

Yü-ch'ih Chiung at An-yang: An Eighth-Century Cult and Its Myths

The suicide of Yü-ch'ih Chiung 尉遲迥 at the citadel of Yeh 鄴 in 580 A.D. was a turning point in the history of sixth-century China. For sixty-eight days he had offered the most convincing loyalist challenge to Yang Chien's 楊堅 assumption of power from the ruling house of Northern Chou. Then, within six months of his defeat and death, Yang dissolved all further resistance, took the imperial title and proclaimed a new dynasty.¹ These events ushered in the unified empire of Sui and in a sense created the setting for China's political fortunes in centuries to come. But the early T'ang government, taking power in turn from the Sui, read them differently. The first T'ang emperor saw fit to recognize Yü-ch'ih Chiung's loyal stand against the Yangs, whom he had himself replaced: he approved a descendant's request to have the old general reburied, and honored him with an imperial grant of silk.²

All this forms merely the background to the events that we examine here. For in 737 Yü-ch'ih Chiung's ghost made its presence felt in the prefectural city An-yang 安陽, and the prefect of the day appeased the ghost with temple and sacrificial cult. In itself this was an unremarkable episode: such things took place, both earlier and later, many times in all parts of China. But the events at An-yang offer a special kind of interest. It happens that we can study them both from several early documents and from later documents that differ radically in character. We have what is for this period probably a unique chance to view an episode of local religious experience from several distinct viewpoints. We can assess, by comparing them, the value and authority of different kinds of evidence — historical, epigraphical, and anecdotal — for the study of this case, and beyond it of other local

I am grateful to Professor Denis Twitchett for useful comments and suggestions that have been adopted in reviewing this piece. Also to Mr. Andrew Morton for checking and copying for me the material from *An-yang hsien-chih* (1738) used in n. 30 and elsewhere.

¹See accounts by Peter A. Boodberg, "Marginalia to the Histories of the Northern Dynasties," *HJAS* 4.3-4 (1939), pp. 230-83, esp. 260 ff.; and Arthur F. Wright, "The Sui Dynasty," in Denis Twitchett, ed., *The Cambridge History of China* (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1979) 3, pp. 57-60.

²*Pei shih* 北史 (Peking: Chung-hua shu-chü, 1974; hereafter *PS*) 62, p. 2214; *Chou shu* 周書 (Peking: Chung-hua, 1971; hereafter *CS*) 21, p. 352.

religious phenomena in medieval China. What follows, then, will be the story of a haunting resolved, but also, more basically, an essay in source-criticism.

SIXTH-CENTURY BACKGROUND

The ancient fortified city of Yeh stood on what is now the southern border of Hopei province, between the modern cities of Han-tan and An-yang. It had served as a seat of government since Warring States times (403–221 B.C.), when it was the capital of Wei 魏. For the Han (206 B.C.–220 A.D.) and for several succeeding northern dynasties it was a center of regional administration.³ In 401, under the Northern Wei, it became seat of the newly formed Hsiang-chou 相州 prefecture, and in 534 capital of the newly seceded Eastern Wei dynasty.⁴ For the Northern Ch'i it was again dynastic capital (550), and for the Northern Chou again the seat of Hsiang-chou (577).⁵ It was to this place that the veteran general Yü-ch'ih Chiung was appointed in 579 as Regional Commander (*tsung-kuan* 總管).⁶

Rapidly changing events at the Northern Chou court forced Yang Chien into a sudden bid for power in the summer of 580. Among other dispositions he summoned Yü-ch'ih Chiung to the capital, hoping to neutralize a man he perceived as a threat, and replaced him as Regional Commander of Hsiang-chou with Wei Hsiao-k'uan 韋孝寬. This was the moment for Yü-ch'ih Chiung to declare his open defiance. He refused to yield the command and led his troops in a rising designed to save the Chou house from a usurping chancellor. The military campaign lasted until early September. By then Yü-ch'ih Chiung had fallen back to his base at Yeh, there to be defeated by forces loyal to Yang Chien under the command of Wei Hsiao-k'uan.⁷ He died in these circumstances:

Ts'ui Hung-tu's 崔弘度 younger sister had previously become principal wife to [Yü-ch'ih] Chiung's son. When the fortifications of Yeh were breached and Chiung, hard pressed, climbed the tower, Hung-tu went

straight up the ramp in pursuit. Chiung drew his bow to shoot him, but Hung-tu took off his helmet and said to Chiung: "We are quite well acquainted, are we not? Each of us today is engaged on the nation's behalf: we cannot heed personal interests. But in consideration of our family relationship I have taken care to keep the soldier rabble in check and not let them attack and dishonor you. With things standing as they do, you must take the quick way out yourself. What are you waiting for?" Chiung flung his bow to the ground and cursed the Chancellor of the Left [Yang Chien]; when he had cursed his fill he killed himself. Hung-tu turned to his younger brother Hung-sheng and said: "You take Chiung's head." And Hung-sheng beheaded him. [Wei] Hsiao-k'uan buried in a pit all fighting men within the inner fortifications.⁸

Yü-ch'ih Chiung's sons were put to death, his youthful grandsons spared. Also spared was Ch'in 勤, the son of his younger brother Kang 綱.⁹ The surviving troops suffered execution within the month.¹⁰

A more far-reaching consequence for local affairs now followed:

Yang Chien . . . then burned down the walled city of Yeh and moved the inhabitants forty-five *li* to the south. He made the city of An-yang administrative center of Hsiang-chou and also of Yeh county. Early in the reign of [Sui] Yang-ti the county administration of Yeh was set up in the Ta-tz'u Monastery 大慈寺 of the old Yeh metropolis. Not until Chen-kuan 貞觀 8 [634 A. D.] were the inner fortifications of the present county town erected.¹¹

This marked the end of Yeh as a seat of local power. An-yang, fourteen miles to the south, would remain the prefectural city of Hsiang-chou throughout the T'ang and beyond.¹²

Certain features of this story will stand out in the later discussion. Yü-ch'ih Chiung died by his own hand. His head was removed and taken,

³ *Tzu-chih t'ung-chien* 174, p. 5425.

⁴ The sequence is sketched out, with some inaccuracies, in Li Chi-fu 李吉甫 (758–814), comp., *Ho Tz'u-chün* 賀次君, annot., *Yüan-ho chün-hsien t'u-chih* 元和郡縣圖志 (Peking: Chung-hua, 1983; hereafter *YHCHTC*) 16, pp. 451–52. See also *T'ai-p'ing huan-yü chi* 太平寰宇記 (1803 edn.) 55, pp. 1a–6b.

⁵ *Wei shu* 魏書 (Peking: Chung-hua, 1974) 106A, p. 2456; 12, p. 298.

⁶ *CS* 6, p. 100.

⁷ *CS* 21, p. 351; *PS* 62, p. 2211; *Tzu-chih t'ung-chien* 資治通鑑 (Peking: Chung-hua, 1956) 173, p. 5392.

⁸ *CS* 21, pp. 351–52; *PS* 62, pp. 2211–13; *Tzu-chih t'ung-chien* 174, pp. 5407–25.

⁹ According to *PS* 62, pp. 2213–16, the sons of Chiung were I 誼, K'uan 寬, Shun 順, Tun 惇, and Yu 祐; those of Kang were Yün 運, An 安, Ch'in 勤, and Ching 敬. In *Yüan-ho hsiang-tsu* 元和姓纂 (1802 edn.) 8, p. 10b, the sons of Kang appear as Yün-an 運安 and Yün-an 允安; Ch'i-fu 耆福, who petitioned T'ang Kao-tsu for permission to rebury his great-uncle in the early seventh century, was the son of the latter; cf. *CS* 21, p. 352; *PS* 62, p. 2214.

