

Notes

Should it be Regarded Part of the Traditional
Mainstream Scripture Study?
Two Reports in the First International
Conference on East Asian Cultures, Held by
RCEAC, St Anne's College

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The First International Conference on East Asian Cultures was held on August 20-22, 2021, under the auspices of the Research Center for East Asian Cultures, St Anne's College, University of Oxford. By the kind invitation of the Chair and Director of the Centre, Dr. Robert Chard, we were able to participate in this particularly meaningful conference. Perhaps because it was the first conference, the theme of the conference was "What is East Asian Civilization? - History, Society, Politics, Economy, Education, and Ethics," a major theme that could cover a very wide research area. Due to the covid virus, most of the participants, including us, were online, but we learned a lot from the wide range of reports from many participants. We would like to thank Dr. Chard and all those involved for their efforts.

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Since we are studying the history of Chinese scripture studies, we made two reports with the main goal of being able to explain the essential features of Chinese scripture studies. The first is about the phenomenon of the short-lived appearance of works that introduced Western political and social concepts to interpret scriptures in the late Qing dynasty, and the second is about Zheng Xuan's interpretation of scriptures at the end of the Later Han Dynasty. The former phenomenon is often ignored in current accounts on the history of scripture studies, but in fact, it must be regarded as an inevitable and natural development of traditional mainstream scripture studies. The fact that Sun Yirang in the late Qing Dynasty wrote *Zhouli Zhengyao* with his main concern about the most urgent issue of how to deal with Western impact is essentially no different from the fact that Wang Anshi in the Northern Song Dynasty wrote a commentary on *Zhouli* with his main concern about his own ideal of political reform. Zheng Xuan, on the other hand, is regarded as a representative of traditional scripture scholars, but his interpretation of the scriptures was essentially different from that of later scholars in that he focused his attention on the text of the scriptures rather than on social issues and reality. Therefore, we believe that from the time after Zheng Xuan, not including Zheng Xuan, until the introduction of Western concepts at the end of the Qing Dynasty, the mainstream of traditional Chinese scripture studies was carried by actual or potential bureaucratic intellectuals with a strong interest in politics and reality.

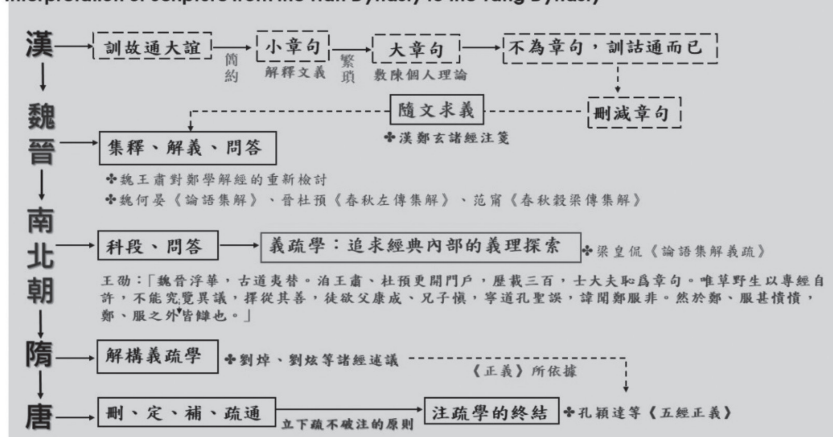
The following are the two reports in order.

**The Deformation of Classical Studies:
The Application of the Concepts of Western Civilization
to the Reading of Chinese Classics**

The introduction of Western scholarship to China in the late Qing came as

a great shock to China's traditional intellectuals. Some reacted by advocating the promotion of Western scholarship, others by advocating adherence to traditional Chinese scholarship, and yet others by advocating a compromise between the two. The *Quanxue pian* 勸學篇 (An Exhortation to Study), written by Zhang Zhidong 張之洞 in 1898, proposed a sort of compromise, and it had an enormous influence because it was able to resolve the inner conflict of many traditional intellectuals.

Interpretation of Scripture from the Han Dynasty to the Tang Dynasty



Later, shortly before the Qing court began discussing reforms in 1901, two imperial edicts were issued, ordering officials to express their views on reform in a broad range of fields such as political institutions, cultural policy, and the military system and with reference to the state of affairs in China and the West, in both ancient times and the present day. Because China's traditional intellectuals considered the interpretation of the Confucian classics to be directly connected to actual politics, there appeared at this time many books that interpreted the classics with reference to Western institutions and theories. The authors of these works included some of the most important contemporary scholars in the history of Chinese scholarship, such as Kang

Youwei 康有爲, Liao Ping 廖平, Liang Qichao 梁啟超, Sun Yirang 孫詒讓, Liu Shiwei 劉師培, and Zhang Taiyan 章太炎, and so this phenomenon cannot be lightly dismissed.

Liang Qichao considered it to be most inappropriate to interpret the Confucian classics by quoting Western concepts. But even so, he did this himself in his *Gu yiyuan kao* 古議院考 (On Ancient Parliaments), and it was pointed out to him by Yan Fu 嚴復 that this was inappropriate. In response, Liang Qichao justified himself in the following terms:

Liang Qichao (梁啟超) *Gu yiyuan kao* (《古議院考》)

「生平最惡人引中國古事以證西政，謂彼之所長皆我所有，此實吾國虛僞之陋習，初不欲蹈之，然在報中為中等人說法，又往往不免。」

The sort of deceitful stance that cites examples from ancient China to explain political institutions of the West and maintains that the outstanding institutions of the West were all originally found in China is something that I find most abhorrent, and so I myself do not want to do this. But it is unavoidable in newspaper articles meant to be read by people whose level of education is not very high.

