清華中文學報　第二十期
2018 年 12 月　頁 49-112
國立清華大學中國文學系

"Roaming the Infinite": Liu Xiang as *Chuci* Scholar and Would-be Transcendent*

Nicholas Morrow Williams**

Abstract

In the Han dynasty there were numerous imitations of Qu Yuan's 屈原 "Li sao" 離騷, many of which did not emphasize his political stance, biography, or suicide, but rather praised him as an explorer of the divine who had attained at least a symbolic kind of immortality. Using the "Fisherman" 漁父 and "Far Roaming" 遠遊 to sketch the early elaboration of these themes, this article then proceeds to examine the complex response to Qu Yuan's legacy in the writings of Liu Xiang 劉向. Liu was one of the key scholars and transmitters of Qu Yuan's work in the Han, but he also wrote a rarely-studied set of "Nine Threnodies" 九歎, which present a distinctive interpretation of Qu Yuan and the "Li sao." Apart from more familiar themes, these poems follow the "Far Roaming" in concluding with a Daoist apotheosis, departing from the troubled sphere of contemporary politics to join the immortal sages of the past. Moreover, this interpretation has a textual basis, since the term "Peng Xian" in the "Li sao" does not necessarily refer to a political figure, but may instead represent a divine figure who attained transcendence through aquatic immersion.

Key words: Liu Xiang 劉向, Qu Yuan 屈原, *Chuci* 楚辭, Daoism 道教, Han literature 漢朝文學, Peng Xian 彭咸

---

* I presented this paper at the 《中古文學與漢學研究工作坊》held at National Tsing Hua University on October 26, 2017, and I am grateful for the feedback of participants there.

** Assistant Professor, School of Chinese, The University of Hong Kong

1. Introduction

Throughout the history of Chinese culture, Qu Yuan 屈原 (ca. 300 BCE) has been a figure representing tragedy, defeat, and self-destruction, but also a poetic inspiration and moral hero. For inherent in the legacy of the *Chuci* 楚辭 is the possibility of Qu Yuan's triumph as well as his defeat and suicide. Even the journey of the soul is not just a figure of death (the celestial soul departing the body forever) but also of immortality: the soul rising above into a new state of freedom, as in the "Far Roaming" 遠遊 poem attributed to Qu Yuan in the *Chuci*. The "Li sao" 離騷 itself, apart from its political complaint, also contains extensive depictions of spirit roaming through the mythic borders of the universe, and the poem as a whole integrates yearning for transcendence with thwarted political ambition, both of which are inalienable elements of Qu Yuan's worldview.[1]

This ambiguity is obscured by Wang Yi's 王逸 (ca. 89-ca. 158) enormously influential interpretation of the anthology, which emphasizes Qu Yuan's political stance.[2] Wang Yi was heavily influenced by the

[1] This paper focuses not on the "Li sao" itself but on its Han interpreters, particularly Liu Xiang. For the Daoist and shamanistic elements in the "Li sao," see Yang Rur-bin 楊儒賓, "Wufeng longzhao xia de xingming zhi xue: Qu Yuan zuopin de sixiangshi yiyi 巫風籠罩下的性命之學——屈原作品的思想史意義," in *Disijie tongsu wenxue yu yazheng wenxue quanguo xueshu yantaohui lunwenji* 第四屆通俗文學與雅正文學全國學術研討會議論文集, ed. Guoli Zhongxing daxue zhongguo wenxue xi 國立中興大學中國文學系 (Taipei: Xinwenfeng chuban gongsi, 2003), 1-26.

[2] There have been numerous excellent studies of Wang Yi in recent years. See Michael Schimmelpfennig, "The Quest for a Classic: Wang Yi and the Exegetical Prehistory of his Commentary to the Li sao," *Early China* 29 (2004): 109-160; Timothy Wai Keung Chan, "Wang Yi on Integrity and Loyalty," in *Considering the End: Mortality in Early Medieval Chinese Poetic*

systematic thought elaborated in the "weft" texts of the Han dynasty, which identified specific correlations between earthly phenomena and the intention of Heaven.[3] Moreover, in the second century CE the political tensions between the consort clans, eunuchs, and other cliques had become severe enough that Confucian thinkers placed ever-increasing emphasis on personal loyalty to the sovereign. In this context, Wang Yi celebrated even Qu Yuan's suicide as a model of political loyalty, in sharp contrast to earlier Han opinion.[4] This political discourse would dominate much of the scholarly discourse on Qu Yuan in imperial China, but it always diverged considerably from the representation of Qu Yuan in literary imitations and pastiche, and is by no means fully representative of Han reception.[5]

In fact, though, many of the Han poems most closely related to the "Li sao" emphasize not Qu Yuan's political complaint but instead his visionary journey; not his aristocratic identity so much as his shamanic heritage; and not his suicidal determination but rather his longing to stop time's passage. There were various Daoist interpretations of the "Li sao" in the Han, such as "Far Roaming" and "Fisherman" 漁父. These prepare for a closer study of Liu Xiang 劉向 (79-8 B.C.) and his "Nine

Representation (Brill: Leiden, 2012), 7-40; Gopal Sukhu, "Monkey, Shamans, Emperors, and Poets: The *Chuci* and Images of Chu During the Han Dynasty," in *Defining Chu: Image and Reality in Ancient China*, ed. Cook and Major (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1999), 145-166.

3 Chan, "Wang Yi on Integrity and Loyalty," 12-19.

4 Ibid., 35-40.

5 See Laurence Schneider, *A Madman of Ch'u: The Chinese Myth of Loyalty and Dissent* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980); and Michael Schimmelpfennig, "Qu Yuans Weg vom 'wahren' 真人 Menschen zum wirklichen Dichter 詩人: Der Han-zeitliche Kommentar von Wang Yi zum 'Li sao' und den *Liedern von Chu*" (PhD diss., Heidelberg, 1999).

Threnodies" (Jiu tan 九歎). Liu Xiang was deeply interested in Daoist self-cultivation methods, such as alchemy, and so it is natural that he focused on this element in the *Chuci* when he attempted to write his own new version of the "Li sao." His self-conscious reworking of a treasured classic was by no means derivative, since it was a reworking in a more elevated and ornately embellished style, and with a new intent as well. While Liu Xiang does frequently refer to the perishing of the body, as in Qu Yuan's works, he complements this with the pursuit of immortality, and the free roaming of the spirit. This transformation of the "Li sao" remains grounded in its source, though. For Liu Xiang knew Qu Yuan's idol, "Peng Xian" 彭咸, not so much as a loyal Shang official as in Wang Yi's commentary, but rather as a pair of shaman-immortals adept at aquatic metamorphoses.

2. The Soul's Journey in Han Readings of the *Chuci*

To begin with, the "Far Roaming," which is originally attributed to Qu Yuan but may actually have been composed as late as the Han dynasty, borrows both structure and specific language from the "Li sao."[6] In one critical passage, the hero asks for advice from transcendent Wangzi Qiao on how to cultivate his spirit:

春秋忽其不淹兮　Springs and autumns pass abruptly on without stopping –

[6] Paul W. Kroll, "On 'Far Roaming', " *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 116.4 (1996): 653-69, at 654; see also Fukunaga Mitsuji 福永光司, "'Daijin fu' no shisōteki keifu「大人賦」の思想的系譜," in *Dōkyō shisōshi kenkyū* 道教思想史研究 (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1987, 2002), 265-97, esp. 277, comparing it to the *Huainanzi* 淮南子.

奚久留此故居	How can I linger long in this old abode of mine?
軒轅不可攀援兮	Xuanyuan cannot be reached or relied upon –
吾將從王喬而娛戲	So I will join with Prince Qiao for pleasure and amusement.[7]
餐六氣而飲沆瀣兮	Consuming the Six Energies and drinking midnight mists –
漱正陽而含朝霞	Gargling the pure Yang and swallowing dawn roseclouds.
保神明之清澄兮	Preserving the purity and transparency of my divine luminosity –
精氣入而麤穢除	Letting the essential energies enter and filthy impurities depart.
順凱風以從遊兮	Following the balmy breezes I roam along –
至南巢而壹息	Reaching Southward Nest with a single breath.[8]
見王子而宿之兮	There I see the Prince and sojourn with him –
審壹氣之和德	Inquiring how to unify vitality, how to modulate potency.[9]

[7] Xuanyuan is the Yellow Emperor. This quatrain does not rhyme but the problem can easily be resolved by reversing the order of the last two characters 娛戲.

[8] Nanchao 南巢 has been identified alternatively as a location near the Lu 廬 river in modern Anhui province, or as the nesting place in the far south of the Vermilion Bird. The latter seems more plausible in context.

[9] For unified vitality, see *Guanzi*: "The unified vitality, being able to transform, is called the 'essence'" 一氣能變曰精. Li Xiangfeng 黎翔鳳, *Guanzi jiaozhu* 管子校注 (Beijing:

曰	He says:
道可受兮	"The Way can be received –
不可傳	but cannot be transmitted.
其小無內兮	So minute it has no interior –
其大無垠	so vast it has no bounds.
無滑而魂兮	Don't let your soul be agitated –
彼將自然	but rather act spontaneously.
壹氣孔神兮	Unify your vitality, concentrate spirit –
於中夜存	maintaining them through the nighttime.
虛以待之兮	Respond to all while being vacant –[10]
無為之先	and before anything else do nothing.
庶類以成兮	Let each kind achieve fulness –
此德之門	this only is the gate of Potentiality." [11]

Everything is in flux; the only stability to be found is by allowing oneself to change too along with the constant mutations of nature. Yet there are devices and techniques for prolonging one's existence within a world of absolute conditionality. These are the methods of the immortals, and Prince Qiao and his many friends. There are potions and elixirs that can mimic the effect of the immortals' own sustenance—the dew found on the mountain peaks at dawn, the mists that descend during the night. The Way cannot be taught in schools, like the wisdom of Confucius, but it can

---

Zhonghua shuju, 2004), *juan* 37, 647.

[10] See *Zhuangzi*: "As for *qi* (vitality), it is what responds to things although itself vacant" 氣也者，虛而待物者也. Guo Qingfan 郭慶藩 ed., *Zhuangzi jishi* 莊子集釋 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1961), *pian* 4, 147.

[11] Hong Xingzu 洪興祖 ed., *Chuci buzhu* 楚辭補注, (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2002), *juan* 5, 166-167. I have consulted Paul Kroll's translation, "On 'Far Roaming'."

be imbibed directly from the patterns of nature, and there are tools that can be studied too, as one prepares for the long life to come. It cannot be achieved in cities, in markets, in courts, or in capitals. Long life is something for a truly free spirit, who has rejected society and departed for the vast beyond. Soul and spirit, all the more liminal and indefinable components of a person, will then be autonomous precisely insofar as they accord with the autonomous Dao. They will become perfectly formed examples of their own kind, fulfilling their unique potentialities.

Such is the general sense of this pivotal passage from "Far Roaming," a poem in the *Chuci* that is attributed to Qu Yuan and yet seems to belong to an entirely different world than that of the "Li sao." In this world the worship of transcendents and pursuit of immortality are firmly established as an alternative to worldly politics. For just as in life, so in art as well: the meaning of the textual tradition is constantly changing. Qu Yuan's writings originate in the historical context of his frustration with the King of Chu, but other readers can find new meaning in them. In particular, they can adapt the same poetic mode and many of the same motifs, but find in the midst of it not a political renunciation but a spiritual one. In both the "Li sao" and the "Far Roaming," this world is confining and the hero is tempted to depart it, but it is only in the "Far Roaming" that he is able to succeed.[12] One literary legacy of the "Li sao" thus becomes the flight of the soul into immortal transcendence, the overcoming of temporality by means of non-action and harmony with the

[12] See the comparison between the two poems in David R. Knechtges, "A Journey to Morality: Chang Heng's *The Rhapsody on Pondering the Mystery*," in *Essays in Commemoration of the Golden Jubilee of the Fung Ping Shan Library (1932-1982)*, ed. Chan Ping-leung et al. (Hong Kong: Fung Ping Shan Library, Hong Kong University, 1982), 162-182, esp. 166-169.

Dao.

In the "Far Roaming," after the conclusion of Prince Qiao's speech, the narrator follows Prince Qiao's advice and achieves Daoist transcendence, passing beyond this world to achieve unity with the spontaneity of original being. We can place this response in the cultural context of the Han, an age when nearly all scholar-officials were afflicted by a "sense of pressure under despotic government," in Hsu Fu-kuan's words, and responded with *fu* poems expressing the "scholar's frustration," in Hellmut Wilhelm's apt description.[13] There is no doubt that the thread of political angst seems to run not far below the surface of nearly all the court literary production of the age. But different writers responded to this angst in different ways, and one of the prevalent responses was to take refuge in the pursuit of immortality.

