

The Earliest Centralized Legislation and the Construction of Political System in China: On the Basis of Interpretation of “Yü Gong”

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Abstract

“Yü Gong” is not a record of the achievement of Yü’s water conservancy treatment but Yü’s legislation of constructing a centralized government. In this ancient piece of article, Yü divides the world into nine states, guided the mountains and rivers, and conferred lands and surnames, etc., which are all intent to restore the local order through the tribute and tax system, strengthen the central control, and make it to the specific system setting of vertical infiltration to the local area. The Five-Fu system is the implementation of the centralization of power based on Yü’s particular political ideal of the world. In addition, so far as the received text shows, “Yü Gong” is not respectful to heaven, and does not advocate virtue, nor does it focus on the relation of monarch and minister. These legislative ideas of centralization belong to the tradition of Yin. There are the same political idea in the era of San Huang and Shang dynasty, but it is completely opposite to the political culture of the Fu Xi, Five Di and the Western Zhou Dynasty. The centralized legislative idea and world mode opened by “Yü Gong” is followed by the succession of the Yin-Shang and Qin Dynasty. The autocratic centralization of the Chinese Dynasty in later generations is based on the gradual improvement of it.

Keywords

“Yü Gong”, Yü, Legislation, Centralization, Technological Tradition

1. Preface: Some Preconditions and Problems

Before discussion of the content of “Yü Gong” (“The Tribute of Yü”),¹ it is necessary to deal with the era and the structure of the text as a prerequisite. As for the era of “Yü Gong”, scholars from various dynasties since the Song Dynasty have many arguments, so far there are at least six categories of opinions.² Due to the lack of direct evidence to solve this problem, there is no need to argue much further on the basis of the existing literature. Nevertheless, the following relatively definite views can be obtained from pure analysis of the text, and these will be the prerequisites for this paper:

1) “Yü Gong” is not a fake and fictional work of later generations. Instead, it is very likely to be directly related to Yü (禹) and Xia dynasty.³ 2) “Yü Gong” was not accomplished at one stroke, but gradually formed in a long period of time. 3) The whole content of “Yü Gong” is all related to Yü who lived in the early time of Xia Dynasty.⁴ 4) Some errors occurred during the spread of the text, but that does not substantially affect understanding of the overall content of it.⁵ In this regard, “Yü Gong” can be deemed as a literature reflecting the actual state of the Yü and early Xia Dynasty.

A source-critical clarification. Three layers of the tradition must be distinguished: textual memory, legendary narrative, and recoverable institutions. “Yü Gong” as we have it is a transmitted text whose final redaction is later than the age it describes, and part of its content is legendary narrative, the mythic framing of Yü’s labors that also appears in the Shan Hai Jing and later sources. Yet the text also preserves institutional material that is not legendary in character: the tribute schedules, the soil and product classifications, and the graded obligations of the Five Fu are administrative in nature, and it is precisely this stratum that archaeology can test (Shaughnessy, 1993). The claim defended here is therefore not that every sentence of “Yü Gong” records Xia practice, but that the text, as a coherent

¹The Chinese version of “Yü Gong” used in this paper is based on (Kong, 1999a). The English version is generally based on (Legge, 1879). If there is no special need, unless necessary, the original text will not be annotated one by one when it be quoted. I disagree with the translation of some words in the translation by Legge. However, in order to facilitate the retrieval of the original text by non-chinese native speakers, I still stick to the original version of the Legge’s English translation when quoting the original text of *Shang Shu*. This will lead to the inconsistency translation between the quotation and the discussion, and may cause some inconvenience to readers which I am deeply sorry for. In this paper, the original texts of Legge’s English translation of *Shang Shu* (尚书) are all italic and bold.

²According to Yüe Hongqin’s collation, these six types of opinions for the time of formation of Yu Gong are: Xia Dynasty theory; Western Zhou theory; spring and autumn theory; Warring States period and 2000th BC to the Warring States period; later ages. The detailed review of the research, cf. (Yue, 2006, pp. 20-25) cf. (Zhou & Zhang, 2001 pp. 90-94).

³After criticizing the extreme research methods of the school of “Discernment of Ancient History (古史辨)”, the contemporary scholars generally accepted this premise.

⁴This point has recently been strongly supported by archaeological research. Cf. (Li, 1981a). Zhao Chunqing further demonstrated the corresponding relationship between the Five-Fu System of “Yü Gong” and the Longshan culture. Cf. (Zhao, 2006, pp. 10-23). Although Jizhou (冀州) is generally believed as the center of the nine-state pattern of “Yü Gong”, a scholar by the name of Zhao Chunqing tends to take Yüzhou (豫州) as the center. Which one of them is more accurate remains to be further studied.

⁵This view is very common. Because it is not closely related to this article, it is no longer enumerated here. Cf. (Liu, 2005, p. 547).

political program, transmits an early model of centralized rule whose institutional logic is recoverable and whose presuppositions can be compared with the archaeological record. This distinction fixes the epistemic status of the argument: the paper argues from the text's internal political logic and from its congruence with independently attested patterns of regional hierarchy, not from the literal historicity of the narrative.

In addition to the introduction in beginning and summary at the end, the main part of the whole article can be divided into three sections: the first section divides the world into nine states (九州). It also describes the mountains, lakes, soil, products, tribute and tax levels and traffic routes in each states. The second section can be summarized as “guide mountains and rivers (导山导水)”. The third section explains the system of Five-Fu (五服).⁶

Scholars have different attitudes and perspectives on the nature and function of “Yü Gong”. The traditional Confucian scholars tend to consider it as a record of the achievements of Yü. And they also study from the perspective of geography and encyclopedia. While scholars in modern times pay more attention to the aspect of historical geography, economy, and knowledge of things and so on. However, as an important document elaborately selected by Confucius and classified as one of the chapters of *Shang Shu* (尚书), its function is surely far from a record of geographic knowledge or description of things. In particular, judging from the whole style of *Shang Shu*, “Yü Gong” is obviously a political text. This view can be proved at least by the following two points:

Firstly, the title of “Yü Gong” makes it clear that its basic content is about tribute and tax.⁷ Therefore, “*following the course of the hills*”, “*cut down the trees* (随山刊木)” and “*guiding mountains and rivers*” are not the purpose but the means. Secondly, the events that recorded in this article occurred when Yao (尧) and Shun (舜) was the Son of Heaven (天子). So from the time line, the content of “Yü Gong” should belong to “Yü Shu” (虞书). But it was actually listed as the first chapter of “Xia Shu” (夏书). In response to this unusual situation, Kong Yingda explained:

The water treatment incident took place at the end of era of Yao (尧), but at the beginning of “Xia Shu”, Yü was elected as a Son of Heaven because of the achievements of this water treatment, which explained the reason why “Yü Gong” was the first part of the “Xia Shu”. The content of this article about the process of water treatment, but recount of the historical event after the completion of the water treatment (Kong, 1999a, p. 132).

It can be said that Kong Yingda's argument already touches on the crux of the problem, but his explanation has one flaw: it does not comply with Confucius's original meaning. According to “Yao Dian” (尧典), Yü's father, Gun (鲧), was appointed to treat floods by water control when Yao was in power. And the result

⁶Scholars generally agree on this topic, and the details are slightly different, Cf. (Kong, 1999a, p. 133); (Yue, 2006, pp. 2-3).

⁷Previous scholars have common view on this point, cf. (Kong, 1999a, 1999b, p. 132).

was not successful. After that failure, he was exiled during the reign of Shun. Then Emperor Shun appointed Yü to “*regulate the water and the land*” (平水土). By the time of Shun’s abdication, Yü became the Son of Heaven. Before that time, water control had already been completed. Therefore, the events recorded in at least two sections of “Yü Gong” occurred in the era of Emperor Shun. Furthermore, “Yü Gong” is ended with “*Yü presented the dark-colored symbol of his rank, and announced the completion of his work*” (禹錫玄圭, 告厥成功), and this sentence appears immediately after the description of Five-Fu system. On these above grounds, it can be deduced that the ending sentence of “*completion of his work*” is not based on water control, but rather on a political construction.

Therefore, it is more important to discuss the following questions: 1) what kind of political literature of “Yü Gong” is, 2) why it was written, 3) the meaning of it and 4) what influence it brings. All of these problems will be solved in the following sections.

2. The Ideal and Strategy of “Yü Gong”’s Legislation: A Reinterpretation Based on Text

There is sufficient reason to consider “Yü Gong” as the epitome of Yü’s preparations for gaining power and governing the world. From another perspective, this article be observed as the fundamental law of Yü for his ruling. Hu Wei’s *YüGong Zhuizhi* (禹贡锥指) refers to Lin Zhiqi’s exposition as follows: “although ‘Yü Gong’ is in the name of ‘tribute (贡)’, it is in fact a piece of ‘dian (典)’”. (Hu, 2006 p. 1) By pointing out the nature of “dian” In *Shang Shu* (尚书) is actually a constitutional law, Lin’s theory is quite brilliant. Briefly speaking, through the tributary (including tax) system, Yü tried to establish a centralization political system which make use of tribute as a link of it. Section 2 of this paper tries to focus on the text of “Yü Gong” and discuss the centralized legislative idea and concrete measures in it.

A note on terminology. Several analytical terms used throughout this paper require clarification, because they are modern heuristic categories rather than concepts that the text itself employs. “Legislation” and “fundamental law” are used here in a functional sense: they denote the text’s project of establishing binding norms and institutions for the whole world, namely the division of the nine states, the guidance of mountains and rivers, the tribute and tax system, and the Five-Fu scheme, a project that traditional scholarship captured when it classified “Yü Gong” as a “dian” (典), that is, a constitutional text. “Centralization” and “central government” refer to the single-center, centripetal structure described above, with Jizhou as the pivot, tribute flowing toward the center, and lands and surnames conferred from it downward; they do not presuppose the fully developed bureaucratic state of later ages.

The “Yin” technological tradition and the “Yang” political orthodoxy are likewise interpretive constructs, drawn from the dictum of the “Xi Ci” (系辞) that “one Yin and one Yang compose the Tao” (一阴一阳之谓道). They are applied

in this paper on explicit criteria. A figure, dynasty, or institution is assigned to the “Yin” tradition when its political order rests on a monopoly of technique (water, fire, metal, agriculture, divination) and treats the order of the world as given by the gods rather than as created by human initiative; it is assigned to the “Yang” tradition when its order is represented as artificially created by human activity, through writing, ritual, law, and orthodoxy, and is legitimated by Heaven or by moral exemplarity. Where the evidence is mixed, the paper says so rather than forcing the assignment. These criteria are stated here so that the assignments made in Sections 3 and 4 can be checked against them.

2.1. Dividing Nine States (九州) & Guiding Mountains and Rivers: Strengthening the Control Power of the Central Government

The first part of the main content of “Yü Gong” is the division of “Nine-States”. Chen Shengyong believed that: “Yü’s division of nine states actually happened. This was verified by the developments in geography and politics achieved in the Xia Dynasty, which benefited from the geographical knowledge of ‘the world (or Tian Xia/天下)’ passed down from Yü. Besides, the Nine-State division also reflects Xia people’s understanding of the order of the world.” (Chen, 1995, p. 13) This understanding is generally correct.

