Numen, Vol. XXIX, Fasc. 1

TOKENS OF IMMORTALITY IN HAN GRAVES*

(Review article)

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(with an appendix by MARC KALINOWSKI)

Few scholars today possess the talent to capture the interest of a general audience for topics in ancient Chinese history of thought. A remarkably large share of such exceptional studies has been produced by the British tradition of scholarship. Arthur Waley, Joseph Needham and Michael Loewe, among others, have written books in a beautiful style intelligible and delectable to read for anyone seriously interested in China, while endowing these books with so many new data and insights that they became milestones or even classics of scholarship for the specialist. After *Crisis and Conflict in Han China*, an excellent study on the intellectual and institutional history of the middle Han period (104 BC to AD 9), Michael Loewe turned to the investigation of the mythology and religion of the Han. In *Ways to Paradise*, as the dust-jacket informs us, he "assesses a wealth of new archeological evidence in an attempt to uncover the attitudes of the pre-Buddhist Chinese to matters relating to death and the hereafter".

This overall concern unites the three specialized studies on Han art and iconography that compose the book: 1° the recently discovered painting on the silk funeral banner from Ma-wang tui dated around 168 BC; 2° the bronze mirrors of the so-called TLV pattern that came into fashion around the beginning of the Christian era and reflect the rich cosmological symbolism characteristic of Han thought and 3° the representations of the Queen Mother of the West which testify to growing beliefs in personified cosmic powers, from perhaps a century later. With his extensive knowledge of recent archeological discoveries (see Loewe, 1976 and

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* Michael Loewe, *Ways to Paradise, the Chinese Quest for Immortality*, London, George Allen & Unwin, 1979.

1977 in the bibliography app. to this review), the author combines great skill in relating them to the written sources of this early and seminal period of Chinese history which was to become the classical age for all later Far Eastern philosophy, religion and art.

If the present review grew into an article, it is not because of any need for lengthy criticism or corrections but rather in response to the wealth of stimulating new ideas which the book presents on some of the most magnificent and controversial new finds in Han tombs. None of the author's main conclusions have yet been contradicted by new archeological evidence or by the fast moving worldwide discussions on these finds. An attempt to include some of the most important of these newer discoveries and discussions (since 1978) has further lengthened the following pages.

I. *The Han frame of mind*

The ideas about death and afterlife that presided over the creation of Han tombs are described in a short first chapter. The author distinguishes three facets of Han mentality, one centered on nature—representing what can vaguely be called the Taoist trend of the time—, a second concerned with the forces of destiny which can be known and dealt with through divination, and a third, associated with the Confucian tradition, emphasizing the role of man and attributing a controlling influence to Heaven. None of these views contained a satisfactory explanation of death or of man's fate after death. The contemporary beliefs about life and death are reflected in some symbols of Han art that were designed to lead the spiritual force of man (*hun*) to an otherworldly paradise, and in the lavish tomb furnishings which tell of a concern to keep the remaining vital force (*p'o*) appeased, and to prevent it from reappearing as a malevolent ghost (*kuei*). The common ideas concerning an existence *after* death were, acc. to the author, expressed in beliefs, myths and legends about paradises: the isles of the immortals in the Eastern sea and later, increasingly, the K'un-lun mountains in the West.

The Han period was also the time when beliefs in deathless immortality gained acceptance, as exemplified in Emperor Wu's search for the elixir and in the evolution of physiological techniques

(attested by the gymnastics chart from Ma-wang tui tomb 3) that were to become part of the Taoist religion. The author might have made a clearer distinction between beliefs in an *after*life and beliefs in ways to *avoid* death. Since the latter are not considered at all, the concluding paragraph puzzles the reader. Pre-Buddhist China where "immortality was achieved, if at all, by an appeal to cosmic forces or by the symbolical use of certain cosmic patterns" is there contrasted with the "totally different" Buddhist concept: "that of personal transformation by means of spiritual disciplines and devotions, of types so far unknown in China". Not only does this sound as if Buddhism had brought new methods of achieving immortality (which it did not), but also it might convey the impression that "personal transformation by means of spiritual disciplines" had been unheard-of in China before the advent of Buddhism. This is not the case. The name that first comes to mind as a pre-Buddhist practitioner of spiritual disciplines is Chuang tzu, the Taoist mystic who lived before the period under investigation here and who was to become, much later, almost a founding father of the Buddhist Ch'an (Zen) school. The transmission of his writings and his influence during the Han period deserve a study which might show that pre-Buddhist Chinese and Buddhist beliefs about the afterlife cannot be that clearly divided into manipulation of cosmic forces here and personal, spiritual transformation there. Chuang tzu ridiculed the seekers of longevity (chap. 15, Watson, p. 167-68) which means that they existed already at his time. It was during the Han period that these practitioners searched for ways to paradise bypassing physical death. Although concerned mainly with the study of tomb furnishings, a book on Han "ways to paradise" might have touched on the difficult question of these precursors of Taoism.

II. *The funerary banner of the Countess of Tai*

The second chapter deals with the famous silk painting on the banner found in the Han tomb no. 1 of the Ma-wang tui site (Hunan province), dated 168 BC or slightly later (cf. fig. 1). It is a joy to read the well-informed and clear summary of the numerous Chinese, Japanese and Western studies (up to 1977) which have

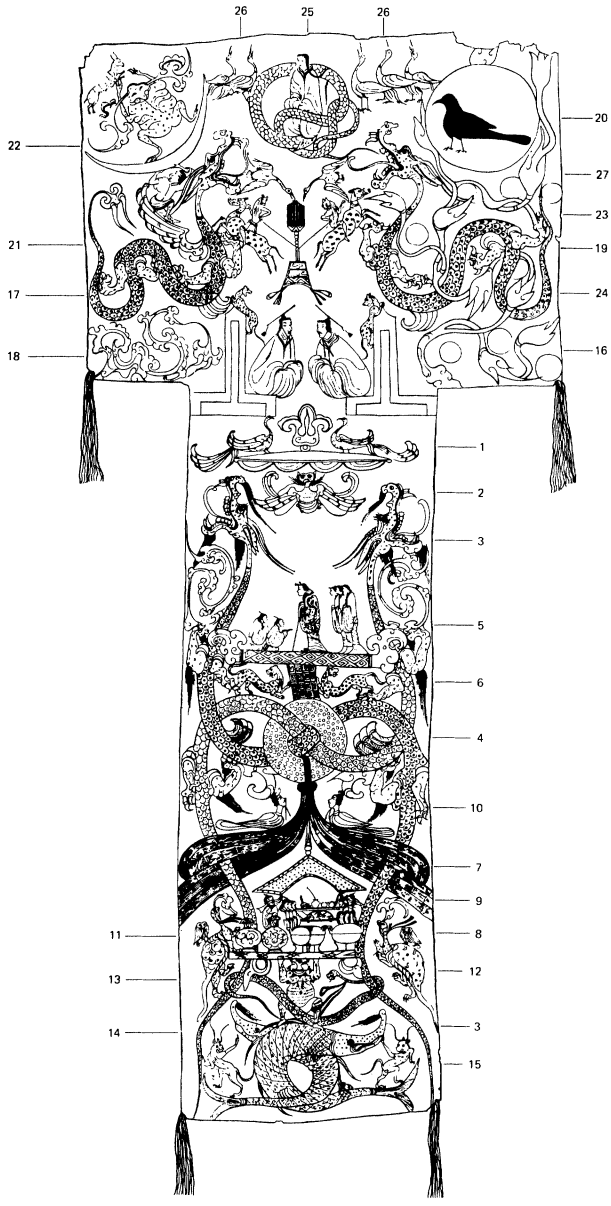

Fig. 1. Painting on the funeral banner from tomb no. 1, Ma-wang-tui (*Kaogu* 1973, 1, p. 44; numbers added by Loewe, p. 36, fig. 7).

already been devoted to this important archeological site. This presentation should be recommended as the best introductory reading on Ma-wang tui. One finds discussed 1° the value of the evidence from this site, 2° the position of the kingdom of Ch'ang-sha in the Han empire in the second century BC, 3° the structure, furnishings, dating etc. of tomb no. 1, 4° the function of the funerary banner and 5° the symbolism of the painting itself. In this last and most important section, the author sums up the diverging opinions of other scholars in what reads like an elaborate international guessing game.