¹⁰ *CS* 21, p. 352.

¹¹ *Chiu T'ang shu* 舊唐書 (Peking: Chung-hua, 1975; hereafter *CTS*) 39, p. 1492; cf. *Sui shu* 隋書 (Peking: Chung-hua, 1973) 30, p. 847.

¹² *YHCHTC* 16, p. 452; *CTS* 39, pp. 1491–92; *T'ai-p'ing huan-yü chi* 55, p. 1a.

according to one source, to the capital at Lo-yang.¹³ His followers were buried in a pit at the site of his defeat; members of his family were pursued and captured. The entire episode took place at the ancient city Yeh, which was then destroyed and abandoned, and An-yang became the seat of prefectural government.

DYNASTIC HISTORY

The career of Chang Chia-yu 張嘉祐 unfolded in the late K'ai-yüan period and ended with his death in 741.¹⁴ His short official biography transmitted in the *Chiu T'ang shu* 舊唐書 picks out a single local episode for attention:

In the 25th year [737 A.D.] he became Prefect of Hsiang-chou. Since the beginning of K'ai-yüan, ten or more Hsiang-chou prefects had died or suffered demotion. Chia-yu learned from his enquiries that Yü-ch'ih Chiung had been Regional Commander of Hsiang-chou at the end of the Chou and had lost his life in the national emergency. So he set up a memorial temple to the spirit as a way to seek its blessing. After three annual assessments his appointment was changed to General of the Left in the Chin-wu 金吾 Guards. Wu Ching 吳兢 became Prefect of Yeh-chün 鄴郡 after him and further invested the spirit with ceremonial robes.¹⁵ From then on prefects suffered no more troubles.

To this biographer, it seems, the problem in Hsiang-chou was simply a matter of survival for the incumbent officials. Prefects died; local wisdom placed responsibility with the martyred patriot; and finally, Chang Chia-yu and his successor appeased the spirit with a sacrificial cult. We must understand "memorial temple" (*shen-tz'u* 神祠) as an individually dedicated place of worship used for seasonal sacrifice. There is no sign that relics or remains of the martyr played a part in the cult, and "shrine" would be too narrow a rendering.

The biographer glosses over a number of questions that closer study soon brings to the surface. He silently accepts the implication that the

martyr's spirit wielded power over incumbent prefects. But what, for instance, was the relationship between this public tribute to Yü-ch'ih Chiung and the imperially sanctioned honoring of his remains early in the seventh century? If the loyal martyr had received family burial and imperial silk more than a century before, what now lay behind these new troubles? What indeed were the troubles? The biographer mentions the death and demotion of certain prefects holding office in Hsiang-chou. But Chang Chia-yu himself certainly lived long enough to serve out his term and move on to a new job in the capital (though he did die there almost at once). To that extent the problem should have been solved. Yet the new Prefect Wu Ching had to enhance the cult-figure's status even more before the "troubles" (*huan* 患) would come to an end. If something more than prefect mortality and demotion was involved, the biography gives no clue to it. Nor does it deal in any way with the territorial distance between Yeh, where the martyr died, and An-yang, where the prefectural center now lay.

In the *Hsin T'ang shu* 新唐書, Sung Ch'i 宋祁 (998-1061) echoes this same passage, but in a few key phrases revises its entire scheme of motivation:

Late in K'ai-yüan he became Prefect of Hsiang-chou. Many previous incumbents had died in office there, and the people were stricken with fear and uncertainty. Chia-yu set up a memorial temple to purge and cleanse the minds of the people, on the grounds that Yü-ch'ih Chiung, who had died for his country, was a loyal subject. Three years later he was recalled to court and appointed General of the Left in the Chin-wu Guards. Wu Ching became Prefect after him and further invested the spirit with ceremonial robes. Then there were no more troubles.

The problem has become merely a loss of public morale. Prefects have died; local memory recalls the bloodshed of 580 and suspects vengeful ghosts; Chang and Wu exorcise the problem in the people's minds by publicly dedicating a cult to Yü-ch'ih Chiung. But the same loose ends remain.

Brevity could explain some of them, but not all. The biographer finds room enough to analyze public morale. He expresses Chang Chia-yu's motives in the deliberately chosen language of a public administrator — "to purge and cleanse the minds of the people" 解祓衆心. And in this he gives an early and clear statement of the principle spelled out in a later age: "gods are not supernatural themselves, but they act supernaturally on the minds of those who believe in them."¹⁶ It is all a far cry from the dramatic

¹³ *Sui shu* 1, p. 4.

¹⁴ *CTS* 99, p. 3093; *Hsin T'ang shu* 新唐書 (Peking: Chung-hua, 1975) 127, p. 4449; tomb inscription by Liu Pi (see n. 18, below).

¹⁵ According to *CTS* 102, p. 3182, Wu Ching (670-749) began at Hsiang-chou as Chief Administrator (*ch'ang-shih* 長史) and became Prefect of the place, renamed Yeh-chün 鄴郡 ca. 742. Early in his career he had served in the Bureau of Historiography. He composed a series of histories of the Northern Dynasties, including the Chou, and would naturally have been familiar with the life and death of Yü-ch'ih Chiung.

¹⁶ See Wang Hui-tsu 汪輝祖, *Hsüeh-chih i-shuo* 學治臆說 (pref. 1793), in *Ju-mu hsü-chih wu-chung* 入幕須知五種 (1892 edn.) B, p. 28a; cited in Etienne Balazs, *Political Theory and Administrative Reality in Traditional China* (London: U. of London P., 1965), p. 63.

confrontations between incoming prefects and proprietorial gods scattered through the histories of the Northern and Southern Dynasties (as with the Hsiang Yü 項羽 cult, to which we return below).¹⁷ The theological and ritual problems raised by local cults, so powerful in the minds of sixth- and seventh-century historians, win little interest in the eleventh. But they will show themselves still very much alive when we examine evidence on this cult from the time of its foundation.

INSCRIPTIONS ON STONE

For the life of Chang Chia-yu we have one contemporary document, a tomb inscription by Liu Pi 柳賁 written on the occasion of Chang's burial near Lo-yang on March 19, 742, three months after his death in Ch'ang-an on December 9, 741.¹⁸ It deals only briefly with the An-yang episode:

Before long he was appointed Prefect of Hsiang-chou. The men of Yin 殷 had false notions;¹⁹ the warden of Yeh flared up. But [Chang] was rich in loyalty, firm in sincerity. He governed like the very gods. Fussy regulations were removed, harsh policies discontinued. Lapsed rituals were restored to full observance . . . (9b)

This glance at Yü-ch'ih Chiung ("warden of Yeh") discovers on the one hand an ill-founded public panic, on the other a demonstration of proud strength by the dead hero. So for Liu Pi the haunting might be apparent or real; and the cult accordingly would serve either to steady the public's nerve or to mollify the threatening spirit. Explicit ambiguity then blurs into formulaic praise of Chang's performance as a model prefect.

By good fortune we have the inscriptions written for the memorial temple itself at the time of its foundation. There are two distinct documents. The first, and by far the more important of the two, was composed for an inaugural stele by Yen Chen-ch'ing 顏真卿 (709-785), with a preface by

¹⁷ The best-known example is the cult of Hsiang Yü at Wu-hsing 吳興, in the fifth and sixth centuries, discussed by Chao I 趙翼 (1727-1814) in his *Kai-yü ts'ung-k'ao* 陔餘叢考 (rpt. Shanghai: Shang-wu yin-shu kuan, 1957) 35, pp. 754-56, and (less completely) by Uchida Michio 內田道夫, "Kô U shin monogatari" 項羽神物語, rpt. in idem, *Chûgoku shôsetsu kenkyû* 中國小說研究 (Tokyo: Hyôronsha, 1977), pp. 241-59. Even more thorough is Miyakawa Hisayuki 宮川尚志, *Rikuchôshi kenkyû: Shûkyô hen* 六朝史研究宗教篇 (Kyoto: Heiraku shoten, 1964), pp. 391-414.