When dividing the world into nine states, “Yü Gong” first describes as the following: “*Yü divided the land. Following the course of the hills, he cut down the trees. He determined the highest hills and largest rivers (in the several regions).*” (禹敷土，隨山刊木，奠高山大川) Lü Zuqian (呂祖謙) explained that “to record land division as the starting point, this shows that Yü had a blueprint in mind already and then put it into practice. That is why he succeed.” (Ding, 2002, p. 296) This statement reveals Yü’s “conspiracy”. Dredging rivers and watercourses is not only for people’s livelihood or flood prevention, but also for reconstructing local social order and administrative region through changing the geographical features. And his specific method is nothing more than “*dividing the land*”, “*cutting down the trees*” and “*determining the highest hills and largest rivers*”.⁸ Cai Chen (蔡沉) interpreted “*dividing the land*” as “separating the land into nine states”. Liu Qiyü paid more attention to the underlying divine meaning contained in the word “division (敷)” (Liu, 2005, pp. 524-525). With the divinity passed down in his blood, Yü acquired the ability to straighten out water, soil, mountain and river, and also the designation from Emperor Shun (舜) to control water.⁹ Before that designation, the Nine-State administrative region did not exist ever.¹⁰ Yü created it by making use of water controlling as an excuse.

⁸Wang Can also provided a similar explanation: (Yü) dredged the river and manage the flood. Finally, from this point of view, the four sides (四方) can be residing and the roads are clear. the “Nine States” is reunification from then on. The world is divided into “nine states”, This “state (州)” is obviously not the “state” in the modern sense. “The author of ‘Yü Gong’ actually believes that there is only one political center in the world” (Wang, 2009, p. 48).

⁹The divinity of Yü will be discussed in detail in the next section.

¹⁰According to “Shun Dian (舜典)”, Yao and Shun were not divided the world into nine states, but twelve states. Cf. (Kong, 1999a, pp. 65-66).

According to this, it is easy to understand the description of “Yü and Gun (鯀) began to dispersal soil and divided the world into nine states”¹¹ in “Hai Nei Jing” of *Shan Haijing* (山海经 • 海内经). To construct an eight-surrounding-one pattern is the reason of dividing the world into exactly “nine” state; that is, making Jizhou (冀州) as the center, and Yan (兗), Qing (青), Xu (徐), Yang (扬), Jing (荆), Yü (豫), Liang (梁), Yong (雍) to embrace it.¹² Although the geographical location of Jizhou is too far in north, which causes the other eight states unable to make an entad circumference, this does not interfere with the existence of a political ideal of centripetal encirclement. There are two points worth paying attention to: First, the eight-surrounding-one pattern advocates the number of “Nine”. This is totally different from Yao and Shun’s advocacy of “Four”, such as four sides (四方), four hours (四时), four great mountains (四岳), twelve states (十二州) and twelve governors (十二牧), but coincides with the idea of later Shang Dynasty’s.¹³

Second, the central radiation pattern was in fact germinated when Huang Di (黄帝) created his power by force, but the central authority and vassal states still maintained a loose relationship after several generations till the era of Yao and Shun. The central government had not been able to form a strong control over local society. Yü’s re-division of nine states is obviously an adjustment in order to change this status. It should be noted that the above explanation depends on the understanding of the means used to create nine states as political structure.

As for the above mentioned means, “*following the course of the hills, cut down the trees*” and “*determined the highest hills and largest rivers*” already reveals the clue. There are roughly two kinds of explanations for the so-called “*following the course of the hills, cut down the trees* (随山刊木)”. The First kind is given by Sima Zhen and Wei Zhao. Sima Zhen said, “cut down trees and make them into token” (刊木立为表记) (Sima, 1963, p. 52). While Wei Zhao (韦昭) said that “ancient people cut trees to open roads” (Sun, 1986, p. 137). That is “cutting off the wooden skin in the mountain forest to mark the path.” (Liu, 2005, p. 525) The second kind of understanding is represented by Zheng Xuan (郑玄). He said that “climbing along the mountains in the state, cutting down trees and opening roads, so as to observe the areas under control and formulate a plan for water treatment” (Kong, 1999a, p. 133). In other words, “in order to cope with the situation in the mountains, we should cut down trees and dredge roads so as to control water” (Liu, 1987, p. 526). These two kinds of explanations all regard water control as the main purpose of “*following the course of the hills, cut down the trees*”.

Actually, “*cutting down the trees*” is an act of delimitation, it is similar to the

¹¹禹、鯀始布土，均定九州(《山海经 • 海内经》)。

¹²Liu QiYü pointed out: “In the nine states of ‘Yü Gong’, the first thing to mention is Jizhou (冀州), which shows its importance. The tributes of all states were transported along the river of each state, and finally they entered the river to reach Jizhou”. So “Jizhou is the head of the nine states.” (Liu, 1987, p. 22).

¹³The most powerful evidence is “*nine divisions* (九畴)” in “Hong Fan (洪范)”. The reason and expression of Yü Xia (禹夏) and Yin-Shang (殷商) advocating “Nine” are detailed in the next section.

set of boundary tablet to mark state's territory in later generations. Nine states is a completely artificially geographic division mainly for political purpose therefore, marks of the new border is a necessity. Following this train of thought, it is easy to find out the mistake in traditional understanding of “*determining the highest hills and largest rivers*”. It was believed by some scholars that the Chinese word “奠 (Dian)” means “determined”. For example, Liu Qiyü pointed out that “determining the highest hills and largest rivers’ meant that great mountains and rivers were the benchmarks for the division of nine states, so the nine states division is based on the natural geographical areas marked by these mountains and rivers.” (Liu, 2005, p. 526) This represents the general understanding of most scholars. It seems that they reversed the cause and effect. As a matter of fact, Yü’s behavior was to redesign the mountains and rivers according to the blueprint for nine states which had been in his mind before practice.

Delimitation has great political significance and is not easy to implement by any regime. The reason why Yü can successfully carried it out was apparently relying on the opportunities brought by the flood. This can be understood from two aspects. Firstly, a large scale of flood broke down the original local social order. People had to migrate so as to avoid the flood. This reality made the powerful local forces severely weakened.¹⁴ Secondly, because of the order of water treatment under emperor Shun, Yü gained a considerable reputation and power. And together with his inherited divine nature, Yü could infiltrate the central power into the local grass-roots society under the name of water treatment. From the detailed records of geography, customs and products of the mountains and rivers in “Yü gong”, we can know that when the Nine-State pattern formed, the central government had been well informed of all the local conditions and affairs. From the above analysis, we may deduce that Yü’s demarcation behavior is, on the surface, a division of the land; but in essence, it is a subversive reconstruction of local order dominated by the central authority. Furthermore, geographical reconstruction was neither an end nor a goal. The deeper motive behind it was to build a centralization authority. In order to make this political pattern stable for long, Yü relied on a system of tribute (贡) and tax (赋),¹⁵ that is, to implement a tributary system in these nine states. As Kong Yingda emphasized, “tribute and tax law had lasted for a long time before. But it changed to a new one after water treatment. Although the new tribute and tax system was built up by Yü, it was not Yü who invented the

¹⁴Scholars have always had different views on the extent of the flood in era of Yü. Since the Song Dynasty, many scholars have even questioned the truth of Yü’s flood control legends. Cf. (Xu, 1985, pp. 139-152) In modern times, some scholars even questioned Yü’s authenticity, cf. (Gu & Tong, 1982, p. 144). But based on the integration of unearthed documents and handed down documents in recent years and the achievements of historical geography and meteorology, it can now be confirmed that Yao and Shun had suffered floods all over the country, and Yü had done great efforts to control floods. cf. (Yue, 2006, pp. 90-94).

¹⁵Guo Yongqin noticed the difference between tribute and tax in “Yü Gong” and the relationship between them, cf. (Guo, 2013). Because there is little impact on the topics discussed in this paper, there is no detailed distinction in this article.

tribute and tax system.” (Kong, 1999a, p. 133)¹⁶ In addition, as the content of “Yü Gong” shows, Yü’s achievement was far more than the establishment of financial system. He also established a series of political systems on the basis of tribute and tax. The following are most important ones among them: 1) a transport network to reach all parts of the country so as to ensure tributaries to the central government; 2) a mature bureaucracy to maintain the operation of the taxation system.

The next section of “guide mountains and rivers (导山导水)” is usually understood as a direct expression of the result of water control.¹⁷ It seems like the words “*dredge the river along the mountains* (随山浚川)” in an inscription made in the Western Zhou Dynasty by the name of “Sui Gong Xu (遂公盨)” (Li, 2002). Therefore, most of the traditional scholars think that the main idea of “guide mountains and rivers” is “managing mountains and dredging waterways”. (Liu, 2005 p. 761). But Wang Fuzhi made a censure, which stated as follows:

“Guide (导)” means a job. The job here is that Yü guides the flow of water. But Mountains will not flow, how they can be ‘guided’? Therefore, the word ‘guide’ should mean ‘open the way’. The flood was billowy, the vegetation grew wildly, and the marsh was everywhere. So the road was blocked. In that situation, Yü went to the foot of the mountain so as to find dry places for the purpose of cutting down the trees and opening the way. In that way, pedestrians could travel. Therefore, the function of the ‘guiding (导)’ mountains was dredging roads in order to facilitate business travel (Wang, 1996, p. 79).

Wang Fuzhi’s discussion on “Guide (导)” touches an important topic, that is, “guiding mountains and rivers” is not only for controlling water, but also for “dredging roads so as to facilitate business travel”. Indeed, the key point of “Guide (导)” is not to control water. Otherwise, “Yü Gong” should have first described water control and then created nine states and built taxation system, which is inconsistent with the narrative order of it. Moreover, if water control was the emphasis, it’s not reasonable to omit details of lakes, marshes and so on.

In the section of “guide mountains and rivers”, eight main lines of dredging are recorded. These lines are not fully guided by geography. On the contrary, it has an obvious human designed feature, which shows strong purposiveness and utilitarian. It can be said that Yü’s guiding water is not all for elimination floods but includes political considerations. There are two reasons for the above conclusion. Firstly, eight mountain lines is not set by nature, but intentionally. It was recorded beyond “Yü Gong” that in ancient times the main mountain ranges were divided into two columns, three columns and four columns, but not eight columns.¹⁸

¹⁶However, according to the regime pattern from the Huang Di (黄帝) to the Yao and Shun times and its central and local relationship, although the centralization of the tribute and tax system might have been established, it is difficult to operate effectively for a long time.

¹⁷Of course, there are different opinions, for example, Hu Wei thought guiding mountain and river was not started yet when Yü made division of nine state; Su Shi thought guiding mountain and river was after nine states was divided. Zhu xi (朱熹) thought both of them are carried out at the same time. Cf. (Liu, 2005, p. 762). These disputes are due to different understanding of the nature of the paragraph.