The crux in the interpretation of paintings is always the need to find

> 1° comparable contemporary paintings—in this case very few: the damaged banner from Ma-wang tui tomb no. 3, coffin decorations, frescoes in other tombs; three other banners found in Shantung and in Kansu are over a century later and therefore of limited value here;
> 2° contemporary or earlier texts apt to explain iconographic details—here mainly the *Shan-hai ching*, parts of the *Ch'u tz'u*, the *Huai-nan tzu*, *Shih chi* and *Han shu*.

A danger the author points out (p. 31) and which not all other scholars have avoided, is to correlate the painting with Han concepts that were, in the middle of the second century BC when the tomb was closed, not yet fully developed, such as the theory of Yin-Yang and the Five Elements, and the Han cosmology with its triad of Heaven, Earth and Man.

To give an idea of the complex problems involved and of the imaginative flights of interpreters, I would like to summarize the author's interpretation of the painting and contrast it with two other attempts published since (Sofukawa, 1979; Hou Ching-lang, 1981). The T-shaped banner can be divided into a lower vertical part with several superimposed scenes or stages framed by the dragon coils, and an upper horizontal part which clearly represents heavenly regions. While the various interpretations of this celestial section disagree only in some details, opinions differ considerably regarding the meaning of the vertical part below it.

Hou Ching-lang, in agreement with the majority of the Chinese authors, sees it as the terrestrial counterpart of the upper section, consisting of a banquet scene on earth (often held to be the funerary banquet for the Countess, cf. Fig. 7, scene no. 8) and, on the platform above it, a scene (no. 5) showing the Countess on her way to heaven, surrounded by servants and celestial emissaries, the latter kneeling and presenting trays with dishes containing some foods of immortality. The canopy (no. 1) above this scene is seen as the celestial vault, comparable to the "flowery canopy" (*hua kai*) which was part of Wang Mang's (r. AD 9-23) ritual symbolism for "ascension to immortality".

Everybody seems to agree that this vertical part represents the deceased woman's progress from her death to her arrival in heaven. But, whereas Hou and others interpret the scene with the Countess (no. 5) as an intermediate stage between heaven and earth, with the banquet beneath and the celestial vault above, Sofukawa and Loewe go further, on different tracks. Sofukawa sees the Countess sitting in a dragon chariot or dragon boat being borne aloft not to heaven but more precisely to Mount K'un-lun. The platform on which she stands becomes the square body and the "vault of heaven" (no. 1) becomes the round canopy of a chariot drawn by the two dragons. The banquet below (no. 8) is the funerary ceremony and sacrifice for her soul. The gate of heaven above the chariot's roof becomes one of the four oriented gates of K'un-lun, where two emissaries of the Celestial Emperor (T'ien-ti) wait to welcome the Countess.

Loewe (and Shang Chih-t'an before him) see in the same vertical section a representation of the island paradise of P'eng-lai "through which lay the road to eternity" (p. 37). These interpreters have been struck by the shape of the intertwining dragons which, together with a base (the lower platform, no. 8) and a lid (the canopy, no. 1) form the outline of a calabash-shaped vase. They point out that the mythical islands in the Eastern Seas are often thought of as floating gourds or even called P'eng-gourd or -vase (P'eng-hu, Ying-hu, etc.).

Sofukawa's and Loewe's interpretations are both well-argued. One consideration in favor of P'eng-lai might be that, as Loewe states in his preface (p. vii), the magical islands in the Eastern Seas

attracted more prayer and devotion during the second century BC than the Western Mount K'un-lun which became increasingly popular only during the second Han Dynasty (AD 25-220). Thus it seems more likely that the P'eng-lai paradise was present in the minds of the mourners and well-wishers preparing the Countess' funeral. However, the evidence for the representation of P'eng-lai on the banner is also slight. No text mentions pictures of P'eng-lai on funerary banners (*Hou Han shu* and *Li chi* mention sun, moon and ascending dragons painted on such banners, cf. Hou, p. 53) but, considering the lack of sources, this silence does not mean much. The banner itself depicts none of the other colorful features of P'eng-lai in the descriptions of the time (palaces of jade and gold, white birds and beasts, pearl trees, fruits that confer immortality, etc.). All we have to go on is the calabash shape suggested by the dragon coils as well as several beasts and symbols of immortality which would fit this as well as other interpretations. The gourd shape certainly is remarkable but one might argue that rather than symbolizing P'eng-lai, the dragons might have been coiled into this shape because the gourd itself is already a symbol of immortality. Here the author could have adduced valuable data from two French studies. Maxime Kaltenmark (1953, p. 164) and Rolf Stein (p. 45-63) have written on the mythological symbolism of gourds (*kua*, *hu*, *hu-lu*) and calabash-shaped vases (*hu*): gourds are fruits of immortality like the peaches of the K'un-lun; they gave birth to the first man; they can be a boat carrying a hero to heaven (P'eng-lai is a floating gourd-vase); they are associated with creation, regeneration and fertility (the latter for the profusion of their pits). Stein (p. 54) examined the etymology of the words for gourd and vase and points out their affinity with a series of words describing primordial chaos (obscure, complete, hidden, unconscious, etc.), i.e. the gourd is a symbol of the embryonic primordial state of the universe which, over a century before Ma-wang tui, the *Tao te ching* exalted as the initial unity to which everything returns, and it is precisely for this reason that gourds became associated with the paradises of the immortals. It therefore makes good sense to see the Countess pass, on her way to heaven, through a state of "return to the origin" and regeneration, symbolized by the gourd-shaped coils surrounding her progress.

The horizontal celestial part of the painting is less controversial. There we have, to the right, the nine red suns in what is generally interpreted to be the mythical Fu-sang tree in the east. Loewe (p. 50-51) does not want to apply the myth of the ten suns to this scene because only nine suns are visible. Sofukawa (p. 137 sq.) reasons that, since one sun should always be circulating, it should be normal that only nine suns are always stationed in the tree. To the left we see the moon above a dragon bearing a woman on its wing. Whether this woman is the moon goddess Ch'ang-o or the Countess, depends on the interpretation one gives to the beautiful serpent-tailed figure in the center of heaven, dominating the whole painting from above (and decorating the cover of the book). This central figure could be Fu Hsi, Nü Kua or the fiery dragon Chu Lung. Loewe tentatively suggests a fourth identification: it could be the Countess herself who has reached her heavenly destination, "sloughing off her mortal coil as easily as a snake sheds the skins that he discards" (p. 59). The charm of this idea is that it would permit to see in the painting three stages of the Countess' transformation: Loewe sees her first in her coffin under the table of the lower banquet scene (no. 8) surrounded by two plus three large vessels; then revived, complete with walking stick, on the second platform (no. 5) accompanied by two plus three attendants and, finally, as the serpent-tailed immortal in heaven with two birds to her right and three birds to her left. There is, however, as Loewe points out, no proof, and the central figure on the other banner from tomb no. 3 is too unclear to decide whether or not it is a man, as it should be in the tomb of a man, if this figure represents the deceased.