¹⁸ Liu Pi, "T'ang ku tso-chin-wu chiang-chün Fan-yang Chang-kung mu-chih-ming ping hsü" 唐故左金吾將軍范陽張公墓誌銘并序, in Huang Pen-chi 黃本驥, comp., *Ku-chih shih-hua* 古誌石華 (San-ch'ang-wu chai ts'ung-shu 三長物齋叢書 edn.) 11, pp. 8b-10a.

¹⁹ This refers to the people of Hsiang-chou, by association with the traditional site of the Yin capital near An-yang; *YHCHTC* 16, p. 451.

Yen Po-yü 閻伯輿. The whole was executed by Ts'ai Yu-lin 蔡有鄰 in a *li* 隸-style script and engraved on a stone which would stand in the precincts of the Yü-ch'ih Chiung temple in An-yang for many centuries to come. For connoisseurs of epigraphy this was a classic piece. Ou-yang Hsiu 歐陽修 (1007-1072) had a rubbing in his famous collection, as we see from his son Fei's 棗 catalogue of 1069.²⁰ In the twelfth century it was studied by Tung Yu 董道 (ca. 1125),²¹ in the fourteenth (*in situ*) by Nai Hsien 廼賢 (ca. 1345).²² Both men evidently found a text in good enough condition to read quite coherently. But by the seventeenth century the stone, though still seen in An-yang, had "lost more than half its surface to erosion."²³ There are reports that the stele was dug out of the ground during a restoration of the temple in 1690.²⁴ And there, at a spot near the northern gate of the city wall, it remained through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries while a series of distinguished epigraphists studied its badly damaged text.²⁵

Their transcriptions give us at best a seriously incomplete document, one which has failed to survive in an organic literary tradition. The transmission of Yen Chen-ch'ing's literary works has been from early times a story of loss and partial reconstitution.²⁶ When the editors of the *Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu* 四庫全書 project (1773-1782) critically reviewed the existing collection they noted a number of inscriptions in epigraphical sources which had been

²⁰ This is the lost *Chi-ku lu-mu* 集古錄目, later partly reconstructed from other sources; see Ch'en Ssu 陳思 (ca. 1200-1259+), *Pao-k'o ts'ung-pien* 寶刻叢編 (Shih-wan-chüan lou ts'ung-shu 十萬卷樓叢書 edn.) 6, p. 31a.

²¹ *Kuang-ch'üan shu-pa* 廣川書跋 (Hsing-su ts'ao-t'ang chin-shih ts'ung-shu 行素草堂金石叢書 edn.) 7, pp. 10a-11a.

²² *Ho-shuo fang-ku chi* 河朔訪古記 (Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu chen-pen pieh-chi 四庫全書珍本別集 edn.) B, pp. 22b-24a.

²³ Ku Yen-wu 顧炎武 (1613-1682), *Chin-shih wen-tzu chi* 金石文字記 (T'ing-lin i-shu 亭林遺書 edn.) 3, p. 29a.

²⁴ Hearsay reported by Liu Ch'ing-li 劉青藜 in *Chin-shih hsü-lu* 金石續錄 (Hsüeh-ku chai chin-shih ts'ung-shu 學古齋金石叢書 edn.; pref. 1710) 2, pp. 11a-b. For the date of restoration, see *An-yang hsien-chih* 安陽縣志 (1738 edn.) 4, p. 14a.

²⁵ Pi Yüan 畢沅 (1730-1797), *Chung-chou chin-shih chi* 中州金石記 (Ching-hsün t'ang ts'ung-shu 經訓堂叢書 edn.) 2, pp. 24a-25b; Ch'ien Ta-hsin 錢大昕 (1728-1804), *Ch'ien-yen t'ang chin-shih-wen pa-wei* 潛研堂金石文跋尾, in idem, *Ch'ien-yen t'ang ch'üan-shu* 全書 6, pp. 14a-b; Wu I 武億 (1745-1799) and Chao Hsi-huang 趙希璜, *An-yang hsien chin-shih lu* 安陽縣金石錄 (1799 edn.) 4, pp. 1b ff.; Wang Ch'ang 王昶 (1725-1806), *Chin-shih ts'ui-pien* 金石萃編 (1805 edn.) 82, pp. 17b-20a; Chao Shao-tsu 趙紹祖, *Chin-shih ts'ui-pien* 金石續編 (rpt. 1860) 2, pp. 5a-9b (this item dated 1808), and idem, *Ku-mo chai chin-shih pa* 古墨齋金石跋 (Chü-hsüeh hsüan ts'ung-shu 聚學軒叢書 edn.) 4, pp. 17a-18a; Hung I-hsüan 洪頤煊 (1765-1837), *P'ing-chin tu-pei chi* 平津讀碑記 (Mu-hsi hsüan ts'ung-shu 木犀軒叢書 edn.) 6, pp. 5b-6a; Lu Tseng-hsiang 陸增祥 (1833-1889), *Pa-ch'üang shih chin-shih pu-cheng* 八瓊室金石補正 (1925 edn.) 56, pp. 5b-7a.

²⁶ Surveyed by Wan Man 萬曼, *T'ang chi hsü-lu* 唐集校錄 (Peking: Chung-hua, 1980), pp. 64-67.

lost to literary transmission; the "Yü-ch'ih Chiung" piece was one of these.²⁷ It joined the recognized Yen Chen-ch'ing corpus in Huang Pen-chi's 黃本驥 definitive edition of 1845.²⁸

Surprisingly, it appears there quite complete and intact, as it does also in *Ch'üan T'ang wen* 全唐文 (compiled 1808–1814), supported by Yen Po-yü's equally complete preface.²⁹ So, despite the patchily preserved stele and the lack of literary tradition, these nineteenth-century editors had a source-text, which for completeness surpassed the best epigraphical work of their time. Such a text in fact lay ready for them in the 1738 gazetteer of An-yang county, where a brief notice on the lately-restored temple adds the entire text of the inscription, preface and all.³⁰ Although we have no information on where the local historian found this unblemished text of an inscription long since half worn away, we have little choice but to use it, checking the wording where we can with passages in the early reports.

Headed "Temple-stele of Master Yü-ch'ih, Grand Preceptor of the Chou and Duke of Shu" 周太師蜀國公尉遲公神廟碑, the stele originally bore a date in the first month of K'ai-yüan 26, and thus in the spring of 738.³¹ Its inscription deals with the life, death, and burial of Yü-ch'ih Chiung and with the arrival and intervention of Chang Chia-yu. The preface represents Yü-ch'ih's rehabilitation in these terms:

In the T'ang Wu-te 武德 period (618–626) the court ordained his reburial. They honored the dead, they mourned the long departed, for state rites had been wanting in former times. They marked the tomb, they remembered the man, for heaven's grace now flowed forth in a later age. In the year *ting-ch'ou* 丁丑 of K'ai-yüan (737) . . . the Prefect of Hsiang-chou, Master Chang Chia-yu . . . raised a temple to this loyal and pure-hearted man, established sacrifices with ritual offerings. When he had first alighted from his carriage to inquire about the local customs

²⁷ *Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu tsung-mu t'i-yao* 四庫全書總目提要 (1795 edn.) 149, p. 33b. The text concerning Yü-ch'ih Chiung accordingly appeared in the supplement 補遺 sect. to Yen's collected works, *Yen Lu-kung chi* 顏魯公集, ch. 16, p. 12a; see *Ying-yin Wen-yüan ko Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu* 景印文淵閣四庫全書 (Taipei: Shang-wu, 1983–86), vol. 1071, p. 692a.