¹⁸Cf. (Liu, 2005, pp. 762-765).

Thus, it is not a necessity for the “guide” to take eight lines. To the opposite, there are no problems with guiding mountain in two, three or four roads. The choice of Yü, on the surface, as Su Shi said, “follows the geographical situation”, (Su, 1985, p. 45), but the real purpose is to match the blueprint of the Nine-States division. Yü’s intention of guiding mountains is to achieve the ideal pattern of the world through the establishment of eight roads leading to the center (Jizhou/冀州). Hence, it can be said that the guiding mountains conduct is to politicize the original natural geography. Secondly, judging from the river geography, it is also not entirely aimed at straightening out floods by dredging the river course.¹⁹ It is exactly the same as the purpose and way of guiding the mountains. It can be seen that this section in “Yü Gong” is actually to show how Yü built a centralized political power based on tribute and tax system by means of water control. In addition, through the mastery of mountains and rivers, the central authority can effectively control the local areas. So we should regard this section as a political declaration, not just a record of Yü’s achievements.

It should also be noted that in the era of Yü, the mountains and rivers were not simply considered as natural beings. This was quite different from the understandings of modern people. In ancient times, mountains and rivers were believed to be the residence of gods.²⁰ Therefore, the religious attribute of human’s initiative to change the appearance of mountains and rivers and its consequent influence on ideology could not be underestimated. In this context, Yü’s ability to change the mountains and rivers of all parts of the world shows that he can get along with and even control gods. As a result, there’s no dispute over the legality and sanctity of Yü’s central government.

As a summary of the two preceding sections, the “*throughout the nine provinces a similar order* (九州攸同)” section is also the most direct representation of the concept of centralization in “Yü Gong”. The full text is quoted as follows:

① (*Thus*), *throughout the nine provinces a similar order was effected: — the grounds along the waters were everywhere made habitable; the hills were cleared of their superfluous wood and sacrificed to; the sources of the rivers were cleared; the marshes were well banked;* ② *and access to the capital was secured for all within the four seas. The six magazines (of material wealth) were fully attended to; the different parts of the country were subjected to an exact comparison, so that contribution of revenue could be carefully adjusted according to their resources. (The fields) were all classified with reference to the three characters of the soil; and the revenues for the Middle Region were established.* ③ *He conferred lands and surnames.* ④ (*He said*), “*Let me set the example of a reverent attention to my virtue, and none will act contrary to*

¹⁹The arrangement of nine rivers, see (Cui, 1935 p. 11).

²⁰From the records of oracle bones, we can see that in the Shang Dynasty, similar ideas are still deep-rooted. This can be corroborated by their frequent sacrifices to rivers and mountains. see (Akatsuka, 2001 pp. 286-292), (Peng, 2001 pp. 389-397), etc.

*my conduct.*²¹

This section can be divided into four parts, and there is a progressive relationship between each parts. Section ① focuses on “*the nine provinces a similar order* (九州攸同)” and “*the grounds along the waters were everywhere made habitable* (四隩既宅)”, it shows that the regime reconstructs the local order. The so-called “*similar order* (同)” is not as simple as Liu Qiyü’s understanding, which says that “the nine states are exactly the same.” (Liu, 2005, p. 808). It is actually means that all parts of the world are arranged by the central authority, and all of them are the same as the “middle” of the world. Therefore, it’s an indication of a certain kind of ideology, which is similar to the “Great Harmony (大同)” of the later ages.

The “similar order (同)” of “*all within the four seas* (四海会同)” in Section ② had the same meaning. It can be regarded as the premise of section ②. On the basis of “*all within the four seas* (四海会同)”, Yü built a set taxation system leaded by the central government so as to achieve the goal of “*revenues for the Middle Region* (成赋中邦)”. “*Middle Region* (中邦)” refers to the central government and the kingship. Of course, revenues is still not the ultimate goal. This centralization of resources was merely a method to strengthen the power and authority of the central government.

In Section ③, Yü’s totalitarian attitude is quite clear. The symbolic importance of “*conferred lands and surnames* (锡土姓)” is very important. But in the past, scholars have different opinions on this sentence and couldn’t reach an agreement. The main difference lies in the identification of the subject in this phrase. One school thinks the subject is Yü; and consequently, the object is local princes.²² The others think that the recipient of land and surname is Yü, while the person who respects morality (as described in the next section) is also Yü. The representative (of the second opinion) is Liu Qiyü. Judging from the aspect of grammar, the sentence pattern resembles so-called imperative. Therefore, its subject must be Yü. His gesture of “*conferring lands and surnames* (锡土姓)” means that local princes are reauthorized according to Yü’s new Nine states pattern. Although this is neither the main content of “Yü Gong” nor possible to know the details now, it can be deduced that after the destruction of the old local order by “guiding mountains and rivers”, “*conferring lands and surnames* (锡土姓)” is no longer a nominal award as in the Five Di’s area, but a kind of conferring power with substantial consequences.

The content of Section ④ should be understood as Yü’s direct order to those local princes who had been conferred lands and surnames. About the phrase “*Let me set the example of a reverent attention to my virtue* (祗台德先)”, the focus of discussion among scholars is on the phrase “祗台”. There are two explanations:

²¹① 九州攸同，四隩既宅，九山刊旅，九川涤源，九泽既陂。② 四海会同，六府孔修，庶土交正，底慎财赋，咸则三壤，成赋中邦。③ 锡土姓。④ 祗台德先，不距朕行。

²²For example, Hu Wei explains that: “The land is rewarded for their merit and demarcation. The surname is to honor their merit and to divide the clan.” (Hu, 2006, p. 659).

“respect me (敬我)” and “fit to (适以)”. Both are acceptable.²³ However, the meaning of the phrase “De (德)” is not so clear. Most of the commentators interpreted it on the basis of Confucian morality,²⁴ which was rested on very shaky ground.²⁵ As a matter of fact, this “De” is similar to the “Three attribute (三德)” in “Hong Fan (洪范)”,²⁶ which is the symbol of Yü’s supreme authority. Hence, “*Let me set the example of a reverent attention to my virtue (祗台德先)*” can be interpreted as “respecting me (Yü) as the highest authority in the world”. Following that clue, the meaning of “*none will act contrary to my conduct (不距朕行)*” may be understood as a straightforward statement of the supremacy of Yü’s (Son of Heaven) authority. Hu Wei developed the view of Zhang JiuCheng (张九成) and pointed out that it was actually Yü’s speech. Using “台” and “朕” as the first person pronoun shows Yü takes credits to himself completely, which indicates that Yü has become arrogant (Hu, 2006, p. 4). Yü’s attitude shown in this section resembles Qi (启)’s posture which is recorded in “The Speech of Gan (甘誓)”: “*You who obey my orders, shall be rewarded before (the spirits of) my ancestors, and you who disobey my orders, shall be put to death before the altar of the spirits of the land, and I will also put to death your children. (用命, 赏于祖; 弗用命, 戮于社, 予则孥戮汝)*”

Moreover, the state of centralization in Xia Dynasty is supported by archaeological research. As Liu Li pointed out, “in the period of the Erlitou (二里头) and Erligang (二里岗), the early countries embodied characteristics of regional centralization. To sum up, during the period of the middle Shang Dynasty, there was a series of unrests which showed the decline of centralized power and the coexistence of multiple political centers. Although in the late Shang Dynasty with Anyang (安阳) as the center, there was a revival in the political influence of central authority, the hegemonic status like the period of Erligang was never obtained. The Erlitou country in the Central Plains was created from a pluralistic and competitive political system. It had experienced a process of expansion to the surrounding area. And the purpose of that was mainly to control and transport important resources including metal and salt, so as to meet the political needs of production of bronze ritual and weapons, and also the economic needs due to population growth in the capital” (Liu, 2008, p. 152).²⁷

It must be stressed what this archaeological evidence does and does not show. Settlement hierarchy, regional interaction, and the procurement of metal and salt at Erlitou and Erligang demonstrate that regional centralization and the capacity to mobilize resources over long distances existed in the relevant period (Liu & Chen, 2003). They do not, however, directly document a tribute administration of

²³For the explanation of the “祗” and “台”, cf. (Yu, 2009, p. 60). Jin JiFu (金吉甫) is for the first opinion and therefore interpreted “祗台德先” as “respect for my virtue and take the lead”. (Hu, 2006, p. 664)

²⁴For example, Liu Qiyü explained that “morality should be the first priority”. (Liu, 2005, p. 814)

²⁵The concept of “De” before the spring and Autumn period is very different from that of Confucius, which was ethnical and had good connotation. Cf. (Zheng, 2009, p. 119).

²⁶The meaning of “Three De” in “Hong Fan” is detailed in the section 2.2 and 3 below.

²⁷Liu Li introduced the concept of “Tribute mode production” in her interpretation, which is worth considering. Cf. (Wolf, 1982, pp. 79-82).

the kind described in “Yü Gong”: no excavated text records tribute schedules or the Five-Fu scheme. The archaeological record is therefore best understood as supporting the plausibility of the political background presupposed by the text, namely a world in which central places dominated regions and controlled resources, rather than as independent confirmation of the text’s specific institutional provisions. The argument of this paper relies on archaeology for the former and on the text itself for the latter.

To conclude, the key point of dividing nine states and guiding mountains and rivers is to strengthen the control power of the central government, especially its ability to infiltrate vertically into the local and grass-roots units. On the basis of the above two progresses, Yü was able to reconstruct local order and gain real control over local nobilities. And the symbol of that was “*conferring lands and surnames* (錫土姓)”. Yü relied on it and had the authority to demand all local power and aristocrats to entirely obey him and augustly stated that “*let me set the example of a reverent attention to my virtue* (祇台德先)” and “*none will act contrary to my conduct* (不距朕行)”.

2.2. Five-Fu System: Centralization of Political Power and Centralization of the World

After discussing the division of Nine States and guiding mountains and rivers, “Yü Gong” paints a picture of Five-Fu (服) system of the world, which quotes as the following:

Five hundred li formed the Domain of the Sovereign. From the first hundred they brought as revenue the whole plant of the grain; from the second, the ears, with apportion of the stalk; from the third, the straw, but the people had to perform various services; from the fourth, the grain in the husk; and from the fifth, the grain cleaned.

Five hundred li (beyond) constituted the Domain of the Nobles. The first hundred li was occupied by the cities and lands of the (sovereign’s) high ministers and great officers; the second, by the principalities of the barons; and the (other) three hundred, by the various other princes.

Five hundred li (still beyond) formed the Peace-securing Domain. In the first three hundred, they cultivated the lessons of learning and moral duties; in the other two, they showed the energies of war and defense.

Five hundred li (remoter still) formed the Domain of Restraint. The (first) three hundred were occupied by the tribes of the f; the (other) two hundred, by criminals undergoing the lesser banishment.

