them adjacent to one another, the moral judgment of the story remains open. It is not clear in *Zuozhuan* whether Cai Ji or Duke Huan is more at fault for the development from an incident in their marital life to a grand war among multiple states. If it makes this causality explicit, this could be regarded as an obvious criticism of Duke Huan of Qi for involving multiple states in a war just because of a small incident in his marital life.<sup>163</sup> In fact, another version of the story in the Warring-States text *Han Feizi*

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<sup>163</sup> A Qing scholar Gu Donggao 顧棟高 has raised doubt about the attribution of the grand war between Qi and Chu to the fault of Cai Ji. He argues the state of Cai is the threshold for Chu; Qi's attack of Cai for the incident concerning Cai Ji is a cover for Chu's real plan on Chu. See Gu Donggao, *Chunqiu dashibiao* 春秋大事表 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1993). Zhang Taiyan 章太炎 also follows him to discuss this issue

makes it explicit that Guan Zhong, Duke Huan's famous advisor, considers it inappropriate to start a war against another state just because of an incident in one's marital life and advises an expedition against Chu to mask the duke's real intention of revenge on Cai.<sup>164</sup> While this *Han Feizi* version dramatizes the expedition to Chu as connected to the small incident concerning Cai Ji, it nevertheless proves that an author in the late Warring-States period, Han Fei, is more concerned with the appropriateness of the duke's behavior, which is perhaps a concern he shares with the *Zuozhuan* authors.

The major change *Shiji* makes to *Zuozhuan* episodes is to stabilize the causality between the two episodes. Sima Qian connects them by adding a sentence, "Duke Huan heard of this and became angry" in the version in "The Hereditary Households of Guan and Cai" (*Shiji*, j.35). Similar modification also occurs in "The Hereditary Household of Qi" (*Shiji*, j. 32) with this appendage: Cai Ji is explicitly connected to the war between Qi and Cai and furthers the war between Qi and Chu. The smooth conjunction in *Shiji* makes Qi's attack of Cai a taken-for-granted human reaction to Cai's inappropriate decision about Cai Ji. Although, *Shiji* also does not make explicit any moral judgment in the story, its judgment possibly has more in common with a version that appears in *Chunqiu Shiyü* 春秋事語, which is a text excavated from a Han tomb at Ma Wangdui site 馬王堆, than with *Han Feizi*. The story in *Chunqiu Shiyü* blames Cai Ji for the war between Qi and Cai. It borrows a character Shi Shuo's words to criticize Cai Ji for violating her husband's will

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and argues that the incident concerning Cai Ji is only the final trigger of the war which had been prepared for twenty years. See Zhang Taiyan, *Chunqiu Zuozhuandu* 春秋左傳讀, in *Zhang Taiyan quanji* 章太炎全2, 234.

<sup>164</sup> *Han Feizi* is attributed to Han Fei (ca.280BCE?-233BCE?), see "Waichu Shuo Shang" 外儲說左上 in *Han Feizi*, in *Siku Congkan chubian* 四部叢刊初編, vol. 350, 11.

and criticizes the Duke of Cai for following Cai Ji's explanation of the incident and thus marrying her to another.<sup>165</sup> In this perspective, Qi's attack is due punishment for faults on the side of Cai Ji and the state of Cai. Although these comments in *Chunqiu Shiyü*, which is transcribed during the period of Qin and Han transition, are not transmitted in *Shiji*, they reflect the popular understanding of this story by Confucian commentators in the times closer to *Shiji*.<sup>166</sup> This understanding stresses the connection between women's inappropriate behaviors and political disasters; it also promotes a woman's submissiveness to her husband and views the acceptance of woman's words as the source of disaster for the state.

In the third case concerning women's inappropriate behavior and resulting political disaster, a war among multiple states is traced to an incident in which the mother of Duke Qing of Qi laughs inappropriately at an envoy of Jin, Xi Ke. *Zuozhuan* provides a number of clues to the reasons for the outbreak of war and the incident under consideration here is only one of the scattered clues. Sima Qian's adaptation brings together entries that cover a period of several years in *Zuozhuan*, and the coherence of the resulting narrative overcomes the boundaries of year breaks that occur in *Zuozhuan*. Narrative unity is achieved in Sima Qian's version by subordinating the story materials

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<sup>165</sup> Shi Shuo comments that “The rule of woman is not to violate the husband, which is the way of Heaven. In serving a larger state, one does not respond with anger, which is the advantage of the small state. Today (Cai) listened to woman's words and married her, as a result, they cut off relationship with Qi 夫女制不逆夫，天之道也。事大不報怒，小之利也…今聽女辭而嫁之，以絕齊…” see “Mawangdui Hanmu chutu Boshu *Chunqiu Shiyü* shiwen”馬王堆漢墓出土帛書「春秋事語」釋文, in *Wenwu* 文物, 1(1977): 33.

<sup>166</sup> According to Li Xueqin 李学勤, *Chunqiu Shiyü* is a text written during the period of Qin and Han transition; it absorbed ideas from the tradition of *Guliang Commentary* while commenting on records based on *Zuozhuan*. See Li Xueqin, “*Chunqiu Shiyu* yu *Zuozhuan* de chuanliu” 「春秋事語」與「左傳」的傳流 ), in *Guji zhengli yanjiu* 古籍整理研究, 4(1989). Also see Zhang Zhenglang 張政烺, *Chunqiu shiyü tijie* 「春秋事語」題解, in *Wenwu*, 1(1977): 36.

provided in *Zuozhuan* to a specific perspective that establishes a simple pattern of causation that leads from the incident involving Duke Qing's mother and the war.

*Zuozhuan*, Xuan 17.1: In the seventeenth year, in spring, the Jin ruler sent Xi Ke to Qi to summon Qi leaders to a meeting. Duke Qing of Qi placed his womenfolk behind curtains and let them observe Xi Ke. As Xi Ke ascended the steps, the womenfolk laughed in the side chamber.<sup>167</sup> Enraged, Xi Ke came out from the meeting and vowed, "If I do not avenge this insult, may I fail to cross the River!" ...Xi Ke arrived in Jin and requested to attack Qi. The Prince of Jin refused. Xi Ke requested to use his private troops to attack Qi and again was refused.

十七年，春，晉侯使郤克徵會于齊。齊頃公帷婦人使觀之。郤子登，婦人笑於房。獻子怒，出而誓曰：「所不此報，無能涉河！」...郤子至，請伐齊。晉侯弗許。請以其私屬，又弗許。(CQZZZ, 771)

*Zuozhuan*, Cheng 2.3: The Prince of Qi sent Guo Zuo to offer the bronze *yan* vessel from Ji, jade chiming stones, and land as gifts to the victors, with this instruction: "If they refuse, let them do what they would." Guo Zuo offered the gifts. The leaders of Jin refused: "Qi must give the daughter of Tongshu of Xiao as hostage in Jin, and make the divisions between fields within its borders all run east and west." Guo Zuo replied, "The daughter of Tongshu of Xiao is none other than our unworthy ruler's mother. If we were to match counterparts in equal domains, then she is also like a mother to the Jin ruler. ..."

齊侯使賓媚人賂以紀甗、玉磬與地。不可，則聽客之所為。賓媚人致賂。晉人不可，曰：「必以蕭同叔子為質，而使齊之封內盡東其敵。」對曰：「蕭同叔子非他，寡君之母也。若以匹敵，則亦晉君之母也。...」(CQZZZ, 787)

*Shiji*, 32: In the spring of the sixth year, Qin sent Xi Ke to Qi. The Duke of Qi had the Lady observe him from among the curtains. As Xi Ke climbed the steps, the Lady laughed at him. Xi Ke said, "If I do not repay this insult, may I fail to cross the River!" When he returned, he requested to lead an expedition against Qi. The Duke of Qin did not grant consent. When Qi envoys arrived in Qin, Xi Ke seized the four envoys at He-nei and killed them. In the eighth year, Jin launched an expedition against Qi. Qi had the Duke's son Qiang become a hostage in Jin, and the Jin troops withdrew. In the spring of the tenth year, Qi led expeditions against Lu and Wei. Grand minister of Lu and Wei went to Jin to ask for troops.

Everything went through Xi Ke. Jin sent Xi Ke eight hundred teams of chariots as Commander of the Central Army. Shi Xie commanded the Upper Army and Luan Shu commanded the Lower Army so as to rescue Lu and Wei and lead an expedition against Qi...*(omitted is a lengthy narrative about the war)*... The Duke of Qi asked to apologize with precious objects. Jin would not listen and was

<sup>167</sup> The possible reason for the laughter is that Xi Ke is crippled. This speculation is based on a later rendition of the incident in *Gongyang Zhuan* and *Guliang Zhuan*. Zhang Taiyan 章太炎 points out that the reason is not specified in *Zuozhuan* because *Zuozhuan* derives from contemporary state histories wherein Xi Ke's disability is a well-known fact for its implied audience. See Zhang Taiyan, *Chunqiu Zuozhuan du 春秋左傳讀*, in *Zhang Taiyan quanji* 2 章太炎全集 2, 417.

determined to obtain Xiao Tong Shuzi, who had laughed at Xi Ke. Jin also ordered that Qi lay out its fields eastwards. The Qi envoy replied, “Shuzi is the Duke of Qi’s mother. The Duke of Qi’s mother is indeed no different than the Duke of Jin’s mother. How can you, sir, deal with her?...” (Nienhauser, V.1:88)  
六年春，晉使郤克於齊，齊使夫人帷中而觀之。郤克上，夫人笑之。郤克曰：“不是報，不復涉河！”歸，請伐齊，晉侯弗許。齊使至晉，郤克執齊使者四人河內，殺之。八年。晉伐齊，齊以公子彊質晉，晉兵去。十年春，齊伐魯、衛。魯、衛大夫如晉請師，皆因郤克…齊侯請以寶器謝，不聽；必得笑克者蕭桐叔子，令齊東敵。對曰：“叔子，齊君母。齊君母亦猶晉君母，子安置之？且予以義伐而以暴為后，其可乎？”(*Shiji*, 32.1497)

*Shiji*, 39: ...The mother of the Duke Qing of Qi watched him (Xi Ke) from the second story of a building and laughed at him. The reason why it was like this was that Xi Ke was hunchbacked, the envoy of Lu was lame and the envoy of Wei was blind. Therefore, Qi also ordered people similar to them to lead these guests. (Nienhauser, V.1:354)

齊頃公母從樓上觀而笑之。所以然者，郤克僂，而魯使蹇，衛使眇，故齊亦令人如之以導客。...(*Shiji*, 39.1677)

The two episodes from *Zuozhuan* are far apart in the original text. However, most of the entries between them are related to the war at An 豰之戰 between Qi and a united army of Jin, Lu and Wei.<sup>168</sup> In the entry under Cheng 23 in *Zuozhuan*, during the treaty debate after the war, the reference to Xiao Tong Shuzi, the mother of the Duke of Qing recalls the laughing incident that occurred several years earlier and draws a connection between it and the war. The *Zuozhuan* records give clear indication of Xi Ke’s important role in the war. Specifically, the entry Xuan 17.2 tells that Xi Ke became the prime minister in Jin. Furthermore the entry Cheng 2.3 tells that Wei and Lu sought military support in Jin by looking to Xi Ke and that Xi Ke asked for more troops than usual for the war at An. Finally, in the account of the war at An given in Cheng 2.3, Xi Ke is criticized for being unable to endure the hardships of the war. Yet, these various episodes are not integrated into a consistent perspective that draws a connection between the

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<sup>168</sup> Wu Kaisheng’s *Zuozhuan Wei* has a chapter about the War at An where it collects all the entries related to this war in *Zuozhuan*. See Wu Kaisheng 吳闡生, *Zuozhuan wei* 左傳微 (Hefei: Huangshan Shushe, 1995), 373-93.

laughing incident and the war at An.

These accounts about Xi Ke are discretely scattered among records concerning Jin, Lu and Wei's other interests in the war against Qi. The most important reason for the war at An, at least so it seems, is the competition for the leadership in covenants between Chu and Jin, as well as Qi's disobedience to Jin and its alliance with Chu, which is suggested in the entries Xuan 17.1 and Cheng 1.5. The official excuse of Jin for joining the war at An against Qi is to assist Lu and Wei, which are formal allies of Jin (Cheng 2.3). The conflict between Lu and Qi, at least seen from the perspective of the *Zuo zhuan*, has a deeper and more significant historical reason than the laughing incident. The recent Duke of Lu, Duke Xuan, ascended the throne by replacing the legitimate heir of the Qi bloodline with the help of Xiangzhong (Wen 18.4). The grudge between Lu and Qi is seen from the fact that Duke Xuan wanted to attack Qi and sent an envoy to Chu to beg for troops before the people of Lu turned to Jin for help (Xuan 18.2, Xuan 18.4).<sup>169</sup> After Duke Xuan's death, the regent of Lu, Ji Wenzi, attributes the isolated situation of Lu to the establishment of Duke Xuan by Xiangzhong: "Xiangzhong it was who made us kill the heirs born of the principal wife and instate the son of the secondary wife, so that we lost our great helper" (Xuan 18.4). The great helper here refers to Qi, the natal state of the former primary wife Ai Jiang and the state where Lu typically forms marital alliances. This demonstrates that the relationship between Qi and Lu was deteriorating during the reign of Duke Xuan. When Qi attacked Lu in the first year of Lord Cheng (590 BCE), Wei attacked Qi to provide assistance to Lu. In this circumstance, both these two states sought military support in Jin, events which led to the war at An. In short, *Zuo zhuan*

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<sup>169</sup> Du Yu 杜預 pointed out for this entry that the duke of Lu does not serve Qi and was afraid by the fact that Qi and Jin had signed a covenant of alliance, which is recorded in Xuan 18.1. See *Chunqiu Zuo zhuan zhengyi*, 783.

provides multiple clues for the war at An, including Jin's competition for the leadership of the covenant and the enmity between Qi and Lu, as well as Xi Ke's personal humiliation in the mission to Qi.

*Shiji*'s rewriting singles out one thread from these various clues provided in *Zuozhuan* and only stresses the connection between Duke Qing's mother's laughing and the war at An. *Shiji* achieves this particular perspective by stressing the constant role Xi Ke plays in important events surrounding the war in that period. The stress placed on the role of Xi Ke is based on congregating relevant events recounted in *Zuozhuan*; but it is also based on rewriting the events against the records in *Zuozhuan*. For instance, the *Shiji* passage from chapter 32 tells us that Xi Ke seized four Qi envoys and killed them, which conflicts with the record in *Zuozhuan*. According to the latter, these four Qi envoys escaped one after the other with Jin's partial acquiescence (Xuan17.1, Xuan18.1). The modification in *Shiji* recasts the events so as to demonstrate Xi Ke's hatred toward Qi and his deciding role in the diplomacy of Jin. Hence, the war at An, where Xi Ke served as the military leader, is interpreted as Xi Ke's fulfillment of full revenge against the Duke Qing of Qi. The other more important circumstances, such as the competition for the leadership of the covenant and the conflict between Lu and Qi, are neglected in this version of the story.

*Shiji* also modifies some details to provide a clear path from Duke Qing's mother's laugh to the war. The narrator in *Zuozhuan* does not put blame on the Duke's mother for the laughing incident and even less for the war. The *Zuozhuan* narrator does not emphasize Duke Qing's mother's role in the laughing incident but attributes this action just to "the womenfolk." With this ambiguity in wording, the narrator hints that it

is not strictly the fault of the Duke's mother that she was brought into the discussion of the treaty. Instead, the narrative implies that Xi Ke wanted to insult Duke Qing of Qi, who laughed at him with his womenfolk, by taking his mother as hostage. This manner of presentation implies that the responsibility for the inappropriate behavior is on Xi Ke and Duke Qing, while Duke Qing's mother is the victim in this conflict between men. In contrast, Sima Qian consciously designates the mother of Duke Qing as the person who was laughing and indicates that it was for this reason she was called to be a hostage after the war. As a result, *Shiji* provides a clearer connection between the laughing incident and the war of An and puts blame on a woman's casual behavior for a major war.

Another important modification *Shiji* makes is to specify Lu and Wei's direct involvement in the laughing incident to emphasize the causality between the incident and the war even more strongly. This happens in the second version of the same story, which appears in "The Hereditary Household of Jin" (*Shiji*, j.39). This version of the story takes a similar perspective to that of the version in "The Hereditary Household of the Grand father of Qi" (*Shiji*, j.32) except that it appends a summarized explanation for the laughing. It introduces two other envoys, one from Lu and one from Wei, and claims that they, just like Xi Ke, were insulted as a result of their physical disabilities. In this way, the war at An is more closely related to the laughing incident and becomes a collective revenge taken by these three states for the ridicule their envoys suffered in Qi. This approach in the *Shiji* stands in contrast with the multiple possible motivations provided for the war in *Zuozhuan*. It is a somewhat simplified dramatization of history, at least as it appears in the earlier text, to emphasize the causal relation between the incident under discussion here and the war. This dramatization maximizes the destructive effect of a

woman's indiscrete behavior, so that it excessively condemns a woman's willful action.

Admittedly, this alternative narrative of the laughing incident in *Shiji* was probably

drawn from *Gongyangzhuan* and *Guliangzhuan*.<sup>170</sup>

This case also demonstrates that while the *Zuozhuan* text made up of discrete episodes is able to contain multiple possible motivations for a great war, the representation of such episodes as a complete narrative in the *Shiji* draws the materials under the light of a definite perspective. By narrating an event with multiple discrete episodes, the *Zuozhuan* author preserves a greater verisimilitude for history; by reducing it to a single, clear perspective, *Shiji* romanticizes history, removing the complexity and ambiguity of a real-world event.

To summarize this section, what is common in these three stories is that the connection between women and political disaster is highlighted in the *Shiji* version. Admittedly, *Shiji* has done this for the purpose of narrativizing a presentation which is episodic in *Zuozhuan*. But what makes this problematic, in the cases presented above is that it prioritizes the perspective of the connection of women and disaster out of other possible perspectives that could have been used as a way of narrativizing the earlier presentation. As shown in the cases of Cai Ji and the mother of Duke Qing, the perspective provided by the author of *Shiji* is to highlight small incidents about women and make these responsible for grand interstate wars that involve multiple states and have immense significance for the power structure among states. It shows a definite

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<sup>170</sup> Both *Gongyang Zhuan* and *Guliang Zhuan* state that all of the envoys from Lu, Wei, and Jin were disabled, but these two books differ on the specific disability of these envoys. See CQZZZ, 772, Or *Chunqiu Gongyangzhuan zhushu* 春秋公羊傳注疏, *Shisan jing zhushu* 十三經注疏 21, 433. *Chunqiu Guliangzhuan zhushu* 春秋穀梁傳注疏, *Shisan jing zhushu* 22, 243. The dramatic scenes depicted in these two texts lack credibility and are probably fictive amplification of the real history by Ru scholars in these two traditions. The state of Qi was not the leader of the lords' covenant at that period, and it is impossible that three states would send their envoys at the same time to the state of Qi for a visit.

narrativizing logic that associates major disorder and change with *yin*/female force, a logic that is explicit in Dong Zhongshu's thought which is discussed in the Introduction.

### *Women's partiality and political disasters*

In this section, I consider a type of story in which a woman's partiality to one of two male parties who are in conflict leads to political disaster. Such partiality means that their support of a certain party derives from their own self-interest and personal affection. There are five stories that contain this theme. These stories concern, respectively, Yong Ji of Zheng 鄭雍姬, Wu Jiang of Zheng 鄭武姜, Wen Ying of Jin 晉文嬴, Mu Ying of Jin 晉穆嬴, and Lady Xiang of Song 宋襄夫人. The basic content of these stories is the same in the *Zuozhuan* and *Shiji* versions, although there are somewhat different approaches in these two texts to aspects of women other than partiality. *Zuozhuan* presents positive aspects of women, such as their crucial role in events, their authority and capabilities, which balance the negative portrayal of their partiality and endow them with inner depth and complexity. In contrast, the *Shiji* versions do not include these positive aspects of female characterization: its women characters are simply partial.

In the first case, Wu Jiang of Zheng shows partiality to her younger son Duan, and this leads to a rebellion against her elder son, Duke Zhuang of Zheng. There are several different ways of reading this story in *Zuozhuan* as Wai-yee Li elucidates in her book, particularly because Duke Zhuang's delay of punishment at each step of the growth of Duan's power draws a lot of speculation on Duke Zhuang's culpability and the real motivation behind his apparent leniency toward his brother.<sup>171</sup> Most interpretations of

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<sup>171</sup> See Wai-yee Li's reading of this story in Wai-yee Li, *The Readability of the Past in Early Chinese*

this story focus on Duke Zhuang's attitude toward his brother Duan, while fewer realize that the mother-son dynamic between Wu Jiang and Duke Zhuang is the core behind the apparent fraternal fight. This focus upon the fraternal relationship rather than upon the mother-son relationship is in harmony with the spirit of *Shiji*, which emphasizes Duke Zhuang's personal problem without situating it within the dynamic of a mother-son relationship. A focus upon the mother-son relationship helps understand this story as a coherent one and dissolves the seeming conflicts between its different episodes as well as between its narrative and commentary. The following discussion will not only show the mother-son dynamic as the core of this story, but will also show that the crucial role of Wu Jiang in the story disappears from the *Shiji* version.

The theme of the connection between Wu Jiang's partiality and the rebellion is common to both *Zuozhuan* and *Shiji*. Both versions start with an anecdote about Wu Jiang's favoritism toward Duan and her disfavor of Duke Zhuang.

*Zuozhuan*, Yin 1.4: Sometime earlier, Duke Wu of Zheng took a wife in Shen, who was known as Wu Jiang. She bore Duke Zhuang and Duan. Duke Zhuang was breech born, and Lady Jiang was shaken. For this reason, she named him “Breech Born” and hated him. She loved Duan and wanted to set him up as heir. Time and again she asked this favor of Duke Wu, but the Duke would not grant it.

初，鄭武公娶于申，曰武姜，生莊公及共叔段。莊公寤生，驚姜氏，故名曰寤生，遂惡之。

愛共叔段，欲立之。亟請於武公，公弗許。(CQZZZ, 10)

*Shiji*, 42: Tenth year of Duke Wu, the Duke married the daughter of the Duke of Shen who was known as Wu Jiang. She bore the heir Breech Born and the birth was difficult. After his birth, the Lady did not love him. Then she bore the younger son Duan and loved him. In the twenty-seventh year, Duke Wu fell ill. The Lady asked the favor of Duke Wu and wanted to set up Duan as heir, but the Duke would not grant it. This year, Duke Wu died and Breech Born acceded, who is Duke Zhuang. 武公十年，娶申侯女為夫人，曰武姜。生太子寤生，生之難，及生，夫人弗愛。后生少子叔段，段生易，夫人愛之。二十七年，武公疾。夫人請公，欲立段為太子，公弗聽。是歲，武公卒，寤生立，是為莊公。

(*Shiji*, 42.1759)

The beginning of the story is basically the same in the two versions with only slight variations in the wording and content. Both versions relate Wu Jiang's partiality against one son (Duke Zhuang) due to his difficult birth. However, the relationship between Wu Jiang and Duke Zhuang is much more negative in *Zuozhuan*, which uses words of stronger meaning than those of the *Shiji* version. For instance, Wu Jiang's feeling toward Duke Zhuang is described with the word "hate" (yan 厝) in *Zuozhuan*, whereas, *Shiji* uses a neutral phrase "not love" (弗愛). Wu Jiang's strong preference in setting up Duan as heir is reflected in *Zuozhuan* with the word "time and again" (ji 亟), indicating the frequency of her request. In the *Shiji* version, her request happens only once and that is just before Duke Wu dies. The stronger rendition of Wu Jiang's feeling of dislike for Duke Zhuang in the *Zuozhuan* version implies a more important role, which will be elucidated later.

The connection between Wu Jiang's partiality and political disaster is addressed in both *Zuozhuan* and *Shiji*, but it is further intensified in the latter with a different rendition of the following events.

*Zuozhuan*, Yin 1.4: When Duke Zhuang acceded, Wu Jiang requested the settlement Zhi for Duan... She requested Jing, and the duke sent Duan to live there, calling him "The Senior Younger Brother of the Walled City Jing."... Shortly thereafter, the Senior Younger Brother commanded the western and northern marches to switch their allegiance to him... The Senior Younger Brother went on to gather the disloyal and make them into his own settlements, reaching as far as Lingyan... The Senior Younger Brother reinforced walls, gathered provisions, repaired his armor and weapons, and prepared his infantry and chariots. He was going to make a surprise attack upon Zheng, and Lady Jiang was going to open the city gate for him. When the duke heard that a date had been set, he said, "Now we can act!"... The text says, "The Elder of Zheng overcame Duan at Yan." Duan did not behave like a younger brother, so it does not speak of a younger brother. They were like two rulers, so it says "overcame." That it labels him "the Elder of Zheng" is to criticize his neglect of instruction: what happened is judged to have been Zheng's intention.

及莊公即位，為之請制…請京，使居之…既而大叔命西鄙、北鄙貳於己。…大叔又收貳以為己邑，至于廩延。… 大叔完聚，繕甲兵，具卒乘，將襲鄭，夫人將啟之。公聞其期，曰：「可矣。」…書曰：「鄭伯克段于鄢。」段不弟，故不言弟；如二君，故曰克；稱鄭伯，譏失教也：謂之鄭志。(CQZZZ, 13)

*Shiji*, 42: The First year of Duke Zhuang, the Duke gives Jing to Duan as a fief, calling him the Senior Younger Brother. Duan arrived in Jing, repaired his armor and weapons, and planned with his mother Wu Jiang to make a surprise attack upon Zheng. The twenty-second year, Duan realized his plan of attacking Zheng and Wu Jiang was the inside collaborator. Duke Zhuang sent an army to attack Duan and Duan fled.

莊公元年，封弟段於京，號太叔。… 段至京，繕治甲兵，與其母武姜謀襲鄭。二十二年，段果襲鄭，武姜為內應。莊公發兵伐段，段走 (*Shiji*, 42.1759).

After the initial account about Wu Jiang's partiality, both versions continue to narrate how Duan increases his power with Wu Jiang's support and how they attempt to replace Duke Zhuang with Duan. The *Zuozhuan* version lingers at each step that Duan takes as he gradually approaches the capital and tells of Duke Zhuang's continuous tolerance before his final retaliation with a record of his conversations with his ministers.<sup>172</sup> In explaining the motivation behind Duke Zhuang's suspicious leniency, it is more consistent with the whole story to take Duke Zhuang's decision of waiting for the prime moment to crack down to be not only meant for his brother but meant primarily for his mother Wu Jiang. In Duke Zhuang's speech in *Zuozhuan*, which is a technique of revealing what he is thinking, Wu Jiang figures as the real trouble that he is dealing with, more so than Duan. Duke Zhuang declines to take action even when Duan commands the border areas of the state to switch their allegiance to him and controls a good part of the state, which are obvious evidences of his treachery. He declines because at these moments he could only crack down on Duan but could do nothing about the source of

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<sup>172</sup> The conversations are omitted in the quote of the *Zuozhuan* passage here. Please see CQZZZ, 12 for a complete reference.

Duan's power, Wu Jiang. Only when Duke Zhuang gains clear evidence of Wu Jiang's involvement in the rebellion, does Duke Zhuang consider it the ripe time to take action. Duke Zhuang's strong intention to punish Wu Jiang is rationalized in *Zuozhuan* by the earlier account of Wu Jiang's strong repugnance toward him beginning from his birth, which then sets the basic tone of their entire relationship. This approach to the first half of the story is also more consistent with the second half of the story, which is clearly about the mother-son relationship. The story, as a whole, goes smoothly without the comment in the middle, which is regarded by Wu Kaisheng 吳闡生 as an attachment to the original text by exegetes from later times.<sup>173</sup>

Compared to the *Zuozhuan* version of the development of Duan's power, the *Shiji* version of the development of the rebellion is much shorter and ends more problematically. It does not tell of the gradual process of the growth of Duan's power that Duke Zhuang tolerates in *Zuozhuan*. However, in the *Shiji* version Duan and Wu Jiang's plan to attack the capital is realized, whereas in *Zuozhuan* Duke Zhuang hears of the plan and takes action before it is realized. Hence, the *Shiji* version places indubitable fault with Wu Jiang and Duan, leaving no space for us to suspect Duke Zhuang's hidden motivation, as we could with the *Zuozhuan* version. As a result the *Shiji* version places the blame clearly on Duan and Wu Jiang but leaves Duke Zhuang innocent.

From the perspective of the whole narrative in the *Zuozhuan* version, Duke Zhuang's oath to Wu Jiang after the crack-down, which meant cutting the mother-son bond with Wu Jiang for life, is not just punishment for her participation in the riot, but also a formal response to Wu Jiang's life-long feeling of repugnance toward him, which

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<sup>173</sup> See Wu Kaisheng 吳闡生, *Zuozhuan wei* 左傳微 (Hefei: Huangshan Shushe, 1995), 1: 11. Zhang Taiyan has a passage that discusses the meaning of the criticism. See Zhang Taiyan, 84.

does not fit with a normal mother-son relationship. But as the story tells us, Duke Zhuang encounters an unexpected situation, that is, the change of his own emotion toward his mother.

*Zuozhuan*, Yin, 1.4: Consequently, the duke placed Lady Jiang in the walled city Ying and swore an oath: "Until we reach the Yellow Springs, we will not see each other!"<sup>174</sup> Soon he regretted this. Kaoshu of Ying was the border officer in charge of Ying Valley. When he heard of these events, he offered gifts to the duke. The duke granted him a meal, but as Kaoshu ate, he put aside the meat. The duke asked about this, and Kaoshu responded, "Your humble servant has a mother. She has always partaken of my meals, but she has never tasted my duke's stew. I request your permission to give some to her." The Duke said, "You have a mother to give things to. Alas, I alone have none!" Kaoshu of Ying said, "Dare I ask what you mean?" The Duke explained the circumstances to him and also admitted his regret. Kaoshu replied, "Why should you worry about this? If you dig into the earth as far as the springs and meet each other in the tunnel, who could say this goes against the vow?" The Duke took his advice. On entering the tunnel, the Duke recited, "Within the great tunnel, our joy flows together." On exiting the tunnel, Lady Jiang recited, "Outside the great tunnel, our joy spreads abroad." And, thereafter they were mother and son as at the beginning.

(傳隱一·四) 遂寘姜氏于城穎，而誓之曰：「不及黃泉，無相見也！」既而悔之。穎考叔為穎谷封人，聞之，有獻於公。公賜之食。食舍肉。公問之。對曰：「小人有母，皆嘗小人之食矣；未嘗君之羹，請以遺之。」公曰：「爾有母遺，繄我獨無！」穎考叔曰：「敢問何謂也？」公語之故，且告之悔。對曰：「君何患焉？若闢地及泉，隧而相見，其誰曰不然？」公從之。公入而賦：「大隧之中，其樂也融融。」姜出而賦：「大隧之外，其樂也洩洩。」遂為母子如初。(CQZZZ, 14-5)

*Shiji*, 42: Consequently, the duke placed Lady Jiang in the walled city Ying and swore an oath: "Until we reach the Yellow Springs, we will not see each other!" After more than a year, the duke regretted this and missed his mother. Kaoshu from Ying Gu offered gifts to the Duke, and the Duke granted him a meal. Kaoshu said: "I have a mother, I request your permission to give of my duke's stew to her." Duke Zhuang said, "I miss my mother a lot, but I don't like to breach my pledge. What can I do?" Kaoshu said, "If you dig into the earth as far as the springs, then you could meet each other." So he followed him and saw his mother.

於是莊公遷其母武姜於城穎，誓言曰：「不至黃泉，毋相見也。」居歲餘，已悔思母。穎谷之考叔有獻於公，公賜食。考叔曰：「臣有母，請君食賜臣母。」莊公曰：「我甚思母，惡負盟，柰何？」考叔曰：「穿地至黃泉，則相見矣。」於是遂從之，見母。(Shiji, 42.1759)

<sup>174</sup> According to early Chinese belief, "Yellow Springs" is the underworld abode of the dead.

In the second half of the story, the central issue is why Kaoshu's interpretation of the word "Yellow Spring" could be a solution to Duke Zhuang's problem. Li Wai-yee's interpretation of the oath itself makes the point that "The estrangement sealed in Duke Zhuang's vow can be undone only thorough a substitution of the literal for the metaphorical meaning of 'Yellow Spring'."<sup>175</sup> However, in her discussion, this concern with the mother-son relationship is soon replaced by her concern with Duke Zhuang's personal problem of keeping his word as a duke and withholding the unity of the polity. With reference to David Schaberg, she argues that Duke Zhuang's real dilemma, that a ruler's public utterance cannot be undone, can only be solved through sophistry. Li's discussion, though pointing out the importance of the moral rhetoric in the world of *Zuozhuan*, forgets to take into consideration that the intended recipient of Duke Zhuang's vow is not Heaven or the people in the state: it is Wu Jiang. The rhetoric in interpreting the vow is important because it concerns strategies of communication and interaction between two people in conflict. Kaoshu's solution could be a solution because it creates a context for Wu Jiang to receive Duke Zhuang's true attitude toward her (which is true in the sense of being loyal to his current feeling) and refresh her attitude toward Duke Zhuang. The tunnel provides a pass through which Wu Jiang could take Duke Zhuang's vow lightheartedly and defuse the tension it originally produces. In confirmation of its effect, *Zuozhuan* takes time to note the process of their emotional union, which is enacted through the scene that takes place in the tunnel. Duke Zhuang recites a stanza to express his happiness when he enters the tunnel; Wu Jiang pairs it up with a similar stanza as she leaves the tunnel. This strategic cooperation makes going through the tunnel a ritual for

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<sup>175</sup> Li, *The Readability of the Past in Early Chinese Historiography*, 69.

giving (re)birth to their mother-son relationship, which redeems the wrong feelings caused by the initial wrong birth. In a word, the emotional union between them is achieved through discursive interaction between them with the tunnel as a strategic new context that defuses previous tensions.

