

“Road of Jade”—Kinetic Analysis of Jade on the Origin of Chinese Civilization*

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Ye Shu-xian's proposal of “Road of Jade” brings forward a new way to study the origin of civilization. Jade replaced bronze as one of the major criteria of the birth of civilizations. Ye explains jade as a mystical witchcraft which has a sacred power for the ancient people. Because the jade is produced in the water, and has the similar color with the sky, both of which have significance for the origin of life, jade is thus considered to be the origin of power. The notion of jade-god gave birth to the civilization in ancient China and triggered competition among the settlements, which in turn, advanced the development of civilization.

Keywords: Ye Shu-xian, Road of Jade, the origin of Chinese civilization, jade as god, kinetic study

Introduction

In May, 2013, at the international symposium on literary anthropology held at Shaanxi Normal University, Ye Shuxian proposed a frontier issues of “Road of Jade”, which argues that jade should be one of the major criteria of the birth of civilizations. This proposal has the potency of displacing bronze from the central place it occupies in cultural history. It gave rise to heated debate.¹ It proved once again the capacity of the inter-disciplinary interpretation to explore the origin of Chinese civilization from the perspective of literary anthropology. What is the theoretical innovation of the “Road of Jade” in terms of the problems in tracing the origin of Chinese civilization? What is the value or significance of this view in the systematic questioning of the research on the origins of Chinese civilization? This paper attempts to examine the exploration of Chinese civilization origins, and elucidate the inner logic of the “Road of Jade” with the aid of Ye's ideas about literary anthropology thoughts to probe into the above issues.

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¹ Ye uses the early jades as a kind of “Object Narrative” to explore the literature and culture, which is the natural extension of his “multiple evidences”; in the same way that his research on the literary anthropology has proceeded from the literary texts to the cultural texts, the early jades also switched from being merely the “material evidence” of the multiple evidences of the literary anthropology to the material symbol of civilization origins, which makes “jade” a new alternative to bronze and deeply connected to the logical progression of literary anthropology and the exploration of civilization. Ye confirms the “great tradition” represented by jade as the source of the “little tradition” represented by bronze, first identifying the relative pre-existence of jade in time. Ye explicitly places early jades in the context of Chinese civilization exploration in papers including Ye shu-xian, My Stones, *Ethnic Arts Quarterly*, 2012(3); Ye shu-xian, Mythological Analysis of the Origins of Chinese Jades—Taking Jades of Xinglongwa Culture as an Example, *Ethnic Arts Quarterly*, 2012(3); Shun Issued Jades to Tribe Leaders after the Abdication from Yao, see Ye Shu-xian, Banrui: the Myth History of the Two Legendary Rulers, *Ethnic Arts Quarterly*, 2012(3); Liao Mingjun, Ye Shu-xian, Mythological Analysis of Chinese Civilization Exploration—Interviews with Ye Shu-xian, *Ethnic Arts Quarterly*, 2012(3).

Part 1 Notional Premises of the “Road of Jade”: Transformation of “Myth” and “History”

Based on Ye’s 30-year-long exploration and research on literary anthropology, the proposal of “Road of Jade” didn’t come out of vacuum. This innovative theory has its ideological foundation in the developments in literary anthropology. From the view point of methodology, Ye’s inventive conceptual understanding of “myth” and “history” and his integrated interpretation of “myth history” laid the theoretical foundation of “Road of Jade”. In the 1980s, with self-awareness about the reform of tools, Ye introduced myth-archetype criticism into the field of literary studies and his re-interpretation of the classics of Chinese culture. The introduction and practice of myth-archetype criticism in literary studies is a breakthrough for the conceptual innovation of “myth”. Myth-archetype criticism is the inter-cultural and interdisciplinary DNA of the subsequent development of literary anthropology. In his re-interpretation of *Lao Tzu*, *Shi Jing* (Book of Odes), *Chuang Tzu*, etc., Ye focused on both the revelation of their literary “ideological contents” and the analysis of their literary expressions of philosophical ideas, which were integrated and aided by the decoding of “mythological images”. In *The Hero and the Sun* and *Chinese Philosophy of Mythology*, the two-way incorporation and the mutual interpretation of “literature” and “philosophy”, with the “mythological images” as the key word, are pushed into a broader cross-cultural horizon. The reinterpretation of *Lao Tzu*, *Chuang Tzu* and *Shi Jing* (Book of Odes) focuses on the particular Chinese classics. However, *The Hero and the Sun* and *Chinese Philosophy of Mythology* adopt “mythological images” to initiatively extend the scope of research field, which exhibits the charm of theoretical innovation.²

The close association or the intimacy between myths and history is related to a special type of myth—Genesis myths which exist and play an important role in all nations’ mythology. Genesis myths are about the creation of the universe and the man, which reflects the search for historical origins. Ye’s systematic research on the bear totem marks a breakthrough of viewing historical elements from the perspective of myths. The multi-evidences relating to the bear totem in ancient myths (name of the Empire, image narration and folk legends, etc.) manifest the great capability and promising potentiality of myths to record and reveal history.³ Thus, the history of myths is presented clearly. By elucidating the deep connection between myths and philosophical thoughts and historical exploration, Ye successfully gets rid of the narrow interpretation of myths and deliberately treats myths as the common source and archetype of the humanities’ modern categories principles, such as literature, history and philosophy. Mythology is thus defined as the integrated origin of civilization.

Besides being motivated by the history-interpreting function of “mythological images” as elaborated above, Ye’s conceptual innovation of “history” is also triggered by an anecdote about a modern school of the thought in the study of China’s history and post-modern views of history such as the New Historicism. The anecdote concerns the doubting of ancient myths from the Doubting Antiquity School. Gu Jiegang puts forward the “pile-up theory” and regards all history recorded by ancient myths as nonsense. He thinks what myths record is merely the result of later generations’ authoritative narration. The Doubting Antiquity School’s denial of the historical significance of myths has its ground in the scientific conception of history in Chinese history studies, which keeps alert for authoritative narration in history records. However, the Doubting Antiquity

² See Ye Shu-xian’s *The Hero and the Sun, Lao Tzu and Chinese Mythology, Cultural Analysis of Chuang Tzu, Cultural Interpretation of Shijing*, Xi’an: Shaanxi People’s Publishing House, 2005.

