
A Note on “Tai Bo Going to Wu”

William H. NIENHAUSER, Jr.

Asian Languages and Cultures, University of Wisconsin–Madison

It may be that Tai Bo 太伯 was an impressive, proto-Confucian son who yielded the throne to his younger brother. But it also may be that he was a typical royal scion who was rejected by his father. This would of course resonate with Qi 棄, the Abandoned One. It would also follow a tradition in Tai Bo’s own ancestry of someone leaving the place where he had lost his position—in this case as successor to Tai Wang 太王—since Tai Bo’s ancestor Buzhu 不窋 had earlier fled the Xia 夏, possibly sent away, to live among the Rong 戎 and the Di 狄 peoples; Gong Liu 公劉 then established this division by establishing the settlement of Bin 豳.¹ It would have been natural that authors writing in the Zhou 周 era would not have wanted to record Tai Bo’s departure from Bin as a result of his “not following” (*bu cong* 不從) his father and would have rather attempted to attribute to Tai Wang’s eldest son, Tai Bo, a willingness to yield the leadership of the Zhou rather than chronicle a break with his father, a possible embarrassing parallel to Qi.

Keywords: Tai Bo, yield the throne, succession narratives, ancestors of the Zhou dynasty, *Shiji* 史記

1 Li Xueqin 李學勤, *Shisan jing zhushu zhengli weiyuanhui* 《十三經注疏》整理委員會, eds., *Mao Shi zhengyi* 毛詩正義 (Beijing: Beijing Daxue chubanshe, 1999), 981. Compare Sima Qian 司馬遷, *Shiji* 史記 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1959), 4:112: 不窋末年, 夏后氏政衰, 去稷不務, 不窋以失其官而犇戎狄之間.

Sima Qian's 司馬遷 (ca. 145–ca. 86 BCE) selection of the state of Wu 吳, centered on what is today Suzhou, for the first of his thirty hereditary houses (*shijia* 世家) has elicited prolific comments over the last two millennia. The most compelling argument is that Sima wanted to elevate Tai Bo 太伯 and his brother Zhong Yong 仲雍 because they yielded power to their younger brother. This was also a major factor in Sima Qian's decision to start the biographies (*liezhuan* 列傳) with Bo Yi 伯夷 and Shu Qi 叔齊 who also yielded the throne. Within the scholarship on the “Wu Tai Bo shijia” 吳太伯世家 (Hereditary House of the Great Elder of Wu), the entire tradition of Tai Bo leaving his father Tai Wang and his home place in northwest China and journeying far southeastward to Wu has also been questioned. Sima Qian's account of this journey in the “Wu Tai Bo shijia” reads:

Tai Bo (Great Eldest Brother) of Wu² and Tai Bo's middle brother, Zhong Yong, were both sons of Tai Wang (the Great King)³ and elder brothers of the Ji Li (The Younger, Successor), the King. Ji Li being worthy and having a sagely son, Chang (The Magnificat), Tai Wang wanted to reach Chang [in the succession] by means of establishing Ji Li [as the head of the Zhou], thus the two men Tai Bo and Zhong Yong⁴ just ran away to the Jing Man, tattooed their bodies and cut short their hair to show that they could not be employed [as rulers] in order to step aside for Ji Li.

吳太伯，太伯弟仲雍，皆周太王之子，而王季歷之兄也。季歷賢，而有聖子昌，太王欲立季歷以及昌，於是太伯、仲雍二人乃犇（奔）荊蠻，文身斷髮，示不可用，以避季歷。⁵

Chang of course becomes King Wen of Zhou because of the efforts of his uncles as the text which follows reveals:

Ji Li was as a result enthroned; he was Ji, the King, and Chang became

2 Bo 伯 here must originally have meant simply “Elder Brother” to Zhong Yong (Middle Brother Yong) and Ji Li (Youngest Brother Li), but in the context of Wu Tai Bo, it seems to suggest “lord” or “prince.” See the text just below.

3 Also known as Gu Gong Dan Fu 古公亶父. Li Feng 李峰, “The Western Zhou State,” in *Routledge Handbook of Early Chinese History*, ed. Paul R. Goldin (London: Routledge, 2018), page 90 calls Gu Gong “the Ancient Duke.”

4 Yong is his given name, his surname was the Zhou royal Ji 姬 and his courtesy name was Shuzai 孰哉. He is also known as Yu Zhong 虞仲, the Younger of Yu, presumably because he was buried at Mount Yu 虞山.

5 *Shiji*, 31:1445.

King Wen. Tai Bo having fled to the Jing Man, named himself Gou Wu. The Jing Man regarded him to be righteous, more than one thousand families following and allying with him, and they established him as the Great Lord of Wu.

季歷果立，是爲王季，而昌爲文王。太伯之奔（奔）荊蠻，自號句吳。荊蠻義之，從而歸之千餘家，立爲吳太伯。⁶

This account raises several questions. Before attempting to address these issues, let us examine the similar account Sima Qian provides in the “Zhou benji” 周本紀 with the main difference in the verbs to describe Tai Bo and Yu Zhong’s 虞仲 flight, *ben* 奔 (flee) and *wang* 亡 (abscond).