The above discussion stresses the importance of taking into account Wu Jiang's role in this story in *Zuozhuan*. It also argues that *Zuozhuan* is concerned less with the coherence of a single person's will and words than with the successful interactions among different people of different interests, whereby conversation and rhetoric, or communication and its strategies, and the agencies of different parties are the subjects of concern.

The stress on interaction in *Zuozhuan* is also demonstrated in the scene wherein Kaoshu remonstrates with Duke Zhuang. Although Kaoshu is shown to have a clear intention before he comes to see the Duke, he does not voice his advice in a straightforward manner from the beginning. Instead, he creates a situation that stimulates the Duke himself to reflect on his relationship with his mother. Kaoshu does this by displaying his own mindfulness of his mother in the banquet. Only after the Duke reveals his regret for not having a mother, does Kaoshu take the opportunity to ask why and then to offer his advice. Thus, Kaoshu's persuasion, though designed ahead of time, is reached strategically through a natural interaction between him and the Duke with respect for the Duke's agency.

In contrast, in the *Shiji* version of the second half of the story, the theme is no longer the dynamic of the mother-son relationship; instead, it is Duke Zhuang's personal dilemma in keeping his pledge. The focus of the narrative switches from the interactions

between people to Duke Zhuang's own activities. For instance, in the scene with Kaoshu, Kaoshu's agency and conscious plot disappear, and he becomes a mindless filial son who is consulted by the Duke. Although there is still a conversation, the Duke is the only character that has agency. He takes control of the direction of the conversation and the development of the event: he encounters a problem, he consults with Kaoshu, and he puts Kaoshu's advice into action. However, the string of Duke Zhuang's activities is consistently abrupt and mechanical. For example, Duke Zhuang presents his personal problem directly without reacting to Kaoshu's request about the meat. Meanwhile, both Duke Zhuang and Kaoshu's speeches convey a basic message without any indication of mood. As a result, the *Shiji* version lacks verisimilitude with its disproportionate emphasis on the Duke's activities alone.

In this exclusive focus on the duke's personal activities in *Shiji* in the reunion scene, only the Duke's personal action of "to see" (jian 見) is recorded as an event. Wu Jiang's participation and reaction is completely neglected and irrelevant to the subject. However, with such a limited representation of Wu Jiang, the message of the connection between Wu Jiang and political disaster stands out as primary. Specifically, Wu Jiang's personal image is downplayed at the beginning, the trouble she made is intensified in the middle, and her positive participation in the remedy of the relationship is abandoned at the end of the story. With all these changes in *Shiji*, the image of Wu Jiang is made uniformly negative. Her partiality is emphasized and she is portrayed as a troublemaker, thereby losing the multiple dimensions her character possesses in *Zuozhuan*.

The story of Yong Ji 雍姬, to which we now turn, tells of Yong Ji's partiality to her father over her husband, which leads to the failure of her husband's plan. This

episode from *Zuozhuan* is basically retained in “The Hereditary Household of Zheng” (*Shiji*, j.42) with slight variation.

*Zuozhuan*, Huan 15.2: Zhai Zhong was monopolizing power, and the Elder of Zheng worried about this. He sent Zhai Zhong’s son-in-law Yong Jiu to kill him. Yong was going to offer Zhai Zhong a ceremonial entertainment in the outlying district. Yong Ji, Yong Jiu’s wife, learned of the plot and said to her mother, “Whom should one hold dearer, a father or a husband?” Her mother said, “Any man can be a husband, but one has only a single father. How can they be compared?” And so she reported to Zhai Zhong, “Sir Yong did not use his house and is instead going to offer you a ceremonial entertainment in the outlying district. I am mystified by this and so report.” Zhai Zhong killed Yong Jiu and exposed his corpse near the pond of the Zhou line. The Duke of Zheng loaded the corpse into his carriage and took it out with him as he left the domain, saying, “He let his wife in on his plans, it is fitting that he died!” In the summer, Duke Li left the domain and fled to Cai.

祭仲專，鄭伯患之，使其婿雍糾殺之。將享諸郊。雍姬知之，謂其母曰：「父與夫孰親？」其母曰：「人盡夫也，父一而已，胡可比也？」遂告祭仲曰：「雍氏舍其室而將享子於郊，吾惑之，以告。」祭仲殺雍糾，尸諸周氏之汪。公載以出，曰：「謀及婦人，宜其死也。」夏，厲公出奔蔡。  
(CQZZZ, 143)

*Shiji*, 42: Fourth year of Duke Li, Zhai Zhong was monopolizing power in the state, and the Duke Li worried about this. He secretly sent Zhai Zhong’s son-in-law Yong Jiu to kill him. Yong’s wife, who was Zhai Zhong’s daughter, learned of the plot and said to her mother, “Whom should one hold dearer, a father or a husband?” Her mother said, “one has only a single father, but any man can be a husband.” The daughter then told Zhai Zhong about this (the plan), Zhai Zhong killed Yong Jiu instead and exposed his corpse in the market. The Duke Li could not do anything with Zhai Zhong. He was angry with Jiu, said, “He let his wife in on his plans, it is fitting that he died!” In the summer, Duke Li left the domain and lived in the outskirt town of Li.

厲公四年，祭仲專國政。厲公患之，陰使其婿雍糾欲殺祭仲。糾妻，祭仲女也，知之，謂其母曰：「父與夫孰親？」母曰：「父一而已，人盡夫也。」女乃告祭仲，祭仲反殺雍糾，戮之於市。厲公無柰祭仲何，怒糾曰：「謀及婦人，死固宜哉！」夏，厲公出居邊邑櫟。祭仲迎昭公忽，六月乙亥，復入鄭，即位。  
(*Shiji*, 42.1762)

In this case, against its general trend toward action and pure narrative, the *Shiji* version keeps the two sets of speeches in the *Zuozhuan* version in order to convey the negative consequences of having women with dubious status involved in politics. The first set is a conversation between Yong Ji and her mother. Yong Ji’s consultation

indicates that a difficult situation exists in which her husband's interest conflicts with her father's. In her mother's answer, a father takes priority over a husband because the latter could be replaced but the former could not. This answer, however, contrasts with the Warring-States expression that "A loyal subject will not serve two rulers and a chaste woman will not have two husbands" 忠臣不事二君，貞女不更二夫, implying that remarriage was more acceptable in the Spring and Autumn times.<sup>176</sup> This conversation rationalizes Duke Li's criticism of Yong Jiu which is also retained in *Shiji*: Duke Li deemed it fitting that Yong Jiu died for letting his wife know about his plan. This speech could be understood as a message against women's involvement in politics. This is probably why these two sets of speeches are transcribed completely in *Shiji*. However, it is worth noting that in *Zuozhuan* Duke Li's criticism is of Yong Jiu instead of his wife.

Despite the great similarity between the two versions, *Zuozhuan* displays a greater sympathy for women by relating the process of how Yong Ji maneuvers between her two commitments in her report to her father about the murder. This speech with an ambivalent message is the embodiment of her dilemma. In light of the context, it is clear that the purpose of Yong Ji's speech is to inform her father about her husband's plan of murder. But her speech in *Zuozhuan* does not directly expose the plan. Instead, she only hints at the plan by expressing her own puzzlement over her husband's strange arrangement of the banquet. In other words, the true information she wanted to convey lies beneath her words on another topic. Through this rhetorical device, Yong Ji is trying to avert her father's murder without directly betraying her husband. After all, it is Zhai

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<sup>176</sup> See *Shiji*, "Tian Shan liezhuan" 田单列傳, 82.2457.

Zhong's intelligence that enables him to discover Yong Jiu's plan with the help of Yong Ji's hint.

Such a double-layered speech creates inner depth for the character of Yong Ji by presenting her complicated mind and discursive ability. Considering its role in characterization, rhetorical speech is not a supplement that could be reduced without affecting the message of the story. In contrast, in the *Shiji* version Yong Ji's speech is abbreviated to a verb "report" (*gao* 告). A complicated rhetorical speech is reduced to a succinct, plain statement of action. The consequence is that with this change *Shiji* seems to mask the depth of the female character Ying Ji.

However, *Zuozhuan* does not limit its understanding of the involvement of women in politics to this single case. In this story, it seems the message is that a married woman creates problems by being partial to her father rather than concerned with her husband's interest or the common interest. However, another similar case in *Zuozhuan*, which is not mentioned in *Shiji*, conveys a different message about women's involvement in politics.

*Zuozhuan*, Xiang 28.9: Lupu Jiang, Qing She's daughter and Lupu Gui's wife, said to Lupu Gui, "If you are planning something and are not telling me, you will certainly not succeed." Lupu Gui told her about the plot to attack Qing She during the autumnal sacrifice. Lupu Jiang said, "My father is stubborn and contrary. If no one stops him, he will not go. I request to stop him." Lupu Gui said, "I agree." In the eleventh month, on the yihai day, the autumnal sacrifice took place at the temple of the Qi ancestor Grand Duke, and Qing She was to oversee the ceremony. Lupu Jiang told him about the plot, and moreover tried to stop him from going. He did not heed her, saying, "Who would dare?" He thus went to the temple. 盧蒲姜謂癸曰：「有事而不告我，必不捷矣。」癸告之。姜曰：「夫子復，莫之止，將不出。我請止之。」癸曰：「諾。」十一月乙亥，嘗于大公之廟，慶舍蒞事。盧蒲姜告之，且止之，弗聽，曰：「誰敢者？」遂如公。(CQZZZ, 1147)

In this story, Lupu Jiang is the daughter of Qing She, who monopolizes power in Qi. The story following this episode tells us that Lupu Gui and his allies successfully murder Qing She and his supporters at the Qi ancestral temple while Qing She is attending the ceremony. Similar to Yong Ji's case, Lupu Jiang encounters a situation in which her husband plots to murder her father. But the result of her participation in the plot is the opposite to that in *Shiji*: she assures the success of her husband's plot by goading her father. This case demonstrates again how a woman maneuvers strategically when she is caught in a dilemma between her father and her husband. Seen from the perspective of Lupu Jiang's speech quoted in the passage, her intention is to aid in her husband's plan by goading her father, and she succeeds. However, from another perspective, she also fulfills her filial duty by informing her father about the danger that awaits him. With her action, she fulfills both her duties toward her husband and her father. Similar to Yong Ji, Lupu Jiang secretly takes sides between her father and her husband without directly betraying either of them.

*Zuozhuan*'s rendition of Lupu Jiang and Yong Ji's similar strategies and different choices indicates that *Zuozhuan*'s authors are aware of the difficulty women have in frequently conflicting situations but are able to present different answers to the same issue in different contexts.<sup>177</sup> In addition to all the similarities, the biggest difference between Yong Ji and Lupu Jiang lies in the focus of their concerns. Yong Ji is concerned with personal affection as seen from her question about whether her husband or her father is closer and should be held dearer (*qin* 禮). In contrast, Lupu Jiang is very much aware of her father's problem of being stubborn and resistant to remonstration, which

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<sup>177</sup> As a comparison, Zhang Taiyan considers suicide as the appropriate recourse for a woman to take when the interests of her father and those of her husband conflict. See Zhang Taiyan, *Chunqiu Zuozhuandu*, 169.

disqualifies him from being a good leader. As such she seems to have a broader vision of the common good, which is not limited by personal affection, and participates in a conspiracy against her father. Seen from this perspective, Yong Jiu's story is about the negative consequences of women's partiality for the orthodox political order but Lupu Jiang's story is about the connection between women's partiality and the restoration of the orthodox order. Unfortunately, only Yong Ji's story is transcribed in *Shiji* while Lupu Jiang's story is not transmitted.

The following story about Wen Ying 文贏 also addresses a woman's partiality in a conflict between her natal family and her conjugal family. This story is set against the background of the war between Qin and Jin, two states in competition for the status of overlord. After Jin captured the two military commanders of Qin, Wen Ying intervenes in the situation and requests that the duke of Jin release them. This connection between Wen Ying's partiality to Qin and the release of two military commanders of Qin in *Zuozhuan* is retained in two versions of the same story in "The Hereditary Household of Jin" (*Shiji*, j.39) and "The Basic Annals of Qin" (*Shiji*, j.5) in *Shiji*. However, Wen Ying's speech varies in all three versions. Whereas Wen Ying's speech in the *Zuozhuan* version demonstrates a woman's maneuverability between her natal state and marital state, the *Shiji* versions no longer feature Wen Ying's standpoint but turn to serve the characterizations of the two dukes under consideration.

*Zuozhuan*, Xi 33.3: Wen Ying requested that the three commanders be repatriated: "Those very men did slanderously provoke the rulers of our two domains. If my unworthy ruler were to get them and eat them, he would still not be satisfied. Why should you, my Duke, condescend to punish them? How would it be if you sent them back to be executed in Qin in order to satisfy my unworthy ruler's desires?" The Duke agreed to this. When Xian Zhen went to court and asked about the Qin prisoners, the Duke said, "My mother pled for them, so I have released them." Xian Zhen was furious and said, "They were captured on the battlefield through

the strength of warriors and were released in the domain city through the wiles of a woman! You give up the fruits of battle and encourage marauding enemies. The day of our destruction draws near!” Then without turning aside he spat upon the ground.

文嬴請三帥，曰：「彼實構吾二君，寡君若得而食之，不厭，君何辱討焉？使歸就戮于秦，以逞寡君之志，若何？」公許之。先軫朝，問秦囚。公曰：「夫人請之，吾舍之矣。」先軫怒曰：「武夫力而拘諸原，婦人暫而免諸國，墮軍實而長寇讎，亡無日矣！」不顧而唾。(CQZZZ, 498)

*Shiji*, 39: Duke Wen's principal wife, the daughter of the Duke of Jin, said to Duke Xiang, “Qin intends to obtain their three commanders to expose their corpses.” The Duke consented, and sent them back. Having heard of this, Xian Zhen said to Duke Xiang, “Our distress will be born of this.” (Nienhauser, V.1: 345)

文公夫人秦女，謂襄公曰：“秦欲得其三將戮之。”公許，遣之。先軫聞之，謂襄公曰：“患生矣。(Shiji, 39: 1670)

*Shiji*, 5: Duke Wen's wife was from Qin. She pleaded for the three imprisoned generals, “Duke Mu's resentment of these three men has entered into the marrow of his bones. I hope you will let these three go home, so that our Duke may have the satisfaction of being able to boil them alive.” The Duke of Jin consented to it and sent the three generals back to Qin. (Nienhauser, I: 100)

文公夫人，秦女也，為秦三囚將請曰：“繆公之怨此三人入於骨髓，願令此三人歸，令我君得自快烹之。”晉君許之，歸秦三將。(Shiji, 5.192)

Wen Ying's speech in the *Zuozhuan* version reveals her personal interest and partiality in a disagreement between Qin and Jin. In her speech with Duke Xiang of Jin, she considers the matter from the perspective of the common interest of these two states, which is also the perspective that represents her personal interest. As the embodiment of the alliance between Jin and Qin through marriage, Wen Ying's personal role is supposed to be representing and maintaining the peace and promoting a cooperative relationship between these two states. However, her role runs counter to the purpose of this war, which is a battle for supremacy between Jin and Qin. The problem for Duke Xiang is that he is so taken in by Wen Ying's perspective that he does not realize that his own standpoint may conflict with hers. Duke Xiang is taken in by Wen Ying not just because of his immaturity as a ruler, but also because Wen Ying is capable of making a

convincing request through the use of hyperbole and irony. Wen Ying asks for the commanders to be executed in their native states, but her real intention, or at least the result of this request, is to free them from detention in Jin. She also exaggerates Duke Mu's eagerness to execute them by comparing it to a desire that could not be satisfied even by eating them. Beneath the rhetoric of common interest, Wen Ying, in this case, represents in her marital state the interest of her natal state. Her identity with her natal state Qin can be seen, especially in her speech with the ruler of her marital state, from the fact that she addresses the Duke of Qin as "my unworthy lord" (*guajun* 寡君), which is conventionally used to address the duke of one's own state.

Although Wen Ying's role in releasing the two Qin commanders is kept in *Shiji*, both *Shiji* versions are abbreviations of the *Zuo zhuan* versions in which Wen Ying no longer speaks from her own standpoint. Her speech reveals Duke Mu's will or wish rather than her idea or opinion. In this way, the *Shiji* versions cover Wen Ying's personal point of view and make her simply a venue for Duke Mu's wishes. Moreover, *Shiji* adjusts Wen Ying's identity according to the chapter where this story appears. In "The Hereditary Household of Jin" (*Shiji*, j.39), Wen Ying addresses Duke Mu of Qin with an objective third-person reference, "Qin," so as to cover Wen Ying's identity with Qin. However, the version in "The Basic Annals of Qin" reserves the first-person address of the duke of Qin as "my lord" to manifest Wen Ying's identity with Qin. This adjustment of Wen Ying's identity is based on the *Shiji*'s tendency in these two versions to honor the dukes of these two states, both incidentally places where the ancestors of the Sima family

had served. Sima Qian's partiality toward these two states is indirectly legitimatized in the *Shiji* “Li shu” chapter as one of the three basic aspects of ritual propriety.<sup>178</sup>

This pursuit of honoring the dukes is reflected in *Shiji*'s contrasting adaptations of rhetoric from *Zuozhuan* in its two versions. In the first *Shiji* version from “The Hereditary Household of Jin,” Wen Ying’s request becomes a succinct direct delivery of Duke Mu’s request without any bewildering rhetorical tropes. Together with this change, Xian Zhen’s harsh criticism of Duke Xiang is also rewritten into a plain statement of the consequence of his decision. With these changes, Sima Qian reduces to a minimum any flaws in Duke Xiang’s leadership for allowing Wen Ying to mislead him, and he also avoids the scene wherein a minister directly criticizes the duke. In this way, Duke Xiang’s authority is better honored in “The Hereditary Household of Jin.” In contrast to this strategy of abbreviating the rhetorical layer, in “The Basic Annals of Qin,” Wen Ying’s metaphorical expression in *Zuozhuan* of “eating them” for Duke Mu’s supposed desire to punish the three dukes is retained and even intensified to a harsher corporal punishment, “boiling alive.” This intensifies the dramatic effect of the contrast between Duke Mu’s claim and his actual treatment of the commanders. Duke Mu does not boil them alive. Instead, he pardons them, and they recover their posts. This ploy works to characterize Duke Mu as a good leader whose wise decision will transform their shame from this failure into future military victories.

In the next case, concerning Lady Xiang of Song, *Shiji* retains from *Zuozhuan* the connection between Lady Xiang’s favoritism of Gongzi Bao and the regicide of Duke

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<sup>178</sup> Li Shu (“Book of Rituals”) in *Shiji* suggests that “Ritual Propriety is to serve Heaven up above, to serve the earth down below, and honor one’s ancestors, ruler and teacher” 禮，上事天，下事地，尊先祖而隆君師，是禮之三本也. *Shiji*, 23:1167. The close relationships of the Sima family with Qin and Jin are recorded in “Taishigong zixu” 太史公自序, in *Hanshu*, 62.2714.

Zhao of Song but leaves out other positive representations of her.<sup>179</sup> *Zuozhuan* depicts Lady Xiang as the authority in the state and the upholder of justice and her partiality for Gongzi Bao is represented positively. In contrast, *Shiji* reduces the representation of her authority and only emphasizes the perspective of the connection of her political activities with her favoritism of Gongzi Bao. The morality of her behaviors is controversial. Although both *Zuozhuan* and *Shiji* justify the killing of Duke Zhao for his lack of discipline, which seems to place Lady Xiang in a righteous position, this does not change the fact that Lady Xiang has committed regicide and she is considered negative by commentators from late imperial China.<sup>180</sup>

*Zuozhuan*, Wen 8.6: The wife of Duke Xiang of Song was the elder sister of King Xiang. Duke Zhao of Song did not treat her with the appropriate ritual. Acting in collusion with clansmen of the Dai lines, she brought about the murder of Duke Xiang's grandson, Kongshu, Gongsun Zhongli, and the marshal Gongzi Mao, all of whom belonged to Duke Zhao's faction.

宋襄夫人，襄王之姊也，昭公不禮焉。夫人因戴氏之族，以殺襄公之孫孔叔、公孫鍾離及大司馬公子卬，皆昭公之黨也。(CQZZZ, 567)

*Zuozhuan*, Wen 16.5: Gongzi Bao of Song showed the appropriate ritual in his dealings with the people of the capital city ... Gongzi Bao was handsome and radiant, and the lady of the former Duke Xiang wanted a sexual liaison with him... But he refused. So she then assisted him in his acts of generosity in the capital. Duke Zhao was unprincipled, and the people of the capital city supported Gongzi Bao by relying on the lady ... Afterwards, the lady was going to have the duke go hunting at Mengzhu and then have him killed. The Duke learned of this and left with all the domain's treasures. Dang Yizhu said, "Why not go over to

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<sup>179</sup> Ma Su 馬驥's (1621-1673) *Zuozhan shiwei* 左傳事緯 has a complete record of all the episodes that are related to the regicide of Duke Zhao of Song in *Zuozhuan*. See Ma Su, *Zuozhan Shiwei* (Jinan: Qilu Shushe, 1992), 125-130.

<sup>180</sup> Ma Su criticizes the fact that Gongzi Wen (Gongzi Bao), who was a successor and a brother of Duke Zhao, does not punish Lady Xiang and others for their regicide of Duke Zhao, which is a transgression itself indeed, and considers him not virtuous as is claimed in *Zuozhuan*. See Ma Su, *Zuozhuan Shiwei*, 129-30. Gao Shiqi 高士奇 (1645-1740) compares Lady Xiang with Mu Jiang of Lu who is apparently more negative: "She (Lady Xiang) is among the kind of Mu Jiang of Lu: Mu Jiang is unfortunate to have Qiaoru be on exile, Lady Xiang is fortunate to have Bao of Song established. But their wrongdoing is the same." 殆亦魯穆姜之類耳。穆姜不幸而出僑如，襄夫人幸而立宋鮑，其為惡一也。See Gao Shiqi, *Zuozhuan jishi benmo* 左傳紀事本末 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1979), 1: 535.

one of the princes?” The Duke said, “Since I failed to gain the confidence of the high officers and even of my lordly grandmother and the people of the domain city, who among the princes would accept me? Moreover, having been a ruler of men, I would rather die than go on to be another’s servant.” He gave all his treasures to his retinue and sent them on their way.

宋公子鮑禮於國人…公子鮑美而豔，襄夫人欲通之，而不可，乃助之施。昭公無道，國人奉公子鮑以因夫人。…既，夫人將使公田孟諸而殺之。公知之，盡以寶行。蕩意諸曰：「盍適諸侯？」公曰：「不能其大夫至于君祖母以及國人，諸侯誰納我？且既為人君，而又為人臣，不如死。」盡以其寶賜左右而使行。(CQZZZ, 620)

*Shiji*, 38: In the ninth year, Duke Zhao was not principled and the people in the capital city did not support him. Bao Ge, Duke Zhao’s younger brother, was worthy and humbled himself to the knights. Formerly, Duke Xiang’s lady intended to have sexual liaisons with Gongzi Bao. But he refused. So she then assisted him in his acts of generosity in the capital. When Duke Zhao went hunting, the lady, Wang Ji, sent Wei Bo to attack and kill Duke Zhao, Chujiu. His younger brother, Bao Ge, was invested. This was Duke Wen. (Nienhauser, V.1: 285)

九年，昭公無道，國人不附。昭公弟鮑革賢而下士。先，襄公夫人欲通於公子鮑，不可，乃助之施於國，因大夫華元為右師。昭公出獵，夫人王姬使衛伯攻殺昭公杵臼。弟鮑革立，是為文公。(Shiji, 38.1628)

*Zuozhuan* includes some episodes that feature Lady Xiang’s authority in the state that do not appear in *Shiji*. In the entry Wen 8.6, which is not included in *Shiji*, she is shown to be able to mobilize a branch of the ruling family to weaken Duke Zhao’s power. Lady Xiang’s activities against Duke Zhuang are also legitimatized in this entry as punishment upon Duke Zhao for his ritual inappropriateness in dealing with her. The entry Wen 16.5 shows that the public supported Lady Xiang’s power and her political activities: “Duke Zhao was unprincipled, and the people of the capital city supported Gongzi Bao by relying on the lady.”<sup>181</sup> In particular, this *Shiji* version retains the basic

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<sup>181</sup> The translation of the sentence is elusive because of different understandings of the word “yin”因 which is translated to “rely on” here. Gu Jiegang takes this word to mean “marry” and renders the sentence to mean that “people supported Gongzi Bao to marry Lady Xiang.” His explanation takes the relationship between Duke Zhao and Lady Xiang as another example of accepted unconventional marriage that is similar to marriage forms of “zheng” and “bao.” (See Gu Jiegang, a. 11). Chen Xiaofang 陳筱芳 disputes Gu Jiegang’s interpretation of this word and proposes to translate it as “rely on.” I accept Chen’s interpretation here and take it as simply to mean “to rely on.” See Chen Xiaofang, “Zheng Bao Yin; Fei

information about Duke Zhao's lack of support by the people but omits Lady Xiang's important role in guiding people to honor Gongzi Bao. With this background detail, *Zuozhuan* indicates that Lady Xiang's passion and partiality for Gongzi Bao is a welcome thing in the state and this passion is only one of multiple reasons that she deposes Duke Zhao, whereas *Shiji* omits the perspective of Lady Xiang's support by multiple ministers and the public and simply retains the detail about her passion for Gongzi Bao and the relationship between this emotion and her political activities. As a result, *Shiji* renders Lady Xiang simply as a biased woman who is driven by her passion to murder the duke. The connection between her partiality and the political disaster thus becomes the foregrounded theme in the *Shiji* version.

Lady Xiang's power in *Zuozhuan* is particularly revealed through the character Duke Zhao himself in his admission of her authority. When Lady Xiang plans to kill Duke Zhao during his hunt, the action is depicted as a prearranged plan that is expected and accepted without resistance by Duke Zhao. The *Zuozhuan* also attributes a self-critical speech to Duke Zhao in which he reflects on his own faults including his inability to maintain a good relationship with Lady Xiang. These details make Lady Xiang's killing of Duke Zhao legitimate and done with the will of the public. In contrast, *Shiji*'s summary of the killing omits these details about Duke Zhao's foreknowledge of this plan and his self-criticism. Thereby it changes Lady Xiang's killing of Duke Zhao from an admitted plan to a secret murder, which intensifies the *yin* feature of Lady Xiang's activities. On the other hand, the omission of the self-critic passage in *Shiji* makes Duke Zhao's moral defect completely accountable for his dethronement but that is not the case

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Chunqiu Shiqi Gongren de Hunzhi" 烹報因: 非春秋時期公認的婚制, in *Xinan minzu xueyuan xuebao* 西南民族學院學報, 19.4 (1998): 129-136.

in *Zuozhuan*. In *Zuozhuan*, Duke Zhao's ritually appropriate behaviors and speech in this passage renders Duke Zhao not as unprincipled as is claimed previously. The Qing scholar Wu Kaisheng even argues that the *Zuozhuan* authors imply that Duke Zhao's moral defect was not enough for him to be dethroned and he was indeed framed by Lady Xiang and Gongzi Bao.<sup>182</sup> In this perspective, the will of Lady Xiang and Gongzi Wen, rather than Duke Zhao's moral defect, decisively causes Duke Zhao's tragic fate. In other words, Lady Xiang's hegemony, instead of the legitimacy of her action, is the deciding factor in this event in *Zuozhuan*. In contrast, in *Shiji*, Duke Zhao's positive dimension does not exist and his dethronement is simply founded on his moral defect. In this version, Lady Xiang ends up being in a righteous position while she is indeed driven by her personal passion.

The story of Mu Ying is another case in the theme of the connection between woman's partiality and political disaster. Mu Ying ruins the Jin ministers' plan of removing her son's heirship to the throne and seals his enthronement with her strategies. The *Zuozhuan* has two episodes related to this story, Wen 6.5 and Wen 7.4. The entry Wen 6.5 relates the discussion among the ministers of Jin, with Zhao Dun as their head, about selecting a new duke from among the brothers of the recently deceased Duke Xiang to replace the young heir apparent Yi Gao. Wen 7.4 relates that Mu Ying, Yi Gang's mother, intervenes in this selection of a new ruler by continuously weeping and questioning their decision to remove her son. The *Shiji* version of the story in "The Hereditary Household of Jin" (*Shiji*, j.39) is basically a combination of these two entries

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<sup>182</sup> Wu, *Zuozhuanwei*, 265.

from *Zuozhuan* with a slight abbreviation (*Shiji*, 39.1671). The close similarity in wording indicates a direct relation between these two versions.

The choice of material in the *Shiji* version illustrates its orientation in messages about women and partiality. The first thing to notice is that the episode about Mu Ying's weeping and questioning the ministers' decision is honestly retained in *Shiji*.

*Zuozhuan*, Wen 7.4: ...Mu Ying each day carried the heir apparent and cried out in the Jin court, "What was the crime of our former ruler? And what is the crime of his successor? If you reject the rightful successor and do not instate him, but instead seek a ruler abroad, then where will you place this one?" She left the court and carried him to the Zhao house. Bowing before Zhao Dun until her head knocked against the ground, she said, "When the former ruler took this son in his hands and entrusted him to you, he said, 'If this son becomes capable, I will bestow gifts upon you; if he does not become capable, I will have nothing but resentment for you!' Although the ruler has now expired, his words still sound in our ears. What would you be doing if you should then reject them?" Zhao Dun and the high officers all worried about Mu Ying and also feared the threat. So they turned against Xian Mie and instated Duke Ling, and with that went forth to engage the Qin army.

穆嬴日抱太子以啼于朝，曰：「先君何罪？其嗣亦何罪？舍適嗣不立而外求君，將焉寘此？」出朝，則抱以適趙氏，頓首於宣子曰：「先君奉此子也而屬諸子曰：『此子也才，吾受子之賜；不才，吾唯子之怨。』今君雖終，言猶在耳，而棄之，若何？」宣子與諸大夫皆患穆嬴，且畏逼，乃背先蔑而立靈公，以禦秦師。(CQZZZ, 558)

The *Shiji* version of this episode in "The Hereditary Household of Jin" (*Shiji*, j. 39) is exactly the same as the one from *Zuozhuan* except for the word "bi" 儯 (threat) which is "zhu" 誅 (execution) in *Shiji*.<sup>183</sup> This passage is retained probably because it teaches a good lesson on the negative consequences of women's intervention in politics--that is, when she intervenes in politics, a woman acts out of her self-interest rather than concern for the common interest of the state. Subsequent history will prove that the establishment

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<sup>183</sup> In Yang Bojun's note to the word "bi," he mentioned an explanation: "fearing that other noble sons' all would threaten (them)." See CQZZZ, 559. The translation by Durrant, Li and Schaberg renders it to "encroachment on their influence."

of Mu Ying's son Yi Gao will be a disaster for Jin. Meanwhile, the image of Mu Ying as a continuously weeping and petitioning woman fits the understanding of the *yin*/woman in Dong Zhongshu's symbolic system. Weeping and tears represent the humid nature of *yin* and petitioning suggests a secondary and subordinate position of women in the relationship with men.

Other incidents related to women in this story occur in the entry Wen 6.5. The discussion of selecting a new duke involves a comparison of the mothers of the candidates. The *Shiji* version of the discussion is a copy of the *Zuozhuan* version except that the episode about Du Qi is omitted. The omission is only problematic if it is considered alongside the information about women which has been retained in the *Shiji* version. While the episode about Du Qi's virtuous behavior in support of her son Gongzi Yong's qualifications is omitted in *Shiji*, the episode about the ineligibility of Gongzi Yue on account of his mother Chen Ying's so-called lasciviousness is retained. The contrasting treatment of the same type of material about the correlation between mothers' behaviors and the qualification of the sons for the throne encourages speculation about their difference in specific messages. The following *Zuozhuan* excerpt includes these two episodes with the omitted part in *Shiji* marked with square brackets.<sup>184</sup>

*Zuozhuan*, Wen 6.5: ...Jia Ji said, “It would be better to instate Gongzi Yue. Chen Ying was the favorite of two rulers. If we instate her son, the people will surely make him secure.” Zhao Dun said, “Chen Ying is of low rank. She was the ninth woman in order. What sway could her son have? Moreover, to be the favorite of two rulers is to be lascivious. As the son of the former ruler, to be unable to seek out a great domain but to depart and dwell in a small domain is contemptible. Since the mother is lascivious and the son is contemptible, he will have no authority. And since the domain of Chen is small and distant, he will

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<sup>184</sup> See the *Shiji* version of the passage in *Shiji*, “Jin Shijia”, 39.1671.

receive no assistance from them. How will we find security in this? [Du Qi, on account of the ruler, deferred to Biji and honored her as superior.<sup>185</sup> And on account of the Di, she deferred to Ji Wei, and she herself became secondary to her.<sup>186</sup> So she became the fourth in order. The former ruler because of all this cherished their son and sent him as an official to Qin, where he became assistant minister. Qin, being large and close at hand, will suffice to provide him with assistance. As the mother was dutiful and the son cherished, this will suffice to give them authority over the people. Would it not be right to instate him?]” They had Xian Mie and Shi Hui go to Qin to meet Gongzi Yong...