Again throughout this chapter the term "immortality" is used rather vaguely. In most cases the author means it to refer to an afterlife in heaven, a state aspired to after death and depicted in tomb decorations as a pious wish for the deceased. Is there a word in Chinese to express this concept? What we usually translate as immortality are expressions that have the same meaning as the English word (immortalis = undying, deathless) and were taken much more literally in China than they ever were in Europe: *pu lao pu szu*, "non-aging, non-dying", *yang sheng pu szu*, "nourish life in order not to die", etc. (Needham, V, 2, p. 94). What is translated

as immortal is *hsien*, a transcendent deathless creature, a state accessible to mortals who follow regimens that make them *avoid* death. Needham has shown how developed these ideas were already in the middle of the second century BC. E.g. the *Yüan yu* poet learns methods to become immortal (from the most popular Han immortal Ch'ih-sung, Master Red Pine, who appears in the book) before embarking on his journey to heaven where he arrives without going through death (Needham, V, 2, p. 84-103).

Even if deathless immortality was already a conscious ideal, it is possible that the same belief inspired the symbolism of the funerary banners. But there is a contradiction here and a confusion between the dead and the immortals. We will come back to this question below.

The author's chapter on the Ma-wang tui banner is an exemplary presentation of all other studies up to 1977 as well as an original and stimulating new interpretation of the painting's symbolism. Sofukawa's and Hou's more recent examinations, while adding some insight, present no solutions convincingly contradicting the author's views. The dearth of source material on Han mythology, while increasing the unique value of the banner, might make an entirely satisfactory explanation of its meaning impossible until further archeological discoveries are made. Meanwhile the topic continues to attract interest. Jean M. James is said to have presented, at the "Midwest Conference on Asian Affairs" (Oct. 1980), a paper on "A New Interpretation of the Banners from Tomb 1 and 3, Mawangdui, Changsha".

III. *TLV cosmology and Han divination*

The relatively short chapter on "TLV mirrors and their significance" (p. 60-85) is only the quintessence of a comprehensive study on TLV mirrors presented in more detail in six appendices to the book (p. 158-229). While causing some repetitions and overlap, this manner of presentation has the advantage that the reader finds in chapter III a convenient summary of all essential results, always with references to more scholarly data in the appendices.

The intriguing geometrical pattern on some Han mirrors resembling a concentric arrangement of four T, L and V shapes has

long since been recognized as a cosmological diagram. The author applies his expert knowledge of Han thought as well as of recent new finds of such mirrors to the riddle of the TLV pattern which had already challenged many scholars whose findings are summarized (p. 62-64). TLV mirrors are but one among several types of Han mirrors and have to be considered in the context of the general evolution of mirror patterns (p. 64-70). The origin of the TLV pattern still remains unknown but its evolution, its periods of perfection and subsequent decadence can now be discerned and dated with more precision. The author establishes a detailed typology of five major groups A, B, C, D and X with their subdivisions (chart, p. 69). This classification is only one of his original contributions to the study of TLV mirrors and presents a sound and eminently useful basis for further research. While no precise dating of particular pieces can be established, it is shown that the development from types A to X is consistent with the chronological pattern of intellectual change. The standard TLV mirror was en vogue roughly between 50 BC and AD 100-150 when it was eclipsed by new fashions, especially the high relief mirrors depicting the Queen Mother of the West.

The second new contribution to the subject is the author's inclusion of mirrors recently found in tombs (esp. the 118 bronze mirrors from the 225 Shao-kou graves near Loyang, cf. p. 212-221). Considering factors like the time that might have elapsed between a mirror's fabrication and its inclusion in a tomb, the value of these finds for dating mirrors is very cautiously evaluated (p. 212-213).

The following remarks on this rich chapter can be grouped under six headings:

1° TLV mirrors and cosmic boards
2° Irregularities in the TLV pattern
3° Trigrams on TLV mirrors
4° TLV mirrors and *liu-po* boards
5° Astral symbolism in mirrors
6° Mirrors as funerary objects

1° *TLV mirrors and cosmic boards.* As to the significance of the TLV symbolism, the reader finds again an instructive summary of previous interpretations (Karlgren, Kaplan, Yetts, Cammann,

Bulling, Hayashi) and the author's own ideas. They are a corroboration of Kaplan's remarks on the similarity to be found between the TLV pattern and the astronomical divining board known as the *shih.* Since the time Kaplan wrote (1937), several authentic specimen of these diviner's boards or "cosmic boards" (Harper) have been excavated and studied. Based on this new material, the author concludes that "the TLV mirrors, which bear some of the features that appear on the boards, were deliberately made as stylized versions of those instruments" (p. 80). Does this mean that the riddle of the TLV signs' origin and meaning is solved at last? Can it be proven that the TLV signs appeared first, as functional or symbolic markings, on the diviner's board and only later, as stylized decorations, on the mirrors? This is a question for the specialist of Han astronomy, calendar science and divination. I had the opportunity to discuss it with Marc Kalinowski, the author of the first comprehensive study on the cosmic boards. Uniquely qualified in this matter, M. Kalinowski was kind enough to contribute to this review a detailed response to the author's arguments which I have the privilege to present together with this review (inf. p. 114). The gist of his answer is that the early appearance of the TLV pattern on mirrors of the *Ts'ao-yeh* and *Shou-chou* types (Loewe's type A) *without* the cosmological background design precludes a direct derivation from the diviner's board. All that can be said is that both objects are roughly contemporary expressions of the same cosmological views. Moreover, the essential astronomical features of the boards, the constellation of the Big Dipper and the twenty-eight equatorial constellations, have never been transposed on a TLV mirror (they do figure on a Taoist mirror of the T'ang [cf. inf. p. 96] as well as on another T'ang mirror [Needham, III, fig. 93], both without TLV design).

As to the divinatory character of the TLV mirrors, the author states that the TLV design "exemplified the most favorable position that could be obtained by manipulating the two discs of the diviner's board" (p. 80). This idea is very attractive and I first adopted it as one more aspect of the sacred aura mirrors had at that time (Seidel, 1981, p. 239). However, Kalinowski explains that what the standard TLV pattern shows is invariably the normal starting position before any manipulation of the diviner's board

(north aligned with north, east with east, etc.). This is far from being the most favorable (p. 83-85) and certainly not a particular position resulting from a divinatory manipulation.

2° *Irregularities in the TLV pattern.* If TLV mirror patterns did express an especially favorable constellation resulting from a divinatory manipulation, then one should expect different mirrors to express different positions adapted either to specific situations or to some personal "horoscope" of the living or deceased owner of the mirror. Consequently it is the irregularity in TLV designs which deserves attention as a possible clue to a specific divinatory situation. The only such irregularity mentioned by the author is the varying starting position of the outer inscription. As Kalinowski points out, the observed preference to start the inscription in the north-east or in the north simply reflects the concept that the year cycle starts in these directions. Among the mirrors that start the inscription elsewhere one could single out the two mirrors that mention the Queen Mother of the West: C 5001 (starting position due west) and C 5002 (starting position south-west, i.e. at the cyclical character *shen*). This fact would rather suggest a relation between the starting position and the mythological symbolism of the design.