The "Far Roaming" thus reflects the new cult of the immortals that developed at the end of the Warring States period and was, as Yu Ying-shih has pointed out, "otherworldly in nature."[14] While this is clearly a new development that goes far beyond anything in the text of the "Li sao" itself, it is not necessarily a misreading of the "Li sao" either. As Fukunaga Mitsuji has pointed out, the title "Far Roaming" is itself a restatement of the phrase *yuan shi* 遠逝 "to depart far off" which occurs

---

[13] Hsu Fu-kuan 徐復觀, "Xi Han zhishi fenzi dui zhuanzhi zhengzhi de yaligan 西漢知識分子對專制政治的壓力感," in *Liang Han sixiang shi* 兩漢思想史 (Taipei: Xuesheng shuju, 1979), 1: 281-293; Hellmut Wilhelm, "The Scholar's Frustration: Notes on a Type of 'Fu'," in *Chinese Thought and Institutions*, ed. John K. Fairbank (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), 310-319, 398-403.

[14] Yu Ying-shih, "Life and Immortality in the Mind of Han China," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 25 (1964-1965): 89.

twice in the "Li sao" itself.[15] Even though Qu Yuan is famous as a suicide, the actual text of the "Li sao" does not conclude with his death, but only with his decision to follow in the tracks of "Peng Xian." As modern scholarship has shown, this is probably not a single Shang nobleman who drowned himself, as per Wang Yi, but rather two ancient shaman-heroes, Peng and Xian.[16] For instance, the *Shanhaijing* mentions both of these separately as the names of shamans.[17] There is a good deal more evidence from the Han dynasty, to be discussed below, that helps to confirm that the "Li sao" does not conclude with suicide. In this light, Qu Yuan's masterpiece is not quite so different from the later tradition of "Roaming with Immortals" poems as it seems at first. It ends with a tantalizing hint that Qu Yuan may continue the visionary journey already described in part earlier in the poem.

Numerous Western-Han scholars and poets developed the *Chuci* tradition in this direction. Though their works may contain political critique as well, they place it within a Daoist framework of self-cultivation and aspirations to immortality.[18] Whereas immortals had at

---

[15] Fukunaga, "'Daijin fu' no shisōteki keifu," 277.

[16] This was already appreciated before the 20th century. Yu Yue 俞樾 (1821-1906) pointed out that Peng Xian "cannot be identified" 無可考. See Yu Yue, "Du Chuci 讀楚辭," in *Chunzaitang quanshu* 春在堂全書, *Chuci wenxian congkan* 楚辭文獻叢刊, ed. Huang Linggeng 黃靈庚, vol. 68 (Beijing: Beijing tushuguan chubanshe, 2014.), *juan* 24, 1b.

[17] Yuan Ke 袁珂 ed., *Shanhaijing jiaozhu* 山海經校注 (Chengdu: Ba Shu shushe, 1993), *juan* 7, 200; *juan* 11, 263.

[18] Note that we are speaking here of religious and not philosophical Daoism, though it is not clear if the two can be distinguished rigorously in the Han. Yu Ying-shih argues that beliefs in the immortals during the Han underwent a transition in a worldly direction, as immortals were imbedded in a political discourse (Yu Ying-shih, "Life and Immortality in Han China," 119-120). From the reverse side, though, this also implies that political discourse integrated the pursuit of

first remained primarily in their own sphere, far from the court, and served as an imagined alternative to political life, Han rulers like Emperor Wu sought to become immortal themselves. Meanwhile, the technology of life-preservation became more advanced. Though the Daoist religion as such was not yet firmly established in the Western Han, its key ingredients were already well elaborated: the preparation of elixirs, legends of recluses and transcendents, and cultivation of the breath and other physical regimes. The result of these development allowed for a (religious) Daoist interpretation of Qu Yuan to coalesce, refining mystical elements already present in the "Li sao" and combining them with more recent doctrines.

Loosely speaking, a large body of Han poetry can be read as "Quvian," in that it belongs to the poetic tradition tracing its origins back to Qu Yuan; but the same body of poetry overlaps closely with a burgeoning new tradition of "roaming with the immortals" or early-Daoist verse. For instance, two of the earliest responses to the "Li sao" that are datable are compositions by Jia Yi 賈誼 (200-168), "Mourning Qu Yuan" 弔屈原賦 and "Rueful Oath" 惜誓.[19] But it is striking that his other extant *fu* composition is instead a philosophical piece on the "Houlet" 鵩鳥賦 that praises Daoist transcendence (lines 89-98):

真人恬漠　The Realized Man is quiet and still.
獨與道息　Existing alone with the Tao.

transcendence.

[19] The latter is contained in the *Chuci*, and its authorship is not definite, as with all the pieces in the anthology.

釋智遺形	Divesting himself of wisdom, abandoning physical form,
超然自喪	Transcendent, he loses self.
寥廓忽荒	Detached and empty –
與道翱翔	He soars with the Way.
乘流則逝	Riding the current, away he goes;
得坎則止	Meeting an obstacle, he stops.
縱軀委命	Yielding his body to fate,
不私與己	He is not partial to self.[20]

Jia Yi never achieved this ideal in life. First a brilliant young advisor to Emperor Wen, before incurring the displeasure of the leading faction at court, he was then relegated to Changsha 長沙, where he served as tutor to the King and composed this very poem. Whereas Qu Yuan's authentic compositions are all written from the perspective of someone in exile or at least removed from the center of power, at leisure to reflect on the hypothetical choice between political service or reclusion, Jia Yi continued to serve in various offices, and was never "detached" or independent of contemporary political currents. He stayed in office while composing paeans to transcendent freedom, and found refuge in the ideal of Daoist detachment for the political frustrations he shared with Qu Yuan.

---

[20] Xiao Tong 蕭統 ed., *Wen xuan* 文選, commentated by Li Shan 李善 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1986), *juan* 13, 608; translation quoting David R. Knechtges, trans., *Wen Xuan or Selections of Refined Literature, Vol. III: Rhapsodies on Natural Phenomena, Birds and Animals, Aspirations and Feelings, Sorrowful Laments, Literature, Music, and Passions* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 47-49.

Another indication of the importance of the Daoist interpretation of Qu Yuan is the fact that one of Qu Yuan's most avid admirers in the Han, the Prince of Huainan 淮南, Liu An 劉安 (179?-122 BCE), also had the *Huainanzi* 淮南子 compiled at his court. In the second century BCE, scholarship was thriving, but had not yet been institutionalized and was highly eclectic.[21] The *Huainanzi* is a diverse and capacious tome that includes numerous elements from Daoism codifying and elaborating thought based on the *Laozi* and *Zhuangzi*. It was highly concerned with political questions and advocated specific policies intended to lighten the burden on the populace and accord with people's natural inclinations. But among other things, the *Huainanzi* also presents a number of Daoist responses to political challenges, notably extolling the powers of the spirit, including the *hun* 魂, *po* 魄, *jing* 精, or *shen* 神.[22] Though the text uses the terms *hun* and *po* relatively infrequently, they are subsumed into its doctrine of the *shen* "spirit," as in the seventh chapter describing the "ultimate in spirit": "*Hun* and *po* abide in his home, while the essence and spirit preserve the root, and neither death nor life cause any transformation in the self" 魂魄處其宅，而精神守其根，死生無變於己.[23] This is a version of the doctrines presented in the *Zhuangzi*, which advocates protecting the individual spirit apart from society.

The *Huainanzi* also contains this memorable dialogue between *hun* (skysoul) and *po* (earthsoul):

---

[21] Hsu Fu-kuan 徐復觀, "Huainanzi yu Liu An de shidai 淮南子與劉安的時代," in *Liang Han sixiang shi*, 2: 82-83.

[22] Ibid., 121-133.

[23] Liu Wendian 劉文典 ed., *Huainan honglie jijie* 淮南鴻烈集解 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2013), *juan* 7, 272.

The earthsoul asked of the skysoul: "How is the body of the Way composed?"
Skysoul replied: "Its body is composed of nothingness."
Earthsoul asked: "Does nothingness have form?"
Skysoul replied: "How can you even hear about nothingness?"
Then skysoul said: "I've only encountered it like this: Looking upon it is, it is without form, and listening to it you hear no sound. It is called the nebulous void. But nebulous void is what we use as a metaphor for it, not the Way itself."
Then earthsoul said: "I've heard it is like this. Looking inside and returning to oneself."
Skysoul said: For all those who obtain the way, you cannot succeed in observing their form, nor will their names be spread abroad. Now you already have form and name. What can you accomplish in regard to the Way?"
Earthsoul said: "Though you speak of this, what can you do about it?"
Skysoul replied: "Then I will return to my original self."
Earthsoul looked back at skysoul, but all at once it had disappeared. Earthsoul still survived, but then vanished into formlessness as well.

魄問於魂曰：道何以為體？曰：以無有為體。魄曰：無有有形乎。魂曰：無有何得而聞也。魂曰：吾直有所遇之耳。視之無形。聽之無聲。謂之幽冥。幽冥者所以喻道而非道也。魄曰：吾聞得之矣。乃內視而自反也。魂曰：凡得道者，形不可得而見，名不可得而揚。今汝已有形名矣，何道之所能乎。魄曰：

言者獨何為者。〔魂曰〕：[24] 吾將反吾宗矣。魄反顧魂，忽然不見。反而自存，亦以淪於無形矣。[25]

This is the foundation for one Han interpretation of "Li sao": a widespread belief that the soul could "vanish into formlessness." Whereas in the "Summons to the Soul," the soul was treated more like a person that, even while traveling throughout the realm, nonetheless could be located at any given moment, here the soul's journey is presented in a more abstract fashion. Though this dialogue seems more like a playful, philosophical reverie than a serious disquisition, the autonomy of the soul is still treated as a matter of personal urgency.

In spite of his royal status, Liu An found himself dissatisfied with his position and became involved in various intrigues and plots, leading eventually to his suicide.[26] Like the scholar-officials of the Han, then, he could have empathized with Qu Yuan and thought of himself as another unappreciated sage. At his court Liu An fostered the study and composition of *Chuci*-style verse. The capital of Huainan was at Shouchun 壽春 in modern Shou county, Anhui province, which had also been the final capital of the independent Chu kingdom, so he may have felt a geographical affinity with Qu Yuan as well. Liu An is famous as the author of the "Li sao zhuan" 離騷傳, apparently the earliest commentary to the poem, and his effusive praise was critical in elevating the "Li sao"

---

[24] Amended by Yu Yue.

[25] Liu Wendian ed., *Huainan honglie jijie*, *juan* 16, 625-626.

[26] On his life see Benjamin E. Wallacker, "Liu An, Second King of Huai-nan (180?-122 B.C.)," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 92.1 (1972): 36-51, and Griet Vankeerberghen, *The* Huainanzi *and Liu An's Claim to Moral Authority* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001), 9-61.

to high status throughout the Han. But he and his courtiers also compiled *Chuci* verse, such as the "Summons to the Recluse" which was included in the *Chuci* anthology. Indeed Liu An's connection with the "Li sao" is so intimate that some modern scholars have attributed it to him.

Though the "Li sao zhuan" by Liu An does not survive in full, it seems to have contained this passage of extravagant praise for the purity and incorruptibility of Qu Yuan's virtue, preserved in the *Shi ji* biography of Qu Yuan:

> Immersed and immired in the mud and the dregs, he sloughed off the old shell besmirched by dirt, to fly up and roam beyond the dust and grime; no longer subject to the dirty pollution of this world, shining immaculate and untainted by the muck. When we consider that high ambition of his, it seems such as could contend for brightness with the very sun and moon.
>
> 濯淖汙泥之中，蟬蛻於濁穢，以浮游塵埃之外，不獲世之滋垢，皭然泥而不滓者也。推此志也，雖與日月爭光可也。[27]

Though the "Li sao" itself does employ a rhetoric of purity, it more commonly praises fragrance as the emblem of virtue. Liu An's rhetoric of purity versus pollution seems much closer to the rhetoric of "Fisherman," another work in the *Chuci* whose dating is disputed:

> 聖人不凝滯於物　The Sage does not become mired in objects,
> 而能與世推移　but is capable of moving along with the

[27] Sima Qian 司馬遷, *Shi ji* 史記 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1959), *juan* 84, 2482. For the identification as Liu An's text, see Liu Xie 劉勰, Wenxin diaolong zhu 文心雕龍注, trans. Fan Wenlan 范文瀾 (Taipei: Xuehai chubanshe, 1991), *juan* 5, 45.

world.

世人皆濁	If everyone in the world is muddy,
何不淈其泥	why not stir up the muck
而揚其波	and raise some waves?
眾人皆醉	If all the people are drunk,
何不餔其糟	why not dine on their dregs
而歠其醨	and swallow their lees?
何故深思高舉	What are these profound longings and lofty aspirations for,
自令放為	but to get yourself exiled? [28]

This work, like "Far Roaming," is attributed to Qu Yuan in our surviving texts of the *Chuci*. But even the Han commentary shows some hesitancy about the attribution, pointing out the role of "the people of Chu" 楚人 in transmitting this story.[29] All things considered, "Fisherman" seems likely to be considerably later than "Li sao," probably a Western Han text as well, which explicitly combines Qu Yuan lore with Daoist argumentation. As with "Far Roaming" and Liu An's work, it attempts to define Qu Yuan as a hero in accordance with a Daoist ethic of maintaining internal purity.[30] What the author of "Fisherman" and Liu An alike appreciated in the "Li sao" may have been above all the purity (not loyalty) of its hero.

---

[28] Hong Xingzu ed., *Chuci buzhu*, *juan* 7, 179-180.

[29] Ibid., 179.