Five hundred li (the most remote) constituted the Wild Domain. The (first) three hundred were occupied by the tribes of the Man; the (other) two hundred, by criminals undergoing the greater banishment.²⁸

²⁸五百里甸服：百里赋纳总，二百里纳铎，三百里纳秸服，四百里粟，五百里米。五百里侯服：百里采，二百里男邦，三百里诸侯。五百里绥服：三百里揆文教，二百里奋武卫。五百里要服：三百里夷，二百里蔡。五百里荒服：三百里蛮，二百里流。东渐于海，西被于流沙，朔南暨声教訖于四海。

The content of this paragraph has nothing to do with the water control which has always been regarded as the theme of “Yü Gong”, so it’s used to be suspected as tampered by later scholars.²⁹ This kind of erroneous judgement is obviously due to misunderstanding of the theme of “Yü Gong”. According to the above analysis, “Yü Gong” should be deemed as the fundamental law for Yü’s new regime. In that case, the description of five “Fu (服)” is not only obvious, but rather necessary. And the meaning of “Fu” can be understood as “posts, duties and official positions and so on for the service of the emperor” (Liu, 2005, p. 816). Therefore, it can be discerned from the text itself that Five-Fu system aims at serving the central government.

This part, together with the previous parts, respectively sets up the world pattern from two different dimensions. The previous content redivides the region and the system, while this part describes the centralized integration and the longitudinal power control. However, the above two differentiations were already deeply shaped and integrated by academic view. In fact, the meaning of the two aspects is integrated in dividing Nine States, guiding mountains and river and setting up the Five-Fu system.

Yue Hongqin pointed out: “Yü Gong”’s Five-Fu system has a rich connotation. It describes a social and political system, which contains three main elements: 1) the relationship between the royal family and local aristocrats surrounding of it, which is the meaning of “Fu”; 2) Five Different levels of “Fu” in correspondence to different relationships, namely Dian (甸), Hou (侯), Sui (绥), Yao(要), Huang (荒); 3) different levels of relationships corresponding to geographically located miles from near the center to far (Yue, 2006, pp. 70-71). It can be said that the Five-Fu system is a kind of hierarchical order under the centripetal pattern. The visual appearance of it is as follows (Figure 1):

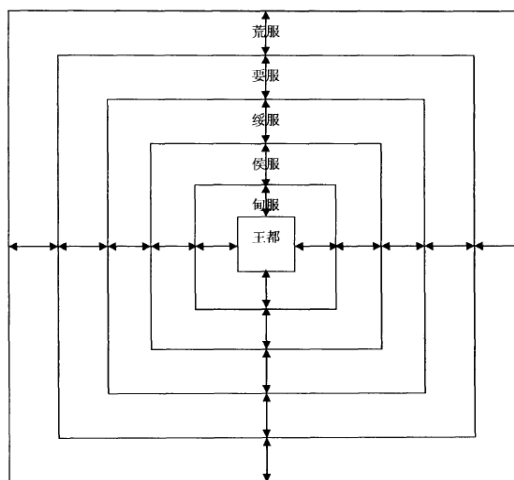


Figure 1. Sketch map of the Five-Fu system (Yue, 2006, p. 71).

²⁹For example, Liu QiYü thought the section on the five-Fu was later added to “Yü Gong”. It “is incompatible with the fundamental scientific narrative of the natural geography of ‘Yü Gong’, and is a fictitious plan to divide the world by five hundred “Li (里)”. (Liu, 2005, p. 821)

There are two characteristics of this system: one is the centripetal pattern with a single center, while the other is the hierarchical pattern. About the latter, there're several questions in need of answers. The first one worthy of deep thinking is: why distinguish by grades? Confucian scholars tend to explain that in terms of degree of enlightenment and moral level, but it did not fully conform to the situation of the era of Yü and Xia dynasty.

By analyzing the content of this paragraph, we may detect bountiful information from the structure of Yü's Five-Fu system. One of them is that the nearer to the Son of Heaven, the heavier the obligation and lower the position. As Zi Chan (子产) said: "the lowest position and the most tribute is the '*Domain of the Sovereign*' (卑而贡重者, 甸服也)" (Yang, 1990, p. 1358). The other important information of this system is that subjects bear different obligations according to the different levels. Gu Jiegang believes that this Five-Fu system is a geographic politics mode with the capital as the center, which gradually expands to four directions. He explained that within the five hundred Li (里) radius of the capital,³⁰ the area is called as "Dian Fu (甸服)". People who lived there should send their agricultural products to the royal capital. Due to the difficulty of transportation in the distance, the closer lived people to the capital, the more they need to pay to the central government. They not only have to send millet, but also send straw as cattle and horses' feeds. And people far away from the capital pay less. They only have to pay husked rice. Beyond the "Dian Fu", the radius of five hundred Li is the "Hou Fu (侯服)". This is the territory assigned to the princes by emperors. The closer to the capital, the smaller the country is; while big countries are in the distance. The next area with five hundred radius is "Sui Fu (绥服)", which is situated between the Central Plains and outer races. The area of Sui Fu needs to be pacified and restrained. Therefore, the central government should promote the culture of Central Plains on the one hand, while rectify its armaments to protect the safety of "Dian Fu" and "Hou Fu" on the other hand. Beyond "Sui Fu (绥服)", the area with radius of five hundred Li is "Yao Fu (要服)"; and beyond "Yao Fu (要服)", the next radius of five hundred Li is "Huang Fu (荒服)". In the eyes of central government, these two are places where foreigners and exiled criminals live (Gu, 1959, pp. 7-8).

Most scholars have noticed that there are lots record about the Five-Fu system in pre Qin literatures, and they are used to compare that with "Yü Gong".³¹ But it seems that only Zhao Chunqing's discussion grasps the key points. As he pointed out: "The description of the Five-Fu system is found in many documents such as *Shang Shu* (尚书), *Guo Yü* (国语), *Zuo Zhuan* (左传), *Xun zi* (荀子), *Li Ji* (礼记), *Lun Heng* (论衡), *Yi Li* (仪礼), *Shi Ji* (史记), *Han Shu* (汉书), and so on. Although the Confucian scholars have different views on the scope and size of the five 'Fu' system, they all believe that the Five-Fu system does exist and that it was one of the systems implemented in Yü era or even from Yao and Shun era.

³⁰"Li (里)" is the traditional Chinese unit of length. One Li is about equal to 0.5 kilometer.

³¹A representative view, cf. (Gu, 1959, pp. 7-8; Li, 1980).

Among them, there are two opinions on the Five-Fu system which either forms in the basis of *Guo Yü* (国语) or from ‘Yü Gong’” (Zhao, 2006, pp. 11-12). He stressed that the “Fu” system of state (邦畿) in the Western Zhou Dynasty, whether it was nine “Fu”, ten provinces (畿), or six “Fu”, was different from the “Yü Gong”’s five “Fu”. It indicates that the nine Fu system implemented by the Zhou Dynasty is quite different from the Five-Fu system of “Yü Gong” (Zhao, 2006, pp. 10-12).

In addition, many scholars debate whether such a strict and standard system is only an ideal or a actual system that was really implemented in the era of Yü. In the early 1980s, Li Min (李民) pointed out from the aspect of archaeology that “the distribution of Longshan (龙山) culture, especially its late regional distribution and the so-called ‘approximate Longshan culture’ around it, basically coincides with the geographical scope of Five-Fu system in ‘Yü Gong’.” “Yü Gong”’s Five-Fu system and its scope were made mysterious by posterity. In fact, it should be reflected in ‘Yü Gong’.” (Li, 1981a). At the end of the 1980s, Shao Wangping’s (邵望平) archaeological study of “Yü Gong” Nine-States, combined with archaeological data, denied Gu Jiegang’s conclusion that “the ancient China did not have the system of the Nine-State”. He pointed out that the territorial scope of Longshan cultural circle is exactly the same as that of “Yü Gong”, that proves the credibility of “Yü Gong” (Zhao, 2006, p. 12). The most persuasive explanation came from Zhao Chunqing. After fully investigating the relationship between Longshan culture and some “approximate Longshan culture”, he argued that the Five-Fu system of “Yü Gong” is not a hypothesis of the ancients but a tortuous reflection of the interrelation between the Central Plains and the neighbors in the Longshan era (Zhao, 2006, p. 10). In conclusion, regardless of the details how the Xia Dynasty implemented the Five-Fu system, it is reasonable to conclude that the single-center, centripetal political idea and world pattern were being put into practice, even if the received scheme idealizes the reality.

It may be useful to state explicitly the inferential steps that connect the Nine States and Five-Fu descriptions to effective territorial administration, and to confront the alternative readings. The argument proceeds in three steps. First, the text presupposes enumerability: the division of the world into nine named states, each with defined mountains, rivers, soils, products, and routes, asserts that the territory can be known and mapped, which is the precondition of any administration. Second, the text presupposes extractability: the tribute and tax schedules specify what each region owes and how it is delivered, which only makes sense if the center could actually collect and transport revenue; the detail of the schedules is evidence that the author reasoned from real fiscal practice, or at least from a coherent fiscal model. Third, the text presupposes enforceability: the Five-Fu grades impose graduated obligations by distance, and “conferring lands and surnames” (锡土姓) re-authorizes local lords, which presupposes a center strong enough to grant and to revoke. Each step is an inference from what the text must be doing to what it implies about the political capacity of the center.

Against this reading stand the alternatives that the Nine States and Five-Fu passages are purely geographical, purely cosmological, or purely retrospective political schemes. The geographical reading fails to explain the normative and fiscal structure of the text. The cosmological reading explains the sacred number nine and the concentric symbolism, but not the specific fiscal content, which is administrative rather than symbolic. The retrospective reading, which holds that the whole scheme is a Warring States projection, cannot be excluded for the received text as a whole, but it is weakened by the correspondence, documented above, between the scheme's scope and the Longshan-Erlitou archaeological horizon. The paper therefore claims neither that the text is a literal map of Xia administration nor that it is a mere cosmogram; it claims that the text articulates a model of territorial administration that was intellectually and institutionally available at the time, and whose core features, division, extraction, and enforcement, are archaeologically plausible.

3. The Origin of “Yü Gong”'s Idea of Legislation: Reinterpretation of Historical Background

The former section elaborates that “Yü Gong” is not a record of water conservancy achievements but Yü's legislative activities. Moreover, the concept of centralization of legislation revealed by the Nine States and the Five-Fu system is quite special. In this section, I will endeavor to clarify the manifestation of this specialty, its conceptual basis, and the impact of early political and cultural traditions on it.

3.1. Starting from the Abnormal Expression of “Yü Gong”

For the special legislative idea in “Yü Gong”, we may get a direct understanding through a new way. In this section, I just list and analyze some “abnormal” phenomena which deserve special attention. The causes of them will be further explored in the next section.

Abnormal Phenomena I: “Yü Gong” lacks “the mandate of heaven (天命)” concept and never shows any respect for heaven. Besides, “Yü Gong” contains no knowledge related to the heaven and sky (天).³²

“Yü Gong” discusses geography and human affairs all the time, but without any words on astronomy or knowledge related to the “Heaven (天)”. On the presumption that the purpose of “Yü Gong” was to record achievements in water control, previous studies never paid attention to that point. But, once this presupposition is abandoned, it's easy to find this peculiarity of “Yü Gong” by comparing “Yü Gong” with other legislative documents such as “Yao Dian (尧典)”, “Shun Dian (舜典)” of *Yü Xia Shu* (虞夏书) which is the first part of *Shang Shu* (尚书).