Another deviation from the standard pattern are the shifts that occur in the correlation of the different directional symbols:

a.) In mirror C 5001 (p. 184) the twelve Branches or chronograms in the central square are not aligned with the four directional animals — *tzu* (= north) is aligned with the tiger (= west), *yu* (= west) with the bird (= south), etc. Here a clockwise rotation of one quarter could adjust the twelve chronograms with the four animals. In mirror X 9003 (p. 189, Pl. XX) a counter-clockwise rotation of one quarter would result in the same adjustment. These displaced but adjustable arrangements would rather add weight to the similarity between TLV mirrors and diviner's boards suggesting, as they do, that the square center of the mirror was considered adjustable to different positions like the Heaven disc of the board. However,

b.) there are other displaced arrangements which cannot be adjusted, as when the positions of tiger and dragon (C 1201, C 1902, C 4111, X 1001), or those of bird and tiger (X 1009) are simply inverted.

These variations are mentioned by the author (p. 178-189) as "incorrect", "erratic" or "misplaced" elements. One wonders if these frequent deviations from a simple and well-known rule were not rather deliberate arrangements suited to some specific divinatory or apotropaic purpose.

Surprising is also the author's silence about the creatures other than the four emblematic animals depicted on the mirrors (p. 160). While it could still be argued that the irregularities mentioned above, comparatively rare as they are, might be simple errors, the constantly varying disposition of a limited number of mythical beasts and immortals in the middle band of the standard TLV mirrors might contain a message we should try to understand.

The T and L shapes cut each quadrant of a TLV mirror into two sections. Dragon, tiger, bird and tortoise-cum-snake are normally depicted in the right (or, seen in a clock-wise direction, first) half of their quadrant. (Some mirrors place some [C 4301] or all [C 4303] of them to the left). In the section not occupied by one of the four animals one finds other creatures, in order of their frequency: birds, unicorns, immortals, toads, leopards, deer, hares, bears and some hybrids difficult to identify. Although this is the feature that varies most from one mirror to another, it can not be regarded as a mere decoration devoid of meaning. A cursory examination of the 44 TLV mirrors with an eight-animals design in the Moriya collection (the plates in the book under review are not clear enough for this) reveals something of a pattern underlying the arrangement of these four intermediary creatures. E.g. feathered immortals are preponderately depicted in the east, facing the dragon, and in the north-east, also facing the dragon; in the south, they usually are shown astride a deer, and they never figure in the west except in mirror C 1902, a notable exception since in this mirror east and west are reversed. Birds abound in the south and the east, they are rare in the other quarters. Small quail-like birds, alone or in pairs, often sit anywhere between the T and L shapes, where one rarely also finds a toad (C 2103, 2101, C 4103 always in the north) or immortals (C 2101, 4102, 4103, D 1003 in the east, C 1206 in the west). A toad-like creature prefers the north (C 1902, 2203, 4302, D 2007, 2010) and is often difficult to distinguish (as in C 1305) from a winged animal with a long tail resembling a unicorn or a *pi-hsieh*

monster which is found most often in the west (C 2105, 2308, 2309, 3102, 4101, 4102, 4103, 4201). Similar creatures appear elsewhere in Han art.

As to the possible meaning of these creatures and their position in the mirrors, a standard pattern emerges. That immortals should prefer the east and south is clear. Immortals in the eastern section of the north can be understood as oriented to the east and reflecting a propitious beginning. The unicorn in the west may be a vestige of an older series of four animals where the *ch'i-lin* unicorn appeared in the west instead of the tiger. The toad, aquatic animal of the moon, is at its appropriate place in the north or north-west. Also what Cammann said about the dispositions of the numerous smaller birds in all four quadrants (*JAOS* 1948, p. 164-65) points to a standard pattern concording with the Yin-Yang and *wu-hsing* theories.

Since there seem to be no mirrors with, for example, *ch'i lin* unicorns in the east, immortals in the west, or toads in the south, it does seem unlikely, here again, that the positions of these creatures, despite their much more loose disposition, represent in any given mirror a definite shift in the whole pattern such as could be due to a divinatory manipulation.

TLV mirrors in tombs thus do not contain any specific message geared to the character or fate in life or afterlife of the particular occupant of the tomb. This does not exclude the possibility that one might find cosmological designs in tombs that do bear some relation to their owner. One such design, about three centuries older than TLV mirrors and cosmic boards, is presently under investigation. In July 1979 *Wen wu* (7, p. 40) published the painting on a lacquer box lid from the tomb of the Marquis of Tseng (burial date 433 BC). It depicts the seal script graph *tou* for the Big Dipper surrounded by the names of the twenty-eight equatorial constellations (*hsiu*). On this design it is not evident to which direction the Dipper handle points since the character *tou* that stands for it, is disposed in a way that its four prolongations simply mark off four groups of seven *hsiu*, indicating the four sections of heaven. However, under the equatorial constellation Gullet (*k'ang*) one finds inscribed the cyclical day designation *chia-yin* which, as the authors of the *Wen wu* article suggest, could designate the day of the Marquis' death (third

day of the fifth month of 433 BC). Their arguments are summed up, with less caution than they themselves display, by Donald Harper (1980-81, p. 49b).

3° *Trigrams on TLV mirrors.* None of the diviner's boards discovered in Han tombs include trigrams or hexagrams in their design. On the more elaborate diviner's board made of bronze, which specialists assign rather to the Six Dynasties' period (Loewe app. III, no. 6 of the chart p. 204-05), the four trigrams *ch'ien* ☰ (NW), *ken* ☶ (NE), *sun* ☴ (SE) and *k'un* ☷ (SW) appear in the four corners of the design, disposed according to the so-called *Hou-t'ien* arrangement.

From a *Shih-chi* passage mentioning the cosmic board we learn that the arrangement of the trigrams must have been part of the divinatory method using the board at the time of Ssu-ma Ch'ien if not already in the sixth century BC, which is the period of the story Ssu-ma Ch'ien relates (cf. Kalinowski, 1983).

On none of the TLV mirrors do we find any trigrams depicted in their usual form of broken and unbroken lines. However, Chang Cheng-lang has recently made the sensational discovery that certain hitherto undecipherable graphs found on oracle bones and bronze vessels are really archaic representations of trigrams and hexagrams. It so happens that TLV mirror X 9003 (p. 189 and Pl. XX) contains such graphs in the spaces between the L and T shapes (cf. fig. 2). The graph in the section of the bird and the chronogram *yin* (south? north-east?) is identical with the graph which Chang has deciphered as the trigram *k'an* (<I> equals ☵). The other three sections show different variations of what must be called a "tetragram" (<II>, >II>, <II> equals ䷾). Since all the thirty-two instances of such graphs on oracle bones and bronzes collected up to now represent either three or six graphs, never four, and all of them, moreover, are at least six or seven centuries older than TLV mirrors, it is possible that the designer of mirror X 9003 used graphs of some other tradition (Yang Hsiung created, ca. AD 10, a system of 81 tetragrams, cf. Needham, II, p. 329) or he simply traced these figures as decorative devices matching the archaic and ornate style in which he wrote the outer inscription. However, all TLV mirrors or rather all Han mirrors should be carefully examined for similar graphs and their possible meaning before one adopts this *faute de mieux* explanation.