[30] It is important to note that the Fisherman actually advocates serving in politics, not retiring. See Timothy W.K. Chan's discussion of "fishermanism" and "antifishermanism" in Timothy Wai Keung Chan, "Epilogue: The Fisherman in Reclusion," in *Considering the End: Mortality in Early Medieval Chinese Poetic Representation* (Brill: Leiden, 2012), 187-207.

The celebration of Daoist purity can be found even within the so-called Wang Yi commentary. When we discuss the scholarly environment of the Han, we should not assume that it is dominated solely by the quest for political allegory or historicization. These are tendencies of the Mao commentary to the *Shijing* and also of Wang Yi's commentary to *Chuci* in particular, as discussed in detail in Yu, *The Reading of Imagery in the Chinese Poetic Tradition*,[31] but were not universal. While Wang Yi has rightly attracted the most study as a commentator of *Chuci*, it is worth noting that we have little firm evidence about the authorship of any particular portion of the commentary. Kominami Ichirō has shown that the commentary must be a composite of at least two, but probably more different sources. Most strikingly, numerous works in the *Chuci* include a commentary in rhymed verse, which might be from another tradition that was incorporated by Wang Yi into his commentary.[32]

In any case, some of the contents of the "Wang Yi" commentary do not pursue the allegorical interpretation with which we are familiar from the "Li sao." This is particularly true of the commentary to the "Far Roaming." It would have been easy enough to employ the same strategy as in the "Li sao," interpreting the mystical journey of the protagonist as having some kind of allegorical significance in relation to the King of Chu. Instead, though, the commentator—whoever it actually was—actually interprets would could be metaphysical doctrines instead as the

---

[31] Yu Pauline, *The Reading of Imagery in the Chinese Poetic Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987).

[32] See Chen Hongtu's 陳鴻圖 confirmation by use of rhyming evidence in Chen Hongtu, "*Chuci zhangju yunwen* zhu de shidai《楚辭章句》韻文注的時代," *Zhongguo Chucixue* 中國楚辭學 16 (2011): 285-294; as well as Kominami Ichirō 小南一郎, *Soji to sono chūshakushatachi* 楚辞とその注釈者達 (Kyoto: Hōyū shoten, 2003), 300-326.

pursuit of immortality. For instance, at the conclusion of Prince Qiao's speech in the "Far Roaming," quoted above, the commentary reads:

庶類以成兮	Let each kind achieve fulness –
（眾法陳也）	*This means that all the various standards are laid out.*
此德之門	this only is the gate of Potentiality.
（仙路徑也）	*This means the way and path of the immortals.*[33]

Even the paraphrase, rather than emphasizing political connotations, understands the relatively abstract "gate of Potentiality" from the first chapter of the *Laozi* into the concrete religious regimen of Daoism, the way of self-preservation and immortality. Likewise, for lines 133-34:

覽方外之荒忽兮	Gazing at the limitless haze –
（遂究率土，窮海嵎也）	*This means that he reaches the [perimeter] surrounding the earth, and penetrates to the edge of the ocean.*[34]
沛罔象而自浮	Racing into the nebulous void I let myself float free.[35]
（水與天合，物漂流也）	*This means that [at the horizon]*

[33] Hong Xingzu ed., *Chuci buzhu*, *juan* 5, 167.

[34] *Shuaitu* 率土 abbreviates "the perimeter surrounding the earth" 率土之濱, as in *Shijing* 詩經, "Bei shan 北山," 205/2. See Ruan Yuan 阮元, ed., *Mao shi zhengyi* 毛詩正義, in *Shisanjing zhushu* 十三經注疏 (Taipei: Shangwu yinshuguan, 2007), 13A.19b.

[35] For the rhyming binome *wangxiang* 罔象, equivalent to *fangxiang* 仿像, Hong Xingzu cites a usage in Wang Bao's "Rhapsody on the Panpipes" 洞簫賦. See Xiao Tong ed., *Wen xuan*, *juan* 17, 788.

where water meets with heaven,
things float free in the current.[36]

Again we find that where the source text uses relatively abstract terms for an indescribable state that is somewhere beyond ordinary human life, the commentary offers a more explicit narrative of the immortal's progress. Rather than merely entering some kind of nebulous void, he has traveled beyond the limits of the earth and ocean.

Also very significant is the commentary to another line in "Far Roaming" which helps us to understand contemporary conceptions of "soul" and "spirit":

神儵忽而不反兮　　The spirit is swift and surreptitious, and does not return –

（魂靈遠逝，遊四維也）　*This means that the soul departs far off, and roams to the four extremities.*[37]

In contrast to the body, which is mired in its location, the Daoist perspective sees the spirit or soul (whose different dimensions can be represented by different words) as the free subject that can roam throughout the universe. These examples help us to illustrate the hermeneutical context for reading the "Li sao" in the Han. In the Han there were ways of reading the earlier strata of the *Chuci* so as to emphasize the role of the pursuit of immortals and of Daoist themes in general. So while all Han scholars were concerned with their relation to

[36] Hong Xingzu ed., *Chuci buzhu*, *juan* 5, 172.

[37] Ibid., 164.

the sovereign and the just application of imperial power, many were equally intrigued by the path to freedom of the spirit that had already matured beyond its original outline in *Zhuangzi*.

This is the broader intellectual context for us to approach Liu Xiang, one of the more creative readers of the "Li sao" in the Han.

3. Biographical and Scholarly Contexts for the "Nine Threnodies"

Liu Xiang, scion of the imperial house, aspiring alchemist, influential bibliographer, and poet of elegant artifice, is a pivotal figure who shaped many aspects of the Chinese tradition.[38] Liu is typically treated primarily as a scholar and editor, but he was also a prolific writer of poetry, and his creative works deserve greater consideration. He also wrote many *fu,* most of which have been lost, but the "Nine Threnodies" are his key extant composition, the penultimate work and technical culmination of the *Chuci* anthology.[39] Though these are sometimes regarded as a pale imitation of the "Li sao," Liu's "Threnodies" do not imitate the "Li sao," but rather reflect explicitly on Qu Yuan and the "Li

[38] For these dates see Qian Mu 錢穆, "Liu Xiang Xin fuzi nianpu 劉向歆父子年譜," in *Lianghan jingxue jinguwen pingyi* 兩漢經學今古文平議 (Kowloon: Xinya yanjiusuo, 1958), 1-54. My interpretation of Liu Xiang owes a great deal to Fukunaga Mitsuji, "Ryū Kō to shinsen 劉向と神仙," who elaborates on his Daoist context in a highly original way, in "Ryū Kō to shinsen: Zen Kan makki in okeru shinsen Dōkyōteki sekai 劉向と神仙──前漢末期における神仙道教的世界," in *Dōkyō shisōshi kenkyū* 道教思想史研究 (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1987, 2002), 299-318.

[39] I translate the title as "Nine Threnodies" particularly to suggest the sense of conscious comment on tradition, "threnody" being an ancient Greek genre of lament, and hence in English a classical allusion of a kind.

sao." Thus, rather than simply sustaining the existing classical tradition, the poems are a reimagination that mark out their distance from the original texts. The "Nine Threnodies," like the other Han poems in the *Chuci* which adopt the voice of Qu Yuan, were denigrated by later scholars from Zhu Xi to David Hawkes. But this was because they were being measured according to the wrong standard: expecting a fluent simulation of spontaneous expression such as they had found in the poems attributed to Qu Yuan, they found instead a richly conceived, multilayered suite of self-consciously allusive poetry. The "Nine Threnodies" are by their very nature manifold, the product of political, scholarly, religious, and literary influences that must all be taken into account. Their composition, to begin with, can be placed in the context of Liu Xiang's fourfold identity as aspiring alchemist and would-be transcendent, court advisor to Emperors Yuan and Cheng, chief editor of the imperial library including its collection of *Chuci*-type poetry, and writer seeking to express his own sentiments and also influence the court.

The Liu imperial house had a long history of interest in alchemical prescriptions and techniques for achieving immortality.[40] This is an important elements in the content of the *Huainanzi*, as discussed above. Emperor Wu of the Han was criticized for his desperate attempts in later life to achieve the formula of long life. Sima Xiangru 司馬相如 (179-117), supreme rhapsodist, may have composed his "Rhapsody on the Great Man" 大人賦 precisely with the aim of satirizing the emperor's efforts.[41] It was indeed at this time, under Emperor Wu's

[40] Fukunaga, "Ryū Kō to shinsen," 301-305.

[41] Sima Qian, *Shi ji*, *juan* 117, 3056. See also discussion in David R. Knechtges and Taiping Chang ed., *Ancient and Early Medieval Chinese Literature: A Reference Guide* (Leiden: Brill, 2010),

auspices, that beliefs in immortals became more firmly established, as one can see from the new representation of the Yellow Emperor as an immortal that appears in his "Treatise on the *Feng* and *Shan* Sacrifices."[42] Liu Xiang in his youth was fascinated with a book entitled *Huainan zhenzhong hongbaoyuan mishu* 淮南枕中鴻寶苑秘書 (Secret text of the Garden of Vast Treasures, from the pillow of the Prince of Huainan), attributed to Liu An. Even his son Liu Xin 劉歆 (d. 23 C.E.), also a distinguished scholar, was criticized by Huan Tan 桓譚 (E. Han) for his excessive faith in the promises of "technicians" 方士 who taught methods for achieving immortality.[43]

As courtier, Liu Xiang suffered typical frustrations and narrowly avoided the fate of a Qu Yuan.[44] After he offered up the book of alchemical prescriptions to Emperor Xuan in 56, he was removed from office when they proved expensive and ineffectual.[45] Under Emperor Yuan, he supported his patrons Xiao Wangzhi 蕭望之 and Zhou Kan 周堪, and opposed the rising influence of the eunuchs. After Liu presented a memorial under another person's name warning about the eunuchs' power, they had him imprisoned and reduced to commoner status, and Xiao Wangzhi committed suicide in 47.[46] Yuandi's reign was also troubled by

976-977, and Wan Guangzhi's 萬光治 subtle critique of the traditional view in Wan Guangzhi, "Sima Xiangru 'Daren fu' xianyi 司馬相如〈大人賦〉獻疑," *Sichuan shifan daxue xuebao (shehui kexue ban)* 四川師範大學學報 (社會科學版) 32.3 (2005): 63-69.

42 See Yu Ying-shih, "Life and Immortality in Han China," 103ff.

43 Li Fang 李昉, *Taiping yulan* 太平御覽 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1960), *juan* 956, 2a; Fukunaga, "Ryū Kō to shinsen," 307.

44 On Liu's biography, see Hsu Fu-kuan, "Liu Xiang *Xinxu Shuoyuan* de yanjiu 劉向新序說苑的研究," in *Liang Han sixiang shi*, 3: 49-115; and Qian Mu, "Liu Xiang Xin fuzi nianpu."

45 Qian Mu, "Liu Xiang Xin fuzi nianpu," 12-13.

46 Ban Gu 班固, *Han shu* 漢書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju , 1962), *juan* 36, 1930; Michael Loewe,

natural disaster, and Liu responded to the various political and environmental catastrophes by composing a set of eight poems of historical allegory: though no longer extant, they are described in his biography as *yi xing gu shi* 依興古事, employing ancient matters for their contemporary significance.[47] Another work that is no longer extant was entitled *Shuo Laozi* 說老子, confirming Liu's Daoist interests, though there is no way to tell whether it emphasized self-cultivation or not.[48]

Liu Xiang was restored to office only under the succeeding reign of Emperor Cheng. It was at this time that he changed his name from Gengsheng 更生 to Xiang. Under Emperor Cheng's reign, he vigorously intervened in court affairs, arguing *inter alia* that the ritual cults of the state should be conducted "in the traditional way."[49] Liu Xiang was no ivory-tower academic; his editing and compilation work was one aspect of his political engagement.[50] His editing of the volumes *Xin xu* and *Shuo yuan*, as well as *Lie nü zhuan,* was intended to present models for men of action involved in the political world, in particular the emperor himself.[51]

"Han Yuandi, Reigned 48 to 33 B.C.E., and His Advisors," *Early China* 35/36 (2012-2013): 379.

47 Loewe, "Han Yuandi, Reigned 48 to 33 B.C.E., and His Advisors," 383; Ban Gu, *Han shu*, *juan* 36, 1948. Four of the poems were entitled "Reviling Slander," 疾讒, "Selecting the Essential" 擿要, "Dispelling Disaster 救危, and "Encomium to the Age" 世頌.

48 Ban Gu, *Han shu, juan* 30, 1729.

49 That is, he "put forward a strong plea in favor of practising the ritual cults of state in the traditional way rather than transforming them into services to heaven and earth [note to *Han shu* 25.1258]." See Loewe, "Han Yuandi, Reigned 48 to 33 B.C.E., and His Advisors," 380.