A qualification is required at the outset. The claim that “Yü Gong” lacks Heaven-language is made with respect to the received text of the modern Shang

³²The “天” used in this paper is difficult to find the exact corresponding words in English. Its connotation includes both the natural sense of sky and the religious sense of heaven. At the same time, it includes all knowledge related to sky, such as astronomical phenomena, climate, seasons, meteorology and so on.

Shu tradition and its major commentaries; it is not a claim about every early Xia textual tradition, which are lost to us, and it is an argument from silence whose strength is limited to the corpus considered. Alternative explanations, that the absence reflects the text's genre or its redaction history rather than the author's religious orientation, are acknowledged; but the contrast with the neighboring chapters of the same book, "Yao Dian", "Shun Dian", and "Gao Yao Mo", makes the absence conspicuous and unlikely to be accidental.

In "Yao Dian", Yao's political governance was recorded from the words as "**he commanded the Hsís and Hos (羲和), in reverent accordance with (their observation of) the wide heavens, to calculate and delineate (the movements and appearances of) the sun, the moon, the stars, and the zodiacal spaces, and so to deliver respectfully the seasons to be observed by the people.** (乃命羲和, 钦若昊天, 历象日月星辰, 敬授民时)". Xi He (羲和), in the above quotation as "Hsís and Hos (羲和)", is descendant of Zhong Li (重黎), who was responsible for blocking the interrelation between the sky and ground (绝地天通) in the era of Zhuan Xu (颛顼). As the minister of Emperor Yao, Xi He's (羲和) duty is to offer sacrifices to the gods and also imitate the heaven (and sky) so as to set rules for the human world. The act of Xi He, as "**the day is of the medium length, and the star is in Niáo; —you may thus exactly determine mid-spring. The people are dispersed (in the fields), and birds and beasts breed and copulate** (日中, 星鸟, 以殷仲春。厥民析, 鸟兽孳尾)," is to integrate the human world and heaven. The standard behind this practice is based on "heaven", that is, four seasons (四时). Therefore, "**in reverent accordance with the wide heavens** (钦若昊天)" is the first principle of construction human domain order. When Shun was granted with power, the situation was still similar to the era of Yao:

On the first day of the first month, (however), he received (Yáo's) retirement (from his duties) in the temple of the Accomplished Ancestor. He examined the pearl-adorned turning sphere, with its transverse tube of jade, and reduced to a harmonious system (the movements of) the Seven Directors. Thereafter, he sacrificed specially, but with the ordinary forms, to God; sacrificed with reverent purity to the Six Honored Ones; offered their appropriate sacrifices to the hills and rivers; and extended his worship to the host of spirits. He called in (all) the five jade-symbols of rank; and when the month was over, he gave daily audience to (the President of) the Four Mountains, and all the Pastors, (finally) returning their symbols to the various princes. ("Shun Dian")³³

The above content gives out a sequential order in the era of Shun. It contains three levels: 1) the heaven (which is further divided into *Tube of jade*, the *Seven Directors* the *God*), 2) the land (which is further divided into *Six Honored Ones*, *hills and rivers*, *spirits*, *the five jade-symbols of rank*), and 3) the human (which is further divided into *the President of the Four Mountains*, *the various*

³³正月上日, 受终于文祖。在璿玑玉衡, 以齐七政。肆类于上帝。禋于六宗, 望于山川, 遍于群神。辑五瑞。既月乃日, 觐四岳群牧, 班瑞于群后。

princes). Like era of Yao, heaven (including astronomy and God,) is also the first rank in the order. It shows that when Yao and Shun were in power, the earth and human were both belonged to heaven. This was a stable and systematic structure. And we can also refer to the statement of Gao Yao (皋陶) who is an important minister in the times of Yao and shun:

From Heaven are the (social) relationships with their several duties, we are charged with (the enforcement of) those five duties; — and lo! We have the five courses of honorable conduct. From Heaven are the (social) distinctions with their several ceremonies; from us come the observances of those five ceremonies; — and lo! They appear in regular practice. When (sovereign and ministers show) a common reverence and united respect for these, lo! The moral nature (of the people) is made harmonious. Heaven graciously distinguishes the virtuous; — are there not the five habiliments, five decorations of them? Heaven punishes the guilty; — are there not the five punishments, to be severally used for that purpose? The business of government! — ought we not to be earnest in it? Ought we not to be earnest in it?

Heaven hears and sees as our people hear and see, Heaven brightly approves and displays its terrors as our people brightly approve and would awe; — such connexion is there between the upper and lower (worlds). How reverent ought the masters of territories to be! (“Gao Yao Mo”)³⁴

According to that, the constitution and rite (礼) of the human society, and even the legitimacy of the emperor are all derived from the heaven. It can be said that at in the prevailing thoughts at that time, the supremacy of heaven is widely recognized.

However, in “Yü Gong”, either the way to divide Nine States, guide mountains and rivers or construct the Five-Fu system has anything to do with the heaven. In other words, the construction of the world pattern in “Yü Gong” didn’t take the order from the heaven as the basis of legitimacy, imitates the instruction of heaven, nor did Yü ever reported to heaven during the process. In addition, after the success of legislation and establishment of the political system, “Yü Gong” only said that “*On the east, reaching to the sea; on the west, extending to the moving sands; to the utmost limits of the north and south:—his fame and influence filled up (all within) the four seas* (东渐于海, 西被于流沙, 朔南暨声教迄于四海).” It seems that all this has no relation to the heaven, and all of them shall be attributed to Yü. Therefore, there appears the text as “*let me set the example of a reverent attention to my virtue, and none will act contrary to my conduct* (祗台德先, 不距朕行)”, which put emphasis on the total power of Yü.

The above special idea in “Yü Gong” also shows in the Shang Dynasty’s constitutional law called “Hong Fan (洪范)”. “Hong Fan (洪范)” was obtained by King Wu (武王) of the Zhou Dynasty from Ji Zi (箕子), who was an old adherent and

³⁴“天叙有典, 敕我五典五惇哉! 天秩有礼, 自我五礼有庸哉! 同寅协恭和衷哉! 天命有德, 五服五章哉! 天讨有罪, 五刑五用哉! 政事懋哉懋哉!”“天聪明, 自我民聪明。天明畏, 自我民明威。达于上下, 敬哉有土!”(《皋陶谟》)

nobleman of the Shang dynasty. According to Ji Zi's statement of the origin of "Hong Fan", it was originally obtained by Yü during water control:

I have heard that in old time Khwăn dammed up the inundating waters, and thereby threw into disorder the arrangement of the five elements. God was consequently roused to anger, and did not give him the Great Plan with its nine divisions, and thus the unvarying principles (of Heaven's method) were allowed to go to ruin. Khwăn was therefore kept a prisoner till his death, and his son Yü rose up (and entered on the same undertaking). To him Heaven gave the Great Plan with its nine divisions, and the unvarying principles (of its method) were set forth in their due order. ("Hong Fan")³⁵

It should be noted that Ji Zi talked about "**Heaven gave (天乃錫)**", which obviously meant for the compliance with King Wu (武王)'s understanding. Because the main reason for King Wu to seek "Hong Fan (洪范)" is that he needs an answer for a question, which is "**Heaven (working) unseen, secures the tranquility of the lower people, aiding them to be in harmony with their condition. I do not know how the unvarying principles (of its method in doing so) should be set forth in due order (惟天阴鹭下民, 相协厥居, 我不知其彝伦攸叙)**." After explanation of the Divine nature of "Hong Fan", Ji Zi never talks about the heaven later. For instance, when Ji Zi discussed "**Nine divisions (九畴)**" separately, he did not take heaven as the leader, but started from the "**the Five Elements (五行)**". There is another evidence to prove that the people of the Shang Dynasty don't have worship for the heaven. Another evidence for that conclusion is that we cannot find the words used to refer to the so-called "heaven" and "sky (天)" in the oracle inscriptions that have been found and identified.³⁶

This last point is an argument from silence and should be read with due caution: the absence of "tian" (天) as a supreme deity in the published Shang oracle corpus is a negative claim, and some scholars have read the graph in certain contexts as referring to a celestial power (cf. Guo, 1957; Chen, 2001). The qualified point stands: Shang royal worship centered on Di (帝) and the ancestors rather than on a personified Heaven, and the Western Zhou turn to Heaven marks a genuine conceptual change (Keightley, 2000).

There are two other points in "Hong Fan" worthy of attention: First, the royal family of the Shang Dynasty regarded "Hong Fan" as the fundamental law for the country's establishment, which reflects the inherent relationship between the Xia and Shang dynasty. Secondly, the most important part of "Hong Fan" says "**the establishment and use of royal perfection (皇极)**" says "**without deflection, without unevenness, Pursue the royal righteousness. Without selfish likings, pursue the royal way. Without selfish disliking, pursue the royal path. Avoid**

³⁵我闻在昔，鯀堙洪水，汨陈其五行。帝乃震怒，不畀洪范'九畴，彝伦攸斁。鲧则殛死，禹乃嗣兴，天乃锡禹'洪范'九畴，彝伦攸叙。(《洪范》)

³⁶Philologists thought, in oracle-bone inscriptions is "天", but the real meaning of it is "big" rather than "sky" or "heaven". This is obviously different from the usage of "天" in the bronze inscriptions of the Western Zhou Dynasty. Cf. (Wang, 1956; Guo, 1957 pp. 1-65; Yan, 2001 pp. 1-3; Chen, 2001 p. 181; Rao, 2001, pp. 378-384).

*deflection, avoid partiality; — broad and long is the royal way. Avoid partiality, avoid deflection; — Level and easy is the royal way. Avoid perversity, avoid one-sidedness; — Correct and straight is the royal way. (Ever) seek for this perfect excellence, (Ever) turn to this perfect excellence.*³⁷ Its standpoint consists with the expression of “*Let me set the example of a reverent attention to my virtue, and none will act contrary to my conduct* (祗台德先, 不距朕行)” in “Yü Gong”. Both of them reveal a clear tendency of centralization.³⁸

However, after the King Wu’s victory over the Shang Dynasty, the tradition of the era of Yao and Shun, which advocated the destiny and knowledge of the heaven, seemed to return to the official mainstream discourse overnight. For example, at the end of the Shang Dynasty and early Zhou Dynasty, the inscriptions on the oracle bone of the royal family of Zhou says “We pray to the heaven, there will be no disaster (𠄎告于天, 夷亡咎)” (Zhu, 1997, p. 37). On the contrary, oracle of Shang Dynasty often says “praying to an ancestor” but never to heaven (Zhu, 1997, p. 37). As in the early days of the Western Zhou, the inscription of He Zun (何尊) reads “King Wu is blessed by the heaven” (武王礼福自天) (Li, 1981b). “Mu Shi (牧誓)” of *Shang Shu* (尚书) “*Now, I, Fā (武王), am simply executing the punishment appointed by Heaven respectfully.*”³⁹ The most economical explanation for this abrupt change is that Shang and Zhou belong to different cultural traditions and therefore have their distinct ideas, thoughts and discourse systems.⁴⁰ Zhou’s attitude to “heaven” is obviously consistent with that of Yao and Shun, and is to the opposite of Xia and Shang dynasties. Due to the deep influence of this concept on the people of the Zhou Dynasty, they often consciously or unconsciously join their understanding and make a revision of the historical records when retelling history. For example, in the idea of Zhou people, the reason why Yü became a emperor was ultimately determined by the heaven, as “the great heaven rewarded him, gave him the world, gave him surname Si, named Xia (皇天嘉之, 祚以天下, 赐姓曰姒, 氏曰有夏)” (Xu, 2002, p. 96). As we can see, this is quite different from the content in “Yü Gong”.