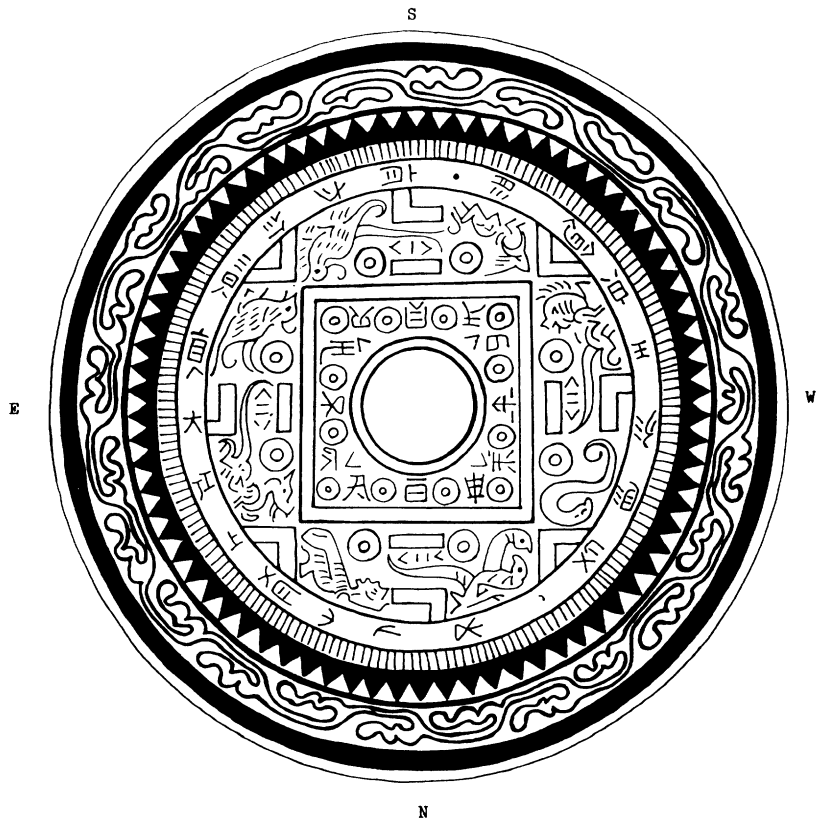

Fig. 2. TLV mirror X 9003 in Loewe's classification; Moriya collection no. 33; made from a positive mould.
The outer inscription runs anti-clockwise, starts in the south and is incomplete: "The Shang-fang made this mirror and truly it is very fine. Upon it are mountain men (= immortals) oblivious of old age. When they thirst they drink from the springs of jade, when they hunger they feed...". The chronograms of the inner inscription are displaced: *tzu* (normally = N) in the east, *yin* (= NEE) in the south, *wu* (= S) in the west, *yu* (= W) in the north.
Between the L and the T shapes (the latter lack their stems) are signs resembling the archaic hexagram graphs.
Besides the four directional animals there are: a bird in the south-east, a unicorn in the south-west, a (rare) snake in the north-west, and an unclear design of an immortal in the north-east.
Cf. Loewe, p. 189 and pl. XX; redrawn by the reviewer.

4° *TLV mirrors and liu po boards.* The similarity between the TLV pattern and the marks which appear on *liu po* game boards has been pointed out a long time ago. Scenes of this game being played by immortals or by human beings occur frequently in Han tomb reliefs as well as on one mirror where the scene is identified as: *hsien jen liu po* "Immortals (playing the game) *liu po*". This inscription enabled Yang Lien-sheng to connect the TLV patterned game boards with the *liu po* game mentioned in texts (e.g. in the *Chao hun* poem, third cent. BC; cf. Yang, 1947, p. 204). Pursuing his idea of the TLV pattern's origin, the author suggests "that the pattern derived from the diviner's board... was transferred not only to mirrors, but also to other types of board that were used in divining; and they helped the players of *liu po* to interpret their throw" (p. 82).

Again, it is not clear if the diviner's board can be considered the ancestor of a game board that seems to have been current at least as early as the third century BC. On the other hand, the author's suggestion of a connection between the *liu po* game and divination (p. 84, 110) is expressed rather too cautiously. Yang Lien-sheng (1952, p. 138) has found indications that in Han and earlier times, ambitious human beings wished that they could play *po* games with deities, hoping to obtain magic powers by winning over them. Needham (IV, 1, p. 321) has shown that not only *liu po* but other games, variations of chess, were used for divination. The playing stones of "image chess" (*hsiang ch'i*), a later game said to have been invented by Emperor Wu of the Northern Chou (AD 561-578), were nothing other than a complex set representing celestial bodies, cyclical characters, trigrams, elements, etc. It looks as if "the position of the pieces at the outset differed according to the position of the celestial bodies and the situation of the cyclical characters at the time when play was begun". The sources presented by Yang and Needham suggest a close kinship and even a blurred borderline between divination and games of chance played with symbols and rules derived from cosmological theories.

Needham (III, p. 304, fig. 125) has also discussed a scene depicting a game in the Wu-liang tomb shrine (cf. fig. 3). What he interprets as a diviner's board in this scene (the middle table seen in profile, with a raised platform on its middle), could be either the table on which, in a *liu po* game, the six sticks are thrown (the "raised

platform'' would then be the profile of the sticks) or else this mysterious table does represent a diviner's board and the magicians around it are engaged in divination as the *Shih chi* 127 describes it: ''dividing the yarrow sticks, determining the trigrams, rotating the diviner's board and arranging the pieces'' (*ch'i*, the same term that also denotes chess pieces, pawns; cf. inf., Kalinowski, p. 118).

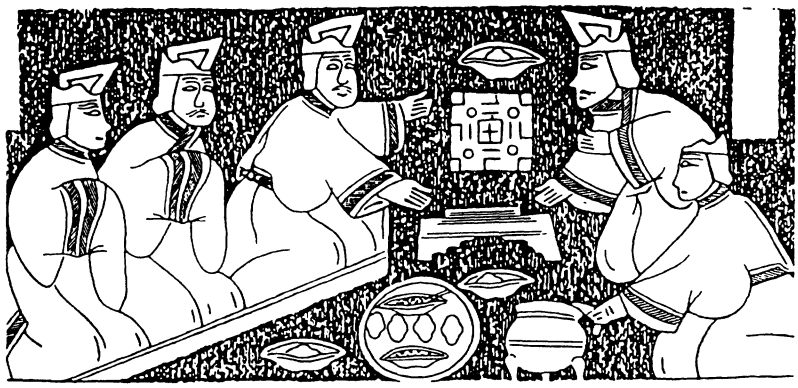

Fig. 3. A scene of divination or of the *liu-po* game, with a TLV board in the background. From the Wu Liang tomb shrines (ca. AD 147), redrawn by Yetts, 1939, p. 149, fig. 38.

5° *Astral symbolism in mirrors.* The old mythological association between mirror and moon is well known. A sixth century source even speaks of a series of fifteen moon mirrors representing the phases of the moon, from a one inch (*ts'un*) mirror to a fifteen inch mirror ''modeled on the number of the full moon'' (*T'ai-p'ing kuang-chi* 230, p. 21b). In T'ang times lunar mirrors were made representing the cassia tree, the alchemical hare, the dancing toad and the goddess of the moon.