³ Ye Shu-xian, *The Totem Bear*, Shanghai: Shanghai Literature and Arts Publishing House, 2007.

School, failing to realize the complexity of myths which is mixed up truth and falsity, thus completely denies the myths' possibility and capability of narrating history. With the aid of the totem bear, Ye showed the history and reasonability of myths, shedding light on the complex of mythical narratives. It is common sense that myth is absolutely not entirely an account of authentic history, but it takes much more effort to penetrate the fantasies in myths and perceive the authentic history or the threads that lead to authentic history. By discovering and consciously adopting the underlying relation between "mythology" and "history", Ye reveals the complexity of mythical narratives. This can be seen as the accomplishment of a Chinese three-step dialectical view of history: from believing antiquity to doubting antiquity, then from doubting antiquity to interpreting antiquity.⁴

The "literature" and "philosophy" in myths is associated by mythological images, while the reproduction of the authentic history in myths relies on the concept of "mythistory" which is developed by Ye. Though it has its theoretical support in Western mythological research, it is still closely rooted in Chinese native materials. Given that mythology is multi-faceted and also the "prototype" that constructs Chinese civilization, Ye even uses the concept of "mythological China" to generalize the self-expression of Chinese civilization. Owing to the activation of the capacity for myths to be multi interpretable, and the penetrating understanding of the relations between mythology and history, "mythistory" offers methodological support for Ye's deep exploration of the origins of Chinese civilization.

Part 2 Basic Characteristics of the Mythological Mode of Chinese Civilization Exploration

Ye's "deified images" explains the origin and occurrence of literature in a cross-cultural, cross-time manner, exhibiting the typical features of the myth-archetype criticism. The inner relations that associate mythology to history and philosophy are revealed. Consequently, mythological research is introduced to the origins of thoughts and history. In exploring the origins of thoughts, Ye regards mythical images as the intrinsic expression of the philosophy of Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu (Lao-Chuang philosophy). His integrated analysis of the physical archetypes of philosophical concepts, such as Tao (道), Zhiyan (卮言), and Tian Jun (天均), is characterized with comparison of thoughts and archeology of conceptions.⁵ The exploration of the starting point of Chinese civilization has, for more than a hundred years, been the core research into the source of Chinese civilization. Thanks to Ye's innovative combination of "mythology" and "history" in his "mythistory" concept, this exploration has made significant progress.

Ye's mythological mode of exploring civilization origins has distinctive characteristics and provides a unique approach. Before analyzing its uniqueness, we can take a look at how it complements those traditional modes of academic research.

With the increase of archeological discoveries, exploration of the origins of civilization is obliged to connect as many verified Chinese civilization forms as possible on the timeline. Previous civilization exploration tries to specify the exact time at which civilization began, however, what numerous archeological discoveries offer is the chronological development of civilization, with no exactly datable starting point. It has been common sense that civilization is gradually shaped and started. The searching for an exact time is no longer the only pursuit of research into the origins of civilization. Scholars also devote themselves to another

⁴ Ye shu-xian, In Search of the Historical in the Literary: Classics of the Mountains and the Sea and the Lost Cultural Mega-Tradition, *Theoretical Studies In Literature and Art*, 2012(2), Ye Shu-xian, by exploring the historical information contained in myths, demonstrates the possibility of connecting myths and history.

⁵ See also Chapters Two to Five of Ye shu-xian, *Cultural Analysis of Chuang Tzu*, Xi'an: Shaanxi People's Publishing House, 2005c.

topic: what are the driving forces of the long evolution of Chinese civilization? The search for the driving forces for the birth civilization has become an important theoretic issue. Scholars have proposed theories such as the “oasis theory” (R. Pempelly), “two revolutions” theory (V. G. Childe), “unequal distribution of resources”, “population pressure theory” (M. J. Harner) and “religion forces” (T. Earle),⁶ all of the various theories attempt to explore the origin of civilization. While, the mythological method, providing the theosophical (theological+philosophical) concepts, is actively trying to search for the underlying forces that promote the birth of civilization. The jade-as-god model, offered by “Road of Jade”, shares two commonalities with other kinetics: firstly, what drives the civilization is material (jade), a proposal which is characteristically materialism; secondly, the social distribution or configuration of material resources implies that of conceptual and spiritual resources.

Besides these two commonalities, the “Road of Jade” enjoys obvious superiorities. Instead of separating the material and spiritual resources, it integrates them as the combined forces for the origin of civilization, which cannot be analyzed by Marxism’s separation of materials and spirits any longer. According to the “Road of Jade”, the fight for spiritual resources goes along with the striving for material resources. This theory takes into consideration both the material forces and the spiritual forces, which results from the unification and fusion of mythological thoughts. Ye points out that, at the very beginning of civilization, humans must have undergone such kind of era that man and god are equal and that the sacred and the secular are not divided. This means, the “Road of Jade” does not only bring us to the star of civilization, but also presents the outlook of the integration of the material and the spiritual.

With the confusion of spiritual factors, the research on the origin of civilization is enriched with the favor of spiritual archeology.

Part 3 “Psychoanalysis” of Jade

In order to grasp the core value of the spirit archeology of Chinese civilization that is implied in the “Road of Jade”, it is necessary to analyze the theoretical structure of the “Road of Jade”. The fundamental work shall be centered on the spiritual and conceptual analysis of jade—the core of jade myths. The following analysis is the induction and explanation of the inherent logic structures underlying the “Road of Jade”.

Jade, as a natural mineral, enjoys certain characteristics that are superior to other minerals. Firstly, it is formed in extremely harsh conditions, making it rare and special. Secondly, it has special physical properties, such as the hardness, color luster, and the sense of touch. Viewing from the little tradition of Chinese civilization, *Shi Jing* (诗经, Book of Odes) put that “a gentleman is as gentle as jade” (“言念君子, 温其如玉”), “a gentleman always wears jade” (“君子无故玉不去身”), a gentleman shall cultivate his morals the way the jade is sculpted—by “cutting (切), polishing (磋), carving (琢) and rubbing (磨)”, and the concept of “jade virtues”: all of these are related to jade’s physical properties. However, Ye explains them as the reflection of the great tradition of “jade-as-god”. The reason why jade is respected in the little tradition of Chinese civilization lies in the jade myths 5000 years ago. “Jade myths” are peculiar to Chinese mythology. The mythological mode of thoughts provides a multi-dimensional panoramic view of the origin of Chinese civilization.