50 In academic jargon, one would say that he excelled at "knowledge exchange."

51 On this point see Hsu Fu-kuan, "Liu Xiang *Xinxu Shuoyuan* de yanjiu," as well Charles Sanft, "The Moment of Dying: Representations in Liu Xiang's Anthologies *Xin xu* and *Shuo yuan*," *Asia Major, third series* 24.1 (2011): 127-158, both of which bring out the coherent point of view

He is said to have presented these three volumes to Emperor Cheng in order to indicate models of behavior to rectify the corruption of the court.[52]

It has been argued that the "Nine Threnodies" must date to a period when Liu Xiang would have been particularly concerned with the themes of the *Chuci*, such as the years between 47 and 32 while he was in disgrace, but in fact the same concern would have pressed equally upon his consciousness in youth, after narrowly escaping execution in 56 BCE; or even later, when he had better access to the texts:[53] Liu Xiang along with several others were charged in 26 BCE with putting in order the imperial library. Then Liu himself was assigned to compile a bibliography of its contents, which was completed by his son Liu Xin.[54] Thus Liu Xiang and his son established the main bibliographical divisions in the treatise "Monograph on Arts and Letters" 藝文志 of the *Han shu* 漢書. The catalog has seven primary divisions, which seem to originate with Liu Xiang himself, and among which *Chuci* would be classified as "*Shi* and *Fu* Poetry" 詩賦.[55]

---

underlying Liu's writings. The composition of the *Lie nü zhuan* may also have been intended as a form of critique directed at the extravagance of palace ladies. See Ban Gu, *Han shu*, *juan* 36, 1957 and *juan* 97B, 3974; Loewe, "Han Yuandi, Reigned 48 to 33 B.C.E., and His Advisors," 380. See also Bret Hinsch, "The Composition of 'Lienüzhuan': Was Liu Xiang the Author or Editor?" *Asia Major* (third series) 20.1 (2007): 1-23.

52 Qian Mu, "Liu Xiang Xin fuzi nianpu," 39-40.

53 Hsu argues that all *Chuci* related work was done between 47-32 B.C., after troubles with Xiao Wangzhi and Zhou Kan. See Hsu Fu-kuan, *Liang Han sixiangshi*, 3: 59.

54 Qian Mu, "Liu Xiang Xin fuzi nianpu," 31-34. On the Han imperial library see Jean-Pierre Drège, *Les Bibliothèques en Chine au temps des manuscrits (jusqu'au Xe siècle)* (Paris: École française d'extrême-orient, 1991), 19-24.

55 It was probably not till the Liang dynasty that *Chuci* became an independent bibliographical

In terms of his compilation work, Liu Xiang played a key role in establishing the *Chuci* corpus that we have today.[56] Huang Linggeng has even proposed that the comment in Wang Yi's postface to the "Li sao" that Liu Xiang divided the text into sixteen *juan* is referring not to the *Chuci* anthology, as has generally been understood, but only to the "Li sao" specifically.[57] This suggestion was actually made first by Southern Song scholar Lü Zuqian 呂祖謙 (1137-1187), who went further and divided up the text of the "Li sao" into sixteen sections, in his own poetic anthology.[58] If this is correct, it gives Liu Xiang a particularly intimate and direct relation with the "Li sao," as he appears almost in the role of co-author. Though there is not sufficient evidence to confirm these theories, nonetheless Liu Xiang's interests throughout his life would have directed him towards the *Chuci*. There was his family background, the inheritance of books and Daoist interests from Liu An; his personal encounters with the fickle judgments of despotism; his literary prowess and creativity. The "Nine Threnodies" seem to originate in a very close

---

category, with Ruan Xiaoxu 阮孝緒 (479-536). See Yan Kejun 嚴可均, *Quan shanggu Sandai Qin Han Sanguo Liuchao wen* 全上古三代秦漢三國六朝文 (Taipei: Shijie shuju, 1969), "Quan Liang wen" 全梁文, *juan* 66, 15b. For context see Jean-Pierre Drège, *Les Bibliothèques en Chine au temps des manuscrits (jusqu'au Xe siècle)*, 115-120.

[56] It is broadly understood today that he may have compiled an early version of the anthology. See, e.g., Lin Weichun 林維純, "Liu Xiang bianji *Chuci* chutan 劉向編集《楚辭》初探," in *Zhong Ri xuezhe Qu Yuan wenti lunzheng* 中日學者屈原問題論爭, ed. Huang Zhongmo 黃中模 (Ji'nan: Shandong jiaoyu chubanshe, 1990), 219-231.

[57] Huang Linggeng 黃靈庚, *Chuci yu jianbo wenxian* 楚辭與簡帛文獻 (Beijing: Renmin wenxue, 2011), 46-50.

[58] Lü Zuqian 呂祖謙, *Donglai jizhu Guanlan wenji jiaji* 東萊集註觀瀾文集甲集, in *Lü Zuqian quanji* 呂祖謙全集, ed. Huang Linggeng 黃靈庚 and Wu Zhanlei 吳戰壘, vol. 10 (Hangzhou: Zhejiang guji chubanshe, 2008), *juan* 1, 1-20.

study of the "Li sao" and deserve close attention in part for their value as a kind of commentary to the "Li sao," substantially earlier than Wang Yi's commentary.

The singular point of view elaborated in Liu Xiang's poems might be termed "classical" or even "neoclassical." Classicism, broadly conceived, is a system of thought rooted in and undergirded by models from the past, and is a consistent strain in the development of Chinese thought and culture.[59] But it is useful to distinguish between early Chinese poetry and later works written in reference to the earlier tradition, and particularly between works that join the classical tradition with the passage of time, and those that self-consciously assert their classical identity *ex ante*.[60] It is unlikely that Liu Xiang would have identified the "Li sao" as a *jing*, classic, but he shows throughout the "Nine Threnodies" that he does treat it as an authoritative text, in which status it can form the basis for a new composition that is simultaneously highly original and also intended as a response to the prior work. Liu Xiang's treatment of "Li sao" as an authoritative model thus should be placed in context of the recognition of the *Shi* as a classic, dating at least to

[59] "Classicism" is itself a self-regarding, often playful or ironical concept. See Michael Nylan's the near-contemporary Yang Xiong and his enjoyment of "classical learning," in Michael Nylan, *Yang Xiong and the Pleasures of Reading and Classical Learning in China* (New Haven, Conn.: American Oriental Society, 2011), and cf. James A. Porter's valuable reflections on the topic in James A. Porter, "What Is 'Classical' about Classical Antiquity?" in *Classical Pasts: The Classical Traditions of Greek and Rome*, ed. Porter (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 1-68.

[60] For discussion and thoughtful reflections on the usefulness of the term "neoclassicism," in spite of and even because of its vagueness, see Scott Messing, *Neoclassicism in Music: From the Genesis of the Concept through the Schoenberg/Stravinsky Polemic* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1988), 61-65 and passim.

Emperor Wu's appointment of the "Five Classics Erudites" in 136 B.C.[61] Its identification as such belonged to an active project of scholarship, editing the texts, writing commentaries and interpretations, explicating their meaning to a new generation. For Liu Xiang, reading and responding to the "Li sao" was part of a broader cultural project of classical exegesis that had already begun in his day and would dominate Eastern Han letters as well.

Indeed, one of the primary themes of the "Nine Threnodies" is actually the "Li sao" itself, the classic text that provided for Liu Xiang an indispensable model for self-expression. The first poem in the series not only opens with a reference to Qu Yuan but also follows the "Li sao" in beginning with Qu Yuan's parentage:

伊伯庸之末胄兮	That final scion of his majesty Boyong –
諒皇直之屈原	The august and incorruptible Qu Yuan, indeed,
云余肇祖于高陽兮	Spoke thus: My originating sire was Lord Gaoyang –
惟楚懷之嬋連	My lineage interlinked with Chu's King Huai;[62]

Note that Liu Xiang explicitly puts the following lines into the voice of Qu Yuan, making this poem one of many in the *Chuci* that adopt the Quvian persona. In another example, though he speaks of his experience in *reading* the "Li sao":

---

[61] Ban Gu, *Han shu*, *juan* 6, 159.

[62] Hong Xingzu ed., *Chuci buzhu*, *juan* 16, 282, 1/1-4 (citations from the Nine Threnodies hereafter include poem and line number in this manner).

覽屈氏之離騷兮	When I peruse the "Li sao" of Master Qu –
心哀哀而怫鬱	My heart breaks with sadness, a long-borne anguish.
聲嗷嗷以寂寥兮	I cry out piercingly in the vast silence –
顧僕夫之憔悴	Even the carriage driver is sick at heart.[63]

In other words, he is not imitating the "Li sao" but writing about the experience of reading it, of reflecting on Qu Yuan's fate. These explicit references to the "Li sao," in contrast to some other Han pieces in the *Chuci* which only borrow its imagery and rhetoric, distinguish the "Threnodies" from the earlier work. Among other things, they imply that the speaker is not Qu Yuan himself but rather a quasi-Quvian protagonist.

Another example is ambiguous:

歎離騷以揚意兮	I chant the "Li sao" to send forth my thoughts –
猶未殫於九章	I have still not exhausted all the "Nine Avowals."
長噓吸以於悒兮	Ever sighing in sorrow, feeling my frustration –
涕橫集而成行	My tears gather side by side and fall in lines.[64]

I translate *tan* as chant above, but this is also the *tan* of "Threnody," Liu Xiang's title, and could the phrase could be rendered with equal justice in causative form as "I turn the 'Li sao' into a threnody of my own," or even

[63] Ibid., *juan* 16, 295-296, 5/1-4.

[64] Ibid., *juan* 16, 300, 6/33-36.

simply "I threnodize the 'Li sao.'" Similarly, in the following example Liu Xiang speaks of using the "Li sao" for his own political expression:

興離騷之微文兮	Using the subtle words of the "Li sao" as my stimulus –
冀靈修之壹悟	I hope that Lingxiu will once become aware;
還余車於南郢兮	Returning my carriage back to Southern Ying –
復往軌於初古	I turn the track back towards the first and ancient one.[65]

So even though the poems are certainly modeled on the "Li sao," Liu Xiang is also placing them into various other explicit relations with the "Li sao," not simply one of imitation and model.

Liu Xiang's self-conscious adaptation of the *Chuci* is perhaps most distinctive in his use of certain self-conscious literary tropes, like repetition and accumulation of descriptive binomes. Liu Xiang also introduces a number of stylistic experimentations into the poems. The second poem in the series opens as follows, with "Ling Huai" being Liu's portmanteau of Qu Yuan's Lingxiu 靈修 and its putative referent, the actual sovereign King Huai 懷 of Chu:

靈懷其不吾知兮	Ling Huai, the Numinous, does not know me –
靈懷其不吾聞	Ling Huai does not hear of me;
就靈懷之皇祖兮	Revering the august ancestry of Ling Huai –

[65] Ibid., *juan* 16, 307, 8/29-32.

懇靈懷之鬼神	I make my plaint to the ghosts of Ling Huai;
靈懷曾不吾與兮	Ling Huai does not make accord with me –
即聽夫人之諛辭	But only hears the fawning phrases of those others.
余辭上參於天墜兮	My own phrases match in excellence Heaven and Earth –
旁引之於四時	They are quoted on all sides throughout the four seasons.[66]

This kind of musical repetition of a single name is extremely rare in the *Chuci* and particularly effective on that account, by virtue of its singular melodiousness.

The "Nine Threnodies" also employ a kind of repetition on a larger scale. Each of the "Nine Threnodies" concludes with an envoi, like the "Li sao" and some of the "Nine Avowals" 九章; but the envois of the poems are eponymously titled *tan* 歎, in contrast to the *luan* 亂 of the "Li sao," which may be a musical term. This produces a self-similarity that comports well with the reflexively allusive nature of the "Nine Threnodies" as a whole: just as each poems recapitulates aspects of the "Li sao," the envoi recapitulates each of the individual poems. Unlike the "Li sao," these envois are composed in the "Encomium to the Tangerine" 橘頌 meter, in tetrasyllabic couplets concluding with the particle *xi* 兮, occasionally also introducing the variation of triplets. Each is full of descriptive binomes, a device present in the "Li sao" itself, but used

[66] Ibid., *juan* 16, 285, 2/1-8.

much more extensively here (as they are in the Han *fu* as well). Again Liu Xiang is taking his materials from the authoritative model, but employing new kinds of stylistic variation and elaboration. The envoi provides an well-crafted conclusion to the first "Threnody," for instance:

歎曰：	The Threnody:
譬彼流水	Just like the rapids of the stream,
紛揚磕兮	When they crash upon the rocks –
波逢洶涌	The waves meet rolling and roiling,
潰滂沛兮	They surge up in baleful bursts –
揄揚滌盪	Swiftly rising, shaking and quaking,
漂流隕往	The rolling currents pour downwards,
觸崟石兮	Striking the cragged stones –
龍邛脝圈	Coursing criss-cross, plashing and splashing,
繚戾宛轉	Interweaving in revolutions interlacing,
阻相薄兮	Impeding all approach –[67]

Liu Xiang represents the hero's state through the objective correlative of the river's rapids rather than by direct statement. This aquatic theme remains pertinent throughout the whole series of poems.

