Cosmology and Historiography in Early China

History 210, Anthropology 275  
Autumn 2006

Robert André LaFleur  
Office Hours  
MI 111  
Tuesday 5:30-7:00  
363-2144  
Thursday 5:30-7:00  
lafleur@beloit.edu  
...or by appointment.

Required Books
Granet, Marcel. Chinese Civilization  
Granet, Marcel. Chinese Thought  
Granet, Marcel. The Religion of the Chinese People  
Hansen, Valerie. The Open Empire: A History of China to 1600  
Ho Peng Yoke. Li, Qi and Shu: An Introduction to Science and Civilization in China  
Knoblock, John. The Annals of Li Buwei  
Mair, Victor. A Reader in Traditional Chinese Culture  
Major, John. Heaven and Earth in Early Han Thought  
Watson, Burton. The Records of the Grand Historian—Han 2  
Watson, Burton. The Records of the Grand Historian—Han 1  
Watson, Burton. The Records of the Grand Historian—Qin  
Watson, Burton. Tso Chuan: China’s Oldest Narrative History

This seminar will explore the intersection of cosmological and historiographical perspectives on the Chinese past through a lens of several classics of Chinese historical thought. Covering the Spring and Autumn period throughFormer Han Dynasty (c. 700 BCE through the beginning of the Common Era), the course will contrast an event-by-event narrative with broader issues of cosmology that figured in a wide array of Chinese writings on nature and human history. Topics will include utopian frameworks in early China, the five “sacred peaks” of early Chinese cosmology, and the combination of mythical imagery and detailed narratives in early Chinese historical works. The course will provide a window of understanding of early Chinese history that will give students both a solid grounding in the events of an important period in the Chinese past and a sophisticated perspective on the intellectual approaches taken by prominent Chinese writers seeking to understand their own history.

Evaluation
Weekly Discussion Notes (15)  
10%  
Thousand-word Analyses (3)  
25%  
Review of The Religion of the Chinese People  
25%  
Final Review Article  
40%

Class attendance and participation is expected. More than one absence will significantly affect your grade. Late assignments will be penalized.

All coursework is due on December 10th
History 210
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Week I (August 29, 31)
Valerie Hansen. The Open Empire: 3-53
Introduction

Part I: Inventing China (ca 1200 B.C.-A.D. 200)
The Beginnings of the Written Record (ca. 1200 B.C.-771 B.C.)
Dragon Bone Soup and Early Chinese Writing
The Discoveries at Anyang
Shang Relations with Other States
The Zhou Conquest of the Shang

Victor Mair. The Hawai‘i Reader in Traditional Chinese Culture: 8-44
Shang Dynasty oracle-bone inscriptions
Shang and Zhou ritual bronze inscriptions
Astronomy in early Chinese sources
Milfoil-divination
Heaven’s mandate
The Odes

Ho Peng Yoke. Li, Qi and Shu: 3-51

Part One: Fundamental Concepts
Li 理, Qi 氣 and Shu 數
The Concepts of Yin 隱 and Yang 陽 and Wuxing 五行
Wuxing and Their Mutual Relationships
Some Applications of Numbers and Wuxing
The System of Yijing
The Binary System and the Xiantian 先天 and Houtian 後天 Orders

Marcel Granet. The Religion of the Chinese People: 37-119

Peasant Religion
Rural Life
Holy Places and Peasant Festivals
Ancient Beliefs
Popular Mythology and Folklore

Feudal Religion
The Life of the Nobles
The Cult of Heaven
Agrarian Cults
The Cult of the Ancestors
Mythology

The Official Religion
The Literati
Orthodox Metaphysics and Morality
Cults and Beliefs

Week II (September 5, 7, 8)
Valerie Hansen. The Open Empire: 55-95
Part I: Inventing China (ca 1200 B.C.-A.D. 200) —continued

The Age of the Warrior and the Thinker: Double Ears and Confucius (770 B.C.-221 B.C)
The Commentary of Mr. Zuo and the Society It Describes
The World of Confucius
A World Breaking Apart: The Differences among Confucius’s Disciples

Victor Mair. The Hawai‘i Reader in Traditional Chinese Culture: 45-136
Confucius and the birth of Chinese philosophy
The challenge of Mo Zi
Mencius's defense of Confucianism
The Great learning, Doctrine of the mean, and Five forms of conduct
The tradition of the Daode jing
Zhuang Zi
The paradoxes of Hui Shi and others
The Lyrics of Chu and the aesthetic of shamanism
Filial piety
The Methods of war of Sun Wu and Sun Bin
Xun Zi and the Confucian way
Early discussions of music and literature
Vestments of mourning