⁶ Chen Chun, Resource, Religion and the Vicissitudes of Civilization, *Southeast Culture*, 2000(5); see also Chen Chun, Exploration of the Origin of Civilization and Early State: Comparison of the Theories, Methods and Research Results, Shanghai: Shanghai Century Publishing Group, 2007.

Ye's psychoanalysis of jade is interpreted on the mystical witchcraft and the magic in the comparative religious studies. Chinese jade, together with the western "hierophany"—gold and Lapis Lazuli, enjoys a holy and sublime status in the early civilization. The earliest "jade as god" idea appears in the great tradition of mythological world. Ye analyzes six jade myths—Yellow Emperor plants jade, etc.—that starts from the legendary Chinese ancestor Yellow Emperor and ends with the three wise rulers of Xia, Shang and Zhou Dynasties.⁷ The analysis, stretching 2,000 years, is the transition period from the great tradition to the little tradition. Ye "interpreted the little tradition of characters by the knowledge of the great tradition", ⁸ and verified the great tradition by the little tradition.

All of the six myths listed by Ye show jade's sanctity and the function of connecting man and god. To be specific, Yellow Emperor's planting jade, recorded in *The Classic of Mountains and Seas*, shows that jade can increase the power of gods or ghosts and protect the gentlemen from the evil;⁹ the story that a jade article made Yu the Great the ruler of the country, as recorded in *Shang Shu* and *Records of the Grand Historian*, shows jade's honorable status in secular world¹⁰. Qi of Xia going up to heaven with the ring of jade in his right hand and semi-circular jade wearing around his waist shows that semi-circular jades and jade wearing are all holy media that connect man and god;¹¹ according to *The Yizhoushu*, Zhou, the last emperor of Shang Dynasty, burned himself together with jade, which implies that jade can be smelted;¹² Jiang Ziya got semi-circular jade and the Duke of Zhou talked to the ancestors with jade sacrificial vessel, which shows that jade conveys mythical information;¹³ King Mu of Zhou visited the Yellow Emperor's Palace and got jade bough and jade leaf, which hints that the Yellow Emperor's Palace may be the palace where the worship of god with jades is performed.¹⁴ In the previous interpretation of mythological stories, Ye re-interpreted both the great and the little tradition under the guidance of the "jade-as-god" concept and presented the multi-dimensions of jade myths.

With the aid of two scholars (Charles de Brosses and F. M. Muller) of comparative studies of religion, Ye confirmed the mythological association between "jade" and "god". He pointed out that the great tradition of regarding jade as god has potentially dominated the little tradition of "jade is virtue", more importantly, he suggested the method of searching for the driving force of regarding "jade as god". That is the "supernatural power" in myths.¹⁵

Searching for the driving force of regarding "jade as god" is the prelude of jade's psychoanalysis. Since Muller suggested the search for supernatural powers that pre-exist the materials, where does the supernatural power of jade come from? Different from the Newtonian mechanics, Nietzsche's "the will to power" or Freud's libido, Supernatural power follows neither the equilibrium law of the acting force and counter-acting force, nor Aristotle's logic of cause-and-effect. The core feature of the supernatural power is eternity and mysteriousness. Its eternity is roughly explained in the description of the place where King Mu of Zhou got jade bough and leaf.

⁷ Ye Shu-xian. *The Golden Bough and the Jade Leaf—Comparative Mythology from Chinese Perspective*, Shanghai: Fudan University Publishing House, 2012, p. 23.

⁸ Ibid., p. 13.

⁹ Ibid., p. 14.

¹⁰ Ibid., pp. 16-17.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 19.

¹² Ibid., pp. 20-21.

¹³ Ibid., pp. 20-21.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 22.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 25.

Where did King Mu of Zhou get the jade bough and leaf? According to *The Classic of Mountains and Seas*, “Clear water springs out of the Chong Mountain, which is warm and windless. Flying birds and various animals feeds here. Former kings called it “Xian Pu” (the Fairyland). The Son of Heaven (King Mu of Zhou) got the jade bough and leaf here.”¹⁶

The core message here is that all jades come from the water, which shares “similarity of mode” with Hetian Jade peddles that come from the river. This fact ought to be the basis on which ancient people set the mythological context of the origin of jade. Crops that grow in water can rear people and can grow year after year. Their lives are endless, which guarantees the eternity of human beings. Similarly, jade “comes from the water” and becomes the symbol of eternal life, which conforms to the “resemblance law” of James George Frazer. The mythical logic can be described like this: crops growing in water change and renew with seasons and have the eternal life; the eternity of crops guarantees the eternity of humankind; since the crops come from the water, their eternity must also come from the water; another rare mineral, jade, also coming out of water, shall have eternal life too. Records proving jade’s coming out of water can be found in *The Classic of Mountains and Seas*. The *Xishan Jing* chapter describes the Gui Mountain: “there is no tree but many jades there. The Qi River, originating from the Mountain and going west into the sea, contains many jades, gold and cinnabars.” The Shuli Mountain: “the Chu River, originating here and going south into the Wei River, contains many white jades.” The Longshou Mountain: “Tiao River, originating here and going south-east into the Jing River contains many beautiful jades.”¹⁷ According to Book of the Later Han, Yu the Great “swam to the East Sea” and got jade bar there. The association between water and life is testified by Mircea Eliade, the leading star of comparative religion, in his *Patterns in Comparative Religion*, a whole chapter¹⁸ fully scans the related myths around the world. In the following chapter, the eternity concept of supernatural stones is analyzed. Notably, stones, which can make women fertile, give birth to stones and marry plants etc., are directly related to the source and the eternity of life.¹⁹ Eliade separately analyzed the eternity symbols—the water and the stone (jade), which, in Chinese civilization, are connected by the archetypal narrative of “jades come from the water”. It means the “resemblance law” shall be built between the two images of Eliade.

Attributing the source of supernatural power to the water is an exploration of the driving force of Chinese civilization in the domain of great tradition. The concept of water as the source is also fully reflected in the little tradition of Chinese culture. For example, Lao Zi compared Tao to water in the chapters 8, 43, 61, 66 and 78 of *Tao Te Ching*; Confucius sighed to the river, “life goes away like water”; Mencius compared benevolence to water;²⁰ Hsün Tzu compared the people to water,²¹ etc. *Water Embodies Tao*, one of the Guodian bamboo

¹⁶ Ye Shu-xian. *The Golden Bough and the Jade Leaf—Comparative Mythology from Chinese Perspective*, Shanghai: Fudan University Publishing House, 2012, p. 22.