Lord Gu had an elder son called Great Elder, the next called the Younger of Yu. [His primary wife] Tai Jiang⁷ gave birth to the youngest son, Ji Li, and Ji Li took Tai Ren⁸ in marriage, both were worthy women, and when he begot Chang there were auspicious signs that he was a sage. Lord Gu said, “Among my offspring there should be one who will rise up [to rule], will this not fall to Chang?” Lord Gu wanted to establish Ji Li so as to transmit [the leadership of the Zhou] to Chang, and the two men then fled and went to Jing Man, tattooed their bodies and cut short their hair to thereby yield to Ji Li.

古公有長子曰太伯，次曰虞仲。太姜生少子季歷，季歷娶太任，皆賢婦人，生昌，有聖瑞。古公曰：「我世當有興者，其在昌乎？」長子太伯、虞仲知古公欲立季歷以傳昌，乃二人亡如荊蠻，文身斷髮，以

⁶ *Shiji*, 31:1445.

⁷ A member of You Tai Clan 有邰氏. According to *Shiji*, 4:111, Jiang Yuan 姜原, Hou Ji’s 后稷 mother, was also from the You Tai Clan descended from Hou Ji and based in Wugong County 武功縣, Shaanxi, about 30 miles west of Xi’an, on the northern bank of the Wei 渭 River; Tai Tai 臺駘 moved the clan from Shaanxi to Shanxi, lower Fen 汾 River valley which he drained. See Yang Bojun 楊伯峻, ed. and comm., *Chunqiu Zuo zhuan zhu* 春秋左傳注 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1981), Zhao 1:1218–19; Stephen Durrant, Wai-yee Li, and David Schaberg, *Zuo Tradition / Zuozhuan: Commentary on the “Spring and Autumn Annals”* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2016), Lord Zhao 1:1325.

⁸ The Great Ren, from the Ren Clan in Zhi 摯, in modern Pingyu County 平輿縣 near Zhumadian 駐馬店, about 120 miles south of modern Zhengzhou; a descendant of Xi Zhong 奚仲 who was the founder of the state of Xue 薛. See *Chunqiu Zuo zhuan zhu*, Ding 1:1524.

讓季歷。⁹

There are several problems in these two accounts that have aroused scholarly interest. According to the *Zhushu jinian* 竹書紀年,¹⁰ Gu Gong Dan Fu 古公亶父, Tai Bo's father who was also known as Tai Wang 大王, was given Qiyi 岐邑 as a fief under Wu Yi 武乙 (1131–1117 BCE) of the Yin dynasty.¹¹ Scholars have noted that it is unlikely in the late Yin (1) that travel from north China to Wu near modern Suzhou would have been feasible and (2) that it was unlikely that the Jing-Man people would have titled a ruler Tai Bo. In fact, what Jing-Man means in this context is difficult to understand and has also troubled commentators. Zhang Shoujie's 張守節 notes in his "Zhengyi" 正義 commentary can serve as an example:

As for [the text] saying "he fled to the Jing Man," after Chu wiped out Yue its territory as attached to Chu, and when Qin wiped out Chu, its territory attached to Qin, and Qin has tabooed the character "Chu," so the text was changed to read "Jing," thus all of the territory of Wu and Yue were designated as Jing. When it came to the time northerners wrote the history they added "Man," it was thus as a function of the [geographical] situation.¹²

而云「亡荊蠻」者，楚滅越，其地屬楚，秦滅楚，其地屬秦，秦諱「楚」，改曰「荊」，故通號吳越之地為荊。及北人書史加云「蠻」，勢之然也。¹³

Zhang's explanation seems forced and not completely satisfying as he himself admits by claiming that the problem was caused by northerners writing about

9 *Shiji*, 4:115.

10 Wang Guowei 王國維, ed., *Jinben Zhushu jinian shuzheng* 今本竹書紀年疏證 (Taipei: Shijie Shuju, 1989), 33b.

11 Qiyi was located on the slopes of Mount Qi 岐山, about 25 miles north of modern Mei County 眉縣 in Shaanxi. See Tan Qixiang 譚其驤, *Zhongguo lishi dituji* 中國歷史地圖集 (Shanghai: Ditu chubanshe, 1982–1987), 1:13.

12 Or "it was so because of the temporal situation," reading *shi* 勢 as *shi* 時. Cf. the "Shuai xing" 率性 chapter of *Lun Heng* 論衡: 人間之水污濁，在野外者清潔。俱為一水，源從天涯，或濁或清，所在之勢使之然也；"Water amongst men is turbid and muddy; beyond the environs of man it is clear and limpid. It is all the same water and it flows from the confines of heaven; whether it is muddy or clear is that which caused by the [geographical] situation."

