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Rethinking Chinese Kinship in the Han and the Six Dynasties: A Preliminary Observation

In the eyes of most sinologists and Chinese scholars generally, even most everyday Chinese, the dominant social organization during imperial China was patrilineal descent groups (often called PDG; and in Chinese usually “*zongzu* 宗族”),¹ whatever the regional differences between south and north China. Particularly after the systematization of Maurice Freedman in the 1950s and 1960s, this view, as a stereotype concerning China, has greatly affected the West’s understanding of the Chinese past. Meanwhile, most Chinese also wear the same PDG-focused glasses, even if the background from which they arrive at this view differs from the West’s. Recently like Patricia B. Ebrey, P. Steven Sangren, and James L. Watson have tried to challenge the prevailing idea from diverse perspectives.² Some have proven that PDG proper did not appear until the Song era (in other words, about the eleventh century). Although they have confirmed that PDG was a somewhat later institution, the actual underlying view remains the same as before. Ebrey and Watson, for example, indicate: “Many basic kinship principles and practices continued with only minor changes from the Han through the Ch’ing dynasties.”³ In other words, they assume a certain continuity of paternally linked descent before and after the Song, and insist that the Chinese possessed such a tradition at least from the Han

¹ This article will use both “PDG” and “*zongzu*” rather than try to formalize one term or one English translation. The aim is to encourage broader conceptions and arguments for terms like *zongzu*, *jiuzu* 九族, *zongqin* 宗親, etc.

² See Maurice Freedman, *Lineage Organization in Southeastern China* (London: Athlone Press 1958); Patricia Ebrey, “The Early Stages in the Development of Descent Group Organization” in James L. Watson and Patricia Buckley Ebrey, eds., *Kinship Organization in Late Imperial China 1000–1940* (Berkeley: U. California P., 1984); James L. Watson, “Chinese Kinship Reconsidered: Anthropological Perspectives on Historical Research,” *Chinese Quarterly* 92 (Dec. 1982), p. 107; Steven F. Sangren, “Traditional Chinese Corporations: Beyond Kinship,” *Journal of Asian Studies* 43.3 (May, 1984), pp. 391–415.

³ Ebrey, “Early Stages,” p. 9.

(that is, the 200s BC) forward, with variations at different periods. This argument about the time of appearance of PDG proper is sensible, but the continuity they sometimes imply or make explicit in their studies seems doubtful. As James Watson says: “What is needed in the field of Chinese kinship is research into the etymology, or ‘mental archeology’, of the term *zu*.”⁴

This paper looks into the complex implications of such terms as *zongzu* and *jiuzu* 九族 by exploring the actual operation of kinship in daily lives. The main points I want to make are that people were using close connections with their matrilineal, as well as with their patrilineal, kin;⁵ further, in the Han and Six Dynasties “*zongzu*” sometimes was employed to refer to these two kinds of relations without a clear distinction. The gradually dominant position of PDG in domestic and social life resulted from the enduring effect created by the imposition of court and literati ideas about society and social structures.

INTRODUCTION

First of all, we look at some examples from sixth-century northern China, namely, Buddhist donor inscriptions that indicate the constituency of hamlet residents. These provide remarkable reference points for understanding the changes in patterns of local organization. In generally surveying and analyzing the statue-donor documents, what is special is the colophons. Based on surnames, from the data reflecting the males’ perspective, we can see two mainly extant structures of the composition of village residents: one is predominantly single-surname; and the other is of numerous, mixed surnames.

I propose to take as representative the Northern Wei-era village of Dangmo 當陌村, in Zhuoxian 涿縣, Fanyang 范陽郡, part of Youzhou 幽州 province (the town correlates to present-day Zhuoxian, Hebei). This was a village controlled by the one surname, “Gao 高.” Twice, in the fourth lunar month, day two, of Jingming 4 (503), and again in 504 (3/9), they organized in order to make Buddha images, namely

⁴ Watson, “Chinese Kinship Reconsidered,” p. 107.

⁵ Mou Runsun 牟潤孫, “Han chu gongzhu ji waiqi zai dishizhong zhi diwei shishi” 漢初公主及外戚在帝室中之地位試釋, in idem, *Zhushi zhai congshu* 注史齋叢稿 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1987), pp. 50–79, already pointed out this important phenomenon, but his discussion focused on imperial houses and distaff families and was thus limited. This has been supplemented: Liu Zenggui 劉增貴, *Handai hunyin zhidu* 漢代婚姻制度 (Taipei: Hua shi chubanshe, 1980), pp. 140–49. There have been considerable discussions against Mou’s view, such as Liu’s, whose points touch on terminological interpretation (p. 142), and some that are a bit forced. We can think of it in another way, namely that although Mou emphasized Han-era episodes, it might be that in the Six Dynasties they were still broadly extant.

statues. On the first occasion, under the leadership of Gao Fude 高伏德 and Liu Xiong 劉雄, around 300 people participated; on the second one, Gao Luozhou 高洛周 led around 70.⁶ By discussing the recorded details of the participants' surnames in these two episodes of Buddhist image-making, and by analyzing them, we can see the preponderance of the Gaos. The surname composition of Gao Fude's statue-making participants is as per the following table:

SURNAME	高	劉	史	張	董	趙	李	寧	程	王	杜	陳	宋	龐	郝	崔	呂	姜	平
TOTAL	190	16	4	9	2	1	7	2	1	5	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

In addition there were: 8 *bhikshu* (monks), 2 *bhikshuni* (nuns), 3 Gao-family wives, and at least 7 whose surnames have dropped out. All of this totals not less than 267 (of which, count 5 as females), and thus in Dangmo the ratio of male-surname-derived Gaos to all surnames was more than 72 percent. Now, if we take into consideration the second statue-making (Gao Luozhou's group), then Dangmo was without doubt a Gao-dominated town.

Furthermore, there was a hamlet whose male inhabitants seem to have been entirely formed from the Chen 陳 surname; it is nearby today's Ruicheng 芮城 *xian*, in Shanxi. In Northern Zhou, the first year of Tianhe (566), on 2/8, "the whole village, young and old, made a statue 合村長幼造像," thus we can determine that all the participants, except Buddhist association tutors and monks, were Chen-family followers of Buddhism.⁷

We turn to the other type of village situation, namely, a mixture of surnames. A representative example is Xinwang 新王 village, which was in Qingzhou 青州, Beihai *jun* 北海, Duchang *xian* 都昌 (northeast of today's Changle 昌樂, Shandong). According to a statue-making colophon dated Eastern Wei, Wuding 2 (544), the Wang-named participants among 200 people led by Wang Erlang 王貳郎 did not even make half,⁸ thus we know it was not a single-surname village. And quite similar to this, there are also the examples of Luoyin 洛音 (situated in today's Yangqu 陽曲, Shanxi), Anlujiao 安 (or 阿) 鹿交 (Pingding *xian*

⁶ See Beijing Lu Xun bowuguan 北京魯迅博物館 and Shanghai Lu Xun Jinian guan bian 上海魯迅紀念館編, eds., *Lu Xun jijiao shike shougao* 魯迅輯校石刻手稿 (Shanghai: Shanghai shuhua chubanshe, 1987), case 2, vol. 1, pp. 47-52.

⁷ Ibid., case 2, vol. 5, pp. 969-73.

⁸ Ibid., case 2, vol. 2, pp. 363-70.

平定, Shanxi), and the like.⁹ The two types of village constituency grew naturally and were widespread phenomena.¹⁰

Because of the ongoing scholarly attention given to same-surname locales, with many important surrounding implications, the following discussion must be of a preliminary sort. Same-surname locales are the most often encountered in historical records. In the period of Former Zhao (one of the Sixteen States), “there were more than 2,000 households in Chang’an that had transferred from all those great families of Qinzhou like Yang and Jiang 徙秦州大姓楊、姜諸族二千余戶于長安,” and after the rebellion of Shi Le 石勒 (274–333), again “from the Qin and Yong-area great families, more than 9,000 people were in Xiangguo 秦雍大族九千餘人於襄國.”¹¹

It is possible that these great families were actually same-surname villages. Consider the case of the Xue 薛 family of Hedong in Northern Wei times: “In that time there were strong clans; there were 3,000 families of the same surname 世爲強族, 同姓有三千家.”¹² Toward the end of the Northern Dynasties, a certain Song Xiaowang 宋孝王 (dates unknown) wrote “Guandong fengsu zhuan” 關東風俗傳 (“Record of Customs in the Guandong Area”); a passage in it reads: “In the time of the [Northern Qi] emperor Wenxuan... regarding those Lius of Ying and Ji provinces, and the Zhangs and Songs of Qinghe commandery, the Wangs of Bingzhou, and the Puyang Hou clans: they are all of a kind. A single clan becomes a myriad households; they live room against room, with their smoke and fire entwined. 文宣之代... 至若瀛、冀諸劉,

⁹ For the Northern Qi period, see, e.g., the following: the 550 AD record of Buddhist image-making of Seng Zhe 僧哲 et al. (40 people) and the similar record in the same year of Seng Tong’s 僧通 80 people, in Beijing tushuguan shanbenbu jinshi zubian 北京圖書館善本部金石組編, ed., *Beijing tushuguan zang Zhongguo lidai shike taben huibian* 北京圖書館藏中國歷代石刻拓本彙編 (Zhengzhou: Zhongzhou guji chubanshe, 1989), vol. 7, pp. 1–4. For 547, we have Wang Faxian’s 王法現 record of Buddhist image-making, as well as Chen Shenxin’s 陳神忻 in 561, and in 563 that of seventy fellow-villagers (see *Lu Xun jijiao*, case 2, vol. 2, pp. 411–14; case 2, vol. 4, pp. 737–40; and case 2, vol. 4, pp. 747–51).

¹⁰ Xing Yitian 邢義田, “Cong Zhanguo zhi Xi Han de zuju, zuzang, shiye lun Zhongguo gudai zongzu shehui de yanxu” 從戰國至西漢的族居族葬世業論中國古代宗族社會的延續, *Xin shixue* 新史學 6.2 (1995.6), pp. 1–66. After Song, for the most part the south had many numbers of villages where “the same surnames resided locally,” but in the north it was much rarer. This is seen differently in Makino Tatsumi 牧野巽, *Chūgoku ni okeru kazoku no sonraku bunpu ni kansuru tsūji teki ichi shiryō*, *Tanken kyōshi ni tsuite, kinshi Chūgoku kazoku kenkyū* 中國における宗族の村落分佈にかんする統計の一資料, 剡縣鄉志について, 近世中國宗族研究, in idem, *Makino Tatsumi choshakushū* 牧野巽著作集 (Tokyo: Ochanomizu shobō, 1980) 3, pp. 171–262; esp. pp. 253–57, which is a comparison with Ding xian, Hebei.

¹¹ *Jinshu* 晉書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974; hereafter, *JŠ*) 103 (Account of Liu Yaozan 劉曜載), pp. 2694, 2701–2.

¹² *Songshu* 宋書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974; hereafter, *SgS*) 88 (biog. Xue Andu 薛安都), p. 2215.

清河張、宋、并州王氏，濮陽侯族，諸如此輩，一宗近將萬室，煙火連接，比屋而居。”¹³ This is another example of same-surname locales.

If we assume sheer residential inertia (lack of any incentive to displace oneself), then “same-surnames living together 同姓聚居” might mean that we are dealing with a phenomenon of natural population increase. We can establish a simple calculation. Suppose that every person has two children, and they in turn have two.¹⁴ Given this premise we extrapolate, so that in ten generations we have 1,024 male offspring. In China’s early period, with early-marriage and early-maturation, the time needed would be no more than 200–300 years. If the time-period is made longer, then the single-surname population of that locale would be even higher, thus forming a “one clan producing myriad households” situation, a statistical process that moves ever forward, not easily put into reverse. The measures taken in the beginning of Western Han to move the strong clans of Guanzhong were only effective for a while, and ultimately produced surname-locals that illegally avoided relocation.