²⁸ *Yen Lu-kung wen-chi* 顏魯公文集 (San-ch'ang-wu chai ts'ung-shu edn., 1845) 6, pp. 4a–5a.

²⁹ *Ch'üan T'ang wen* (1814 edn.) 339, pp. 8a–b; 395, pp. 23b–25b.

³⁰ *An-yang hsien-chih* (1738 edn.) 4, pp. 13b–15b. It also records that sacrifices were still currently offered to Yü-ch'ih Chiung at this temple on the twelfth day of the seventh month. Textual variants suggest that the *Ch'üan T'ang wen* editors used an intermediary source, *An-yang hsien chin-shih lu* (1799 edn.) 4, pp. 1b–4b, where the surviving remnants of the inscription are collated with the 1738 text, exposing some discrepancies.

³¹ Compare Ou-yang Fei, Ku Yen-wu, Pi Yüan, Ch'ien Ta-hsin, Wang Ch'ang ("K'ai-yüan < >/1/2< >"), Chao Shao-tsu, Hung I-hsüan. (See nn. 20, 23, 25, above.) Only Nai Hsien gives the date K'ai-yüan 26/2/21, in *Ho-shuo fang-ku chi* B, p. 24a.

they complained in the prefecture of malevolent hauntings. He said, "If any ordinary man or woman who dies by violence can wreak trouble, how much more, then, can the Duke of Shu, whose words and deeds were an example to all! . . . Holders of the prefect's post, though privileged to draw a high stipend, have neglected to perform due rites of celebration: it was right and proper that they should suffer calamities! I, therefore, have laid out my own salary, and a lofty temple has risen in splendor. I have moved in a 'stone from another hill,'³² and a magnificent stele completes the words of praise. As long as hills and valleys stand firm they will for evermore record his mighty heroism."

These are the careful words of a man who expects to be overheard by the presence that threatens him — loudly praising the spirit's past merit, freely endorsing his recent mischief-making, elaborately smoothing his ruffled feathers. The passage expresses a dual motivation: to assuage disturbance to the public by "malevolent hauntings" 多祟, and to free a scared prefect from the "calamities" 戾 that his predecessors suffered.

Chang's comments recall one of the central themes of Chinese theology: the spirits of those who die by violence and by their own hand are often the ones that impose their powerful presence on human society and require service by sacrificial cult. Chang affirms the territorial responsibility of local officials in performing such ritual tasks. In this case a powerful enough spirit at large within the bounds of Hsiang-chou will aim at the Prefect of Hsiang-chou and look for a cult at the official seat of Hsiang-chou, regardless of the particular spot where he met his death. So Chang now accepts, in the dead hero's hearing, that the ceremonies of reburial in the early T'ang have not fulfilled his appetite for public recognition. The new cult will put the matter right.

Following the preface, Yen Chen-ch'ing's solemn lines, ringing with echoes from the *Book of Odes*, sum it up:

In Yeh there is a worthy prefect,
Master Chang is he.
Fragrant in his bright virtue,³³
Now he builds a Closed Temple.

³² A line from *Shih ching* 詩經, Ode 184, "Ho ming" 鶴鳴.

³³ This alludes to *Shang shu* 尚書, "Chün Ch'en" 君陳: "Perfect government is like potent fragrance, it influences the spirits. It is not millet which has the potent fragrance, it is bright virtue." See *Shang shu chu-shu* 尚書注疏 (Shih-san ching chu-shu 十三經注疏 edn., 1815) 18, pp. 10b–11a.

Now he builds a Closed Temple,
And the Closed Temple is hushed.³⁴
Now he sets up a fine stele,
And the fine stele brings rules.

The demon afflictions end forthwith,
Spirits and men look fair.³⁵
Blessings and goods³⁶ in full store,
Offerings and sacrifice never in default.³⁷

A month after this a second inscription was carved on the back of the same stone. Composed by Yü-ch'ih Shih-liang 士良, a great-great-grandson of Yü-ch'ih Chiung, and dated K'ai-yüan 26/2/25 (March 19, 738), it celebrated the ancestor's loyal career and the incumbent's priest-like mediation. For this piece no full text survives. We have about seventy percent of the original, copied from rubbing or stone by later epigraphists,³⁸ but large gaps break up the text so often and so seriously that it yields poor sense. Nai Hsien, who read it in the fourteenth century, offers this brief summary:

The reverse of the stele commemorates miracles wrought by [Yü-ch'ih] Chiung. It says that sunshine and rain always followed in response to prayers. He turned back wind, drove off locusts, and thus saved the whole territory from harm. When autumn nights came round two cranes would descend and settle in the temple courtyard. Even now (it says) the local people still talked of it as a wonder.³⁹

With this as a framework we can bring some details of the original text into focus. It seems, for instance, more likely that the two cranes made a single appearance on a clear night after Chang's successful prayer for rain, prompting his kinsman Chang Huan 張環 to "compose a Rhapsody on Fructifying Rain 賦膏雨." Later, when rainstorms threatened the autumn harvest and Chang prayed again, he used a medium 巫 to communicate with the spirit. And after their successful harvest the people of Hsiang-chou sang a hymn of praise to their model prefect.⁴⁰

³⁴The opening line of Ode 300, "Pi kung" 閟宮. The Closed Temple was dedicated to Chiang Yüan 姜嫄, mother of the Chou founding patriarch Hou-chi 后稷.

³⁵載色, from Ode 299, "P'an shui" 泮水.

³⁶載穀, from Ode 166, "T'ien pao" 天保. ³⁷A further line from Ode 300, "Pi kung."

³⁸Wu, *An-yang hsien chin-shih lu* 4, pp. 8b-10a; Wang, *Chin-shih ts'ui-pien* 82, pp. 20b-22a; Chao, *Ku-mo chat chin-shih pa* 4, p. 18a; Lu, *Pa-ch'ung shih chin-shih pu-cheng* 56, pp. 6a-b.

³⁹Nai, *Ho-shuo fang-ku chi* B, pp. 23a-b.

⁴⁰Wu, *An-yang hsien chin-shih lu* 4, p. 9b; Wang, *Chin-shih ts'ui-pien* 82, p. 21b.

These inscriptions share a characteristic with the biographical accounts with which we began. It is not just that all issue from the hands of the T'ang ruling elite; they also enjoy in their various ways the status of public documents. Documentary forms of course impose certain distinctive rhetorical demands. But public official status lays down a more basic imperative: inevitably these documents address one, and only one, aspect of the Hsiang-chou cult — its role as support for an imperial officer, his personal security, and his duty to preserve order, promote the people's welfare, and maintain harmony between human society and the surrounding cosmos.

We first approached the An-yang material from the detached and conspicuously public vantage-point of imperial historians, then moved inward towards statements so close in time and space to the temple's foundation that they could claim some part of their own in its earliest ritual function. The whole concentric system, however, shows more consistency than variety. At first sight the authors of the two T'ang histories, though using almost the same form of words, pass quite antithetical verdicts on the whole episode — the *Old* implicitly assenting, the *New* functionally agnostic. Yet the obituary memoir of Chang Chia-yu shows both judgments standing quite easily together, offering state historians a choice of styles. We have no real grounds to deny that the same two judgments might even have stood together in the minds of Chang himself, of Yen Chen-ch'ing, Yen Po-yü, and Yü-ch'ih Shih-liang. Of course, the rhetoric of the temple inscriptions declares a firm and passionate commitment to its presiding spirit. But so would it also if the temple and its inscriptions were merely the product of a calculated and cynical act of administrative policy. There is a sense, then, in which these documents from the very fountainhead of the An-yang cult present no more than an opaque surface through which we see little of its underlying motivation. Nor (with the doubtful exception of Yü-ch'ih Shih-liang's composition) do they reveal much about its concrete circumstances. They reflect instead what we can only call an official mythology, according to which a troubled episode in local affairs resolves into social and cosmic harmony under a wise and able administrator.