13 *Shiji*, 4:115.

the south. Wei Zhao 韋昭, cited in the “Jijie” 集解 commentary says Tai Bo was enfeoffed by King Wu of Zhou 周武王 (r. 1046–1043 BCE), that is some sixty years after Tai Bo supposedly went to Wu: “*hou Wu Wang zhuifeng wei Wu Bo, gu yue Wu Tai Bo*” 後武王追封為吳伯，故曰吳太伯。¹⁴ The “Wu Tai Bo shijia” says that it was Zhou Zhang 周章, Tai Bo’s grandnephew and the grandson of Tai Bo’s younger brother, Zhong Yong 仲雍, who was enfeoffed with Wu:

When Tai Bo expired, he had no sons and his younger brother Zhong Yong was invested, this was Wu Zhong Yong. When Zhong Yong expired, his son Ji Jian was invested. When Ji Jian expired, his son Shu Da was invested. When Shu Da expired, his son Zhou Zhang was invested. At this time King Wu of Zhou overcame Yin and he sought out descendants of Tai Bo and Zhong Yong, finding Zhou Zhang. Zhou Zhang was already lord in Wu and he accordingly enfeoffed him [with it]. Then he enfeoffed Zhou Zhang’s younger brother Yu Zhong with the old Xia ruins [of their capital] to the north of Zhou.

太伯卒，無子，弟仲雍立，是為吳仲雍。仲雍卒，子季簡立。季簡卒，子叔達立。叔達卒，子周章立。是時周武王克殷，求太伯、仲雍之後，得周章。周章已君吳，因而封之。乃封周章弟虞仲於周之北故夏虛。¹⁵

According to this text, King Wu also enfeoffed another man known as Yu Zhong 虞仲 (Yu the Younger), who it claims was Zhou Zhang’s younger brother. He was installed at Xiaxu 夏虛, the ruins of a former Xia capital, located a few miles north of Sanmenxia 三門峽 near modern Pinglu County 平陸縣 in Shanxi on the north bank of the Yellow River. As noted above, Yu Zhong was also the name of Tai Bo’s younger brother. Thus it is strange that a descendant of his would have the same appellation. This place was also known as Yu 虞, a word that was interchangeable with Wu 吳 according to many scholars.¹⁶ This was the place where Shun 舜 (Yu Shun 虞舜) was born.¹⁷ It is possible that originally both Jiangsu Wu and Shanxi Yu were written with the same graph until Yu was wiped out by Jin in 655 BCE as recorded in *Zuo*

¹⁴ *Shiji*, 31:1445.

¹⁵ *Shiji*, 31:1446.

¹⁶ See, for example, Chen Pan 陳槃, “*Shiji* ‘Wu Tai Bo shijia’ buzhu” 史記吳太伯世家補注, *BIHP* 52.3 (1981): 394, citing Gu Yanwu 顧炎武.

¹⁷ *Shiji*, 1:31, “Jijie.”

zhuan, Xi 5. That passage in the *Zuo zhuan* is also significant;¹⁸ the record of this in the *Shiji* reads:

In this year [655 BC], Jin again asked the permission to use the road from Yu to lead an expedition against Guo. Gong Zhi Qi,¹⁹ a Grand Master of Yu, remonstrated with the Lord of Yu and said, “Jin cannot be lent the road. If it were so, they would destroy Yu.” The Lord of Yu said, “Jin and we have the same *cognomen*. They would not attack us.” Gong Zhi Qi said, “Tai Bo and Yu Zhong were Tai Wang’s sons. Tai Bo fled away, and for this [reason] he did not succeed [the throne]. Guo Zhong and Guo Shu²⁰ were King Ji’s (i.e., Ji Li’s) sons, and they became the Heads of the Excellencies²¹ for King Wen.”

是歲也，晉復假道於虞以伐虢。虞之大夫宮之奇諫虞君曰：「晉不可假道也，是且滅虞。」虞君曰：「晉我同姓，不宜伐我。」宮之奇曰：「太伯、虞仲，太王之子也，太伯亡去，是以不嗣。虢仲、虢叔，王季之子也，爲文王卿士。」²²

Here it is made clear that Tai Bo’s younger brother, Yong Zhong, is also known as Yu Zhong. Yang Bojun 楊伯峻 in his *Chunqiu Zuo zhuan zhu* 春秋左傳注 notes that *bu cong* 不從 (did not follow), presumably Sima Qian’s source, was

18 See *Chunqiu Zuo zhuan zhu*, Xi 5:307–9. Translation in Stephen Durrant, Wai-yee Li, and David Schaberg, *Zuo Tradition / Zuozhuan: Commentary on the “Spring and Autumn Annals,”* 277.

19 According to Fang Hsuan-chen 方炫琛, “*Zuo zhuan renwu minghao yanjiu*” 左傳人物名號研究 (Ph.D. dissertation, Taiwan Chengchi University, 1983), 409, #1289, *zhi* 之 in Gong Zhi Qi 宮之奇 is an honorific noun-infix. Qi 奇 was his *praenomen*. Gong 宮 may be his *nomen*.

20 Fang Hsuan-chen observes that Guo Zhong 虢仲 and Guo Shu 虢叔 were enfeoffed respectively with two states, Eastern Guo and Western Guo. Many scholars argue that Guo Zhong was enfeoffed at Eastern Guo and Guo Shu at Western Guo. See Fang Hsuan-chen, “*Zuo zhuan renwu minghao yanjiu*,” 600, #2095.