Be that as it may, it is important to point out that single-surname locales were not all the same as our current “clan, or *zongzu*” concept. They were antecedent to it.¹⁵ The important, later, extrinsic denotation of patrilineal *zongzu* actually came from the phenomenon of locales of families with surnames held in common, or from name order. Some scholars have emphasized that “without a Chinese style surname, there is not a Chinese style *zongzu*.”¹⁶ But in reality, during Han-Wei times people’s surnames underwent a gradual, historical process of change, moving from unregularized to regularized in terms of the son’s inheritance of the father’s surname. Thus, what we call “same-surname” and “same-surname locales” were actually step-by-step phenomena.

¹³ *Tongdian* 通典, Wang Wenjin 王文錦 et al., annot. (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1988; hereafter, *TD*), sect. “Shihuo 食貨” 3, pp. 62–63.

¹⁴ If a person only had one child, there would be no way that in later generations this model would show increase; there must be at least two children.

¹⁵ For convenience, for the modern analytical view of *zongzu* I state “*zongzu*”; but for usages found in historical documents I do not add quotation marks.

¹⁶ Xu Fuguan 徐復觀, “Zhongguo xingshi de yanbian yu shehui xingshi de xingcheng” 中國姓氏的演變與社會形式的形成, in *Zhou Qin Han zhengzhi shehui jiegou zhi yanjiu* 周秦漢政治社會結構之研究 (Hong Kong: Xin Ya yanjiusuo, 1972), p. 342. (Rpt. as *Liang Han sixiang shi* 兩漢思想史; see vol. 1.) Xu’s emphasis on surnames in Chinese history is very useful (see pp. 326, 339–340, 344, and throughout). Patricia Ebrey pays attention to how the spread of patriarchal surnames was an enormous boost to the spread of patriarchal concepts, however, when she implies that it was widespread by the time of the Qin unification, this is too early; Ebrey, “Women, Marriage, and the Family in Chinese History,” in Paul S. Ropp, ed., *Heritage of China: Contemporary Perspectives on Chinese Civilization* (Berkeley: U. California P., 1990), pp. 201–2.

According to research in anthropology, China's *zongzu* society in part refers to PDGs of the single-locale type, or else refers merely to people's having a shared view about their patrilineal genealogy.¹⁷ These two views each have their own particular emphasis. The former one stresses substance and an organized *zongzu* form; the latter (those with simply a genealogical conception about themselves) is a broadly defined concept whose contents are rather wide in meaning. If we examine diachronically, in my opinion the conceptual *zongzu* must precede the substantive *zongzu* as a phenomenon. From Song forward, under the influence of the conceptual type of *zongzu*, substantive *zongzu* arose in parts of larger regions. My essay takes the semantically broad, conceptual, form merely as a point of reference, and performs some analyses that aim at showing people's "patrilineal mentality" from Han through the Northern and Southern Dynasties.

The meanings of the phrase I just used, "patrilineal mentality," as well as that of the anthropological term "concept of a patrilineal genealogy," tend to correspond when seen in the larger picture, thus they underscore father-ancestors, on the one hand, and the later notion of kinship relations, on the other. If that sort of consciousness had diminished, for instance, people would not have been able to maintain a conceptual structure of *zongzu*, and the probabilities for establishing substantive types of *zongzu* would be reduced. As this mentality matured, the conceptual form of *zongzu* developed; and the substantive *zongzu* simply floated along in parallel.

THE ACTUAL SITUATION:

INDEPENDENT FAMILIES TAKING *AD HOC* ACTION

Naturally, the above viewpoint came from scholars working with modern data, and what is chiefly reflected are the conditions after Song. However, if we trace back to the Han-Wei and Six Dynasties, we often

¹⁷ Lin Yaohua 林耀華, *Yixu de zongzu yanjiu* 義序的宗族研究 (1935; Beijing: San lian shu-dian, 2000), p. 73, felt that a *zongzu* group descended from once ancestor, following the patrilineal links, and then they simply came to dwell in the same locale, becoming a community based on their paternal blood relations. His concept emphasizes the concrete organizational aspects of PDG. Chen Qinan 陳其南, "'Fang' yu chuantong Zhongguo jiazu zhidu: jian lun xifang renleixue de Zhongguo jiazu yanjiu" 房與傳統中國家族制度, 兼論西方人類學的中國家族研究, in *Jiazu yu shehui, Taiwan yu Zhongguo shehui yanjiu de jichu linian* 家族與社會, 臺灣與中國社會研究的基礎理念 (Taipei: Lianjing chuban shiye gongsi, 1990), pp. 129-51, brings out the importance of the genealogical concept in the system of kin groups among the Han people. Wang Songxing 王崧興, "Han ren de jiazu zhi, shi lun 'you guanxi, wu zuzhi' de shehui" 漢人的家族制, 試論有關係無組織的社會, in *Zhongyang yanjiuyuan dierjie guoji Hanxue huiyi lunwenji, minsu yu wenhua zu* 中央研究院第二屆國際漢學會議論文集, 民俗與文化組 (Taipei: Zhongyang yanjiuyuan, 1989), pp. 271-73, in the same way emphasizes the present universality of the conceptual genealogical model's PDG and he feels that functioning PDG

see the phrase *zongzu* in the historical records, but the basic unit of human life was still the small household. We do not see the later sort of clan property, clan heads and clan shrines: the patrilineal concept of genealogy was still in development. At the end of Western Han, Wang Mang's 王莽 (45 BC–23 AD; r. 8–23 AD) uncles were all made marquises: "His various elder and younger cousins were all the sons of generals or of the Five Marquises, so they took advantage of their opportunities and were extravagant. In their equipages and horses, music and women, idleness and gadding, they competed with one another. 群兄弟皆將軍五侯子，乘時侈靡，以輿馬聲色佚游相高。"¹⁸ But when Wang Mang's own father died young and had not been enfeoffed, Wang became a lone orphan. Economically speaking, the Wang households could not provide each other support.

At the end of Eastern Han, in the late 170s, Liu Bei 劉備 (reigned in Shu as the Former Lord, 221–23) and his clansman Liu Deran 劉德然 had both gone to study with Lu Zhi 盧植 (ca. 159–192). "Deran's father Yuanqi normally funded the Shu Former Lord equally compared with the support given to Deran 德然父元起常資給先主，與德然等。" The wife of Yuanqi spoke: "Each one has his own family. Why should we constantly act like this 各自一家，何能常爾邪!"¹⁹ The remark expressed dissatisfaction, the basis of which was simply that each family's economy was independent of that of other families. The households of Cao Cao 曹操 (155–220) and his cousin Cao Hong 曹洪 (d. 232) were also disparate in this way. When Cao Cao was minister of works he "ordered each district to estimate the property of every household. The result was that Cao Hong's household was about at the same level as Cao Cao's, and the latter said: "How did our house get to be equal to Zilian's (Hong's)?"²⁰

When Cao Pi 曹丕 (187–226; r. Wei Wendi 220–226) was the heir-apparent, he once "wished to borrow a hundred pieces of silk from Hong, but the latter did not give him satisfaction," further evidence that families each had their own worth and that there was not a common accounting of property. At times of ongoing turmoil, individual households were able to strengthen their mutual relationships, so occasionally

groups are no longer detectable generally.

¹⁸ *Han shu* 漢書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1962; hereafter *HS*) 99 (biog. Wang Mang) 99, p. 4039; trans. Homer H. Dubs, *The History of the Former Han Dynasty* (Baltimore: Waverly Press, 1955) 3, p. 125.

¹⁹ *Sanguo zhi* 三國志 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1982; hereafter *SGZ*) 32 (biog. of "Former Lord"), p. 871. See Rafe de Crespigny, *A Biographical Dictionary of Later Han to the Three Kingdoms* (23–220 AD) (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2006; hereafter, *deC/BD*), p. 501.

²⁰ *SGZ* 9 (biog. Cao Hong), *zhu*, cit. "Wei lue" 魏略, p. 278. On Cao Hong, see *deC/BD*, p. 42.

decided together about a coordinated mass movement of a whole *zongzu* hamlet, but mostly each family was responsible for its own wealth, directions, and plans.²¹ This was inextricably part of the patrilineal mentality at its level of development in this particular time period.

The “Sangfu 喪服” (“Grades of Mourning”) section of the *Book of Etiquette and Propriety* (*Yili* 儀禮), states:

The birds and beasts know their mothers but not their fathers. Persons from uncivilized areas say, “What shall I do with my father and mother?” Worthies in the villages and cities know how to honor deceased fathers. The grandees and scholars know how to honor grandfathers. A ducal lord [honors the deceased] to the level of his great-grandfather. The Son of Heaven honors to the level of the very first ancestor who emerged [in his family].²²

The quoted passage is making a deeper point, not just asserting things baselessly. The notion is that because the positions of individuals are not the same, and memories concerning one’s patrilineal ancestors are not equal, thus patrilineal mentality went through quite mixed levels of development, depending on the social level and kin awareness. Because of all this mixed development, we need the kind of research that reaches back to the origins of *zongzu*, as suggested by Watson.

Like *zongzu*, *jiuzu* as a common term was employed frequently under many contexts, and what it could mean was intensely and continually disputed, from Western Han forward. The dominant opinion stresses that the members of a *jiuzu* belonged to the same surname group in the paternal line. This was first put forward by such Han-era commentators as Kong Anguo 孔安國 (d. ca. 100 BC) and Zheng Xuan 鄭玄 (127–200 AD) in their commentaries on *Shangshu*, and was supported by a great deal of later scholars as a standard explanation of the Old Text School. Yet, relatively few scholars after the Han followed the other contention, as presented by the New Text School of commentators, who defined *jiuzu* as nine kin groups – comprised of four from father’s kin, three from mother’s, and two from the wife’s. This explanation was recorded in detail in *Baihu tongyi* 白虎通義.²³ The key

²¹ For further examples of families’ pursuing different plans, see *SGZ* 9 (biog. Cao Xiu 曹休), p. 279, where we read, “When the world is in disorder, the *zongzu* all disperse separately from [their] villages.”

²² *Yili zhushu* 儀禮注疏 (SSJZS edn. Beijing: Zhonghua, 1980) 30, p. 1106a. See *Yi-li, Cérémonial; traduit par Séraphin Couvreur* (1835–1919), p. 187 (Dans le cadre de la collection “Les classiques des sciences sociales”; <www.uqac.quebec.ca/zone30/Classiquesdesciencesociales/index.html>; Chicoutimi, Québec: 2004).

²³ Scholars who believe that the Jinwen position was both the more historically reflective and exegetically correct included such as Yu Yue 俞樾 (Qing era), “*Jiuzu kao*” 九族考, in

difference between the two definitions (Old Text and New Text) lies precisely in whether the *jiuzu* category should include relatives other than the patriline. It is very clear that paternal connections took precedence over others in the view of the Old Text School, while the New Text School acknowledged the significance of matrilineal and marriage connections besides paternal lines; it is more distant conceptually from the much later PDG than the Old Text viewpoint. Such contradictory views lead us to the realization that the complexity of kinship at that time, and even further on, requires analyzing actual life circumstances in order to determine which position was closer to social reality.

According to the principles recorded in the *Book of Etiquette and Propriety*, the mourning obligations, including garment, duration, and behavior, for one's paternal uncle are much more heavy than those for one's maternal uncle, in spite of the same biological connection between them and their nephews. (See the Figures 1 and 2, below, showing a simplified schematic of mourning grades for paternal and maternal relatives.) Perhaps parts of the Confucian classic *Yili* are datable to the late Warring States period (ca. third century BC), but mostly it was not put into one compendium as "Yili" until Western Han times and not commented on until Eastern Han.²⁴ With a patrilineal preference, it was used as the authority for mourning since about the late Western Han.