This shows just how prevalent at the time the argument was about how the institutions of the West and the institutions of ancient China were the same.

This phenomenon of the introduction of Western concepts into canonical exegesis which was so prevalent in the late Qing is extremely interesting, and so I undertook an investigation of the principal exponents of this practice. Today, I wish to present some representative examples, but because my time is limited, before doing so I shall summarize the trends to be seen in their works as a whole.

First of all, unlike commentaries that quote widely from a variety of

traditional texts, almost all of these works are succinct in their wording and are quite short. The main reason for this is that the authors had to look for content close to Western concepts in Chinese classics, and such passages were in fact quite limited. A secondary reason is that they probably agreed with Zhang Zhidong, who had argued in his *Quanxue pian* that at a time of crisis, when the very survival of the nation is at stake, one should not indulge in lengthy discussions unrelated to current problems.

Secondly, the classics taken up in these commentaries were largely limited to the *Shangshu* 尚書, *Lunyu* 論語, *Mengzi* 孟子, *Zhongyong* 中庸, and *Zhouli* 周禮. The *Shangshu*, *Lunyu*, *Mengzi*, and *Zhongyong* contain much discussion about politics, and so it was comparatively easy to explain them by quoting Western concepts. Many of the scholars who adduced Western concepts when writing commentaries on these works belonged to the so-called Gongyang 公羊 school. Those who belonged to this school claimed that they were cognizant of the Sage's political judgements underpinning the classics, and because they made use of this to advocate political reform, they were proactive about introducing new concepts from the West, and their interpretations were quite persuasive.

Thirdly, in order to counter the Gongyang school, their opponents had to make the *Zhouli* their most important focus and interpret it by adducing Western concepts. The *Zhouli* records the administrative and bureaucratic system of the Zhou period in great detail, and so it could be easily compared with Western politics.

In the following, I wish to present some examples.

Those who provided interpretations of the Confucian classics were all scholars who had been raised in the milieu of Chinese scholarship and, unlike Yan Fu, they did not have a proper understanding of Western thought. They would adduce several Western concepts in a quite arbitrary fashion and apply

them to their interpretations of the classics. It was chiefly concepts from the two areas of political theory and political institutions that interested them and were easy for them to use.

The first example related to political theory is social Darwinism. It is well known that Yan Fu's *Tianyan lun* 天演論 (On Evolution) had an enormous influence on contemporary intellectual circles. Kang Youwei, too, accepted Yan Fu's ideas, and in his commentary on the *Lunyu* he used the concept of "evolution" to develop his arguments. For example, with regard to the statement in the *Lunyu* that "Gentlemen have no reason to contend. But, of course, there is the archery contest" (君子無所爭、必也射乎), Kang Youwei writes as follows:

related to political theory is social Darwinism
Yan Fu's *Tianyan lun* 天演論 (On Evolution)

Kang Youwei (康有為) *Lunyu* (《論語注》) used the concept of "evolution" to develop his arguments.

"Gentlemen have no reason to contend. But, of course, there is the archery contest"
(君子無所爭、必也射乎)

然進化之道，全賴人心之競，乃臻文明；禦侮之道，尤賴人心之競，乃能圖自存。不然，則人道退化，反於野蠻，或不能自存而併於強者。聖人立教雖仁，亦必先存己而後存人。……孔子制禮十七篇，皆寓無窮之意，但於射禮見之。凡人道當禦侮圖存之地，皆當用之。今各國皆立議院，一國之禦侮決於是，一國之圖存決於是，萬國之比較文明定於是，兩黨之勝負迭進立於是。以爭，而國治日進而不敢退；以爭，而人才日進而不敢退。

The path of evolution leads to civilization by means of people's competitiveness, and in order to protect themselves from external enemies people must protect themselves especially by means of their competitiveness. Otherwise, humanity will regress and return to barbarity, and unable to protect themselves, they will be absorbed by the powerful.... Nowadays, countries around the world have established parliaments, but deciding to protect one's country from an external enemy, deciding on one's country's fate, deciding on the relative superiority of civilizations, and struggles among political parties for political power are all based on the spirit of competition. Countries progress and people progress by means of the spirit of competition.

In the section from which the above statement from the *Lunyu* was taken, Confucius had emphasized "non-contention." Kang Youwei discusses human evolution, latching on to the word "contend," and argues that competitiveness is all-important and that this represented Confucius's thought.

The second example related to political theory concerns Rousseau's *Social Contract*. Liang Qichao wrote as follows:

The "theory of the eighteenth century" mentioned here by Liang Qichao

related to political theory concerns Rousseau's Social Contract. The ideas of "equality" and "freedom"

◦Liang Qichao (梁啟超)

十八世紀之學說，其所以開拓胸襟，震撼社會，造成今日政界新現象者有兩大義，一曰「平等」，二曰「自由」，吾風受其說而心醉焉，曰其庶幾以此大義移植於我祖國，以蘇我數千年之憔悴乎！

The fundamental reason that the theory of the eighteenth century was able to broaden people's minds, have an impact on society, and bring about today's new phenomena in politics lies in the concepts of "equality" and "freedom." I was moved by this theory and thought that it might be possible to improve our wretched conditions of the past several thousand years if these concepts could be introduced to our homeland.

refers specifically to Rousseau's *Social Contract*.