21 *Qingshi* 卿士. According to Lü Zongli 呂宗力, this position supervised the Six Ministers in Western Zhou: *Zhongzai* 冢宰 (Prime Minister), *Situ* 司徒 (Minister of Education), *Zongbo* 宗伯 (Lord of Ritual), *Sima* 司馬 (Minister of Horse / War), *Sikou* 司寇 (Minister of Justice), *Sikong* 司空 (Minister of Works). See Lü Zongli, ed. *Zhongguo lidai guanzhi da cidian* 中國歷代官制大辭典 (Beijing: Beijing chubanshe, 1994), 178.

22 See also *Shiji*, 39:1647; William H. Nienhauser, Jr., ed., *The Grand Scribe’s Records*, vol. 5.1 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 311–12.

interpreted in the *Shiji* "Wu Tai Bo shijia" as *wang qu* 亡去 (ran away to), but should literally mean Tai Bo "did not follow at his (Tai Wang's) side" 不跟隨在側 when Tai Wang moved the Zhou people to Mount Qi 岐山.²³ Yang refers the reader to Gu Yanwu's 顧炎武 (1613–1682) commentary on this passage. Gu writes:

"Bu cong" is to say that Tai Bo was not at the side of the Great King ... Later Confucians then drew wrong conclusions from the text of the Hymns of Lu, saying that the Great King had the intention of cutting away at the Shang and Tai Bo would not follow [in this]. How could this be any different from Qin Hui's saying, "It must be so."

不從者，謂太伯不在大王之側爾……後儒遂傳會〈魯頌〉之文，謂太王有翦商之志，太伯不從。此與秦檜之言莫須有者何以異哉！²⁴

Qin Hui pressed his case against Yue Fei although the evidence was inconclusive by arguing that "It must be so," an expression that has come to be used when someone draws a conclusion based on thin evidence. Gu's reference to the Lu Song 魯頌 (Hymns of Lu) must be to the "Bi Gong" 闕宮 (The Royal Ancestral Temple, Mao #300):

Among Hou Ji's descendants	后稷之孫，
there was Tai Wang,	實維大王，
dwelling on the south slope of [Mount] Qi,	居岐之陽，
it was he who began the cutting away of the Shang.	實始翦商。 ²⁵

Gu like Yang asserts that the text of the *Zuo zhuan* is clear and should be literally understood as not physically following his father.²⁶ This suggests another account of Tai Wang's leaving Bin 邠 and moving to Mount Qi. It occurs in the "Rang wang" 讓王 (Yielding the Kingship) chapter of the *Zhuangzi* 莊子:

²³ *Chunqiu Zuo zhuan zhu*, Xi 5:308.

²⁴ Cited from Wang Yuzhe 王玉哲, *Zhonghua yuangu shi* 中華遠古史 (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 2003), 451.

²⁵ *Mao Shi zhengyi*, 1410. Or for *jian* 翦 perhaps "cutting away" at the Shang influence in the west.

²⁶ Cited by Wang Yuzhe, *Zhonghua yuangu shi*, 451. Wang also quotes Cui Shu 崔述 (1740–1816) who is emphatic that *bu cong* means what it says: "did not follow."

When the Tai Wang Dan Fu was dwelling in Bin, the Di people attacked him. He tried to serve them with skins and silks, but they would not accept them. He tried to serve them with dogs and horses, but they would not accept them, and then with pearls and jade, but they would not accept them. What they sought was his territory. Tai Wang Dan Fu said [to his people], “To dwell with the elder brother and cause the younger brother to be killed, or to dwell with the father and cause the son to be killed—this is what I cannot bear to do. Make an effort, my children, to dwell [here]. What difference is there between being vassals to me or vassals to the Di people? Moreover, I have heard that a man does not use that which he employs for nourishing [their home place in Bin] to harm that which he is [his people and his sons].” Thereupon he took his staff and quirt²⁷ and left them, but the people one after the other followed him, and in the end he established a state at the foot of mount Qi.²⁸

大王亶父居邠，狄人攻之。事之以皮帛而不受，事之以犬馬而不受，事之以珠玉而不受，狄人之所求者土地也。大王亶父曰：「與人之兄居而殺其弟，與人之父居而殺其子，吾不忍也。子皆勉居矣！爲吾臣與爲狄人臣，奚以異？且吾聞之，不以所用養害所養。」因杖策而去之。民相連而從之，遂成國於岐山之下。²⁹

Here it is clear that in at least this one version of the story Tai Wang discouraged his people from following him to Mount Qi. The modern scholar Xu Zhuoyun (also known as Cho-yun Hsu) 許倬雲 has argued: “Dan Fu, the great-grandfather of future King Wen of the Zhou, led the Zhou across Mount Liang and resettled them at Qi. This particular legend was as important to the Zhou in later times as the Exodus story was to the Hebrews. Nevertheless, *no single leader in history has ever been able to relocate an entire population. A sizable number of the Zhou must have stayed behind in Bin.*”³⁰ This fits nicely with the “Zhou benji” passage that says that in the end Tai Wang only “went with his personal staff to Bin” 與私屬遂去邠.

These various texts which conflict that suggest Tai Bo did not go along

27 Or “using his quirt as a staff.”

28 The same text appears in the *Lüshi chunqiu* (cf. John Knoblock and Jeffrey Riegel, *The Annals of Lü Buwei* [Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000], 557).