¹⁷ Ibid., pp. 15-16.

¹⁸ Eliade Mircea, *Patterns in Comparative Religion*, Guilin: Guangxi Normal University Press, 2008, Chapter 8.

¹⁹ Eliade Mircea, *Patterns in Comparative Religion*, Guilin: Guangxi Normal University Press, 2008.

²⁰ According to *Part 1. Kào Tsze of The Works of Mencius*: Kào Tsze said, “human nature is like fast-flowing water. If you break the east bank, water goes east; if you break the west bank, water goes west. There is no distinction between the good and evil about human nature, as there is no fixed direction for the water”; Mencius answered, “it’s true that the water has no fixed direction, but it can go either up or down. If you collect water, it can be high enough to reach your forehead, even the mountains. The circumstances make it so. Human being can be evil, do can his nature.” According to *Part 2. Kào Tsze of The Works of Mencius*: “Yu the Great control the water in water’s way. That’s why Yu led the water into the Seas. Today, you lead the water into the neighboring countries. Water has gone in the wrong direction, which is called the flood. Flood is what a gentleman dislikes.”

²¹ According to *Way of the King of Xunzi*: “The king is like the body and the people like the shadow. If the body is upright, so will the shadow. The king is like the plate and the people like the water. If the plate is round, so will the water.”

slip writings of ancient Chu State, explicitly places water at the center of universe.²² Discussion about the water as the source of thought in the little tradition of written records has been done by many scholars both at home and abroad. American contemporary Sinologist Sara Allan confirmed the water and plants as the ideological origin of Chinese thoughts, and holds the view that the water and plants is the metaphor of many native Chinese philosophical concepts.²³

The implied meaning of water is the source of life and the eternity, which confirms each other: water is the invariable source of life and the eternity of life comes from the water's endless circulation in the universe. In the circulation theory of western literature development, Canadian literary critic Northrop Frye made an analogy of the circulation of literary images and the circulation of water which brought together the source of literary images and the endlessness of the water circulation. Thus, the inner driving force of literature development is also a metaphor of water. Though flowing to the lower places, water nourishes all, and drives the spreading of civilization in the early uncivilized world.²⁴ The practical reason why water is lined with the circulation and re-birth is that ancient people know the water's circulation in the universe.²⁵ Similar to Frye's "psychoanalysis" on water, Chinese always believes that "the water of the Yellow River comes from the Heaven", and terms like "Heaven Han River" or "Heaven River" connect the water and the heaven which shows water's symbolic significance of eternal life.

The psychoanalysis of jade leads us to know that water is the source of civilization. This in turn verifies that the jade-as-god concept is the ideological source of Chinese civilization. Since jade can connect man and god and gives human eternal life, jade turns into a spiritual resource in integrated mythical thoughts. Jade's supernatural power of eternity is conveyed in "holy narrative", for example, Yellow Emperor ate jade cream and planted the jade flower.²⁶ Qi of Xia treated the dukes and princes with jade at Yuan Platform,²⁷ all gods and ghosts being fed on jade,²⁸ etc. The "secular version" of this holy narrative is of medical care function, "a gentleman never leaves his jade" or "jade nourish people".

Another link between jade and eternity is the same color shared by the sapphire (blue jade) and the sky. Ye adopted the patterns of comparative religion in comparing Sumerian lapis lazuli, Hebrew jade in the Garden of Eden, Buddhist Rudraksha tree and Chinese jade. He pointed out that jades that are worshiped in these nations have the same azure blue color as the sky, which may be the source of jade's supernatural power. All of these jades are not necessarily bluish green, but bluish-green jades' function of connecting man and god and symbolizing eternity is confirmed in various nations. In Ye's opinion, ancient Chinese use jade to worship the

²² According to *Water Embodies Tao* of the Guodian bamboo slips of ancient State of Chu: "Tao produces water. Water embodies Tao, and forms the sky. The sky embodies the Tao and forms the land."

²³ Allan Sara, *The Way of Water and Sprouts of Virtue—Metaphor of Chinese Early Philosophical Thoughts*, Beijing: The Commercial Press, 2010, p. 23.

²⁴ According to the chapter 25 of *Lao Zi*: something is born in the early chaos. With no sound and no shape, it exists and circles. It can be called the mother of the sky and the land. I don't know its' name, but I'm willing to call it Tao, and name is Da. Da flows, flow far away, and finally returns.

²⁵ To understand more about the water's connection with "Tao" and "never-ending circulation", see also Ye Shu-xian, *Lao Tzu and Mythology*, Xi'an: Shaanxi People's Publishing House, 2005b, pp. 86-93; Ye Shu-xian, *Cultural Analysis of Chuang Tzu*, Xi'an: Shaanxi People's Publishing House, 2005c, p. 522. Ye cited Frye's analysis of water in *Anatomy of Criticism*: "water's symbolic circulation: from the rain to the spring, from the spring to the steam and river, from the stream and river to the sea, then evaporated back to the rain. Again and again."

²⁶ Ye Shu-xian, *The Golden Bough and the Jade Leaf—Comparative Mythology from Chinese Perspective*, Shanghai: Fudan University Publishing House, 2012, p. 22.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

heaven because they noticed jade's similar color to the sky.²⁹ Ye arrives at this conclusion by the comparative method.³⁰ Meanwhile, he realized that the colors of sapphire (green jade) and lapis lazuli have obvious distinction. Therefore he made other evidences and further argumentation. He proved the correctness of color analogy by giving the example of Liuli, which is closest to lapis lazuli in color and enjoys high status. The name of man-made Liuli may be transliteration of lapis lazuli's Latin proper name. Later generation created two imitations of Liuli—Liuli-colored glaze and glass, whose color is also close to the natural mineral lapis lazuli.

The eternity concept in jade-as-god theory is the Chinese version of the pursuit for eternal life in mythical thoughts. The association of jade and water is the exploration of the source of eternal life. The color analogy places the highest form of eternal life in heaven, which can be proved by mythical imagination like "Jade Emperor" and "jade halls—palace in the moon". Actually, in his spiritual archeology of mythical imaginations like hero myths, Sun myths and the totem bear,³¹ Ye continuously focused on the mythological expression of the eternal life.