Liu Shiwei took a completely different stance from that of Liang Qichao when discussing the *Social Contract*. In his *Zhongguo minyue jingyi* 中國民約精義 (The Essential Meaning of the Chinese Social Contract) he writes:

Liu Shiwei (劉師培) *Zhongguo minyue jingyi* (中國民約精義)

吾國學子知有「民約」二字者，三年耳。大率據楊氏廷棟所譯和本盧騷《民約論》以為言。顧盧氏《民約論》，於前世紀歐洲政界為有力之著作，吾國得此，乃僅僅於學界增一新名詞，他者無有。而竺舊頑老，且以邪說目之，若以為吾國聖賢從未有倡斯義者。

Intellectuals in our country learnt of the word "social contract" no more than a mere three years ago.... Rousseau's *Social Contract* had an enormous influence on European politics in the previous century, but our country has merely acquired a new scholarly term and nothing more. And yet certain reactionary intellectuals regard "social contract" as a heterodox doctrine, as if the sages and worthies of our country had never advocated such an idea.

The *Zhongguo minyue jingyi* uses classical Chinese texts to stress democratic ideas. For example, "Lament of the Five Sons" in the *Shangshu* includes the statement "The people are a country's foundation; if the base is secure, so

is the country”（民惟邦本、本固邦寧），and according to Liu Shiwei, the democratic thought evident in this statement has points in common with the definition of government in the *Social Contract*.

《尚書》中「民惟邦本，本固邦寧」（〈五子之歌〉）反映了民本思想，與《民約論》中政府的定義是相同的：

三代之時為君民民主之時代，故《尚書》所載以民為國家之主體，以君為國家之客體，蓋國家之建立，由國民凝結而成。趙太后謂：不有民，何有君？是君為民立，在戰國之時且知之，而謂古聖獨不知之乎？《民約論》之言曰：「所謂政府者，非使人民奔走於政府之下，而使政府奔走於人民之中也。」吾嘗謂中國君權之伸，非一朝一夕之故。……故觀《尚書》一經，可以視君權專制之進化。然而君權益伸，民權益屈。……後世以降，人民稱朝廷為國家，以君為國家之主體，以民為國家之客體，……君民民主之世，遂一變而為君權專制之世矣。夫豈《尚書》之旨？

In China's Xia, Yin, and Zhou periods, the sovereign and the people lived together. Therefore, in the ideas to be seen in the *Shangshu*, the people are the main pillar of the state and the sovereign is an appendage of the state. This is because a state is formed when people gather together.... The *Social Contract* says, "Rather than making people work under it, the government works among the people." In contrast, in China the sovereign's authority has grown powerful over a very long period of time. If one looks at the *Shangshu*, it is evident that subsequently China's political system evolved into an autocracy under a sovereign.... It could be said that the assertion of the *Shangshu* is that a society in which the sovereign and the people had originally been living together turned into an autocratic society under a sovereign.

Because these explanations appeared to lend support to the view that Western thought had its origins in China, they evoked an enormous response at the time.

With regard to political institution, we may mention the parliamentary system. As the failure of the Westernization movement became clear, the perception that institutional reform was inevitable spread, and many intellectuals were of the view that a parliamentary system would be an effective way to coordinate the views of the sovereign and his ministers. In 1901 the Boxer Rebellion broke out, and the Qing court issued the edict on reform. Around this time, Sun Yirang wrote the *Bianfa tiaoyi* 變法條議 (Reform Proposals), which explained commonalities between the *Zhouli* and Western political institutions, and he subsequently published it under the revised title *Zhouli zhengyao* 周禮政要 (Political Essentials of the *Rites of Zhou*). In the preface he wrote :

Sun Yirang (孫詒讓) wrote the *Bianfa tiaoyi* (《變法條議》) (Reform Proposals):

中國開化四千年，而文明之盛，
莫尚於周。故《周禮》一經，政
法之精詳，與今泰東西諸國所
以致富強者，若合符契。

“The detailed political institutions described in the *Zhouli* are in complete accord with the institutions of Eastern and Western countries that currently boast wealth and power.”

In the *Zhouli zhengyao*, Sun Yirang cites a large number of passages from the *Zhouli* and argues that in ancient China, too, just as in the present-day West, the opinions of the general populace were conveyed to the sovereign. That the opinions of the general populace were conveyed to the sovereign was the same as what happened in present-day Western states, which, according to Sun Yirang, meant that although the equivalent of the word “parliament” did not exist in ancient China, effectively the same function already existed. According to Sun Yirang, the following passage describing the duties of the Vice Minister of Justice in the *Zhouli* represented a model for a parliament:

First, deliberation on dangers to the state; second, deliberation on relocation of the capital; third, deliberation on installation of a ruler.

一曰詢國危，二曰詢國遷，三曰詢立君。

The assertion that a parliamentary system had existed in China during the Zhou period is made also by Liu Shipei in his *Zhongguo minyue jingyi* in the volume dealing with the *Zhouli*.