賈季曰：「不如立公子樂。辰嬴嬖於二君，立其子，民必安之。」趙孟曰：  
「辰嬴賤，班在九人，其子何震之有？且為二君嬖，淫也。為先君子，不能求大，而出在小國，辟也。母淫子辟，無威；陳小而遠，無援，將何安焉？[杜祁以君故，讓偃姞而上之；以狄故，讓季隗而已次之，故班在四。先君是以愛其子，而仕諸秦，為亞卿焉。秦大而近，足以為援；母義子愛，足以威民。立之，不亦可乎？]」使先蔑、士會如秦逆公子雍。(CQZZZ, 551)

Chen Ying, who appears in the passage above, was at first the wife of Duke Huai of Jin and subsequently became a concubine of Duke Wen. Stories about her appear in the entries Xi 22.5 and Xi 23.6 in *Zuozhuan*. If considered in terms of the relevance of the material to the events that follow, the episode about Du Qi should be preferred over the episode about Chen Ying precisely because Du Qi’s son Gongzi Yong is the primary chosen candidate. Apparently, this is not the concern in *Shiji*. In terms of their content, both episodes are related to the topic of partiality but they offer different messages. The episode about Du Qi informs the reader that Du Qi’s virtuous behavior in conceding formal status to other consorts of Duke Wen leads to Duke Wen’s partiality for her son. This correlation of Duke Wen’s partiality for Du Qi and her virtuous behavior is perhaps not presented in *Shiji* because it runs counter to *Shiji*’s emphasis on the connection between a ruler’s partiality and negative women, a theme to which we will return in the

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<sup>185</sup> Du Qi is the mother of Gongzi Yong and Bi Ji is the mother of Duke Xiang.

<sup>186</sup> Wei She was a wife that Duke Wen had married when he lived among the Di people.

third part of this chapter. In the episode about Chen Ying, Zhao Dun disputes Jia Ji's interpretation of Chen Ying's partiality by two dukes as an advantage. Instead, he redefines it as an indication of her lasciviousness or moral decadence, and hence a disadvantage. Apparently, with its incorporation of this episode, this definition of remarriage as lasciviousness is the *Zuozhuan* message *Shiji* prefers to emphasize. This example also suggests that partiality in *Zuozhuan*, which is described with words “bi”嬖 and “ai”愛, could be associated with positive things, such as virtue and advantage, as is shown in this case. But for *Shiji*, the accepted associations of partiality are pretty much narrowed down to its negative aspects. By including the story of Chen Ying and omitting the story of Du Ji, *Shiji* emphasizes the message that a son by a favored, lascivious woman is ineligible to be ruler.

To summarize the discussion in this section, five stories about women from *Zuozhuan* are represented in *Shiji* in a way that emphasizes a connection between women's partiality and political disaster. One can perceive the partiality in the behavior of these women only when one presupposes an appropriate standpoint for them. Such a standpoint must be conceived from the perspective of a patrilineal and patriarchal order. In such an order, a woman's identity is all about identifying herself with a man; her self-interest and personal affection, which many of us today would see as a source of identity, are the source of partiality in the cases we have explored. However, even in this order, a woman's appropriate identity is wavering between two different patrilines, between her father's line and her husband's line. What needs to be noted is that even *Shiji* considers that a married woman could choose to identify either with her natal family or her marital family, as is reflected in the opposite treatment of Wen Ying's identity in its two versions

of her story. This contrasts strikingly with the priority of the conjugal family in the conception of women's identity in latter dynasties, as represented, for example, by *The Book of Filial Piety for Women* (*Nü Xiaojing* 女孝經). This Tang text defines women's filial piety, which is presupposed as a devotion to one's parent in its literal sense, as a devotion to her husband and her parents-in-law.

Besides the issue of partiality and identity, I have also considered the implications of the differences in style of *Zuozhuan* and *Shiji*. In the *Shiji* versions of the stories, not only do representations of women occur less often, but speeches in general tend to be much shorter; pure narrative outweighs speeches. This style of writing is related to the purpose of the sections of "Hereditary Households" and "Basic Annals" in *Shiji*, which serve largely to delineate the history of ruling lineages. However, the problem is that these "hereditary household" and "basic Annals" are not pure narratives exclusively about kings and dukes. They do contain speeches, some of these from or about women. In the process of presenting such speeches, they retain and expand some but reduce others. The story of Mu Ying is the good example of this selective attitude. Furthermore, though the historicity of *Zuozhuan* speeches has been questioned, this discussion has shown *Shiji*'s pure narrative is no less arbitrary and unhistorical by singling out the activities of rulers and dismissing the participation of women (and other characters) in the events. This point is especially illustrated in Wu Jiang's story where a mechanical passage of Duke Zhuang's activities displaces the dynamic interactions among Duke Zhuang, Wu Jiang and other characters as the content of the historical narrative. By adopting a selective attitude toward rhetorical speeches and material about women, *Shiji* simply represents women as partial human beings who tend to cause disasters. Such an

approach to women, again, follows Dong Zhongshu's conception of women in his *yin-yang* symbolic system where women are inherently associated with negative affection and behavior.

### *Rulers' favoritism of women and succession upheavals*

This section examines *Shiji*'s adaptation from *Zuozhuan* of the theme of a duke's favoritism of a concubine leading to a succession upheaval. This topic involves eight stories about women from the Spring and Autumn period. These concern the following women: Zhongzi 仲子 and Rong Zi 戎子 in Qi, Ai Jiang 哀姜, Jing Ying 敬嬴, Ziban's 子般 mother Meng Ren 孟任 in Lu, Li Ji 驪姬 in Jin, Yi Jiang 夷姜, Xuan Jiang 宣姜 and Nan Zi 南子 in Wei, the heir apparent Jian's mother 太子建母 and a duke's daughter Jiang Mi 江芈 in Chu. The general scenario in stories that possess this theme is that the duke favors a son of a favorite concubine over his legitimate heir and thereby replaces his successor, a change that usually brings chaos. *Zuozhuan* makes a connection between a duke's favoritism and a succession upheaval in some of its narratives. However, overall in *Zuozhuan*, the connection between favoritism and succession is neutral. *Zuozhuan* relates such an objective narrative as "Shusun Qiaoru married his daughter to Duke Ling; she was favored and gave birth to Duke Jing" 叔孫還納其女於靈公，嬖，生景公, wherein "being in favor" (bi 媚) is simply an euphemism for the fact that the duke has sexual intercourse with her, which leads to the birth of a future duke (*Zuozhuan*, Xiang 25.2). A mother's favoritism could also be a source of power for an heir to ensure his succession. For example, *Zuozhuan* at one point attributes a new duke's failure to preserve his rule to the fact that his mother was not favored and thus he lacks the

reverence of the state.<sup>187</sup> In *Shiji* stories of this type are rewritten to produce a binary of legitimacy versus favoritism, which is then equal to good versus bad. It also characterizes favored women and their sons primarily with negative features, which correspond to Dong Zhongshu's definition of *yin* in his *yin-yang* symbolism. *Shiji*'s adaptations send a clear message about women's essential connection with disaster, change, and disorder, which resonates with *Chunqiu Fanlu*.

The story of Li Ji, the story of Meng Ren and her son Ziban, and the story about Yi Jiang are the three cases in which *Zuozhuan* and *Shiji* vary the most in narrative details. The first two also demonstrate *Shiji*'s way of establishing a connection between favored parties' essentially negative features and succession upheavals.

Li Ji, who was a favored concubine of Duke Xian of Jin 晉獻公, wanted to replace the current heir apparent Shen Sheng with her own son, and she designed a plot to criminalize him. Here are the *Zuozhuan* and *Shiji* versions for this process:

*Zuozhuan*, Xi 4.6: By the time Xiqi was about to be established as heir, Li Ji had already conspired with the high officers of the mid-rank, and she said to the heir apparent, "Our lord has dreamed of Qi Jiang. You must quickly offer a sacrifice to her." The heir apparent offered a sacrifice at Quwo and sent the sacrificial meat and wine back to the duke. The duke was hunting, so Li Ji kept the offerings in the palace for six days. When the duke arrived, she poisoned it and presented it to him. The duke offered some of it to the ground and the earth boiled up. So he gave some of it to a dog, and the dog died. Then he gave some to a petty official, and the official also died. Weeping, Li Ji said, "This assault comes from the heir apparent!" The heir apparent fled to Xincheng, and the duke killed the heir apparent's tutor, Du Yuankuan.

(傳僖四·六) 及將立奚齊，既與中大夫成謀，姬謂太子曰：「君夢齊姜，必速祭之！」太子祭于曲沃，歸胙于公。公至，毒而獻之。公祭之地，地墳。與犬，犬斃。與小臣，小臣亦斃。姬泣曰：「賊由太子。」太子奔新城。公殺其傅杜原款。(CQZZZ, 296)

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<sup>187</sup> *Zuozhuan*, Wen 14.3. Zishu Ji was the consort of Lord Zhao of Qi and gave birth to She. Zishu Ji did not garner favor, and she inspired no awe 子叔姬妃齊昭公，生舍。叔姬無寵，舍無威。

*Shiji*, 39: In the twenty-first year, Li Ji said to the heir apparent, “The duke met Qi Jiang in his dream. The heir should offer a sacrifice in Quwo quickly and then return those sacrificial offerings to the duke.” The heir at this offered a sacrifice to his mother, Qi Jiang, at Quwo, and then presented the sacrificial meat to Duke Xian. At the time Duke Xian had gone hunting, and the meat was left in the palace. Li Ji charged somebody to put a poisonous drug into the meat. After two days, Duke Xian came back from hunting, the chef presented the meat to Duke Xian, and Duke Xian was about to eat it. Li Ji from his side stopped him and said, “The place where the meat came from is far away. It would be appropriate to test it.” They offered it as a sacrifice to the earth, and the earth swelled up. They gave it to a dog, and the dog died. They gave it to a petty subject, and the petty subject died. Li Ji wept and said, “How hard-hearted the heir is! His own father and he intends to murder and replace him. How much worse must be his intentions towards others? In addition, My Lord has grown old and a person for whom only a short time from dawn to dusk is left. Still he can not wait and intends to murder you!” She spoke to Duke Xian, “The reason why the heir did this is no more than Xi Qi and I. I hope that we, mother and son, can escape to another state, or soon commit suicide. Do not let us, mother and son, in vain be made into chopped fish or meat by the heir. In the beginning when my lord intended to remove him, I still opposed it. But now, I should indeed fault myself in this opposition.” When the heir heard of it, he fled to Xincheng. Duke Xian was angry, and thus executed his mentor, Du Yuankuan (Nienhauser, V.1: 310, modified).

二十一年，驪姬謂太子曰：“君夢見齊姜，太子速祭曲沃，歸釐於君。”太子於是祭其母齊姜於曲沃，上其薦胙於獻公。獻公時出獵，置胙於宮中。驪姬使人置毒藥胙中。居二日，獻公從獵來還，宰人上胙獻公，獻公欲饗之。驪姬從旁止之，曰：“胙所從來遠，宜試之。”祭地，地墳；與犬，犬死；與小臣，小臣死。驪姬泣曰：“太子何忍也！其父而欲弑代之，況他人乎？且君老矣，旦暮之人，曾不能待而欲弑之！”謂獻公曰：“太子所以然者，不過以妾及奚齊之故。妾願子母辟之他國，若早自殺，毋徒使母子為太子所魚肉也。始君欲廢之，妾猶恨之；至於今，妾殊自失於此。”太子聞之，奔新城。獻公怒，乃誅其傅杜原款。*(Shiji, 39.1645)*

In the *Zuozhuan* passage, Li Ji is already presented as a bad woman who framed the heir apparent, Shen Sheng. In the *Shiji* passage, the portrayal of the same facts in *Zuozhuan* is reconstructed in *yin* terms and Li Ji’s case is made to be an extreme exemplar of the destructive power of the *yin*. In addition to the *Zuozhuan* version of the story which I compare with the *Shiji* version here, the *Guoyu* version of the story is also a possible source for Sima Qian to draw upon for his version of the story about Li Ji. However, the *Guoyu* version is quite different from the *Shiji* version in both plot and

speeches and there is little evidence that *Shiji* has drawn from the *Guoyu* version for its different renditions of Li Ji compared to the *Zuozhuan* version.<sup>188</sup> It is also possible that Sima Qian has drawn from *Guliangzhuan* which also has an extended account of the story.<sup>189</sup> Again, the basic plots and most details of the story in the *Guliangzhuan* version are quite different from the *Shiji* version. Compared to *Guliangzhuan* or *Guoyu*, *Shiji* seems to share more correspondence in basic plots with *Zuozhuan* although the details in them vary.

The *Shiji* passage expands all three steps in Li Ji's plot, the poisoning, the testing and the accusing, and makes them more insinuating and secretive than in *Zuozhuan*. In *Zuozhuan*, it is Li Ji herself who poisons the sacrificial meat and presents it to the duke. In contrast, in *Shiji* Li Ji does not poison the meat directly but instead orders servants to do this and then presents the poisoned meat to the duke while she is attending him. This makes her have only an indirect connection with the poisoning process. These two versions could be separated together from the *Guoyu* version where Li Ji poisons the meat and Shen Sheng presents it.<sup>190</sup> With regard to the testing of the meat, in the *Zuozhuan* passage, it is the duke himself who discovers the problem of the meat in the process of offering the sacrifice as part of the ritual. In contrast, in the *Shiji* passage, the duke becomes the mindless victim, whom Li Ji persuades to test the meat, but the persuasion becomes redundant and illogical since it is also shown to be a necessary step in the sacrificial ritual. *Shiji* might have drawn from *Guliangzhuan* where a similar

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<sup>188</sup> See *Guoyu* 國語 (Shanghai: Shanghai Guji Chubanshe, 1978), “jinyu” 2, 289.

<sup>189</sup> See *Chunqiu Guliangzhuan zhushu*, *Shisanjing zhushu* 22, 148.

<sup>190</sup> See *Guoyu*, 292.

episode about Li Ji's persuasion of Duke Xian to test the meat occurred.<sup>191</sup> *Shiji*'s rendition of these two steps together emphasizes the secrecy and indirectness of Li Ji's behavior and her duplicity in her dealings with the duke. The *Guoyu* version is again shown to be irrelevant with the *Shiji* version in that Li Ji is presented as the person who tests the meat on the dogs and petty attendants.<sup>192</sup>

*Shiji*'s modification of Li Ji's speech is radical and has an effect similar to the modification of her activities. Her four-word speech in *Zuozhuan* is expanded into a speech of more than a hundred words. In the *Zuozhuan* speech, Li Ji simply directs her accusation to the heir apparent Shen Sheng. In the *Shiji* speech, instead, she impugns Shen Sheng's motivation and then expands the accusation by speculation and imagination. More importantly, Li Ji continues her play of duplicity in the speech. She pretends to be willing to be sacrificed and commit suicide but such a submissive and suicidal pose is a cover for her real intention of incriminating the heir. She also pretends to have newly realized her earlier mistake of opposing the removal of Shen Sheng while she actually is eager to remove him. Although the *Guoyu* version is full of long speeches, there is little evidence that the *Shiji* speech has drawn from any of the speeches in the *Guoyu* version. In *Guoyu* Li Ji speaks directly to Shen Sheng and accuses him of being cruel to his father in order to win the favor of the people. This accusation is completely different from that in *Shiji*.<sup>193</sup>

The secrecy, the indirectness, and the duplicity of Li Ji's way of framing Shen

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<sup>191</sup> See *Chunqiu Guliang Zhuan Zhushu*, 145.

<sup>192</sup> *Guoyu*, 292.

<sup>193</sup> *Guoyu*, 292.

Sheng in the *Shiji* version stand against the simplicity and directness of the *Zuozhuan* passage. The rationalization that it is simply for the purpose of clarifying the terse language in *Zuozhuan* is not sufficient if we look at the redundancy of Li Ji's advice on testing the meat in the *Shiji* passage. It is possible that *Shiji* has drawn from other earlier texts for its differences from the *Zuozhuan* version; nevertheless, it is clear that *Guoyu* is not the source of those differences. The new features developed in *Shiji*'s portrayal of Li Ji's behaviors, such as secrecy, indirectness and duplicity, are *yin* traits. They illustrate the definition of *yin* as darkness, reversal, submissiveness, and inconstancy which contrasts with *yang* as brightness, smoothness, initiative and constancy in *Chunqiu Fanlu*. As a result, the case of Li Ji in *Shiji* appears to be an exemplar of a woman's full exertion of the evil forces of *yin*. *Shiji* brings the story of Li Ji to an extreme status in terms of featuring *yin* traits for the purpose of illustrating the destructive power of women as a *yin* party. Among the stories about women also occurring in *Zuozhuan*, Li Ji's story is the unique case in which a woman's speech is expanded rather than cut short, strictly for the purpose of making the story a representative. In Sima Qian's commentary to "Hereditary Household of Wei," he takes Li Ji's story as an illustrative example of the destructive power of women's slander.<sup>194</sup>

Li Ji's case presents *Shiji*'s dualistic approach to a story about the connection between favoritism and succession upheaval: it intensifies the negative personality and behaviors of the favored concubine Li Ji and aligns them squarely with the configuration of *yin* in the *yin-yang* symbolic system while Duke Xian and Shen Sheng, as

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<sup>194</sup> *Shiji*, 37:1605. See the English translation of Sima Qian's commentary to "Hereditary Household of Wei" 衛康叔世家 in Nienhauser, V.1: 261-62.

representatives of *yang*, are rendered as righteous but active forces. In the following case about Meng Ren and her son Ziban, Sima Qian continues this dualistic approach to his material and rewrites the favorite concubine and her son as the *yin* party and their competitors as the opposite. Not only is Meng Ren, as a favored concubine, written in *Shiji* to be more like a stereotypical *yin* character, more importantly, her son Ziban is tainted with *yin* features because of his affiliation with the act of favoritism.<sup>195</sup>

*Zuozhuan*, Zhuang 32.4: Sometime earlier, Duke Zhuang had built a tower overlooking the residence of the Dang line. He caught sight of Meng Ren and pursued her. But she shut herself inside. When he spoke of making her his wife, she agreed, cutting her arm and swearing a covenant with the duke. Ziban was born to them. On the occasion of a rain sacrifice, the duke was rehearsing the appropriate ritual at the residence of the Liang line. One of the duke's daughters was watching him. Luo, the stableman, was on the other side of the wall and flirted with her. Ziban was angry and sent someone to whip him. The duke said, "It would be better to kill him. He is not someone you can whip. Luo has great strength: he can tear down a leaf of the imposing Ji Gate." The duke fell ill and asked Gongzi Ya about the succession. The latter replied, "Qingfu is talented." He asked Gongzi You who replied, "I will serve Ziban to my death."...

初，公築臺，臨黨氏，見孟任，從之。閟。而以夫人言，許之，割臂盟公。生子般焉。雩，講于梁氏，女公子觀之。圉人犧自牆外與之戲。子般怒，使鞭之。公曰：「不如殺之，是不可鞭。犧有力焉，能投蓋于稷門。」公疾，問後於叔牙。對曰：「慶父材。」問於季友。對曰：「臣以死奉般。」

(CQZZZ: 253)

*Zuozhuan*, Zhuang 32.5: ...In winter, in the tenth month, on the jiwei day, Gongzi Qingfu sent Luo, the stableman, to murder Ziban in the residence of the Dang line. 冬，十月己未，共仲使圉人犧賊子般于黨氏。成季奔陳。立閔公。(CQZZZ, 254)

*Shiji*, 33: Sometime earlier, Duke Zhuang had built a tower overlooking the residence of the Dang line. He caught sight of the eldest daughter of the clan. Pleased with and in love with her, he promised to establish her as his wife, cutting his arm to make a pledge. The eldest daughter gave birth to a son, Ziban. When Ziban grew up, he was pleased with a woman of the Liang clan and went to watch her. A stableman Luo from the outside of the wall flirted with the woman of the Liang clan. Ban was angry and had Luo whipped...*(omitted is an introduction of Duke Zhuang's brothers and sons.)*... Duke Zhuang had no legitimate successor. He loved the eldest daughter and intended to establish her son Ziban. When Duke Zhuang was ill, he asked his younger brother Shu Ya about the matter of his

<sup>195</sup> In the Chinese versions of the stories, Ziban's name "Ban" is written in different characters in *Zuozhuan* and *Shiji*. It is not rare that a person's name has different ways of writing in different texts.

successor. Shu Ya said: “In one generation it succeeds from father to son, in another generation it succeeds from elder brother to younger brother. This is the norm of Lu. Qing Fu is there, and he can be your successor. What is your lordship worried about?” Duke Zhuang was troubled that Shu Ya intended to establish Qing Fu, and he retired to ask Ji You, Ji You said: “Please allow me to establish Ban at the risk of death.” … When Duke Zhuang died and Ji You established Ziban, Qingfu had the stableman Luo kill Duke’s son Ban at the Dang clan in tenth month of the Yiwei year (Nienhauser, V.1:148).

三十二年，初，莊公筑臺臨黨氏，見孟女，說而愛之，許立為夫人，割臂以盟。孟女生子斑。斑長，說梁氏女，往觀。圉人犧自牆外與梁氏女戲。斑怒，鞭犧。莊公聞之，曰：“犧有力焉，遂殺之，是未可鞭而置也。”斑未得殺。…莊公無適嗣，愛孟女，欲立其子斑。莊公病，而問嗣於弟叔牙。叔牙曰：“一繼一及，魯之常也。慶父在，可為嗣，君何憂？”莊公患叔牙欲立慶父，退而問季友。季友曰：“請以死立斑也。”… 及莊公卒而季友立斑，十月己未，慶父使圉人犧殺魯公子斑於黨氏。(Shiji, 33.1531-2)

These two versions of the story about Meng Ren (the eldest daughter in *Shiji*) and Ziban exemplify the way *Shiji* makes explicit the implicit connection in *Zuozhuan* between a duke’s favoritism and a succession upheaval. *Zuozhuan* implies the connection between Duke Zhuang’s favor for Meng Ren and the succession upheaval. Duke Zhuang’s favor for Meng Ren is not stated explicitly as in previous cases, but it is displayed with a narrative episode about their first encounter; its connection with the succession upheaval is not clear but only implied by the fact that they are adjacent in the narrative order. In contrast, *Shiji* makes the connection explicit by means of the narrator. *Shiji*’s narrator states the favor directly to readers and makes explicit its correlation with the succession by adding a sentence that “(the duke) loved the eldest daughter and intended to establish her son Ziban.”

More than that, the *Shiji* emphasizes Duke Zhuang’s personal lead in his relationship with Meng Ren by modifying the encounter scene, which places Duke Zhuang and Meng Ren separately into *yang* and *yin*. In *Zuozhuan*, the narrative of the encounter unfolds around both the duke and Meng Ren. Both of them take the initiative at

a certain point in their encounter. In particular, Meng Ren blocks the duke from the door because of his ritually inappropriate pursuit. When the duke promises her status as the formal wife, she cuts her arm to swear a covenant with the duke. This special scene shows Meng Ren's strong will and initiative to protect her own interests. But the episode of the encounter in *Shiji* centers upon the duke alone and singles out his initiative in the event. *Shiji* switches the subjects for the same verbs and it becomes Duke Zhuang who cuts his arm to make a pledge with Meng Ren. Meng Ren becomes the silent recipient of actions not mentioned at all in the narrative. The rewriting in *Shiji* makes Duke Zhuang a dramatic character who cuts his arm to show love, but it also aligns Duke Zhuang and Meng Ren separately with the ideal, proprieate binary between *yin* and *yang*: Duke Zhuang, as a member of the *yang* category, takes the lead and has the initiative to promise a future, while Meng Ren, as a ideal member of the *yin* category, is silent, receptive, and follows Duke Zhuang's lead. On the other hand, the *Shiji* version matches the actions of Meng Ren and Duke Zhuang with their positions as being in the inside and on the outside in the terms of *yin/yang* symbolism, which highlights symbolically the equations between inner/outer and passive/active with clear divisions within them. With these changes, *Shiji* demonstrates the duke's love/favor of Meng Ren and prepares for his preference in the decision of an heir in the subsequent story. However, in the process of such adjustments and idealization, *Shiji* loses the complex and vivid image of Meng Ren and takes away the chance to present, as does *Zuo zhuan*, the agency and impact of a woman.

The *Shiji* adaptation continues its dualistic approach to this story about the connection between favoritism and succession disorder by making Meng Ren's son Ziban

the *yin* party, who is bad and illegitimate, and his competitors the *yang* party, who are innocent and legitimate. *Shiji* diverges from *Zuo zhuan* in two important aspects. The episode concerning Ziban's whipping of the stableman Luo in *Shiji* differs radically in details from its *Zuo zhuan* counterpart; nevertheless, they have structural similarity. First, *Shiji* changes the identity of the girl who is the reason for the whipping. In *Zuo zhuan*, the girl is the duke's daughter, so she should be Ziban's sister; whereas in *Shiji*, she is a daughter of the Liang clan whom Ziban pursues. Secondly, the circumstance of the whipping is changed. The *Shiji* version keeps the main verb "watch/guan" from *Zuo zhuan*, but displaces its subject and its object. In *Zuo zhuan*, the duke's daughter goes to the Liang clan to watch her father rehearse a ritual ceremony and the stableman flirts with her. In *Shiji*, Ziban goes to the Liang clan to watch daughter of that clan and discovers the stableman is flirting with her. These two versions of the circumstances of the whipping scene have structural similarity, which indicates a direct relationship between them; however, with changes in *Shiji*, the value of Ziban's whipping is reversed. In *Zuo zhuan*, Ban whipped the stableman for the latter's inappropriate behavior and out of a desire to protect his sister. In *Shiji*, the situation is changed so that Ziban acts out of jealousy toward his rival, the stableman. In short, Ziban's whipping of Luo changes from an act of righteous punishment of a bold servant to an irrational attack on an innocent competitor. Preceded by this modification, Ziban's death at the hands of the stableman Luo changes its significance. Instead of being an aftereffect of irrational revenge, Ziban's death results from his own irrational hatred toward a sexual rival. As a result, the images of Ziban and the stableman Luo fall separately into the *yin-yang* binary: Ziban is emotional and irrational, which reflects his status as a *yin* character together with his

mother; the stableman Luo, as a helper of Ziban's competitor and hence a member of the *yang* category, is innocent, strong, and is able to crack down on the bad *yin* force. In the *Shiji* adaptation the negation of Ziban's personality is accompanied by negation of his legal status as the successor. In the episode concerning a dispute about the heir, *Shiji* presents Ziban as an illegitimate heir, which is an absent detail in *Zuozhuan*. In *Zuozhuan*, the narrator does not suggest who between Ban and Qingfu is more legitimate to succeed Duke Zhuang. But according to the appropriate ritual of Zhou which advocates lineal succession, Duke Zhuang's son Ziban is more legitimate as a successor than the duke's brother, Qingfu. The *Shiji* passage call into question the succession order by adding a sentence into Shu Ya's speech that "In one generation it succeeds from father to son, in another generation it succeeds from elder brother to younger brother. This is the norm of Lu." This norm implies that Duke Zhuang of Lu, who succeeded his father, should offer his throne to his brother. But this norm does not appear in *Zuozhuan* and it is not supported by historical records of Lu that we possess today. Qian Hang's 錢杭 study clarifies that "First generation succession, then agnatic succession" is not the norm of the succession in Lu. Although there were several cases of agnatic succession in the history of Lu, they were mostly a result of political upheaval or unconventional circumstance. The appropriate practice was only generational succession from father to son.<sup>196</sup> *Shiji* probably has drawn this from *Gongyangzhuan* 公羊傳. However, *Gongyangzhuan* does not explicitly indicate that it is the appropriate norm of Lu.<sup>197</sup> In the *Gongyangzhuan*

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<sup>196</sup> Qian Hang 錢杭: *Zhou dai zongfa zhizhushi yanjiu* 周代宗法制度史研究 (Shanghai: Xuelin chubanshe, 1991), 132-44.

<sup>197</sup> Duke Zhuang said: "Is this going to be like this? Ziya told me that: 'In Lu once succeed from father to son, once succeed from elder brother to younger brother. Qingfu is here.'" Ji You said: "How can he? This

narrative, although Shu Ya tends to take agnatic succession as a norm, Ji You considers Shu Ya to be “causing disorder.” The commentator in *Gongyangzhuan* identifies with Ji You and praises Ji You’s action of killing Shu Ya for a smooth succession as demonstrating the righteous way for a subject to serve a ruler.<sup>198</sup> *Shiji* differs from *Gongyang Zhuan* to explicitly make the “norm” a solid and accepted one in Shu Ya’s speech and omits Ji You’s criticism of it as “causing disorder.” By taking it as an accepted norm of Lu, *Shiji* presents its agenda of making a favored concubine’s son, Ziban, an illegitimate heir and his competitor, Qingfu, the legitimate heir.

The moralistic approach to Ziban’s succession in *Shiji*, together with two episodes highlighting the *yin* behaviors of Ziban and his mother, produces a binary in the succession competition: The favored concubine and her son are the negative and passive *yin* force and the son is not the legitimate successor; their competitors are the righteous and active *yang* force and they are legitimate. Though *Zuozhuan* connects succession upheavals with favoritism on various occasions, the binary between the favored party and the legitimate party in *Shiji* does not appear in *Zuozhuan*.

A comparable case with a similar rewriting of the issues of favoritism and legitimacy is the case of Yi Jiang 夷姜 and her son 急子. The major difficulty in understanding the differences between two versions of the story in *Zuozhuan* and *Shiji* is to comprehend why *Shiji* obscures Yi Jiang’s *zheng* 無 relationship with Duke Xuan and her later suicide. My perspective of *Shiji*’s concern with the contrast of legitimacy and favoritism provides an approach to understanding this change.

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is going to produce disorder! How can he?” see “Zhuang 32,” in *Chunqiu gongyang zhuan zhushu*, in *Shisanjing zhushu* 20, 216.

<sup>198</sup> *Chunqiu Gongyangzhuan zhushu*, Zhuang 32, 216.

*Zuozhuan*, Huan 16.5: Sometime earlier, Duke Xuan of Wei had consorted with Yi Jiang, who gave birth to Jizi. They entrusted him to the Noble Son of the Right. They arranged a wife for him in Qi, and she was beautiful, so Duke Xuan took her for himself. She gave birth to Shou and Shuo, and Shou was entrusted to the Noble Son of the Left. Yi Jiang hanged herself. Xuan Jiang, the woman from Qi, conspired with Shuo against Jizi. Duke Xuan sent Jizi to Qi as an ambassador and sent brigands to await him at Shen, where they were to kill him... The two Noble Sons consequently hated Duke Hui (Shuo). In the eleventh month, Xie, the Noble Son of the Left, and Zhi, the Noble Son of the Right, instated Gongzi Qianmou. Duke Hui fled to Qi.

初，衛宣公烝於夷姜，生急子，屬諸右公子。為之娶於齊，而美，公取之。生壽及朔。屬壽於左公子。夷姜縊。宣姜與公子朔構急子。公使諸齊。使盜待諸莘，將殺之...二公子故怨惠公。十一月，左公子洩、右公子職立公子黔牟。惠公奔齊。(CQZZZ, 145-7)

*Shiji*, 37: Eighteenth year of Duke Xuan. Sometime earlier, Duke Xuan had been in love with Lady Yi Jiang. Yi Jiang gave birth to a son Jizi. He made him heir apparent and ordered the Noble Son of the Right to tutor him. The Noble Son of the Right arranged a wife for him in Qi. When they had not yet married, Duke Xuan saw that the woman who was to be made the heir's wife was beautiful. Duke Xuan was delighted, took her for himself, and took another girl for the heir apparent. Duke Xuan obtained the daughter of Qi, who gave birth to the sons, Shou and Shuo, and had the Noble Son of the Left be their master. The heir apparent's mother died and Duke Xuan's formal wife (Xuan Jiang) and Shuo together slandered the heir apparent Jizi. Because Duke Xuan had seized the wife of the heir apparent, he disliked the heir and wished to depose him. After hearing about the heir apparent's bad behavior, he was extremely angry. He sent Jizi on a mission to Qi and sent brigands to await him at the border, where they were to kill him... The Noble Son of the Left and the Noble Son of the Right felt Shuo's enthronement to be unfair. In the fourth year of Duke Hui (Shuo), the Noble Son of the Left and the Noble Son of the Right were bitter that Duke Xuan had slandered and killed the former heir apparent and had replaced him with another. Consequently, they raised a rebellion, attacked Duke Hui and instated Qianmou, the younger brother of the former heir apparent Ji. Duke Hui fled to Qi.

( Nienhauser, V.1: 247-48, modified)

十八年，初，宣公愛夫人夷姜，夷姜生子伋，以為太子，而令右公子傅之。右公子為太子取齊女，未入室，而宣公見所欲為太子婦者好，說而自取之，更為太子取他女。宣公得齊女，生子壽、子朔，令左公子傅之。太子伋母死，宣公正夫人與朔共讒惡太子伋。宣公自以其奪太子妻也，心惡太子，欲廢之。及聞其惡，大怒，乃使太子伋於齊而令盜遮界上殺之，...左右公子不平朔之立也，惠公四年，左右公子怨惠公之誣殺前太子伋而代立，乃作亂，攻惠公，立太子伋之弟黔牟為君，惠公奔齊。(Shiji, 37:1593)

The story detail common to both *Zuozhuan* and *Shiji* is that Xuan Jiang and her second son Shuo slander Yi Jiang's son Jizi. Jizi and Xuan Jiang's first son, Shou, are

plotted against and killed. Shuo becomes the next duke but is soon removed by two prime ministers who are resentful about what has happened and replaced by another son of the duke, Xianmou.