The Taoists also had star mirrors. A beautiful specimen of the T'ang period has recently been unearthed in China (*Kaogu* 4, 1976) and discussed by Schafer who found an identical mirror represented in the *Taoist Canon* (*Tao tsang* fasc. 196, Harvard-Yenching Index no. 429). This Taoist astral mirror should be mentioned here because it has features in common with the TLV mirrors as well as with the diviner's board.

Like the TLV mirrors it contains: pictures of the four emblematic animals, the cyclical characters of the twelve Branches (interspersed with eight of the ten Celestial Stems), and an inscription which, considering its date (late 7th or early 8th century) is remarkably similar in tone to the TLV mirror inscriptions.

Like the diviner's board it contains: the image of the Big Dipper, represented by seven connected dots, north of the central knob (thus *not* in the center as it is positioned on the diviner's board), the twenty-eight equatorial constellations (*hsiu*), the twenty (12 + 8) Stem and Branch symbols for the compass directions and the eight trigrams in their conventional *hou t'ien* positions (as they figure on the Six Dynasties' diviner's board).

Features unique to the mirror are images of four deities, the discs of sun and moon south of the central knob and dots indicating the five planets. The pattern of the mirror consists of a central round star field around which a) the equatorial constellations, b) the cyclical signs and c) the inscription are disposed in three round concentric bands. *There is no TLV pattern.* Harper has pointed out (1978-79, p. 10) that this mirror shows the Big Dipper and the equatorial constellations as they are found on the heaven plate of the cosmic board "and we may quite confidently conclude that the heaven plate served as the prototype for the mirror". The only inconvenience in all this is that, since this is not a TLV mirror, the kinship between star mirror and diviner's board tells us nothing about the significance of the TLV pattern.

In a last effort to do justice to these mysterious TLV shapes, we might follow another line of thought. The first function of a mirror is to reflect the light of the sun. There are lunar and astral mirrors but the primary affinity of mirrors is with the light, i.e. with the sun. Many inscriptions exalt the mirror's radiant reflection of sun and moon, or mention the light of the sun (p. 192). Therefore the derivation of the TLV shapes from the design on Han sun-dials still seems the most plausible theory (which the author mentions without investigating it further, p. 71-72). The two preserved specimen of what must have been Han sun-dials both bear TLV markings (Needham, III, p. 305 sq.). The practical *raison d'être* of

the TLV shapes on the sun-dials has not yet been understood, but there is no doubt that it was of a functional, astronomical and not of a decorative nature. To copy these markings onto a mirror would express the affinity of the mirror with the sun's light and with fire.

The *Huai-nan tzu* (ca. 120 BC) mentions sun mirrors called *yang sui* and moon mirrors named *fang chu*. Needham (IV, 1, p. 87 sq.) identifies the *yang sui* as concave burning mirrors for igniting tinder from the sun's rays, the *fang chu* as dew pans for collecting dew when exposed to the full moon. But this is not all. Taoist texts are full of mirror meditations in some of which the right and the left eye of the adept become sun- and moon-mirrors which either reflect the astral numina in the sky or, turned inward, illuminate their divine reflections in his own body (Robinet, Kaltenmark, 1974).

Thus, the association mirror—sun light and the later Taoist homology eye—sun-mirror, together with the fact that the round face of the sun-dial is the only context in which the TLV shapes had an—as yet unexplained—practical function, makes it seem likely that Yetts was on the right track when he called TLV mirrors "sun-dial mirrors". It might therefore be wise to postpone further TLV discussions until historians of science know more about the meaning of the markings on the sun-dial face.

6° *Mirrors as funerary objects.* It is clear from archeological evidence that the TLV mirror was, around the beginning of our era, "the characteristic talisman which was buried with the dead of the upper classes" (p. 101) and that mirrors with inscriptions mentioning the immortals were especially meaningful in a funerary context. However, the repeated reference, throughout the book, to TLV mirrors as funerary objects should not obscure the fact that most mirror inscriptions express good wishes that can only have been addressed to a living recipient. Of the fifteen representative inscriptions translated in appendix II (p. 192-203), ten express wishes of wealth, longevity, numerous prosperous progeny, long life for one's parents, renown in office, fame among scholars, prosperity of one's household; two wish to remember friends (one of them "as [long] as we see the light of the sun), three wish "life as long as that of metal and stone", a formula that appears elsewhere together with others of the above wishes, two other mirrors wish "life as long as the metals and stones that constitute the palladia of

the State'' (p. 198-99: *kuo pao* is not ''protector of the land'' but the dynastic treasure of the empire). TLV mirrors were talismans made for the living and only secondarily included in the tombs of their owners.

Speaking of the late Han mirrors depicting the Queen Mother of the West and the King of the East (p. 122), the author comes back to the idea of a special funerary function which he finds expressed in the life-giving meeting of the two deities on the mirror. Here again the primary function of these mirrors as burial objects is open to doubt and, although both deities are on the same mirror, they do not meet—they sit very properly in their opposite quarters, the Queen in the West and the King in the East, symbolizing rather the orientation of the mirror like tiger and dragon of yore, and, as far as this reviewer has been able to see, never even turned toward each other, as the King is turning toward the Queen on some Han tomb reliefs (p. 130, fig. 22).

The funerary function of mirrors is further adduced as the reason why the mirror patterns lost their religious symbolism by the Wei and T'ang periods, when Buddhism and its ''preference for cremation rather than interment tended to eliminate opportunities for the burial of mirrors as a talisman for the dead'' (p. 123). This can scarcely have been the reason since a study of Buddhist cremation in China shows that it took many centuries for this practice to be accepted. The famous monk Hsüan-tsang (AD 602-664) was still interred and the laity did not practice cremation until the late T'ang period and never took to it on a large scale (Seidel, 1982, II). When the fashion in the world of the living was cosmic symbolism, we find TLV mirrors in the tombs; when the fashion of the world changed to the artistic decorative mirror patterns of the T'ang, we also find these mirrors in T'ang tombs.

IV. *The Queen Mother of the West* (*Hsi Wang Mu*)

The third and last study in the book deals with the myths and the iconography of the most popular deity in the late Han period. This deity is one facet of the very oldest and most powerful mythical figure of Chinese religions, the mother goddess and female demiurge. Mentioned already in oracle bone inscriptions (as Hsi

mu, Mother of the West), her cult is still alive today in Taiwan (Overmyer 1976, p. 238, n. 27; idem 1977). Although innumerable sources from before the Han until today refer to her popular myth and cult and although she was the favorite fairy queen of Chinese poets and painters, there is no substantial description of her before a late T'ang hagiography in the Taoist Canon. The study of her early career is therefore a difficult subject no one has yet tackled.

Relating pre-Han and Han texts to the recently discovered images of the Queen Mother of the West on mirrors and tomb reliefs, the author composes the first coherent picture of this magnificent goddess. His idea is that, around AD 100, the world view systematized by Tung Chung-shu more than 200 years earlier, came to be intellectually criticized by some (such as Wang Ch'ung) and to be supplemented by others with a "faith placed in the supremacy of certain unseen powers" (p. 86-87). This intellectual change he adduces as one of the reasons why we see, around AD 100, a first forceful impact of the Hsi wang mu myth on Han iconography.

The reader will find five major topics discussed in chapters IV and V:

1° References to the Queen Mother of the West, from the oracle bones to the *History of the Later Han*: a summary of the sources that mention Hsi wang mu and show her evolution from a mythical being with the tail of a leopard and the teeth of a tiger, to the divine Queen conferring immortality and living in a western paradise on or near Mount K'un lun.—Most of this is well known.