Ho Peng Yoke. *Li, Qi and Shu*: 55-85; 113-163; 171-194

*Part Two: Chinese Mathematics*
Early Chinese Mathematics
Mathematics in the Han Period
Mathematics in the Second and Fifth Centuries
Mathematics in Tang and Song China

*Part Three Chinese Astronomy*
The Beginning of Chinese Astronomy
Chinese Astronomy in the Spring-and-Autumn Period to the Han Dynasty
The Cosmological Schools
Stars and Constellations in Chinese Astrology
Chinese Astronomical Records
Calendrical Science
Yixing and Astronomy in Tang China

*Part Four Chinese Alchemy*
Magic and early Ideas of Immortality
The Golden Age of Chinese Alchemy
Elixir Poisoning
Alchemy in Medieval China

*Week III* (September 12, 14, 15)
Victor Mair. *The Hawai'i Reader in Traditional Chinese Culture*: 72-77
The world of the Zuozhuan

Burton Watson. *The Tso Chuan*: 1-215
Two Brothers of Cheng and the Mother Who Doted on the Younger
The Revolt of the Ducal Son Chou-hsü in Wei
A Quarrel Over Precedence
A Wife's Dilemma
Two Half Brothers Who Hurried to Their Death
The Deaths of Duke Huan of Lu and Duke Hsiang of Ch'i
Duke Hsien of Chin and Lady Li
Duke Hui of Chin
The Battle of Han
The Brief Career of Yü or Duke Huai of Chin
Ch'ung-ehr: The Years of Wandering
Ch'ung-ehr: The Return to Chin
The Battle of Ch'eng-p'u
Duke Wen of Chin's Attack on Cheng
The Battle of Yao
An Inglorious Defeat for Sung
The Responsibilities of Rulership
King Chuang of Ch'ü Asks About the Cauldrons
The Battle of Pi
King Chuang of Ch'ü Lays Siege to Sung
An Old Man Repays a Debt of Gratitude
The Battle of An
The Death of Duke Ching of Chin
The Battle of Yen-ling
The Siege of Pi-yang
The Death of Hsün Yen of Chin
The Assassination of Duke Chuang of Ch‘i
Prince Chi-cha of Wu
Tzu-ch‘an’s Government Policies
The Death of King Ling of Ch‘u
The Death of Duke Chuang of Chu
The Battle Between Wu and Ch‘u at Po-ch‘ü
The Battle Between Ch‘i and Lu at Ch‘ing
The Revolt in Wei
The Revolt of the Lord of Po in Ch‘u
Attitudes Toward the Supernatural

**Week IV** (September 19, 21, 22)
Valerie Hansen. *The Open Empire: 97-112*
Part I: Inventing China (ca 1200 B.C.-A.D. 200) —continued
The Legalist State

Han Fei Zi and his antecedents
Anecdotes from the warring states
The laws of Qin before the empire
The rise and fall of the Qin empire

Shi ji 5: The Basic Annals of Qin
Shi ji 6: The Basic Annals of The First Emperor of the Qin
Shi ji 15: Reflections on the Rise of the Qin
Shi ji 68: The Biography of Lord Shang
Shi ji 71: The Biographies of Shuli Zi and Gan Mou
Shi ji 72: The Biography of the Marquis of Rang
Shi ji 75: The Biographies of Bai Qi and Wang Jian
Shi ji 79: The Biographies of Fan Ju and Cai Ze
Shi ji 85: The Biography of Lü Buwei
Shi ji 86: The Biographies of the Assassin-retainers (Excerpt)
Shi ji 87: The Biography of Li Si
Shi ji 88: The Biography of Meng Tian
Shi ji 126: The Biographies of Wits and Humorists (Excerpt)

**Week V** (September 26, 28, 29)
Granet, Marcel, *Chinese Civilization*, 1-235
Introduction
First Part—Political History
Book One: Traditional History
The Five Sovereigns
The Three Royal Dynasties
The Epoch of the Leaders and of the Combatant Kingdoms
The Imperial Era
Book Two: The Chief Data of Ancient History
The Ages Without Chronology
The Feudal Period
The Empire
Second Part—Chinese Society
Book One: The People of the Plains
Life in the Fields
Peasant Customs
Book Two: The Foundation of the Chieftainships
Holy Places and Cities
Diffused Powers and Individual Authority
Male Gods and Chieftains
Rivalries of Brotherhoods
The Agnatic Dynasties
The Increments of Prestige
The Principles of Infeudation