The association of water as the source between jade and grass and the color similarity of jade with the sky provides mythical logics for jade's holiness. Holy narratives, like "Heaven River", Nüwa repairing the heaven with "five-colored stones",³² jade being the essence from "the combination of heaven and earth", intensifies jade's holiness by integration of both the water as the source and the color similarity. As the driving force of Chinese civilization, the "jade-as-god" concept integrates the material and spiritual elements of the origin of civilization. The pursuit of jade mineral and the privilege of "worshiping god with jade" bred the bud of early Chinese civilization. The "era of jade" of early Chinese civilization is not Ye's invention. However, the "Road of Jade" theory enriches the spiritual pursuit and conceptual contents of "era of jade" by illustrating jade's holiness. According to "Road of Jade", jade that integrates the material and spiritual resources becomes a holy gold apple that attracts various power groups. This gives birth to Chinese civilization.

Part 4 Kinetic Analysis on the "Road of Jade"

According to the view of "mythistory", the mythology and history are both opposite and complementary to each other. The "Road of Jade" concept provides a kinetic mode that is worth pondering on to the research on the origin of civilization. It has unmatched theoretical advantages in offering a multi-dimensional view of the starting point of civilization which connects man and god and combines the material and the spiritual powers. Psychoanalysis is merely a "measure" of power source of "Road of Jade". As for constructing the civilization, how the jade-as-god view performs its magic effects? How do the material and spiritual powers work? What kinds of "stresses" exist at the civilization source defined by the way of jade? A series of questions constitute of the basic contents of the kinetic analysis on the way of jade.

²⁹ Ye Shu-xian, *The Golden Bough and the Jade Leaf—Comparative Mythology from Chinese Perspective*, Shanghai: Fudan University Publishing House, 2012, p. 200.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 179: "viewing from the metaphorical usage of lapis lazuli in Sumerian mythology, the color of lapis lazuli reminds the Sumerian the color of the night sky, which extends to be the original color of the whole heaven. The heaven is the world of gods, so the color of heaven gets the supernatural holiness."

³¹ See also the interchangeability between "熊 (bear)" and "能 (capacity)". Ye Shu-xian, *The Totem Bear—Chinese Ancestors' Mythical Exploration of the Civilization Origin*, Shanghai: Shanghai Literature & Art Press, 2007.

³² In *Huainanzi*, Chapter 6 *Lanmingxun*: "in remote antiquity the four poles of the Universe collapsed and the world descended into chaos; the firmament was no longer able to cover everything and the earth was no longer able to support itself; fires burned wild and waters flooded the land; fierce beasts ate common people, and ferocious birds attacked the old and the weak. So Nüwa tempered the five-colored stones to mend the heavens, cut off the feet of the great turtle to support the four poles, killed the black dragon to help the earth, and gathered the ash of reed to stop the flood. After the repairing, four corners of the heaven became normal; the flood receded, and the earth was restored to stability; the beasts were killed and the people are saved; the heaven above the earth became complete and round."

The kinetic analysis on the way of jade is the analysis of the flow direction of the mysterious power that gives people eternal life. This differentiates the way of jade from secular forces like greed. What affect the early people are the unpredictability and the mystery of this power. The theory of greed or desire, distinguishing the sacred and the secular, highlights the secular greed as an important driving force. However, this theory betrays and ignores the spiritual condition at the beginning of civilization, where the sacred and the secular are unified. The supernatural power is manifested in the long-standing fight for jade, in Shaman's sincerity in worshiping god with jade, in the all-around social input in acquiring jade and in the amazing jade-polishing techniques. Analysis of the complex kinetic system will be made from the following aspects.

The Competition for Materials and the Striving for Ideological Power

Ye showed the competition for scarce resources at the birth of various civilizations. However, the cause of competition is not the scarcity, but the underlying conceptual identity awareness. In other words, both competing parties fight for the jades' infinite supernatural power. Therefore the spiritual concepts disseminated together with the material competition. With the formation of jade's cross-cultural identity, the arduous pursuit for jade and the competition between tribes turned into the fight for social control and ideological power. Ye pointed out that:

The ideology molded by jade myths include the concepts of regarding jade as god, the symbol of celestial body and the symbol of eternal life, Shamanist rituals of worshiping god and ancestors with jade; folktales that respect and uphold jade; moral standards (virtues of jade) and teaching or learning patterns (cutting, polishing, sculpting and rubbing) derived from jade; social practice of wearing jade (a gentleman must wear jade)"; linguistic customs formed from the supreme values of jade—names that contain jade (jade girl, Zhuanyu, Qiongyao, Tang Guizhang etc.); numerous Chinese characters that is formed with jade (玉) as a component and various idioms and proverbs with the jade myths as the core information. The previous examples, through cultural spreading and interaction, constructed the state of royal powers in the Central Plain, and also the identity of many states and peoples beyond the Central Plain.³³

Viewing from the influences the "jade-as-god" view has on the multi-aspects of Chinese social life, the "Road of Jade" does not highlight the process of forming social entity through wars (which, of course existed), but the fusion of nation spirits on the basis of the widely acceptance of the jade-as-god concept. According to the Road of Jade, besides the physical unification of political community, namely, early state, the gradual formation of Chinese civilization also means the chelation of spiritual ideas, such as ideology. As a spiritual "chelate", jade-as-god view is more stable, which is embodied in both the heaven worshiping with jade in Shamanism and the gold medal inserted with jade in the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

Ideology created by the jade-as-god view, surmounting the great and little tradition and integrating the spiritual and material, is the uni-force that drives the formation of Chinese civilization. The Road of Jade provides a more dimensional view of the starting point of Chinese civilization.

The Competition Among Different Regional Cultures and the Fight for Social Strata within One Single Civilization Community

The competition among different regional cultures, both spiritual and material, is a comprehensive, whole-scale war during the forming of civilization, which is a force that leads to complexity.³⁴ This force does initiate not only the bud of one single civilization, but also the world-wide mutual initiation between various

³³ Ye Shu-xian, *The Golden Bough and the Jade Leaf—Comparative Mythology from Chinese Perspective*, Shanghai: Fudan University Publishing House, 2012, p. 29.