2° The deficiencies of Han cosmology and the search for deathlessness: Han Confucianism had no answers to the questions of death and Tung Chung-shu's system provided no bridges between the different realms of the cosmos. "The Queen's powers and intervention were sought as a means of acquiring immortality" and of communicating with heaven (p. 97). We also see, in the Han yearning for immortality, a gradual shift from eastern paradises in the sea to the western Mount K'un lun.—It would be too simple to explain this shift with Han Wu-ti's failure to find the elixir of the eastern sea islands (p. 97). It rather should be seen in the context of the contemporary shift of emphasis from aquatic deities to mountain deities, and of course together with the enlargement of the

western horizon through travel and military expeditions, as pointed out (p. 97-98). Also, Mount K'un lun, despite its north-western location, very early became a cosmic center, an axis mundi and a gateway to heaven, whereas from P'eng-lai no road lead further.

3° The soteriological movement of 3 BC: the religious craze that swept through the population of north-west China in 3 BC is the first incident that brought a popular Hsi wang mu cult to the notice of the historians. The three accounts of it (p. 98-99) are important early testimony of the kind of movement that, two centuries later, led to organized Taoism.

4° The iconography of the Queen: dated mirrors from the second century, tomb reliefs and decorated bricks from the second and third centuries yield a new and detailed picture of the Queen, of her attributes and escort. The author composes this picture relying on the excellent studies by Kominami Ichiro (1974) and Hayashi Minao (1973, 1974). The Queen can be recognized quite conveniently by her characteristic headdress, the *sheng*. She is seen seated on a kind of cosmic pillar or on a mountain which the author hesitates, perhaps overcautiously, to identify with Mount K'un lun. By the end of the Han, several mythological creatures of diverse provenance are seen grouped around her dragon-and-tiger throne: the hare, the toad and the three-legged bird (these lunar and solar animals are treated separately in the short chapter V), the nine-tailed fox of good omen, an armed guardian identified as Ta hsing po, immortals (sometimes engaged in the *liu po* game) as well as other figures in postures of supplication seemingly asking for the elixir of immortality.

The author dismisses as "perhaps too fanciful" (p. 110) the idea that the shape of the Queen's seat in the I-nan relief—three pillars arising from a single base (cf. fig. 4)—might be intended to form the character *shan* (mountain). On the contrary, this is quite likely. Another example of such a device can be seen in the astronomical design on the lacquer box lid of 433 BC (cf. sup. p. 92). There, the Big Dipper (surrounded by the twenty-eight equatorial constellations) is not, as later in Han drawings, depicted by the seven stars of the constellation but by the contemporary *graph* for *tou* = Dipper. The character magically naming a thing might have been considered to contain more of its essence than a mere drawing of its

outward appearance (cf. the chapter on the evolution of ideograms in Vandermeersch II, p. 473-97; Seidel, 1982, I, p. 321).

5° The myth of the seasonal meetings: Kominami, to whom the author expresses his indebtedness, has shed new light on the Hsi wang mu myth by comparing it with the myth of the Weaving Maid and the Oxherd, the two constellations, separated by the Milky Way, who meet only once (or twice) a year on the seventh day of the (first and the) seventh month. The author develops this very

Fig. 4. Queen Mother of the West and King Father of the East; from reliefs in a tomb at I-nan, Shantung. Probably third century AD. Cf. description in Loewe, p. 110, 122 and fig. 21.

enlightening comparison which shows i.a. that the annual or bi-annual meetings of the two constellations have a deeper meaning in common with the theme of the Queen Mother's meetings with the King Father of the East (Tung wang kung), or with certain favored temporal rulers like King Mu of Chou and the Han Emperor Wu. They are to be seen as "part of a much larger and more important

myth. This myth saw the continuity of the universe as depending on two annual meetings that took place in summer and winter... so as to mark the progress of the annual cycle'' (p. 119). The Queen Mother of the West and the King Father of the East become two cosmic forces whose periodic union operates the annual rebirth of the natural cycle. In the later (Six Dynasties) story of the Queen Mother's meetings with a Chinese monarch, her image as the lifegiving force in the annual cycle has evolved into that of a deity granting immortality and transmitting heavenly revelations in a setting that contains elements of contemporary Taoist ritual (p. 118).

The author's study of the Queen Mother of the West begins and ends with the myth of the seasonal meetings as its main theme. It is this myth which permits the fruitful comparison with other tales that express the interplay of cosmic forces through the meetings of various sets of partners. The myth bears, in its mature form, ''on the maintenance of the cosmic order, the processes of rebirth within the world of nature and the attainment of immortality'' (p. 87). The author suggests that it was the main reason why the Queen Mother of the West became so popular in the second century AD. But there is more to Hsi wang mu than that. The emphasis on her meetings with a male partner as a cosmic union of Yin and Yang obscures one minor theme, that is, the meaning of her meetings with human monarchs, and one major theme, which is what Kominami (quoting Eliade) calls her ''androgyny''.

The minor issue first: The story of the Queen Mother's meeting with King Mu is older than that of her being the partner of an eastern male deity, Tung wang kung. The story of her visit to the Han Emperor Wu attained its greatest popularity in the Six Dynasties period. Thus, the theme of the Queen Mother meeting human monarchs is older than the new theme of her partnership with a male deity and survived it. The two themes of annual meetings and that of her visit to an emperor intertwine when, p. ex. the meeting with Emperor Wu takes place on the seventh day of the first or the seventh month (p. 117, 120). But the issue in the second case is not a cosmic hierogamy but the meeting between a *deity* and a *human* being. The female nature of the deity here expresses her intermediary role, revealing celestial secrets to a human aspirant to

immortality. The seventh day of the first and seventh months is not only a day of male-female union but also of communication between Heaven and Earth, gods and mankind. Another important element in this legend is the failure of both King Mu and Emperor Wu to achieve immortality despite the extraordinary privilege of a personal audience with the Queen Mother: the divinely mandated mediator between Heaven and Earth, the Son of Heaven, fails in the task in which the earnest seeker of immortality, though merely his subject, can succeed.

The author could not possibly have elaborated all the facets of the Queen Mother of the West in Han and Six Dynasties beliefs without doubling the volume of his book. But the major feature of Hsi wang mu's "androgyny" or rather her unpartnered supremacy over the cosmos would have deserved more attention especially since the real root of her cosmic powers is probably not to be found in her interplay with a Yang force but in her very obscure role as a primordial cosmic demiurge and mother goddess. It is this facet that might be the oldest strand of her myth as well as the most enduring, since the modern syncretist religions that still venerate her (as Hsi wang mu or as Lao mu, Sheng mu, cf. Overmyer 1976, p. 139) stress her role as cosmic creator (or rather procreator) and as cosmic mother who does not unite with Yang but gives birth to Yin and Yang.

In this sense the Queen Mother of the West participates in a mythical complex that includes Nü kua, the mother of the god Lao chün, etc. as well as all the later Holy Mothers of popular religions since the Sung. This motif might even include the very problematic unsolved mysteries in the first chapter of the *Tao teh ching* ("the Beginning [*shih*] of Heaven and Earth" written with the radical "woman"—and "the Mother that rears the ten thousand creatures") as well as in the sixth chapter (the female "Valley Spirit" which is "the base from which sprang Heaven and Earth").