Liang Qichao, too, collected passages similar in content to a parliamentary system from various Chinese classics to write the *Gu yiyuan kao*. (《古議院考》)

According to Liang Qichao, the statement “consult with ministers and officials, consult with ordinary people” (謀及卿士，謀及庶人) in the *Shangshu*

Liang Qichao (梁啟超) collected passages similar in content to a parliamentary system from various Chinese classics to write the *Gu yiyuan kao* (《古議院考》). The passages he drew from the classics included, for example, the following:

其在《易》曰：上下交泰，上下不交否。

其在《書》曰：詢謀僉同。又曰：謀及卿士，謀及庶人。

其在《周官》曰：詢事之朝，小司寇掌其政，以致萬人而詢焉。一曰詢國危，二曰詢國遷，三曰詢立君，以眾輔志而蔽謀。

其在《記》曰：與國人交止於信。又曰：民之所好，好之；民之所惡，惡之，此之謂民之父母。好民之所惡，惡民之所好，是謂拂人之性，災必逮乎身。

其在《孟子》曰：國人皆曰賢，然後察之。國人皆曰不可，然後察之。國人皆曰可殺，然後殺之。

is the same in intent as references to “counsellors” (諸大夫) and “everyone in the state” (國人) in the *Mengzi*, and they correspond to the Upper House and Lower House of parliaments in the West. Liang Qichao even went so far as to give examples of what he considered to represent the actual operations of a parliamentary system in ancient China.

Liang Qichao to give examples of what he considered to represent the actual operations of a parliamentary system in ancient China.

滕文公欲行三年之喪，而父

兄百官皆不悅，此上議院之

公案也；周厲無道，國人流

之於彘，此下議院之公案也。

Duke Wen of Teng wanted to observe three years of mourning, but the elders and officials were not pleased. This was a decision by the Upper House. Because King Li of Zhou was cruel, the people condemned him to exile, and this was a decision by the Lower House.

If a parliamentary system had existed in China since ancient times, there arises the question of why a parliamentary system could not have been brought

to realization by the time of the late Qing, and according to Liang Qichao, this was because a parliamentary system cannot become a reality unless suitable social conditions are in place. He argued, in other words, that one had to start by building schools and raising the people's level of education.

To argue that institutions similar to those of the West had existed also in ancient China just because some fragmentary passages having points in common with institutional ideas of the West could be found in Chinese classics was, as noted by Liang Qichao, in a certain sense ridiculous. How, then, should one understand the phenomenon of such arguments having been nonetheless quite popular?

It must be noted that the Confucian classics themselves possessed qualities suited to discussing commonalities with Western concepts. For example, the *Lunyu*, a collection of fragmentary statements, had since early times been considered to have points in common with *xuanxue* (玄學) and Buddhism, and it was easy to also discuss its commonalities with Western concepts. The *Zhouli* describes the duties of more than three hundred administrative officials and is extremely wide-ranging in content, and so it was easier to seek out content having points in common with Western concepts than in the case of other classics.

The problems faced by late-Qing society were, at any rate, not such that they could be resolved through Confucian morals or the cultivation of one's character. Liang Qichao subsequently wrote *Qingdai xueshu gailun* 清代學術概論 (*An Overview of Scholarship in Qing period*), and in this book he commented that his former teacher Kang Youwei's discussion of points in common with the ideas and institutions of the West in his interpretations of Confucian classics had been of no benefit to our understanding of the classics.

Today, the discussions of points in common with the ideas and institutions of the West by these scholars in their interpretations of the Confucian classics

are not held in very high regard. But for Qing researchers of the classics who considered it their responsibility to take an active part in politics, responding to the Western impact was an obligation that they could not shirk, and it was for this reason that quite a large number of unusual books about canonical studies appeared within a short period of time. These books became, moreover, the final work of these researchers of the classics who considered it their responsibility to take an active part in politics. After the abolition of the civil service examination system, the relationship between the study of the Confucian classics and involvement in politics was completely severed.

In subsequent research on the classics, Hu Shi 胡適 and Gu Xiegang 顧頡剛 studied the *Shijing* from the perspective of folklore studies, Wen Yiduo 聞一多 used Freud's psychology to study the *Shijing*, Guo Mingkun 郭明昆 applied the theories of anthropology to study the chapter on mourning garments in the *Yili* 儀禮, and Wu Chengshi 吳承仕, Guo Moruo 郭沫若, Gao Heng 高亨, and others studied the classics from the vantage point of Marxist thought. In a certain sense, these endeavours could perhaps be regarded as an extension of the way in which Kang Youwei, Liao Ping, Liang Qichao, Sun Yirang, Liu Shipei, and Zhang Taiyan had introduced concepts from Western thought and institutions into the interpretation of Chinese classics in the late Qing. Therefore, this sort of peculiar canonical exegesis in the late Qing is at any rate interesting in all sorts of ways.

Between the Lines of Scriptures:

The Unique Nature of Zheng Xuan's Exegesis

Along with Zhu Xi (朱熹 A.D.1130-1200), Zheng Xuan (鄭玄 A.D.127-200) is the most important and most influential figure in the history of Chinese scripture commentary. The four scriptures, *Shijing*, and the three *Li* — *Zhouli*, *Yili* and *Liji*, have been in use for more than a thousand years, with Zheng

Xuan's commentary as the most authoritative standard edition. Therefore, Zheng Xuan's theories deserve further discussions.

Instead of making one more small contribution to the previous research findings on Zheng Xuan, I would like to point out something more important that the previous studies have overlooked, which is the unique nature of Zheng Xuan's commentary.