The legitimate status of Yi Jiang and Ji Zi is complicated in *Zuozhuan*, as seen from the unusual relationship between Duke Xuan and Yi Jiang and Yi Jiang's unnatural death. In *Zuozhuan*, the Chinese word for the relationship between Duke Xuan and Yi Jiang is *zheng* 焲 which is translated here to “had consorted with.” This *zheng* relationship means that Yi Jiang had been a concubine of Duke Xuan’s father, but Duke Xuan took her as a consort after his father’s death. Gu Jiegang 顧頡剛 argues that the *zheng* relationship was a common family practice and was not condemned by public opinion in the Spring and Autumn period.<sup>199</sup> His argument is challenged by younger scholars; Lü Yahu argues that *zheng* and *bao* were exceptional forms of marriage and they were not authorized by ritual propriety.<sup>200</sup> Chen Xiaofang 陳筱芳 has listed multiple examples showing that some people of the Spring and Autumn period viewed the relationship of *zheng* negatively.<sup>201</sup> The moral status of the *zheng* relationship thus remains controversial and problematic. Besides, what is more of concern is the social

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<sup>199</sup> Gu Jiegang, “You ‘zheng’ ‘bao’ deng hunyin fangshi kan shehui zhidu de bianqian” 由“烝”“報”等婚姻方式看社会制度的變遷, in *Wenshi* 文史 (Zhonghua shuju, 1982), vol. 14.

<sup>200</sup> Lü Yahu 呂亞虎: “Dongzhou shiqi ‘zheng’ ‘bao’ hun xianxiang kaobian” 东周時期“烝”“报”婚现象考辨 in *Renwen zazhi* 人文雜誌, 6 (2004): 138-144.

<sup>201</sup> For instance, Lady Mu of Qin resented Duke Hui of Jin for his having a *zheng* relationship with Jia Jun; Gongzi Wan originally refused to have a *zheng* relationship with Xuan Jiang before he finally submitted himself to the relationship under the coercion of the state of Qi. See Chen Xiaofang 陳筱芳, “Zheng Bao Yin: Fei Chunqiu Shiqi Gongren de Hunzhi” 焲報因: 非春秋時期公认的婚制, in *Xinan minzu xueyuan xuebao* 西南民族學院學報, 19.4(1998, 8): 130.

status of the women in the *zheng* relationship. On this point, Tong Shuye's 童書業 argument is very relevant to this discussion:

"First ... when there is no formal wife or the formal wife does not have a son, the status of a woman in the *zheng* relationship is equal to the status of a wife. So her son could be an heir and her daughter could be married to be a wife of a great state. Second, when the ruler takes another wife, the person in the *zheng* relationship loses her position as a wife and her son may easily lose the status of heir. So that is why someone may commit suicide."<sup>202</sup>

This passage explains the vulnerable social status of Yi Jiang and Ji Zi in the state. Ji Zi, who was conceived through the *zheng* relationship, is originally entitled to the heirship. *Zuozhuan* does not suggest directly, as *Shiji* does, that Ji Zi is the heir of Duke Xuan, but the closeness of his status to the heirship is implied in the fact that he is entrusted to one of the two powerful figures in the state, the Noble Sons of the Right and the Left, who are able to dethrone the new duke. Following the account in the *Shiji*, scholars had assumed that Jizi was the heir apparent.<sup>203</sup> However, a woman in a *zheng* relationship lacks the ritual protection that a ceremonial covenant offers. Although Yi Jiang's status is equal to a formal wife, Xuan Jiang has replaced her as Duke's formal wife causing her suicide. Xuan Jiang is the one who shares the posthumous name "Xuan" with Duke Xuan which indicates her formal status as his proper wife. Meanwhile, Ji Zi loses the absolute entitlement to heirship when Xuan Jiang gives birth to two sons. In a word, Yi Jiang's status as the wife and Ji Zi's status as heir resulting from a *zheng* relationship is ritually tenuous and easily replaceable. Yi Jiang's suicide thus could be

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<sup>202</sup> Tong Shuye, *Chunqiu Zuozhuan Yanjiu* 春秋左傳研究 (Shanghai: Shanghai Renmin Chuban She, 1980), 210.

<sup>203</sup> Some scholars who take Ji Zi as the ready-made heir have drawn evidence from *Shiji*. Yang Bojun and Zhang Taiyan are both examples. See Yang Bojun, 145; Zhang Taiyan, 167.

explained by her untenable circumstance of being abandoned by Duke Xuan and unprotected by ritual propriety.

In the *Shiji*, the vulnerable social status of Yi Jiang and Ji Zi is masked with changes to some wordings and to what in place are signs of complete legitimacy. *Shiji* replaces the word “zheng” for the relationship between Duke Xuan and Yi Jiang with the word “ai”愛 (love). Meanwhile, it uses the title “furen” to refer to Yijiang to clearly indicate she is Duke Xuan’s first formal wife. Moreover, *Shiji* rewrites Yi Jiang’s problematic death by changing the word “yi”縊 (to hang) to a neutral word “si”死 (to die, dead). These changes of narrative details happen within the ideological background that the negative moral implication of the *zheng* relationship strengthened in the Han. *Zheng* came to be defined as “licentious behavior with one’s elders”上淫 in the notes of the Eastern Han scholar Fu Qian 服虔.<sup>204</sup> In the Han ritual text, *Li Ji* 禮記, the relationship between a son and the consort of his father is taken as a sign of complete lack of ritual propriety and of being uncivilized like beasts.<sup>205</sup> Possibly against the background of development of this stronger moralistic approach to the *zheng* relationship in the Han, *Shiji* covers over this relationship in order to claim fully legitimate status for Ji Zi. The *Shiji* version implies that the first wife, Yi Jiang, died and then Xuan Jiang became the formal wife. Thus *Shiji* covers Yi Jiang’s vulnerable status as the first wife and suggests that she is a ritually appropriate first wife and hence Ji Zi the most

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<sup>204</sup> Gu, “You ‘zheng’ ‘bao’ deng hunyin fangshi kan shehui zhidu de bianqian”, 8.

<sup>205</sup> It says: without (the principle of) propriety, father and son might have the same mate 夫唯禽獸無禮，故父子聚麀. See *Li Ji* (*The Book of Rituals*), Quli 曲禮 1, see Sun Xidan: *Liji Jijie* 禮記集解 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1989), 10. Also see Gu, “You ‘zheng’ ‘bao’ deng hunyin fangshi kan shehui zhidu de bianqian”, 9.

legitimate heir. Furthermore, *Shiji* declares that Ji Zi is the ready-made heir apparent who is entrusted to the Noble Son of the Right, and both Shuo and Shou are entrusted to the Noble Son of the Left. Hence, *Shiji* makes both of Xuan Jiang's sons oppose the heir Ji Zi as new threats to the established heirship. *Shiji* reinforces the competitive relationship between the sons of Yi Jiang and the sons of Xuan Jiang further with an emphasis on the identity of Qianmou. *Shiji* declares that Qianmou, the son of the duke who is later established by two Noble Sons to replace Xuan Jiang's son Shuo, is Ji Zi's younger brother. Zhang Taiyan argues that this detail in *Shiji* does not correspond with *Zuozhuan* and it is probably not true.<sup>206</sup> Nevertheless, by emphasizing Qianmou as Yi Jiang's son and Ji Zi's younger brother, a detail absent in *Zuozhuan*, this version focused more clearly on the competition between the legitimate party of the sons of Yi Jiang and the favored party of the sons of Xuan Jiang. In addition, the role of Duke Xuan's favoritism in this competition is highlighted in *Shiji*. Duke Xuan's personal preference for the sons of Xuan Jiang over Ji Zi is emphasized in *Shiji* with an appendage of a passage explaining his psychology.

*Shiji* insists on making a connection between favoritism and succession upheavals, not only in its rewriting of narrative details as in the above three cases but also in its selective adaptation of criticisms in stories of this theme. The story about Ai Jiang and Jing Ying and the story about Zhongzi and Rong Zi are examples of this way of reconstruction.

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<sup>206</sup> Zhang Taiyan argues: “‘The Hereditary House of Wei’ takes Qianmou and Zhao Bo as full brothers of the Heir Apparent Ji Zi. This does not correspond with *Zuozhuan*...As a matter of fact, The Great Historian, Sima Qian, has used a hodgepodge of texts, which definitely cannot be used to dispute *Zuozhuan*. Not only are neither of them full brothers of Ji Zi, even Zhao Bao is possibly not a full brother of Qianmou.” 《衛世家》以黔牟、昭伯為太子伋母弟，與《左傳》不合...其實太史公所據雜書極多，固不足以難《傳》也。非但二人非伋母弟，即昭伯亦未必是黔牟母弟耳。See Zhang Taiyan, *Zhang Taiyan quanji* 2,168.

Ai Jiang, the formal wife of Duke Wen, is sent back to her natal state of Qi because her son is supplanted by Jing Ying's 敬嬴 son as the new duke of Lu with the intervention of Xiang Zhong 襄仲 (Wen 18.4). The *Shiji* recreates entirely the sad scene of her departure from *Zuozhuan* as follows: “The Lady of the Jiang line returned to Qi. This was the irrevocable return. As she was about to leave, she passed through the market crying and said, ‘Oh, Heaven! Xiang Zhong violated the proper way. He killed the legitimate heir and established a secondary son.’ The people in the market all cried, and the men of Lu called her ‘Ai Jiang.’”<sup>207</sup> Both in the *Zuozhuan* and *Shiji*, the narrator intensifies Ai Jiang’s tearful accusation with the company of a weeping crowd. Such a detailed record of a woman’s intense experience in *Shiji* is rare but also reasonable: Ai Jiang is speaking on behalf of the authentic blood line of the ruling family whose legitimate right of succession has been usurped by the son of a favored concubine, Jing Ying. In other words, Ai Jiang represents the legitimate *yang* power in relationship to the *yin* force, the favored concubine Jing Ying and her son.

In this case, Sima Qian’s adaptation of Ai Jiang’s criticism from *Zuozhuan* in *Shiji* is accompanied by rewriting its narrative detail to connect Jing Ying exclusively with favoritism. In both the *Shiji* and *Zuozhuan* versions of this story, it is not the duke who selects his favored concubine’s son as his successor. Rather, it is a primary minister, Xiang Zhong 襄仲, who plays the crucial role of replacing the legitimate heir with the son of the favored concubine. However, the *Shiji* version provides a new version of the story of Jing Ying that simply associates her with Duke Wen’s favoritism.

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<sup>207</sup> Wen 18.6: (傳文十八·六) 夫人姜氏歸于齊，大歸也。將行，哭而過市，曰：「天乎！仲為不道，殺嫡立庶。」市人皆哭。魯人謂之哀姜。I omit the *Shiji* version in “*Lü Shijia*” because it is identical to the *Zuozhuan* passage. Please see the English translation of the *Shiji* passage in Nienhauser, V.1: 151.

*Zuozhuan*, Wen18.4: ...The secondary consort of Duke Wen, Jing Ying, had given birth to Duke Xuan. Jing Ying was the favorite but privately served Xiang Zhong. When Duke Xuan had grown up, she entrusted him to Xiang Zhong.

文公二妃敬嬴生宣公。敬嬴嬖而私事襄仲。宣公長，而屬諸襄仲...

*Shiji*, 33: ...The second consort of Duke Wen Jing Ying was the favorite. She gave birth to a son Wei; Wei privately served Xiang Zhong. (Nienhauser, V.1:151) 次妃敬嬴，嬖愛，生子僂。僂私事襄仲...( *Shiji*, 33: 1536)

In *Zuozhuan*, the favored concubine Jing Ying loyally served Xiang Zhong and entrusted her son, the future Duke Xuan, to him. Apparently, Duke Wen's favor enabled Jing Ying to do the network building for her son. In contrast, in *Shiji*, it is the son, Wei, himself who served Xiang Zhong, and Jing Ying's role changes to being only the favorite of the duke.<sup>208</sup> With this change, Jing Ying's power is solely linked to the power of her sexual attraction. The *Shiji* version denies Jing Ying's vision or her social strategy as contributing to the establishment of her son and instead, it emphasizes her son's own volition. Hence, *Shiji* accounts for Jing Ying's role as a favorite as the first reason for the success of her son, even though her son's personal association with Xiang Zhong plays the more important role in her son's enthronement. Meanwhile, the *Zuozhuan* version emphasizes Jing Ying's personal initiative in taking advantage of her favoritism to put her son onto throne; in contrast, *Shiji* highlights the negative aspect of Jing Ying's situation of "being favored" (bi嬖). In this way, *Shiji* rewrites the *Zuozhuan* passage to align a woman with the *yin* feature of being passive and receiving favor.

The story about Zhong Zi 仲子 and Rong Zi 戎子 again demonstrates *Shiji*'s selective adaptation of criticism to promote a binary between the favored and the legitimate. In the story, Zhong Zi's son was entrusted to Rong Zi 戎子 who was favored

<sup>208</sup> *Shiji*'s adaptation also indicates that the word "serve" 事 does not have sexual connotation which is an observed misunderstanding of this word in the scholarship of *Zuozhuan*. For instance, Tong Shuye takes Jing Ying's relationship with Xiang Zhong as a form of marriage which is similar to the relationship of *zheng*. This is probably a misunderstanding. See Tong, *Chunqiu Zuozhuan yanjiu*, 211.

by the duke. Rong Zi asked the duke to establish her adopted son as the heir and to replace Guang, the former heir. The duke agreed. Zhong Zi opposed the duke's decision but the duke did not listen to her (*Zuozhuan*, Xiang 19.5). This fault is demonstrated in the following event: When the duke was seriously ill, Cui Zhu, who is a powerful minister in the state and a stronger supporter of the heir apparent, Guang, established the latter as the new duke and Rong Zi was killed (*Zuozhuan*, Xiang 19.5). Zhong Zi's warning, as it turns out, was thoroughly justified.

*Shiji*, 32: The Duke of Qi had married a woman in Lu and she bore a son, Guang, making him the heir. Between Zhong Zi and Rong Zi, Rong Zi was the favorite, Zhong Zi bore a son, Ya, and entrusted him to Rong Zi. Rong Zi requested that he be made heir, and Duke consented to this. Zhong Zi said: "That will not do. Guang's establishment is ranked among the feudal lords. Now if you remove him without reason, my lord will certainly regret it." The Duke said, "It is all up to me." Then he sent Heir Guang to the eastern border and had Gao Hou tutor Ya, who became the heir apparent. When Duke Ling became sick, Cui Zhu went to meet the former heir Guang to establish him. This was Duke Zhuang. Duke Zhuang killed Rong Zi.

戎姬。戎姬嬖，仲姬生子牙，屬之戎姬。戎姬請以為太子，公許之。仲姬曰：“不可。光之立，列於諸侯矣，今無故廢之，君必悔之。”公曰：“在我耳。”遂東太子光，使高厚傅牙為太子。靈公疾，崔杼迎故太子光而立之，是為莊公。莊公殺戎姬。<sup>209</sup>

The *Shiji* retains almost the entire *Zuozhuan* narrative of this story, including Zhong Zi's remonstration with the duke, by translating it into the vernacular of the time. In light of its failure to persuade the duke, Zhong Zi's speech does not have any functional role in the event, but carries only didactic significance as a comment within the narrative. Through this device, the narrator points out, in the voice of Zhong Zi, the shortsightedness of the duke's decision. While retaining this didactic comment by Zhong Zi, *Shiji* omits another didactic criticism in the same *Zuozhuan* passage which supports

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<sup>209</sup> Nienhauser, V.1: 97; *Shiji*, 32: 1559. The *Zuozhuan* version, which is basically similar, is omitted here. The names of Zhong Zi and Rong Zi are written as Zhong Ji and Zhong Ji in the Chinese version of *Shiji*.

Rong Zi. In that particular passage, *Zuozhuan* details the heir Guang's cruel execution of Rong Zi and attaches a criticism by making reference to Ritual Propriety: “Guang had Rong Zi killed and exposed her corpse at court. This violated ritual propriety. A woman has no specified punishments. Even if there were such, her corpse should not have been in the court or the marketplace”光殺戎子，尸諸朝，非禮也。婦人無刑。雖有刑，不在朝市(*Zuozhuan*, Xiang 19. 5). The *Shiji* counterpart simplifies the cruel execution with a simple, neutral verb *sha* (殺“to kill”) and omits the comment (*Shiji*, 32.1500). *Shiji*'s abbreviation might be justified as Sima Qian's lack of interest in propagating the Ritual Propriety as the authors of *Zuozhuan* do; however, with Rong Zi's didactic remonstration going before it, *Shiji* conveys its own moral message that Duke Ling's fault in following Rong Zi's words is the source of a subsequent series of chaotic killings. In this sense, *Shiji* is no less ideological with its fewer comments and purer narrative. On the other hand, *Zuozhuan*'s combination of narrative and comments has the advantage of judging the character Rong Zi involved in the story from different perspectives. Although as in *Shiji*, the narrative in *Zuozhuan* criticizes Duke Ling's fault in the favoritism of Rong Zi and following her words, its criticism of Guang in the account of Rong Zi's tragic death enables readers to sympathize with Rong Zi and be less biased toward her and the legitimate heir Guang. In contrast, the simplistic version in *Shiji* reduces the message of the story simply to a criticism of favoritism.

In addition to modifying the narratives inherited from *Zuozhuan*, *Shiji* also promotes a connection between favoritism and succession upheaval by extending it to stories which do not make such a connection in the earlier *Zuozhuan* version. The stories of Jiang Mi 江芈, the mother of the heir apparent Jian of Chu 楚太子建, and of Nan Zi

南子are all rewritten in a fashion that emphasizes this connection. The case of Jiang Mi is the simplest of these accounts. King Cheng of Chu, who has many favored concubines, plans to withdraw Shang Chen's heirship to the throne. Shang Chen learns about his plan from Jiang Mi and acts first to usurp the position of king (*Zuozhuan*, Wen 1.7). The *Shiji* passage about this succession upheaval duplicates the record in *Zuozhuan* except that it adds an explanation of Jiang Mi's identity. The *Shiji* passage explains that Jiang Mi is a “favored concubine” of the king (*Shiji*, 40:1698; Nienhauser, V.1:392). However, according to Yang Bojun, who bases his analysis on the structure of her name, Jiang Mi is most likely the king's sister who is married to Jiang 江.<sup>210</sup> By describing Jiang Mi as a favored concubine, Sima Qian rewrites the confrontation of Jiang Mi and Shang Chen as a confrontation between King Cheng's favored concubine and his legitimate heir.

In a story about the mother of Prince Jian of Chu, Jian's lesser master, Fei Wuji, because of his lack of favor with Jian, involves Prince Jian in a series of plots which leads to Jian's flight from Chu. *Zuozhuan* keeps a record of the complicated role of Jian's mother in the story; the *Shiji* adaption, like so often elsewhere, makes a strong contrast between favor and legitimacy. The *Zuozhuan* version starts with an episode about the birth of Jian: “When the Master of Chu was in Cai, the daughter of the hereditary prefect of Juyang fled to him and bore to him the heir Jian” 楚子之在蔡也，鄖陽封人之女奔之，生太子建 (*Zuozhuan*, Zhao 19.2). This episode presents the initiative of Jian's mother in her marriage with the duke of Chu. There is no sign in *Zuozhuan* that she lacks the duke's favor. Considering that she is only a daughter of a hereditary prefect and their

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<sup>210</sup> CQZZZ, 514. Based on the two interpretations of Jiang Mi's identity, Zhang Taiyan has a hypothesis that Jiang Mi is a sister of King Cheng of Chu who has a sexual relationship with King Cheng. See Zhang, 321.

marriage does not go through appropriate ritual ceremony but her son is established as heir apparent, it is likely she is initially favored by the duke. But *Shiji* makes the explicit claim that the duke does not favor her: “His mother was a woman from Cai and was not favored by the king 其母蔡女也，無寵於王” (*Shiji*, 40.1712; Nienhauser, V.1: 411). The added detail, which is not supported by the *Zuozhuan* record, positions Jian’s mother as a wife who was not favored. Such rewriting reinforces the competition between the legitimate and the favored to explain the removal of the heir apparent Jian.

The portrait of Prince Jian’s mother in the “The Hereditary Household of Chu” (*Shiji*, j.40) affects the explanation of her significant role in the war between Chu and Wu. The *Zuozhuan* passage is as follows: “Residing in Ju, the Chu heir Prince Jian’s mother summoned Wu forces and opened the gates for them. In winter, in the tenth month, on the sixth day, the Wu heir Zhufan entered Ju, seizing the Chu Queen and her precious vessels and taking them back with him” 楚太子建之母在鄭，召吳人而啟之。冬十月甲申，吳太子諸樊入鄭，取楚夫人與其寶器以歸。<sup>211</sup> The participation in the war of Prince Jian’s mother, the Queen, conveys different messages within the context of *Zuozhuan* and *Shiji*. In *Zuozhuan*, placed in a context about her initiative, her action could be explained as motivated by her personal interest. Having been deposed and replaced by a young girl from Qin as the queen of Chu, she is sent back to her hometown. She pursues a way out of this unhappy situation by letting herself be taken to another state. However, in *Shiji*, with the absence of the first episode about her in *Zuozhuan*, such an explanation of her action is impossible. The only explanation left to us is that she has done this simply for the purpose of destroying the state of Chu. This explanation is

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<sup>211</sup> *Zuozhuan*, Zhao 23.7. Please see the parallel *Shiji* passage in English in Nienhauser, V.1: 411-12.

tricky due to the fact that the result of her action is that she herself is carried away. But the *Shiji* narrative tends toward this explanation by modifying the account of the war between the states of Wu and Chu to indicate that the family of Jian's mother continues to be involved in the war and actually helps the Wu army enter the state of Chu.<sup>212</sup> This detail is particular to *Shiji* and never appears in *Zuozhuan*. With the addition of this detail, it is as if Jian's mother and her family have gained revenge against the duke of Chu by cooperating with the state of Wu in the war between these two states. In other words, the legitimate heir Jian and his maternal relatives are consistently acting against the biased King Ping of Chu and the beneficiary of his favor, the next king of Chu. This presentation once again plays the conflict between the legitimate line and the favored line at the center of political strife.<sup>213</sup>

The story of Nan Zi is another example of succession upheaval being rewritten in *Shiji* to demonstrate the binary of legitimacy versus favor.<sup>214</sup> In *Zuozhuan*, the heir apparent Kuai Kui 喬瞞 feels ashamed of Nan Zi's sexual affair with the noble son Zhao of Song and plans to kill her. Nan Zi discovers his plan and accuses him in front of Duke Ling of Wei. The duke stands by her side and Kuai Kui flees Wei (*Zuozhuan*, Ding 14.8, CQZZZ, 1597). The *Shiji* version is a short summary of the story. In particular, it abstracts the lengthy narrative about why Kuai Kui plans to kill Nan Zi in *Zuozhuan* into

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<sup>212</sup> The text in the “Chu Shijia” is as follows: “...(The King of Wu) dispatches Noble son Guang to attack Chu taking advantage of the family of Jian’s mother...使公子光因建母家攻楚...” (Nienhuaser, V.1: 411.)

<sup>213</sup> King Ping’s negative status in *Shiji* is also confirmed in the story about Wu Zixu who whipped King Ping to revenge his father. See *Shiji*, “Wu Zixu Liezhuan,” 66.2171.

<sup>214</sup> Gao Shiqi has collected stories about Nan Zi and Kuai Kui. See Gao Shiqi, *Zuozhuan jishi benmo* 左傳紀事本末 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1979), 587.

a short sentence: “There was enmity between the heir Kuai Kui and the lady of Duke Ling太子蒯聵與靈公夫人有惡” (Nienhauser, V.1:255, modified). This abbreviation does not reflect the relevant narrative episodes in *Zuozhuan*; instead, it tells a different story. It replaces Kuai Kui’s “shame” at Nan Zi in *Zuozhuan* with an “enmity” between them. This renders it as if the heir Kuai Kui and Nan Zi are enemies in competition with one another, and Nan Zi, who is supported by the duke, wins out over the former. In addition, *Shiji* addresses these two persons in a way that makes it appear that they are not related. However, the *Zuozhuan* version implies that Nan Zi is possibly Kuai Kui’s mother. Xi Yang, whom Kuai Kui sends to kill Nan Zi, describes Kuai Kui saying: “The heir lacks the way; he sent me to kill his mother.” 太子無道，使余殺其母 (*Zuozhuan*, Ding 14.8). Other evidence that they are mother and son is in a *Zuozhuan* passage from several years later. When Kuai Kui reported his own situation to the king of Zhou, he referred to Nan Zi as his “lordly mother”: “Kuaikui, incurring incrimination from his lordly father and lordly mother, skulked away to Jin” 諢聵得罪于君父、君母，逋竄于晉 (*Zuozhuan*, Ai 16.2; CQZZZ, 1697). Although it is still not definite from this that Nan Zi was Kuai Kui’s biological mother, the passage at least shows that Kuai Kui claims Nan Zi as his mother.<sup>215</sup> Nevertheless, a mother-son relationship matches well with Kuai Kui’s feeling of shame toward Nan Zi’s love affair. However, the *Shiji* record avoids any

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<sup>215</sup> Scholars have disagreed whether Nanzi is Kuai Kui’s biographical mother. Yang Bojun cited *Yili sangfu* 儀禮喪服 to argue that Kuai Kui had to call his step-mother Nan Zi “mu 母” because the latter is his father’s formal wife (CQZZZ, 1599). In contrast, Fu Lipu 傅隸樸 in *Chunqiu sanzhuhan biyi* 春秋三傳比義 takes Nan Zi as Kuai Kui’s biological mother (Fu, *Chunqiu sanzhuhan biyi*, 1088.). Gao Shiqi implies the mother-son relationship between them with his argument that Kuai Kui’s behavior is against ethics 逆倫之事 and “although Nan Zi is licentious, she is not one that Kui could kill” 南子雖淫，非聵所得殺, See Gao, *Zuozhuan jishi benmo*, 594.

suggestion of a separate relationship between the two and replaces Kuai Kui's feeling of shame with enmity toward his father's consort as his motivation for killing Nan Zi. These revisions frame the conflict between Kuai Kui and Nan Zi as antagonism between the legitimate heir and the favored second wife.

These examples discussed in this section demonstrate *Shiji*'s tendency to simplify complex power struggles to a question of the role of favoritism in succession upheavals. It produces a clear binary of favor versus legitimacy, which is equal to the binary of bad versus good in stories that are related or possibly related to the theme of favoritism and succession upheaval in *Zuozhuan*. Favored women are rendered as a constant source of political disorder and their competitors are rendered as legitimate and righteous in contrast to them. *Shiji* highlights the binary between the favored line and the legitimate line in narratives about the connection between favoritism and succession upheavals and also adds details of “favor versus legitimacy” to narratives about succession upheavals that are not related to favoritism in *Zuozhuan*. *Shiji*'s dualistic approach to these stories about the Spring and Autumn periods works to support the *yin-yang* symbolic interpretation of the relationship between women and political chaos with “historical facts.” It helps eternalize the *yin-yang* binary as a frequent phenomenon in history and the binary of bad, favored woman versus good, legitimate order as a basic schema for understanding political chaos in later dynasties, which is usually claimed as “female disaster” 女禍.

To summarize, the discussion in this chapter demonstrates that the same stories show significant variations in *Shiji* and *Zuozhuan*. Although the connection between women and political disaster already exists in the *Zuozhuan* versions, the *Shiji* versions

intensify this connection by utilizing three strategies: first, *Shiji* singles out this connection as the perspective from which to narrate episodic stories in *Zuozhuan*; second, it reduces representations of positive aspects of women who produce political disaster in *Zuozhuan* and leaves them simply negative; third, it produces a moral dualism between women and their male competitors, leaving the women as well as their associates to be the bad party and their male competitors as the good one. This intensification of the connection between women and political disaster in *Shiji* adapts historical narratives to the dualistic conception of two genders, or two forms of energies, in Dong Zhongshu's *yin-yang* symbolic system, which was discussed in the Introduction. When placed alongside the approach toward women in *Shiji*, *Zuozhuan*'s approach to these stories becomes more significant. *Zuozhuan* shows considerable tolerance and sympathy for women who were involved in political disasters. It does this by providing other perspectives upon the events that carry the connection between women and disaster. It also attests to women's complexity and capability beneath what might appear on the surface to be self-interested behaviors. It also leaves open to women the possibility of change after their mistakes. In a word, *Zuozhuan* represents an alternative perspective toward women against the discourse of "female disaster," which is the tradition that *Shiji* has inherited and escalated. This point will continue to be attested in the following chapter.

## CHAPTER V

### WOMEN'S ATTRACTIVENESS AND SPEECH

This chapter will focus on the issues of women's attractiveness and speech, two major targets in the discourse of female disaster, and will compare the different attitudes toward these issues in *Zuozhuan*, *Shiji*, and *Lienüzhuan*. The word “attractiveness” is used here to translate the Chinese word *se* (color/sexual attractiveness), a word often corresponding to the word *mei* 美 (beauty/beautiful) in *Zuozhuan*. The frequently-occurring word *bi* 璧 (to be favored) also refers to the attractiveness of a person and is used under the same category here. The word “speech” here designates the action of expressing opinions and feelings with words, or in Chinese, *yan* 言. It does not mean that what is articulated is a formal speech or oration. What I mean here instead is any act of verbal self-expression that might have impact on other people. In some examples from early texts, such verbal acts by women are often represented with the word “mouth” (*kou* 口), more specifically, “slanderous mouth” (*chankou* 謣口).<sup>216</sup> The concern of this chapter is how these earlier texts, such as *Zuozhuan*, *Shiji*, and *Lienüzhuan*, associate women's beauty and speech with danger and how these texts differ in the attitude toward women's attractiveness and speech. This discussion will also contribute to our understanding of the development of the early interpretations of the three aspects of

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<sup>216</sup> See examples in *Guoyu*, “Jinyu” 1, 257

women's *side* 四德 (four qualifications), womanly virtue (fude 婦德), womanly speech (fuyan 婦言) and womanly appearance (furong 婦容).<sup>217</sup>

In the study of the history of Chinese women, a typical topic is the discourse of female disaster, in which women's beauty and speech are the key issues. Because of the key position of these two issues, the contemporary scholar Liu Yongcong 劉詠聰 rephrases the discourse of female disaster as the discourse of “women bringing down a nation by their beauty and speech” 婦女言色亡國論.<sup>218</sup> Liu points out that the discourse of female disaster has its origin in pre-Qin history, takes shape in the two Han periods, and becomes popular in later dynasties.<sup>219</sup> Liu Yongcong lists quite a few examples of the discourse of female disaster 女禍 in pre-Qin classical texts, including *The Book of Songs* 詩經, *The Book of History* 尚書, *The Book of Change* 易經, *Analects* 論語, *The Scattered History of Zhou* 逸周書, *Guan Zi* 管子 as well as *Zuo zhuan*.<sup>220</sup> The significance of women's attractiveness and speech in this tradition is implied in her conclusion: “In the pre-Qin period, the content of the idea of ‘female disaster’ has several main levels of meaning as follows: first, women should not participate in state politics,

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<sup>217</sup> *Side* was proposed by Ban Zhao in her article “Lessons for Women” (*Nüjie* 女誡) and it included womanly virtue (fude 婦德), womanly speech (fuyan 婦言), womanly bearing (furong 婦容) and womanly work (fugong 婦功). See a translation of “Lessons For Women” in Robin R. Wang, *Images of Women in Chinese Thought and Culture: Writing from the Pre-Qin Period through the Song Dynasty* (Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc, 2003), 177.

<sup>218</sup> See Liu Yongcong 劉詠聰's *De cai se quan: lun zhongguo gudai nüxing* 德才色權——論中國古代女性(*Virtue, Talent, Beauty and Power: Discussion on women in traditional China*) (Hongkong: Maitian Chubanshe, 1998), 15.

<sup>219</sup> Liu, *De cai se quan*, 87.

<sup>220</sup> Liu Yongcong, *De cai se quan*, 15.

which is exclusively men's affair; second, if a ruler follows women's words, the state will be ruined; third, if a ruler indulges himself in female sexual appeal, disaster will fall upon him.”<sup>221</sup> In her discussion of the formation of the discourse of female disaster in the Western Han, Dong Zhongshu, Sima Qian, and Liu Xiang are important representatives. Indeed, the “Treatise of Five-phases” 五行志 in *Han Shu* 漢書 records that Dong Zhongshu and Liu Xiang make a consistent connection between natural disasters that either are recorded in *Zuozhuan* or occurred during the Han and the inappropriate behavior of women living at the same time.<sup>222</sup> The list of misbehaviors related to women include licentiousness, jealousy, slander, staying unmarried, rising above the rank of a concubine to the status of a wife, excessive virtue, power overriding men, and cruelty, all of which are considered signs of excessive *yin*.<sup>223</sup> Sima Qian in *Shiji*, does not join Liu Xiang and Dong Zhongshu in featuring a connection between natural disaster and women's misbehavior but the concern with the discourse of female disaster is the same. The third chapter of this dissertation has demonstrated that Sima Qian primarily preserved stories of women from the Spring and Autumn period illustrating the connection between women and political catastrophes.

The participation of *Zuozhuan*, *Shiji* and *Lienüzhuan* in the formation of the discourse of female disaster is recognized by scholars; however, the attitude of these

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<sup>221</sup> Liu, *De cai se quan*, 30. Translation is mine.