³⁴ In research on the origin of Chinese civilization, the complication of society is much discussed by scholars; correspondingly, the universe develops from tidiness to untidiness, from singleness to complexity.

civilizations. Similarly, in one single civilization, with different groups sharing the same jade-as-god identity, they compete for jades and the jade-as-god view. The fight inside a society results in the formation of social strata and the supreme ruling class that monopolize the privilege of “worshiping god with jade”. According to *Discourses of Chu* in the book *Discourses of the States*:

King Zhao of Chu asked Guan SheFu, “according to the *Book of Zhou*, Zhong and Li separated the heaven and the earth, why is that? If not, can humans go up to the heaven?”

Guan Shefu answered, “the fact is not so... In Shao Hao’s ruling, the Jiuli tribe did not behave virtually. Man and god were mixed. Ceremonies were performed by ordinary people and Shamanism was done at home. There was no stress on god’s holiness ... when Zhuangxi took over the country, he ordered that Nan Zhengchong be in charge of the heaven and confer it to god and Huo Zhengli in charge of the earth and confer it to the man ... which is the separation of the man from the heaven.”

Zhuangxi’s “separating the man from the heaven” is the process of limiting the power of man-and-god communication to the hand of the supreme rulers. Before this, “man and god were mixed” and “Shamanism was done at home” showed that, every human being can communicate with god, which is described on a broader scale of “Asian-American Shaman worship” by Kwang-chih Chang. Shaman is a representative of the winning class who has monopolized jade and the power to communicate with the heaven. This winning class, in that way of “the winner takes all”, comprehensively monopolizes the resources and many other powers in the social entity. With “state”—this political entity—the supreme rulers take charge of the unpredictability of the power in “jade-as-god” view. Such mysteriousness of power is also reflected in the little tradition, such as the saying that “the holy jade of state cannot be shown to ordinary men”. In the ancient world, the mysterious power is the “charisma” in the sages, such as the Buddha, Mohammed, Confucius and Jesus. In modern world, the mysterious power is the “Mana”³⁵ in native beliefs, which is defined by Max Weber as the charming personality “revealed” in those leaders. The social stratification and the consolidation of the supreme ruling class’s status changed the body of society, from complex unity of multi powers to a relatively stable self-organized structure. After the consolidation of the social strata, there are a lot of internal stresses inside it, which has the potential of sudden outburst, like the infinite energy hidden inside the earth after its formation.

Transverse Force and Longitudinal Force

Through the jade and ideology competition among different regional cultures, the competition for the supernatural power is established among paralleled civilizations.³⁶ Before the formation of the hierarchy political entity, i.e., the state, the competition is among the different peoples in the same region and finally

³⁵ Ye Shu-xian, *The Golden Bough and the Jade Leaf—Comparative Mythology from Chinese Perspective*, Shanghai: Fudan University Publishing House, 2012, p. 222. Ye points out that, though Joseph Needham innovatively liked “virtue (德)” of the Chinese to “mana” of the primitive societies, he overlooked the links between virtue and jade. Joseph’s liking can be extended by Ye’s interpretation pattern, namely, virtue, jade and mana are mutually linked, forming a circulation of forces.

³⁶ The “District-System-Type” theory proposed by Su Bingqi, provided the outline of the competition among different civilizations, see Su, Bingqi, On the Districts, Systems and Types in Archeology, *Cultural Relics*, 1981(5). Kwang-chih Chang holds the view that all three dynasties, Xia, Shang and Zhou, moved their capitals for many times, because of the pursuit for the important political property—copper and tin. These two metals formed the bronze ware, which was the center of the three dynasties’ political fights. “For the three dynasties, the bronze ware wasn’t luxuries or decorations in the palaces, but the necessary tools for the political power struggles. Without the bronze ware, the three dynasties wouldn’t have been established; without the copper and tin, there wouldn’t have been the bronze ware.” Kwang-chih Chang, *The Bronze Age of China*. Beijing: SDX Joint Publishing Company, 2013, p. 60. Ye Shuxian depicted the longitudinal force of jade by focusing his recent research on “The Silk Road” and “The Jade Road”, and the “route map” of “The Jade Road” along the Yellow River.

forms the ideological unity within which the peoples support and compete with each other. However, the competition among different cultures is the competition for the supernatural power. The transverse force that comes from the competition among different peoples in one same region is embodied in two aspects. The first is in their fight for the supreme ruling power in the formation of states. The second is in the fight for supreme power of communicating with god and ideological dominance by acquiring the ruling power. “Jade-as-god” view triggered the fight for resources and power among paralleled cultures, which actually was the fight for the embodiment of supernatural power. In exploring the origin of civilization, researchers used to focus on the material symbols. With deepened research, more and more researchers come to realize the importance of spiritual force. The “jade-as-god” view integrates the spiritual and material forces.

Spiritual force always changes. Therefore the spiritual completion never ends. The transverse forces ultimately lead to the pursuit of the supreme spiritual power. Jade’s power of communicating man and god becomes the compass that directs the spiritual force, attracting human beings with the incredibility of supernatural power and leading them into the house of civilization. The discontent for civilization development is more than the secular greed identified by Werner Sombart (1863-1941) when he did research on the source of the capitalist spirits. This discontent that provides an upward force is already rooted in the source of civilization. Besides the secular material desires, humans also desire for spiritual resources.

For the birth of civilization, the significance of transverse force that resulted from the competition among regional cultures and the upward force of spiritual pursuit is fully displayed in one article—*The transportation of Jade from the West to the East and the Formation of Chinese Civilization*. “The cultural and historical meaning of the transportation of jade, different from that of the transportation of gas from the west to the east, lies in what it has brought into Chinese tradition—spiritual forces, i.e., the national mainstream of core values.”³⁷ Ye pointed out that, “... viewing the source of jade ware in east Asia from the perspective of mythology, the main line of Chinese mythology is jade myths and the related faiths. We can see that certain corresponding jade-as-god concept lies behind every type of jade ware. Observing the time and place of the unearthed jades, we can outline the spreading route of jade-as-god view.” Such route predicts the direction of the driving force of civilization, which is the very theoretical focus of Ye’s two main directions of explaining the civilization spreading. “According to the great tradition, from 8000 years ago to 4000 years ago, the spreading of jade culture can be simplified in two directions, from the north to the south and from the east to the west.”³⁸

The driving forces for civilization which are implied in the “Road of Jade” took on the multi-element, multi-direction and multi-polar complexion. The previous analysis from three levels is set out for the sake of labor saving. The exploration of Chinese civilization origin requires the mobilization of multi-forces in the “Road of Jade”. Therefore a multi-dimensional view of the starting point of civilization can be formed. The “Road of Jade” presents the complex kinetic structure of civilization, which is scattered in Ye’s works that analyze jade in the multi-dimensional perspective. Correspondingly, the driving force has been paid much attention to in recent research on the origin of civilization. The kinetic analysis on the way of jade has proved the methodological support for the research.