**Week VI** (October 3, 5, 6)
Book Three — The Seigniorial Town
The Town
The Overlord
Public Life
Private Life
Book Four — Society at the Beginning of the Imperial Era
The Emperor
Social Changes
Conclusion
Granet, Marcel, *La pensée chinoise*, 1-48
Book One: The Expression of Thought
Language and Writing
Style
Book Two: The Directing Ideas
Time and Space

**Week VII** (October 10, 12, 13)
Huang-Lao
The five phases
Part III: The Discourses, Books 21-26
Discourses, Book 21
Discourses, Book 22
Discourses, Book 23
Discourses, Book 24
Discourses, Book 25
Discourses, Book 26
Marcel Granet. *Chinese Thought*: 49-141
Book Two: The Directing Ideas
Yin and Yang
Numbers

**Week VIII — Spring Break**

**Week IX** (October 26, 27) — Note: Thursday/Friday meetings
Part I: The Almanacs, Books 1-12
Almanac: Book 1
Almanac: Book 2
Almanac: Book 3
Almanac: Book 4
Almanac: Book 5
Almanac: Book 6
Almanac: Book 7
Almanac: Book 8
Almanac: Book 9
Almanac: Book 10
Almanac: Book 11
Almanac: Book 12

**Week X** (October 31, November 2, 3)
*Part II: The Examinations, Books 13-20*
- Examinations, Book 13
- Examinations, Book 14
- Examinations, Book 15
- Examinations, Book 16
- Examinations, Book 17
- Examinations, Book 18
- Examinations, Book 19
- Examinations, Book 20

**Week XI** (November 7, 9, 10)
John Major. *Heaven and Earth in Early Han Thought*: 1-268
*Preliminary Considerations*
- A General Introduction to Early Han Cosmology
- *Huainanzi* Chapter 3 *Tianwenxun*: The Treatise on the Patterns of Heaven
- *Huainanzi* Chapter 4 *Dixingxun*: The Treatise on Topography
- *Huainanzi* Chapter 5 *Shicixun*: The Treatise on the Seasonal Rules

**Week XII** (November 14, 16, 17)
Valerie Hansen. *The Open Empire*: 112-150
*Part I: Inventing China (ca 1200 B.C.-A.D. 200)—continued*
- The Creation of Empire (221 B.C.-A.D. 200)
- The Founding of the Han Dynasty
- The World of the Regional Rulers: The Mawangdui Finds
- The Han Dynasty Under Emperor Wu

Victor Mair. *The Hawai‘i Reader in Traditional Chinese Culture*: 169-224
- The Xiongnu, raiders from the steppe
- Sima Qian, "account of the legendary physician Bian Que"
- Sima Qian, "letter to Ren An"
- The rationalism of Wang Chong
- Admonitions for women
- Zhang Heng, "western metropolis rhapsody"

*Part I: The Beginning of the Revolt*
- *Shiji* 48: The Hereditary House of Chen She

*Part II: The Vanguarded*
- *Shiji* 7: The Basic Annals of Xiang Yu

*Part III: The Victor*
- *Shiji* 8: The Basic Annals of Emperor Gaozu
- *Shiji* 16: (Excerpt) Reflections on the Rise of Emperor Gaozu

*Part IV: The Great Ministers*
- *Shiji* 53: The Hereditary House of Prime Minister Xiao
- *Shiji* 55: The Hereditary House of the Marquis of Liu (Zhang Liang)
- *Shiji* 56: The Hereditary House of Prime Minister Chen

**Week XIII** (November 21)
*Part V: The Disaffected*
- *Shiji* 89: The Biographies of Zhang Er and Chen Yu
- *Shiji* 90: The Biographies of Wei Bao and Peng Yue
- *Shiji* 91: The Biography of Qing Bu
- *Shiji* 92: The Biography of the Marquis of Huaiyin (Han Xin)
- *Shiji* 95: The Biographies of Hann Xin and Lu Wan
Shiji 94: The Biography of Tian Dan

Part VI: The Loyal Followers

Shiji 95: The Biographies of Fan Kuai, Li Shang, Lord Teng, and Guan Ying: Concluding...