<sup>222</sup> Bret Hinsch pointed out that Liu Xiang “adhered to Dong Zhongshu's cosmological Confucianism. Yet, whereas Dong emphasizes the ruler's effect on the cosmos, Liu shifted attention to the actions of officials, eunuchs, and consort kin.” This implies that Liu Xiang paid more attention to the role of the *yin* representatives. See Bret Hinsch, “Reading *Lienüzhuan* Through the Life of Liu Xiang,” in *Journal of Asian History*, 39.2 (2005):137.

<sup>223</sup> Ban Gu, *Hanshu*, 5. 1315-49.

early texts toward women's attractiveness and speeches is not as simplistic as that being summarized in the phrase “women bringing down a nation by their beauty and speech” nor is it monolithic without variation. This discussion will demonstrate that *Zuozhuan*, *Shiji* and *Lienüzhuan* have differed in their representations of the role of women's attractiveness and speech.

I argue the earliest implication of women's attractiveness and speech is neutral. In early texts like *Zuozhuan*, *Guoyu*, *Lüshi Chunqiu*, and *Shiji*, female attractiveness is referred to as *nude* 女德. For instance, *Zuozhuan* contains the saying that “female attractiveness is endless” 女德無極 (*Zuozhuan*, Xi 24.2); *Shiji* contains the saying that “the conquering tendency of the soft and tender does not only designate the female attractiveness, but also designates the beauty of men.” 柔曼之傾意，非獨女德，蓋亦有男色焉. Philip J. Ivanhoe finds the shared sense of the word *de* here with its general meaning as virtue in the aspect that “*de* retains the sense of an inherent, spontaneously functioning power to affect others.”<sup>224</sup> I would argue that this reference not only complicates the meaning of the word *de*, but also implies a neutral implication of female attractiveness in its earliest context, that is, female attractiveness is just part of the natural power that women have. Woman's speech is also a thing of dual implications. *Zuozhuan* and *Lienüzhuan* contain a great number of examples positively featuring women's speeches, although *Lienüzhuan* also advocates that women's slander is the source of political disaster.

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<sup>224</sup> Philip J. Ivanhoe, *Confucian Moral Self Cultivation*, x.

Below, this discussion will show how *Shiji* and *Lienüzhuan* played crucial roles in the formation of the discourse of female disaster; in contrast, *Zuo zhuan* does not reflect the essence of the discourse of female disaster, the tendency of taking certain types of women, who are sexually attractive, slanderous, or promiscuous, as responsible for political disaster.

### *The discourse of female disaster in Shiji and Lienüzhuan*

The tendency of tracing political disaster to women, especially to their speeches, sprouts in pre-Qin texts. Among the pre-Qin materials, the poem “Zhanyang” (瞻卬 Looking Up) in *The Book of Songs* is a distinguished representative of this discourse to advocate the destructiveness of women and their speech. According to Liu Yongcong, “Zhanyang” is also one of the most frequently cited texts in the comments in *Lienüzhuan* (*Traditions of Exemplary Women*) as support for Liu Xiang’s 劉向 (79-8 BCE) condemnation of negative female characters.<sup>225</sup>

A wise man builds up the state city,  
But a wise woman overthrows it.  
Admirable may be the wise woman,  
But she is [no better than] an owl.  
A woman with a long tongue,  
Is [like] a stepping-stone to disorder.  
Disorder does not come down from heaven;  
It is produced by women.  
Those from whom come no lessons, no instruction,  
Are women and eunuchs

.....  
So a woman who has nothing to do with public affairs,  
Leaves her silk-worms and weaving.

哲夫成城  
哲婦傾城

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<sup>225</sup> Liu, *De cai se quan*, 89.

懿厥哲婦  
為梟為鴟  
婦有長舌  
維厲之階  
亂匪降自天  
生自婦人  
匪教匪誨  
時維婦寺  
...  
婦無公事  
休其蠶織<sup>226</sup>

This poem clearly articulates the basic idea of female disaster -- that women are the source of disaster -- with its fourth stanza: “Disorder does not come down from heaven; it is produced by women.” This poem also explicitly propagates the idea that women should not be involved in public affairs. Women’s wisdom and eloquence is taken as a source of political disorder and ruin: a woman of wisdom will overthrow a state city in contrast to a man’s wisdom which could establish a state city. In particular, a woman’s eloquent speech, described in the metaphor “long tongue,” is taken as a stepping-stone to disorder.

According to the Mao commentary, this poem criticizes King You of Zhou 周幽王 who is misled by Bao Si 褒姒.<sup>227</sup> Paul Rakita Goldin hence argues that the point of the poem “would be not that all women are inherently wicked--only those, like Pao [Bao] Ssu [Si], who scheme to alter the line of succession and thereby bring on catastrophes which they cannot have thought through.”<sup>228</sup> In other words, the disaster is connected to a

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<sup>226</sup> Maoshi Zhengyi 毛詩正義, in *Shisanjing zhushu* 十三經注疏 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 2001), 5: 1914.

<sup>227</sup> Ibid.

<sup>228</sup> Paul Rakita Goldin, *The Sage and the Second Sex*, 135.

certain type of woman, not all women. In *Lienüzhuan*, various stanzas from this poem are quoted in the commentaries to the stories about negative female characters, such as Moxi 末喜, Wen Jiang of Lu 魯文姜, Li Ji of Jin 晉骊姬, Sheng Ji of Qi 齊聲姬, in order to affirm their identity as the type of “Pernicious and Depraved” (*niebi* 賐嬖) women.<sup>229</sup> In the stories about women under the type of “the Pernicious and Depraved,” the responsibility of political catastrophes is not attributed to the men who were attracted to these women or who took their slander or schemes; instead, the responsibility is put on the women who were the main actors in politics. The compiler of the stories clearly identifies these female characters as the source of disaster with comments quoting from this poem or other similar statements. Women’s wisdom and eloquence, which are presented in the stories as schemes and slanders, are treated as faults of the women who belong to the category of “the Pernicious and Depraved,” although the more common feature of women in this category is sexual attractiveness and promiscuousness.

However, also in *Lienüzhuan*, there are categories of “the Virtuous and Wise” 賢明, there are categories 仁智 and “Those Able in Reasoning and Understanding” 辭通 which feature women who combined wisdom and eloquence with female virtue. Mu Ji of Qin 秦穆姬, Qi Jiang of Jin 晉齊姜, Deng Man of Chu 楚鄧曼, the wife of Xiji 僖羈妻, the wife of Zongbo 宗伯妻, whose stories came from *Zuozhuan*, were transmitted in these categories.<sup>230</sup> Women are categorized into contrasting types although they may own

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<sup>229</sup> Albert Richard O’Hara, *The Position of Woman in Early China: According to the Lieh Nü Chuan “The Biographies of Chinese Women”* (Taipei: Mei Ya Publications, Inc., 1971), 186-214.

<sup>230</sup> Ibid.

similar qualities such as eloquence or wisdom. Women's smartness and eloquence could be praised as good qualities only when they are combined with female virtues in the sense of serving the interests of their fathers, husbands or brothers.

What really differentiates women in the category of "the Pernicious and Depraved" from the women in those positive categories is not their wisdom, eloquence or sexual attractiveness, as they are accused of in the stories; instead, it is the political catastrophes or benefits to a certain group of men which are linked to their behavior. Liu Xiang categorizes women into distinct types regardless of the complexity of women within these stories or the commonalities between women in the different types. This tendency of identifying a certain woman as the source of political disaster is the essence of the discourse of female disaster. The hallmarks that will place a woman into this dangerous category include: sexual attractiveness, smartness, eloquence, rich sexual experiences and linkage to a political catastrophe.

*Shiji*'s participation in this tradition of denigrating women represented by "Zhanyang" is evident from its emphasis on the destruction caused by women's speech and attractiveness in some important moments of early Chinese history, such as the fall of three dynasties and the tragic exile of Confucius from the state of Lu.

The female element in the cause for Confucius's exile from his native state exists in the account of *The Analects*: "The people of Qi sent to Lu a present of female entertainers, which Ji Huan received, and for three days no court was held. Confucius took his departure" 齊人歸女樂，季桓子受之。三日不朝，孔子行。<sup>231</sup> In this account, it is implied that Ji Huanzi, who is attracted to entertainers and forgets his duty, is

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<sup>231</sup> Liu Baonan 劉寶楠: *Lunyu zhengyi* 論語正義 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1990), "Weizi" 微子, 21.717.

responsible for Confucius's departure. The *Shiji* account of the same event diverts the fault to women by emphasizing the active role of women in the event.

Huanzi finally accepted the female entertainers from Qi and did not harken to the public affairs for three days. When the Ritual of Jiao was done, he again did not distribute sacrificial meat to the general ministers. Confucius then left and stayed overnight in Dun. *Shiji* sent him off and said: "The master did not do anything wrong." Confucius said: "Can I sing?" He sang: "The mouth of the women could cause exile; the advice of women could cause death and failure. So wander around leisurely in order to finish the years!"

桓子卒受齊女樂，三日不聽政；郊，又不致膳俎於大夫。孔子遂行，宿乎屯。而師已送，曰：“夫子則非罪。”孔子曰：“吾歌可夫？”歌曰：“彼婦之口，可以出走；彼婦之謁，可以死敗。蓋優哉游哉，維以卒歲！”<sup>232</sup>

This detail of Confucius's song is new content added to the *Shiji* version. The song propagates the idea of the destructiveness of female advice to relations between a ruler and his ministers. With the added detail of Confucius singing the song, women's speech displaces Huanzi's personal indulgence in entertainment to become Confucius's real concern and the cause of his exile. The song itself is an abrupt addition to the story, since there is no evidence in the preceding portion of the story that these female musicians have been offering advice to Huanzi. Women's passive involvement in politics in the *Analects* version is rewritten into an active role in the *Shiji* version. This modification makes women, rather than the ruler, culpable for Confucius's exile. From another perspective, the way the *Shiji* version confuses a ruler's indulgence in women with women's active mouthing of advice implies that, for Sima Qian, they are two sides of the same thing -- female disaster. This episode of the story conveys a strong message of female disaster through the authoritative voice of Confucius.

While the "Hereditary Household of Confucius" criticizes women's slander without any narrative support, "Hereditary Household of Wei" 衛康叔世家 lists the

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<sup>232</sup> *Shiji*, 47.1918.

narrative examples from the Spring and Autumn period to support the idea that women  
womenn period to support the idea that women suppo

His Honor the Grand Scribe says: “When I read the words of this ‘hereditary house,’ and reach the point of Duke Xuan’s heir [Jizi] being executed on account of a woman’s opinion, and his younger brother Shou’s vying to die first so that [the Heir] might live instead, [I am reminded] how similar this is to the Heir of Jin, Shensheng, who is not daring to expose the faults of the lady Li Ji—they each abhorred the idea of harming their father’s aspirations. Yet they ultimately paid with their lives—how tragic! Sometimes fathers and sons kill each other, or brothers destroy each other— Alas, what is this all for?” (Nienhauser, V.1: 261-62)

太史公曰：余讀世家言，至於宣公之太子(假/急)以婦見誅，弟壽爭死以相讓，此與晉太子申生不敢明驪姬之過同，俱惡傷父之志。然卒死亡，何其悲也！父子相殺，兄弟相滅，亦獨何哉？( *Shiji*, 37.1810)

This comment parallels the story about the sons of Duke Xuan of Wei with the story of Li Ji. Sima Qian considers that Duke Xuan’s wife Xuan Jiang was solely accountable for the tragedy that happened to Duke Xuan’s sons, Ji Zi and Shou (Nienhauser, V.1:248). Sima Qian also compares this story to the famous Li Ji case, which features the destructive effect of a woman’s slander. As discussed in the previous chapter, the exceptional expansion of Li Ji’s speech in the *Shiji* version exemplifies woman’s “long tongue” and makes Li Ji a representative example of the destructiveness of a woman’s speech. Though the final question about the reason for the tragedy between fathers and sons and between brothers remains unanswered in the comment, the answer is implied in his summaries of these two stories--that is, fathers, sons and brothers kill each other on account of slander by women. This passage implies the idea that women’s acts of slander are the source of tragedy and disputes between fathers and sons and between brothers.

Besides the two cases mentioned above, the major contribution Sima Qian makes to the tradition of the discourse of female disaster is that he writes this discourse into the

pattern of the dynastic cycle and makes women accountable for the fall of all three early dynasties. Though the patterned correlation between women and the fall of three dynasties began in *Guoyu* and *Zuozhuan*, it is in *Shiji* and *Lienüzhuan* that a woman, as a person, becomes the source of disaster.

Let's first look at the *Guoyu* version of the fall of the three dynasties, where it considers the destructiveness of women from the perspective of the historic conflicts between two political entities:

After the banquet, Historian Su told the ministers: “There are male Rong people and there are also female Rong people. If the Jin won over Rong with male Rong people, the Rong definitely will win over Jin with female Rong people, what we could do with that!” Li Ke said: “Why?” Historian Su said: “In antiquity, Jie of Xia attacked Shi, the Shi people married Meixi to him. Meixi was favored; as a result, she is comparable in status with Yi Yin and brought down Xia. Xin of Yin attacked Su, the Su people married Daji to him. Daji was favored; as a result, she was comparable in status with Jiao Li and brought down Yin. King You of Zhou attacked Bao, the people of Bao married Bao Si to him. Bao Si was favored and gave birth to Bo Fu, so that she is comparable in status with Tao Shifu, the Heir Apparent Yi Jiu was sent to exile and Bo Fu was established. The Heir Apparent fled to Shen. The people of Shen and Zeng called in western Rong to attack the Zhou. The Zhou was then destroyed.”

飲酒出，史蘇告大夫曰：“有男戎必有女戎。若晉以男戎勝戎，而戎亦必以女戎勝晉，其若之何！”里克曰：“何如？”史蘇曰：“昔夏桀伐有施，有施人以妹喜女焉，妹喜有寵，于是乎與伊尹比而亡夏。殷辛伐有蘇，有蘇氏以妲己女焉，妲已有寵，于是乎與膠鬲比而亡殷。周幽王伐有褒，褒人以褒姒女焉，褒姒有寵，生伯服，于是乎與虢石甫比，逐太子宜臼而立伯服。太子出奔申。申人、鄆人召西戎以伐周。周于是乎亡。”<sup>233</sup>

In the *Guoyu*, in this statement from Historian Su, Meixi 妹喜, Daji 姐己 and Bao Si 褒姒 bring down dynasties under similar conditions: they are daughters of conquered people but favored by the leaders of the conquering central states and received status equal to primary ministers in their courts. This means that the fall of the dynasties results

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<sup>233</sup> *Guoyu*, “jinyu”1, 255.

from the conquest of the states by the enemies from within those states. This is further clarified by the following paragraph.

Now my lord destroys the father and raises his child, this is the foundation of disaster. If he raises the child and follows her desires, the child will long to avenge her father's shame. Although she has an attractive appearance, certainly she has an evil heart and can not be taken as good. In love with her appearance, certainly my lord will offer her his love. If she receives his love and deepens her desire and follows her devilish heart, then certainly she will ruin the country and create disaster. The disaster comes from female barbarians (Rong) and this is the case for all three dynasties.

今君滅其父而畜其子，禍之基也。畜其子，又從其欲，子思報父之恥而信其欲，雖好色，必惡心，不可謂好。好其色，必授之情。彼得其情以厚其欲，從其惡心，必敗國且深亂。亂必自女戎，三代皆然。<sup>234</sup>

In this paragraph, the “devilish heart” (惡心) of a dangerous woman is based on a daughter’s longing to avenge her father’s shame of being defeated by the central states. In other words, the devilish heart of a dangerous woman is interpreted as historically entrenched rather than inherent.

In contrast, *Shiji* considers the destructiveness of these women from the perspective of the inherently different functions of *yin/woman* and *yang/man* and the coordination of those functions. This is reflected in Sima Qian’s lecture on the role of conjugal families of empires in the rise and fall of dynasties in “The Hereditary Household of Marital Relatives” (*Shiji*, j.49):

From antiquity those emperors and kings received the Mandate, and those rulers succeeded to rule and preserved the culture not just because their interior virtue was robust, but also because they got assistance from their external relatives. The Xia dynasty flourished by relying on Tushan, whereas Jie was exiled because of Moxi. The Yin (Shang) flourished by relying on Yousong, whereas Zhou was killed because of favoring Daji. The Zhou flourished by relying on Jiang Yuan and Grand Ren, whereas King You was captured because of being enamored of Bao Si.

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<sup>234</sup> *Guoyu*, “jinyu”1, 263.

自古受命帝王及繼體守文之君，非獨內德茂也，蓋亦有外戚之助焉。夏之興也以涂山，而桀之放也以末喜。殷之興也以有娀，紂之殺也嬖妲己。周之興也以姜原及大任，而幽王之禽也淫於褒姒。(Shiji, 49.1967)

Sima Qian emphasizes the dual role of the marital relatives of the emperors and kings in the success and fall of the lineage. Noticeably, when Sima Qian talks about the rise of a great dynasty, the contribution tends to be attributed to the natal state of the empress, hence another group of men; when he talks about the fall, the fault belongs to a specific woman. It produces a pattern for the rise and fall of a dynasty: the rise of a dynasty depends on the appearance of great men and good alliances among men, whereas the fall of a dynasty is brought about by the favoritism of a single woman. This message resonates with what is said in the poem “Zhanyang” about the contrasting roles that the two genders play in the life cycle of a state city. When women do make a contribution to the establishment of a dynasty, their contribution lies in their giving birth to great male ancestors as Jiang Yuan and Grand Ren did.

When Sima Qian provides the rationale for the dual role of marital relatives of emperors and kings in the success and fall of the lineage right after the passage in the quote, he resorts to the *yin-yang* theory. (His statement of the *yin-yang* theory has been discussed in the Introduction of this dissertation.) For Sima Qian, the role of marital families in historical events has a theoretic foundation in the fundamental working of *yin* and *yang*, since the royal consorts and their native families represent the force of *yin* in their relationship with the emperor and kings who represent the force of *yang*. According to the *yin-yang* theory, the marital families, the *yin*, could play a good role by following the leadership of the emperor and kings and give them necessary assistance; whereas, disaster is exclusively associated with *yin* and is solely brought up by the representatives

of the force of *yin*. Under this theory, it is the role of disastrous women that is emphasized for the fall of three dynasties.

The stories about Da Ji and Bao Si in “Basic Annals” demonstrate *Shiji*’s effort to trace the origin of disaster to women. Although the “Basic Annals of the Xia” does not mention Moxi 末喜 in its short record about Xia Jie 夏桀, the stories of Daji and Bao Si in the other two Basic Annals establish these two women as exemplars of female disaster. Daji’s story exemplifies the disaster of a woman’s speech, and Bao Si’s story exemplifies the disaster of a woman’s attractiveness. “The Basic Annals of Yin” makes Daji fully responsible for King Zhou’s 紂 wanton behavior.

Emperor [King] Zhou’s disposition was sharp, his discernment was keen, his perception was swift, and his physical strength excelled that of other people... He was fond of wine, licentious in pleasure and doted on women. He loved Daji and would only listen to her words. Hence [he] ordered Shi Juan to compose new licentious music, northern-district dances, and depraved songs. He raised taxes to fill the Lu Tai with money to stock his Ju Qiao with grain (Nienhauser, I:49).  
帝紂資辨捷疾，聞見甚敏；才力過人…好酒淫樂，嬖於婦人。愛妲己，妲己之言是從。於是使師涓作新淫聲，北里之舞，靡靡之樂。厚賦稅以實鹿臺之錢，而盈鉅橋之粟。*(Shiji, 3:105)*

The narrative starts with a description of King Zhou’s extraordinary abilities, his personality and his hobbies. Only after mentioning “he loved Daji and would only listen to her words” does the narrative turn to talk about his bad governance. With the conjunction word “hence” 於是 connecting these two portions of the story, the narrative renders it as if all of King Zhou’s bad governance is the result of following Daji’s advice. It is as if Daji holds complete sway over King Zhou’s mind and causes the bad governance that finally brings down the Shang dynasty. Although there is similarity in the incrimination of Daji between this *Shiji* version and the *Guoyii* version, what differentiates the former from the latter is that Daji’s destructiveness is not traced to a

further cause in the ruin of her natal state. Daji herself becomes the origin of disaster in the *Shiji* version.

The culpability of Daji is not unique to “The Basic Annals of Yin” in *Shiji*. “The Basic Annals of Zhou” (*Shiji*, j.4) has similar accusations about King Zhou of Shang in the voice of King Wu of Zhou 周武王 in the “Great Oath” 太誓.

King Wu then wrote the “The Great Oath” and announced to all the people: “Now Zhou, the King of Yin, has used his woman’s words to sever himself from Heaven, to destroy his three principal relationships and to distance himself from his uncles. He ended and abandoned his ancestors’ music and made licentious songs, used inflection to confound the orthodox songs and to please his women...”  
(Nienhuaser, I: 60)

武王乃作太誓，告于眾庶：“今殷王紂乃用其婦人之言，自絕于天，毀壞其三正，離逖其王父母弟，乃斷棄其先祖之樂，乃為淫聲，用變亂正聲，怡說婦人...” (*Shiji*, 4.121)

The content of the “Grand Oath” cited here from *Shiji* is different from “Grand Oath” in the “contemporary version” 今文 of *The Book of History* 尚書, although the credibility of “Great Oath” itself is a problem.<sup>235</sup> The language style of King Wu’s Great Oath is closer to the style of *Shiji* than to that of Emperor Wu’s other oath, “Oath at Mu” 牧誓, which also appears in the same “Basic Annals.” The concerns in the oath, such as the differentiation between orthodox music and inflected music as well as the importance of the three principal relationships, are major topics in the Han exegeses of the classics. The source of the oath is suspicious and it was probably forged in the more recent time of Sima Qian and attributed to King Wu of Zhou. However, the possibly more authentic “Oath at Mu” similarly accuses King Zhou of following a woman’s advice as his first major fault. The King said “The ancients had a saying, ‘A hen shall not

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<sup>235</sup> See Kong Yingda, *Shangshu zhengyi* 尚書正義 (Shanghai: Shanghai Guji Chubanshe, 2007), 397.

crow in the morning! For a hen to crow in the morning means that a household will become desolate.' Now Zhou, the King of Yin, only listens to his woman's words..."王曰：古人有言‘牝雞無晨。牝雞之晨，惟家之索’。今殷王紂維婦人言是用..." (*Shiji*, 4.122; Nienhauser, I: 61). This oath, which also appears in the *Book of History*, is the earliest record in the transmitted records of Chinese history of denigration of a woman's speech action and her participation in politics. It further connects itself with an even earlier tradition with the quotation of the ancients' words. The saying implies that the tradition of denigrating the speeches of women and rejecting their general involvement in public affairs starts much earlier and Sima Qian is only one of its representatives.

Along with the teaching in the story of Daji about women's opinions and general involvement in politics, the story of Bao Si in the "Basic Annals of the Zhou" exemplifies another aspect of female disaster, disaster related to a woman's attractiveness. Compared to the story about Daji, Sima Qian expends a much greater effort to rationalize the culpability of Bao Si 褒姒 for the ruin of the Zhou.

Lady Bao Si did not like to laugh. King You tried all means to make her laugh. But as before, she would not. King You lit the beacons and beat the great drums. As the beacons were lit only when intruders drew near, the feudal lords all came to the rescue. Upon their arrival, there were in fact no intruders, thus Lady Bao Si laughed out loud. The King was pleased, so he lit the beacons several times. Afterwards, since this was not a reliable warning, the feudal lords became more reluctant to come. 褒姒不好笑，幽王欲其笑萬方，故不笑。幽王為烽燧大鼓，有寇至則舉烽火。諸侯悉至，至而無寇，褒姒乃大笑。幽王說之，為數舉烽火。其後不信，諸侯益亦不至。(*Shiji*: 4.148)

Although Bao Si was indifferent to the long-distance trek made by the lords, as evidenced by her light-hearted reaction to the serious joke that King You had played on the feudal lords, it was King You who had come up with this idea and thus abused his own power. We can expect that the narrator would hold King You personally responsible

for being obsessed with a woman and being wanton with his power. However, the lengthy recounting of Bao Si's birth story makes clear that Sima Qian's intention is to make Bao Si responsible for the disaster. King You becomes a victim of the mysterious dangerous power that Bao Si obtains from her miraculous birth.

In the past, when the Xia-hou clan was in decline, two divine dragons appeared at the court of the Emperor of Xia and said: "We are the two lords of Bao." The Emperor of Xia divined, through scapulimancy, whether to kill them, to expel them, or store the dragons' saliva. Nothing was auspicious. Only when he divined a request to store the dragons' saliva was it auspicious. Thereupon, he laid out silk for sacrifice and wrote a prayer to them on a bamboo tablet. The dragons thus disappeared, leaving their saliva, which he put aside in a casket. When Xia perished, this casket was handed down to Yin; and when Yin perished, it was again handed down to Zhou. For three dynasties consecutively none had ventured to open it until near the end of King Li's era when he opened it to look at it. The saliva overflowed the court and could not be cleaned up. King Li made women strip naked and yell at it. The saliva changed into a black reptile and as such entered the innermost quarters of the king's palace. A girl in the innermost quarters, whose adult teeth had just come in, encountered it and became pregnant when her hair was first pinned up. As she had no husband, yet gave birth to a baby, she was frightened and abandoned it...the abandoned daughter came from Bao, she was Lady Bao Si. In the third year of King You, King You saw her at the inner palace and loved her, they bore the son Bofu, and even abolished Queen Shen and the Heir Apparent and took Bao Si as the Queen and Bofu as the Heir Apparent. The Grand Historian Boyang said: "The Disaster is in shape and nothing to change!" (Nienhauser, I:73, modified)

昔自夏后氏之衰也，有二神龍止於夏帝庭而言曰：“余，褒之二君。”夏帝卜殺之與去之與止之，莫吉。卜請其漦而藏之，乃吉。於是布幣而策告之，龍亡而漦在，櫝而去之。夏亡，傳此器殷。殷亡，又傳此器周。比三代，莫敢發之，至厲王之末，發而觀之。漦流于庭，不可除。厲王使婦人裸而譙之。漦化為玄龜，以入王后宮。后宮之童妾既甿而遭之，既笄而孕，無夫而生子，懼而棄之...棄女子出於褒，是為褒姒。當幽王三年，王之后宮見而愛之，生子伯服，竟廢申后及太子，以褒姒為后，伯服為太子。太史伯陽曰：「禍成矣，無可奈何！」(Shiji, 3.147)

According to the birth story, Bao Si is the indirect incarnation of two dragons' saliva which had been carefully confined by generations of emperors and kings throughout three dynasties. This saliva escaped and was incarnated as a black reptile during the reign of the notorious King Li 厲王 and successfully crawled into the inner

quarters of the palace where it impregnated a virgin girl who later give birth to Bao Si. Bao Si is made to be inherently dangerous by rendering her essence as something dangerous which was to be avoided throughout the good reigns but escapes through careless dealing in the recent bad reigns. In *Shiji*, Bao Si is the embodiment of the *yin* part of her god ancestor, the saliva of the dragon gods, which could be considered as a form of *yin* power with its humidity, mutability and association with darkness and secrecy.

This mythical story about Bao Si has its precedent in “Zhengyu” 鄭語 in *Guoyu* 國語. In “Zhengyu,” Bao Si is a woman taken domestically into the Zhou without appropriate ceremony and then replaces Queen Shen, who had been taken from another clan of a different surname through appropriate ceremony. Although *Shiji* adapted the birth story from “Zhengyu,” it does not adapt its discursive context and broader perspective. In “Zhengyu,” this story is told by Boyang in his conversation with Duke Zheng about the faults of King You of Zhou which would result in a disaster for him. In “Zhengyu,” King You is faulted for his preference for bad associates over good ones. The list of bad associates includes Bao Si but is not limited to her. Boyang addresses the faults committed by King You preceding the story about the mysterious birth of Bao Si.

The [King’s] failure is caused by harmful things. The “Grand Oath” says, “What the populace wants is what Heaven follows.” Today the King abandons the bright and illustrious things; he favors the obscure and slanderous things. He dislikes the rich, plump horn of rhinoceros, but associates with mischievous children and unproductive women... Now Shifu of Guo is a slandering, fawning, and craftily obsequious man, yet he has been raised ans a minister; this is because the king focuses on those who are similar to himself. [The king] has abandoned his legitimate queen and raised a concubine from his harem [as his chief consort]; this is because he is fond of unproductivenss. Indeed, dwarves and hunchbacks serve [as entertainers] by his side; this is because he allows the churlish to draw near. He does not let the standards of Zhou shine, but carries out the words of a woman; this is because he makes use of the slanderous and nefarious. He does not

establish [meritorious] ministers, but employs [the advice] of his bewitching [wife] and installs his favorites; this is because he carries out the obscure. Such a state of affairs cannot continue long.

殆於必弊者也。《泰誓》曰：『民之所欲，天必從之。』今王棄高明昭顯，而好讒慝暗昧；惡角犀豐盈，而近頑童窮固。…夫虢石父讒諂巧從之人也，而立以為卿士，與劓同也；棄聘後而立內妾，好窮固也；侏儒戚施，實御在側，近頑童也；周法不昭，而婦言是行，用讒慝也；不建立卿士，而姚試幸措，行暗昧也。是物也，不可以久。<sup>236</sup>

In this passage the target of criticism is King You who made inappropriate choices for his associates. These inappropriate choices include his establishment of ministers, replacement of the queen, and the selection of entertainers, as well as his favoritism of Bao Si. In Boyang's discussion, King You's favoritism of Bao Si over Queen Shen is criticized for three reasons. First, the marriage between King You and Bao Si, as a consort taken domestically, could not be as prolific and beneficial as the one between King You and Queen Shen. Second, her slanderous words, which King You would follow, would interfere with the appropriate working of the Zhou law. The third reason is the most important reason in the discussion: King You's abolishment of Queen Shen and the crown prince would lead to the anger of her native state, Shen, and its associated states. This reason is listed at the end of the account of Bao Si's birth story:

Xu of Bao [the ruler of Bao] had committed a crime, so he offered [this girl] to King [You], and the king subsequently excused him. [The King] came to dote on the girl and made her his queen; she gave birth to Bofu. Heaven engendered this [disaster] long ago. The poison of [the girl from Bao] is great; [she] was granted to the king in order to expedite the destruction of his excessive nature. When poison is well stewed, it kills even more quickly. Shen, Zeng and the Western Rong are now mighty, and the royal house is in disarray; since the king continues to indulge his desires, is [the situation] not all the more difficult? The king wishes to kill the crown prince in order to secure Bofu; he will surely request [the crown prince] from Shen. The men of Shen will not consent to [handing over the crown prince], the king will surely attack them. If he attacks Shen, and Zeng and the Western Rong united to attack Zhou, then Zhou cannot be defended. Zeng and the Western Rong treat Shen kindly, and Shen and Lü are mighty, their warm love of

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<sup>236</sup> Guoyu, “zhengyu”, 515.

the Crown Prince well known. If the king's army should arrive, it is certain that [Shen's allies] would rush to its assistance. The King's heart is angry, the lord of Guo obsequious. The existence or destruction of Zhou will be determined within three years.<sup>237</sup>

褒人褒姁有獄，而以為入于王，王遂置之，而嬖是女也，使至于為後而生伯服。天之生此久用處，其為毒也大矣，將使候淫德而加之焉。毒之酋臘者，其殺也滋速。申、繒、西戎方強，王室方騷，將以縱欲，不亦難乎？王欲殺太子以成伯服，愁求之申，申人弗畀，愁伐之。若伐申而繒與西戎會以伐周，周不守矣！繒于西戎方將 德申，申、呂方強，其隩愛太子亦必可知也，王師若在，其救之亦必然矣。王心怒矣，虢公從矣，凡周存亡，不三稔矣！<sup>238</sup>

Thus King You's insistence on satisfying his personal desire by replacing the appropriate heir with his favored son would lead to a war between these states and the Zhou. All these discussions in the quoted passages put Bao Si into a historical context where King You's favoritism of Bao Si is related to different aspects of state politics and King You's pursuit of the satisfaction of his desire is detrimental because of the existence of other powerful parties.

When Sima Qian adapts the myth of Bao Si's birth from "Zhengyu" he cuts the narrative off from the context of criticism of King You and singles out the narrative about Bao Si's birth alone. This means that the mysterious birth story stands alone to imply an inherent dangerous nature of Bao Si. Furthermore, the *Shiji* version abbreviates Boyang's comment to disconnect Bao Si's dangerous nature from its final agent of Heaven and let it stand on its own as a self-engendered thing. In "Zhengyu," when Boyang addresses the significance of the mysterious birth of Bao Si, he traces the agent of Bao Si's birth further: it is Heaven who has reserved Bao Si as punishment for someone for a wrongdoing. Boyang considers that Heaven is the agent of the birth of Bao Si and it sent her down as a

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<sup>237</sup> This translation is based on Paul Ro. Goldin's translation of the same passage, see Robin R. Wang, *Images of Women in Chinese Thought and Culture*, 86.

<sup>238</sup> *Guoyu*, "zhengyu", 519.

punishment upon a person of excessive nature (King You) who limitlessly pursues his personal desire. This renders Bao Si as a vehicle of righteousness by Heaven although she is displayed as a disaster. The actively featured negative character in “Zhengyu” is thus King You.