29 Wang Xianqian 王先謙, *Zhuangzi jijie* 莊子集解 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1999), 8:252.

30 Emphasis mine; cf. Cho-yun Hsu and Katheryn M. Linduff, *Western Chou Civilization* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1988), 44.

with his father to Bin have led Yang Kuan 楊寬 and other modern scholars to postulate a second tradition of what happened to Tai Bo. Noting the contradictions between the *Shiji* accounts of Tai Bo “fleeing” 奔 (or 亡) to Wu and the *Zuo zhuan* claiming that Tai Bo actually “did not follow” 不從 his father to Bin, and that *Zhuangzi* records a text that claims that Tai Wang urged “his Zhou people to remain behind and reside there” 子皆勉居矣, Yang argues that the story of Tai Bo was reshaped during late Western Zhou and Eastern Zhou under the influence of scholars who wanted to emphasize the *rang* 讓 or yielding aspect of Tai Bo’s role. They reshaped the account of Tai Bo’s not following his father to that of yielding to his younger brother Ji Li 季歷 by fleeing to Wu. Yang Kuan summarizes this in his *Xi Zhou shi* 西周史:

In the fifth year of Duke Xi in the Zuo Tradition ...when it comes to speak of the history of the founding of the state of Yu, it then says, “Tai Bo and Yu Zhong were the *zhao* sons of the Great King.³¹ Tai Bo did not follow [him] and for this reason did not succeed.” This is sufficient to prove that the first ancestors of the state of Yu were Tai Bo and Yu Zhong. When it comes to the state of Wu, it was probably a branch of Yu. That which the Yihou Ze *gui* says about the matter of Ze the Marquis of Yu dividing his fief and going to Yi should be the original first ancestor of the state of Wu.³²

《左傳·僖公五年》……講到虞的開國歷史，就說：「大伯、虞仲，大王之昭也。大伯不從，是以不嗣。」足以證明虞的始祖是太伯、仲雍。至於吳國，應該是虞的分支。宜侯矢簋所說康王時虞侯矢分封到宜的事，該即吳國的始祖。³³

The inscription on this *gui* 簋 or tureen has actually been used by scholars to support the idea that Tai Bo had gone to Wu. However, Lothar von Falkenhausen notes “the localities mentioned in the inscription seem to be near the Zhou capital in present-day Shaanxi, and the vessel was in all likelihood taken to the Lower Yangzi region secondarily; the tomb in which it was found

31 On *zhao* sons see Michael Loewe, “Zhaomu from Pre-Imperial Times to Eastern Han,” in *Problems of Han Administration: Ancestral Rites, Weights and Measures, and the Means of Protest* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2016), 36–73.

32 On this *gui* see also Constance A. Cook and Paul R. Goldin, eds. *A Source Book of Ancient Chinese Bronze Inscriptions* (Berkeley: The Society for the Study of Early China, 2016), 21–27.

33 As cited in Han Zhaoqi 韓兆琦, *Shiji jianzheng* 史記箋證 (Nanchang: Jiangxi renmin chubanshe, 2004), 5:2194. See also the longer original passage in Yang Kuan 楊寬, *Xi Zhou shi* 西周史 (Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1999), 59–60.

dates several centuries later than the vessel; and the Ji affiliation of the Wu kings is a likely instance of fictive kindship.”³⁴

The same idea is elaborated by Wang Yuzhe in his *Zhonghua yuangu shi*:

In those years Tai Wang and his personal attendants migrated “stopping at the foot of Mount Qi; the people of Bin and the entire state holding their elderly and carrying their children, returned to Gu Gong at the foot of Mount Qi” (“Zhou benji” in *Shiji*).³⁵ But Tai Wang’s sons Tai Bo and Yu Zhong nevertheless “did not go along with” their father’s move to the west. They both did not follow to go to Mount Qi in Shaanxi and for this reason did not succeed Tai Wang in the position of king but remained behind in the original old territory and served as the founders of the state of Yu in Shanxi.”

當年太王與私屬轉徙，「止於岐下，邇人舉國扶老攜弱，盡復歸古公於岐下」（《史記·周本紀》）。可是太王之子太伯、虞仲卻「不從」其父一起西遷。他倆沒有跟隨去陝西的岐山，因之也就沒有嗣太王的王位，而仍留在原來的舊地，作了山西虞國之祖。³⁶

To me the narrative that Yang and Wang suggest depicts realpolitik rather than the kind of Confucian formulaic yielding of the throne we can see in the accounts of Tai Bo “going to Wu” in Jiangsu, such as that in the “Wu Tai Bo shijia.” The older siblings, denied succession of the Zhou because of Tai Wang’s desire to enthrone Chang (late King Wu), would create their own lineages. It could have also been part of an important military strategy on Tai Wang’s part by allowing his sons to control the important gateway to the east at Yu (with Yu Zhong at West Yu), and thus access to the Shang domain, along the Yellow River, while also giving the Zhou protection from the Rong and Di in what is now central and northern parts of Shanxi. The “cutting away of the Shang” as “Bi gong” has it. Or it may have been simply that the older sons of Tai Wang, denied the chance to lead the Zhou people, wanted to set up their own regimes near their base in what is the southern part of Shanxi. Either way, this hypothesis also supports the theory that the Zhou moved from their base in the east westward to the Jing 涇 River region in Shaanxi during the latter part

34 Lothar von Falkenhausen, *Chinese Society in the Age of Confucius (1000–250 BC): The Archaeological Evidence* (Los Angeles: Cotsen Institute of Archaeology, 2006), 283.