³⁷ Ye Shu-xian, *The transportation of Jade from the West to the East and the Formation of Chinese Civilization*. *Guangming Daily*, 25 July 2013.

³⁸ Ye Shu-xian, *The transportation of Jade from the West to the East and the Formation of Chinese Civilization*. *Guangming Daily*, 25 July 2013.

Part 5 Epilogue: The Methodological Significance of the Road of Jade

The Integrated View of the Civilization Exploration

The research on the origin of civilization requires an integrated view, which points at an inevitable trend of research on civilization origin. The integration does not only confine to the integration of research patterns of all related natural principles in empirical archeology, but also extend to the integration of different views and methods of empirical natural principles, social principles and interpretive humanities. With the deep involvement in civilization exploration, the “Road of Jade” is characterized with the empirical favor, analysis methods of social science (the sociological analysis on the route of jade) and the interpretation feature of humanities (“spiritual archeology” of the jade-as-god view).

On the peculiar features of Chinese civilization, researchers usually attach great importance to rituals. Rituals are part of the “construction of spiritual civilization” of ancient Chinese, which is verified by the “material” evidence—unearthed sacrificial pottery, jade and bronze vessels. But, to deepen the research on their spiritual source should rely on the interpretation of Chinese civilization thoughts. According to the Road of Jade, the source of rituals is in the concept of regarding jade as god—“worshiping the heaven with jade”, which offers a way to deepen the ritual research. However, only when the “jade as god” view is introduced to a larger-scale world civilization and the more-pervasive spiritual archeology, can its real theoretical effects be fully motivated. On the basis of Peter Frost’s “Asian-American Shamanism”, Kwang-chih Chang put forward the “Asian-American Shamanism as the basement” theory and the Maya-Chinese continuum theory. He thought that the reconstruction of “Asian-American Shamanism” shall be extended to the east of old world, especially China, instead of being limited to the Central and South America region. Since ancient China shares many similarities in many aspects, such as religion and arts, with the Central and South America, they can be placed in the same category as Shamanistic Civilization.³⁹ His “Asian-American Shamanism as the basement” theory provides larger conceptual space for the jade-as-god view which “worships the heaven with jade”. The meaning of Shamanism to the embryology of concepts is echoed in Ye’s jade-as-god view. The conceptual logic of “worshiping the heaven with jade” to “regarding jade as god” is revealed in the conceptual derivation of Asian-American Shamanism.

A Coherent View of Chinese Civilization Outlined by the Road of Jade

From the historical background of “worshiping the heaven with jade” to the gold medals inserted with jade in the Beijing Olympics,⁴⁰ from the “virtue of jade” of the Confucian morals to the fortune made by jade sales, from being buried minerals in the Flood Age to the symbol of highest values in the civilization age, from the reserved, warm, and mild properties⁴¹ to humans’ killing and fighting to attain it ... jade has gone through the building of Chinese civilization with various gestures, which provides us a perfect perspective to know about the integrity and continuity of Chinese civilization. In the research on the origin of Chinese civilization, its continuity is commonly accepted by scholars. The continuity has two layers of relevant meanings: first, Chinese civilization never stops from the ancient to now, which enchants the west scholars; second, there is a

³⁹ See also Li, Hong-wei, Kwang-chih Chang’s Gain and Loss in the Research on Chinese Civilization, *Hebei Academic Journal*, 2003(5).

⁴⁰ To know more about the gold medals inserted with jade in Beijing Olympics, besides Ye’s analysis, see also Xing, Jinshan, Jade and the Olympics: Analysis on the Jades in Beijing Olympics. *Relics from South*, 2008(2).

⁴¹ Since East Zhou Dynasty, Confucian ideal personality cultivation is to be “a gentleman as warm and gentle as jade”. Lao Tzu, in *Tao Te Ching*, highly praised “a sage who wears coarse cloth and jade”. see Ye, Shu-xian, The transportation of Jade from the West to the East and the Formation of Chinese Civilization. *Guangming Daily*, 25 July 2013.

structural continuity of belief, ritual, politics and economics inside Chinese civilization system, which is described by Tu Weiming as “the continuity of being”.⁴² He used “the continuity of being” to explore the particularity of Chinese thoughts. He raised a question about the concept of “Qi”, “in what sense do the most unintelligent substances, such as stones, and the most intelligent embodiments, such as the heaven, constitute of the same thing—Qi?” In Ye’s words: how old great tradition becomes the conceptual source of the “little tradition” concepts in written records? “Stones” and “heaven” listed by Tu directly correspond to jade and “jade-as-god view” in the “way of jade”. The great potential of the way of jade in connecting the great and little tradition and conducting the spiritual archeology can be seen. The continuity, integrity and growth of Chinese philosophy, which are intensively discussed by researcher who conduct comparative studies of Chinese and the western philosophies, may have more to dig up. With the mutual interpretation between the great tradition and the little tradition, comparison of philosophical thoughts can make a great difference.

Probability of Mutual Interpretation Between the Great Tradition and the Little Tradition

The “Road of Jade” as the source of civilization has not only confirmed the typical jade type of different civilization age, but also revealed the most essential particularity of Chinese civilization (jade and ritual). With the full-scale development of Chinese archeology, more civilization sites describe the sky of Chinese civilization history by “stippling”. Different from the Su Bingqi’s “Starry Sky” to describe the transverse surface of the start of Chinese civilization, Kwang-chih Chang summarized the historical development of Chinese civilization with “continuity”. This continuity forces Kwang-chih Chang to regard the birth of Chinese civilization as the typical pattern, while the broken “emergences” of European civilization as untypical, which is the innovative application of Marx’s thought of the Asiatic Mode of Production. Chang’s brave proposal is verified by revealing the most intrinsic essence of Chinese civilization.