Thus Liu Xiang's "Nine Threnodies," while obviously inconceivable without the model of the "Li sao," distinguish themselves through explicit reference to the model; stylistic innovations such as repetition and descriptive rhetoric; and structural innovations such as the more prominent role of the envoi poems. Yet these ornate and self-reflexive features ultimately provide contextualization for the journey of the poetic

[67] Ibid., *juan* 16, 284-85, 1/61-70.

hero, Liu Xiang's own self-representation. Thus the passage just quoted prepares the way for this concluding envoi:

嘉皇既歿　　Now that his exquisite majesty has perished,
終不返兮　　Gone and never to return –
山中幽險　　In the hills it is dark and perilous,
郢路遠兮　　The road back to Ying is far indeed –

讒人譆譆　　Slanderers are vitriolic in accusation,
孰可愬兮　　But to whom may I offer a plaint? –
征夫罔極　　The traveler on the road will never arrive,
誰可語兮　　But whom may I tell of this? –

行唫累欷　　Chanting in my journey, accumulating sighs,
聲喟喟兮　　Calling out alas, alas –
懷憂含戚　　Harboring this worry, holding in my distress,
何佗傺兮　　How dismal, how dismayed! –[68]

Rather than restating the main theme, Liu contrasts the situation of the world at large with his own personal concerns. Liu Xiang's reappropriation of materials from the "Li sao" also emphasizes the disparity between the cosmic concerns of the realm and the individual perspective of personal suffering. Readers overly familiar with the understanding of the "Li sao" as Qu Yuan's suicide note (directly contradicted by Sima Qian's biography) would thus expect Liu Xiang's work too to end with resignation, despair, and suicide. Yet the series as a whole does not end on this note of self-pity but instead on one of Daoist

[68] Ibid., *juan* 16, 305-306, 7/57-68.

optimism.

4. The Soul's Navigation to Freedom

In the final poem of the "Nine Threnodies," Liu Xiang adopts the title of "Far Roaming" to make his own concluding statement. It should be recalled here that we do not know the precise date of Qu Yuan's "Far Roaming" either, so it is not necessarily the case that Liu Xiang has it in mind here:[69]

Far Roaming 遠游

悲余性之不可改兮　I grieve for my nature, that cannot be altered –
屢懲艾而不迻　Though rebuked and punished, I will not be moved.[70]
服覺皓以殊俗兮　My garb has resplendent gleam, unlike the vulgar –
貌揭揭以巍巍　My aspect a lofty dignity, and a glorious grandeur.

譬若王僑之乘雲兮　Just like Prince Qiao ascending the clouds –
載赤霄而淩太清　Borne along on crimson ethers, piercing the

[69] See discussion in Fukunaga, "Ryū Kō to shinsen," 310-312. It is also possible that these titles are not original. In fact, for Liu Xiang's piece a variant gives the title as 遠逝, as in the fourth of the "Nine Threnodies." The title of the other "Far Roaming" is drawn from its opening line. I suspect Liu may not have known "Far Roaming" under its current title.

[70] Hong Xingzu explains that *ai* 艾 stands here for *yi* 忘, glossed as *cheng* 懲 in *Shuowen jiezi*. See Xu Shen 許慎, *Shuowen jiezi zhu* 說文解字注, ed. Duan Yucai 段玉裁 (Hangzhou: Zhejiang guji chubanshe, 1998), *juan* 10B, 515b.

high empyrean!

欲與天地參壽兮　I'd like to partake in the longevity of Heaven and Earth –

與日月而比榮　To compare in splendor with the Sun and Moon.[71]

登崑崙而北首兮　I ascend Mount Kunlun and face to the North –

悉靈圉而來謁　All the divinities of the realm come to visit here.

選鬼神於太陰兮　Selecting spirits and gods from the Supreme Yin –

登閶闔於玄闕　I ascend the Gate of Heaven, by the Tower of Obscurity.

回朕車俾西引兮　I turn around my carriage and veer towards the West –

褰虹旗於玉門　Raising my rainbow banners at the Jade Gate.

馳六龍於三危兮　Driving six dragons over the Three Perilous Peaks,

朝四靈於九濱　I summon the Four Spirits from the Nine Shores.[72]

結余軫於西山兮　I harness my chariot on the Western Hills –

[71] This trope is extremely prominent in the discourse surrounding the "Li sao," as in Liu An's appraisal quoted in the *Shiji*.

[72] The Nine Extremities [of the ocean]. 四 is a variant for 西.

	橫飛谷以南征	Crossing Precipitous Valley to journey south.
	絕都廣以直指兮	Pointing straight all the way to Vastness' Center –
20	歷祝融於朱冥	I pass Zhu Rong at the Vermilion Chasm.
	枉玉衡於炎火兮	Rounding the Jade Balance in the scorching flames, –
	委兩館于咸唐	I descend to the Two Pavilions by the Pool of Affinity.
	貫浭濛以東揭兮	Passing through Formless Maelstrom to reach the Eastern extremity –
	維六龍於扶桑	I tie my Six Dragons at the Fusang Tree.
25	周流覽於四海兮	I gaze all around upon the Four Seas –
	志升降以高馳	My will is to gallop higher, as I rise and fall.
	徵九神於回極兮	I drive the Nine Gods to turn around the pole –
	建虹采以招指	Set up rainbow hues through my summoning banners.
	駕鸞鳳以上遊兮	Driving simurgh and phoenix to roam aloft –
30	從玄鶴與鷖明	I follow Dark Crane and Luminous Lark.
	孔鳥飛而送迎兮	Great Birds soar past, sending me off –
	騰群鶴於瑤光	Surpassing the various cranes in carnelian gleam.
	排帝宮與羅囿兮	There are set the Palace of the Gods and the Net Garden –
	升縣圃以眩滅	Rising to the Hanging Garden I am dazzled

blind.

結瓊枝以雜佩兮　Tying on branches of jasper and various adornments –

立長庚以繼日　I stand atop the evening star and follow the Sun.[73]

淩驚雷以軼駭電兮　Piercing the startling thunder to drive with the violent lightning –

綴鬼谷於北辰　I tie the Spirit Valley to the Northern Dipper.

鞭風伯使先驅兮　Whipping on the Lord of Winds as my vanguard –

囚靈玄於虞淵　I imprison the Mysterious Spirit in Yu's Abyss.

泝高風以低佪兮　Riding back on the high breeze, circling around –

覽周流於朔方　I observe the outer current in the North.

就顓頊而敶詞兮　Setting forth my invocation to Zhuanxu –

考玄冥於空桑　I consult the Fathomless Chasm at Hollow Mulberry.[74]

旋車逝於崇山兮　Turning back my carriage, I depart for the Supreme Mountains –

奏虞舜於蒼梧　Making a declaration to Yu Shun at Cangwu.

[73] Changgeng 長庚 is a special name for Venus when it appears in the western sky at evening.

[74] Kongsang is identified by commentators as a mountain, but might also be a celestial body. Consider the description in the divination book *Guicang* 歸藏 quoted by Guo Pu in his commentary to *Shanhai jing*: "Through the cerulean haze of the Hollow Mulberry, / Extending out towards all Eight Extremities" 空桑之蒼蒼，八極之既張. See Yuan Ke ed., *Shanhai jing jiaozhu*, *juan* 10, 381.

	濟楊舟於會稽兮	Crossing in my poplar boat to Mount Guiji –
	就申胥於五湖	I meet Shen Xu at the Five Lakes.
	見南郢之流風兮	Seeing the passing breezes at Southern Ying –
50	殞余躬於沅湘	My own body perishes in the Yuan and Xiang.[75]
	望舊邦之黯黮兮	Gazing back dimly at my old country –
	時溷濁其猶未央	At that moment I grow confused, but not yet finished.
	懷蘭芷之芬芳兮	I harbor the fragrant odors of eupatory and angelica –
	妒被離而折之	Jealous they have been scattered, and ruined.
55	張絳帷以襜襜兮	Unfolding a crimson canopy that rustles and swishes,
	風邑邑而蔽之	As the breeze brushes faintly by, covering it.
	日曒曒其西舍兮	The sun is shining clear as it departs to the West –
	陽焱焱而復顧	I look back towards its sparkling rays.
	聊假日以須臾兮	I will pass the days in leisure, for a brief moment –
60	何騷騷而自故	Why grieve *sao*-like and make myself antique?[76]
	歎曰	The Lament:

[75] The Yuan and the Xiang are Chu rivers, passing through modern Hunan and Hubei provinces.

[76] Hong mentions a variant *ku* 苦 for *gu* 故.

譬彼蛟龍　　It is like the Flood Dragon,
乘雲浮兮　　Floating along with the clouds –
汎淫浮溶　　Roaming rampant over vast voids,
紛若霧兮　　All muddled as a fog –

滂洋輣轕　　Torrents tumbling, criss-crossing,
雷動電發　　Thunder booms and lighting flashes,
馺高舉兮　　Rapidly I rise upwards! –
升虛淩冥　　Ascending the emptiness, crossing the darkness,

沛濁浮清　　Surging with the muddy, floating with the pure,
入帝宮兮　　I enter the palace of the Gods –
搖翹奮羽　　Shaking my wings, brandishing my feathers,
馳風騁雨　　I race with the winds and sprint with the rains,
遊無窮兮　　Roaming the Infinite![77]

The opening quatrain identifies the speaker a Qu Yuan alter ego, unsatisfied that his virtue is appreciated by others. But almost immediately in the fifth line, the poem turns to famous immortal Prince Qiao, also the main interlocutor of the "Far Roaming." It is striking also how in line eight, the poet mentions that the brilliance of the immortals rivals the sun and moon, just as in Liu An's praise for the "Li sao." Here worship of the immortals becomes an alternative to the pursuit of worldly

[77] Hong Xingzu ed., *Chuci buzhu*, *juan* 16, 309-312. "Roaming the Infinite" appears in *Zhuangzi*. See Guo Qingfan ed., *Zhuangzi jishi, pian* 1, 17.

success. In the remainder of the poem proper, Liu Xiang conducts a cosmic journey through various mythological sites, meeting divine ancestors and deities. Rather than the canonical order of the directions beginning with East, Liu Xiang inverts the route, traveling North, West, South, and finally East. The journey is not an imperial progress but rather one of personal fulfillment. This journey climaxes in lines 43–44, when he even meets with two gods of the North, Zhuanxu 顓頊 and also Fathomless Chasm (Xuanming 玄冥).

Then, on a more human scale, Liu visits Shen Baoxu 申包胥 in the Five Lakes. Though the Wang Yi commentary here confuses Shen Baoxu with his contemporary Wu Zixu, this is hardly a plausible reading of the two characters "Shen Xu" 申胥. The importance of Shen Baoxu is that he is a loyal patriot of Chu, who after saving it from the armies of Wu, refused any reward from King Zhao 昭, and instead went into reclusion.[78] According to this line he remains at the "Five Lakes," presumably Lake Taihu and its environs, though perhaps referring to Lake Dongting in Chu. That is, with the last personal name in the poem Liu Xiang refers to an immortal from Chu.[79]

In spite of this, though, Liu Xiang also presents himself as facing the prospect of death even in this poem. For Liu writes explicitly of how:

見南郢之流風兮　Seeing the passing breezes at Southern Ying –

[78] See Liu Xiang, *Xinxu jiaoshi* 新序校釋, ed. Shi Guangying 石光瑛 and Chen Xin 陳新 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2001), *juan* 7, 902-903.

[79] There is an echo of the drowned Wu Zixu as well, which is typical of Quvian lore, as we see again below.

殞余躬於沅湘　I would let my body in the Yuan and Xiang.[80]

That is, even though he is willing to drown himself in the course of the poem, the narrative does not end there. Either he changes his mind, or his identity survives somehow in spite of his physical destruction. Though this poem does not reflect explicitly to the soul, then, it must be assumed as the subject of the final lines of the poem (either as *hun* or *shen* 神), in order for the narrator's journey to continue. Or alternatively, perhaps a kind of death is also one stage in the enlightened man's progress; one might compare the close relationship between illness and lyric poetry in Han literature, as discussed by Cheng Yu-yu.[81] A too close identification with Qu Yuan in a later poet might logically seem to imply a tendency to self-destruction.

Instead, though, Liu Xiang rejects such a fate when in the last line of the poem before the envoi, he writes: "Why grieve *sao*-like and make myself antique?" 何騷騷而自故. *Saosao* 騷騷 is a reduplicative binome that can describe the gusting of the wind, but here seems to refer to "sorrow" as in the title of the "Li sao; moreover, given Liu Xiang's deep concern with that poem, it may also be a literary self-reference at the same. The final character poses another difficulty. Though a variant reading of 苦 for 故 is easier to understand, meaning "Why make myself grieve, *sao*-like?" the *lectio difficilior* of the received text is more interesting. Liu Xiang rejects wallowing in self-pity in the manner of the "Li sao," or "making himself antique," as Qu Yuan had, preferring instead

[80] Hong Xingzu ed., *Chuci buzhu*, *juan* 16, 311, 9/49-50.