From that time since, people all over China, from emperors to commoners, began to be required to mourn their deceased relatives

Chunzai tang quanshu 春在堂全書 (1899), vol. 9, *Yu lou zazuan* 俞樓雜纂; Jiang Liangfu 姜亮夫, "Yao dian xin yi" 堯典新議, sect. "Jiuzu 九族," in *Guxue lunwen ji* 古學論文集 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1996), pp. 12–14; Lü Simian 呂思勉, *Zhongguo zhidu shi* 中國制度史, chapter 8, "Zongzu 宗族" (Shanghai: Shanghai jiaoyu chubanshe, 1985), pp. 370–71; Rui Yifu 芮逸夫, "Jiu zu zhi yu er ya shi qin" 九族制與爾雅釋親, rpt. in idem, *Shiyusuo ji kan* 史語所集刊 22 (1950), pp. 209–30; the Japanese scholar Egashira Hiroshi 江頭廣, *Seikō: shūdai no kazoku seido* 姓考, 周代の家族制度, chap. 4, part 3, "kyūzoku setsu 九族說" (Tokyo: Kazama shobō, 1980), pp. 246–48, leans toward the Jinwen side. Those who preferred the Guwen position include Lu Deming 陸德明 and Jia Gongyan 賈公彥 (Tang-era). Later, we have Gu Yanwu 顧炎武, *Rizhi lu* 日知錄, j. 2 ("Jiu zu 九族"), in Zhang Shunhui 張舜徽, *Qingren biji tiaozhao bian* 清人筆記條辨 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1986), pp. 143–44; and in our own day, Du Zhengsheng 杜正勝, "Wu fu zhi san zu qun jieyou yu lunli" 五服制三族群結構與倫理, in *Gudai shehui yu guojia* 古代社會與國家 (Taipei: Yunchen wenhua shiye gufen youxian gongsi, 1992), p. 869; Lü Shaogang 呂紹綱, Zhang Yu 張羽, "Shi 'jiu zu'" 釋九族, *Dongnan wenhua* 東南文化 1999.1, pp. 18–21; and Zhao, *Liang Han zongzu yanjiu*, pp. 104–5. Rui, "Jiu zu zhi," pp. 209–13, has arranged the varying opinions of late-Qing scholars on the "jiuzu" topic. On pre-Tang Guwen and Jinwen opinions concerning *jiuzu*, and exactly how many and which extended-family members were included in those ideal family structures, see also T'ung-tsu Hsü, *Han Social Structure*, ed. Jack L. Dull (Seattle: U. Washington P., 1972), item I,48 on p. 297 (esp. n. 198).

²⁴ See William G. Boltz's essay on "I li" in Michael Loewe, ed., *Early Chinese Texts: A Bibliographical Guide* (Berkeley: The Society for the Study of Early China, and Inst. of E. Asian Studies, U. of California, Berkeley, 1993), pp. 234–43.

based on its norms. However, in his commentary on the meanings of various phrases found in “Sangfu,” Yu Weizhi 庾蔚之, a southern ritual expert of the fifth century,²⁵ stated: “Because the maternal relations wear separate mourning clothes, it puts the nonpatrilineal surnames at a distance in order to solidify one’s own clan 外親以總斷者，抑異姓以敦己族也。” Yu then said: “The reason that (the mourning garment) of the maternal relatives is confined to the *sima* 總麻 of three months is in order to strengthen the solidarity of one’s paternal kin by reducing the influence of one’s maternal kin.”²⁶ For the “sima” mourning grade, see figures 1 and 2; note that the maternal mourning grades in figure 2

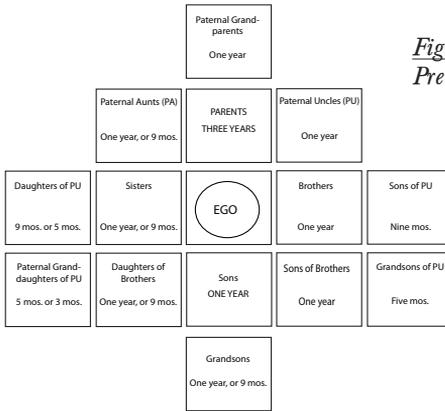


Figure 1. Mourning Grades for Paternal Kin Pre-Tang; simplified.

PU = Paternal uncle
PA = Paternal aunt

Traditional Terms for the Mourning Time-Periods per each of Five Ranks:

- 3 years = *zhancui* 斬衰
- 1 year = *ji* 期
- 9 months = *dagong* 大功
- 5 months = *xiaogong* 小功
- 3 months = *sima* 總麻
- None = *wufu* 無服

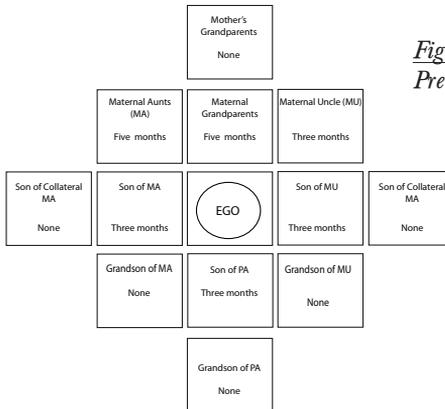


Figure 2. Mourning Grades for Maternal Kin Pre-Tang; simplified.

MU = Maternal uncle
MA = Maternal aunt

Includes son of PA. For other terms, see above.

²⁵ *Suishu* 隋書 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1973; hereafter *SS*) (“Treatise on Literature” part 1) 32, p. 920–21, lists Yu’s works as “Sangfu” 喪服, 31 *juan*; “Sangfu shiyao” 喪服世要, in 1 *juan*, and a commentary titled “Sangfu yaoji” 喪服要記.

²⁶ *TD* 92, p. 2514.

are mostly “none,” or else “*sima*,” which is the lowest grade. *Sima* corresponds to mourning ranks in the paternal scheme (figure 1) that are the most distant and on the female side of “Ego.” With this in mind, Yu’s thoughts provide a clue to help us reassess the roles played by the matrilineal kin. What he reveals suggests that maternal kin may have made such an impact on people’s daily lives that authorities deliberately developed restrictions, as imposed through the formalized mourning system. It reminds us that we shouldn’t see this *Yili* mourning system as an accurate mirror of contemporary, de facto kinships; instead, we should find out the complex relationships between the system’s doctrines and the social reality.

THE SOCIAL REALITY OF MATERNAL RELATIONS

By getting rid of the contorting lenses of patrilineal bias and by considering carefully the texts of Han and Six Dynasties times, we can dig up rich evidence about the everyday impact of maternal relatives. I will argue from three respects: 1. children’s receipt of status through mothers; 2. close relations with maternal uncles; and 3. the precedence of maternal ties even when paternal ties were available.

Mothers as Markers of Children’s Status

It is rather clear that during this early period the relationship between children and their mothers was, in a certain sense, more intimate than that between children and fathers. A typical presentation of a close mother-child relationship is found in the feudal manipulations that empress-dowager Wang Zhengjun 王政君 (70 BC–13 AD) effected after her son, emperor Cheng (r. 32–7 BC) came to the throne near the end of the Western Han period.

Empress-dowager Wang had eight brothers, among whom only two, as well as she herself, were full siblings; the others were half-brothers produced by the same father. When titles and subjects were arranged in 32 BC, the two full-siblings gained the relatively higher title of *hou* 侯, or marquis, and large shares of income-households – more than 8,000 households each. But the five living half-brothers (the sixth one, who was the father of 王莽, had died) received titles of *guannei hou* 關內侯, or lesser marquisates; and even after increments given five years later, their income-households numbered 3,700 households at most: this amounted to less than half that granted to the full-brothers. Moreover, the empress-dowager urged the emperor to grant title to a half-brother, Gou Can 苟參, who shared a mother with her. There were

objections raised, but he was finally offered government office as palace attendant and superintendent of waterways and parks, which were lucrative posts.²⁷

The fate of Wang Mang, the usurper and founder of a short-lived dynasty, was, however, not so fortunate. His father was also a half-brother of empress-dowager Wang, but, as mentioned, he had died early, without a chance to gain titles and fief-households in 32 BC. Before gaining central control of the Han, Wang Mang had stayed for many years at a redundant post, that of colonel of the Archers Who Shoot by Sound (*shesheng xiaowei* 射聲校尉), and did not gain a marquisate (*hou*) until 16 BC, after his paternal uncles requested several times.²⁸ Wang Mang's frustrated attempts to get titles early in his career were due to his relatively distant relationship with the empress-dowager, as seen in comparison with the rewards given his uncles and Gou Can. This difference was specifically centered on matrilineal kinship, in this case concerning the empress-dowager. Similar matters can be seen in the biographies of the mothers of emperors Wu and Xuan of the Western Han. Maternal connections in these cases played a significant part.

The above examples are limited to the lives of royal family members; partly this is because the elite constitute the bulk of material that we have from the period. But this should not make us ignore facts about maternal kinship links, nor underestimate their prevalence generally in society. The phenomenon was not limited to the upper reaches.

A certain tomb-contract (or, will), "Xianling quanshu 先令券書," dated to the Western Han, the year Yuanshi 4 (5 AD) and excavated from a tomb in Yizheng 儀征 city, Xupu 胥浦 (in present Jiangsu province), reflects the importance at the end of Western Han of the function of the mother and of maternal relationships when common, everyday families disbursed their wealth. According to the text of the contract, the mother of its writer Zhu Ling 朱凌 had had a series of three husbands and a total of six children. Thus, Zhu had three siblings who shared a father: Yijun 以君, Zifang 子方, Xianjun 仙君, and there was another brother, Gongwen 公文, whose father was Shuai Jinjun 衰近君 of Wu. He had a sister Ruojun 弱君, whose father was Bing Changbin of Quyang 曲陽病長賓. When this mother of Zhu Ling (called "Old Woman")

²⁷ On Gou, see Michael Loewe, *A Biographical Dictionary of the Qin, Former Han and Xin Periods (221 BC–AD 24)* (Leiden: Brill, 2000; hereafter, *L/BD*), p. 131.

²⁸ *HS* 18, p. 702; 10, p. 304; 98: pp. 4015, 4017–18; 10, p. 310; 18, pp. 703–5; 99: pp. 4039–40. On empress Wang, see *L/BD*, pp. 564–65; on Wang Mang, *ibid.*, pp. 536–45. Both Loewe essays reveal intricate details of maternal kin relations among the Wangs, and their political ramifications.

was dividing up her property, she first bequeathed productive lands to two sons of the Zhu surname, then later to Xianjun and Ruojun of the other father, but with stipulations: she had specified that after a while the daughters' fields had to come back to her, and she would give them to the unfortunate son Gongwen (who had been convicted for assault), because he was "poor and lacked property."²⁹ From this will, we see that after the father was gone, the estate could be disposed of through the mother. Those siblings by the mother, no matter their fathers, all had opportunities to gain access to the estate. Through this and the preceding analyses, we see that such occurrences were not at all outside of normal.

A further approach can be found in the nature of children's statuses within the family, and their somewhat strong dependence on the status of their mother. In other words, a child could be low-ranked in a family, even in a local community, if his mother was without a good family background or if her status was that of a concubine. Wang Fu 王符 (ca. 90–165 AD), a famous scholar and writer of the Eastern Han, suffered this sort of status diminution in his home town, in Anding 安定 commandery, because local custom looked down upon the children of consorts and adopted children, and he did not have strong matrilineal kin.³⁰

To be thought of as "lacking in matrilineal kin" usually meant simply that one's mother was from an inferior level. Pei Qian 裴潛 (a person of the Cao-Wei dynasty era), Dao Qia 到洽 (477–527) of the Southern Qi and Liang dynasty period, and Cui Kuo 崔廓 (ca. 521–610) of the Northern Qi all had experiences similar to Wang Fu's, although

²⁹ Chen Ping 陳平 and Wang Qinjin 王勤金, "Yi zheng xu pu 101 hao xihan mu 'xian ling quan shu' chu kao" 儀征胥浦101號西漢墓“先令券書”初考, *WW* 1987.1, pp. 20–25; idem, "Zaitan xu pu 'xian ling quan shu' de jige wenti" 再談胥浦“先令券書”的幾個問題, *WW* 1992.9, pp. 62–65; and Kubota Kōji 久保田宏次, "Chūgoku kodai ni okeru kasan sōzoku Kōsoyo Gichō ken syohō hyakuichi gō Zen Kan bo shutsudo "Senrei kensyo" o chūshin ni" 中國古代における家産相續, 江蘇省儀征縣胥浦101號前漢墓出土“先令券書”を中心に, in Hori Toshikazu sensei koki kinen, *Chūgoku kodai no kokka to minshū* 堀敏一先生古稀紀念, 中國古代の國家と民衆 (Tokyo: Kyūko-shoin, 1995), pp. 129–46. For the most recent translation and ordering of the slips, see Li Xiemin 李解民, "Yangzhou yi zheng xupu jianshu xinkao" 揚州儀征胥浦簡書新考, in Changsha shi wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo, ed., *Changsha Sanguo Wu jian ji bainian lai jianbo faxian yu yanjiu guoji xueshu yantaohui lunwenji* 長沙三國吳簡暨百年來, 簡帛發現與研究國際學術研討會論文集 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2005), pp. 449–5. Not all translations and interpretations are alike; but for the issue I touch on, there is actually no divergence in the explanations. See a full trans. of the will by Bret Hinsch, "Women, Kinship, and Property as Seen in a Han Dynasty Will," *TP* 84.1 (1998), p. 3–4, who says that Bing Changbin was from Qu'a 曲阿 (article trans. into Chinese as "Handai yizhu suo jian nüxing, qinqi guanxi he caichan" 漢代遺囑所見女性, 親戚關係和財產, trans. Li Tianhong 李天虹, *Jianbo yanjiu* 簡帛研究 (Guangxi shifan daxue chubanshe, 2001), pp. 777, 783.