Shiji 96: The Biography of Chancellor Zhang

Shiji 97: The Biographies of Li Yiji and Lu Jia

Shiji 98: The Biographies of Fu Kuan, Jin Xi, and The Marquis of Kuaicheng: Concluding...

Shiji 99: The Biographies of Liu Jing and Shusun Tong

Shiji 100: The Biographies of Ji Bu and Luan Bu

Part VII: The Rulers

Shiji 9: The The Basic Annals of Empress Lü

Shiji 10: The The Basic Annals of Emperor Wen the Filial

Shiji 11: The The Basic Annals of Emperor Jing the Filial

Shiji 12: The The Basic Annals of Emperor Wu (fragment)

Part VIII: The Rulers

Shiji 49: The Hereditary Houses of the Families Related to the Emperors by Marriage

Part IX: The Great Families

Shiji 50: The Hereditary House of King Yuan of Chu

Shiji 51: The Hereditary Houses of Jing and Yan

Shiji 52: The Hereditary House of King Daohui of Qi

Shiji 53: (Excerpt) The Hereditary Houses of Prime Minister Cao

Shiji 57: The Hereditary House of Zhou Bo, the Marquis of Jiang

Shiji 58: The Hereditary House of King Xiao of Liang

Shiji 59: The Hereditary Houses of the Five Families

Part X: The Leader of the Revolt

Shiji 106: The Biography of Liu Pi, the King of Wu

Some Remarks on the Han Peers I

Shiji 17: The Chronological Table of the Feudal Lords from the Beginning…Introduction

Some Remarks on the Han Peers II

Shiji 18: The Chronological Table of the Distinguished Followers of Gaozu…, Introduction

Some Remarks on the Han Peers III

Shiji 19: The Chronological Table of Marquises during the Reigns of Emperors…Introduction

Part XI: The Eminent Officials

Shiji 84: The Biographies of Qu Yuan and Master Jia

Shiji 101: The Biographies of Yuan Ang and Chao Cuo

Shiji 102: The Biographies of Zhang Shizhi and Feng Tang

Shiji 103: The Biographies of Lord Wanshi and Zhang Shu

Shiji 104: The Biography of Tian Shu

Week XIV (November 28, 30, December 1)

Burton Watson. Records of the Grand Historian-Han Dynasty II: 5-258

Part I: Heaven, Earth, and Man

Shiji 28: The Treatise on the Feng and Shan Sacrifices

Shiji 29: The Treatise on the Yellow River and Canals

Shiji 30: The Treatise on the Balanced Standard

Part II: Statesmen, Generals, and Foreign Peoples

Shiji 107: The Biographies of the Marquises of Weiqi and Wuan

Shiji 108: The Biography of Han Changru

Shiji 109: The Biography of General Li Guang

Shiji 110: The Account of the Xiongnu

Shiji 111: The Biographies of General Wei Qing and the Swift Cavalry of General Huo Qubing

Shiji 20: The Chronological Table of Marquises Enfeoffed from the Jianyuan Era…Introduction

Shiji 112: The Biographies of the Marquis of Pingjin and Zhufu Yan

Shiji 115: The Account of Southern Yue

Shiji 114: The Account of Eastern Yue

Shiji 115: The Account of Chaoxian

Shiji 123: The Account of Dayuan

Shiji 116: The Account of the Southwestern Barbarians

Week XV (December 5, 7, 8)

*Part II: Statesmen, Generals, and Foreign Peoples, continued*

*Shiji* 117: The Biography of Sima Xiangru

*Shiji* 120: The Biographies of Ji An and Zheng Dangshi

*Part III: The Plotters of Revolt*

*Shiji* 118: The Biographies of the Kings of Huainan and Hengshan

*Part IV: The Collective Biographies*

*Shiji* 121: The Biographies of the Confucian Scholars

*Shiji* 119: The Biographies of the Reasonable Officials

*Shiji* 122: The Biographies of the Harsh Officials

*Shiji* 124: The Biographies of the Wandering Nights

*Shiji* 125: The Biographies of the Emperors' Male Favorites

*Shiji* 127: The Biographies of the Diviners of Lucky Days

*Shiji* 129: The Biographies of the Money-makers

*Week XVI* (December 12)

*Presentations and Panel Discussions*

*Final Papers Due by 5:00 p.m. on Sunday, December 10th.*