[81] See Cheng Yu-yu 鄭毓瑜, " 'Tiqi' yu 'shuqing' shuo 體氣與抒情說," in *Yinpi lianlei: wenxue yanjiu de guanjianci* 引譬連類：文學研究的關鍵詞 (Taipei: Lianjing, 2012), 61-103.

to commune with the infinite in an original way. In the triumphant, transcendent conclusion that follows, we can appreciate Liu Xiang's transformation of the literary materials he had begun with. On the basis of his Daoist faith in the cultivation of immortality and the necessity of self-preservation, he finds himself simultaneously inspired by the *sao* tradition and yet willing to reject it. His soul-journey is no political allegory but an act of religious devotion expressing his optimism for a radiant future, dissevered from his mortal frame and at one with the immortals in Heaven.[82]

5. An Aquatic Sojourn

To understand how Liu Xiang escapes drowning at the end of the "Nine Threnodies," we need to examine more closely the final envoi, which opens with the poet comparing the journey to a vast watery cataclysm. This analogy is sustained in various ways throughout the envois of the poems, which frequently return to the flood motif. Here this prepares for the final ascent, climbing up over wind and wave, and ultimately joining with the Infinite. But in other poems the water journey is more disturbing. For instance, in the first poem of the "Nine Threnodies," we see him struggling to proceed through a torrential flow:

揚流波之潢潢兮　Surging and sliding the whitecaps rise,
體溶溶而東回　Driving my body back east in the rolling

[82] Note that "Grieving the Whirlwind" 悲回風 in the "Nine Avowals" 九章 may describe a similar kind of transcendence, in inchoate form, and so could be considered an intermediate stage between "Li sao" and Liu Xiang. The dating of "Grieving the Whirlwind" is itself uncertain, as it is seems to be later than the "Li sao" itself.

flow.

心怊悵以永思兮　My heart is caught by an ache of a ceaseless longing –

意晻晻而日頹　My thoughts are occluded in the setting of the sun.

白露紛以塗塗兮　The white dew falls in all-covering profusion –

秋風瀏以蕭蕭　The autumn winds shriek with tempestuous wail.

身永流而不還兮　My body will drift forever and will not return –

魂長逝而常愁　My soul, for long departed, will grieve always.

If his body perishes, his soul will journey off in yet another direction. He is struggling to preserve his identity in facer of the constant eastward flow of the river, i.e., the passage of time, just as in the "Li sao."[83] The sixth poem likewise concludes with the soul searching in a deluge:

念我煢煢　Considering my solitude,

魂誰求兮　Who is there for my soul to seek? –

僕夫慌悴　My driver is enervated and enfeebled,

散若流兮　We are lost as water flown past.

This passage echoes the conclusion of the "Li sao," when Qu Yuan looks back homeward. Here, though, the emphasis is on Liu Xiang's isolated soul. And in the second of the "Nine Threnodies," we find a more

[83] See discussion in Chen Shih-hsiang, "The Genesis of Poetic Time: The Greatness of Ch'ü Yuan, Studied with a New Critical Approach," *Tsing Hua Journal of Chinese Studies* 10.1 (1973): 1-43.

elaborate presentation of this theme:

	九年之中不吾反兮	In these nine years I have not been able to go back –
	思彭咸之水遊	I long to roam in the waters along with Peng Xian.
	惜師延之浮渚兮	I lament that Music-master Yan wafted by the islets –
	赴汨羅之長流	Following in the endless current of the Miluo.[84]
45	遵江曲之逶移兮	I keep to the river's course, with its weaving and winding –
	觸石碕而衡遊	I strike upon a stony crag and traverse sideways.
	波澧澧而揚澆兮	The waves plish and plash, and stir up a whirlpool –
	順長瀨之濁流	I must course the long rapids with their muddy flow.
	淩黃沱而下低兮	Crossing the yellow Tuo and descending below –
50	思還流而復反	I long to go back on the current and to return.
	玄輿馳而並集兮	The dark carriages race along and gather

[84] Shi Yan 師延 was music master for the wicket tyrant Zhow, final ruler of the Shang dynasty, and to have composed the decadent music that typified his rule. He drowned himself in the Pu 濮 river after the fall of the Shang. See Sima Qian, *Shi ji*, *juan* 24, 1235.

		together –
	身容與而日遠	But I dally and dither, growing more remote each day.
	櫂舟杭以橫濿兮	Oaring my boat down and voyaging across –
	濟湘流而南極	Fording the currents of the Xiang and ending up South.
55	立江界而長吟兮	I stand on the margin of the Jiang and sing out long –
	愁哀哀而累息	My melancholy is piercing and congeals in suspiration.
	情慌忽以忘歸兮	I feel bewildered and befuddled, and forget to return –
	神浮遊以高厲	But my spirit roams free and charges high.
	心蛩蛩而懷顧兮	My heart is worried and frustrated, nostalgic and yearning –
60	魂眷眷而獨逝	My soul gazes yearningly and departs alone.

Here once again Liu's aquatic journey is associated with the departure (*shi* 逝) of his soul. As always the stormy waters are depicted with effective use of binomes like "plish and plash" 澧澧 (**ri*ʔ- *ri*ʔ). This poem also raises the question of what Liu Xiang understood to be the fate of Peng Xian, when Liu writes, "I long to roam in the waters along with Peng Xian." This is a crux for interpretation of the *Chuci*, since Qu Yuan concludes the "Li sao" by saying "I must follow Peng

Xian to the place he [they?] abides [abide?]" 吾將從彭咸之所居: we must be able to identify "Peng Xian" to understand his final decision at the end of the poem. It could mean that he has already committed to drowning himself, or that he has decided to become a recluse instead.

Though the former is the traditional interpretation, it has long been recognized as inadequate.[85] Hu Shi pointed out already in 1922 that Qu Yuan became something like an "archery target" in which countless arrows of speculation and myth happened to land together.[86] These included a wide range of folk traditions and myths about drowned and revived heroes, whose relationship with the historical Qu Yuan remains unclear. For instance, there was a tradition of sacrificing women as brides to the River God;[87] in the Eastern Han dynasty, Cao E recovered the body of her father, a shaman who had drowned while seeking the river god.[88] Indeed, Wang Yi's own son, talented poet Wang Yanshou 王延壽, also died of drowning in the Xiang river, home of the two goddesses celebrated in the "Nine Songs."[89] One of the ancient heroes mentioned repeatedly in the *Chuci* itself, Wu Zixu 伍子胥, who was drowned by the temperamental king of Wu, Fuchai 夫差, also became the object of

---

[85] Schneider's survey in *A Madman of Ch'u: The Chinese Myth of Loyalty and Dissent*, 125-151, is definitive.

[86] Hu Shi 胡適, "Du Chuci 讀楚辭," in *Hu Shi wenji* 胡適文集 (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 1998), *juan* 3, 75.

[87] See Lai's exegesis of the myths that underlay this practice in Whalen Lai, "Looking for Mr. Ho Po: Unmasking the River God of Ancient China," *History of Religions* 29 (1990): 335-350.

[88] See Chan's discussion of the practice in the Han and Six Dynasties, "Searching for the Bodies of the Drowned: A Folk Tradition of Ancient China Recovered," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 129.3 (2009): 385-401.

[89] Fan Ye 范曄, *Hou Han shu* 後漢書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1965), *juan* 80A, 2618.

worship and celebration on the Duanwu festival.[90]

As for the meaning of "Peng Xian" specifically, there are numerous possibilities.[91] Liu Xiang's phrasing seems to suggest the transcendent element, first of all by associating Peng Xian with *you* 遊 "to roam." This term, which we have seen already in the "Far Roaming" itself, is of central importance to the Daoist-tinged *Chuci* poems of the Han.[92] It tends to mean not just an ordinary journey, but specifically a journey of the spirit, traveling to mythological or holy places around the universe, like Mount Kunlun or Penglai, or even all the way into the Infinite, as in the conclusion of Liu Xiang's own "Far Roaming. But then it goes back to the *Zhuangzi* as well, whose first chapter, "Free and Easy Roaming" 逍遙遊, describes a kind of transcendent who, "does not eat any of the five grains, but inhales the wind and drinks the dew. He rides on the clouds, drives a flying dragon, and wanders beyond the four seas."[93] To "roam" is thus a Daoist term of art which should not be understood to refer merely to the drowning of a mortal body.

Regarding the question of the identity of "Peng Xian," Liu Xiang's poem is one of the most important pieces of evidence from the Han. Unfortunately, none of the primary texts in the *Chuci* identifies Peng

---

[90] Schneider, *A Madman of Ch'u: The Chinese Myth of Loyalty and Dissent*, 138. Schneider goes on to mention how the folk tradition and literati tradition continued to inspire one another, fleshing in the legends behind the Duanwu festival, over the following centuries.

[91] These have been usefully and comprehensively summed up by Chen Yiliang 陳怡良 in his article, " 'Li sao' 'luoying, ' 'Pengxian' xiyi 〈離騷〉「落英」、「彭咸」析疑," *Chengda zhongwen xuebao* 3 (1995): 41-64.

[92] See Kominami's discussion in *Soji to sono chūshakushatachi,* 262-294.

[93] Victor Mair, *Wandering on the Way, Early Taoist Tales and Parables of Chuang Tzu* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1998), 6-7.

Xian, but the Han commentary identifies Peng Xian as a Shang noble whose advice to the king was rejected, and therefore drowned himself.[94] But there is no corroborating evidence for this story in other sources, so it seems most likely to be a fiction modeled on Qu Yuan's own story. In fact, though, according to Sima Qian's biography of Qu Yuan, he composed the "Li sao" early in his career, not on the verge of suicide. "Embracing the Stone" 懷沙 is a much more likely candidate for Qu Yuan's final poem, if such exists.

An alternative hypothesis is that "Peng Xian" refers to two people, perhaps Peng Zu 彭祖 and Wu Xian 巫咸 (Shaman Wu). Shaman Wu appears in the *Shanhaijing*, as mentioned above, and even more significantly in the "Li sao" itself (lines 279-280):

巫咸將夕降兮　Shaman Xian will descend at dusk –
懷椒糈而要之　I hold up fine rice and fagara as I await him.

Like Wu Yang in the "Summons to the Soul," he seems to be a mythical shaman-ancestor. Qu Yuan is able to meet him in person only because he provides appropriate offerings that can cause the divine to descend and manifest itself in front of him. Peng might refer to a similar kind of being, Shaman Peng, a name that also appears in the *Shanhaijing*. But it is also plausible to identify the name with Peng Zu, the famously long-lived man whose biography appears in the *Liexian zhuan* 列仙傳 (originally compiled by Liu Xiang himself):

> Peng Zu was a grandee of the Yin dynasty. His surname was Jian, his name Keng. He was the descendent of the high god Zhuanxu,

[94] Hong Xingzu ed., *Chuci buzhu*, *juan* 1, 13.

> the middle son of Lu Zhong.[95] He lived through the Xia up to the end of the Yin, over eight centuries. He often ate cinnamon and mushrooms, and excelled at stimulating the "wandering *qi*." In Liyang there is a shrine to Peng Zu. In previous ages people would pray for rainstorms there, and there prayers were always speedily fulfilled. There were usually two tigers on each side of the shrine. Even after the offerings ceased there were still tiger tracks there. Later he rose up to transcendence and departed.
>
> 彭祖者，殷大夫也。姓籛，名鏗。帝顓頊之孫，陸終氏之中子。歷夏至殷末，八百餘歲。常食桂芝，善導引行氣。歷陽有彭祖仙室，前世禱請風雨，莫不輒應。常有兩虎在祠左右，祠訖地即有虎跡云。後昇仙而去。[96]

The authenticity of this text is suspect, so this may not have been the account Liu Xiang himself knew, but such a tradition arose not long after his time.

Another problem with Wang Yi's identification is hard to reconcile with Liu Xiang's description of their *shui you* 水遊, "aquatic sojourn," which suggests a Daoist jaunt, not suicide. At first he might simply appear to be referring to Qu Yuan and Peng Xian's aquatic suicides. But *you* is a word of specifically Daoist implications, referring to a particular attitude to existence, one of detachment and calm, and not incidentally also one that allows its possessor to roam freely throughout the cosmos. We should consider the next line as well, since here Peng and Xian

---

[95] According to the *Shi ji*, the third son. See Sima Qian, *Shi ji*, *juan* 40, 1690.

[96] *Liexian zhuan,* #17. Maeno Naoaki 前野直彬 ed. and trans., *Retsusenden* 列仙傳, *Zenshaku kanbun taikei* 全釈漢文体系, vol. 33 (Tokyo: Shūeisha, 1975), *juan* A, 658.

appear in conjunction with Shi Yan 師延, or Shi Juan 師涓, a music master from remote antiquity said to have drowned himself. From this one meet think that the passage meant to imply that he had drowned himself too. But consider the parallel usage of *fuzhu* in Sima Xiangru's "Rhapsody on the Great Man" 大人賦：

徧覽八紘而觀四荒兮	Gazing all over at the Eight Bounds and viewing the Four Wastes –
揭度九江而越五河	He departs over the Nine Rivers and crosses the Five Waterways.
經營炎火而浮弱水兮	He journeys round Scorching Flame and wafts on Weakwater River –[97]
杭絕浮渚而涉流沙	He sails across the Drifting Islets and journeys past the Flowing Sands.[98]

Thus these "drifting islets," just like the aquatic sojourn, are another place associated with the habitation of the immortals.

Apart from Liu Xiang and Wang Yi, another critical piece of

---

[97] There was a Mountain of Scorching Flames 炎火之山, according to Yuan Ke ed., *Shanhaijing jiaozhu*, *juan* 16, 344. Weakwater River was also near Mount Kunlun.