³⁰ *Hou Hanshu* 後漢書 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1965; hereafter, *HHS*) 49, p. 1630.

in their paternal lines these three all derived from great families of the day – the Hedong Peis, Pengcheng Daos, and the Boling Cuis, respectively.³¹ Dao Qia’s father Dao Dan 到坦 (dates unknown) “felt that Qia had no maternal family, so he sought to marry Qia to Yang Xuanbao 羊玄保, who would provide a good maternal surname.” To have “no maternal family” was not actually to have no maternal kin. We learn from the biography of Qia’s brother, Dao Gai 到溉 (477–548), that in fact their mother’s family, named Wei 魏, were originally not among the elite, but in order to let her two sons be appraised by great families, she “spent the wealth of Yuezhong 越中 to help them make connections and serve Ren Fang 任昉,”³² who was among the leading literati then. Their mother at that time was still alive and had never risen beyond her original situation. Although we know of remarks by the southern elite in the time of the Southern Dynasties like: “Do not forget to take into account his being a son of a consort,” nonetheless maternal families were powerful supports. It is why Dao Dan wanted his son to move upward by the help of his matrilineal connection.

Northern Qi Cui Kuo “when young was orphaned and his mother was of low status, and because of this he was not ranked in the family by the local clans.” He was a member of the well-known Boling Anping 博陵安平 Cuis, but even though separated from the time of Wang Fu by over 400 years and separated by geography as well, still the customs were rather similar. Thus we can understand better the widespread impact that maternal kin had on the matter of a person’s status.

The very notion of sons’ having relatively humble or high statuses in the family or in the community can be traced back to ideas expressed in the Gongyang commentary to the *Spring and Autumn Annals*, which claimed that the noble status of the son relies on the status of his mother.³³ This highlights the relationship between mother and son, and the role of this relationship in identifying the son’s domestic status. In other words, it affirms the effect on the children of their matrilineal background. In fact, we know of cases of persons during the Han, from princes to commoners, who relied on their mothers’ surnames rather than their fathers’ – opposite of the usual way. Such cases must

³¹ For concrete examples and discussion see Tang Zhangru, 唐長孺, “Du Yanshi jiaxun, ‘Houqu pian’ lun Nanbei dishu shenfen de chayi” 讀顏氏家訓後娶篇論南北嫡庶身分的差異, *Lishi yanjiu* 歷史研究 1994.1.

³² *Nanshi* 南史 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1975) 25, p. 678 (re. Dai’s mother) and 680 (re. the father’s statement).

³³ *Chunqiu Gongyang zhuan zhushu* 春秋公羊傳注疏 (SSJZS edn.), j. 1 (Yingong 1), vol. 2, p. 2197.

have occurred so frequently that Wang Fu treated it as an indication of changes in surname, ongoing since the Zhou era.³⁴

Children and Maternal Uncles

Many children maintained a rather close relationship with their maternal uncles during Han and post-Han times. In a seminal paper first published in the 1950s, Pan Guangdan 潘光旦 (1899–1967), a distinguished Chinese sociologist, made a study of the roles of maternal uncles in ancient China, concluding that they were so significant that certain measures, including those effecting the preferential position of one's patrilineal kin in the mourning system that I mentioned earlier, were introduced to reduce their influence in domestic life.³⁵ What I want to expand on here is the active roles that uncles played since the Han, which was outside of Pan's scope.

It is worth noting that the ancient custom of blood-feuds, which was current in many tribes and primary societies, remained active in the Han period. In at least two instances, nephews took revenge in support of their maternal uncles. Zhai Fu 翟黼 (fl. 120s), an official living in the middle of Eastern Han, was threatened with exile to Rinan (the remote south of China, near today's Vietnam) for such revenge, but he fled to Changan, later on attaining to office.³⁶ Another incident occurred in today's Shanxi province near the end of Eastern Han. The character in this tale of revenge was a commoner named Jia Shu 賈淑 (fl. 160s). He was arrested by a county clerk because he had murdered someone to avenge his maternal uncle within that county, and he was jailed and would have been sentenced to death without the intercession of Guo Tai 郭泰 (128–169).³⁷ According to one study, this kind of revenge is less recorded in historical materials, compared to other kinds, such as that concerning fathers or other patrilineal kin. Of course, this kind of revenge should not be ignored, because: “as clans decay, ... only

³⁴ Wang Fu, *Qianfu lun* 潛夫論, sect. “Zhishixing 志氏姓, ed. Wang Jipei 汪繼培 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1985), p. 494.

³⁵ Mr. Pan Guangdan 潘光旦, in his trans. of Friederich Engels' work *The Origins of the Family, Private Property, and the State, in the Light of the Researches of Lewis H. Morgan* (1884) (see *Jiazu, sichan yu guojia de qi yuan* 家族私產與國家的起源), in the explanatory notes very clearly discussed this matter. Pan believed that in ancient China there had also existed a distinct empowerment of maternal uncles, and to clarify his position he analyzed the constraints on maternal uncles concerning the mourning ranks/garments and examples of cognatic males as inheritors during Spring and Autumn times; see Pan Guangdan, *Pan Guangdan wenji* 潘光旦文集 (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2000), j. 13, pp. 231–34 (n. 214). See also, *ibid.*, j. 10, “Lun Zhongguo fuquan shehui duiyu jiuquan de yizhi” 論中國父權社會對於舅權的抑制, pp. 458–63.

³⁶ *HHS* 48, p. 1602; See also *deC/BD*, p. 1027.

³⁷ *HHS* 68 (biog. Guo Tai), p. 2230; also *deC/BD*, p. 369.

the immediate kin according to their nearness of blood are responsible for pursuing vengeance and entitled to the fruits.³⁸ These examples at least further indicate that the link between nephew and maternal uncle was still intimate in some areas at that time.

Patterns of adoption also support the view about the intimate nephew-maternal uncle bond. Until the end of Eastern Han, if one failed to have a son as heir, one could adopt a maternal nephew as male heir. Chen Jiao 陳矯 (d. 237) was a high official in the cabinet of Cao Cao and later the Cao-Wei government. As the son of a person whose surname was Liu, he left his natal family to be the heir of his maternal uncle, but then later married a woman of his own natal group, prompting a call for his prosecution, which was quashed by Cao Cao.³⁹ Similarly, Zhu Ran 朱然 (181–249), a famous general under Sun Quan, was adopted by his maternal uncle whose name was Zhu Zhi 治 (156–234), who was without heir, and thus he shifted his original surname Shi 施 to Zhu.⁴⁰ Despite the relative rarity of such adoptions in written records, the custom, as a matter of fact, survived in some regions of China, such as various counties in Shanxi, Anhui, Jiangxi, Hubei, Hunan, Shanxi, and Gansu until the early twentieth century, as stated by a national customary law and conventions survey completed by the Republican government in 1918.⁴¹

A rather striking detail is that this collateral, maternal, relationship was often characterized as “bone and flesh 骨肉,” a metaphor frequently used to express the close link between children and parents. In a memorial to the throne near the end of the Western Han, Xie Guang 解光 (fl. during Chengdi’s reign, 32–7 BC), the metropolitan commandant, exposed certain illegal behaviors of Wang Gen 王根 (?–2 BC), who was the maternal uncle by marriage of the recently deceased Chengdi, and holder of high office at court. Xie said: “(Wang) Gen is the most intimate relative, like bone and flesh, and also a vital minister.”⁴² Even if he was not the blood uncle of the deceased emperor, Wang Gen was called “bone and flesh,” so it is certain that this term should be applied to the blood connection between a maternal uncle and his nephew. Another

³⁸ E. S. Hartland, *Primitive Law* (London: Methuen, 1924), p. 54.

³⁹ *SGZ* 22, p. 644; see *deC/BD*, pp. 69–70.

⁴⁰ *SGZ* 56, p. 1305; see *deC/BD*, pp. 1165, 1170.

⁴¹ Nanjing guomin zhengfu sifa xingzhengbu 南京國民政府司法行政部編, ed., and Hu Xusheng 胡旭晟 et al., annot., *Minshi xiguan diaocha baogao lu* 民事習慣調查報告錄 (Beijing: Zhongguo zhengfa daxue chubanshe, 2000), *xia ce* 下冊, pp. 825, 830, 845, 849, 863, 871, 877, 958, 970, 999, 1022, 1032, 1044, 1051, etc.

⁴² *HHS* 98, pp. 4015, 4028; see *L/BD*, pp. 610–11.

memorial confirms this point. In a later case, from about 140, in order to save his imprisoned maternal uncle Song Guang 宋光, Huo Xu 霍諝, still a youth, wrote to the powerful Liang Shang 梁商 to protest Song's innocence, saying at one point: "[We], [Huo] Xu and [Song] Guang, are bone and flesh, so we are bound by duty to protect each other."⁴³

Based on these facts, I believe that at least in some aspects nephews and their maternal uncles maintained a kind of intimate bond, and this relationship represented the influence of the matrilineal kin because the tie between these two males developed through the female line.

Maternal Family Taking Precedence

In early China, in all regions, it was common that the mother's natal family rear her children if they should become orphaned. For example, Bo Ji 薄姬 (?–155 BC), the mother of emperor Wen of the Western Han (r. 179–157 BC), was brought up by her *waijia* 外家 (mother's natal family) because her father died early. Some high officials in early Eastern Han, such as Fan Sheng 范升, Liu Ban 劉般, and Zhu Hui 朱暉 all had the same experience as children or youths.⁴⁴

We find a considerable number of such cases later, during the Wei-Jin and Six Dynasties. Wei Shu 魏舒 (209–290), an active top official in early Western Jin politics, was fostered by his *waijia* surnamed Ning 甯 on account of his father's early death; he lived at the Ning household for a long time before he set up his own family. Another critical politician of early Jin was Xun Xu 荀勗 (d. 289), who came from a distinguished family. Orphaned, he depended on his maternal uncle, from a well-known elite family of the same Yingchuan commandery, and, just as Wei had done, he grew up in his uncle's house.⁴⁵ More than a dozen analogous cases exist for this period. The same sort of custom existed in north China. Helan Xiang 賀蘭祥 "was orphaned at 11 *nian*... and he grew up with his maternal uncle and was especially loved by Taizu."⁴⁶ Huangfu Ji 皇甫績 "was two when orphaned; he was reared by his maternal kin Wei Xiaokuan 韋孝寬."⁴⁷ Before the founding of Sui, "Yang Jian's 楊堅 uncle Yang Yuansun had lived in Ye City, and because "he

⁴³ *HHS* 48, p. 1616.

⁴⁴ On Bo Yi, see *L/BD*, p. 14. For others, *HHS* 36, p. 1226; 39, p. 1303; 43, p. 1457.