The integration of multi-aspects in jade-as-god view, the centralization of ritual in Chinese civilization, the continuity of the start and development of Chinese civilization, and the unity and integrity of Chinese belief and ritual depict the essence of Chinese civilization from various perspectives, through which, the richness of Chinese civilization is reflected from the mutual revelation and interpretation between the great tradition and the little tradition. If the continuity is the outward feature of the formation of Chinese civilization, the transfer from “jade as god” to “virtue of jade” is the conceptual thread going through the great and little traditions. And the transformation of “worshiping the heaven”, a mythological view, to rituals set as political rules, shows that the great tradition and the little tradition share the same ideological regulation system.

In the context of comparative studies of Chinese and Western philosophy, F. W. Mote pointed out that, the pre-Qin thinkers didn’t mention any “Genesis myth”, which is the most prominent feature of Chinese philosophy. This conclusion shall be detailedly examined in the context of comparing the civilization and thoughts of China and the West.⁴³ If we see the origin theories from the clearer reason since the Renaissance,

⁴² Tu, Weiming, *The Continuity of Being: Chinese Visions of Nature. And Analysis on the Three Keynotes of Chinese Philosophy, Research of Chinese Philosophy History*, 1981(1).

⁴³ The pre-Qin thinkers didn’t directly “solve” “the problem of Genesis”. In *The Adjustment of Controversies*, a chapter of *Zhuangzi*, Genesis is explained in Chinese speculative way which has long annoyed western scholars: “Among the men of old their knowledge reached the extreme point. What was that extreme point? Some held that at first there was not anything. This is the extreme point, the utmost point to which nothing can be added. A second class held that there was something, but without any responsive recognition of it (on the part of men). A third class held that there was such recognition, but there had not begun to be any expression of different opinions about it. It was through the definite expression of different opinions about it that there ensued injury to (the doctrine of) the Dao. It was this injury to the (doctrine of the) Dao which led to the formation of (partial) preferences.” This means: to avoid “injury” to Tao and maintain the dynamic flow of “Tao” in all steps and shapes of ceaseless change, thinkers had to give up the “definite expression” of the source.

the driving force of Chinese civilization is neither expressed as explicitly as “the God” in the West, nor identified by the pure natural “substance” (according to Thales, water).⁴⁴

Regarding the concrete “the God” or the substance “water” as the originating principle is not typical in Chinese civilization exploration. However, Lao Tzu’s ambiguous definition and unclear positioning of the civilization source with “Hun Dun (chaos)”, *The Universe Comes from the Water*’s dynamic description of the starting point with the water that has no fixed place and no fixed shape, and in Song Dynasty, neo-Confucianism scholars’ dynamic depiction of Qi showed Chinese view of “the formation of all things”, which is pretty different form that of the West. The dynamism, chance-based and pervasive of Chinese view of “the formation of all things” can be trace in the continuity of great tradition of Chinese civilization. In *The Formation of Chinese Civilization*, Xu Pingfang, Kwang-chih Chang et al. summarized the continuity as follows:

Chinese civilization was formed in the wholesome frame of the universe’s creation, which is of continuity. So, it didn’t make any essential difference to the relationship of man and nature. Seen from the ideological perspective, old Chinese civilization developed in the same frame and its development didn’t break the original ideological frame.⁴⁵

As to the relationship of man and nature, the comparison of the essential features of Chinese and western philosophy—Chinese theory that “man is an integral part of nature” and the western theory of “man and nature are opposite”—is unalterable in the domain of little tradition, which correspond with the comparison of existing or not of “Genesis myths” in the domain of great tradition.

The methodological approach of mutual interpretation between the great tradition and the little tradition motivated by Ye’s “Road of Jade”, is a way to lead us out of the puzzle of “making up the history” and “proving the history”. But this approach shall be confirmed in the self-examination system of hermeneutic methodology. If we sink into the circular argumentation, the “Road of Jade” will lose its methodological “kinetic energy” and become a new dogma. Take an analogy to explain it, just like the process of “pointing the moon with the finger” eventually turns into the obsession with “the finger” and the process of “pointing the moon” is forgotten. To avoid this extremity, guided by the dynamic theoretic feature of the “Road of Jade”, we shall deepen our research into the utmost source “context” of civilization on the basis of more careful analysis of the unearthed materials and with the more human interpretative methods, in order to present a more complex, more multi-dimensional view of the source of Chinese civilization. Maybe, this layer-by-layer mode of research is the sole and most reliable way to enable the kinetic analysis of jade by the “Road of Jade” to give the priority in the onward time sequencing line, which can be random, to jade, rather than the bronze, which also conforms to the real verification of Chinese civilization essence.

Conclusion

“Road of Jade” serves as a new approach to explore the powers that give birth to civilization. Jade has

⁴⁴ We can make an interesting comparison between Thales’ “water” with the “water” in Chinese five Yin-Yang elements. The five elements—metal, wood, water, fire and earth—do not exactly refer to the five substances, but represent five related strengths in the formation and change of things with the waxing and waning of Yin-Yang. Five material substances are chosen for the sake of convenience. In *Leijing Tuyi* (Illustrated Supplement of the Classic Cannon), Zhang Jingyue said that, “Five Elements are the essence of Yin-Yang, and Yin-Yang is the Qi of the Five Elements. Without the essence, no Qi can be formed; without Qi, the essence can’t move. The motion is the motion of Yin-Yang’s Qi.” Five Elements is the different forms of the interaction between yin and yang, and yin-yang is the original motive for the change of the Five Elements.

⁴⁵ Xu Pingfang, & Kwang-chih Chang. *The Formation of Chinese Civilization*, Beijing: New World Press, 2004, p. 339.

sacred power to give birth to individuals and civilizations as well. “Road of Jade” helps to explain the complex structures in the birth of civilization and reveal the manifold powers that advanced the civilization. The powers can be summarized as, the competition for materials and the striving for ideological power, the competition among different regional cultures and the fight for social strata within one single civilization community, transverse force and longitudinal force. The proposal of “Road of Jade” has significance beyond the civilization research as well. With the proposal of “Road of Jade”, integrated view of the civilization exploration is broadly recognized. “Road of Jade” helps to outline a coherent view of Chinese civilization.

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