35 *Shiji*, 4:114.

36 Wang Yuzhe, *Zhonghua yuangu shi*, 451.

of the Shang dynasty, as many scholars beginning with Qian Mu 錢穆 have argued.³⁷

The mainstream narrative of Tai Bo yielding the throne fits the motif of yielding that has been studied most thoroughly in Sara Allan's *The Heir and the Sage: Dynastic Legend in Early China*.³⁸ Yet if we look at the account of Tai Bo in some texts outside the Confucian tradition, there is no mention of his yielding at all. The *Mu Tianzi zhuan* 穆天子傳 (Account of Emperor Mu), for example, reads:

On the *renshen* day, the Son of Heaven set out to the west ... The Son of Heaven had Zhai Fu receive them [presents from the Chi-wu people] and said "The ancestors of the Chi-wu Clan emerged from the Zhou Clan. Tai Wang Dan Fu having first created the Western Lands, enfeoffed his first son Wu Tai Bo with Eastern Wu, instructing him in the art of forging bronze swords and presenting him with the jade disc of the Zhou house."
 壬申，天子西征……天子使鄒父受之。曰：「赤烏氏先出自周宗。大王亶父之始作西土，封其元子吳太伯于東吳，詔以金刃之刑，賄用周室之璧。」³⁹

The jade disc (*bi* 璧) was given to officials and lords. Here Dan Fu is formally enfeoffing Tai Bo with Eastern Wu, a designation unknown in other early texts. Could it not refer to Eastern *Yu* 東虞? This would pair nicely with Du Yu's 杜預 (222–285) commentary on the Xi 5 passage in the *Zuo zhuan* (mentioned above) which claims that Yu Zhong was enfeoffed at West Wu:

Tai Bo and Yu Zhong were both Tai Wang's sons; they did not follow their father's command, completely stepping aside (yielding [their status]) and going to Wu. Zhong Yong as the son of a secondary wife was enfeoffed at West Wu.

太伯、虞仲皆大王之子，不從父命，俱讓適吳。仲雍支子，別封西

37 For a thorough discussion of Qian Mu's theory and those supporting opposing ideas see Maria Khayutina, "Western Zhou Cultural and Historic Setting," in *The Oxford Handbook of Early China*, ed. Elizabeth Childs-Johnson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 369–70.

38 Revised and expanded edition, see Sara Allan, *The Heir and the Sage: Dynastic Legend in Early China* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2016).

39 Compare Rémi Mathieu, *Le Mu Tianzi zhuan; traduction annotée, étude critique* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1978), 33–34; *Mu Tianzi zhuan* 穆天子傳, *Sibu beiyao* 四部備要, 2.2b–2.3a.

吳。⁴⁰

If Tai Bo and Yu Zhong both set up small states in Shanxi after their father went west, this would also tally with a stanza from the “Huang yi” 皇矣 (How August, Mao #241):

The High Lord made a state, made a companion,	帝作邦作對，
from Tai Bo and King Ji.	自大伯、王季。
Now this King Ji,	維此王季，
was of loving heart and friendly,	因心則友，
friendly to his elder brothers.	則友其兄。 ⁴¹

The state referred to in the first line would be Zhou, the “companion” state or *dui* 對 would be Yu. Ji Li would then be said here to have befriended his elder brothers, something that would have been difficult had they both been hundreds of miles away in Jiangsu Wu. Ji Li also allied the Zhou with the Shang state of Zhi 摯 by marrying a woman of their ruling line, the Rens 任—she was known as Tai Ren 太任. His son, Chang (i.e., King Wen) married a woman from the Shens 莘 known as Tai Si 太姒.⁴² The idea of small city-states allied with the Zhou is one that many scholars today believe best describes early Chinese politics.⁴³ The last stanza of the “Mian” 緜 (Long, Drawn Out, Mao #237) reads:

Yu and Rui settled [their grievances] and	
concluded peace,	虞芮質厥成，
King Wen moved their basic natures.	文王蹶厥生。
And, we had those who came from a distance to submit,	予曰有疏附，
those who attended us first and later,	予曰有先後，

40 Du Yu 杜預, *Chunqiu jingzhuan jijie* 春秋經傳集解 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1988), 256.

41 *Mao Shi zhengyi*, 1024.

42 On these marriage-alliances, see “Da ming” 大明, Mao #236. James Legge, *The Chinese Classics*, vol. IV, *The She King* (Taipei: SMC Publishing Inc., 2000), 433 and 435. On Zhi see n. 8 above.