[98] Sima Qian, *Shi ji*, *juan* 117, 3060. Cf. translations in Burton Watson, *Records of the Grand Historian: Han Dynasty* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961, 1993), *juan* 2, 298; and Yves Hervouet, *Le Chapitre 117 du Che-ki (Biographie de Sseu-ma Siang-jou): Traduction avec notes* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1972), 196-197; "D'un regard circulaire, il inspecte les huit pôles et les quatres déserts; / s'éloignant toujours, il traverse les neuf fleuve et franchit les cinq rivières. / Il fait un périple sur le mont des Flammes, puis vogue sur le fleuve Jo; / il s'embarque sur les îles flottantes pour traverses les sables mouvants." In spite of his capitalization here, Hervouet points out elsewhere that these "îles flottantes" and "sables mouvants" are specific places in the geography of the immortals. See Yves Hervouet, *Un Poète de cour sous les Han: Sseu-ma Siang-jou* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1964), 314.

evidence from the Han is Yang Xiong's "Refuting the 'Li sao'" 反離騷, composed in his youth apparently before the reign of Emperor Cheng. That entire poem is dedicated to criticizing Qu Yuan for his decision to commit suicide. It concludes:

棄由聃之所珍兮　He discarded what You and Dan prized,
蹠彭咸之所遺　And trod the tracks left by Peng Xian.[99]

The final line here is ambiguous, though, since the second verb *yi* 遺 (LH *wi) can mean either "to abandon" or "to bequeath" (actually the ambiguity is preserved by Knechtges' rendering of "left"). It is likely that Yang Xiong had in mind the line in the "Li sao," "I would follow the model bequeathed by Peng and Xian" 願依彭咸之遺則 (line 76), which would indicate that the traditional reading is more plausible, with *yi* 遺 meaning "bequeath":

蹠彭咸之所遺　And trod the tracks that Peng Xian had bequeathed!

That is, committing suicide in the same manner as Peng Xian. Yet the ambiguity does also leave open the possibility that Yang Xiong is criticizing Qu Yuan for committing suicide, rather than pursuing the path of long life, like Peng Zu and Wu Xian:

蹠彭咸之所遺　And arrived at that which Peng Zu and Wu Xian had abandoned!

---

[99] Ban Gu, *Han shu*, *juan* 87A, 3521; for this translation I quote David R. Knechtges, *The Han shu Biography of Yang Xiong (53 B.C.-A.D. 18)* (Tempe, Ariz.: Center for Asian Studies, Arizona State University, 1982), 16, which follows the traditional interpretation of Peng Xian's fate.

That is, Yang Xiong might conceivably intend to criticize Qu Yuan for rejecting the admirable path of reclusion and self-cultivation exampled by Peng Zu and Wu Xian.

Considering these alternative interpretations of Peng Xian as historical official vs. semi-divine transcendent, it is worth noting that Qu Yuan in later centuries came to epitomize the synthesis of both at the same time, attaining deification as a water god.[100] Based on Liu Xiang's poem, though, it seems that the historical Qu Yuan may already have been implicated in this kind of legend. Recently, Yao Xiaoou has compared the legends surrounding Qu Yuan's suicide by drowning and those surrounding Peng and Xian's achievement of immortality.[101] Though superficially similar, and conflated by Wang Yi, many of the legends about Peng Zu do not necessarily imply any connection with drowning at all. For instance, the following story, found in the *Liexian zhuan* and also in the *Soushen ji* 搜神記, involves immersion in water but not drowning or death:

> Qin Gao was a man of Zhao. Because he excelled at playing the zither, he became a retainer of King Kang of Song (r. 318-286 B.C.E.). He practiced the arts of Juan and Peng, and swam freely around Jizhou and Zhuo commandery [in modern Hebei province].[102] Over two centuries later he departed [this world]

---

[100] As documented exensively in Schneider, *A Madman of Ch'u: The Chinese Myth of Loyalty and Dissent.*

[101] Yao Xiaoou 姚小鷗, "Peng Xian 'shui you' yu Qu Yuan de 'chen yuan' 彭咸「水游」與屈原的「沉淵」," *Wenyi yanjiu* 文藝研究 2 (2009): 44-49.

[102] Juan refers to Juanzi 涓子, an immortal mentioned in the *Liexian zhuan* who achieved immortality by consuming the atractylis (*zhu* 朮). See Wang Shumin 王叔珉 ed., *Liexian zhuan*

> and entered the Zhuo river, where he obtained a baby dragon,[103] and introduced it to his younger followers, also promising: "Tomorrow we will all carry out the lustration ceremony and wait to meet him." Then he established a shrine beside the river. In the end he rode up on the back of a crimson carp, and came to sit in the shrine. Over ten thousand people saw him there. He stayed for one months, then went back into the water and departed.
>
> 琴高者，趙人也。以鼓琴為宋康王舍人。行涓、彭之術，浮游冀州、涿郡之間，二百餘年後，辭入涿水中，取龍子，與諸弟子期之曰：「皆潔齋待於水旁，設祠。」果乘赤鯉來坐祠中。且有萬人觀之，留一月餘，復入水去。[104]

Though probably later than Liu Xiang's poem, this seems like the clearest commentary on the true meaning of *shui you*. It is not so much an ending as the opening towards a new mode of life. Rather than being an awkward reference to suicide by drowning, it is a straightforward description of the magical arts with which Peng was associated. Moreover, there is no fundamental conflict between drowning and immortality. Notably, several shamanistic cultures employed a rite of purification by water, seeing immersion as the gateway of a shamanic

---

jiaojian 列仙傳校箋 (Taipei: Zhongyang yanjiuyuan Zhongguo wenzhe yanjiusuo, 1995), *juan* A, 24.

[103] This term later comes to refer specifically to the lizard.

[104] *Liexian zhuan,* #11; Wang Shumin ed., *Liexian zhuan jiaojian*, *juan* A, 60; Maeno Naoaki 前野直彬 ed. and trans., *Retsusenden, juan* A, 650. Cf. *Soushen ji*, episode #11, in Huang Jun 黃鈞 cmt., *Xinyi Soushenji* 新譯搜神記 (Taipei: Sanmin shuju, 2009), 9. Cited in Yao Xiaoou, "Peng Xian 'shui you' yu Qu Yuan de 'chen yuan'."

journey towards the underworld.[105] For Peng Xian too, it is plausible that, as Chan Ping-leung summarizes, "A religious man such as a shaman would naturally choose drowning as the means of transporting himself from the world of reality to his supernatural world."[106] Or as it is stated even more simply in the commentary to the "Far Roaming," cited above: "Where water meets with heaven, all things float along in the current." One of the means of achieving immortality in the Han seems to have involved finding "heaven" underwater.

Even more importantly, there was a mythological basis for these practices which is associated specifically with the legendary ancestor of Peng Zu and of Qu Yuan both, the god Zhuanxu, already mentioned in the same Threnody by Liu Xiang. The story is reported in the *Shanhaijing*:

> There is a kind of fish that is dried on one side. Its name is the Fishlady. After Zhuanxu died, he came back to life. When the gale comes from the northern route, Heaven itself becomes a great outpouring of water. Then the snake transforms into a fish: this is what is called the Fishlady. After Zhuanxu died, he came back to life.[107]
>
> 有魚偏枯，名曰魚婦。顓頊死即復蘇。風道北來，天乃大水泉，蛇乃化為魚，是為魚婦。顓頊死即復蘇。[108]

---

[105] Mircea Eliade, *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*, trans. Willard R. Trask (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964), 234-235.

[106] Chan Ping-leung, "Ch'u tz'ŭ and Shamanism in Ancient China" (PhD diss., The Ohio State University, 1972), 136.

[107] This sentence is repeated word for word, mystifyingly.

[108] Yuan Ke ed., *Shanhaijing jiaozhu*, *juan* 16, 351.

One scholar argues that the snake represents rebirth itself (through the molting of its scales), while the fish is prominent symbol of fecundity and life, so the transformation of snake into fish is precisely a representation of metamorphosis restoring creative life.[109] As mysterious as this passage is—and notwithstanding textual problems such as the mysterious repetition of the key sentence about Zhuanxu's reincarnation, apparently a copying error (but which way?)—it asserts clearly that Zhuanxu's rebirth is associated with an aquatic metamorphosis.[110] This story suggests the profound religious basis for the legends of particular individuals returning to life from the water, based in an aquatic cult perhaps of ancient provenance.[111]

Whatever Qu Yuan actually intended by the two characters "Peng Xian," they formed a term with profound mythical, shamanistic, and historical resonance, encompassing two or even more specific figures from the remote past. Though it is a much later source, the opening of Li He's 李賀 (790-816) poem "Sing Out Loud" 浩歌 supports an interpretation of Peng Xian as two separate names, but also as a complex and tragic myth:

南風吹山作平地	The south wind blows down the mountains, making level earth;
帝遣天吳移海水	God dispatches the Tianwu to transport the

[109] Chiu I-wen 邱宜文, *Shanhaijing de shenhua siwei* 山海經的神話思維 (Taipei: Wenjin chubanshe, 2010), 219-224.

[110] Sarah Allan elaborates on Zhuanxu's apparent identity as a water creature or flood god in Sarah Allan, *The Shape of the Turtle: Myth, Art, and Cosmos in Early China* (New York: State University of Albany Press, 1991), 67-69.

[111] See again Lai, "Looking for Mr. Ho Po: Unmasking the River God of Ancient China."

waters of the ocean.

王母桃花千遍紅　The spirit-mother's peach blossoms have blushed a thousand times;

彭祖巫咸幾回死　Peng Zu and Wu Xian died many times over. [112]

This dazzling opening describes a world of total, constant transformation, the same world of flux we saw in the "Far Roaming" attributed to Qu Yuan. Mountains fall and seas turn over; when enough aeons have passed, even the peach blossoms of the gods fade and bloom again over and over, and even so-called immortals live and die many lives in succession. The title of this poem derives from the "Nine Songs," so while writing it Li He certainly had the *Chuci* in mind, as he often did. Thus these lines seem to confirm that "Peng Zu and Wu Xian" was a plausible interpretation of "Peng Xian" even in the Tang, but still leaves it somewhat uncertain whether they drowned or not.

We could sum up as follows. For Liu Xiang, Qu Yuan's death by drowning is not quite the end of the story. More significant even than death is his pursuit of immortality in the manner of Peng and Xian. Thus in the coda of the "Nine Threnodies," Liu rises up with the tempest and transcends even the division between the corrupt and the pure, to join with the divine and roam with the infinite:

沛濁浮清　Surging with the muddy, floating with the pure,

70　入帝宮兮　I enter the palace of the Gods –

搖翹奮羽　Shaking my wings, brandishing my feathers,

[112] Li He 李賀, *Li Changji geshi biannian jianzhu* 李長吉歌詩編年箋注 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2012), *juan* 2, 127.

馳風騁雨　I race with the winds and sprint with the rains,
遊無窮兮　Roaming the Infinite! –[113]

This is an interpretation of the "Li sao," and the "Nine Threnodies" as a whole owe much in content and style to the "Li sao"; but it is something entirely different as well, of which there is little comparable in the "Li sao" itself. In a way what Liu Xiang achieves is a synthesis of the "Li sao" and "Far Roaming"; he asserts that by esoteric techniques one may master the tempest and use the wild torrents of the southern rivers as the very route to immortality. Unlike the Qu Yuan "Far Roaming," though, in his poem Liu Xiang does not neglect the violence of exile and even watery death that themselves form part of the route to transcendence. The "Nine Threnodies" is an elaborately wrought composition whose closely interrelated elements contain profound intertextual echoes of Qu Yuan, all of which progress towards the Daoist apotheosis of its quasi-Quvian protagonist Liu Xiang.

（責任校對：劉思妤）

[113] As with the Fisherman, but not Qu Yuan himself, according to the "Fisherman" story in the *Chuci* (itself presumably a Han composition).

References

1. Classic Works

Ban Gu 班固. *Han shu* 漢書. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 1962.

Fan Ye 范曄. *Hou Han shu* 後漢書. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 1965.

Guo Qingfan 郭慶藩 ed. *Zhuangzi jishi* 莊子集釋. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 1961.

Hong Xingzu 洪興祖 ed. *Chuci buzhu* 楚辭補注. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 2002.

Li Fang 李昉. *Taiping yulan* 太平御覽. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 1960.

Li He 李賀. *Li Changji geshi biannian jianzhu* 李長吉歌詩編年箋注. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 2012.

Li Xiangfeng 黎翔鳳. *Guanzi jiaozhu* 管子校注. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 2004.

Liu Wendian 劉文典 ed. *Huainan honglie jijie* 淮南鴻烈集解. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 2013.

Liu Xiang 劉向. *Xinxu jiaoshi* 新序校釋. Edited by Shi Guangying 石光瑛 and Chen Xin 陳新. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 2001.

Liu Xie 劉勰. *Wenxin diaolong zhu* 文心雕龍注. Edited by Fan Wenlan 范文瀾. Taipei: Xuehai chubanshe 學海出版社, 1991.

Lü Zuqian 呂祖謙. *Donglai jizhu Guanlan wenji jiaji* 東萊集註觀瀾文集甲集. In *Lü Zuqian quanji* 呂祖謙全集, edited by Huang Linggeng 黃靈庚 and Wu Zhanlei 吳戰壘, vol. 10. Hangzhou: Zhejiang guji chubanshe, 2008.