ANECDOTAL SOURCES

Already in the twelfth century, Tung Yu noticed in a book called *Shang-shu ku-shih* 尚書故實 a variant account of Chang Chia-yu's experience in Hsiang-chou, and he sharply challenged its version of the facts.⁴¹ This

⁴¹Tung, *Kuang-ch'uan shu-pa* 7, p. 11a.

book survives, in a single *chüan*.⁴² Its author was Li Cho 李卓, its subject the fund of anecdotes shared with Li by a board president 尚書 whose exact identity we are unable to pin down, but who numbered Chang Chia-yu among his forebears. What evidence we have about Li and his elusive President Chang is circumstantial but plausible. It suggests that the book had its genesis in a time of national emergency, probably when Huang Ch'ao's 黃巢 rebellion struck at Lo-yang in the winter of 880.⁴³ Li Cho lived long enough later on to brood nostalgically over a T'ang dynasty already collapsed — hence well into the tenth century. President Chang, it seems, belonged to the same family and generation as the celebrated art critic Chang Yen-yüan 張彥遠. His descent from Chang Chia-yu's generation emerges directly in the piece of family lore about Yü-ch'ih Chiung that we now put under scrutiny:

[President Chang] himself told the story of his great-uncle in the fifth generation,⁴⁴ Chia-yu, who in the K'ai-yüan period became Governor General 都督 of Hsiang-chou. There were strange calamities in the official residence, and a succession of prefects had lost their lives. When the General arrived, he sat formally robed through the whole night, in the principal chamber. Suddenly, at midnight, he heard the sound of a sigh behind the screen, and before long a man emerged from the side-chamber to the west. His dress was in tatters, his body limp and worn out. The man mounted the steps one by one and walked straight up to him. The General now demanded in a stern voice, "What spirit are you, to present yourself here?" The reply came, "I am Yü-ch'ih Chiung, general of the Later Chou. I died in this place, and my remains are here still. I want to entrust a man of good will to see my burial and funeral sacrifices duly completed. But past incumbents of this prefecture have all been men of weak courage and poor spirit. They were startled and scared to death, not murdered by me." He then pointed to a ten-year-old girl and said, "This is my daughter. She too is buried beneath the side-chamber." Next day the General ordered his staff to dig up the place, and they did indeed find two skeletons. He provided a full set of garments, shrouds, and coffin equipment and had them

buried with due ceremony. Two nights later the man reappeared to express his thanks. He then said, "All I can offer by way of return is to make you disciplined and conspicuous in your government."⁴⁵ I am at your service in times of flood or of drought." The General now reported the matter to the throne, requesting permission to found a temple and offer blood-sacrifice at the seasons of the year. The Emperor specially bestowed a written decree in praise of this wonder. A stele was carved with an account of the matter. And the temple with the stele is there still.

Of course Tung Yu was right: the simplest tests show up this story as full of factual error. We have direct contemporary evidence that Chang Chia-yu knew of Yü-ch'ih Chiung's formal reburial more than a century before his own time. Long before his time, too, imperial histories of the northern dynasties had recorded that Yü-ch'ih died in Yeh, not An-yang (namely, in *Chou shu* since 635, *Sui shu* since 636, and *Pei shih* since 659). And if Chang did communicate with the throne and obtain in return a special rescript, no hint of this transaction remains in the early sources. All told, there is every temptation to discard the whole piece as so much spurious imagining. Except, that is, for two features which keep curiosity alive. One is the claimed authority of family tradition — a tradition already a century and a half removed from the event, with all the refractions and distortions that time could bring, but still a tradition that must have found its origin somewhere. The other point concerns an internal feature of the story itself — the ten-year-old girl, supposed to be the dead general's daughter, whose skeleton is unearthed together with his. In any purely fabricated story a detail like this would be surplus to requirements: contributing nothing functional to the main action, it hangs there incongruously and inconclusively. What, we want to ask, lies behind it?

The matter would have to rest there if we did not have another and much fuller version of this story from a date far closer to the events in An-yang. It appears in *Kuang-i chi* 廣異記, a collection of supernatural anecdotes compiled in the second half of the eighth century by Tai Fu 戴孚. The contents of this collection suggest that the author mixed with lower-ranking members of the provincial civil service in various parts of China and collected from them many local stories of religious interest, covering the

⁴² I use here the text in *Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu*. The item in question appears on pp. 7b-8a (Ying-yin Wen-yüan ko Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu edn., vol. 862, p. 472).

⁴³ Here I summarize the main conclusions of Yü Chia-hsi's 余嘉錫 powerful documentary study in *Ssu-k'u t'i-yao pien-cheng* 四庫提要辨證 (rpt. Peking: Chung-hua, 1980) 15, pp. 909-18.

⁴⁴ *Kao-po-tsu* 高伯祖, the elder brother of his grandfather's grandfather.

⁴⁵ The attributes "disciplined" (*chieh* 節) and "conspicuous" (*hsüan* 宣) were among those officially used in canonizing meritorious officials; see *T'ang hui-yao* 唐會要 (Kuo-hsüeh chi-pen ts'ung-shu edn.) 79, pp. 1456-57. I am grateful to Prof. David L. McMullen for pointing this out.

decades down to 780. Tai Fu himself must have died between then and 794. His book has been lost since 1127, but much of it survives, item by item, in the tenth-century *T'ai-p'ing kuang-chi* 太平廣記, and a few fragments appear in twelfth-century encyclopedic collections.⁴⁶ For our study of the An-yang cult, then, *Kuang-i chi* offers testimony from no more than forty, or at most fifty, years after the cult's foundation. This version of the story both challenges and illuminates the account in *Shang-shu ku-shih*.⁴⁷

In the K'ai-yüan period Chang Chia-yu became Prefect of Hsiang-chou. The prefectural residence had long been haunted, and when Chia-yu first arrived ghosts at once began changing around his furniture⁴⁸ and creating maximum disturbance. But Chia-yu did not fear them. When the settings for a feast in a small hall in his west court were once again overturned, together with other foodstuffs, Chia-yu went to investigate.⁴⁹ He saw a girl and asked her, "What spirit are you, young lady?" She said, "I am the daughter of my late father Yü-ch'ih, once Prefect of Hsiang-chou and Grand General of the Chou dynasty. Our family has suffered a great wrong, and he wishes to meet the Prefect and set forth his case." Chia-yu said, "I shall hear what he has to say with due respect."

Before long the man appeared. In look and dress he was stately and grand, in gaze noble and sublime. He began by paying his respects to Chia-yu, who invited him to sit and asked him this: "You, a man wise and good in life, an honored spirit in death — why do you now squeak and rustle⁵⁰ among the shades, frightening the boys and girls and giving this prefecture the lasting repute of a haunted post? How could such integrity come to that?"

He replied, "In days gone by, when the house of Chou reached

⁴⁶ For my own study of the book's attribution, dating, textual authenticity, and transmission, see Tu Te-ch'iao 杜德橋 [Glen Dudbridge], "Kuang-i chi ch'u-t'an" 廣異記初探, *Hsin Ya hsüeh-pao* 新亞學報 15 (1986), pp. 395-414. See also Uchiyama Chinari 內山知也, "Chū Tōshoki no shōsetsu — Kōiki o chūshin to shite" 中唐初期の小説 — 廣異記を中心として, in *Kaga hakushi taikan kinen Chūgoku bunshi tetsugaku ronshū* 加賀博士退官記念中國文史哲學論集 (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1979), pp. 527-41. Uchiyama's figures for internal dating are slightly different from my own. His reconstruction of Tai Fu's career, assuming first appointment in or after 787, is not based on hard evidence; see his pp. 531-32.