⁴⁵ *Jinshu* 41, p. 1185; 39, pp. 1152–53. On the Xun family, see Howard L. Goodman, "Sites Of Recognition: Burial, Mourning, and Commemoration in the Xun Family of Yingchuan, 140–305 AD," *Early Medieval China* 15 (2009), pp. 49–90; and idem, *Xun Xu and the Politics of Precision in Third-Century AD China*, *Sinica Leidensia* 95 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2010), chap. 1.

⁴⁶ *Zhoushu* 周書 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1974) 20 (biog. He Lanxiang 賀蘭祥), p. 336.

⁴⁷ *SS* 8 (biog. Huangfu Ji), p. 1139.

was orphaned when he was small, he was taken in by his mother's natal family, the Guos, and raised in his uncle's clan;⁴⁸ and so forth.

The common point is that the orphaned children were cared for by their mother's natal family. However, we must keep in mind that it does not mean they had no remaining paternal kin or paternal kin relations. We know that at least some of them even had their father's brothers still alive. Fan Wang 范汪 (ca. 308–ca. 372), for example, was taken into his mother's natal family, the Xinye 新野 Yus 庾. His father's two brothers, Fan Jian 堅 and Guang 廣, were alive, one of them holding high position in the early Eastern Jin central government.⁴⁹ Due to the incompleteness of documentation, we cannot easily identify others who may have had close paternal kin, as did Fan Wang, but it is highly likely that in some of the above cases there were living paternal kin, concurrently with the maternal. Xun Xu's great-grandfather had seven brothers, for instance, and many of their descendants had high posts, or won high reputation in society in the Wei or Jin dynasty,⁵⁰ so Xun Xu possessed paternal kin at any rate, and we know that he received mentoring and career help from some of those.⁵¹ Wei Shu, who was mentioned above, had a second paternal uncle named Wei Heng 魏衡 who held an important post in Ministry of Personnel at the Western Jin court.⁵²

In addition, cases of children sent to their mothers' natal families are not confined to those who lost fathers, but include those without mothers. The early experience of empress Yang 楊 of emperor Wu of the Western Jin provides a good example. Her *jinshu* biography says:

(The empress's) mother, from Tianshui (天水) and of the surname Zhao 趙, died early. Thus, the empress depended on the family of her mother's brother. His wife was so benevolent that she fed the empress with her own breast milk, while letting other women feed her own baby. After growing up, the empress attended her stepmother Duan, relying on Duan's family.⁵³

The biography of empress Yang's father Yang Wenzong 楊文宗 points out that he passed away young,⁵⁴ but according to her biography, actually her natal mother died even earlier than the father, and then the latter remarried with Ms. Duan; thereafter empress Yang, as

⁴⁸ *SS* 43 (biog. Wang Hong of Hejian, 河間王弘), p. 1211. When they were boys, Weichi Gang 尉遲綱 and Weichi Jiog also had this sort of experience; see *Zhoushu* 20 (biog. Weichi Gang), p. 339.

⁴⁹ See *JS* 75: pp. 1982, 1989; 90: p. 2336.

⁵⁰ See *SGZ* 10, pp. 307, 319, 321.

⁵¹ See Goodman, *Xun Xu and the Politics of Precision*, pp. 73–75.

⁵² *JS* 41, p. 1185.

⁵³ *JS* 31, p. 952.

⁵⁴ See *JS* 93, pp. 2412–13.

a young girl, experienced intense protection among her mother's kin. What is surprising is that her father's three brothers were living, and all would obtain key court posts,⁵⁵ but they did not reach out to their paternal niece. It is also a fact that empress Yang descended from the eminent Confucian scholar-official Yang Zhen 震 (d. 124). Four generations of his descendants had occupied important state ranks, from Eastern Han to Cao-Wei.

Another case comes from the early life of Liu Yu 劉裕 (363-422), the founder of the Liu-Song dynasty (420-479). As a boy, he lost his mother and was raised by the latter's brother, even though his father was alive; his boyhood name was changed accordingly, from Qinu 奇奴 to Jinu 寄奴,⁵⁶ with the implication being that he was a borrower of another's lodging.

If we consider highly regarded and powerful families of this type as a benchmark, there is little reason to think that their experiences of maternal-kin nurture were so unusual among leading families generally. No doubt, many at that time found solace among maternal kin, despite having able paternal relatives; however, biographies and other anecdotal literature frequently do not record the back-stories of intra-family networks and links. The stories of maternal support may actually be fewer than those about paternal-kin support, but the implications should not be understated, including those of an anthropological point of view. Given the primary human activity of child-rearing, then a culture's choice of rearers in place of the biological parents may denote the place that the rearers occupied in the extended family. Children in early China, in this light, may be seen as the social responsibility, *de facto* if not *de jure*, of maternal and paternal kin alike. The matrilineal kin and the ties between children and their mothers played significant roles, even if we cannot call China of Han-Six Dynasties time a matrilineal society.

We can return to the question of the New Text School's explanation of *jiuzu*. To a certain degree, then, it represented a reality when considering the wider social scope. In fact, *jiuzu* and *zongzu* can also refer to maternal kin in practical terms of titles and rewards. In 200 BC, for example, the office of chamberlain of the imperial clan (literally, *zongzheng* 宗正) was established in order "to regulate *jiuzu*."⁵⁷ Here, the word included relatives of imperial consorts (*waiqi*) at least because during the early part of Western Han such relatives shared with the

⁵⁵ See the biographies of his three brothers at *JŚ* 40, pp. 1177 ff.

⁵⁶ *SgS* 1, p. 1; 27, p. 783.

⁵⁷ *HS* 1, p. 64.

emperor's patrilineal kin the rank-title "*zongshi* 宗室," as Chinese historian Mou Runsun 牟潤孫 showed half a century ago. After the Han, *jiuzu* still appeared in historical documents, under certain circumstances indicating one's relatives taken as a whole, not just the patrilineal kin. Wei Shu, as we saw, was orphaned, then later reared by his mother's family, remaining with them into adulthood. After becoming a high official he: "distributed all his salary and made bestowals to the *jiuzu*, and so nothing was left for his own house."⁵⁸ It is reasonable to assert that this *jiuzu* contained Wei Shu's matrilineal kin, owing to his early experience with them.

Furthermore, *zongzu*, basically a reference to the Chinese patrilineal descent group, did not relate exclusively to patrilineal kin. At the end of Wang Mang's rule, when violence and trouble were widespread, the "*zongzu* and local people urgently went out to attach themselves to Diwu Lun 第五倫, and he used advantageous terrain to build a fortification." At that time, "the price of rice per *dan* was 10,000 coins, and people were eating each other. (Diwu) Lun adopted the orphaned son of his brother, and a grandson on his daughter's side. He shared wheat with them, and they lived together however they could, supporting each other for their lives."⁵⁹

With *zongzu* and allied terms (like *zongqin*) being used more broadly than just for patrilineal kin, we are able to see even pre-Tang China more clearly as a society in which families were preserved and aided by efforts of mothers and their relatives. The terms we have been observing in effect conveyed meanings something similar to "cognatic kin group."

PATERNAL SURNAMES AND COLLATERAL SURNAMES

The Old Text School, or interpretive method, of the classics was not altogether wrong. Their thoughts on *jiuzu* indicated that some scholars were concerned to delineate and even increase the patrilineal tendency. This is revealed in several respects. One sign in particular lay in the shift of surname patterns. Until a certain point in time, the dominant model in China was that offspring follow the father's surname, which many scholars regard as a salient feature of Chinese PDG. But in fact, the convention did not become influential or formally correct until Jin

⁵⁸ *JŚ* 41, pp. 1185, 1187.

⁵⁹ *HHS* 41, p. 1395, Diwu's biography, and the quotation from *Dongguan Hanji* in note 2 on the same page. On Diwu, see *deC/BD*, pp. 145-46.

times. Let us try to unearth something of this picture, which is quite different from that of a previous time.

A large portion of Chinese commoners began to possess surnames earlier than their counterparts in most other countries did. This started in about the middle of the Spring and Autumn period, but some proportion did not get surnames until the end of the Western Han. We can distinguish various new surnames at different moments by comparing certain types of historical and other records. Many people at the beginning of the surnaming phenomenon did not treat their name quite like the legally heritable entity that it would become later, moreover they did not hand them down along the patrilineal line. Thus one's surname could be changed without too much difficulty. A person might follow his mothers' surname, or select a new one to avoid disaster or vendetta.

The practice survived well into the end of the Eastern Han; in fact, there were so many such cases that Guan Ning 管寧 (158–241), a reclusive literati of that time, wrote a work called “Shizu Lun” 氏族論 (“On Clans”), which criticized the practice. Later commentators gave a reason for Guan's composing his work: “That many people of his age were changing their surnames recklessly during political turbulence was a violation of the institutions of the sages, and it was an idea that was against [the original] ritualized surnames.”⁶⁰ Guan Ning's thoughts were by and large correct, except for his attributing, as was the tradition, all bad phenomena to the political troubles of dynasties. For example, Zhang Yan 張燕 (fl. 180s–200s), a leader of a rebellion late in Eastern Han, changed his surname from Chu 褚 to Zhang because his rise to leadership of the rebels was via the personal recognition of the original rebel leader surnamed Zhang. Afterward, the newly minted Zhang Yan gave this surname to his own descendants.⁶¹

In addition, surnames came under the mantic system of the Five Processes (*wuxing* 五行) based on their pronunciations; or they could be employed as signs revealing good or ill luck, for example, concerning one's house, an art that was called *tuzhai shu* 圖宅術, one of numerous, similar popular arts from Han to Tang.⁶² And people could vary

⁶⁰ Commentary to *SGZ* 11, p. 360, quoting *Fuzi*.

⁶¹ *SGZ* 8, pp. 261–62. See *deC/BD*, p. 1083.

⁶² See Wang Chong, *Lunheng* 論衡 (sect. “Jieshu”), Huang Hui, annot. (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1990), pp. 1027–28; also Ogata Isamu 尾形勇, “Suiritsu teisei syotan, Chūgoku kodai seishi sei ni kansuru ichi kōsatsu” 吹律定姓初探，中國古代姓氏制に關する一考察, in Nishijima Sadao hakushi kanreki kinen ronsō henshū linkai 西嶋定生博士還曆記念論叢編集委員會編, ed. *Nishijima Sadao hakushi kanreki kinen, Higashi Ajia shi ni okeru kokka to nōmin* 西嶋定生博士還曆記念，東アジア史における國家と農民 (Tokyo: Yamakawa shuppansha, 1984), pp. 133–54; Huang Zhengjian 黃正建, *Dunhuang zhanbu wenshu yu Tang Wudai zhanbu yanjiu* 敦

their surnames under those same rules of the Five Processes in order to avoid misfortune. What is striking is that the dominant surname pattern continued to be the patrilineal name, in spite of the several ways by the end of Eastern Han that names could be changed, some including taking the mother's surname. At the level of the imperial court, people were even forced to change a surname back – from the mother's or another's back to the patrilineal name. The empress Deng Mengnü 鄧猛女 (141–165) of emperor Huan of Eastern Han (r. 147–167) was the daughter of Deng Xiang 鄧香; but her father died when she was young, and she changed her surname to Liang when her mother remarried with Liang Ji 梁紀 (d. 159), a relative of the powerful minister Liang Ji 梁冀. After the failure of Liang's family in a palace power struggle, “the emperor had her surname changed to Bo 薄 (which may have been Deng's own mother's natal name) on account of his hatred for the Liang family.” Then an official reported that the empress was the daughter of Deng Xiang and “should not follow yet another surname,” but take her original surname Deng, as happened accordingly.⁶³ This official's view indicates that since late in Eastern Han, in the eyes of some elites, if a change was required one's surname should follow his or her patrilineal, rather than matrilineal, surname.

This matter gradually grew to become a sensitive topic, and several people who had followed their mothers' surnames shifted back to their patrilineal ones. Zhu Ran, whom we encountered, above, having changed his surname to that of his adoptive maternal uncle, requested going back to “Shi,” since the uncle, now deceased, had eventually produced his own blood heir. Zhu's request, however, was refused by the Wu ruler Sun Quan (r. 222–252), and only about three decades later did the change occur, upon request by Zhu's son.⁶⁴ The anecdote shows two linked PDG families attempting to sort out a problem by following basic ideals of patrilineal naming and legal inheritance through blood male heirs.