To sum up, we can roughly divide two ideas and traditions with respect to heaven or not. The first is “Yü Gong” and “Hong Fan” as the representative, not respecting the heaven but have great respect for the land and the things on the ground; (like “the Five Elements”) the other is respecting heaven, like Yao and Shun and the royal family of Western Zhou Dynasty.

³⁷无偏无陂, 遵王之义; 无有作好, 遵王之道; 无有作恶, 尊王之路。无偏无党, 王道荡荡; 无党无偏, 王道平平; 无反无侧, 王道正直。会其有极, 归其有极。(《洪范》)

³⁸Dong Zuobin has noticed the centralization of the Shang Dynasty. He believed that there was a central government beyond the local princes. The greatest power and the highest status are only belong to the king of Yin (殷王) (Dong, 2001, pp. 200-201).

³⁹今予发惟恭行天之罚。(《牧誓》)

⁴⁰Many scholars try to find traces of this change from the perspective of philology and linguistics, but their premise is that the culture of the Western Zhou Dynasty and the Shang Dynasty belongs to the inheritance relationship, that is, in the same system. This premise itself is likely to be inaccurate. The difference between Shang and Zhou is more likely to be a reflection of the differences between two parallel cultures. They each have a set of words, concepts and ideas.

Abnormal Phenomena II: “Yü Gong” lacks the concept of “De (德)” (like protecting and giving favors to ordinary people).

In the “Yü Gong”, there is only one word of “De (德)”, which is in the sentence of “*Let me set the example of a reverent attention to my virtue (祇台德先)*”. And “De (my virtue)” in this sentence means the state of the authority of the emperor. That is different from “De” in the Western Zhou Dynasty or Confucian. The former means the good governance and the virtue of grace, and the latter belongs to the moral category. In fact, the usage of “De” in “Yü Gong” as we mentioned above is consistent with the “three virtues” in “Hong Fan”, which are “*the first is correctness and straightforwardness, the second, strong rule, and the third, mild rule (剛克、柔克、正直)*.” This phenomenon may be understood from the difference between the two sets of different conceptual systems, which also directly affects the principles and legislative ideas of their respective political systems.

The “De” in the Western Zhou Dynasty should be understood in relationships. “De” may be interpreted from two kinds of relations: one is the relationship between heaven and man, and the other is between King and people. In the former, the legitimacy of the regime is derived from heaven, and so as the legitimacy of all political dominance and governance. The reason why the regime can have mandate from the heaven is that the political governance may endow the people with benevolence. Therefore, in the latter relationship between the king and his people, the people receive favor from the king, which is deemed as the “De” of the king. Combining the two aspects together, we can see that the “De” of King and regime is to make the people “gain”, and consequently the king can “gain” the mandate of heaven.⁴¹ Based on this premise, the interpretation that “De is the gains (得)” in the Warring States period can now be understood. Therefore, the Western Zhou Dynasty attaches great importance to the “De” of “respecting heaven and protecting the people”. Confucius’s moralization of “De” may be seen as inherited from this train of thoughts. But the relationship behind “De” is totally different from “Yü Gong”. For example, in the tribute and tax system, the center of gravity is set on the “revenues (賦)” of “*The six magazines (of material wealth) were fully attended to; the different parts of the country were subjected to an exact comparison, so that contribution of revenue could be carefully adjusted according to their resources. (The fields) were all classified with reference to the three characters of the soil; and the revenues for the Middle Region were established. (六府孔修, 庶土交正, 底慎財賦, 咸則三壤成賦)*” Other institutional settings are centered around the “*revenues (賦)*”. Despite the mention of “*contribution of revenue could be carefully adjusted according to their resources (底慎財賦)*”, there is no connotations of protecting the people and benefiting the people.⁴²

⁴¹This kind of understanding of the meaning of “De” in the Western Zhou Dynasty, cf. (Ye, 2013).

⁴²After the Han Dynasty, the commentary was also influenced by the orthodox ideas of the Western Zhou Dynasty. Almost all the explanations were focused on protecting the people and benefiting the people.

As with the preceding claim, this observation concerns the received text and its vocabulary: “Yü Gong” contains only one occurrence of “De”, in the phrase “祇台德先”, and the point is that the text does not elaborate “De” as a relationship of beneficence between ruler and people. The claim does not deny that virtue-thinking existed elsewhere in early society, nor that later readers could find moral instruction in the text; it identifies a difference in the text’s own conceptual economy.

Abnormal Phenomena III: “Yü Gong” is in short of description of the relationship between the king and officials (a local aristocrat).

Compared with the system of “Twelve herding (十二牧)” in the latter part of “Shun Dian (舜典)” and “Gao Yao Mo (皋陶谟)”, this phenomenon is particularly abnormal. Almost all of “Shun Dian” discusses issues of selection and employment. The subsequent “Gao Yao Mo” is no exception, which especially emphasize on the relationship between the emperor and officials. The paragraph in “Gao Yao Mo” may be taken as an example: “*The men of a thousand and men of a hundred will be in their offices; the various ministers will emulate one another; all the officers will accomplish their duties at the proper times, observant of the five seasons (as the several elements predominate in them), — and thus their various duties will be fully accomplished. Let not (the Son of Heaven) set to the holders of states the example of indolence or dissoluteness. Let him be wary and fearful, (remembering that) in one day or two days there may occur ten thousand springs of things. Let him not have his various officers cumberers of their places. The work is Heaven’s; men must act for it!*”⁴³ This shows that in the era of Yao and Shun, the relationship between the emperor and the nobility (including the ministers and the local aristocracy) is extremely difficult to deal with. It even becomes the most serious problem in the regime.

In the whole text, there is only one record of the relationship between emperor and minister in “Yü Gong”, which is the above mentioned “*conferred lands and surnames (中邦錫土姓)*”. This sentence is a plain record Yü’s reconstruction of local order and there’s no sign of any difficulty at all. This leads to the question: why the tension between the emperor and the minister in the era of Yao and Shun suddenly become no problem at all under the governance of Yü? It can only be said that after Yü’s gain of power, the nature, function and way of governance of his regime remarkably changes over the times of Yao and Shun, and a new situation was opened up. Briefly speaking, the most profound difference between the regime of Yao, Shun and Yü is that the separation between rule of the emperor and governance of the aristocracy turned into a unity and all controlled by the emperor.⁴⁴ The centralization of the political system in “Yü Gong” is the most

⁴³百僚师师，百工惟时，抚于五辰，庶绩其凝。无教逸欲，有邦兢兢业业，一日二日万几。无旷庶官，天工，人其代之。(《皋陶谟》)

⁴⁴We should pay attention to this “noble”, such as Si Yüe, Gong Gong, Qun and so on. They always had triple identities. They are both the power ministers of the central government and the representatives of the local aristocratic, and they are also “technical aristocrats” from their origins. The concept of technical aristocrats will be introduced in detail in the next section.

direct and typical token of the unity of rule and governance. It reveals that to solve the tension between rule and governance, the key is to build an efficient bureaucracy controlled by the central government, which is ensured by a workable tribute and tax system.

As in the previous cases, the observation is limited to the text's economy of presentation: the received "Yü Gong" records the conferral of lands and surnames but does not elaborate the ruler-minister relation, a silence that the text's focus on centralization explains. It is not evidence that no such relations existed in the Xia, and it does not by itself show that the author was unaware of the tension that "Shun Dian" and "Gao Yao Mo" treat as central.

The above three points explain in general the particularities of Yü's legislative ideas expressed in "Yü Gong". To sum them up, Yü changes his respect from heaven to earth, didn't talk about "De" nor the benefits of the people. Instead, he emphasizes the central control based on the tribute and tax system which was built by himself. Consequently, He swept the malpractice brought about by the division of political and governance at the times of Yao and Shun and substituted with a centralized bureaucratic institution.

3.2. The Origin of "Yü Gong"'s Thought: An Interaction between Ancient Technology and Orthodoxy

From the above analysis, we may see that Yü not only changed the political pattern and legislative idea of Yao and Shun but also further pushed forward the transformation of the whole culture features. This was neither only based on his idea nor power. Instead of that, it was supported by profound ideological and cultural background. This is also the explanation to the particularities of the content of "Yü Gong", such as no special respect for the heaven, in lack of the concept of "De" and integration of ruling and governance. In this section, I'll try to find out causes of the phenomena mentioned above from the aspect of the ancient cultural tradition.

Ancient Chinese culture has been permeated by competition, struggle and mutual mingling between two traditions: Yin and Yang. And the complicated relationship is best generalized by the sentence in "Xi Ci (系辞)" of *Zhou Yi*, which is "One Yin and one Yang compose the Tao (一阴一阳之谓道)" (Kong, 1999b, p. 268). We may find culture phenomena which may be traced back to these two points, such as the division of the early history of the Three Huang (三皇), the Five Di (五帝) and the three kings (三王) In the pre Qin period, the recount of the orthodoxy by Confucian in the later generations, and as well as Confucian criticism of Yü's "Family hereditary Dynasty" (家天下). All these are explanations and commentaries on ancient history and culture under the background of "Yin" and "Yang".

For a better understanding, we need to examine from the source of Chinese culture, which is in the era of Three Huang (三皇). At this stage, the opposite position of "Yin" and "Yang" already evolved. Nü Wa (女娲), Shen Nong (神农),

Sui Ren (燧人), Zhu Rong (祝融) and Gong Gong (共工) in this era, and also Gun (鲧), Yü (禹) in later period, all represent the tradition of technology and belonged to the “Yin (阴)” tradition. While at the end of the Three Huang era, the “Yang” tradition appears. It’s first created by Fu Xi (伏羲) in his “orthodoxy (道统)”. Later, Huang Di (黄帝) further promoted that by his “political orthodoxy (政统/政道)”, which extended to the whole five emperors until Yao and Shun.