檀弓	<p>17. Duke K'wang of Ló fought a battle with the men of Sung at Shàng-<i>shih</i>. Hsien P'an-fú was driving, and P'ü K'wo was spearman on the right. The horses got frightened, and the carriage was broken, so that the duke fell down¹. They handed the strap of a relief chariot (that drove up) to him, when he said, 'I did not consult the tortoise-shell (about the movement)'. Hsien P'an-fú said, 'On no other occasion did such a disaster occur; that it has occurred to-day is owing to my want of courage.' Forthwith he died (in the fight). When the groom was bathing the horses, a random arrow was found (in one of them), sticking in the flesh under the flank; and (on learning this), the duke said, 'It was not his fault; and he conferred on him an honorary name.</p>	The Than Kung
魯莊公及宋人戰于乘丘。縣賁父御，卜國為右。馬驚，敗		
績。公隊，佐車授綏。公曰：「末之卜也。」縣賁父曰		
「他日不敗績而今敗績，是無勇也」，遂死之。圉人浴馬，		
有流矢在白肉。公曰「非其罪也」，遂誅之。		

First of all, I want you to look at one example. It's a chapter in the *Tangong*. This is the original text. Here is James Legge's translation. And, Zheng Xuan's commentary in this chapter is a little weird. To the scripture text 「公曰：末之卜也」，Zheng Xuan's commentary says, 「末之猶微哉。言卜國無勇」，which means, in Zheng Xuan's opinion, Zhuangong commented on Buguo and said, "How weak, Buguo is!" This interpretation was disapproved by Qing dynasty scholars.

In an ancient warfare, consulting the tortoise-shell was the means used to decide who would be the driver and who would be the spearman on the right. The authorized subcommentary of the Qing dynasty understands "末之" as "I did not", and the overall meaning is that the Duke said "I did not consult the tortoise-shell (about the motion) ", as translated by Legge.

Fang Bao, who was also a member of the authorised subcommentary committee, interpreted the word "末" a little differently, but he also agreed that "卜" was "consulting the tortoise-shell", which is quite different from

Zheng Xuan's interpretation of "卜" as Buguo, name of the "spearman on the right".

As the Qing dynasty scholars declared, determining the driver and spearman on the right by consulting the tortoise-shell is a standard practice of the time, which can be seen in *The Commentary of Tso* (春秋左氏傳). On the other hand, as Fang Bao said, it would be strange to call someone's name only by one's family name, and when a sovereign calls his subjects, he usually calls them by their first names only, but not by their family names. It is also unnatural that Zheng Xuan's commentary interprets "末之" as "weak", and the commentary "'末之' 猶 '微哉'" seems to be a forced excuse. For more than one of these reasons, few scholars nowadays would support Zheng Xuan's interpretation.

周禮·筮人

掌三易以辨九筮之名。九筮之名，八曰筮參。

鄭玄注：參謂筮御與右也。

subcommentary quotes

趙商問：僖十五年秦晉相戰，晉卜右慶鄭，吉。襄二十四年晉致楚師，求師於鄭，鄭人卜宛射犬，吉。皆用卜。今此用筮，何？鄭答：

天子具人，故筮有可使者。諸侯兼官，無常人。

However, it would be completely ridiculous to regard that Zheng Xuan knew nothing about the custom of determining the position of the driver and the spearman by consulting the tortoise-shell. He says, for example, in the commentary to "筮人" in the *Zhouli*, "determining the position of the driver and spearman on the right by *Yijing* divination", and the subcommentary records the question that Zheng Xuan's disciple asked Zheng Xuan, in which he pointed out the contradiction between *Tso* and *Zhouli* — one saying consulting tortoise-shell, one saying using *Yijing* divination—, the ways to resolve it. The subcommentary also records the answer of Zheng Xuan. These records evidently show that Zheng Xuan was totally aware of the custom of

consulting the tortoise-shell to decide the positions of the driver and spearman in the Spring and Autumn period.

Even so, Zheng Xuan refused to interpret "卜" as consulting the tortoise-shell, and deliberately chose the impossible interpretation that "末之" means "weakness", assuming that the Duke had called Buguo the spearman on the right. So, why is that?

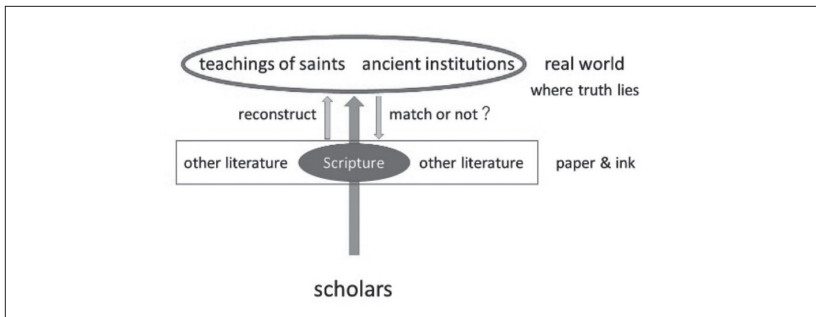
The reason is that the scripture says, "Buguo was the spearman on the right". "Xianbenfu was driving, and Buguo was a spearman on the right," Scholars might think the text is clear and there is nothing wrong with it, but there indeed is a problem. Let's look at James Legge's translation again. The main plot of the story is: "A stray arrow hit the horse, startling it and causing the Duke to fall from the cart. Xianbenfu, the driver, blamed himself, challenged the enemy to a fight and died, only to find out later that it was because of the stray arrow." That's the whole story. The main elements are the driver, the horse, and the stray arrow, and Buguo "the spearman on the right" has no role in this story. This was the exact problem for Zheng Xuan.