We also have examples from the western state of Shu-Han at this same time. Both Ma Zhong 馬忠 (?–234) and Wang Ping 王平 (?–248) had been reared by their mothers' families and had taken their names,

煌占卜文書與唐五代占卜研究 (Beijing: Xueyuan chubanshe, 2001), pp. 72–81; and Yu Xin 余欣, *Shendao renxin, Tang Song zhi ji Dunhuang minsheng zongjiao shehuishi yanjiu* 神道人心, 唐宋之際敦煌民生宗教社會史研究 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2006), pp. 171–77. On Han to Tang arts, see Marc Kalinowski, “Technical Traditions in Ancient China and Shushu Culture in Chinese Religion,” in John Lagerwey, ed., *Religion and Chinese Society, Volume I: Ancient and Medieval China* (Hong Kong and Paris: The Chinese University Press and École française d'Extrême-Orient, 2004), pp. 223–48.

⁶³ *HHS* 10, p. 444; see *deC/BD*, pp. 118–20.

⁶⁴ *SGZ* 56, pp. 1305, 1309.

but they eventually got their original surnames back.⁶⁵ In Cao Cao's cabinet, an official called Xu Xuan 徐宣 (?–236) frequently disagreed with Chen Jiao (see above), who was from Xu's own locale. It was Xu who, as mentioned above, criticized Chen's taking his mother's surname and eventually marrying a female from his patrilineal family, only to have his attacks stopped by order of Cao Cao.⁶⁶ It is not difficult to infer the dominant public opinion among elites on this issue and the sort of pressure that Cao Cao and Chen faced under the attack of peers.

Up to this point, "changing surname" had become an intolerable action, in the view of the literati circles at least. One such change suggested by Kong Rong 孔融 (153–208) late in Eastern Han received an unprecedentedly fierce attack a hundred years later by Xu Zhong 徐眾 (time unknown), an Eastern Jin scholar.⁶⁷ The tendency of the elite was to come down in favor of patrilineal naming when push came to shove. It was but one aspect of the overall phenomenon of PDG and patrilineal ties. Concurrently, some commoners at the periphery of society could choose to follow their mothers' surnames even up until the end of the Ming, as Gu Yanwu 顧炎武 (1613–1682) pointed out.⁶⁸ Overall, especially since Eastern Han, ideas about patrilineal correctness, as it were, rose to the fore. We see it in two aspects: memory of one's patrilineal ancestors, and desire for patrilineal heirs.

Thinking of One's Ancestors

In the Western Han period, Chinese as a whole lacked deep concern about the names of their ancestors. Few people could remember the names of their grandfathers, to say nothing of ancestors deeper in the murky past. Even Liu Bang, the founder of Western Han (r. 206–195 BC), failed to memorize the name of his father, so in *Shiji* we learn that he called his father "Tai Gong," a general term for old men. Liu Bang set up a temple named "Taishang Huang" (father of the emperor) to worship his father, unlike those later emperors who usually established seven or nine temples to worship generations of ancestors. Thus, the purported connections between Liu Bang and the distant sage Tang Yao were merely the imagination of later classical scholars.

By surveying biographies in *Hanshu*, it can be determined that nearly all biographies just recorded the name and hometown of their subjects, but not even the names of the subjects' fathers, let alone other

⁶⁵ Ibid 43, pp. 1048–49; see *deC/BD*, pp. 661–62, 828–29, respectively.

⁶⁶ *SGZ* 22, p. 644. On Xu, see *deC/BD*, pp. 913–14.

⁶⁷ *SGZ* 62, p. 1411, quoting Xu Zhong's "Ping 評."

⁶⁸ *Rizhilu* 日知錄 (Changsha: Yuelu shushe, 1994) 22, p. 814.

ancestors. Examples of exceptions are Zhang Liang 張良, Ji An 汲黯, and Li Guang 李廣, whose biographies provide the names of ancestors because they were descendants of Warring States nobles. (Also, we get detailed information in the accounts of the lives of Sima Qian 司馬遷, Yang Xiong 揚雄, and Wang Mang 王莽.) This phenomenon cannot be treated so much as the result of historians' intentional erasures, or their subjects' self-effacement due to humble origins. It was instead a general sort of unconcern about the names of fathers and ancestors, an unconcern stemming from a certain unconsciousness about ancestors in general.

Starting around the end of Western Han, some elites began to pay attention to their ancestors, Wang Mang being a famous example. In Eastern Han, more and more Confucian scholars followed his example, and records about the names of one's patrilineal ancestors burgeoned, along with the appearance of several specific studies on the origins and rules of surnames, such as essays in the works of Wang Chong 王充 (?–97), Wang Fu, and Ying Shao. After the reign of emperor Huan, epitaphs of deceased contained certain kinds of genealogical records about the subject's PDG. The first extant epitaph with this type of data is the "Tablet of Xianyu Huang" 鮮於璜碑, erected in 165 AD and unearthed in a suburb of current Tianjin 天津. On the tablet were carved the names and official posts of five generations of the subject's patrilineal ancestors, as well as their putative primogenitor.⁶⁹ Tablets with similar contents can be attested starting at about this point in time.⁷⁰ Such inscriptions, mostly honoring bureaucrats and scholars, reveal that throughout the nation an emerging tendency among the elite was to use memory about their PDG and even to fabricate their patrilineal ancestors.

The causes of this development in a larger sense are certainly connected to the social background, that is to say, the increasing emphasis

⁶⁹ This epitaph's main face says: "... was named Huang; and his appellation was Boqian. His ancestor was derived from the descendant of Qizi in the Shang. Due to the great merit as the chancellor to the king of Jiaodong during Han, there were the great-grandson of the receptionist, the grandson of the *xiaolian*, and the eldest son of the retainer." 鮮於璜, 字伯謙, 其先祖出於殷箕子之苗裔, 漢膠東相之醇曜, 而謁者君之曾, 孝廉君之孫, 從事君之元嗣也." The rear surface inscribed the names of five generations following Jiao and their official positions. Based on this we can group Xianyu Huang's five antecedent generations. See Nagata Hide-masa 永田英正, comp., *Kandai sekkoku shūsei* 漢代石刻集成 (Zuhan shakubun hen 圖版釋文篇) (Tokyo: Dōhōsha, 1994), p. 156.

⁷⁰ E.g. during Ningyuan 1 (168) those of Zhang Shou 張壽, Heng Fang 衡方, and about that year Yang Chen 楊震; during Jianning 2 (169), that of Guo Tai 郭泰; during Xiping 2 (173): Lu Jun 魯峻; Xiping 3 (174): Lou Shou; 177: Yin Zhou 尹宙; Guanghe 3 (180): Zhao Kuan 趙寬; Zhongping 2 (185): Cao Quan 曹全; 186: Zhang Qian 張遷; and during Jian'an 10 (205), that of Fan Min 樊敏. See *ibid.*, pp. 166, 168, 174, 176, 202, 208, 224, 226, 246, 252, 262.

on one's family background in the course of what were new forms of official recruitment. In the view of contemporaries,

What are the surnames for? To honor efficacious spiritual power and discourage cunning force. Sometimes one's official position is taken as a surname, sometimes one's profession. When hearing the surname, the spiritual power [of the person] can be known. Thereby mankind is encouraged to practice what is good. 所以有氏者何? 所以貴功德, 賤伎力. 或氏其官, 或氏其事, 聞其氏即可知其德, 所以勉人爲善也.⁷¹

Wang Fu thought that in deep antiquity, "To grant surnames and give orders to the clans, they relied on their virtues and deeds."⁷² In Eastern Jin, Xu Zhong 徐眾 (who was mentioned, above) also said:

In early times, when they established surnames, sometimes it was by birth, sometimes by office-title, sometimes by the patriarch's name. All these cases involved external shapes of loyal deeds in order to make clear the nature of clans. Therefore it is said: "If they have been honored with land, we grant them a surname"; this is the canonical way of early kings. The reason we clarify the origin and concentrate on beginnings, and display merit and virtue, is so that sons and grandsons do not forget.⁷³

There was a tight connection between the possession (or not) of a surname and the same for the family's deeds. In early society, where the customs of "discussing surnames and records of great families when choosing personnel" and "distinguishing virtue by clan and assigning worthies by station"⁷⁴ were so totally current, wherever we find the origins of surnames, it means that the forbears had merit and virtue, which was greatly advantageous for building up the prestige of descendants and broadening their reputations. In general, surname was thought by such scholars (here, Ban Gu and Wang Fu), as the symbol of merit for an individual or his family. In other words, if in ancient times one possessed merits and virtues, he would be granted a surname by the king. Thus, it was advantageous to demonstrate the origin of a surname and connect it

⁷¹ Ban Gu 班固 (32-92), *Baihu tong* 白虎通, j. 9 ("Xingming 姓名"), p. 402; see Tjan Tjoe Som, *Po Hu T'ung: The 'Comprehensive Discussions in the White Tiger Hall'* (Leiden: Brill, 1949-52), pp. 579-80.

⁷² Wang Fu, *Qianfu lun*, sect. "Zhishixing, p. 401.

⁷³ *SGZ* 62 (Biog. Shi Yi 是儀), commentary, quoting Xu's "Ping," p. 1411; also *TD* 95, pp. 2570, 2573.

⁷⁴ See Zhongchang Tong 仲長統, *Changyan* 昌言, in Yan Kejun 嚴可均, comp., *Quan Hou Han wen* 全後漢文 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1959), 89, p. 954; Wang Fu, *Qianfu lun* (sect. "Lun rong" 論榮), p. 34.

to a figure of the same surname recorded in ancient texts, and gain access to those merits. It would gain one reputation even in one's own time.

The rise of the Old Text trends in scholarship, and in particular the prevalence of *Zuozhuan*, created possibilities for tracing origins of surnames, since such works carried in their texts many relevant data. A historian of Northern Song times, Zheng Qiao 鄭樵 (1104–1162), stated: “Whenever we speak of surname clans 姓氏, these all have their origins in the two works “Shi ben 世本” and “Gongzi pu 公子譜,” which in turn have their origins in *Zuozhuan*.”⁷⁵ I would quarrel with the accuracy of this remark, but his reference to *Zuozhuan* concerning the importance of research into “surname clans” was one hundred percent right. That classic contains so many records touching on surname clans, that none of those in Eastern Han times who studied the phenomenon, for example, Wang Chong, Wang Fu, and Ying Shao, could fail to find materials there. The rise in stature of *Zuozhuan* occurred beginning at the end of Western Han, with Liu Xin 劉歆. Although in Eastern Han times *Zuozhuan* was not placed in the court academies, still scholars who took up its study were numerous.⁷⁶ They could get support from *Zuozhuan* to correlate with the historical evidence about their own surnames, and they constructed genealogies that stemmed from their paternal sides. Moreover, the classic's overall philosophical tendency paralleled notions such as “honoring lord and father, demeaning minion and son 崇君父, 卑臣子. ... loyalty is deeper for the lord and father 義深于君父,”⁷⁷ the kinds of idea that Han-era thinkers had frequently outlined. It went in step with the flourishing of a patrilineal mentality.

At an early stage, knowledge about the origins of the various surnames was controlled by intellectuals, because such records were found in scholarly texts and commentaries; few commoners could obtain access easily. With the circulation of specific books that discussed surnames, despite missing numerous details about the process, commoners did gain some knowledge about their own surnames and sought to trace the names of ancestors at least since the Northern Wei.

It is worth noting that Buddhism might have contributed to this activity because of such Buddhist notions as “parents from seven gen-

⁷⁵ Zheng, *Tongzhi* 通志, “Shizu lue 氏族略” and “Shizu xu 氏族序” (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1990), p. 1.

⁷⁶ Tang Yan 唐晏 (Qing era), *Liang Han Sanguo xuean* 兩漢三國學案 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1986), j. 9 (“Chunqiu 春秋”), pp. 447–72. A list of Han scholars who studied *Zuozhuan* would be quite detailed; one e.g., is the 167 AD epitaph for Wu Rong 武榮, which says that he studied broadly and distinguished subtlety, including *Xiaojing* 孝經, *Lunyu* 論語, *Hanshu* 漢書, *Shiji* 史記, *Zuoshi* 左氏, and *Guoyu* 國語.