43 Mark Edward Lewis’s comments on the Shang may apply to the Zhou as well: “It (Shang) was not a continuous, territorial state, but a league of towns allied by kinship or shared religious practice, towns existing amid alien and hostile settlements.” See his “The World of the City-States,” in *The Construction of Space in Early China* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006), 136.

those who hastened forward to present themselves, 予曰有奔奏，
those who can defend us from injury.⁴⁴ 予曰有禦侮。⁴⁵

Rui 芮 was a city-state located near modern Ruicheng County 芮城縣 in Yuncheng City 運城市 in Shanxi, about 10 miles northwest of Yu.⁴⁶ As neighbors and relatives (Rui was also a Ji 姬 lineage state), Yu and Rui would naturally have had territorial disagreements. The last stanza of the poem refers to the time prior to the Zhou conquest of Yin. Having Yu and Rui come for adjudication of their grievances amounted to these states acknowledging the ascendancy of the Zhou.⁴⁷ This gradual accretion of territory and alliances perhaps allowed Confucius to say (*Lunyu* 8.20): “Two-thirds of the world had already turned to [King Wen], and yet he still continued to defer to and serve the Shang” 三分天下有其二，以服事殷。⁴⁸ Could this two-thirds have been in part the result of other members of Tai Wang’s family who remained in southwestern Shanxi and began to stake out the territories of their own city-

44 The translation is my own, working from Bernhard Karlgren, *The Book of Odes* (Stockholm: The Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities, 1950), 189–90; James Legge, *The Chinese Classics*, vol. IV, *The She King*, 437–41, and various Chinese commentaries (see the notes just above).

45 *Mao Shi zhengyi*, 993–94.

46 See Wang Yuzhe, *Zhonghua yuangu shi*, 448–49. There were also states named Yu and Rui probably in the Jian [Qian?] River 汧水 Valley in Shaanxi, cf. Chen Chao-jung 陳昭容, “On the Possibility That the Two Western Zhou States Yu and Rui Were Originally Located in the Jian River Valley,” in *Imprints of Kinship: Studies of Recently Discovered Bronze Inscriptions from Ancient China*, ed. Edward L. Shaughnessy (Hong Kong: The Chinese University of Hong Kong Press, 2017), 189–207, and Maria Khayutina, “King Wen, a Settler of Disputes or Judge? The ‘Yu-Rui case’ in the *Historical Records* and Its Historical Background,” *Bochumer Jahrbuch zur Ostasienforschung* 38 (2015): 261–76, especially the map on page 270 which shows two sets of Yu-Rui, one in Shaanxi and the other in Shanxi on the northern bank of the Yellow River opposite modern Sanmenxia.

47 See the commentary by Kong Yingda 孔穎達 (574–648) cited in Wang Xianqian 王先謙, *Shi sanjia yi jishu* 詩三家義集疏 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1987), 842, reveals that after the settlement of Yu and Rui more than forty small states allied themselves to Zhou.

48 Translation in Edward Slingerland, *Confucius Analects: With Selections from Traditional Commentaries* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2003), 84–85.

states? The ruler of Yu would have been Tai Bo.⁴⁹

If Yang Kuan and Wang Yuzhe are correct, this would not eradicate the narrative tradition recorded in so many texts that claim Tai Bo founded Jiangsu Wu, but does suggest these texts are derived from a later tradition, begun during the Chunqiu era and encapsulated in texts like the *Zuo zhuan*, *Guoyu*, and *Lunyu* 8.1 in support of ideas that Confucius and subsequently his followers would espouse regarding *rang* or yielding. This concept was shared by Sima Qian who, as mentioned above, placed Wu Tai Bo's hereditary house first among the *shijia* in large part because of its emphasis on yielding the throne, much as he placed Bo Yi and Shu Qi, who also yielded, at the head of the *liezhuan*.⁵⁰

49 Would there be any resonance of King Li going to Zhi 殲 (*Shiji*, 4:142: 厲王出奔於殲)? Zhi is 15 miles north-northeast of Huo County 霍縣 in Shanxi which, if the Fen River region was the home of the Zhou might make it a logical place for him to seek sanctuary. According to Zheng Xuan 鄭玄 (127–200), Zhi was a Shang ally. See Qian Mu 錢穆, *Shiji diming kao* 史記地名考 (Taipei: Sanmin shuju, 1984), 208.

50 Chen Jianing 陳家寧 in his discussion of Wu Tai Bo (see Chen Jianing, *Shiji Shang Zhou shishi xinzheng tubu* 《史記》商周史事新證圖補 [Tianjin: Tianjin renmin chubanshe, 2011], 166–73), it has been pointed out to me recently, draws many of the same conclusions as those in this paper.