In the *Shiji* version instead, Boyang only makes a short comment after the narrative of the birth story:

In the third year of King You, the King saw her in the innermost quarters of the palace and loved her; she gave birth to Bofu. The King in the end removed Queen Shen and the Heir, made Lady Bao Si the Queen and Bo Fu the Heir. The Grand Scribe Bo Yang said: “The Calamity has taken from. There is nothing we can do about it! ” (Nienhauser, I:74)

當幽王三年，王之后宮見而愛之，生子伯服，竟廢申后及太子，以褒姒為后，伯服為太子。太史伯陽曰：「禍成矣，無可奈何！」 (*Shiji*, 4.147)

Bo Yang’s comment implies that Bao Si is the disaster, readily embraced by King You. Sima Qian adapts this fictional, supernatural birth story from “Zhengyu” and ignores the discursive context in the “Zhengyu” version. The mythicization of Bao Si’s birth makes the attractiveness of a woman something completely alien and extremely dangerous to civilization where it is constantly kept at bay. This mythicization is similar to other moments in *Shiji* where Sima Qian resorts to supernatural birth stories, that is, when he attempts to rationalize the power of someone as originating from within that person himself or herself. Another example is the miraculous birth of Liu Bang who becomes the first emperor of Han from a commoner’s family without any hereditary background.

The comparison of the Bao Si story in *Guoyu* and *Shiji* may suggest that the concept of the force behind the dynastic cycle changed from the mandate of Heaven in *Guoyu* to the interaction of the *yin* and *yang* forces in *Shiji*.

In *Lieniuzhuan*, Liu Xiang further developed the stories about the roles of three disastrous women in the fall of three dynasties by adding many more details to emphasize the connection between these women and the misbehavior of their husbands. Liu Xiang particularly features the power of these women's speeches and attractiveness. He stresses the negative role of womanly speeches in the story about Moxi with the sentence that "He [Jie] placed Moxi on his knee and harkened to her advice" 置末喜於膝上，聽用其言 and in the story about Bao Si with the sentence that "He [King You] punished the loyal admonitors by death and would only listen to Baosi" 忠諫者誅，唯褒姒言是從. In the story about Danji [Daji], Liu Xiang highlights King Zhou's obsession with Daji with the sentence that "He never left Danji, he valued highly whatever Danji praised and he destroyed whatever Danji disliked" 不離妲己，妲己之所譽貴之，妲己之所憎誅之.<sup>239</sup> With these additional highlights, women's speeches and attractiveness are thus rendered as the dark drive behind the fall of three dynasties.

### *Women's attractiveness in Zuozhuan*

The rest of this chapter will focus on how *Zuozhuan* represents women's attractiveness and speeches. The discussion below will revolve around the two topics of womanly beauty and womanly speech and illustrate each of them with three stories from *Zuozhuan*.

In contrast to *Shiji*'s approach to female attractiveness represented by the case of Bao Si, the following discussion will show that *Zuozhuan*'s approach to the relationship

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<sup>239</sup> O'Hara, *The Position of Woman in Early China*, 187,188, 191.

between women's attractiveness and their roles in politics does not follow the logic of female disaster by which an attractive woman is considered evil and held accountable for political disaster. The first case is Xi Gui 息媯 who first married the Duke of Xi 息公, then married King Wen of Chu 楚文王 and is also known as Lady Wen 文夫人. Xi Gui's beauty attracted Duke Ai of Cai and King Wen of Chu and the competition for her led to the ruin of Cai and Xi as seen from the following anecdotes from *Zuozhuan*. *Zuozhuan*, however, still celebrates her virtue and broad vision in the second as well as in a third anecdote about her.

*Zuozhuan, Zhuang 10.3*: Duke Ai of Cai took a wife in Chen. The Duke of Xi also took a wife there. When Gui, the wife of the Duke of Xi, was going to be married, she passed through Cai. The Duke of Cai said, "She is my sister-in-law." He detained her and met with her, but he did not treat her as a guest. When the Duke of Xi heard this, he was angry and sent someone to tell King Wen of Chu, "Attack us, and when we seek help from Cai, then attack them." The Master of Chu acted accordingly. In autumn, in the ninth month, Chu defeated the Cai army at Shen. They took Xianwu, Duke of Cai, with them on their return.

蔡哀侯娶于陳，息侯亦娶焉。息媯將歸，過蔡。蔡侯曰：「吾姨也。」止而見之，弗賓。息侯聞之，怒，使謂楚文王曰：「伐我，吾求救於蔡而伐之。」楚子從之。秋，九月，楚敗蔡師于莘，以蔡侯獻舞歸。(CQZZZ, 184)

*Zuozhuan, Zhuang 14.3*: Because of what happened at Shen, Lord Ai of Cai praised Xi Gui in speaking to the Master of Chu. The Master of Chu went to Xi and, on the pretext of carrying in food supplies for a ceremonial entertainment, immediately destroyed Xi. He took Xi Gui back home, and she eventually gave birth to Du Ao and the future King Cheng. But she had not yet spoken a word. The Master of Chu asked her about this, and she replied, "I, one woman, have served two husbands. Even though I have not been able to kill myself, why should you expect me to speak?" The Master of Chu, having destroyed Xi on account of the Duke of Cai, then attacked Cai. In autumn, in the seventh month, Chu entered Cai.

蔡哀侯為莘故，繩息媯以語楚子。楚子如息，以食入享，遂滅息。以息媯歸，生堵敖及成王焉。未言。楚子問之。對曰：「吾一婦人，而事二夫，縱弗能死，其又奚言？」楚子以蔡侯滅息，遂伐蔡。秋，七月，楚入蔡(CQZZZ, 198).

In the story, Duke Ai of Cai gave himself the excuse of his marital bond with Xi Gui to approach her. Angry at Duke Ai of Cai's inappropriate behavior with Xi Gui,

Duke of Xi invited the Chu army into a war with Cai. Inspired by Duke of Cai's praise of Xi Gui's beauty, King Wen of Chu destroyed the state of Xi in order to take Xi Gui as his wife. Thereafter, King Wen attacked Cai in order to please Xi Gui who regreted her situation of having married twice. These events show how Xi Gui's beauty leads to accusation and destructive attacks among powerful men. This story is comparable to the story of Bao Si in *Shiji*: Xi Gui's attractiveness leads to the ruin of her husband's reign as did the attractiveness of Bao Si. In addition, Xi Gui's trait of not initiating speech is also similar to Bao Si's state of not laughing: both of their attitudes suggest their refusal to give their husbands free access with avoidance of contact with them in one aspect.<sup>240</sup> Similarly, their refusal induces their husbands to resort to brave actions to win their attention.<sup>241</sup>

From the perspective of female disaster, Xi Gui, like Bao Si in *Shiji* could be accused of ruining two states by attracting the Duke of Cai and the King of Chu with her extraordinary beauty. But, in fact, in *Zuozhuan* the opposite holds true. In the

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<sup>240</sup> Scholars have various interpretation of Xi Gui's situation of “buyan” 不言. Yang Bojun follows Zheng Xuan and takes it to mean “not to initiate speech.” He also cites from *Liji*, “Sangfu”喪服 to support this. According to “Ritual: if serving cut-sleeve mourning, one responses with yes or no without fully reply. If serving rough-sleeve mourning, one replies but does not initiate conversation” 禮，斬衰之喪，唯而不對；齊衰之喪，對而不言. The cut-sleeve mourning is usually for father and ruler; the rough-sleeve mourning is usually for mother or consort. This implies Xi Gui was serving the rough-sleeve mourning for her ex-husband. See Yang Bojun, 198. See more explanation about the rite in Sun Xidan’s 孫希旦, *Liji jijie* in *Shisanjing qingren zhushu* 十三經清人注疏禮記集解 (Zhonghua Shuju, 1989), 1365. Qian Zhongshu follows Zhou Shouchang 周壽昌 and takes it to mean “not to talk about her past.” See Qian Zhongshu, 179. I think Yang’s interpretation is more favorable.

<sup>241</sup> Such a way of refusing to fulfill their social roles seems a common strategy for women at that time as seen from a third example here. *Zuozhuan*, under Zhao 28.3, recounts a story, “Some time ago there was a minister of Gu who was ugly. He took a wife who was beautiful, and for three years she neither spoke nor smiled. He drove her out into the marsh in his chariot and shot at a pheasant. When he hit it, his wife smiled and spoke for the first time.” 昔賈大夫惡，娶妻而美，三年不言不笑。御以如皋，射雉，獲之，其妻始笑而言。

commentary after the anecdote about Duke Wen's attack of Cai in order to please Xi Gui, the target of criticism is Duke Ai of Cai: "A noble man said, 'When it says in the *Shang Writings*: The spread of wickedness is like the blazing of fire on the prairie; since one cannot even approach it, how can one still beat it out?' surely fits Duke Ai of Cai!" 君子曰：「商書所謂『惡之易也，如火之燎于原，不可鄉邇，其猶可撲滅』者，其如蔡哀侯乎！」 The gentleman's speech criticizes Duke Ai of Cai's vice of instigating King Wen's attack upon Xi which finally causes the attack upon his own state.<sup>242</sup> It can be assumed from this anecdote that the narrator of *Zuozhuan* does not take as one of his choices the criticism of Xi Gui for being attractive or slanderous to King Wen. Instead, the *Zuozhuan* narrator attributes to Xi Gui a speech about her own situation in the first entry cited above to show her sense of Ritual Propriety. She was ashamed of being married to two husbands and resisted with her reticence. But she still survives and does not resort to suicide. Such an ambivalent attitude toward remarriage indicates the existence of an expectation toward women's chastity but its grip upon women is loose.<sup>243</sup> In comparison, the Han adaptation of Xi Gui's story in Liu Xiang's *Lienüzhuan* rewrites the story so that, after Xi Gui was made the wife of King Wen of Chu, she managed to meet with her ex-husband and commit suicide in front of him.<sup>244</sup> Xi Gui is rendered as a chaste woman who is only devoted to one husband and could not stand remarriage. In

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<sup>242</sup> Zhuang 6.4 in *Zuozhuan* has also cited this sentence and it is more clearly there to criticize a duke for bringing disaster upon himself by doing evil to others. See CQZZ, 50.

<sup>243</sup> Tong Shuye argues that the notion of female chastity represented in Xi Gui's speech does not emerge until the Warring States period and makes Xi Gui's speech here inauthentic. See Tong, *Chunqiu Zuozhuan yanjiu*, 377.

<sup>244</sup> See *Lienü Zhuan*, "Traditions of the Chaste and Obedient" 貞順傳, Lady of Duke of Xi 息君夫人, in *Siku Quanshu* 四庫全書 (Shanghai: Shanghai Guji Chubanshe, 1987), 448: 38-39; see the English version in O' Hara, *The Position of Women in Early China*, 112.

contrast, in *Zuozhuan*, Xi Gui not only survived her remarriage, she even survived the death of her second husband King Wen of Chu and was pursued by another man as shown in the third anecdote which will be discussed below.

In the following anecdote, *Zuozhuan* still praises the virtue and vision of a woman whose beauty leads to the disasters that befell two states. The story features Xi Gui's wise speech, spoken when the command minister of Chu, Zi Yuan, attempted to seduce her with witchcraft several years after King Wen's death.

*Zuozhuan*, Zhuang 28.3: Ziyuan, the command minister of Chu, wanted to bewitch the wife of King Wen. He built a lodge at the side of her palace and shook clappers there to the rhythm of the Wan dance. When the king's wife heard this, she wept and said, "When our former ruler used this dance, it was to practice our military preparedness. Now the command minister does not employ this against enemies but at the side of 'the person who has not yet perished' (a widow). Is this not an aberration?" An attendant reported this to Ziyuan, and Ziyuan said, "A woman has not forgotten the need to strike at our enemies, while I, in contrast, have forgotten it." 楚令尹子元欲蠱文夫人，為館於其宮側，而振萬焉。夫人聞之，泣曰：「先君以是舞也習戎備也。今令尹不尋諸仇讎，而於未亡人之側，不亦異乎！」御人以告子元。子元曰：「婦人不忘襲讎，我反忘之！」 (CQZZZ, 241)

This episode comes before the record about Zi Yuan's expedition to the state of Zheng 鄭. Lady Wen, Xi Gui, diverted Zi Yuan away from his interest in her and motivated his expedition to Zheng, the crucial battlefield in the competition for power between Jin and Chu. This episode is included here to give Xi Gui credit for her indirect advice to Zi Yuan. The episode not only reveals Xi Gui's lasting attractiveness for the men around her, but also demonstrates her virtue in being concerned with the public interest and her loyalty to her second husband, King Wen of Chu. This anecdote, together with the first two anecdotes, gives us a round image of Xi Gui: she is attractive and has a complicated marriage history; she has a strong sense of chastity but is still practical; and she is wise enough to be able to criticize a man's obsession with her. *Zuozhuan* hence

produces a female character of both attractive appearance and pure mind. This story in *Zuozhuan* does not align with the message that a woman's wisdom or her attractiveness is the source of disaster as advocated in the poem "Zhanyang" or implied in the stories in *Shiji*. This multi-dimensional image of Xi Gui in *Zuozhuan* not only contrasts with her image as a virtuous model in Liu Xiang's *Lienü Zhuan*, but also contrasts with her image as an attractive and disastrous woman in *Shiji* as will be discussed below.

"The Hereditary Household of Guan and Cai" (*Shiji*, j. 35) has a record mentioning Xi Gui which exactly follows the *Zuozhuan* account of Zhuang 10.3. It should be recalled that Xi Gui was treated without respect by Duke Ai of Cai in that episode, leading her husband Duke of Xi to take a revenge on the Duke of Cai by involving his state in a war with the Chu. The next two records in *Zuozhuan*, which feature Xi Gui's direct speech, are left out in *Shiji*.<sup>245</sup> Since anecdotes are not necessary elements for a dry record of great events for a lineage of rulers, in the "Hereditary Households" of *Shiji*, it is curious that Sima Qian retained the first anecdote on Xi Gui, which concerns the capture of Duke Ai of Cai outside of the domain, but skipped the second anecdote, Zhuang 14.3, which concerns the Chu army's invasion of the domain itself. It is possible that *Shiji* has referred to sources other than *Zuozhuan*. Nevertheless, a rationalization for this choice based upon the different importance of these two events for the lineage of Cai is not well-founded because the Chu army's invasion of the domain

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<sup>245</sup> In *Shiji*, the record proceeds as follows: Duke Ai's eleventh year (684 B.C.). Earlier, Duke Ai took a wife from Chen and the Marquise of Xi also took a wife from Chen. The lady of Xi (Xi Gui) was about to be married when she passed through Cai, Duke Ai of Cai did not treat her with respect. The Marquis of Xi was angry and made a request of King Wen of Chu (r.689-677 B.C.): "If you come to attack me, I will seek aid from Cai. Cai is sure to come and Chu can take advantage of this to strike at it. You will surely have merit by means of this." King Wen of Chu followed this, captured Duke Ai of Cai, and took him back with him 哀侯十一年，初，哀侯娶陳，息侯亦娶陳。息夫人將歸，過蔡，蔡侯不敬。息侯怒，請楚文王：「來伐我，我求救於蔡，蔡必來，楚因擊之，可以有功。」楚文王從之，虜蔡哀侯以歸. See *Shiji*, 35. 1566; Nienhauser, V.1: 197.

was no less important for a lineage than the event in which one duke was captured. The latter created the need to replace the ruler; the invasion might mean the complete ruin of the entire lineage. A parallel record in “The Hereditary Household of Chu” (*Shiji*, j.40) which combines these two events into one shows these two events have equal importance from the perspective of the Chu (*Shiji*, 40:1696; Nienhauser, V.1: 389). No matter what the reason might have been for Sima Qian to include the first anecdote and skip the other two, the effect of his choice is that Xi Gui is made into a good-looking woman whose attractiveness causes men to fight among each other. All the complexity of this female character in *Zuozhuan* is completely lost in the *Shiji* record.

The second story concerning the issue of female attractiveness, the story of the concubine/wife of Duke Ping of Song Qi棄, will show that *Zuozhuan*’s accommodation of multiple facets of a character also applies to those beautiful women of “long tongue.”

*Zuozhuan*, Xiang 26.8: (1) Some time earlier, the Song supervisor of conscripts Rui sired a girl that had been born red-skinned and hairy. He had had her abandoned at the bottom of an embankment. A concubine subordinate to Gong Ji took her in and named her “Qi.” She grew up and became beautiful. Once, when Duke Ping entered his mother Gong Ji’s quarters to pay an evening visit, Gong Ji gave him a meal. The lord saw Qi and gazed at her, finding her extremely bewitching. Gong Ji included her among the lord’s concubines. (2) She was favored and gave birth to Zuo, who was ugly but gentle. The heir apparent Cuo was handsome but ruthless. Xiang Xu, the preceptor of the left, feared and hated him. The eunuch Huiqiang Yilei was the heir’s court preceptor but did not enjoy any favor. In autumn, a Chu visitor came on an official visit to Jin and passed through Song. The heir apparent knew him and requested to offer him ceremonial entertainment in the country, and the lord had him go. Huiqiang Yilei requested to go with the heir apparent. The lord said, “Does he not hate you?” He replied, “...*(omitted because it is not related to our discussion)*...” The lord sent him. Upon his arrival, he dug a hole, sacrificed an animal, and placed on it a written document. He examined the site, and then galloped back and told the lord, “The heir apparent is about to raise a rebellion. He has already sworn a covenant with the visitor from Chu.” The lord said, “He is my heir. What else can he ask for?” He replied, “He wants to accede sooner.” The lord sent someone to examine the site, and there was indeed evidence. He asked his consort, Qi, and Xiang Xu about this, and they both said, “We have indeed heard about it.” The lord imprisoned the

heir apparent, who said, “Only Zuo can save me.” He summoned Zuo and sent him to intercede on his behalf with the lord, saying, “If by midday he does not come, I know I will die.” Xiang Xu heard about this and kept up an endless conversation with Zuo. The appointed time passed, and Cuo thus hanged himself and died. Zuo became the heir apparent. The lord gradually came to hear that Cuo was guiltless, and he thus had Huiqiang Yilei boiled alive. (3) Xiang Xu saw the groom walking the horses for the lord’s wife and asked whose horses they were. He replied, “The duke’s wife.” Xiang Xu said, “Who is the duke’s wife? How come I do not know?” The groom came back and told the duke’s wife. The duke’s wife sent Xiang Xu gifts of brocade and horses and preceded them with jades, along with this message: “The duke’s concubine, Qi, sent this emissary to present them.” Xiang Xu changed the wording to “the duke’s wife,” and then he bowed twice with his forehead touching the ground and accepted the gifts.

初，宋芮司徒生女子，赤而毛，棄諸堤下，共姬之妾取以入，名之曰棄。長而美。平公入夕，共姬與之食。公見棄也而視之尤。姬納諸御，嬖，生佐，惡而婉。太子座美而很，合左師畏而惡之。寺人惠牆伊戾為太子內師而無寵。秋，楚客聘於晉，過宋。太子知之，請野享之，公使往。伊戾請從之。公曰：「夫不惡女乎？」對曰：「……」遣之。至則欲用牲，加書徵之，而騁告公曰：「太子將為亂，既與楚客盟矣。」公曰：「為我子，又何求？」對曰：「欲速。」公使視之，則信有焉。問諸夫人與左師，則皆曰：「固聞之。」公囚太子。太子曰：「唯佐也能免我。」召而使請，曰：「日中不來，吾知死矣。」左師聞之，恆而與之語。過期，乃縊而死。佐為太子。公徐聞其無罪也，乃享伊戾。左師見夫人之步馬者，問之。對曰：「君夫人氏也。」左師曰：「誰為君夫人？余胡弗知？」圉人歸，以告夫人。夫人使饋之錦與馬，先之以玉，曰：「君之妾棄使某獻。」左師改命曰「君夫人」，而後再拜稽首受之。(CQZZZ, 1117-8)

This is a fairly long narrative in *Zuozhuan* where a woman, Qi, is the narrative center. The passage has three independent anecdotes which are marked with numerals in the quote and which focus on teaching a lesson about virtue and beauty. At first glance, this story fits the theme, which *Shiji* prefers to transmit, about the association between a favored concubine and succession upheaval. In particular, Qi could be compared to the model femme fatale Bao Si with her birth story in the first anecdote. Qi had an unusual birth. She was born with a red-skinned and hairy body. This made her seem less human and was the reason her biological mother abandoned her. The unnatural birth, as in the

case of Bao Si, works to explain why Qi is “extremely bewitching”尤.<sup>246</sup> She also had an issue with speech, as seen from the fact that she gave perjured testimony on the occasion of the accusation against Heir Apparent Cuo.

However, if we examine the story above carefully, we see elements and messages that go against the typical “favored concubine versus succession upheaval” story as it appears in *Shiji*. In the *Shiji* type, the legitimate heir tends to represent righteousness and goodness; and the slanderous concubine and her son tend to represent evilness. This story, however, can be read quite differently. In the second anecdote, Qi’s son Zuo was described as “ugly but gentle” and the Heir Apparent Cuo was described as “handsome but ruthless.” This comparison measures their nature against their looks. The narrative confirms Zuo’s good nature from Cuo’s perspective in the episode about Cuo’s hope of being rescued by Zuo. The above comparison reverses the logic encountered in the *Shiji* stories of this type that so often pits the favored concubine and her son against the righteous, legitimate heir. The contrast of them in the story is given from the point of view of the left chief minister of Song, Xiang Xu 向戌, as seen from the fact that he is the person who reacts to this contrast in the narrative: Xiang Xu feared and hated Cuo and preferred Zuo to be the future ruler. Xiang Xu not only committed perjury as Qi did, he also hindered Zuo’s effort of rescuing Cuo by stopping him from seeing Cuo in time. This caused Cuo to commit suicide in despair. Xiang Xu’s machinations seem to put him

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<sup>246</sup> In the “Treatise of Five-phases” of *Han Shu*, Qi’s hairy skin reflects a disharmony in the *yin-yang* system and is associated with a failure to discriminate correctly between the respectful and the debased. In this case, such indiscrimination is seen in the fact that Qi was raised to the position of a wife from the position of concubine, see *Han Shu*, 5.1419.

in a negative light, which blemish his positive image in other entries in *Zuo zhuan*.<sup>247</sup> However, he is not the only basically positive character who uses machinations to bring down a bad ruler-candidate in *Zuo zhuan*.<sup>248</sup> In particular, Xiang Xu's abhorrence of the heir Cuo fits his concern with inner virtue and disdain of outer beauty, characteristics illustrated in the entry Xiang 15.1. There Xiang Xu criticizes Meng Xianzi's 孟獻子 beautification of his abode 美室 as marring his good reputation 令聞.<sup>249</sup> This anecdote shows that Xiang Xu honored fame won from demonstrating one's virtue and saw the negative effect that concern with beauty had on one's virtue. This anecdote also suggests that a concern with one's good reputation and virtue was commonly shared by prominent ministers at the time, such as Xiang Xu and Meng Xianzi. The anecdote also places Xiang Xu among that group of people whose point of view the authors of *Zuo zhuan* promote.<sup>250</sup> Seen from Xiang Xu's point of view, Zuo's ugliness would help him concentrate on the gaining of virtue, whereas Cuo's beauty would distract his attention away from his virtue. Both Cuo's good looks and his ruthless personality rationalize the belief that he would be a bad ruler if he acceded. With inclusion of the description

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<sup>247</sup> See *Zuo zhuan*, Xiang 15.1, Xiang 27.4, Xiang 27.6.

<sup>248</sup> An excellent example is Shi Que 石碏. Shi Que caused a usurper Zhou Xu 州吁 to be executed by offering disguised "good" advice about how he might solidify his rule. See Yin 4.5. He was praised as a "gentleman" in *Zuo zhuan*.

<sup>249</sup> ZZ, Xiang 15.1: In the fifteenth year, in spring, Xiang Xu of Song came on an official visit, and also to renew the covenant of Bo. He had an audience with Meng Xianzi, and found fault with his abode: "You, sir, have a great reputation and yet you have aggrandized your abode. This is not what we had hoped for." He replied, "When I was in Jin, my older brother did it. To take it down would be to redouble the labor. Moreover, I do not dare oppose him." 十五年，春，宋向戌來聘，且尋盟。見孟獻子，尤其室，曰：「子有令聞而美其室，非所望也。」對曰：「我在晉，吾兄為之。毀之重勞，且不敢間。」

<sup>250</sup> According to David Schaberg, the historiographers of *Zuo zhuan* identified themselves with a ministerial class depicted as steadfastly conservative, prescient, and eloquent. See David Schaberg, *A Patterned Past*, 259.

“handsome and ruthless” preceding the anecdote about Cuo’s death, the *Zuozhuan*

authors render it as if Cuo’s tragic ending is due to his lack of virtue.

The relationship between virtue and beauty in the case of Cuo indicates a way of interpreting the story of Qi, who was an extremely bewitching beauty herself. In both the second and the third anecdote in the entry Xiang 26.8, the success of Qi and her son is interpreted as a result of their ability to accrue virtue rather than to extract favor from the duke based on Qi's attractiveness. In the third anecdote, Xiang Xu at first pretended not to know who the wife of the duke was. This suggests his disapproval of the ritually inappropriate act of promoting a concubine of low status like Qi, who also shared the same surname with the duke, to the status of the duke's formal wife. The change of Xiang Xu's attitude afterwards has to do with Qi's manifestation of her sense of Ritual Propriety. In Qi's greeting to Xiang Xu, she offered him gifts which were relevant to his status as a chief minister and precedes them with jade. Jade is highly associated with ritual propriety and could symbolize one's virtue.<sup>251</sup> She also addressed herself as “the duke's concubine” to show that she abides by Ritual Propriety as Xiang Xu did and did not regard herself as the duke's formal wife. Qi's greeting showed her strong sense of ritual propriety and won Xiang Xu's support of her as the duke's wife. So Xiang Xu asks that her title be changed to “duke's formal wife” before he accepted the gifts from her in an equivalent ritual manner by “bowing twice with his forehead touching the ground.”

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<sup>251</sup> Jade is commonly used in ritual vessels and is associated with Ritual Propriety. In *Analects*, Confucius said, “ ‘It is according to the rules of propriety,’ they say. ‘It is according to the rules of propriety,’ they say. Are jade and silk all that is meant by propriety? ‘It is music,’ they say. ‘It is music,’ they say. Are bells and drums all that is meant by music?” 子曰：“禮云禮云，玉帛云乎哉？樂云樂云，鐘鼓云乎哉？” see *Lunyu zhengyi* 論語正義, 6. 28, 6.691.

Although Qi started out as a bewitching woman in the first anecdote, the following two anecdotes submit her story to the common teaching about the inevitable working of *bao*, “recompense” in *Zuozhuan*.<sup>252</sup> The last anecdote is included to present the dynamics of *bao*: a ritually inappropriate promotion was dismissed by a representative minister; the promotion was acknowledged after the candidate demonstrated her mastery of ritual propriety, or *li* (禮). As David Schaberg argues that “the historiographers made the anecdote series, with its predictions and culminations, its balanced accounts of revenge and reward, the demonstration of *li* at work.”<sup>253</sup> Qi and her son’s success in the state are thus interpreted as a reward for their demonstration of virtue and a punishment upon Cuo for his lack of virtue.

This story displays a more flexible approach toward a favored attractive woman in *Zuozhuan*. In contrast to the dualistic approach to the same issue in *Shiji*, where a favored attractive concubine is evil and the abandoned legitimate heir is good and righteous, *Zuozhuan* contextualizes the success of a group of people to emphasize the constant working of *bao* in dynamic situations and to promote the importance of virtue without pre-selection of its representative. As a result, the image of Qi in *Zuozhuan* is not as simplistic and flat as that of a bad slanderous beauty. Instead, Qi is complicated and has contrasting dimensions of being slanderous and self-interested, on the one hand, and being ritually-appropriate and having self-awareness, on the other hand.

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<sup>252</sup> As argued by David Schaberg, the historiographer of *Zuozhuan* promotes the inevitable workings of *bao*, *recompense*, by recounting the events as a series of ritual aberrations and corrections. See David Schaberg, *A Patterned Past*, 259.

<sup>253</sup> Ibid., 221.

An underlying message about physical attractiveness from the discussion of Qi and Cuo in *Zuozhuan* is that, though the effect of physical attractiveness might be powerful, one's virtue is still the determining element for one's fate. The discussion of the disaster of physical attractiveness in the speeches of Shu Xiang's mother 叔向之母 in *Zuozhuan* conveys a similar message.

*Zuozhuan*, Xiang 21.5: Sometime earlier, Shuxiang's mother was jealous of Shuhu's mother, who was beautiful but was not sent to wait on their husband. Her sons all remonstrated with their mother. Their mother said, "Deep mountains and great marshes indeed produce dragons and snakes. She is beautiful, and I fear she will give birth to dragons and snakes to bring disaster upon you. Yours is a declining clan, and the domain has many that enjoy great favor. When ruthless persons set them against you, would that not be ruinous? Why else would I begrudge her our husband?" Shuxiang's mother thus sent her to wait on their husband in the bedchamber. She bore Shuhu, who was handsome, valiant, and strong. Luan Ying was enamored of him. That was why the Yangshe clan came to grief.

初，叔向之母妒叔虎之母美而不使，其子皆諫其母。其母曰：「深山大澤，實生龍蛇。彼美，余懼其生龍蛇以禍女。女，敝族也。國多大寵，不仁人間之，不亦難乎？余何愛焉？」使往視寢，生叔虎，美而有勇力，欒懷子嬖之，故羊舌氏之族及於難。(CQZZZ, 1061)

*Zuozhuan*, Zhao 28.2: Some time before, Shuxiang had wished to marry a woman from the family of Wuchen, Lord of Shen. His mother wanted him to marry someone from her family. Shuxiang said, "I have many mothers but few brothers. I see the faults of your side of the family." His mother said, "Wuchen's wife Xia Ji has killed three husbands, one ruler, and one son, and has brought one domain and two high ministers to their destruction. Should you not see her faults? I have heard that 'Great beauty must necessarily hold great ugliness.' That woman was the daughter of Yao Zi, the lesser wife of Lord Mu of Zheng; she was the younger sister of Lord Ling of Zheng. Lord Ling died early without an heir, and Heaven concentrated beauty in this one, for it was certain to use this one to bring about great destruction. Long ago a girl was born to the Youreng line. Her thick black hair was very beautiful and glossy enough to use as a mirror. They named her the Dark Wife. The Music Director Hou Kui took her to wife and she bore Bofeng, who had in him the heart of a swine, insatiably greedy and violent beyond all bounds. They called him the Great Swine. Hou Yi of Youqiong destroyed him, so that Hou Kui<sup>a</sup> receives no sacrifices. What is more, the fall of the three dynasties and the dispossession of the Jin heir Shensheng were all due to these creatures. What do you intend to accomplish by this? This is an extraordinary creature, one capable of affecting others. Unless one is a person of virtue and dutifulness, there is sure to be disaster!" Alarmed, Shuxiang did not dare marry her. When Lord Ping forced him to marry her, she bore Yang Shi.

Just after Yang Shi was born, Zirong's mother -- the wife of Shuxiang's elder brother Yangshe Chi -- ran to tell Shuxiang's mother the news: "Our eldest younger brother's wife has born a son." Shuxiang's mother went to see the child. She had reached the hall when she heard the sound of his cry and turned back, saying, "This is the sound of a jackal or wolf. The wolf child is wild at heart. If not this child, then no other will destroy the Yangshe house." And she did not see him.

初，叔向欲娶於申公巫臣氏，其母欲娶其黨。叔向曰：「吾母多而庶鮮，吾憲舅氏矣。」其母曰：「子靈之妻殺三夫，一君、一子，而亡一國、兩卿矣，可無憲乎？吾聞之：『甚美必有甚惡。』是鄭穆少妃姚子之子，子貉之妹。子貉早死無後，而天鍾美於是，將必以是大有敗也。昔有仍氏生女，黷黑而甚美，光可以鑑，名曰玄妻。樂正后夔取之，生伯封，實有豕心，貪惄無饜，忿頽無期，謂之封豕。有窮后羿滅之，夔是以不祀。且三代之亡、共子之廢，皆是物也，女何以為哉？夫有尤物，足以移人。苟非德義，則必有禍。」叔向懼，不敢取。平公強使取之，生伯石。伯石始生，子容之母走謁諸姑曰：「長叔姒生男。」姑視之。及堂，聞其聲而還，曰：「是豺狼之聲也。狼子野心。非是，莫喪羊舌氏矣。」遂弗視。(CQZZZ, 1492)

These two anecdotes from *Zuozhuan* have the closest affinity with the tradition of the discourse of female disaster. Shu Xiang's mother's long speech in the second anecdote especially takes a very similar approach to the fall of three dynasties and the death of Shensheng as depicted in *Shiji*. It makes beautiful women like Xia Ji 夏姬 accountable for the disasters upon the men who are attracted to them. Qian Zhongshu 錢鍾書 takes these two pieces of speeches as representatives of the discourse of female disaster.<sup>254</sup> The problem with his reading, however, is that he focused on some elements in the speeches without examining the message of the whole speeches in the contexts of the narratives. Moreover, he draws upon material from other texts, such as *Guoyu*, without understanding the quote in its own context. In particular, Qian Zhongshu considers that the discourse of "female disaster" accuses beautiful women of having fair looks but a devilish heart (惡心) by citing the Scribe Su's words in *Guoyu*, which is

<sup>254</sup> Qian Zhongshu 錢鍾書: *Guanzhuibian* 管锥編 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1979), vol.1, 215.

discussed earlier in this chapter: “Although she has good appearance, certainly she has a devilish heart.”<sup>255</sup> The devilish heart, in *Guoyu*, designates women’s intention to avenge their fathers who were defeated by the rulers who became their husbands. Qian Zhongshu’s interpretation removes Scribe Shi’s words from their context and takes them to mean that beautiful women possess an innate evil heart.