⁷⁷ *HHS* 36 (biog. Jia Kui 賈逵), pp. 1236–37.

erations 七世父母。” A donor’s inscription gives us clear evidence. This inscription is normally referred to as “Yao Boduo zaoxiang” 姚伯多造像; it was erected in present-day Shanxi in 496:

Yao Boduo, who is the offspring of Xuan Yuan, and progeny of Yu Shun had an official ... first ancestor who was appointed as the general of Huangyuebing and the *situ* ... Hei province ... [in the year of] ... Under the rule of the Liu (a reference to the Former Zhao state) ... Gong Yao He was the ... General Who Guards the South ... province... Shi... During the rule of the Liu [he] was Taizhong daifu and then Grand Administrator of Jiangxia Yao <Qiao> was Shangshu, then general of Guanjun, then governor of Shanggu under the rule of the Shi (which refers to the Later Zhao state). Yao Heyin was the great leader of the unions from four ... counties, the head of Jiyang Fort, and then Quzhou *ling* under the rule of the Yaos (which refers to the Later Qin state). Grandfather Yao Che, during the ... year of the He... [reign period]... Beidi, two commanderies. Father Yao Ji ... 姚伯多者, 軒轅之苗胄, 虞舜□後胤, 官□.....始祖留時南□.....□年用爲皇越兵將軍, 黑州□□ 司徒, □.....公姚和留時鎮南□將軍、□州 □□石.....留時太中大夫、江夏太守. 姚<喬>石時使部.....尚書、冠軍將軍、上谷太守. 姚鈴蔭姚時四.....縣都盟統, 吉陽保主. 曲州令. 祖姚車.....和□□中□□□北地二郡. 父姚芟.....⁷⁸

The text of the record has been damaged, but the chief idea is quite clear. What is first discussed is the emergence of forbears; and second is the names and office-statuses of ancestors. This is very close in content to the numerous commemorative tablets written by Han scholars. Examples of inscriptions similar to Yang’s are many.⁷⁹ We do not have to believe this type of formulation, and we have many more that are merely expressive of donors’ points of view and hopes. The appearance and development of this style have a direct relationship with the “setting of the surname clans” that began under Northern Wei emperor Xiaowen in order to establish the family ordering of the Han elite. These donors’ ancestors frequently were in state offices, so therefore we can bring in their official posts. For a part of the populace, memory was simply in reference to their ancestors’ great reputations.

⁷⁸ *Lu Xun jijiao shike shougao*, case 2, vol. 1, pp. 29–30. In the Chinese text, □..... means that there are unknown number of erased characters. In the English, two ellipses means that due to missing or erased characters, the translation must skip to another topic. The symbols <> show a deduced meaning because of poorly legible graphs; the character 留 is equated with 劉.

⁷⁹ E.g., No. Wei, 4th yr. of Xinghe 興和 (542), the Li family, the whole Li kin of the same village, made a Buddha image; *ibid.*, case 2, vol. 2, pp. 314; and W. Wei, 14th yr. of Datong 大統 (548), Xue family, *ibid.* case 2, vol. 3, pp. 553–54, etc.

Another inscription called “Fan Nuzi” 樊奴子, which was carved in 530, retains the names of Fan’s seven patrilineal ancestors, starting with his father.⁸⁰ Other examples recorded the names of donors’ grandfathers or great-grandfathers, and some contained the names of grandmothers.⁸¹ In my opinion, names engraved on such tablets signal an increasing patrilineal consciousness. In this respect, some distinctions between elites and commoners were fading, thus marking the way that PDG would soon take shape.

Collateral Surnames

But another way to detect the development is in the way dynastic houses reacted to royal sons who were without heirs, and a change in that regard from Han to Jin. Liu Yi 劉揖, the son of emperor Wen of Western Han (r. 179–157 BC) died without an heir. The deceased son’s chief minister, Jia Yi 賈誼, suggested that an heir be adopted, but this was refused by emperor Wen, and eventually the princely establishment of Liu Ji was abolished.⁸² On the contrary, during Western Jin on numerous occasions emperor Wu (Sima Yan 司馬炎; r. 266–290) created adoptive heirs in cases of sons who died young. In just one example, his son Sima Gui 司馬軌 died when he was not even two, and later he was “posthumously given a fief name and considered to have been the proper heir of Prince of Chu Sima Wei 楚王瑋.”⁸³ Moreover, Wudi paid close attention to situations in which his brothers died without heir. This kind of change also could be found in the society at large. We have several examples of local officials trying to let the wives of criminals subject to the death penalty live with their husbands briefly in prison so as to produce an heir.⁸⁴

An obvious step taken by the court was to prohibit the custom of adopting boys from the collateral, maternal surname into another, as legal heirs. The custom was current till the end of Eastern Han, and then began to be a target of criticism by scholars. The Shu-Han kingdom was the first government to forbid it through formal law, and later

⁸⁰ *Lu Xun jijiao shike shougao*, case 2, vol. 1, p. 213.

⁸¹ E.g., No. Wei Zhengguang 2 (521): Qi Moren’s 綺麻仁 image-making (*Lu Xun jijiao shike shougao*, case 2, vol. 1, p. 121); E. Wei Xinghe 2 (540): Lian Fu’s 廉富 image making (*ibid.*, case 2, vol. 2, p. 285); Wuding 7 (549): Wang Guang 王光 (*ibid.*, case 2, vol. 2, p. 431); No. Wei Heqing 1 (562): Zhao Ke 趙科 (*ibid.*, case 2, vol. 4, p. 745); No. Qi Tiantong 3 (567): Zhang Jing (*ibid.*, case 1, vol. 6, p. 1037); and No. Zhou Tianhe 5 (570): Guo Shisun (*ibid.*, case 2, vol. 5, p. 996).

⁸² *HS* 48, p. 2261; 47, p. 2212; *L/BD*, p. 394

⁸³ *J/S* 64 (biogs. of Wudi’s Thirteen Princes 武十三王傳), pp. 1719, 1721–22.

⁸⁴ *HHS* 29 (biog. Bao Yu 鮑昱), *zhu*, cit. *Dongguan Han ji*, p. 1021; 64 (biog. Wu You 吳祐傳), p. 2101.

dynasties followed the proscription, even though this kind of adoption was steadily continuing. Collateral adoption, although experiencing this sort of change, having gone from wide practice to prohibition, also showed the strengthening of patrilineal consciousness. During Eastern Han, it was very commonplace, that “when members of one generation were without heir, they take one who is not of their surname to continue [their line].”⁸⁵ In Cao-Wei times it was still allowed. At the beginning of Wei, someone wrote a “Discussion of Four [types of] Orphanhood” 四孤論; this pointed out several circumstances under which orphans were taken in and raised to manhood by collateral-surnamed families, but that it was unsure whether according to the rituals it would require returning to the original clan. Participating in the discussion were the erudit Tian Qiong 田瓊 and the minister of justice Wang Lang 王朗, who thought that a certain person in question ought not to be returned,⁸⁶ saying that “collateral-surname adoption” had already become accepted among a sector of the scholarly elite. Wei emperor Ming 明帝 (Cao Rui 曹叡; r. 227–239) appointed Guo De 郭憲, the younger cousin of his consort Guo, as heir to [Zhen Huang], having him adopt the surname Zhen,⁸⁷ obviously a case of adoption from outside the family.

Liu Bei’s adoption of Liu Feng 劉封 is actually in this category as well. The historical record says that: “Originally he was the son of a certain surname Kou from Luo Hou county 羅侯寇氏, and the nephew of the Liu family of Changsha. When the Shu Former Lord (Liu Bei) went to Jingzhou, he did not yet have an heir, so he raised Feng as his son.”⁸⁸ And we also read in the histories that Zhang Jun 張君 of Shu-Han raised Wei Ji 衛繼 as his son.⁸⁹ By a later in time, in the Eastern Jin era, in the social culture collateral-surmane adoption still was “practiced by very many people.”⁹⁰ And even later, in Ming-Qing times, it remained current among the populace.⁹¹ However, since Shu-Han, “laws prevented collateral surnames becoming heirs,” thus Zhang Ji accordingly returned to his “Wei” surname. This was the first occurrence in history that such adoption and inheritance was stopped in the form of a legal code. In

⁸⁵ *TD* 69 (“Yixing wei hou yi” 異姓爲後議), p. 1914.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 1914–15. ⁸⁷ *SGZ* 5, p. 163. ⁸⁸ *SGZ* 4 (biog. Liu Feng 劉封), p. 991.

⁸⁹ *SGZ* 45 (biog. Yang Xi 楊戲), *zhu*, cit. “Yibu qijiu zaji” 益部耆舊雜記), p. 1091.

⁹⁰ *TD* 69, cit. “Yixing wei hou yi,” p. 191.

⁹¹ See An Wotena 安沃特納 (Ann Waltner), Cao Nanlai 曹南來, trans., Hou Xudong 侯旭東, eds., *Yan huo jiexu, Ming Qing de shouji yu qinzu guanxi* 煙火接續, 明清的收繼與親族關係 (Hangzhou: Zhejiang renmin chubanshe, 1999), pp. 63–71, 98–103; published originally as Ann Waltner, *Getting an Heir: Adoption and the Construction of Kinship in Late Imperial China* (Honolulu: U. Hawaii P., 1990).

Western Jin, it was specifically entered into the code, and in Tang and later times was incorporated legally as well, as we see, below.

An incident involving the posthumous establishment of an heir for Jia Chong 賈充 (217–82), a powerful minister of Western Jin, strongly reveals the conflict among the attitudes toward collateral-surname adoption and a change in the dominant viewpoint of scholars. When Jia died he had no direct male heir, but he had a brother and at least three cousins and four cousins twice-removed.⁹² There was no lack of male descendants, but his third wife Guo Huai 郭槐 insisted on having Han Mi 韓謐, the son of Jia Chong's first wife's daughter, become his heir. This caused quite a stir both publicly and privately. When Guo first made her intention known, she faced the criticism of officials in Jia Chong's service, but she did not listen. Those officials sent letters seeking to have her reverse the decision about the Jia heir; at one point in their complaint they said, "In the Rites, [it is written that] the great lineages when without heirs would take a male heir from one of the lesser branches; there is no language about collateral surnames becoming heirs." They received no answer from the court. Guo Huai, on her part, issued a statement claiming that this was Jia Chong's own final wish. The Jin emperor Wu ordered the court to follow Jia's purported wishes, and the significant part of his edict bears quoting, since its preamble shows how elites of the third century conceived of *zongzu* in antiquity:

In antiquity, when one of the ranked states was without heir, it would select secondary males from the primarily enfeoffed branches in order to continue the line. But in more recent times, they simply made a change by eliminating the state. When we consider the Duke of Zhou and Xiao He (the minister who established early-Han law), houses either established the legal heir ahead of time or they gave fief and rank to the legal consort. Basically, this was to honor and announce merit but it did not comport with what was normative. [Jia Chong] sincerely selected his collateral grandson Han Mi to be the descendant of [Jia Chong's deceased] legal heir Li Min 黎民. We have reluctantly made a decision: The bones and flesh of a collateral (external) grandson reach close; we understand that one's kindness and emotions can link with another person's heart. Would that [the court] consider Mi as the legal grandson of the Duke of Lu (Jia Chong) and become the heir of his estate.⁹³

⁹² *JS* 40 (biog. Jia Chong), pp. 1170, 1175–1176.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 1171.

