

琴史卷第一

The History of the Qin, Chapter One

I

帝堯

Emperor Yao

帝堯宅天下，其聖神之妙用，則蕩蕩乎民無能名者也。其事業之餘迹，則巍巍乎其有成功者也。揚子嘗云：「法始乎伏，成乎堯，匪伏匪堯，禮義峭峭」。夫琴者，法之一也。當《大章》之作也，琴聲固已和矣。舊傳堯有〈神人〉暢，古之琴曲，和樂而作者命之曰「暢」，達則兼濟天下之謂也。憂愁而作者命之曰「操」，窮則獨善其身之謂也，夫聖而不可知之謂神，非堯孰能當之？

When Emperor Yao reigned over the world, the excellence of his holiness was so prodigious that its greatness for the people cannot be named, and the traces of his activities were so majestic in their effectiveness.¹ Master Yang [Xiong] once said: "The models were first instituted by Fu [Xi] and then perfected by Yao. Without Fu [Xi] and Yao, rites and morality would be so much senseless babble."² The *qin* is one of the models. When once [the piece] "Dazhang" (Great Measure) was composed, the sounds of the *qin* were certainly already harmonious.³ According to tradition, the hymn "Shenren" *chang* (The Deities) is by Yao;⁴ among old *qin*

1 Cf. *Lunyu* 8.19/19. 子曰：「大哉，堯之為君也！巍巍乎，唯天為大，唯堯則之。蕩蕩乎，民無能名焉。」「巍巍乎！其有成功也；煥乎，其有文章！」The Master said: "Great indeed was the rule of Emperor Yao! Heaven alone is truly majestic, exalted and majestic, and only Yao could equal it. He was boundless, so vast and boundless the people couldn't even name it. How exalted and majestic his achievements! How bright and glorious the ways of culture he created." (Transl. in Hinton 2013, 282).

2 Yang Xiong, *Fayan* 4/9; cf. Nylan 2013, 56-57.

3 According to *Liji* 19.9/100, "Dazhang" 大章 ("Great Measure") was a kind of virtuous music created by Emperor Yao. However, according to *Lishi chunqiu* 5.5/27, "Dazhang" is the name of a fifteen-stringed *se* 瑟 zither made by Gu Sou. See Knoblock and Riegel 2000, 149.

4 Regarding the meaning of *chang* 暢 in the title, Zhu Changwen gives a definition that considers *chang* as a category of tunes expressing "harmony and happiness", therefore opposed to *cao* 操, voicing "sorrow and grief." This kind of evaluation appears for the first time in *Fengsu tongyi* 6.14/45: 其道行和樂而作者，命其曲曰《暢》。《暢》者，言其道之美暢，猶不敢自安，不驕不溢，好禮不以，暢其意也。其遇閉塞，憂愁而作者，命其曲曰《操》。《操》者，言遇留遺害，困厄窮迫，雖怨恨失意，猶守禮義，不懼不憚，樂道而不失其操者也。"The songs composed when they were able to practice their Way they called hymns, by this term expressing the beauty and elevatedness of the Way they practiced. They did not grant themselves one moment rest, they were neither overbearing nor effusive, they loved rites, but they did not try to exalt their own thoughts. The song they composed when oppressed and melancholic they called elegies, by this name indicating that even when meeting with disasters or falling into danger, when being oppressed and reduced to necessity, although steeped in sorrow and unable to reach their arms, they still kept to the rites and righteousness, without fear and without misgivings, rejoicing in the Way and not losing their consistency." (Van Gulik 1940, 72-73) Van Gulik translates *chang* as