⁴⁷ See *T'ai-p'ing kuang-chi* (Jen-min wen-hsüeh edn.; rev. rpt. Peking, 1961) 300, p. 2386. This modern punctuated edn. makes critical use of important manuscript and printed textual sources, but omits the collation notes made in 1668 by Sun Ch'ien 孫潛 from a ms. copy of an early edn. These have been compiled by Yen I-p'ing 嚴一萍, *T'ai-p'ing kuang-chi chiao-k'an chi* 校勘記 (Pan-ch'iao: I-wen yin-shu kuan, 1970).

⁴⁸ For 崇迴祐家 read 迴易家具, with Ming ms. and Sun Ch'ien.

⁴⁹ For 觀 read 視, with Sun Ch'ien. ⁵⁰ For 宵宰 read 屑 (with Sun) 窳.

the end of its imperial sway,⁵¹ Yang Chien seized power. How could I, who had the honor to serve under the Chou, endure the collapse of its state altars? It was for this that I wished to preserve my integrity as a subject, to take the lead in the great cause. I aspired to restore the cosmos to rights and so maintain the Emperor T'ai-tsu's 太祖 heritage.⁵² Wei Hsiao-k'uan was once a minister of the Chou house, but he failed to respond to the call of the righteous enterprise. Instead, he agreed to be harnessed and used by Yang Chien. I, with the forces of a single prefecture, faced the massed thousands⁵³ of the entire empire's armies. Even though my good faith reared up to high heaven itself, there was no one in the whole world to come to my aid. Upon which my territory fell to the enemy. My whole lineage was put to death, and the bones of my entire family, about sixty of them, lie beneath this hall. The more time goes by the more our sense of grievance rankles. Even if we would,⁵⁴ we cannot rot away, but whenever we address ourselves to men we terrify them to death. With no one to hear our complaint we have come to this. I beg you, noble sir, to cast your eyes⁵⁵ upon us. If our forgotten bones can gain your kind attention and our darkened souls⁵⁶ be lifted up again, then even death will be to us as life itself."

Chia-yu gave his consent. Some days later he had the pile of bones dug up and gave them solemn burial at the rear of the hall. He then made the hall into a temple and addressed prayers to the dead at the seasons of the year.

[Chia-]yu had a daughter aged eight or nine. Whenever a member of his family had a question to ask they would make her address it to the spirit, and the spirit would always respond. And when the spirit had something to say to Chia-yu, he too would call the little girl out to meet him. This became a regular practice. And from that time on the spirit would always send ghostly troops with any members of Chia-yu's family who were bound on a journey, to escort them as far as the borders. When the troops returned they would report in full on how far the escort had gone. In the west they never went farther than the Ho-yang 河陽 Bridge.⁵⁷

⁵¹ For 作 read 祚, with Sun.

⁵² Yü-wen T'ai 宇文泰 (507-556); see discussion of dates in CS 2, p. 43, n. 26. He was the father of the first Chou emperor Hsiao-min 孝閔帝.

⁵³ For 益 read 萬, with Sun. ⁵⁴ For 別 read 則, with Sun.

⁵⁵ For 盼 read 眄, with Sun. ⁵⁶ For 魅 read 魂, with Sun.

⁵⁷ Ho-yang was a county on the north bank of the Yellow River, just facing Lo-yang. It was protected by various citadels, one of which, the Chung-tan Citadel 中潭城, stood on an island

This account stands in an interesting relation to the late ninth-century version from *Shang-shu ku-shih*. Of course they have enough features in common — the prefect's dialogue with the ghost, the ghost's young daughter, his neglected bones in the precincts of the residence, his request for burial and obsequies — to count as variants of the same story. Yet they part company over many important details, none more interesting than those concerning Yü-ch'ih Chiung's slaughtered kin. Once again an earlier stage of evidence brings out a crisper definition. The daughter, whose remains so incongruously accompany her father's in the later version, has a perfectly clear role to play in the earlier: she is chosen from among sixty members of the slain lineage to come out and herald her father's formal appearance before the state official. In this example the version in *Shang-shu ku-shih* betrays a process of decay, by which an isolated feature of the old story survives beyond the context and function that once gave it meaning. Such loose matching between the two variants guarantees a particular kind of value. For if they had been closely matched we should have to suspect some relatively uninteresting form of routine literary transmission. As it is, we seem rather to have two independent derivatives of a common background tradition. Of the tradition's source or early currency we may not know anything for sure, but we can at least take its existence as well spoken for.

A more basic question now arises. For reasons already pointed out, the variants of this powerful ghost story cannot claim authority as simple factual accounts of events in the An-yang of 737. What, then, is their status? How should they be read? With these questions we come at last to the main concern of the present study. The same questions confront any student who hopes to exploit the great corpus of early *chih-kuai* 志怪 literature for insights into Chinese social and religious history. Here, for once, with the story of Yü-ch'ih Chiung's ghost and his provincial cult, we can set certain apocryphal items within a context defined by contemporary documents and study them with the benefit of known historical perspective. At least one level of conjecture can be removed from our attempt at a critical reading.

The *Kuang-i chi* presents itself as the work of a conscientious reporter.

in midstream. "A floating bridge spanning the Yellow River was constructed there, with boats as supports and bamboo matting going across them" (*YHCHTC* 5, p. 144). Cf. remarks by Chang Shun-min 張舜民 (ca. 1034-ca. 1110), quoted by Hung Mai 洪邁 (1123-1202) in *Jung-chai sui-pi* 容齋隨筆 (rpt. Shanghai: Shanghai Ku-chi ch'u-pan she, 1978), *hsü-pi* 續筆 12, p. 366. Li Tsu-huan 李祖桓, "Huang-ho ku-ch'iao shu-lüeh" 黃河古橋述略, *Wen-shih* 文史 20 (1983), pp. 67 and 74, dates the Ho-yang Bridge to 785. This, I believe, rests on a misreading of the source, which associates the bridge more generally with a strategic garrisoning of Chung-tan Citadel from 758 on.

In many ways it anticipates China's great classic of open-minded religious record, the collections of Hung Mai 洪邁 entitled *I-chien chih* 夷堅志. Tai Fu, like Hung Mai, often takes trouble to name eyewitness informants (in one case himself) for the wonders he has to describe. His prose is simple, even austere, scarcely more than one remove from perfunctory note-taking. He has space for little more than necessary data, not much to spare for emotive, descriptive, or rhetorical effects, and certainly none for moralism. It is hard to attribute to him any interest in creatively remolding the material at hand. Unsurprisingly, then, his 300-odd items vary widely in character as well as content. We cannot expect to form a systematic view of their documentary value without covering the collection as a whole (a task which I have been pursuing for some time, and of which the present study forms a small part). Many items, however, respond well to a simple analytical device that will serve a useful purpose here — the device of resolving a narrative into "inner" and "outer" stories. The *inner* story represents the private, even subjective, experience of a person who makes direct contact with the otherworld; it is very often characterized as a dream, trance, or vision of a kind that separates the subject from his surroundings. The *outer* story gives the public and visible context for the inner; it represents characteristically what we ourselves, as outside observers, might have seen and heard if we had been there. Both these categories, particularly the outer story, need to be drawn with subtlety and care, since certain pieces reveal more than one level of externality.⁵⁸ But they can throw some light on the story of Chang Chia-yu and Yü-ch'ih Chiung's ghost.