Bibliography

- Allan, Sara. *The Heir and the Sage: Dynastic Legend in Early China*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2016.
- Chen Chao-jung 陳昭容. "On the Possibility That the Two Western Zhou States Yu and Rui Were Originally Located in the Jian River Valley." In *Imprints of Kinship: Studies of Recently Discovered Bronze Inscriptions from Ancient China*. Edited by Edward L. Shaughnessy, 189–207. Hong Kong: The Chinese University of Hong Kong Press, 2017.
- Chen Jianing 陳家寧. *Shiji Shang Zhou shishi xinzheng tubu* 《史記》商周史事新證圖補. Tianjin: Tianjin renmin chubanshe, 2011.
- Chen Pan 陳槃. "Shiji 'Wu Tai Bo shijia' buzhu" 史記吳太伯世家補注. *BIHP* 52.3 (1981): 391–419.
- Cook, Constance A. and Paul R. Goldin, eds. *A Source Book of Ancient Chinese Bronze Inscriptions*. Berkeley: The Society for the Study of Early China, 2016.
- Du Yu 杜預. *Chunqiu jingzhuan jijie* 春秋經傳集解. Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1988.
- Durrant, Stephen, Wai-yee Li and David Schaberg. *Zuo Tradition / Zuozhuan: Commentary on the "Spring and Autumn Annals."* Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2016.
- Fang Hsuan-chen 方炫琛. "Zuo zhuan renwu minghao yanjiu" 左傳人物名號研究. Ph.D. dissertation. Taiwan Chengchi University, 1983.
- Han Zhaoqi 韓兆琦. *Shiji jianzheng* 史記箋證. Nanchang: Jiangxi renmin chubanshe, 2004.
- Hsu Cho-yun 許倬雲 and Katheryn M. Linduff. *Western Chou Civilization*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1988.
- Karlgren, Bernhard. *The Book of Odes*. Stockholm: The Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities, 1950.
- Khayutina, Maria. "King Wen, a Settler of Disputes or Judge? The 'Yu-Rui case' in the *Historical Records* and Its Historical Background." *Bochumer Jahrbuch zur Ostasienforschung* 38 (2015): 261–76.
- . "Western Zhou Cultural and Historic Setting." In *The Oxford Handbook of Early China*. Edited by Elizabeth Childs-Johnson, 364–400. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020.
- Knoblock, John and Jeffrey Riegel. *The Annals of Lü Buwei*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000.

- Legge, James. *The Chinese Classics*, vol. IV, *The She King*. Taipei: SMC Publishing Inc., 2000.
- Lewis, Mark Edward. *The Construction of Space in Early China*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006.
- Li Feng 李峰. "The Western Zhou State." In *Routledge Handbook of Early Chinese History*. Edited by Paul R. Goldin, 84–107. London: Routledge, 2018.
- Li Xueqin 李學勤 and *Shisan jing zhushu zhengli weiyuanhui* 《十三經注疏》整理委員會, eds. *Mao Shi zhengyi* 毛詩正義. Beijing: Beijing Daxue chubanshe, 1999.
- Loewe, Michael. *Problems of Han Administration: Ancestral Rites, Weights and Measures, and the Means of Protest*. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2016.
- Lü Zongli 呂宗力, ed. *Zhongguo lidai guanzhi da cidian* 中國歷代官制大辭典. Beijing: Beijing chubanshe, 1994.
- Mathieu, Rémi. *Le Mu Tianzi zhuan; traduction annotée, étude critique*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1978.
- Mu Tianzi zhuan* 穆天子傳. *Sibu beiyao* 四部備要.
- Nienhauser, William H., Jr., ed. *The Grand Scribe's Records*, vol. 5.1. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006.
- Qian Mu 錢穆. *Shiji diming kao* 史記地名考. Taipei: Sanmin shuju, 1984.
- Sima Qian 司馬遷. *Shiji* 史記. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1959.
- Slingerland, Edward. *Confucius Analects: With Selections from Traditional Commentaries*. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2003.
- Tan Qixiang 譚其驤. *Zhongguo lishi dituji* 中國歷史地圖集. Shanghai: Ditu chubanshe, 1982–1987.
- von Falkenhausen, Lothar. *Chinese Society in the Age of Confucius (1000–250 BC): The Archaeological Evidence*. Los Angeles: Cotsen Institute of Archaeology, 2006.
- Wang Guowei 王國維, ed. *Jinben Zhushu jinian shuzheng* 今本竹書紀年疏證. Taipei: Shijie Shuju, 1989.
- Wang Xianqian 王先謙. *Shi sanjia yi jishu* 詩三家義集疏. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1987.
- . *Zhuangzi jijie* 莊子集解. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1999.
- Wang Yuzhe 王玉哲. *Zhonghua yuangu shi* 中華遠古史. Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 2003.
- Yang Bojun 楊伯峻, ed. and comm. *Chunqiu Zuo zhuan zhu* 春秋左傳注. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1981.
- Yang Kuan 楊寬. *Xi Zhou shi* 西周史. Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1999.

「太伯之吳」札記一則

倪豪士

威斯康辛大學麥迪遜分校亞洲語言文化系

太伯或許是一位令人欽佩的、具有先儒風範的人物，甘願讓位於其弟。然而，他也可能只是一位被父親摒棄的典型王室後裔。這自然讓人聯想到「棄兒」后稷。太伯的出走亦符合其家族傳統：某人一旦失位——在此例中，指太王繼承人之位——便會離開故土。太伯的先祖不窋早年逃離夏（甚或是遭到驅逐），流落於戎狄之間；隨後公劉在豳地定居，由此開創了這一支系。周代的作者們自然不願將太伯離開豳地記錄為「不從」其父的結果，而更傾向於將他塑造為主動讓出周部族首領之位的長子，而非記錄他與父親決裂，造成可能與后稷相提並論的尷尬局面。

關鍵詞： 太伯 讓位 繼位敘事 周先祖 《史記》