If the story goes like this, then the four characters in this scripture, "卜國為右", would be completely meaningless. The words of the scripture are meaningless, which would be a situation that Zheng Xuan could not accept. That's the reason why he adjusted the interpretation, so that the 4-character sentence "卜國為右" would have a meaning and necessity. Moreover, he took the trouble to add a commentary to "遂死之", saying "two of them died", but not "he died (in the fight)". In Zheng Xuan's opinion, this story must be about the two men, it should not be a story of only one of them. It is only through Zheng Xuan's interpretation that the significance of the existence of the four characters "卜國為右" in the scripture can be approved.

The above ideas of Zheng Xuan have never been explained, presumably, by anyone before. I am the first person who proposes this explanation, as well

as the first one to do so in public today. Yet I think my interpretation of why Zheng Xuan interpreted the passage this way is probably not incorrect, because there are many other similar examples that can be found, though few scholars have paid attention to them so far.

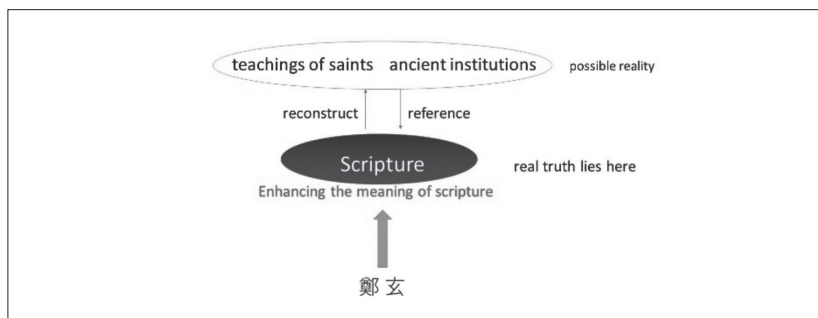
After his death, Zheng Xuan's commentaries have been valued by scholars for a thousand and eight hundred years, and there is a substantial amount of research on Zheng Xuan's commentaries. In spite of this, there are still many parts that have not been explained as to why Zheng Xuan interpreted the text the way he did. Why is that? It is because the interests of later scholars differed from those of Zheng Xuan.



Through the scriptures, scholars of later generations studied the teachings of saints and ancient institutions that could be learned from the contents of the scriptures. What was important was the thought and institutions behind the scriptures. The question was how to correctly understand the teachings of the saints and the ancient institutions, and the scriptures provided the clues. The teachings of the saints needed to be rational and systematic in thought if they were to be understood correctly while the ancient institutions needed to be realistic and consistent with historical facts. Any interpretation of scriptures that did not meet such conditions was a failure, and no matter how it was interpreted, if it did not meet such conditions, then one had to question the

texts of such scriptures themselves. The history of scripture interpretation from the Song to the Qing dynasties shows exactly this situation. The so-called neo-Confucianists of the Song dynasty emphasized the thoughts of the saints, while the so-called evidential scholarship of the Qing dynasty accentuated the historical reality of the ancient institutions, both of which regarded the scriptures as their materials. Since the scriptures were merely materials, their contents were sometimes questioned and sometimes denied. More often than not, Zheng Xuan's commentaries, which were appended to the scriptures, were dismissed as errors and therefore ignored.

Many scholars of the Qing dynasty advocated "Han learning" and respect for Zheng Xuan was also in vogue, but this only showed their opposition to the dogmatization of neo-Confucianism's interpretation of scriptures. Their scholarship was quite different from that of the Han dynasty, and to them, Zheng Xuan's commentaries were never more than reference tools. So while they disapproved many of the interpretations of Zheng Xuan's commentaries, they did not consider why Zheng Xuan adopted such interpretations.



Zheng Xuan, on the other hand, focused his research on the scriptures themselves and the scripture texts themselves. He believed that the scriptures themselves were sacred and precious. However, the words used in the scriptures are words that everyone uses, and thus they are not sacred. The

sanctification of scripture lies not in its words, but in the way the words are arranged. In other words, the relationship between word and word, sentence and sentence, verse and verse, and chapter and chapter is what must be studied and deciphered. In the previous example, the idea that the meaning of the phrase "末之卜也" can be determined by looking up the history of the Spring and Autumn period and examining the use of the word at that time, and that "卜" is a consulting tortoise-shell, may not be a problem if one is merely reading historical documents. However, since *Liji*, the Book of Rites is a scripture, the sentence "末之卜也" cannot be discussed in isolation. Rather, we must take into account the fact that there are four characters "卜國為右", before the phrase. It is not possible to interpret it in such a way that it is the same whether the four characters are there or not.

The study of discussing scriptures is called 經學 or scripture study. However, Zheng Xuan was the only one commentator who really studied the scriptures, while scholars after him used the scriptures to study the thoughts of saints and the ancient institutions. To Zheng Xuan, the truth was in the text of the scriptures and nowhere else. To other scholars, the truth itself was the thoughts of the saints and the ancient institutions, which was the real historical past, and the scriptures were merely traces of it. This is where Zheng Xuan's uniqueness lies, and this is why he has been misunderstood or ignored for the next one thousand and eight hundred years, while being respected on the surface.