Before Fu Xi (伏羲), who started to practice the “Yang” tradition, there was no political society. However, social governance already existed. The so-called “governance” generally means regulating the society. Whenever there is a governance structure that aims at maintaining and improving social order, the power to govern becomes inevitable. However, there was no regime in the era of Three Huang (三皇). The land of China all over was named as “ten thousand states” (万邦). And modern scholars also call it as clans, tribes, tribal alliances and so on. All these “states (邦)” were autonomous communities, most of which have strong consanguinity. According to archaeological findings, differentiation in identity and social status among members already emerged in these communities.⁴⁵ Hence, it can be deduced that the power mechanism had formed and been institutionalized to a certain extent. The question is, in this “natural” mechanism, who took the charge of power? There is no doubt that clan chiefs usually have the power of family governance. But this is limited to one family or clan. Larger scale social organizations will obviously be composed of many families. In these larger communities, natural leaders based on blood relatives like parents and patriarchs can’t take the power for granted. The person in charge of power can only be elected through a certain artificial standard. In the legends of ancient Chinese history, the rulers of the tribe (usually one or several families) are mostly people who have been authorized with “technology”. For example, Nü Wa (女娲), who used to “Smelting stone and using to repair the sky (炼石补天)”⁴⁶ is probably the representative of the group that masters smelting technology.⁴⁷ Shen Nong (神农) mastered the technology of farming, medicine and so on;⁴⁸ Gong Gong (共工) specializes in hydrology and water technology;⁴⁹ Sui Ren (燧人) and Zhu Rong (祝融) are famous for the fire technology;⁵⁰ You Chao (有巢), as the name suggests, belongs to the inventors of architectural technology.⁵¹ Correspondingly, studies in archaeological anthropology show that in the early human community, people who know and take charge of the holy technologies are usually highly re-

⁴⁵According to archaeology studies, the era of three Huang and the five Di belong to the early and middle stages of the Neolithic age. Some scholars correspond to the two cultural forms of Yangshao culture and Longshan culture. Related research, cf. (Wang, 2002).

⁴⁶For the historical materials of Nü Wa to repair the sky, Cf. (Yuan, 1985, pp. 13-14).

⁴⁷According to archaeological excavations of metal artifacts, the time of ancient metallurgy in China was presumed about 5000-4000 years ago. Cf. (Hua, 1994, p. 1) Metallurgical technology must have accumulated a very long stage before metallurgy can be used to make utensils.

⁴⁸Legend of Shen Nong, cf. (Yuan, 1985, pp. 31-39).

⁴⁹The historical materials of Gong Gong, cf. (Yuan, 1985, pp. 141-144).

⁵⁰The Documents related to Sui Ren, cf. (Yuan, 1985, pp. 38-39).

⁵¹The historical materials of You Chao, cf. (Yuan, 1985, p. 28).

spected. And this respect always accompanies with power. Therefore, “technology” is the key to gain power in early ethnic groups.

Of course, under the background of ancient Chinese concept of Pan natural God, there are the following two prerequisites for the understanding of “technology”. Firstly, human’s activities in this world and technologies accompanied are deemed as part of the world; or in other words, human, human’s technology and the world are homogeneous. Secondly, the technology itself has the sanctity. The reason why certain people have technologies is not they’ve made efforts by themselves but was given by the heaven. Hence, mastering technical knowledge symbolizes the ability to communicate with man and God. In other words, technology is the link between man and God. Consequently, the usefulness and divinity of technical knowledge can bring status, prestige and power to the masters, which make them become “aristocrats” higher than ordinary tribal members. In order to ensure his nobility, as well as his standing and power, it becomes necessary to monopolize technical knowledge and pass it down only in a very small and closed circle. We saw the seventy generations of Shen Nong (神农) in historical records, which means that the technology of agriculture and medicine is inherited in Shen Nong family only, was an example of the monopoly of technical knowledge. The above discussion is about “Yin” tradition, next we will talk about its opposite: “Yang”.

As the representative of this tradition, Fu Xi’s achievements are quite different from those of the above people. These are the Invention of eight diagrams (八卦), setting norm of writing (造书契), establishment of marriage ceremony and creation rules for preparing and cooking sacrifices.⁵² Generally speaking, Fu Xi’s achievements are all in the spiritual level. They represent people’s earliest attempts to initiatively understand the world and creatively produce “rules” for the human world, which is fundamentally distinguishes from the achievements of the technical aristocracy. The general idea behind the latter is to follow the God’s will. To conclude, Fu Xi represents the tradition of “Yang”, whose characteristics can be summarized as artificially and actively. And this is directly opposite to technical aristocrats’ “Yin” tradition, which means following the orders of God.⁵³

Furthermore, in the ancient historic legends about the Era of Three Huang, Fu Xi and Nü Wa has a close relationship. Later generations think that they were brothers and sisters or husband and wife, and both of them have the image of a snake body. Many modern scholars have made an in-depth interpretation from anthropology or mythology, most of these studies are from the perspective of horizontal comparison.⁵⁴ However, if we observe through the vertical dimension by taking Chinese history into consideration, there appears one layer of metaphor

⁵²The literature on the relationship between Fu Xi and Nü Wa, cf. (Yuan, 1985 pp. 14-15; Li, 1985 pp. 64-73).

⁵³A theoretical explanation of Fu Xi’s reconstruction of human society as a legislator, cf. (Jiang, 2011).

⁵⁴Cf. (Wen, 1993 pp. 58-131; Xu, 1985 pp. 216-241; Ding, 1961 pp. 463-465; Yu, 1984; Zhu, 1996; Fan, 2007; Ma, 2007). These studies have studied the deified legends about Fu Xi and Nü Wa from different angles such as mythology, anthropology, archaeology and philology.

which is never been fully understood. The most obviously different pictures of Fu Xi and Nü Wa indicates that Chinese culture is divided into Yin and Yang at the very beginning. The image of Fu Xi represents the tradition of “Yang”, which emphasizes that people create order and rules based on their initiatives; while Nü Wa’s represents the tradition of Yin, which stresses taking order from God with the core of mastering technology. In addition to Nü Wa, most famous people in the era of Three Huang, such as Sui Ren, Shen Nong, Zhu Rong, Gong Gong and so on, all belong to the tradition of Yin. Comparing the camps between Yin and Yang tradition, it’s obvious that in a long period after Fu Xi, the masters of technologies occupy the dominant position in society. This pattern continues until the appearance of challenge to Yan Di, who is the last leader from Shen Nong’s tribe.

The challenger is Huang Di, who belongs to Yan-Huang (炎黄) tribe. He uses force to override all other tribes and builds a political system during this process, which becomes his greatest achievement. Later generations call the political model founded by Huang Di as “Tian Xia (天下)”. This is undoubtedly a turning point. Since then, Chinese history entered into a political society based on the “Tian Xia (天下)” model.⁵⁵ It’s worthy of notice that Huang Di’s achievement did not rely on the sanctity of some kind of technical monopoly. Instead, his merit should be classified into the Yang’ tradition, since the characteristic of it is to restructure the world artificially. And that is called “orthodoxy (道统)” or “political orthodoxy (政道)” by the Confucian.

For “Fu Xi - Huang Di’s political orthodoxy”, besides reforming social, political and cultural order, it is also necessary to rebuild the sanctity and legitimacy of the regime. In this regard, Fu Xi’s practice is to claim that it is based on the relation among “heaven, earth and man”, while Huang Di tries to obtain legitimacy through becoming immortal himself (成仙) and annexing tribes who have mastered the sacred knowledge. Although these methods are theoretically feasible, the effects of practices are not so satisfactory. It was not until Huang Di’s grandson Zhuan Xu (颛顼) came to power, the legitimacy and sanctity of the regime was finally established by “blocking the traffic between the sky and the ground (绝地天通)”.⁵⁶ He can be regarded as the earliest person to make laws for ideology.⁵⁷

The struggle between “Yin” and “Yang” traditions deeply impact ancient China’s politics. When it comes to the period of Yao and Shun, which was in the late Five Di era, the basic political pattern becomes as follows: an emperor, who symbolized “orthodoxy”, is followed by a number of technical aristocrats, who hold technical knowledge and govern the society. However, the record in “Yao Dian” indicates that, under the ruling of Yao and Shun, the balance between the two sides, the emperor and aristocrats, has changed quietly. Several important events show that the strength of the “technical tradition” begin to grow up and

⁵⁵A theoretical interpretation of the “Tian Xia” as a regime. cf. (Li, 2013).

⁵⁶The oldest record of “blocking the traffic between the sky and the ground (绝地天通)”, cf. (Xu, 2002, pp. 512-516).

⁵⁷In recent years, scholars have made many studies on the achievements of Zhu Zhuan in the ideological construction. Scholars have basically formed a consensus on this. Cf. (Jiang, 2000).

threat the Emperor's ruling. For instance, Yao sent Gun (鯀) to prevent floods due to the pressure of his minister Si Yue (四岳); And after Gun's exile, Shun was forced to designate Gun's son, Yü, to treat floods. Because of the success of water treatment, Yü gained prestige and became the successor of Shun. After that, the orthodoxy passed down from Fu Xi was fundamentally subverted and the centralized politics of family succession system was created eventually. Since Yü passed the throne to his son, Qi, this political pattern with one family overriding thousands of families finally become the basic mode of Chinese politics in the following three thousand years. Just as the "Li Yun" (礼运) of *Li Ji* (礼记) said, the inheritance of political power from one tribe to one family is the characterization of "private". And from another point of view, Yü's obtaining the power also marks the revival of the repressed technological tradition since Huang Di.

Politics led by technological tradition has significant characteristics of privacy and standardization. As for privacy, the political system of family succession is actually quite similar the tradition that technical knowledge were secretly inherited and monopolized by family. And for standardization, it resembles the usage of technology by those aristocrats. In era of Yü, the technological method of standardization gradually extended to the political field, which made the political governance institutionalized and regulated by the law. The division of Nine-States in "Yü Gong" is a very typical example. Another good representative is the content of "The criminal law of Yü" (禹刑).⁵⁸ It can be deduced that after Yü, China's political and social governance shows a clear tendency of privacy, standardization and institutionalization.

4. Epilogue

Combined with the above introduction and analysis, we can further explain the impact of "Yü Gong" as a political legislation. From the perspective of cultural tradition, "Yü Gong" records a restoration of the technical aristocracy. For the first time in Chinese political history, "Yin" tradition grasps the political power. Yü's act of legislation reconstructs the world, which set up a tribute and tax system as its link to form a centripetal and hierarchical governance system with the emperor as the center. This provides a basic model for the whole traditional Chinese political philosophy and practice.

One of the influences brought about by Yü's new political system is a technicalized "political orthodoxy". The beginning of China's politicization and the setting up of power mechanism was on the basis of Huang Di's special understanding and expectation of the human world, which may be traced back to Fu Xi's creation of "orthodoxy". However, in the era of Yü, the operation of political power gradually becomes a specific technology. Consequently, political governance is also divided

⁵⁸In the spring and Autumn period, Shu Xiang (叔向) said, "In the Xia Dynasty there was political confusion, and *Yü Xing* was drawn up." (夏有乱政, 而作禹刑) (Yang 1990, p. 1275) Many scholars believe that this is the earliest written Criminal code in Chinese history. It can be considered that the institutionalization and standardization of penalty is also the product of the standardization atmosphere brought about by technological tradition.

into two levels: the “Dao” of governance (治道) and the “statecraft” (治术).