If we examine carefully the speeches of Shu Xiang’s mother as well as the whole narrative, both anecdotes really concern the danger of beauty in general without a gendered orientation; the whole narrative also emphasizes men’s lack of virtue as the real cause of disaster. In the first anecdote, though the speech of Shu Xiang’s mother starts by making Xia Ji responsible for the disaster upon the men around her, the focus in the narrative in general is upon the character of male descendants. Beautiful women are compared to “deep mountains and great marshes” which are able to produce sons who are like “dragons and snakes” of dangerous power. Under this logic, in the second anecdote, Bofeng, the son of a beautiful woman Dark Wife, is compared to a ferocious animal with “a heart of a swine.” Later in the passage, the son of Shuxiang’s beautiful wife is also compared to a dangerous animal, a jackal or a wolf. The logic of comparing the sons of beautiful women to ferocious animals in the speech of Shu Xiang’s mother is subtly different from rendering women themselves as the embodiment of the *yin* essence of a ferocious animal, such as the saliva of dragons in the *Shiji* story of Bao Si. Li Wai-yee argues that in these anecdotes, “extreme beauty represents a danger that is mysteriously hereditary and not necessarily connected to desire.”<sup>256</sup> It is admitted that there is an

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<sup>255</sup> Ibid., 214.

<sup>256</sup> Li Wai-yee, 157.

inevitable linkage between beauty and danger in this anecdote as Li points out; however, the speeches of Shuxiang's mother never claim that beautiful women, such as Xia Ji, Xia Ji's daughter or the ancient beauty Xuan Qi, themselves possess any devilish essence. Instead, these beautiful women here fit into a great matrix as "deep mountains and great marshes," which can bring forth quite opposite and sometimes dangerous forces such as "dragons and snakes." In other words, the speech of Shuxiang's mother relates less to the inheritance of the combination of good looks and a devilish heart from Xia Ji to her daughter and her grandson but relates more to the mutation from the extreme of good in the mother to the extreme of bad in the sons. This idea accords with common Taoist logic as we witness in *Daodejing* and *Zhuangzi* which claim extremes generate their opposite. This Taoist perspective is implied more clearly in the speech in the second anecdote: "Great beauty must necessarily hold great ugliness" 甚美必有甚惡, which addresses the natural mutation from great beauty to great ugliness.

The story of Xia Ji in *Zuozhuan* could also be an illustration of this mutation. The image of Xia Ji in *Zuozhuan* does not fit the description of a combination of a beautiful appearance and a devilish heart either. Throughout *Zuozhuan*, there is no direct representation of Xia Ji's devilish heart: in the episodes concerning Xia Ji, she remains a passive character, who is desired by and guided by men. The danger of her extreme beauty lies in the way that it leads to various evil behavior among men, which is featured in *Zuozhuan*: the wanton behavior of Duke Ling of Chen and his two ministers (Xuan 9.6); Wu Chen's lies and plots for the purpose of winning Jia Ji for himself (Cheng, 2.6); Zi Fan's revenge (Cheng, 7.5), a conversion from a woman's extreme attractiveness to men's extreme vice (Cheng, 2.6).

Besides the message of the mutation from great beauty to great evil, what also is of concern is the importance of virtue for a person who possesses beauty. The relationship between beauty and virtue is particularly elaborated in the conclusion of the long speech in the second anecdote: “Whenever a person possesses something exceptional, s/he will be able to change others. If such a person is not virtuous or dutiful, then there is sure to be disaster” 夫有尤物，足以移人。苟非德義，則必有禍.

In the above sentence, the phrase of “*you-wu*” could have two different interpretations. Many commentaries render it exclusively as designating “beautiful woman.” According to them, this sentence means that when a man owns a beautiful woman who is able to change others, if he is not virtuous enough, disaster will fall upon him and his family.<sup>257</sup> However, this interpretation is problematic here. In this case, Shu Xiang who is going to marry the daughter of Xia Ji 夏姬 is one of the virtuous exemplars in *Zuozhuan*. He is praised by Confucius as “a kind of rectitude passed down from ancient times” 古之遺直 (*Zuozhuan*, Zhao 14.7). He is also one of the favorite characters for the authors of *Zuozhuan*, through whom they frequently voice their ideas of ritual propriety as seen from the numerous entries featuring his speeches.<sup>258</sup> Surely as virtuous as Shu Xiang is, Shu Xiang could not be the target of criticism for bringing disaster upon his family by marrying a beautiful woman and by being lacking in virtue. Thus, this interpretation of the sentence explain above might not be appropriate.

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<sup>257</sup> Both Yang Bojun’s interpretation and Waiyee Li’s English translation take this meaning of the word. The English translation goes like this: “This is an extraordinary creature, one capable of changing a man. Unless he is a man of virtue and dutifulness, there is sure to be disaster.”

<sup>258</sup> See Xiang 18.3, 21.5, 21.7, 27.4, 27.5, Zhao 1.3, 1.12, 1.13, 2.3, 2.5, 3.3, 5.4, 6.3, 6.7, 9.3, 10.4, 11.2, 11.6, 13.2, 13.3, 14.7, 15.7.

An alternative interpretation of “*youwu*” makes more sense: it designates “something exceptional” in general, specifically beauty in this case. This interpretation has a precedent in *Zhuangzi* where the phrase “*wu-zhi-you*” (物之尤) is also used to describe a man with extraordinary feature, the master Nanbo Ziqi.<sup>259</sup> This interpretation implies a message that the beauty itself has association with danger which could only be avoided by gaining of virtue. This interpretation goes better with the general concern with the sons of beautiful women in these two anecdotes. Specifically in the context, the exceptional thing, *you-wu*, designates Bo Shi’s extreme beauty inherited from his mother and grandmother. Such a heritage of beauty is more clearly depicted in the first anecdote concerning Shu Hu, who is described as “handsome, valiant, and strong” as a son to a beautiful woman. According to the first anecdote, Shu Hu was favored by Luan Ying 懿盈 simply because of his physical attractiveness and this brought disaster upon his clan (Xiang 21.5). Likewise, in the second anecdote, Bo Shi brought disaster upon his family for having associated with the powerful minister Qi Ying who was punished by the duke of Jin (Zhao 28.2). In a word, this interpretation of “*you-wu*” as “something exceptional,” rather than as “female beauty” goes better with the interest in the basic stories around men in the two anecdotes. On the other hand, the danger of beauty comes from the contraction between beauty and virtue. As mentioned above, these two anecdotes emphasize these men’s wild heart of animals, which could be understood as the opposite of humanity and civility represented by ritual propriety. This implies that men as

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<sup>259</sup>Nan-bo Zi-qi was seated, leaning forward on his stool, and sighing gently as he looked up to heaven. (Just then) Cheng-zi came in, and said, when he saw him, 'Master, you surpass all others. Is it right to make your body thus like a mass of withered bones, and your mind like so much slaked lime?' 南伯子綦隱几而坐，仰天而噓。顏成子入見曰：“夫子，物之尤也。形固可使若槁骸，心固可使若死灰乎？” See “Xu Wu-gui” 徐無鬼, “Zapian”雜篇, in Wang Fuzhi, *Zhuangzijie* 莊子解 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1987), 24.218.

beautiful as Shu Hu and Bo Shi, relying too much on their appearance and physical strength to influence others and gain favor, are unable to submit themselves to the domestication of Ritual Propriety and become human and civil.

Still, the importance of virtue plays the chief role in these anecdotes. In the first, concerning the disaster brought by Shu Hu, the clan of Yangshe successfully avoided complete ruin because the head of the clan, Shu Xiang was virtuous enough to avoid punishment. As told in the narrative, Shu Xiang was confident that he could be proven innocent by another righteous person Qi Xi 祁奚 without even asking the latter for help. His prediction was fulfilled (*Zuozhuan*, Xiang 21.5). Shu Xiang's confidence demonstrates the power of virtue to overcome the destructiveness of beauty, as has been discussed in the case of Qi above.

The above discussion concerning the speeches of Shuxiang's mother shows that *Zuozhuan*'s concern is not the beauty possessed by the *yin* representatives as in *Shiji*, such as attractive women or male favorites and how their beauty causes danger to the members of the ruling lineage who were attracted to them. Instead, in *Zuozhuan*, the concerned problem is the conflict between virtue and physical attractiveness within the male members of the family. That is, their own physical attractiveness may hinder them from accruing virtue, which is the key to the success of their family.

These two anecdotes featuring the speeches of Shuxiang's mother also contribute to a multi-dimensional image of woman in *Zuozhuan*. Both anecdotes start out with a negative image of Shuxang's mother as a jealous and partial woman, but the featured speeches serve as a discursive tool to prove that judgment a misunderstanding of her and to clarify her real concerns. These two anecdotes demonstrate her prescience in being

able to correctly predict the danger for the household as well as her eloquence in delivering speech pieces with both historical references and philosophical soundness. This makes Shuxiang's mother similar to those prescient and eloquent ministers whose speeches are frequent representations of the ideas of the authors of *Zuozhuan*.

In summary, the discussion above showed that *Zuozhuan* does not put the responsibility for the danger of beauty for a house on the secondary characters in the house; it puts the responsibility for the danger of beauty more on the male primary representatives of the house. In addition, *Zuozhuan* is able to present multiple dimensions of women's characterization by combining their wisdom, virtue and eloquence with their attractiveness, jealousy, slander or partiality.

### *Women's speeches in Zuozhuan*

In the following portion of this chapter, *Zuozhuan*'s approach to woman's speeches is also distinctive from that of the discourse of female disaster. In contrast to the chapter "The Household of Confucius" of *Shiji* and "Zhanyang" in *The Book of Songs* where speeches of women are taken as the source of chaos and disaster, *Zuozhuan* celebrates women's wise advice and eloquent speech just as it does for ministers. This can be illustrated in the two cases respectively of Deng Man of Chu and Ding Jiang of Wei. In a third case, which concerns Mu Jiang of Lu, even the speeches and wisdom of a licentious and rebellious woman are celebrated. The stories of these three women were ascribed to distinct types in *Lienüzhuan*.

The first example concerns the lady of King Wu of Chu, Deng Man. The following two anecdotes record Deng Man's conversations with her husband on two different occasions.

*Zuozhuan*, Huan 13.1: In the thirteenth year, in spring, Qu Xia, the maréchal of Chu, set out to attack Luo. Dou Bobi saw him off. As he was returning, Dou Bobi told his charioteer, "The maréchal is certain to be defeated. He lifts his feet high; his intentions are not firm." Dou Bobi then met with the Master of Chu and said, "We must reinforce the army." But the Master of Chu refused to do this. The Master of Chu went in and reported this to his wife Deng Man, and Deng Man said, "The high officer was not speaking of numbers, but was saying that you, my lord, should soothe the common people with good faith, instruct their overseers with virtue, and overawe the maréchal with punishments. The maréchal, emboldened by the Pusao campaign, will rely too much upon himself and is certain to underestimate Luo. If you, my lord, do not take control and offer assistance, he will not set up a proper defense! Now, assuredly Dou Boubi was saying that you should instruct the multitude and with good intent control and assist them, should summon the high officers and encourage them with your fine virtue, and should meet with the maréchal and tell him that heaven will not treat him leniently. If Dou Bobi did not mean this, then how could he not have known that all the Chu army was on the march?" The Master of Chu sent some Lai men to chase after Qu Xia, but they did not arrive in time... When the Chu army reached Luo, the Luo forces along with the Rong of Lu engaged them in battle from both sides and soundly defeated them. The maréchal hanged himself in the Huang Valley. All the military leaders of Chu were imprisoned at Yefu to await punishment. The Master of Chu said, "It is my fault alone," and pardoned them all.  
十三年，春，楚屈瑕伐羅，鬥伯比送之。還，謂其御曰：「莫敖必敗，舉趾高，心不固矣。」遂見楚子，曰：「必濟師！」楚子辭焉。入告夫人鄧曼。鄧曼曰：「大夫其非眾之謂，其謂君撫小民以信，訓諸司以德，而威莫敖以刑也。莫敖狃於蒲騷之役，將自用也，必小羅。君若不鎮撫，其不設備乎！夫固謂君訓眾而好鎮撫之，召諸司而勸之以令德，見莫敖而告諸天之不假易也。不然，夫豈不知楚師之盡行也？」楚子使賴人追之，不及...及羅，羅與盧戎兩軍之，大敗之。莫敖縊于荒谷。群帥囚於冶父以聽刑。楚子曰：「孤之罪也。」皆免之。*(CQZZZ, 137)*

*Zuozhuan*, Zhuang 4.1: In the fourth year, in spring, in the royal third month, King Wu of Chu arrayed his troops in a Chu-domain formation and issued spears to the army so that they could attack Sui. When he was about to begin a ritual fast, he entered his home and said to his wife, Deng Man, "My heart is unsteady." Deng Man sighed and said, "Your fortune, king, is at its end! That what is full should be unsteady is the Way of Heaven. Surely the former rulers know this. Thus, as you approach a military affair and are about to issue a great command, they make your heart unsteady about it. If the army does not suffer a defeat, but you expire during the march, it will be a blessing for the domain." So the king set

out, but he died under a *man* tree.

四年，春，王三月，楚武王翦尸，授師子焉，以伐隨。將齊，入告夫人鄧曼曰：「余心蕩。」鄧曼歎曰：「王祿盡矣。盈而蕩，天之道也。先君其知之矣，故臨武事，將發大命，而蕩王心焉。若師徒無虧，王薨於行，國之福也。」王遂行，卒於構木之下 (CQZZZ, 163).

In these two anecdotes, the image of King Wu can be paralleled with bad rulers in the discourse of female disaster. In both Huan 13.1 and Zhuang 4.1, King Wu of Chu reported to his wife, Deng Man, what happened both in the court and within him. He also completely followed Deng Man's words even though that resulted in his death, as reported in the second anecdote. In the matter of dealing with his wife, King Wu of Chu acts in a similar manner as King Zhou who was depicted as not following his ministers' advice but “completely following a woman’s words” 維婦人言是用.<sup>260</sup> However, the result of these actions is totally opposite for King Wu of Chu. King Wu of Chu becomes a good military leader by following his wife’s words, an image which contrasts sharply with King Zhou’s image in *Shiji* as a bad administrator for following a woman’s words. In the first anecdote, with Deng Man’s words, King Wu was able to take personal responsibility for the failure of the expedition to Luo 羅. In the second anecdote, King Wu followed Deng Man’s words and chose the success of the Chu army over his own life and even ordered that news of his death not be announced before the army succeeded in Sui 隨. The role of Deng Man in these two anecdotes helps to bring out the self-criticizing and self-sacrificing aspects of King Wu of Chu and helps him become a good military leader, a quality revealed in his posthumous name *wu* (martial). On the other hand, the function of Deng Man’s words in these two anecdotes also contrasts to

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<sup>260</sup> The words are from “The Oath of Mu” in “The Basic Annals of Zhou,” see Nienhauser, I: 61; *Shiji*, 4. 122.

“Zhanyang” where women’s wisdom and speeches are the source of political disorder and to “The Hereditary Household of Confucius” where women’s mouth is the cause of bad relationships between a ruler and his ministers. In these two anecdotes, Deng Man’s words help dissolve the misunderstanding between King Wu of Chu and Dou Bobi, enable King Wu to make a wise decision on the defeated generals, and finally bring great military success to Chu in King Wu’s reign. In this sense, these two anecdotes in *Zuozhuan* go against the negative generalization of the role of women’s speeches in public affairs in the discourse of female disaster.

It is also clear in these two anecdotes that the *Zuozhuan* loads a woman’s wise speeches with as much weight as a minister’s without any gendered differentiation in their formats and messages. First and foremost, Deng Man’s speeches follow the technique of reading signs, which frequently occurs in the speeches of prescient ministers such as Shu Xiang in *Zuozhuan*. Although the target of Deng Man’s interpretation, Dou Bobi’s words in the first anecdote and Duke Wu’s beating heart are not general signs (such as traces on battlefields, human gestures, music, poem stanzas, or numinous signs as discussed by Wai-yee Li.) in *Zuozhuan*. They have two layers of meaning as all other kinds of signs in *Zuozhuan*: their literal meanings on the surface and their hidden, broader signification underneath.<sup>261</sup> Literal meanings were drawn from the context where the signs occurred, whereas the hidden significations have been drawn from the belief of a united socio-political, ritual, comic order and the mysterious, universal correspondences among different things.<sup>262</sup> In both anecdotes, King Wu of Chu understood the words and

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<sup>261</sup> Li Wai-yee categorizes and analyzes these different types of signs in *The Readability of the Past in Early Chinese Historiography*.

<sup>262</sup> See Li Wai-yee’s interpretation of the two concerns in the readings of signs in her *The Readability*.

phenomena on their surface layers, whereas Deng Man in both cases penetrated through the surface and revealed the hidden signification of the signifying words and phenomena in a broader context. Specifically, in the first case, Deng Man points out that the real meaning of Dou Bobi's advice ("Must reinforce the army!") is not about adding more soldiers, but about strengthening the appropriate ritual order in the state by carrying out the king's role as the paramount leader and aiding the army with moral support. In the second case, Deng Man had the knowledge of the way of Heaven and revealed the message of Heaven about the king's approaching death from a sign that the king observed from within himself. Besides the common double-layered structure observed in Deng Man's interpretation of words and phenomenon, the message of Deng Man's interpretation is no different from the common teaching in the speeches by prescient ministers. In Deng Man's speeches, as in some of the prescient ministers' speeches, the power of a ritually appropriate order is emphasized as the key to the military success of a state; at the same time, utmost exertion of human agency is preferred over negatively following the message from Heaven.<sup>263</sup> Such a similarity between a wise wife's advice and wise ministers' advice is predicated on the assumption of an equal capability with argument and knowledge for both genders and this differentiates *Zuo zhuan* from *Chunqiu Fanlu* where the two genders were considered inherently different in their mentality and their impact on the politics.

Deng Man is not the only example in *Zuo zhuan* where a wife gives wise advice to

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<sup>263</sup> The same message about an appropriate ritual order as the key to the military success is also observed in the story about Chonger (Xi 27.4); the preference for human agency over negatively following messages from Heaven is also observed in Zhuang 32.3, Xi 5.8.

her husband on public affairs. Other examples include Xi Fuji's wife 哲負羈之妻 (Xi 23.6), Chong'er's wife Qi Jiang 齊姜 (Xi 23.6), Bozong's wife 伯宗之妻 (Cheng 15.5) and Ding Jiang 定姜 (Cheng 14.1).<sup>264</sup> Women are not only behind-the-scene observers, they are also remonstrators in the inner quarters.<sup>265</sup> What differentiates some of these cases from the ministers' advice to rulers is that wives' advice tends to be straightforward, less rhetorical, preferring to use short verbs in an imperative mood. This distinctive feature of wives' advice in *Zuozhuan* presents a more informal, intimate and equivalent relationship between wives and husbands than that between rulers and ministers. As discussed in other chapters, among these cases of wives' advice, Xi Fuji's wife's advice is displaced by her husband's own thoughts and Qi Jiang's advice is rewritten into a message of contempt toward the female gender in *Shiji*. Deng Man's, Ding Jiang's and Bozong's wife's advice is left out in *Shiji*. In regards to Deng Man's example, *Shiji* has a succinct record of King Wu of Chu's expedition to Sui 隨 but the result of the expedition has changed to being one cut short with the death of King Wu and Deng Man is not mentioned at all in the record.<sup>266</sup> In short, these positive cases of wives' advice are basically absent in *Shiji*.

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<sup>264</sup> Zong Bo's wife is also recorded in *Guoyu*, "Jinyu" 5, 407.

<sup>265</sup> For the behind-scene observation, Zhou Yiqun argued in the article "Virtue and Talent: Women and Fushi in Early China" that "Despite their physical exclusion from men's social occasions, women enjoyed considerable freedom in moving behind the scenes as planners, providers, observers, and advisors, and therefore were far from being cut off from male social life." See ZhouYiqun, "Virtue and Talent: Women and Fushi in Early China," in *Nan nü*, 5.1 (2003): 1-42.

<sup>266</sup> Year Fifty-one, Zhou called the Duke of Sui, accused him of recognizing Chu as a King. The King of Chu was irritated, considered that Sui betrayed himself and attacked Sui. King Wu died in the expedition and the army turned back.五十一年，周召隨侯，數以立楚為王。楚怒，以隨背己，伐隨。武王卒師中而兵罷。See *Shiji*, "Chu shijia," 40.1695.

However, all these stories were compiled into Liu Xiang's *Lienüzhuan* and put into the categories of "The Virtuous and Wise Women" and "The Benign and Wise Women." For instance, in *Lienüzhuan*, Deng Man is ascribed to the category of "the Virtuous and Wise Women" and the story remains basically the same as the version in *Zuozhuan*. The weight of Deng Man's advice is highly appraised by Liu Xiang with the sentence from the poem "Dang" 荡 (Spreading) in *Shiji*: "Why is it that you do not listen, But upset Heaven's great charge" 曾是莫聽, 大命以傾.<sup>267</sup> The positive attitude of Liu Xiang toward these women may be related to Liu Xiang's goal of demonstrating women's good ways of assisting their husbands. Liu Xiang's confirmation of these women sets him apart from Sima Qian who reduces the representation of women and the positive role of their agency in his comprehensive history written along lineages.

A second example of women's speech in *Zuozhuan* is the story of Ding Jiang of Wei. It focuses on the function of speeches in acknowledging women themselves as political authorities on the discourse level. There are several entries in *Zuozhuan* featuring Ding Jiang's 定姜 extraordinary speeches including offering advice to her husband, Duke Ding of Wei. With her deep involvement and her demonstration of wisdom in the public affairs of Wei, which is the target of criticism in "Zhanyang," the story of Ding Jiang could be an important opposing example in *Zuozhuan* against the discourse of female disaster. Her advice to her husband on public affairs, which has been mentioned above, is of wisdom and thoughtful consideration and was readily accepted by

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<sup>267</sup> O'Hara, *The position of Woman in Early China*, 77.

her husband.<sup>268</sup> The following record does not focus on her relationship with her husband, a relationship already represented by Deng Man's case. Instead, it focuses on her relationship with her non-biological son Duke Xian and with high officials in the state.

*Zuozhuan*, Cheng 14.5 The Duke of Wei was ill. He sent Kong Chengzi and Ning Huizi to instate Jing Si's son, Kan, as heir apparent. In winter, in the tenth month, Duke Ding of Wei died. His wife, Lady Ding Jiang, in repose after she had wailed, saw that the heir apparent was not grieving. She would not so much as imbibe water, but sighed and said, "This man—not only would he destroy the domain of Wei, he will begin his iniquities with this soon-to-perish widow. Alas! Heaven is bringing disaster upon Wei! That I could not have Zhuan preside over the altars of earth and grain!"<sup>269</sup> When the high officers heard this, they were without exception filled with fear and dread. As of that time, Sun Linfu did not dare leave his precious vessels in Wei, and put them all in Qi. He also had very good relations with the high officers of Jin.

衛侯有疾，使孔成子、甯惠子立敬姒之子衍以為太子。冬十月，衛定公卒。夫人姜氏既哭而息，見太子之不哀也，不內酌飲，歎曰：「是夫也，將不唯衛國之敗，其必始於未亡人。嗚呼！天禍衛國也夫！吾不獲轉也使主社稷。」大夫聞之，無不聳懼。孫文子自是不敢舍其重器於衛，盡寘諸戚，而甚善晉大夫。

*Zuozhuan*, Xiang 10.5: Sun Linfu of Wei divined about pursuing the enemy and presented the omen to Ding Jiang. Lady Jiang asked about the omen verse. It said, "The omen is like a mound. There are men who leave for battle, and lose their leader." Lady Jiang said, "The invaders lose their leader. That is advantage for those resisting the enemy. You, high officers, should consider this!" The men of Wei pursued the Zheng forces. Sun Kuai, Sun Linfu's son, took Huang Er of Zheng captive at Quanqiu.

孫文子卜追之，獻兆於定姜。姜氏問繇。曰：「兆如山陵，有夫出征，而喪其雄。」姜氏曰：「征者喪雄，禦寇之利也。大夫圖之！」衛人追之，孫蒯獲鄭皇耳于犬丘。

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<sup>268</sup> ZZ, Xiang 14.1: In the fourteenth year, in spring, the Prince of Wei went to Jin. The Prince of Jin forced him to grant an audience to Sun Linfu. Lord Ding refused. In summer, after the Prince of Wei had returned, the Prince of Jin sent Xi Chou to bring Sun Linfu to Wei to seek an audience. The Prince of Wei wanted to decline. Ding Jiang said, "This will not do. He is a descendant of a hereditary minister of the former lord. Moreover, a great domain is interceding on his behalf. If you refuse, the domain will perish. Even though you hate him, is it not better to bear his presence than to perish? My lord should endure this! To bring peace to the people and to pardon a hereditary minister, is that not admissible?" The Prince of Wei granted him an audience and restored his position. (傳十四·一) 十四年，春，衛侯如晉，晉侯強見孫林父焉。定公不可。夏，衛侯既歸，晉侯使郤犨送孫林父而見之。衛侯欲辭。定姜曰：「不可。是先君宗卿之嗣也，大國又以為請。不許，將亡。雖惡之，不猶愈於亡乎？君其忍之！安民而宥宗卿，不亦可乎？」衛侯見而復之。

<sup>269</sup> Zhuan was Kan's younger brother by the same mother.

*Zuozhuan*, Xiang 14.4: Zhuan, the duke's full younger brother, followed the duke. When they reached the border, the lord sent the invocator of his clan to announce his flight and also to announce that he had committed no offense. Ding Jiang said, "If there are no spirits, why announce it? If there are spirits, they cannot be deceived. Since he has committed offenses, how can he announce that he has not? He set the great officials aside and conferred instead with the minor officials. That was his first offense. The former ruler had eminent ministers to serve as his teachers and guardians, but he treated them with contempt. That was his second offense.<sup>270</sup> I served the former ruler with towel and comb, but he treated me with a harshness more fitting for a concubine. That was his third offense. He should announce his flight and make an end of it. He is not to announce that he has committed no offense!"

子鮮從公。及竟，公使祝宗告亡，且告無罪。定姜曰：「無神，何告？若有，不可誣也。有罪，若何告無？舍大臣而與小臣謀，一罪也。先君有冢卿以為師保，而蔑之，二罪也。余以巾櫛味君，而暴妾使余，三罪也。告亡而已，無告無罪！」

Among the above three anecdotes, the first and the third anecdote feature Ding Jiang's speeches about the legitimate heir, her legitimate son Duke Xian of Wei. The second anecdote features her speech about a divination on a decision in a war. The third anecdote again is a judgment of Duke Xian's political behavior. These prescient speeches are attributed to Ding Jiang by the authors. For example, in the first anecdote, she precisely recounts Duke Xian of Wei's future faults and his failure as a duke. Nevertheless, with these three anecdotes *Zuozhuan* establishes her as the alternative, or the real, political authority in the reign of Duke Xian of Wei, who is incompetent and is driven to exile for twelve years before he goes back home. The main fault of Duke Xian, according to Ding Jiang's accusation in the last anecdote, is his inability to maintain good relationships with his chief ministers and with Ding Jiang herself. With this accusation, the authors of *Zuozhuan* imply that Ding Jiang, as the former duke's proper wife, should enjoy a status of authority, which should be acknowledged and respected by the current duke himself. Ding Jiang's authority over general officials is shown to be at work even as

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<sup>270</sup> Ding Jiang is referring to Sun Linfu and Ning Zhi, whom Lord Xian humiliated repeatedly.

early as when Duke Xian starts his rule. In the first anecdote, Ding Jiang observes Duke Xian of Wei's insensitive behavior at his father's funeral and predicts the disaster that he will bring to Wei. Her prediction effectively influences the high officials and, according to the narrative, "they were without exception filled with fear and dread." In particular, Sun Linfu takes her prediction very seriously and starts preparing for the upcoming disaster. Ding Jiang's basic judgment of Duke Xian becomes a common understanding among high officials and the excuse for Sun Linfu to depose Duke Xian (*Xiang* 14.4). Ding Jiang's authority in the state is revealed particularly in the second anecdote where the military commander Sun Linfu presents the result of the divination to her, rather than to Duke Xian, for a final decision. Sun Linfu follows Ding Jiang's order and pursues the enemy. Her authority in the state is confirmed again in the last anecdote where she intervenes and changes the words in Duke Xian's announcement to the ancestors before he leaves the border. Ding Jiang's involvement in the decision-making for warfare and in the activities in the clan temple, as well as her advice with her husband, are indications that *Zuozhuan* endorses Ding Jiang's involvement in public affairs in Wei and embraces her position as the real authority in the Duke Xian's reign. The high officials are shown to be willing to accept her political judgments and decisions; she herself also assumed that her authority needs to be respected by the duke of the state. This example goes against the argument of excluding women from politics in the poem "Zhanyang."

The *Zuozhuan*'s approach to Ding Jiang's wisdom and political power also goes against the discourse of female disaster by emphasizing the positive effects of her wisdom. This is demonstrated in its celebration of her speeches and reading ability. First and foremost, in the second anecdote, instead of rendering Ding Jiang's speech as the

source of political disorder, it is shown to lead to a particular military success for Wei. When Ding Jiang is offered the result of a divination, which at first glance predicts the failure of the Wei army at the battle, she reinterprets it and converts it instead into an advantage for Wei. The chief commander Sun Linfu is encouraged by her reinterpretation and achieves success in that particular battle. This anecdote not only presents Ding Jiang's ability in reading omen verses but also presents her wise leadership in offering moral support and prompting the human agency of the military leader through her manipulation of a divine message. This anecdote presents as well Ding Jiang's possession of the most important ability celebrated by *Zuozhuan*, the ability to read heavenly signs and predict the future. Likewise, the other two anecdotes also present her ability to read a person's emotions and gestures. In the first anecdote, Ding Jiang is able to predict Duke Xian's poor leadership from his lack of grief at his father's funeral.<sup>271</sup> In the third anecdote, Ding Jiang is able to reveal the faults of Duke Xian that are in violation to the appropriate manners in dealing with others which Duke Xian is not able to recognize. In a word, Ding Jiang is the medium for the authors of *Zuozhuan* as various wise ministers to show their basic argument that ritual propriety is the source of political success.<sup>272</sup>

In contrast to the multiple records about Ding Jiang's speeches in *Zuozhuan*, *Shiji* does not mention Ding Jiang at all. Liu Xiang's *Lienüzhuan* includes these entries about Ding Jiang from *Zuozhuan* under the section of Matronly Models 母儀傳. The important

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<sup>271</sup> Wai-yee Li reveals such connections in her interpretation of this anecdote and puts Ding Jiang among the prescient characters who were able to read signs in *Zuozhuan*. See *The Readability of the Past*, 182.

<sup>272</sup> David Schaberg pointed out that rhetoric of ritual propriety is regularly used for deciphering the political success of hegemons in *Zuozhuan*: "Because of the potential for abuse, historiography regularly emphasizes principles that make the hegemon's success dependent on virtue and ritual propriety." See *A Patterned Past*, 141.

change *Lienüzhuan* makes to the story of Ding Jiang is that Ding Jiang's power in the state no longer exceeds Duke Xian, which should be considered as a sign of excessive *yin* by Liu Xiang. More importantly in *Lienüzhuan*, an anecdote, which does not appear in *Zuo zhuan*, is prioritized to feature her motherly love. In this anecdote, Ding Jiang wept and presented a poem when her daughter-in-law was returned to her natal state after Ding Jiang's son died.<sup>273</sup> The other anecdotes in *Lienüzhuan* about Ding Jiang were derived from *Zuo zhuan*. Ding Jiang's advice to her husband and her suggestion to Sun Linfu about the battle are registered in *Lienüzhuan* to support her image as the model of a matron. This implies that offering good advice to the duke and the ministers is still taken as a legitimate aspect of a matron in *Lienüzhuan*. But *Lienüzhuan* rewrites the last of the three anecdotes which are discussed above by toning down Ding Jiang's harsh criticism of Duke Xian and changing her address to him to a respectful appellation “*gong*” 公 (which means “your highness”), so that it sounds more like a modest admonition to a person of higher position than she is. In a word, in *Lienüzhuan*, Ding Jiang is rewritten into a model of a matron by emphasizing her motherly love toward her daughter-in-law, removing the sign of her disrespect toward Duke Xian and keeping her function as a good advisor in a modest version. In this way, the power of *yin* represented by Ding Jiang in *Lienü Zhuan* does not override the power of *yang* represented by the dukes; instead, Ding Jiang in *Lienüzhuan* demonstrates how *yin* serves *yang* in her offering of good advice to her son. Nevertheless, this approach to women's speech and wisdom in *Lienüzhuan* contrasts with the complete negation of women's wisdom in “Zhanyang.” This story, as well as other stories mentioned earlier, indicates that Liu Xiang acknowledges women's

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<sup>273</sup> Ding Jiang, Mother in Law of Wei 衛姑定姜, in *Lienüzhuan*, 148.

positive role in politics; but it also emphasizes the secondary, supporting positions of their roles to men.<sup>274</sup>

Ding Jiang is not the only case in *Zuozhuan* where a woman's active participation in state politics is featured with a record of her speech. Other important cases include Nan Zi 南子 (Ding 13.3, 14.8, Ai 2.2), Lady Dao of Jin 晉悼夫人 (Xiang 29.11, Xiang 30.3) and Cheng Feng 成風 (Min 2.8, Xi 21.4). *Zuozhuan*'s approach to their involvement in state politics is case-specific without any generalized bias. In the case of Nan Zi who according to *Analects* brought Confucius criticism from his followers after their meeting,<sup>275</sup> *Zuozhuan* neutrally states her important role in the state as leading a court faction in the entry Ding 13.3. In particular, the target of criticism in this entry is not at all Nanzi; instead, it is Nanzi's enemy Gongsun Shu who brought death upon himself by being arrogant with his wealth.<sup>276</sup> Another entry, Ai 2.2, records Nanzi's speech about selecting the successor after the death of her husband, Duke Ling of Wei. Her important role in this decision-making process is neutrally revealed when the decision itself is portrayed as a result of reconciliation of the wills of different parties.<sup>277</sup> In the other two

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<sup>274</sup> Also see Liu, *De cai se quan*, 45.