The initial analysis is simple. Chang enters an inner story at the moment when his personal investigation (*Kuang-i chi*) or deliberate vigil (*Shang-shu ku-shih*) puts him in contact with the ghosts. This inner story covers his conversation with the ghosts and ends when his staff are called in to deal with their abandoned bones. (In *Shang-shu ku-shih* it resumes briefly for uttering of thanks and offering of service.) All the rest is outer story, and here the richness and interest of the *Kuang-i chi* begin to make themselves felt. There is a prelude, in which a poltergeist haunting strikes typically at domestic items — furniture, crockery, foodstuffs. And, with the reburial and the temple cult, there is an aftermath in which Chang's own young daughter serves as a spirit medium for the Prefect and his family, allowing them to communicate with the honored spirit; appended to this is an account of one

⁵⁸ Some examples are discussed in my paper "T'ang Tales and T'ang Cults," presented to the Second International Conference on Sinology, December, 1986, in Taipei.

feature of their cordial communion. But analysis into inner and outer stories offers more than a simple paragraphing device. Each of them, once isolated, shows a character of its own and calls for an appropriate style of reading.

The inner story is formal in more senses than one. Not merely does it convey the formality of an official interview, but its very composition obeys a settled and predictable formula. It belongs to a category we might call "the tale of the haunted post," in which a sequence of terror and destruction is halted by a local official with the courage to identify the dangerous spirit, confront it, and bring it within the sphere of public control. The origins of this formula are old, and they are linked (as here) to real historical situations. The example of Hsiang Yü has been mentioned above. There, too, was an ancient dynastic contender, likewise defeated and beheaded, who for much of the fifth and sixth centuries established a claim to blood sacrifice in the very audience chamber of the official quarters in Wu-hsing 吳興. Incoming officials were obliged to deal with him, and the sources record different styles of confrontation.⁵⁹ Those who brazened it out (with shoes on their feet) in the audience chamber met varying success: one died, one simply survived; one managed to replace bloody victims with Buddhist vegetarian offerings, another with offerings of dried meat. Some officials made friends with him. One, it was said, owed a high promotion to his dutiful service of the god; another won answers to his prayers by sociably carousing with him. All this took place against the background of an established temple dedicated to Hsiang Yü in the territory of Wu-hsing.

We might draw several parallels with the case of Yü-ch'ih Chiung, but the most pertinent is that a trial of strength between local cult and imperial authority works itself out time after time as a personal transaction between prefect and god in the very seat of official power. The *Kuang-i chi*, which takes cognizance of a Hsiang Yü cult,⁶⁰ also reports other such transactions. Each one has an "inner story," and each of these takes the form that we have found here: the ghost, boldly sought out, emerges and speaks its mind; the magistrate or prefect responds; and the ghost, its needs fulfilled, shows

gratitude by rendering him service.⁶¹ This is the sense in which Chang Chia-yu's inner story is formulaic and predictable. When the contact between local official and threatening spirit is articulated in narrative form it will take the same necessary shape. In much the same way, Yü-ch'ih Chiung's ten-year-old daughter plays a role that recurs through other ghost stories in *Kuang-i chi* and elsewhere. The young, subordinate, insignificant figure prepares for the appearance of one more weighty, of greater public moment or social standing: a serving maid heralds the coming of her ghostly mistress; a female shade identifies a receptive mortal while a dead officer waits in the darkened wilderness for his more important turn.⁶² Such figures find their counterparts in Taoist literature of the pre-T'ang Shang-ch'ing 上清 tradition, with the jade maidens and their like who announce the arrival of divine beings.⁶³

With this inner core of recognized formulas we can now contrast the surrounding outer story. It is familiar ground in a wholly different way, standing squarely in the large, ancient and worldwide literature of poltergeist reports. Psychic research, of course, is no part of our business here, and indeed the documentary status of this piece — an apocryphal anecdote set down decades after the event — would not meet modern criteria of evidence in that field of enquiry. But comparisons can be drawn, and we can still make use of poltergeist literature to illuminate the *Kuang-i chi*. At once it becomes clear that the outer story fits organically with a well-established pattern. Poltergeist stories, routinely filled with moving furniture, broken crockery, and spilt foodstuffs, also regularly contain human subjects whose presence appears to stimulate or provoke the disturbances. Modern writers use terms like "agent" or "medium" to identify this role, which they treat as a strictly passive and usually unconscious involvement with phenomena that often bring the subjects pain and distress.⁶⁴ Poltergeist agents are preponderantly young and female, often pubescent girls, occasionally true children. In some cases they are possessed by a spirit that links itself with

⁵⁹ The main references, in chronological order and excluding duplication, are: *Nan shih* 南史 (Peking: Chung-hua, 1975) 27, p. 726 (before 412 A.D.); *ibid.* 18, p. 499 (before 465); *Nan Chi shu* 南齊書 (Peking: Chung-hua, 1972) 27, p. 308 (before 486); *Nan shih* 18, p. 501 (499); *ibid.* 51, pp. 1269-70 (early 6th c.); *ibid.* 18, pp. 306-7 (510-19); and *ibid.* 9, p. 273 (558). The T'ang dignitary Ti Jen-chieh 狄仁傑 (607-700) uttered an act of formal suppression in 688; see *Ch'ao-yeh ch'ien-t'ai* 朝野僉載, cited in *Shuo-fu* 說郛 (rpt. Shanghai: Shang-wu, 1927) 2, pp. 10b-11a.

⁶⁰ See *T'ai-p'ing kuang-chi* 301, p. 2389, "Ts'ui Min-ch'üeh" 崔敏敬. This cult was located at Hsü-chou 徐州, now in the northwest corner of Kiangsu. The dialogue strongly recalls a speech in *Nan shih* 18, p. 306.

⁶¹ For the dead requiring reburial, see *T'ai-p'ing kuang-chi* 105, p. 709; 328, p. 2603; 329, p. 2614; 336, pp. 2668-70. For animals requiring assistance, *ibid.* 439, p. 3581; 456, pp. 3731-32.

⁶² *T'ai-p'ing kuang-chi* 300, p. 2383; 333, pp. 2647-48; 386, pp. 3081-82; Chou Leng-ch'ieh 周楞伽 ed., *P'ei Hsing Ch'uan-ch'i* 裴劍傳奇 (Shanghai: Shang-hai ku-chi, 1980), pp. 74-75, "Chao Ho" 趙合.

⁶³ See Kristofer M. Schipper, *L'empereur Wou des Han dans la légende taoïste: Han wou-ti nei-tchouan* (Paris: École Française d'Extrême-Orient, 1965), pp. 42, 59, 68-69.

⁶⁴ "Agent" is the term used by Alan Gauld and A. D. Cornell in *Poltergeists* (London: 1979), pp. 67-84. I refer to this book in particular for the sake of its chronological list of 500 cases with source references (pp. 363-98).

the disturbances. This is the context in which the "prelude" and "aftermath" of the outer story come together as an organic whole; and Chang Chia-yu's eight-year-old daughter, whose communication with the spirit suggests that she too is possessed, emerges as a likely poltergeist agent by the same token.

The point must be made with care. We are not in a position to treat any of this as empirically verified data but simply to observe its conformity with patterns taken from a wide range of reports. We can even give the conformity a quantitative value by using Alan Gauld's register of characteristics drawn from reports of 500 cases throughout the world.⁶⁵ Seven of them are suggested in the outer story:

GAULD NO.	CHARACTERISTIC
11	Female agent
12	Agent under twenty
15	House-centered
16	Small objects moved
17	Large objects moved, e.g., chairs, tables
41	Possession, obsession
46	"Deceased person" communicates

(Characteristic 24, "Phantasms [human]," is excluded, since it belongs only to the inner story.) Of the 500 cases there are forty-five that share four of these characteristics, and four that share five of them.⁶⁶ These rather limited figures conceal some suggestive parallels. A single example will make the point — the story from sixteenth-century Lyons of a defected Benedictine nun who died and was buried in the open without ceremony or memorial. One of the remaining nuns later gathered from the sound of rapping noises that the lost sister wished for reburial in the abbey. When this was organized by the suffragan bishop the dead nun, through the same personal medium, answered questions about life after death; she also, in a scene of spirit possession, sought forgiveness and received the Church's absolution.⁶⁷ Here,

⁶⁵ Gauld and Cornell, *Poltergeists*, pp. 226–28.