After the era of Yü, the technicalized regime becomes a kind of private property that can be contended. It should be remembered that since the beginning of Nü Wa, technology was never in one man or woman’s hand. Yü, instead of other masters of technology, gained the power through the technology of water control, which undoubtedly coincides with the specific circumstances at that time. It is not hard to imagine that when changes in the external environment occur, other skilled people may also gain the highest power. In fact, the underlying trouble has been exposed in the early Xia Dynasty. The so-called “Tai Kang losing state (太康失国)” is such an example. Hou Yi (后羿), who led the transformation in this incident, is a man with the skill of crossbow shooting.

It is the Yin-Shang (殷商) tribe that finally causes the collapse of the Xia Dynasty. This tribe comes from the East and belongs to the East Yi (东夷) culture tradition. The overthrow of the Xia Jie (夏桀) regime by Cheng Tang (成汤) and the establishment of the Shang Dynasty can be regarded as the first political revolution in Chinese history. Since then, the political power is no longer in the hands of members of the Yan – Huang (炎黄) tribes.⁵⁹ But the Shang Dynasty doesn’t wreck the political pattern of the Xia Dynasty centered on the technical tradition. As a matter of fact, the Yin-Shang era almost completely inherits the political model set up in “Yü Gong”. In particular, the Shang Dynasty also revolve around the system of tribute and tax to realize the political power, its political pattern has a Five-Fu structure just like “Yü Gong”,⁶⁰ and the relationship between the central and local princes is also similar to the Xia dynasty.⁶¹

However, the Shang Dynasty relies more on the technology of communication between man and God, that is, the monopoly of witchcraft. This is evidenced by the famous expression of “Yin people respect the ghost (殷人尚鬼)” and a large number of Oracle Bones inscriptions. As an arbiter of divination, the emperor of Shang is the spokesman of God in this world. No wonder facing with the destroy of the Shang Dynasty and his own death, King Zhou (纣王) said “*was not my birth in accordance with the appointment of Heaven?* (我生不有命在天乎?)” (Legge, 1879, p. 98). In order to maintain political power, the Shang royal family choose to absorb and integrate local technical masters. Studies show that many diviners (贞人) in the Imperial court of Shang are actually representatives from various territorial states. They are participants in the Shang’s politics on the one hand, while their technologies are subject to the final judgment of the king of Shang on the other hand. In the eyes of the Shang’s royal families, the foundation of a firm and lasting political power lies in the monopoly over the technology to communicate with God. This method has the inherent malpractices of technical tradition, one of which is the sharp contradiction between the royal power and

⁵⁹ According to the clan, Yü Xia belongs to the western group of the Yan – Huang (炎黄) tribes. Although this is difficult to prove in archaeology, judging from the geographical and ethnic relations provided by the handed down literature, this judgement should be accurate.

⁶⁰ The monarchy and centralization of the Shang Dynasty, cf. (Yang, 1983, pp. 128-171).

⁶¹ Cf. (Dong, 2001, pp. 200-201; Liu, 2008; Sun, 2008, pp. 171-185).

the clergy, who also has the human and God communication techniques.

King Wu's (武王) victory of the battle of Mu Ye (牧野) marks the replacement of the Shang Dynasty by the Western Zhou Dynasty. Meanwhile, this revolution brings about the most significant turning point in the early process of interaction and struggle between the orthodoxy (Yang) and the technical tradition (Yin). The Zhou people's political ideas and theories are created by King Wen (文王) and completed by Zhou Gong (周公). It is obvious that the royal family of Zhou is not a branch of the technical tradition, and they choose the "political orthodoxy" as the basis for the reconstruction of the political power and the order of the world. In fact, the Zhou Dynasty's political legitimacy relies on the mandate of heaven (天命) and policy of benevolence (德政). The most prominent example is King Wen's revision of *Zhou Yi* and Zhou Gong's ritual design.

The lack of sanctity of the regime made it necessary for the Western Zhou to find a way out. Because of that, Wen Wang and Zhou Gong particularly emphasize the connection between the mandate of heaven (天命) and the people's livelihood. This is a talented invention to solve this predicament. While at the institutional level, feudalism is one of the core methods to solve that problem. By allocating lands to members of the royal family and allies, the tribes have to migrate. Hence, the original structure of local society which was firmly occupied by technical aristocrats fundamentally subverted. And another representative strategy is the policy of civilian (or etiquette). It is accompanied by the reconstruction of bureaucracy under the rule of rite.⁶² That may be discerned from the official system of the *Zhou Li* (周礼): All the elites of technical knowledge are incorporated into the political order and become part of the bureaucracy on the one hand, and controlled by special political civilian bureaucrats on the other hand. Meanwhile, these political civilian bureaucrats are directly manipulated by feudal princes and central authorities. In this way, the position of the technicians in the political society is greatly reduced. They can no longer act as legislators but only practitioners. Moreover, the Western Zhou official made a fundamental division on all the technical knowledge masters, namely, the insider or outsider to the bureaucracy. The so-called insider is incorporated into bureaucracy and officially recognized, while the outsider is labelled as "illegitimate" and excluded to the edge of society by the power. After that, the interpretation to legality and sanctity is dominated by political power.

Academics have long established a consensus on the Western Zhou's emphasis on "Wen (文)". However, as for how to understand "Wen (文)", it is still not definite. The Western Zhou Dynasty's rule of "Wen (文)" is formally characterized by its rule of rite, virtue and bureaucracy.⁶³ That is based on initiative and actively following the mandate of heaven, which is advocated by King Wen (文王). However, the mandate of heaven of Western Zhou is no longer a technology of divination, but the connotation into the will of the people and people's livelihood. This change is skillfully realized by Zhou Gong. Therefore, although Zhou people

⁶²The bureaucracy of the Western Zhou Dynasty, cf. (Li, 2010).

⁶³The general situation of the rule of Li (礼), cf. (Zheng, 2009).

still respect heaven in posture, they shift the political focus from following the god to civil affairs. The so-called “ritual (礼)” is actually order and rules for human society, which is similar to legislation in modern times. The other systems, such as criminal law, are created in accompany with “ritual (礼)” and constantly complicated and refined. The main consequence of this professionalized bureaucracy is the division of political connotation, that is, the distinction between politics (政) and governance (治). Transactional grass-roots officials became masters of governance. And their knowledge and skills are increasingly distinct from the old technical aristocrats’.

In general, as discussed, from the above overview of the development of “political orthodoxy” and “technical tradition” before the Western Zhou Dynasty, we may clearly see the formation of the two tradition, their influences on the political society and the struggle between them for the control power. Moreover, in the course of development, there comes a complicated situation of the integration of “political orthodoxy” and “technical tradition”. In fact, neither pure orthodoxy nor technical tradition is able to maintain the political power to regulate social order, or in other words, Yin and yang, as two opposites, shall struggle and integrate inevitably.

As the Zhou builds a model of “common world” based on patriarchal clan system and feudal rules, the centralized power of “Yü Gong” is ended for the time being. However, the interruption of the eight hundred years of the duration of the Zhou Dynasty doesn’t obliterate it forever. The idea of centralization passed down from generation to generation among technical people. When it comes to the end of the Warring States period, there appears two symbolic events: the book named *Shan Hai Jing* (山海经) as a theory and an important political practice - the establishment of the Qin Dynasty.

The similarity between *Shan Hai Jing* and “Yü Gong” is obvious.⁶⁴ And scholars in the Han Dynasty even discusses about the relationship between *Shan Hai Jing* and Yü. Wang Chong’s (王充) “Bie Tong” of *Lun Heng* (论衡·别通) points out that “Yü records water and Yi (益) remember foreign objects...written the *Shan Hai Jing*.”⁶⁵ Many scholars in modern times regard it as a political geography rather than a simple geography or witchcraft.⁶⁶

Wang Youlu notices the relationship between the division of nine states in “Yü Gong” and the great unification in the Qin period. Unfortunately, he misunderstands the reason behind it.⁶⁷ Considering that the tribes of Qin and Yin-Shang

⁶⁴Cf (Wang, 1971 pp. 183-203).

⁶⁵A collection and demonstration of historical data on the relationship between *Shan Hai Jing* and Yü, see (Yuan, 1986 p. 63).

⁶⁶Cf. (Ye, 1999).

⁶⁷Wang Youlu pointed out: “the Warring States period was a period when Chinese politics demanded unification. The requirement of unification was reflected in the legalist theories of Shang Yang (商鞅), Han Fei (韩非) and Li Si (李斯). As for what the state power should be like after the unification, of course, scholars have put forward their own ideas and think that it should be divided into several large areas under the central regime, that is, state (州).” “After a long debate, the theory of ‘Nine States’ was finally formed.” “However, scholars’ ideas about nine states were not immediately implemented.” (Wang, 1989 p. 40).

both belong to the East Yi (夷) and both their descendants are early technical nobles like Yü, it's easy to understand the similarity between Qin's idea of the world and that expressed in "Yü Gong" and "Hong Fan". From this point of view, Qin's political measures, such as advocacy of autocratic monarchy, unification in ideology, legislation on administration, construction of bureaucracy and prefectures and so on, all directly demonstrated the restoration of the tradition of technology after the Western Zhou Dynasty.

5. Conclusion

This paper has argued that "Yü Gong" is not a record of flood control but the earliest extant charter of centralized legislation in the Chinese tradition: a constitutional text in which the division of the Nine States, the guidance of mountains and rivers, the institution of tribute and tax, and the Five-Fu scheme jointly construct a single-center, centripetal political order. Read in this way, the text's peculiar features, its silence on Heaven, its thin treatment of virtue, and its neglect of the ruler-minister relation, are not defects but signatures of a distinct legislative idea: an order grounded in earth, technique, and fiscal machinery rather than in Heaven, virtue, and ceremonial politics.

The framework of the two traditions, "Yin" technology and "Yang" orthodoxy, accounts for this distinctiveness and for the text's place in the long history of Chinese political thought. "Yü Gong" records the moment at which the "Yin" technological tradition first grasped supreme political power and converted its ethos of mastery and standardization into a program of government; Yin-Shang inherited and deepened the model, the Western Zhou interrupted it with the "Yang" orthodoxy of Heaven and virtue, and Qin restored it in imperial form. The autocratic centralization of the Chinese Dynasty is the gradual refinement of the model first legislated in "Yü Gong".

The argument has been advanced with the qualifications stated above: the key terms are heuristic categories applied on explicit criteria; the evidence of the text is weighed as textual memory and institutional logic rather than as literal report; the archaeological record establishes the plausibility of the political background but not the historicity of every provision; and the arguments from silence are restricted to the received corpus. Within these limits, "Yü Gong" emerges as the earliest articulation of centralized legislation in China, and the point of origin for the political system that later became the Dynasty.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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