<sup>275</sup> See *Chongkan songben shisanjing zhushu* 重刊宋本十三經注疏, *Lunyü zhushu jiejing* 6 論語注疏解經, Yongye 6: 55-2.

<sup>276</sup> When Gongshu Fa died, the Duke of Wei was already on bad terms with Gongshu Shu, on account of his wealth, and Gongshu Shu was also preparing to eliminate the faction of the lord's wife. The lord's wife informed against him, saying, “Gongshu Shu is going to start a revolt.”及文子卒，衛侯始惡於公叔戌，以其富也。公叔戌又將去夫人之黨，夫人愬之曰：「戌將為亂。」(*Zuozhuan*, Ding 13.3)

<sup>277</sup> In summer, Lord Ling of Wei died. His lady said, “The command that Gongzi Ying be made heir was the command of the ruler.” Gongzi Ying replied, “I am different from the other sons, and the ruler died in my arms. If there were such a thing, I certainly would have heard of it. Moreover, Zhe is here, the son of the exile.” Therefore they set up Zhe as lord. 夏，衛靈公卒。夫人曰：「命公子郢為太子，君命也。」對曰：「郢異於他子，且君沒於吾手，若有之，郢必聞之。且亡人之子輒在。」乃立輒。

cases, both Lady Dao of Jin and Cheng Feng's participation in public affairs are noted along with the records of their speeches. What is common for these two women's political appearances is that they attempt to preserve their own native states or native clans by intervening in the marital state's diplomatic decisions. *Zuozhuan*'s attitudes toward these women's speeches are based on its agenda of protecting the interest of central states, rather than based on a gendered bias. Lady Dao of Jin's opinion was disputed for its conflict with the self-interest of the state of Jin, but Cheng Feng's speech was recorded for its goal of serving the self-interest of the state of Lu (Xiang 29.11, Xi 21.4).

These examples support the judgment that *Zuozhuan* does not generalize women's political speeches as monolithically negative. Instead, *Zuozhuan*'s record of women's political speeches tends to be neutral to their specific roles in different contexts without any gendered presumption. The speeches of Ding Jiang, NanZi and Cheng Feng represent their political authority or intellectual charisma in the states. Even though Lady Dao of Jin's speech was criticized in the voice of another minister, her speech was recounted as an important alternative understanding of the concerned topic (Xiang 29.11). *Zuozhuan*'s capacity to represent the diversity and complexity of the roles of women in history is seen in these examples.

The third example of the topic of women's speeches is Lady Mu Jiang of Lu. *Zuozhuan*'s attitude toward Lady Mu Jiang goes against the discourse of female disaster in the way that it incorporates the representation of her participation in political chaos and the celebration of her wisdom, knowledge and character depth without submitting to the

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(*Zuozhuan*, Ai 2.2)

teaching about the wisdom and speech of women as the source of disaster. Liu Xiang's *Lienüzhuan* ascribes Mu Jiang to the negative category of "Pernicious and Depraved Women"; however, he also acknowledges her good quality of smartness and wisdom.<sup>278</sup> Two contemporary scholars Zhou Yiqun and Wai-yee Li, who discuss Mu Jiang's case in their own research, point out the transgression and indecorousness in Mu Jiang's behavior as well as the ambiguity and complexity in the message of the text.<sup>279</sup> The dangerous implication they found in Mu Jiang's wisdom and speech is respectable but disputable. My discussion, in turn, emphasizes the lack of negative implication in *Zuozhuan*'s representation of Mu Jiang's wisdom and eloquence.

There are seven entries in *Zuozhuan* directly related to Mu Jiang: Cheng 9.5, Cheng 11.3, Cheng 16.5, Cheng 16.8, Xiang 2.3, Xiang 9.3 and Xiang 23.5. These entries represent multiple but consistent aspects of Mu Jiang. In Cheng 16.5 and Cheng 16.8, Mu Jiang's power from her status as a matron enables her to act in bold defiance of the duke's authority.

*Zuozhuan*, Cheng 16.5: Shusun Qiaoru, who had been having adulterous relations with Mu Jiang, wished to do away with the Ji and Meng lineages and to appropriate their property. When the lord was about to leave, Mu Jiang saw him off and urged that he drive out Ji Wenzi and Meng Xianzi. The lord told her about troubles in Jin, saying, "I beg to abide by your command upon my return." Mu Jiang was angry. At that moment Gongzi Yan and Gongzi Chu walked by quickly, and she pointed to them, saying, "If you refuse, these can all become rulers." The lord waited at Huaitui and left only after having arranged the guarding of the palace, fortified preparations, and appointed sentries- that was why he was late in joining the Jin forces. He had Meng Xianzi guard the lord's palace.

宣伯通於穆姜，欲去季、孟而取其室。將行，穆姜送公，而使逐二子。公以晉難告，曰：「請反而聽命。」姜怒，公子偃、公子鉏趨過，指之曰：「女

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<sup>278</sup> O' Hara, *The Position of Woman in Early China*, 199.

<sup>279</sup> Zhou Yiqun, "Virtue and Talent: Women and Fushi in Early China," in *Nan nü* 5.1 (2003): 1-42; Li Wai-yee, 222-26.

不可，是皆君也。」公待於壞墳，申宮、儆備、設守，而後行，是以後。使孟獻子守于公宮。

*Zuozhuan*, Cheng 16.8: In the seventh month, the lord joined forces with Yu Duke Wu and the princes to attack Zheng. When he was about to leave, Mu Jiang commanded him in the same way as before. Again the lord made arrangements for guarding the palace and appointing sentries. (傳十六·八)七月，公會尹武公及諸侯伐鄭。將行，姜又命公如初。公又申守而行。

The disastrous nature of Mu Jiang's behavior might be represented in her adultery and her threatening request to the duke. Mu Jiang's adultery with Shusun Qiaoru (Xuan Bo) motivates her to ask her son Duke Cheng to remove the two most powerful families in Lu headed by Ji Wenzi and Meng Xianzi. Such a request creates potential catastrophe for the status quo of the state. However, this request is not as disastrous if one situates it within the broader political circumstances. The excessive power of the three houses had become problematic in the reign of Mu Jiang's husband, Duke Xuan, and the latter had attempted to remove these families with external help. But with his untimely death, this plan failed (*Zuozhuan*, Xuan 18.5). The competition for power between the house of Ji Wenzi and the duke's house later even drove Duke Zhao into long-term exile.<sup>280</sup> From this perspective, Mu Jiang's strong request to remove these two families is fulfilling her wifely duty of continuing the will of her husband Duke Xuan, although it incorporates a new interest of benefitting her lover Shusun Qiaoru for her.

Another aspect of the disastrous nature of her behavior is her defiance of the authority of the duke. She makes a strong appearance in Cheng 16.5 where she hints at the possibility of replacing the duke with other sons of hers. Liu Xiang clearly identifies such behavior of Mu Jiang as “defying the ruler”<sup>281</sup> 背君 in *Lienüzhuan*.<sup>281</sup> A fair judgment

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<sup>280</sup> *Zuozhuan*, Zhao 30.1, 30.2, 32.1.

<sup>281</sup> O' Hara, 199.

of Mu Jiang's bold behavior should be based on an understanding of her powerful presence in the state. Her power in the state is partly represented in the entries Cheng 11.3 and Xiang 23.5 which tell stories that the marriage and heir in two aristocratic houses are decided according to Mu Jiang's personal preferences.<sup>282</sup> She was backed up by her natal state, Qi, which historically played an important role in the transition of power in Lu as its conventional, powerful ally through marriage. However, her confidence in her own power in Cheng 16.5 is proved unreal from the entry in Xiang 9.3. The entry, which features her long speech reflecting on her life based on a divination omen, tells that Mu Jiang was put under house arrest after she failed in forcing the duke to remove two grand families. This entry is related to Cheng 16.5 and 16.8 as the punishment of her former behavior; nevertheless, it is disputable if she deserves such a punishment from her son.<sup>283</sup>

On the other hand, the entry has a positive effect on the characterization of Mu Jiang.

*Zuozhuan*, Xiang 9.3: Mu Jiang expired in the Eastern Palace. When she first went there, she divined by milfoil and encountered the eight of “Restraint.” The scribe said, “This is called ‘Restraint’ going to ‘Following.’ ‘Following’ is about leaving. You are sure to leave soon!” Mu Jiang said, “Not so! About this the *The Book of*

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<sup>282</sup> Cheng 11.3, “Shengbo’s mother had not formalized her engagement before marriage. Mu Jiang said, ‘I will not have a concubine for a sister-in-law.’ After giving birth to Shengbo, she was sent away by her husband Shuxi and married Guan Yuxi of Qi.” The other entry is Xiang 23.5: “Sometime earlier, Zang Xuanshu took a wife in Zhu, who died after giving birth to Zang Gu and Zang Wei. He then raised to her place her niece, the daughter of Mu Jiang’s younger sister. She gave birth to Zang Wuzhong, who grew up in the lord’s palace. Mu Jiang loved him, and that was why he was instated as heir. Zang Gu and Zang Wei were sent out to Zhu.”

<sup>283</sup> The Qing scholar Ma Xiao points out, Someone says, although Mu Jiang threatened the duke by pointing at the two Duke repeatedly but she does not necessarily have any plan to depose him. However, the duke suddenly killed Duke’s Son Yan. It is to channel his anger (toward Mu Jiang) 或曰，姜雖指二子以脅公，未必有廢立之謀，而公遽殺之，為遷怒焉. See Ma Xiao 馬驥, *Zuozhuan Shiwei 左傳事緯* (Qinan: Qilu Xueshe, 1992), 200.

*Changes in Zhou* says, “‘Following’: prime, offering, benefit, constancy, no blame.’ Prime is the highest part of the body; offerings are made when blessings gather; benefit is the harmony of dutifulness; constancy is the mainstay of endeavors. Embodying humaneness suffices to improve a person, bringing blessings to virtue suffices to meld ritual propriety, benefiting others suffices to harmonize dutifulness, and making constancy unwavering suffices to build the mainstay of endeavors. Since this is so, there cannot be any deception. That is how even with ‘Following,’ there is ‘no blame.’ Now I, as a woman, was yet party to fostering disorder; and undeniably in just a lowly position, I was yet ungenerous; this cannot be called ‘prime.’ I did not bring peace and stability to the domain and patrimony; there cannot be ‘offerings.’ My action harmed my person; this cannot be called ‘benefit.’ I abandoned my position to have adultery; this cannot be called ‘constancy.’ With these four virtues, ‘Following’ is yet ‘no blame.’ But since I have none of them, how can this be ‘Following’? Since I have taken up evil, how can there be ‘no blame’? I am sure to die here. I will not be able to leave!”

穆姜薨於東宮。始往而筮之，遇艮之八。史曰：「是謂艮之隨。隨，其出也。君必速出！」姜曰：「亡！是於《周易》曰：『隨，元、亨、利、貞，無咎。』元，體之長也；亨，嘉之會也；利，義之和也；貞，事之幹也。體仁足以長人，嘉德足以合禮，利物足以和義，貞固足以幹事。然，故不可誣也，是以雖隨無咎。今我婦人，而與於亂。固在下位，而有不仁，不可謂元。不靖國家，不可謂亨。作而害身，不可謂利。棄位而姣，不可謂貞。有四德者，隨而無咎。我皆無之，豈隨也哉？我則取惡，能無咎乎？必死於此，弗得出矣。」

In structure, this passage fits the typical frame of the historical events with a prior prediction in *Zuozhuan*. Conventionally, after listing the event proper, which is probably recorded in the *Spring and Autumn Annals*, *Zuozhuan* recalls a prior prediction which points to the event as a possible result of a certain tendency observed from certain signs and gestures. As a result, the event becomes a fulfillment of the prediction based on the wisdom of the prescient predictor. This passage fits this typical frame: Mu Jiang’s death in the Eastern Palace where she was kept under house arrest is the event proper; it is followed by Mu Jiang’s prediction of her life ending based on a contrast of her own life experiences with the divination result. The event proper becomes a fulfillment of this prediction. The coincidence in structure enlists Mu Jiang in the group of prescient people who are chosen by the authors of *Zuozhuan* to offer insightful prediction. What is special

in this case is that Mu Jiang, the person who offers the prediction, is also the person whose fate is predicted. This enriches this character with multiple dimensions: the inappropriate behaviors that she has exhibited are paralleled with her clear understanding of the disastrous effect of them on her own fate. On the other hand, this passage also features Mu Jiang's mastery of the authoritative text *The Book of Changes* as well as her strength in defying the diviner's authority and making her own interpretation. Her defiance of the diviner's authority in this entry is consistent in spirit with her defiance of the duke's authority in Cheng 16.5. But here, the same quality of defiance is portrayed in a positive light as the quality that enables her to find the right prediction of her own fate. In a word, Xiang 9.3 represents *Zuozhuan*'s portrayal of Mu Jiang's positive qualities regardless of her negative image in Cheng 16.5 and Cheng 16.8.

One may suspect if it is the authors' genuine intention to present Mu Jiang's positive qualities in Xiang 9.3. Besides a confirmation of the positive messages in the passage above, Wai-yee Li argues that the speech in Xiang 9.3 represents *Zuozhuan* authors' "imposition of a moralist's voice" on Mu Jiang and borrows Mu Jiang herself to render faulty her prior opposition to the Ji clan, who is portrayed positively in many parts of the *Zuozhuan*.<sup>284</sup> It is an important insight on the role of the authors in the representation of Mu Jiang; however, two points could be made from *Zuozhuan* to remedy Li's argument. First, *Zuozhuan* authors do not side with Ji Wenzi in the story of Mu Jiang as seen from the two entries. In Xiang 2.3, the authors of *Zuozhuan*, using the voice of "noble man," criticize Ji Wenzi as unwise for taking the fine wood that Mu Jiang had arranged for her funeral to bury Mu Jiang's daughter-in-law Qi Jiang. The "noble

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<sup>284</sup> Li Wai-yee, 225-226.

man” insists that Mu Jiang should receive appropriate respect from Ji Wenzi as the grandmother of Duke Xiang.<sup>285</sup> The authors of *Zuozhuan* also do not always side with Ji Wenzi in his competition for power with the duke’s house, as seen in Xuan 18.5, which concerns the political circumstance of the state upon the death of Mu Jiang’s husband. In Xuan 18.5, a favored minister Gongsun Guifu wants to remove the three families, including the house of Ji Wenzi, to instate the duke’s house but he fails when the duke dies and his house is removed by Ji Wenzi instead. Ji Wenzi’s action is criticized by a contemporary minister, whereas Guifu’s son is praised for being ritually appropriate.<sup>286</sup>

Secondly, it is very possible for Mu Jiang to adopt a moralist’s voice in her own speech, as seen from the entry Cheng 11.3. In Cheng 11.3, her speech, “I will not have a concubine for a sister-in-law,” is the reason for Sheng Bo’s mother to be divorced by her

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<sup>285</sup> Xiang 2.3: In summer, Qi Jiang expired. Sometime earlier, Mu Jiang had arranged to have fine *jia* wood chosen to make for herself an inner coffin and a *song* lute. Ji Wenzi took these things and buried Qi Jiang with them. A noble man said, “This violated ritual propriety. Ritual propriety does not allow contravention. A daughter-in-law is one who nurtures her mother-in-law. There is no greater contravention than to diminish a mother-in-law in order to supply a daughter-in-law. As it says in the *Odes*, ‘It is thus only with wise men—

Admonish them with good words,  
And they follow the path of virtue.

In this matter, Ji Wenzi was unwise. Moreover, Lady Jiang was the ruler’s grandmother. As it says in the *Odes*,

Make brew; make sweet liquor—  
Offer them to the grandfather and grandmother  
So as to fulfill a hundred rites,

And bring down blessings on all.

<sup>286</sup> *Zuozhuan*, Xuan 18.5: "Gongsun Guifu was favored because his father, Xiangzhong, had instated the lord. He wished to remove the three Huan lineages so as to expand the power of the lord's house. Guifu made a plan with the duke and went on an official visit to Jin, hoping to use Jin troops to remove the Huan lineages. In winter, the lord expired. Ji Wenzi declared at court: "Xiangzhong it was who made me kill the heirs born of the principal wife and instate the son of the secondary wife, so that we lost our great helper!" Zang Xuanshu said angrily, "If at the time you could not adjudicate the crime of Xiangzhong, what crime is his progeny guilty of? If you wish to banish Guifu, I will request to have him banished." They thus drove out the clan of Dongmen. Guifu [Zijia] was returning to Lu. When he reached Sheng, he built an altar of earth and surrounded it with curtains. He reported discharge of his mission to his chief aide. Having done so, he bared the left side of his body, tied his hair with hemp, took his appointed place and wailed, stamping his feet three times before he came out. He thereupon fled to Qi. That the text says "Guifu returned from Jin" is to show approval."

husband (*Zuozhuan*, Cheng 11.3). This speech indicates Mu Jiang has a clear sense of the ritual propriety of her times and takes it as the foundation of her personal preference.

With this understanding as background, it is consistent with the basic image of Mu Jiang in *Zuozhuan* for her to criticize herself in a moralist's voice of all these ritually inappropriate behavior. Besides, there is no visible indication in Xiang 9.3 that Mu Jiang's wisdom in offering the right prediction is perceived as dangerous by the narrator. Based on all the evidence, this current discussion argues that Xiang 9.3 represents *Zuozhuan* authors' genuine intention of portraying the positive qualities of Mu Jiang. *Lienüzhuan* also completely preserves this passage about divination to present Mu Jiang's wisdom and acknowledges it as her good quality.<sup>287</sup>

The entry Cheng 9.5, which is the first entry about Mu Jiang in *Zuozhuan*, is consistent with Xiang 9.3 in presenting her wisdom and knowledge.

*Zuozhuan*, Cheng 9.5: In summer, Ji Wenzi went to Song to convey a message [for Boji who had just been married to the Song ruler]. He reported the completion of his mission, and the lord offered him a ceremonial entertainment. He chanted the fifth stanza of "Hanyi." Mu Jiang came out of her chamber to the inner court, bowed twice, and said, "You, sir, deigned to be assiduous. You do not forget the former lord, and your regard reaches to his heir and even extends to his widow. The former ruler indeed expected this from you. I presume to bow in gratitude for your repeated, assiduous service." She also chanted the final stanza of "Green Coat" before entering her chamber.

(傳九·五) 夏，季文子如宋致女，復命，公享之。賦<韓奕>之五章。穆姜出于房，再拜，曰：「大夫勤辱，不忘先君，以及嗣君，施及未亡人，先君猶有望也。敢拜大夫之重勤。」又賦<綠衣>之卒章而入。

Nevertheless, scholars find dangerous implications in her behavior and speeches in this entry. Zhou Yiqun argues that the authors of *Zuozhuan* forge coherence between Mu Jiang's *fushi* (presenting poetic stanza) performance in Cheng 9.5 and her overall moral

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<sup>287</sup> O' Hara, *The Position of Women in Early China*, 199.

character.<sup>288</sup> She argues Mu Jiang's physical appearance at the banquet openly challenges the principle of sexual segregation in her time. Furthermore, with the combination of Cheng 9.5 and Cheng 16.5, "Mujiang is depicted as being ready to violate the social constraints on women in pursuit of both sexual desires and political ambitions."<sup>289</sup> For Cheng 9.5, Zhou argues that Mu Jiang appears at the banquet in hopes of impressing Ji Wenzi and paving the way for further contact to make him a potential ally or even a lover.<sup>290</sup> She defends this argument from the similar social status of Ji Wenzi and Mu Jiang's future lover Shusun Qiaoru. However, although it is impossible for one to demonstrate that Mu Jiang does not have any sexual desire or political ambition for Ji Wenzi, at least it is certain that it is not the purpose of Cheng 9.5 to establish such connections. Only if *Zuozhuan* later records that Mu Jiang has a sexual relationship or political collusion with Ji Wenzi afterwards can one be sure that the entry Cheng 9.5 is intended by the authors of *Zuozhuan* to illustrate Mu Jiang's inappropriate attempts to seduce Ji Wenzi. Besides that, Zhou takes it as true without close reading of the text itself that the historians of *Zuozhuan* condemn her violation of sexual segregation in Cheng 9.5 by appearing at the banquet. Zhou's argument is based on a questionable presumption that the authors of *Zuozhuan* held an orthodox position on the issue of sexual segregation. This assumption is suspicious if one recalls *Zuozhuan*'s criticism of Mu Jiang's daughter Gong Ji of Song in Xiang 30.7. In Xiang 30.7, Gong Ji burned herself in the fire to comply with the norm of sexual segregation which stipulates that a woman abstain from

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<sup>288</sup> Zhou, "Virtue and Talent," 26.

<sup>289</sup> Zhou, "Virtue and Talent," 27.

<sup>290</sup> Zhou, "Virtue and Talent," 28.

going out of her room without the company of a nanny.<sup>291</sup> The commentator of *Zuozhuan* in Xiang 30.7 criticizes Gong Ji with the argument that a married woman could act judiciously according to the exigencies of the situation. This example illustrates *Zuozhuan*'s criticism of rigid adherence to ritual propriety and its potential tolerance of Mu Jiang's behavior even if it does not strictly follow ritual propriety.

Against Zhou Yiqun's argument, this discussion argues that Cheng 9.5 demonstrates the *Zuozhuan*'s interest in presenting nuanced communication between two genders of equal status with *fushi* performance and Mu Jiang's pursuit of ritual propriety with her mastery of the Classics and rituals. Three points might be made in support of this argument. First, the intended audience of Ji Wenzi's stanza presentation is Mu Jiang who is behind the curtain rather than the duke who is offering the banquet. Our discussion of Cheng 11.3, Cheng 16.5, and Xiang 23.5 already mentioned Mu Jiang's powerful status as the matron in the state, which could be the base of Ji Wenzi's respect to her on the banquet. More importantly, the fifth stanza of "Hanyi" which is offered by Ji Wenzi does not address any of the concerns for a duke in an interstate marriage, such as the political implication of the relationship between two states; instead, it addresses the grandeur of the new home and the happiness of a daughter, which are a mother's concerns for her daughter.<sup>292</sup> Mu Jiang's appearance from behind the curtain might have

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<sup>291</sup> *Zuozhuan*, Xiang 30.7.

<sup>292</sup> See the Chinese original of "Hanyi" 韓奕 (Mao 261) in *Duanju shisanjing jingwen*, 76. The English translation of the fifth stanza of "Hanyi" by James Legge reads:

"Jue-fu is very martial,  
And there is no State which he had not visited.  
When he would select a home for Han-ji,  
There seemed none so pleasant as Han,  
Very pleasant is the territory of Han,  
With its large streams and meres,

been on the condition that she understood that Ji Wenzi spoke to her with this particular stanza. Second, the narrative presents Mu Jiang's appearance at the banquet as self-contained and temporary for the expediency of completing the banquet ritual. With clear notes of its beginning and its ending, the passage makes it clear that Mu Jiang appeared temporarily at the banquet only for the purpose of expressing her appreciation and presenting her stanza which was required by the occasion. The presentation of a poetic stanza, as a ritual between two formal parties at a public banquet, asks for an equal reply to Ji Wenzi's presentation from the side of the duke's house. Since the passage does not note any such intention by the duke himself, Mu Jiang's presentation of the poetic stanza is presented as a necessary part of the banquet ritual. The narrator also attempts to show the ritual appropriateness of Mu Jiang's physical movement at the banquet by noting that she bowed twice before she spoke. Third, Mu Jiang's speech and stanza citation are consistent and appropriate with a combination of an appreciation of Ji Wenzi and a remembrance of Mu Jiang's deceased husband, Duke Xuan. In her speech, Mu Jiang expressed her gratitude to Ji Wenzi by taking his work as a demonstration of his continued loyalty to her late husband, Lord Xuan, which extended to her and her children. Mu Jiang's presentation of the poetic stanza rises from her speech to express her remembrance of her deceased husband. Such remembrance should not be taken simply as an expression or a hint of her personal emotion or a desire which is indecorous and transgressive at such an occasion. Instead, this was the extension of her appreciation

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Full of big bream and tench;  
With its multitudes of deer,  
With its bears and grisly bears;  
With its wild-cats and tigers.  
Glad was he of so admirable a situation,  
And here Han-ji found rest and joy."

which this time diverted away from Ji Wenzi to its source, her deceased husband, who was believed to be at present as a spirit and was appreciated for leaving her and her children in a good circumstance in the secular world. Understood in this way, both Mu Jiang's speech and poetic stanza are appropriate in content for the particular occasion. In a word, this passage demonstrates Mu Jiang's mastery of the *Classic of Poetry* and ritual propriety and her ability to complete the banquet ritual as the representative of the house of the duke.

This reading of Mu Jiang argues that the authors of *Zuo zhuan* could be genuinely showing the positive qualities of Mu Jiang, such as wisdom, the ability of self-criticism, the mastery of the Classics and ritual propriety, alongside her negative acts without hinting at the dangerous implication of the former within its narration. Even in *Lienüzhuan*, Mu Jiang's wisdom in the interpretation of the divination is admired, rather than taken as a hallmark of danger. That is because what Liu Xiang finds dangerous is wisdom and speech in the form of political scheme and slander, rather than wisdom and speech in general. Nevertheless, the incorporation of such a complicated woman as Mu Jiang in *Lienüzhuan* makes it impossible to clearly differentiate the model of slanderous and licentious women from the models of wise and benevolent ones. Despite the tension and complexity within *Lienüzhuan*, the denigration of women's wisdom and speech, as well as attractiveness in appearance, in *Shiji* and *Lienüzhuan* is much more powerful over time and has greater effect on the formation of ideal womanhood in the latter dynasties. For instance, as pointed out by Lisa Raphals, Ban Zhao's (45-116 CE) reading of women's *side* (四德) shows a tendency of rejecting the display of women's talent, eloquence and attractiveness of appearance: "in Ban Zhao's humble and conservative

readings of side (四德), women's virtue (*fude*) signified one's adherence to ritual propriety expressed in a manner of tranquility rather than colorful display of one's talent and brilliance. In the same humble manner, women's speech (*fuyan*) signifies not one's persuasive skills or eloquence but one's ability to be circumspect. Women's comportment (*furong*) focuses on clean and proper presentation of oneself instead of the attractiveness of one's appearance.”<sup>293</sup>

Against the tradition of the discourse of female disaster which passed down from the poem “Zhanyang” in *Shiji*, and “Oath at Mu” in *Shangshu*, to *Shiji* and *Lienüzhuan*, *Zuozhuan* provides an alternative perspective to the issues of women’s speeches and attractiveness of appearance. First, *Zuozhuan* reflects neither the idea that an attractive woman, who causes political disaster, is licentious and unprincipled nor the idea that an attractive, slanderous woman would bring disaster to the man associated with her. Rather, it characterizes women with various combinations of attractiveness, slander and virtue and links them to various political situations. Second, it does not associate the danger of beauty with secondary characters in the political entity, those which could be considered as representatives of *yin* in the *yin-yang* theory. Rather, it focuses on the tension between virtue and physical attractiveness presented in the person of the primary representative of a political entity. This implies that *Zuozhuan* is not subject to the idea of associating danger and disaster with the force of *yin*, an idea readily embodied by Liu Xiang and Sima Qian to be the foundation of their acceptance of the discourse of female disaster. Third, *Zuozhuan* features women’s wisdom, eloquence and knowledge and confirms their

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<sup>293</sup> Lisa Raphals, *Sharing the Light*, 104-5.

contribution to the states against the perspective that women's wisdom and eloquence are the source of disaster, which is an important part of the discourse of female disaster.

The messages I read from *Zuozhuan* tell us that the discourse of female disaster, which takes certain types of women who are attractive, slanderous and unprincipled as the cause and treats their wisdom and eloquence as the contributing factor to the disaster, is not the only perspective on women that the early texts leave to us. As a history book, *Zuozhuan* preserves nuanced, complicated situations in which various women lived and features various, shining or dark, facets of real heroines.

## CHAPTER VI

### CONCLUSION

The gender problem is not an independent issue for either *Zuozhuan* or *Shiji*, as the attitude toward women was only a part of their attitudes toward a broader category of people with which they were concerned. In *Zuozhuan*, one could not tell the difference between the wise speech by a minister and that by a wife of a duke. In *Shiji*, the women and their natal family members are treated as being the same group of people, so there is a “hereditary household” for the whole group of maternal relatives, not separately for royal consorts. In *Shiji*, Sima Qian not only downplayed the agency and initiative for palace women and their relatives, but also for ministers, another group of representatives of *yin* in a relationship with rulers. The topic of the representation of women in *Shiji* and *Zuozhuan* is only necessitated when a modern student like me who is imbedded in a world with gender issues wants to single out the part of Chinese history for women.

From *Chunqiu* and *Zuozhuan* to *Shiji*, women have experienced a downgrade of their formal status in historical records. In *Shiji*, women, the wives of dukes, lost their formal equality with their duke husbands in terms of being written into state history, as we see in *Chunqiu*. Their activities, including marriage, returning home, visits, and death, disappeared from Sima Qian’s history for the Spring and Autumn period, which focuses on the activities of male members of ruling lineages. A positive representation of women’s wisdom, eloquence, and authority is no longer in the interest of nor taken as a ritual part of history writing in *Shiji*.

In the terms of the representations of women, especially those from Spring and Autumn period, in *Zuozhuan* and *Shiji*, *Zuozhuan* gave fuller representation of women

than *Shiji* and its attitude toward women was more positive in comparison to the latter. First, *Zuozhuan* in many examples presented women as having authority, agency and initiative; in the *Shiji* versions of these stories, the roles of women were reduced in order to strengthen the agency of and focalization through the male members of a ruling lineage toward a goal of a linear logic of succession. Second, *Shiji* stressed the disruptive role of women in state affairs by intensively preserving the stories in *Zuozhuan* that associated women with political disasters and emergencies. Third, *Zuozhuan* had a non-gendered approach to the effect of women's wisdom, knowledge and eloquence; it left space for complexity of characterization for women. In contrast, *Shiji* and *Lienü Zhuan*, where these stories in *Zuozhuan* were transmitted, emphasized a patterned understanding of women and produced gender role types.

With the representation of women in *Shiji*, the effect of the agency of women in history is patterned. In *Shiji*, women's agency is more closely connected to political disasters and negative political situations. In the limited representation of positive heroines, their good roles came from their virtue in being self-restrictive and submissive. It implies as a historical teaching in *Shiji* that the limitation of the political autonomy of women is a way to promise the success of lineage and tradition.

The cause of the different representation of women in *Zuozhuan* and *Shiji* could be interpreted in three aspects. First, the reduction of representation of women in history books is a reflection of the transition of polity from a unity of formally equal feudal states to an imperial system where the royal woman lost her legitimate political role in an idealized scheme. Second, Sima Qian's negative attitude toward palace women was related to the problem of excessive power and favoritism of the royal maternal relatives

in early Han, which caused incidents that interrupted the smooth succession to the throne for the ruling Liu family. Third, Sima Qian's idea on relationships between palace women and rulers was influenced by the *yin-yang* theory, which started to emerge in commentaries to classical texts in Western Han. *Shiji* incorporated the doctrines of “three bonds” and “threefold following”, which define women’s virtue as submission and self-restriction based on the *yin-yang* theory. Sima Qian’s glorification of rulers and forefathers and his stress on the association of women with political disaster and emergencies also resonates with Dong Zhongshu’s idea of strengthening the hierarchy of and the moral opposition within the *yin-yang* binary.

One may also attribute the different representations of women in *Zuozhuan* and *Shiji* to their different writing styles reflected in these texts. However, I would argue that adoption of a certain style of writing can carry ethical implications and reflects the authors’ view of history. In the case of *Zuozhuan*, although the fragmented narrative style was partly a result of the limit of the writing material, the unbound bamboo strips and wooden boards, it also reflected the authors’ belief in the potential force of every minor thing and minor person and possible connections among different fragments of history. There are cases in *Zuozhuan* where minor persons avenged great persons for their wrongdoing upon them; the *Zuozhuan* entries also stay more open to interpretation and to various associations with other entries. Whereas *Shiji*’s writing of a comprehensive history along lineages is a projection of the new political structure, an empire with a single ruling lineage, in the historiography as suggested by Mark Lewis, it is also a practice of honoring the superior *yang* and debasing the inferior *yin* in history writing, which is believed to be ritual propriety by both Sima Qian and Dong Zhongshu.

One limitation of my study is the focus on the stories about heroines from the Spring and Autumn period. I do not have space to discuss the majority of the stories about women from the Warring State period and Han in *Shiji*. Although I believe Sima Qian's representation of women in these stories is does not grant them much complexity and agency, a more comprehensive discussion of the women in *Shiji* would be necessary to convince readers of my argument about Sima Qian's attitude toward women. I also have not been able to consider the impact Sima Qian's way of writing about palace women may have had on the representations of women in later dynastic histories in imperial China. This remains an intriguing topic to me.

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