⁶⁶ The four are: no. 205, from Stratford, Connecticut, in 1850 (see H. Spicer, *Sights and Sounds* [London: 1853], pp. 101–10); no. 261, from Amherst, Nova Scotia, in 1878–9 (see W. Hubbell, *The Great Amherst Mystery* [London: 1888]); no. 358, from Lading, Austria, in 1916–18 (see *Zeitschrift für Parapsychologie*, 1932, pp. 97–101); no. 430, from France (no location) in 1940 (see *Annales de médecine légale et de criminologie* 31 [1951], pp. 67–78).

⁶⁷ Adrian de Montalembert, *La merveilleuse histoire de l'esprit qui depuis nagueses cest apparu au monastere des religieuses de saint pierre de lyo* (Paris, 1528; rpt. in vol. 1 of N. Lenglet Dufresnoy, *Recueil de dissertations anciennes et nouvelles sur les apparitions, les visions et les songes ...* [Avignon, 1751]). See Gauld and Cornell, *Poltergeists*, pp. 23–26.

in the dress of another culture, is the same tale of the grateful dead, with a system of communication now based entirely on poltergeist knockings and possession. The comparison suggests that our account from the *Kuang-i chi* might stand almost as well without the factitious aid of its inner story.

So the effect of this analysis is to present the story from *Kuang-i chi* as a composite construction, calling for different styles of critical reading. To read one part of it — the inner story — we must recognize a convention for expressing in narrative form the transactions between imperial authorities and local cults. To read the other, outer, part we must begin by opening our minds to the variety of social experience reflected in Chinese books of marvels, though ignored in standard literature. The phenomena of spirit possession, we know well, were woven intimately into the fabric of life in traditional China. It should come as no surprise that poltergeist phenomena were probably commonplace too, and naturally stimulated a response from the surrounding community.⁶⁸ In this sense the outer story offers a picture of social behavior that claims a certain documentary status. But however socially plausible we may find its features to be, it still offers no securely historical insights into the events at An-yang in 737 and 738.

The strongest reminder of this comes not here but at the end of the story in *Shang-shu ku-shih* with the words "the temple with the stele is there in Hsiang-chou still." They remove the narrator from his story and place him in a detached present situation from which he views story and temple on equal terms. This simple concluding device creates an even wider outer story enfolding all the rest. Tai Fu often made use of it, though here he left it implied rather than expressed. Its effect is to give the story the status of a mythological document standing beside the visible institution to which it refers. It becomes a myth of resentful spirits and neglected bones crying for burial, their wishes made known through haunting and possession, their gratitude expressed by protection of secular interests. This, we understand, was the interpretation which society at large (as distinct from government authorities) now attached to the established cult. And as such it more likely reflected the typical than it did the actual.

Actual or not, it certainly suggests that more complex circumstances may have attended the birth of this cult than the official sources permit us to know. There is no inherent reason why the tradition reflected in *Kuang-i*

⁶⁸ Some examples at random from the 12th-c. *I-chien chih* (ed. Ho Cho 何卓 [Peking: Chung-hua, 1981]): *Ping-chih* 丙志 9, p. 440, "Wen-chou lin chai" 溫州賃宅; *Ting-chih* 丁志 3, p. 555, "Wu Shih-liang" 武師亮; *ibid.* 4, pp. 569–70, "Tai Shih-jung" 戴世榮; *ibid.* 7, p. 591, "Tai-lou men chai" 戴樓門宅. The subject deserves more systematic study.

chi and *Shang-shu ku-shih* should not have been born with the cult itself.⁶⁹ It might even offer tempting glosses on certain ill-defined phrases in the official sources: Yen Po-yü's "malevolent hauntings," Yen Chen-ch'ing's "demon afflictions," Yü-ch'ih Shih-liang's "prayers through a spirit medium." But that is mere guesswork. In fact our anatomy of the various sources has rather shown that not many circumstantial facts lie within our grasp, not even those we would most like to know. (For example, did a popular cult to Yü-ch'ih Chiung exist in the background, or were actual human remains involved at any level in the community?) Instead, we have clearly recognizable products of two different mythologies — one official, affirming imperial control over all phenomena secular and religious within a given territory; the other vernacular, dramatizing and validating a cult in terms of its parent community's own religious values.

Yü-ch'ih Chiung sits awkwardly within the categories proposed in a growing Western literature on medieval China's provincial cults.⁷⁰ He resembles those "generals of defeated armies . . . persons who have died a violent death, whose head and body are buried in different places, whose spirits have been dispersed . . . troubling men or causing illness" and who "look for bloody food," that we associate easily with pre-T'ang society,⁷¹ much less easily with that of the high T'ang.⁷² Yet the imperial authorities endorse his cult, rather than undermine it as they might traditionally have done.⁷³ They establish his temple in an important prefectural center in the heart of the classic northern plain, where he protects their community in the manner (but without the title) of a City God 城隍. Yet City Gods, it is said, were not recruited from the ranks of the dangerous resentful dead,⁷⁴

⁶⁹ I do not find the reference to the Ho-yang Bridge (see above, n. 57) a serious obstacle to this point. It occurs in connection with the spirit troops detailed to escort traveling members of the prefect's family, a circumstance made known, it seems, by the usual means of communication through the young daughter. The early ninth-century *YHCHTC* makes it clear that a floating bridge spanned the Yellow River during a time of strategic reinforcement after the disasters of the An Lu-shan rebellion (from 758 on), but leaves the situation before the rebellion unclear. Even if anachronism could be proved, it might show no more than the relatively late appearance of this appended detail in the story. The background tradition itself could still have stretched back earlier in time without it.

⁷⁰ Rolf A. Stein, "Religious Taoism and Popular Religion from the Second to Seventh Centuries," in Holmes Welch and Anna Seidel, eds., *Facets of Taoism: Essays in Chinese Religion* (New Haven: Yale U.P. 1979), pp. 53-81; Miyakawa Hisayuki, "Local Cults around Mount Lu at the Time of Sun En's Rebellion," *ibid.*, pp. 83-101; David Johnson, "The City-God Cults of T'ang and Sung China," *HJAS* 45 (1985), pp. 363-457; Jean Lévi, "Les fonctionnaires et le divin: Luites de pouvoirs entre divinités et administrateurs dans les contes des Six Dynasties et des Tang," *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie* 2 (1986), pp. 81-110.

⁷¹ Stein, "Religious Taoism," pp. 66-67. ⁷² Johnson, "City-God Cults," pp. 425-32.

⁷³ Contrast remarks in *ibid.*, p. 432. ⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 424 ff.

although the spirits of those who died for their country *could* legitimately receive official sacrifice.⁷⁵ So we see the Hsiang-chou prefects struggle to make the best of a paradoxical challenge — their malignant persecutor is officially a loyal martyr, and we must understand their rhetoric in this light. All this will remind us that the great movements of historical change in Chinese religion followed a complex irregular course, not a simple or neat one. The documents that remain demand careful and critical study, which they generously repay with richer understanding.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 444.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CS	<i>Chou shu</i> 周書
CTS	<i>Chiu T'ang shu</i> 舊唐書
PS	<i>Pei shih</i> 北史
YHCHTC	<i>Yüan-ho chün-hsien t'u-chih</i> 元和郡縣圖志