Since the mid-Qing Dynasty, the opposing concept of "Han learning" - "Song learning" has become popular, and its influence continues to this day. Nevertheless, it is not surprising that the Qing scholars had no understanding of Zheng Xuan, since it is clear that Qing scholarship, in terms of basic spirit, directly inherited the Song scholars. For example, many of the views in WangYinzhì (王引之)'s *Jingyishuwen* (經義述聞), which is considered the

masterpiece of Qing dynasty "Han learning," implicitly follow those of the Song scholars.

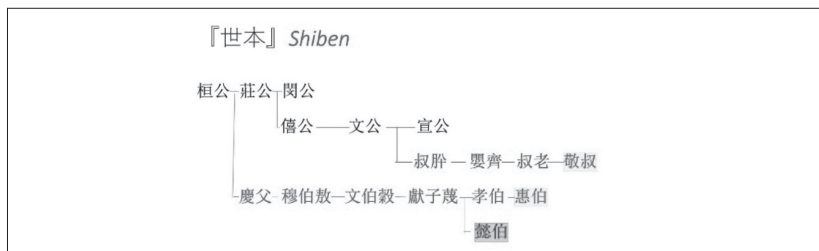
It should be noted that the authors of subcommentaries, who are said to have studied Zheng Xuan's theories with faith and their subcommentaries are also known as "疏不破注", i.e. "subcommentary never disproves the commentary", actually perverted and ignored Zheng Xuan.

檀弓	懿伯之忌
滕成公之喪，使子叔敬叔弔，進書。子服惠伯為介。及郊，為懿伯之忌不入。惠伯曰：政也，不可以叔父之私不將公事。遂入。	鄭玄注：懿伯，惠伯之叔父。
<small>26. At the mourning rites for duke A'king of Thang*, 3se-shā A'ing-shā was sent (from Lā) on a mission of condolence, and to present a letter (from duke Aī), 3se-fū Hui-po being assistant-commissioner. When they arrived at the suburbs (of the capital of Thing), because it was the anniversary of the death of I-po, (Hui-po's uncle), A'ing-shā hesitated to enter the city. Hui-po, however, said, 'We are on government business, and should not for the private affair of my uncle's (death) neglect the duke's affairs.' They forthwith entered.</small>	惠伯says "叔父之私"
	鄭玄注：敬叔於昭穆，以懿伯為叔父。

Look at one more example. This is also a chapter from the Tangong. This is the original text, and James Legge's translation is here. Here, Zheng Xuan's commentary explains the kinship of the three men, 惠伯, 懿伯, and 敬叔. 懿伯 is 惠伯's uncle, so the reason is obvious: 惠伯 says "叔父之私" i.e. private affair of my uncle", and "private affair of my uncle" should refer to the same thing as "懿伯之忌" in the previous sentence. Scholars of later generations have not disputed this point. However, in his commentary to the very phrase "叔父之私", 鄭玄 writes "敬叔於昭穆, 以懿伯為叔" i.e. In terms of generations, 敬叔 may call 懿伯 his uncle." The previous commentary noted that 懿伯 was 惠伯's uncle, and now it says that he was 敬叔's uncle. Here, all the scholars of later generations were puzzled and simply ignored this commentary. In fact, Zheng Xuan's idea can be easily explained, in my opinion. Here, 惠伯 says "private affair of my uncle", but the scripture only points out "uncle", without the possessive "my". When 惠伯 was talking to 敬叔, instead of using the term "my uncle," he only says "uncle", which means that although 懿

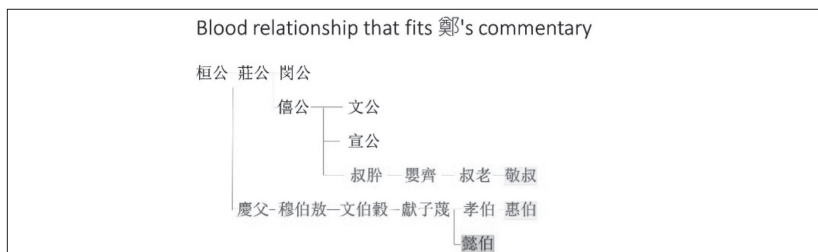
伯 was 惠伯's uncle in the first sense, he was also "uncle" to 敬叔 in a sense. So Zheng Xuan explained that 懿伯 was 敬叔's uncle in terms of generation. From this, we can see how carefully and meticulously Zheng Xuan analyzed the wording of the scriptures.

Not surprisingly, Kong Yingda (孔穎達)'s subcommentary on this passage makes no mention of this scrupulous analysis by Zheng Xuan, and, surprisingly, declares that there is a typographical error in this commentary. He determined that the "懿伯" in "敬叔於昭穆, 以懿伯為叔父" was a typographical error that occurred in the course of transmission, and that Zheng Xuan's commentary was originally "敬叔於昭穆, 以惠伯為叔父". Such an inference is, in fact, completely improbable. If, as Kong Yingda says, Zheng Xuan's commentary was "敬叔於昭穆, 以惠伯為叔父", then what does it mean? It means that 惠伯 referred to himself as "uncle" to 敬叔. The use of the word "uncle" as a self-appellation was very unnatural. Not only that, but if 惠伯 called himself "uncle", then we would not know what kind of relationship 懿伯 has with them. First of all, Kong Yingda also admits that 懿伯 is 惠伯's uncle. And there is no evidence that 懿伯 is 惠伯's uncle except for the words "private affair of my uncle". Therefore, in Kong Yingda's view, not only is the meaning of Zheng Xuan's commentary incomprehensible, but Kong Yingda's understanding is also self-contradictory. So why did Kong Yingda determine that it was a typo? It was a judgment based on the "fact" of their kinship known through the document *Shiben* (世本).