Ruan Yuan 阮元 ed. *Mao shi zhengyi* 毛詩正義. In *Shisanjing zhushu*

十三經注疏. Taipei: Shangwu yinshuguan 商務印書館, 2007.

Sima Qian 司馬遷. *Shi ji* 史記. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 1959.

Xiao Tong 蕭統 ed. *Wen xuan* 文選. Commentary by Li Shan 李善. Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe 上海古籍出版社, 1986.

Xu Shen 許慎, *Shuowen jiezi zhu* 說文解字注. Edited by Duan Yucai 段玉裁. Hangzhou: Zhejiang guji chubanshe 浙江古籍出版社, 1998.

Yan Kejun 嚴可均. *Quan shanggu Sandai Qin Han Sanguo Liuchao wen* 全上古三代秦漢三國六朝文. Taipei: Shijie shuju 世界書局, 1969.

Yu Yue 俞樾. *Chunzaitang quanshu* 春在堂全書, in *Chuci wenxian congkan* 楚辭文獻叢刊, edited by Huang Linggeng 黃靈庚, vol. 68. Beijing: Beijing tushuguan chubanshe 北京圖書館出版社, 2014.

Yuan Ke 袁珂 ed. *Shanhaijing jiaozhu* 山海經校注. Chengdu: Bashu shushe 巴蜀書社, 1993.

2. Modern Works

Allan, Sarah. *The Shape of the Turtle: Myth, Art, and Cosmos in Early China.* New York: State University of Albany Press, 1991.

Chan Ping-leung. “Ch’u tz’ŭ and Shamanism in Ancient China.” PhD diss., The Ohio State University, 1972.

Chan, Timothy Wai Keung. “Epilogue: The Fisherman in Reclusion.” In *Considering the End: Mortality in Early Medieval Chinese Poetic Representation*, 187-207. Brill: Leiden, 2012.

_____. “Searching for the Bodies of the Drowned: A Folk Tradition of Ancient China Recovered.” *Journal of the American Oriental*

Society 129.3 (2009): 385-401.

_____. "Wang Yi on Integrity and Loyalty." In *Considering the End: Mortality in Early Medieval Chinese Poetic Representation*, 7-40. Brill: Leiden, 2012.

Chen Hongtu 陳鴻圖. "*Chuci zhangju* yunwen zhu de shidai《楚辭章句》韻文注的時代," *Zhongguo Chucixue* 中國楚辭學 16 (2011): 285-294.

Chen Shih-hsiang. "The Genesis of Poetic Time: The Greatness of Ch'ü Yuan, Studied with a New Critical Approach." *Tsing Hua Journal of Chinese Studies* 10.1 (1973): 1-43.

Chen Yiliang 陳怡良. " 'Li sao' 'luoying, ' 'Pengxian' xiyi〈離騷〉「落英」、「彭咸」析疑." *Chengda zhongwen xuebao* 成大中文學報 3 (1995): 41-64.

Cheng Yu-yu 鄭毓瑜. " 'Tiqi' yu 'shuqing' shuo 體氣與抒情說." In *Yinpi lianlei: wenxue yanjiu de guanjianci* 引譬連類：文學研究的關鍵詞, 61-103. Taipei: Lianjing 聯經, 2012.

Chiu I-wen 邱宜文. *Shanhaijing de shenhua siwei* 山海經的神話思維. Taipei: Wenjin chubanshe 文津出版社, 2010.

Drège, Jean-Pierre. *Les Bibliothèques en Chine au temps des manuscrits (jusqu'au Xe siècle)*. Paris: École française d'extrême-orient, 1991.

Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Translated by Willard R. Trask. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964.

Fukunaga Mitsuji 福永光司. "Ryū Kō to shinsen." In "Ryū Kō to shinsen: Zen Kan makki in okeru shinsen Dōkyōteki sekai 劉向と神仙——前漢末期における神仙道教的世界," in *Dōkyō shisōshi kenkyū* 道教思想史研究, 299-318. Tokyo: Iwanami shoten 岩波書店, 1987, 2002.

_____. "'Daijin fu' no shisōteki keifu「大人賦」の思想的系譜," In *Dōkyō shisōshi kenkyū* 道教思想史研究, 265-297. Tokyo: Iwanami shoten 岩波書店, 1987, 2002.

Hervouet, Yves. *Un Poète de cour sous les Han: Sseu-ma Siang-jou.* Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1964.

_____. *Le Chapitre 117 du Che-ki (Biographie de Sseu-ma Siang-jou): Traduction avec notes.* Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1972.

Hinsch, Bret. "The Composition of 'Lienüzhuan': Was Liu Xiang the Author or Editor?" *Asia Major* (third series) 20.1 (2007): 1-23.

Hsu Fu-kuan 徐復觀. "Xi Han zhishi fenzi dui zhuanzhi zhengzhi de yaligan 西漢知識分子對專制政治的壓力感." In *Liang Han sixiang shi* 兩漢思想史, vol. 1, 281-293. Taipei: Xuesheng shuju 學生書局, 1979.

———. "Huainanzi yu Liu An de shidai 淮南子與劉安的時代." In *Liang Han sixiang shi* 兩漢思想史, vol. 2, 73-175. Taipei: Xuesheng shuju 學生書局, 1979.

———."Liu Xiang *Xinxu Shuoyuan* de yanjiu 劉向新序說苑的研究." In *Liang Han sixiang shi* 兩漢思想史, vol. 3, 49-115. Taipei: Xuesheng shuju 學生書局, 1979.

Hu Shi 胡適. Hu Shi wenji 胡適文集. Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe 北京大學出版社, 1998.

Huang Jun 黃鈞 cmt. *Xinyi Soushenji* 新譯搜神記. Taipei: Sanmin shuju 三民書局, 2009.

Huang Linggeng 黃靈庚. *Chuci yu jianbo wenxian* 楚辭與簡帛文獻. Beijing: Renmin wenxue 人民文學, 2011.

Knechtges, David R. "A Journey to Morality: Chang Heng's *The Rhapsody on Pondering the Mystery*." In *Essays in Commemoration*

of the Golden Jubilee of the Fung Ping Shan Library (1932-1982), edited by Chan Ping-leung et al., 162-182. Hong Kong: Fung Ping Shan Library, Hong Kong University, 1982.

_____. *The Han shu Biography of Yang Xiong (53 B.C.-A.D. 18)*. Tempe, Ariz.: Center for Asian Studies, Arizona State University, 1982.

Knechtges, David R. trans. *Wen Xuan or Selections of Refined Literature, Vol. III: Rhapsodies on Natural Phenomena, Birds and Animals, Aspirations and Feelings, Sorrowful Laments, Literature, Music, and Passions*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996.

Knechtges, David R. and Taiping Chang ed. *Ancient and Early Medieval Chinese Literature: A Reference Guide*. Leiden: Brill, 2010.

Kominami Ichirō 小南一郎. *Soji to sono chūshakushatachi* 楚辞とその注釈者達. Kyoto: Hōyū shoten 朋友書店, 2003.

Kroll, Paul W. "On 'Far Roaming.'" *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 116.4 (1996): 653-669.

Lai, Whalen. "Looking for Mr. Ho Po: Unmasking the River God of Ancient China." *History of Religions* 29 (1990): 335-350.

Lin Weichun 林維純. "Liu Xiang bianji *Chuci* chutan 劉向編集《楚辭》初探." In *Zhong Ri xuezhe Qu Yuan wenti lunzheng* 中日學者屈原問題論爭, edited by Huang Zhongmo 黃中模, 219-231. Ji'nan: Shandong jiaoyu chubanshe 山東教育出版社, 1990.

Loewe, Michael. "Han Yuandi, Reigned 48 to 33 B.C.E., and His Advisors." *Early China* 35/36 (2012-2013): 361-393.

Maeno Naoaki 前野直彬 ed. and trans. *Retsusenden* 列仙傳. *Zenshaku kanbun taikei* 全釈漢文体系, vol. 33. Tokyo: Shūeisha 集英社, 1975.

Mair, Victor. *Wandering on the Way, Early Taoist Tales and Parables of Chuang Tzu*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1998.

Messing, Scott. *Neoclassicism in Music: From the Genesis of the Concept through the Schoenberg/Stravinsky Polemic*. Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1988.

Nylan, Michael. *Yang Xiong and the Pleasures of Reading and Classical Learning in China*. New Haven, Conn.: American Oriental Society, 2011.

Pauline, Yu. *The Reading of Imagery in the Chinese Poetic Tradition*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987.

Porter, James A. "What Is 'Classical' about Classical Antiquity?" In *Classical Pasts: The Classical Traditions of Greek and Rome*. Edited by Porter, 1-68. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006.

Qian Mu 錢穆. "Liu Xiang Xin fuzi nianpu 劉向歆父子年譜." In *Lianghan jingxue jinguwen pingyi* 兩漢經學今古文平議, 1-54. Kowloon: Xinya yanjiusuo 新亞研究所, 1958.

Sanft, Charles. "The Moment of Dying: Representations in Liu Xiang's Anthologies *Xin xu* and *Shuo yuan*." *Asia Major, third series* 24.1 (2011): 127-158.

Schimmelpfennig, Michael. "Qu Yuans Weg vom 'wahren Menschen' 真人 zum wirklichen Dichter 詩人: Der Han-zeitliche Kommentar von Wang Yi zum 'Li Sao' und den Liedern von Chu." PhD diss., Heidelberg, 1999.

———. "The Quest for a Classic: Wang Yi and the Exegetical Prehistory of his Commentary to the Li sao." *Early China* 29 (2004): 109-160.

Schneider, Laurence. *A Madman of Ch'u: The Chinese Myth of Loyalty and Dissent*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980.

Sukhu, Gopal. "Monkey, Shamans, Emperors, and Poets: The *Chuci* and Images of Chu During the Han Dynasty." In *Defining Chu: Image and Reality in Ancient China*, edited by Cook and Major, 145-166.

Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1999.

Vankeerberghen, Griet. *The Huainanzi and Liu An's Claim to Moral Authority*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001.

Wallacker, Benjamin E. "Liu An, Second King of Huai-nan (180?-122 B. C.)." *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 92.1 (1972): 36-51.

Wan Guangzhi 萬光治. "Sima Xiangru 'Daren fu' xianyi 司馬相如〈大人賦〉獻疑." *Sichuan shifan daxue xuebao (shehui kexue ban)* 四川師範大學學報 (社會科學版) 32.3 (2005): 63-69.

Wang Shumin 王叔珉 ed. *Liexian zhuan jiaojian* 列仙傳校箋. Taipei: Zhongyang yanjiuyuan Zhongguo wenzhe yanjiusuo 中央研究院中國文哲研究所, 1995.

Watson, Burton. *Records of the Grand Historian: Han Dynasty.* New York: Columbia University Press, 1961, 1993.

Wilhelm, Hellmut. "The Scholar's Frustration: Notes on a Type of 'Fu'." In *Chinese Thought and Institutions*, edited by John K. Fairbank, 310-319, 398-403. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957.

Yang Rur-bin 楊儒賓. "Wufeng longzhao xia de xingming zhi xue－Qu Yuan zuopin de sixiangshi yiyi 巫風籠罩下的性命之學——屈原作品的思想史意義." In *Disijie tongsu wenxue yu yazheng wenxue quanguo xueshu yantaohui lunwenji* 第四屆通俗文學與雅正文學全國學術研討會議論文集, edited by Guoli Zhongxing daxue zhongguo wenxue xi 國立中興大學中國文學系, 1-26. Taipei: Xinwenfeng chuban gongsi 新文豐出版公司, 2003.

Yao Xiaoou 姚小鷗. "Peng Xian 'shui you' yu Qu Yuan de 'chen yuan' 彭咸「水游」與屈原的「沉淵」." *Wenyi yanjiu* 文藝研究 2 (2009): 44-49.

Yu Ying-shih. "Life and Immortality in the Mind of Han China." *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 25 (1964-1965): 80-122.

清華學報

「遊無窮兮」：劉向的楚辭學術與升仙追求

魏　寧*

摘要

漢代有不少規模〈離騷〉之作，這些詩文往往側重於屈原作品中的神遊而非其政治諷喻，看重屈原代表的神巫傳統而非其貴族身份，頌揚其超越古今的意志而非自沉的決意。本文首先以〈遠遊〉和〈漁父〉等作品為例，概述漢人對〈離騷〉作出的不同詮釋，為隨後深入研究劉向及其〈九歎〉作鋪墊。劉向素來熱衷於煉金術，所以當他仿〈離騷〉而作〈九歎〉，焦點自然也落在超自然元素之上。他自覺地模擬經典之作，但遠非陳陳相因，反而用更高雅的風格、更瑰麗的詞藻進行再創作，傳達出新的創作意圖：歌頌道家的精神超越。一如屈原那樣，劉向固然在作品中常常言及肉體的速朽，但另一方面提出對長生不死的追求和神遊物外的逍遙。這種對〈離騷〉的改造其實有一定文獻根據，以屈原推崇備至的彭咸為例，王逸注指他是忠君愛國的「殷賢大夫」，劉向卻視為深諳「水遊」之術的靈巫和仙人。

關鍵詞：劉向、屈原、《楚辭》、道教、漢朝文學、彭咸

* 香港大學中文學院副教授。