The emperor Wudi ended his edict by warning that it should not be considered a precedent unless the conditions of any future case are similar. (Soon after, Han Mi became Jia Mi, and he would rise to great influence under the tyrannical rule of Guo Huai's daughter; he was murdered in 300.) After the time of the above edict, when the offices of ritual debated over Jia Chong's posthumous honorific name, the erudit Qin Xiu 秦秀 held that the late Jia had "gone against the rites and diluted human feelings, bringing disorder to the great social relations," and that he had "broken off the sacred feeding of his ancestors, and brought about the very beginnings of great court disasters." The court entered opinions about giving a posthumous name of "The Vapid 荒," but Wudi in the end did not permit it, and another name was given, namely, "The Martial 武."⁹⁴

Normally, matters about appointing heirs of minor nobility who had died did not require imperial intervention; it was possible to settle it in the office of the Grand Herald.⁹⁵ But in this affair, because of the late Jia Chong's status as a Jin stalwart and the role of his daughter in manipulating dynastic succession, many made emphatic protests. But in addition to factional politics, we see that in the matter of adoptions, the influence of the elite at court had undergone an essential change to become quite opposed to collateral adoptions. The protestors against Guo Huai said that the Rites had no passage in them that allowed collateral adoption; and the emperor's edict made sure that the Jia case would remain an exception.

On this particular issue of legal-ritual precedents, it should be noted that Jia Chong himself had been responsible for the revision of the Jin law code in the period 265–67;⁹⁶ and in the late 260s, when Guo Huai once became angry over Jia's possibly being forced to push aside his marriage to her for political reasons, she scolded him: "To have revised and set the laws and ordinances established [your] merit as a supporter of the dynasty. I had my part in that."⁹⁷ Actually the

⁹⁴ Ibid.; see also *Zizhi tongjian* 資治通鑑 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1956) 81, pp. 2580–81.

⁹⁵ In Han times, the office not only was involved in protocol to be observed by non-Chinese official visitors, but had responsibilities that touched on inheritances of titles among marquises and princes of the blood; see Hans Bielenstein, *The Bureaucracy of Han Times* (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1980), pp. 39–40.

⁹⁶ On Jia's group that revised law code, see Goodman, *Xun Xu*, pp. 105–6. On that team were Xun Xu and his kinsman Xun Yi 荀顛 (d. 274), and Yi was next tasked by the court to collate and revise the Rites, esp. the "mourning grades 喪服," which were the ritual procedures for, and in a certain sense legal relationships between, the patrilineal and non-patrilineal branches of a family. The Jia Mi affair of 282 was so serious that just after Jia Chong's death, the court ordered Zhi Yu 摯虞 (d. 311) to review (and eventually reject) Xun Yi's earlier work (this is gone into in detail in Goodman, *Xun Xu*, pp. 353–59).

⁹⁷ *JŚ* 4 (biog. of Jia Chong), p. 1171. The life of Guo, including this episode, is treated in

Jin code seems to have had some sort of provision against collateral inheritance,⁹⁸ but perhaps the particular legal steps to install Han Mi that were taken by Jia Chong's widow did not violate those legal provisions, and what we are seeing is a contradiction between the court's general wishes at that moment in time and her political agenda. This entire episode signals a turning point in the consciousness about *zongzu*, and at the same time gives evidence showing the strength of the old traditions.

Afterward, we frequently see similar arguments among the elite. In Eastern Jin, Fan Ning wrote the following to Xie An 謝安: "[Collateral-surname adoption] is what we call going against the ordering of human relationships and [the ancient system of] *zhaomu* 昭穆;⁹⁹ it defies the intent carried forward continually in the codifications."¹⁰⁰ Moreover, when Wei emperor Ming made an heir from his wife's family, as mentioned, Sun Sheng 孫盛 (302–73) later criticized: "De was a collateral surname and using him this way denies the category. It brings neither merit nor family ties, and it appropriates the mother's titles. It denies human ties and ignores the codifications. It is extreme."¹⁰¹ I

detail in Timothy Davis, "Potent Stone: Entombed Epigraphy and Memorial Culture in Early Medieval China," Ph.D. diss. (Columbia University, 2008), chap. 4, part 1, see esp. p. 194.

⁹⁸ *JFS* 84 (biog. of Yin Zhongkan 殷仲堪), p. 2195: During Eastern Jin, he made a legal pronouncement about "sons and grandsons' becoming heirs to their collateral kin who were without descendants, claiming it was a case of "gaining support by arranging an adopted son from another surname; it was something not permitted by rites and laws." This shows that the custom of intrafamily commingling of collateral generations had been prohibited, and that such prohibition had been established in Western Jin and kept later in Eastern Jin; see Cheng Shude 程樹德, "Jinlü kaoxu" 晉律考序, in *Jiuchao lükao* 九朝律考 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1963), pp. 225–26. See also *Kongzi jiaoyu* 孔子家語 (sect. "Wen li" 問禮): "非禮則無以別男女、父子、兄弟、婚姻、親族、疏數之交焉"; and *Baopuzi* 抱樸子 (sect. "Shen ju 審舉"): "令親族稱其孝友, 邦閭歸其信義"; *Tanglü shuyi* 唐律疏議, annot. Liu Junwen 劉俊文 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1997) 12 ("Hu hun 戶婚"), p. 942; Song-era Dou Yi 竇儀 et al., *Song xing tong* 宋刑統, annot. Xue Meiqing 薛梅卿 (Beijing: Falü chubanshe, 1999) 12 ("Hu hun 戶婚"), p. 217; and Ming-era Li Shanzhang 李善長 et al., *Da Ming lü* 大明律, annot. Huai Xiaofeng 懷效峰 (Shenyang: Liaohai shushe, 1989) 4 ("Hu lü" 戶律 and "Da Ming ling, huling" 大明令, 戶令) 4, pp. 45, 239. Concerning this question, also see Lü Simian, *Lü Simian dushi zhaji* 呂思勉讀史劄記 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1982) ("Jin yi waixing wei hou" 禁以異姓爲後), pp. 559–60.

⁹⁹ The term stemmed from Zhou practice of allowing two lines of ancestral descendants to be installed in the ancestral temples as subsidiary to Hou Ji and other "clan originators, or *yuanzu* 元族": one of these two ancestral lines was called *mu* and the other *zhao*, after Wenwang and Wuwang; see *Suishu* 33 ("Jingji B"), p. 990. Furthermore, in Western Jin times, Zhi Yu (see n. 96, above) made a case to the court about the importance of genealogies, because in his view people had become unable to establish their ancestry since the disruptions of the end of Han; he compiled a work called "Zuxing zhaomu" 族姓昭穆 (or, "The Patriarchal Zhao-Mu Lineages." His work is discussed in *SS*, *ibid.*, which states that it was in 10 *juan*, claiming it was very popular in the period 480–556.

¹⁰⁰ *TD* 69 ("Yixing wei hou yi"), p. 1914.

¹⁰¹ *SGZ* 5 (biog. Hou Fei 後妃), *zhu*, cit. Sun Sheng, p. 164. On Sun's dates, see Cao Dao-heng 曹道衡 and Shen Yucheng 沈玉成, *Zhonggu wenxue shiliao congkao* 中古文學史料叢考 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 2003), p. 1189.

grant that Sun's critique was severe, but still, in all these cases we see that since Eastern Jin, elite objection to this kind of adoption grew ever more commonplace. The path that the changeover took was from up to down; the initial impetus came from the social elite, or the court, and it is reasonable to assert that such a significant social change was the product of an intentional group preference.

However, we must bear in mind that there were no signs of the appearance of PDG proper until the end of the Northern Dynasties. Based on my own study of local organizations, even most commoners didn't even have much of an idea of *zongzu* at that time. What they were most concerned about was their own family's happiness and fortune, a family being usually comprised of not more than five or six members. The influential organization was the *yi* 邑, a local association based mainly on rules and beliefs of a small locale, in spite of the fact that in many cases a village was totally of one surname.

Given the background just discussed, the vast majority of Northern Dynasties documents about patrilineal lines are the "conceptual" type: they were still not organizations.¹⁰² On the other hand, many that we termed "zongzu" reflect the use of a broad term for same-surname people living in one locale. It would be difficult to apply the logic of later times to them. Concerning non-elite families, the *baixing* 百姓, we must continue to limit this to same-surname *in loco* habitation, and then we can begin to trace that tendency toward common patriarchal ancestors. In the names of the *baixing* in those times we often can see the type "X Strong Clan." But this coincidentally shows that their consciousness about "zu" was still at a beginning level. It was the aspiration and pursuit of individual people, a type of extrinsic mark, and not a concrete phenomenon. After actual *zongzu* developed, we do not see that sort of naming. There are very few cases of image-making inscriptions in which the words "zongzu" or "qinzu 親族" are given as the objects of donors' prayers. From my own tabulation of 1,602 such records there altogether not even ten cases, a proportion of less than 1 percent.¹⁰³ The small number and the observed low proportion both explain how the image-makers, at least at the time of making Buddha-images to bring blessings, mostly lacked a *zongzu* focus. Any organizational form was still not apparent in terms of *zongzu*, and they were not as yet construct-

¹⁰² Zhou Yiliang 周一良, "Boling Cuishi ge'an yanjiu' pingjie" 博陵崔氏個案研究評介, idem, *Wei Jin Nanbei chao lunji* 魏晉南北朝史論集 (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 1997), pp. 522-23; P. Ebrey also this kind of viewpoint, in "Early Stages," pp. 18-19.

¹⁰³ See Hou Xudong 侯旭東, *Wuli shiji beifang minzhong Fojiao xinyang* 五六世紀北方民眾佛教信仰 (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 1998), pp. 223-26.

ing detailed genealogies or organizations. On the contrary, they were simply utilizing Buddhist teachings to establish local associations 邑義 in order to mobilize and organize same-surname Buddhist disciples.

CONCLUSION

Through this rough survey, we have come to know a bit about the roles of matrilineal kin and the actual situation of people's ideas about and consciousness of *zongzu*. If what I have said is reasonable, it may serve to help us rethink basic viewpoints about society at that time. We can draw a simple scheme of the lines of development in the lives of Han-Wei Six Dynasties people that went from recognizing the dual nature of patriarchy/matriarchy to a sentimental patrilineal consciousness. A *zongzu* that was truly a "patrilineal corporate body based on inheritance" was a long historical, stepwise situation taking more than a thousand years from Han to Song. It was a long and profoundly significant change. It made a deep influence on many aspects of later Chinese history, and the Han-Wei Six Dynasties era was the turning point, for at that time *zongzu* was still at the very beginning point of the change from "parental kin as corporate body" to the "patrilineal corporate body" and the first step in the formation of patrilineal consciousness. When the historical documents for that era speak of *zongzu* and *jiuzu*, it cannot be explained completely as the "patrilineal corporate body"; those documents also include maternal and uxorial aspects. The production of such a heavy impetus for change was greatly prompted and guided by the court and its Confucian thinkers, slowly broadening out from top to bottom. In terms of the intention as well as the guided nature of this kind of change, there are other explanations, but we must wait for deep research that is yet to come. That research might pay relatively more attention, as Sangren stressed in his article decades ago, to other associations that were active in daily life, such as the *she* 社 (hamlet community) in the Han to Tang era, and particularly in the North Dynasties the *yi*, rather than to concentrate on *zongzu*.¹⁰⁴ We should also be careful in using case studies of family histories, since they tend to analyze families as paternal kinship organizations. Finally, some of our conclusions about the early background of what we see as women's high social status during Tang need further reflection, because we may be able to trace it to the Han, rather than focus on the Northern Wei background.

¹⁰⁴ Steven F. Sangren, "Traditional Chinese Corporations: Beyond Kinship," *JAS* 43:3 (May 1984), pp. 391-415.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<i>deC/BD</i>	Rafe de Crespigny, <i>A Biographical Dictionary of Later Han to the Three Kingdoms (23–220 AD)</i>
<i>HHS</i>	<i>Hou Hanshu</i> 後漢書
<i>HS</i>	<i>Han shu</i> 漢書
<i>JŠ</i>	<i>Jinshu</i> 晉書
<i>L/BD</i>	Michael Loewe, <i>A Biographical Dictionary of the Qin, Former Han and Xin Periods (221 BC–AD 24)</i>
<i>SgS</i>	<i>Songshu</i> 宋書
<i>SGZ</i>	<i>Sanguo zhi</i> 三國志
<i>SS</i>	<i>Suishu</i> 隋書
<i>TD</i>	<i>Tongdian</i> 通典