Please see the PPT.

The part in red in this family tree is the parent-child relationship described in the *Shiben*, which Kong Yingda cited in his subcommentary. It turns out that 敬叔 and 惠伯 are distant relatives, and in terms of generations, 惠伯 is one generation senior. If 懿伯 is 惠伯's uncle, then to 敬叔, 懿伯 is of his grandfather's generation. Here, Kong Yingda took the historical fact of the kinship of the figures appearing in the scriptures as the irrefutable and absolute truth. Therefore, he had to conclude that Zheng Xuan's commentary was wrong. However, in accordance with the principle that "subcommentary never disproves the commentary," he argued that Zheng Xuan did not make a mistake, but that the characters in the commentary were changed in the process of transmission. The historical facts proved by *Shiben* were, for Kong Yingda, more reliable than the scriptures or their commentaries. I would like to emphasize that this standard of value is completely different from that of Zheng Xuan. Zheng Xuan was only seeking the truth in the text of the scripture. The fact for him is that here 惠伯 says "uncle" to 敬叔 but not "my uncle", which means that 懿伯 was also an uncle to 敬叔 in a sense. Certainly, Zheng Xuan would not completely ignore the historical facts. However, it could not be more important than the text of the scripture. It is also important to aware that there is no guarantee that *Shiben* is an accurate representation of the facts. Even if we assume that the account in the *Shiben* is accurate, it does not necessarily contradict Zheng Xuan's interpretation. This is because the



blood relationship between them may have been like this.

宣公 of 魯 is generally considered to be the son of 文公, but there is no clear evidence in the scriptures, and some scholars in the Han Dynasty believed that 宣公 was the brother of 文公. If that is the case, even if we accept all the parent-child relationships in *Shiben* cited by Kong Yingda, then 惠伯 and 敬叔 were of the same generation, so to them, 懿伯 could be called their uncle. It is not clear how Zheng Xuan understood their blood relationship, and there also is a possibility that he did not have a detailed understanding of their blood relationship. For Zheng Xuan, blood relations that had no basis in scripture were of no importance, and the truth lay in the meaning that could be gleaned from the analysis of the text of scripture.

Before Kong Yingda, many scholars who supported and believed in Zheng Xuan's theories produced many subcommentaries, but they studied Zheng Xuan's theories with the main concern to understand the ideas of the saints and the ancient institutions. Therefore, they were interested in what Zheng Xuan's commentary said, but less interested in why Zheng Xuan had given such a commentary. Zheng Xuan strove to read the hidden meaning of the scriptures from the relationships between word and word, sentence and sentence, verse and verse, and chapter and chapter in the scripture texts, and expressed the results as commentary. For scholars of later generations, Zheng Xuan's end point was the starting point. Therefore, the interpretation of the commentaries was a theory that had already been established, and the aim was to reconstruct that theory as an elaborate system. At that time, how Zheng Xuan analyzed the texts of the scripture to write these commentaries was not the main subject of their interest. Later, after Liu Xuan (劉炫) in the Sui Dynasty and then Kong Yingda in the early Tang Dynasty, the method of confirming historical facts from literary sources had already matured, and they came to believe that the "facts" were the unquestionable truth. At this time, the textual analysis of the

scriptures that Zheng Xuan devoted his soul to was not considered important at all. Thus, a situation arose, in which many scholars, on the surface, respected Zheng Xuan, acknowledged the authority of his commentaries, and examined and studied his theories in various ways, but never considered what he was thinking and why he wrote them the way he did. This situation has continued through the Qing Dynasty till the present time.

In conclusion, Zheng Xuan sought to give the fullest possible meaning to the words of the scriptures. Such a pursuit was not common among later scholars, including the proponents of Zheng Xuan's theory. Therefore, Zheng Xuan was unique in the history of Chinese scripture interpretation, and his goals and interests were completely different from those of other scholars. The scholars after Zheng Xuan were more interested in the thoughts of the saints and the ancient institutions, and less in the texts of the scriptures. From the middle of the Qing dynasty onward, research on the words of the scriptures also flourished, but this was done by extracting words from the scriptures and comparing them with words from other ancient texts, a research method that was the opposite of that of Zheng Xuan, who tried to find the deeper meaning of the scriptures by analyzing the context of the texts.

Finally, I would like to share my impressions. I don't feel interested in the thoughts of Chinese saints or the ancient institutions, so I don't find the discussions of scholars later than Zheng Xuan very interesting, on the contrary, Zheng Xuan's commentaries analyzing the text of the scriptures are extremely interesting and stimulating. I also think it is very thought provoking that such an interesting work has been misunderstood, misinterpreted, and ignored for one thousand and eight hundred years. That's all I have to say. Thank you very much for your attention.

本稿の前半部分は拙著『学術史読書記』（2019年三聯書店、北京）所収の

「経学変形記」に基づき、後半部分は「鄭注禮記補疏（曲禮檀弓）」（京都大学『中国思想史研究』第43号、2022年3月）に基づく。本稿は、本学における橋本秀美の2020年度在外研究の成果の一部である。