All this, of course, goes far beyond a chapter on the Han iconography showing ways to paradise. Staying within the limits of this subject, Kominami has devoted some thought to this matter and stresses, besides the fact (mentioned also by the author) that she was originally alone in pre-Han sources, that

1° in Han reliefs Hsi wang mu is more often alone than a partner to Tung wang kung (Kominami, p. 67),

2° among the Queen's attributes are several that symbolize not a pure Yin nature but Yin and Yang (Kominami, p. 68-69):

a) the simultaneous presence of the lunar hare and toad together with the three-legged solar bird. Loewe (p. 130-31) sees the three-legged bird as a variant of the three grey birds that serve the Queen.

b) Her throne is often not a mountain or pillar but a seat composed of a dragon and a tiger, a linkage in which Loewe very justly sees an expression of "the idea of omnipotence and continuity that is achieved by the fusion of the two forces" (of Yin and Yang, p. 105, cf. also pl. I).

c) Her headdress, the *sheng*, identified as a tool for weaving (Loewe, p. 105), is another symbol of a complementary nature. Although one could say that in the case of the Weaving Maid and the Oxherd, the weaving is a female activity complementary to the male tending of lifestock (sericulture-agriculture), the Queen Mother's weaving has no male counterpart. She is the female weaver of cosmic order, as a difficult but important passage in the *Huai-nan tzu* suggests (Loewe, p. 95). This passage, where the Old [Woman] of the West (Hsi lao) snaps her *sheng* headdress, creating cosmic catastrophies, has to be seen together with other fragments of this myth where, by breaking her *sheng* or forsaking her loom, the woman artisan (*nü kung*) creates havoc in government or extinguishes the light in the universe (Kominami, p. 69).

These elements are not isolated irregularities in the myth of a cosmic hierogamy but glimpses of the more fundamental essence of Hsi wang mu. The author quotes an intriguing text (*Hsüan-chung hsiang chuan*, ca. AD 1602) said to contain lost parts of the *Lieh-hsien chuan*, where the Queen Mother of the West, with the King of the East, is described as "creator of heaven and earth, moulder of all things that are created, mistress acknowledged by all those who ascend to heaven or descend to earth" (p. 124). After a futile search for this text I found an almost identical passage in the hagiography

of the Queen Mother by Tu Kuang-t'ing (AD 850-933; *Tao tsang* 560, *HY* 782.1.9b), a passage where it is also the cosmic couple who together mould all things. In another passage of Tu Kuang-t'ing's work it appears that the primordial role of the mother demiurge had, in his time, been taken over by the more recent goddess, the Holy Mother of the god Lao chün:

> "Some believe that it is she who is the greatest and the most venerable.
> She controls Heaven and Earth,
> harmonizes Yin and Yang,
> employs Wind and Rain as her servants.
> She makes the five planets advance and retreat,
> she arranges the cold and the heat,
> wields power over *Ch'ien* and *K'un*
> and rules over all immortals of the three realms.
> Life and death of men,
> rise and decline of generations,
> all proceed from her.
> It is from the Holy Mother of Lao chün
> that Heaven, Earth and all beings have received life."
>
> (*Tao tsang* 560, *HY* 782.1.8b-9a)

Since the Mother of the West, already mentioned in an oracle bone inscription, might be the oldest of all these demiurge motherdeities and since it is clear that her "marriage" with the King of the East occurred only in the late Han and never diminished her cosmic powers, one could wonder if the above passage does not describe what was originally the supreme primordial nature of the Queen Mother of the West.

V. *More questions concerning the afterlife*

The three different kinds of funeral artifacts discussed in this book all express the longing for an afterlife in a paradise beyond the tomb. The author's wish to investigate ways to paradise presided at their choice. In the case of the TLV mirrors we have seen that their funeral function as talismans on the way to paradise is only one possible reason for inclusion in the tomb, since their inscriptions seem to destine them primarily for use by the living who then might take them also into their last resting place. In fact, the majority of Han funeral objects were not symbolic roadsigns for a further journey to a paradise but artifacts reproducing and symbolizing an afterlife in the tomb itself which was first of all a *residence.* How else

could one explain the presence of all the replicas of buildings, servants and lifestock, of coffers filled with textiles, textscrolls, seed grain, game boards, lacquer bowls, bronze vessels, lamps and mirrors, etc. (for the contents of the Ma wang tui tombs, see p. 25-27). The author discusses this function of the tomb and explains it as the attempt to keep the remaining vital force (*p'o*), which accompanies the body to the grave, provided with all it might need for a comfortable existence with the body, and to prevent it from straying (p. 12-13). While the *p'o* should thus reside in the tomb, the intelligent and more spiritual force of man, the *hun*, had to be provided with symbols intended to escort the "soul" to some land of immortals. Thus, the painting on the banner, the mention of immortals on the mirrors and the pictures of the Queen Mother of the West all concern the fate of the *hun*. At the risk of pressing the logic of these definitions too far, the question may be asked why these escorts for the journey of the *hun* were included in the tomb which received the body after the *hun* had departed from it and after all ritualized efforts to call it back (*chao hun*) had failed.

Indeed, a clear separation of a *p'o*, appeased with the wealth included in the tomb, from a *hun* departed to heavenly realms is not possible. It is contradicted by the funerary cult of the Han, which, as Doris Croissant has shown, included periodic sacrifices (of the *chi li* category addressed only to pure benevolent *shen* spirits) in a small temple (*tz'u t'ang*) erected *at the tomb site.* These sacrifices were made to the *hun*. It would be interesting to know if the pictures of the Queen Mother of the West and other paradise scenes were located in parts of the tomb destined for the cult of the *hun*. The tradition of the *tz'u t'ang* tomb shrines is attested for the region of Shantung. In the southern Ch'ang-sha, where the funeral banner of the Countess of Tai was found on top of the innermost coffin *inside* the tomb, other rites might have prevailed. The latter would corroborate existing evidence for the presence of the *hun* also inside the tomb. Wang Ch'ung (AD 27-97) castigates the prevailing custom to bury food in the tombs in order to "please the spirit" (*ching hun*).

One striking fact is that, of all the Han texts which the author quotes to explain the meaning of the banner, the mirrors or the Queen Mother of the West, not one concerns the afterlife of the dead (with the possible exception of the *Chao hun* poem). In other

words, we did not, for example, know about any connection between the Queen Mother of the West and the cult of the dead before Hsi wang mu pictures were actually found in tombs. She was a kind of mythical monster who became, in the second century AD, a Queen of the immortals, *not* of the souls of the dead. Not one text speaks of any soul of a deceased and buried human being ascending to her paradise. This quite extraordinary realisation leads to the question as to how, if not in terms of paradises, the afterlife of the dead was described in Han texts. A few such passages exist and they hint at a completely different fate awaiting the deceased. They are not too difficult to understand since they represent the first glimpses of beliefs that were to become common in the Six Dynasties period where we find them in countless popular tales and in Taoist texts. A reader for whom *Ways to Paradise* is the first introduction to Han religions might assume that all souls were believed to go to heavens like the one depicted on the banner, or to paradises like the one of the Queen Mother of the West. It is therefore useful to briefly summarize basic ideas concerning the netherworld that can be dated before the end of the second century AD (many of them are to be found in Maeno, 1961).

The oldest *locus classicus* for the fate of the dead is a story in the *Tso chuan* (dated about 721 BC). There the home of the dead are the "Yellow Springs" (*huang ch'üan*), a shadowy subterranean abode not too far beneath the earth (Needham, V, 2, p. 84-85), comparable to the Greek Hades. In the second century BC this belief was still current since a son of the Han Emperor Wu speaks of it in a sad chant before his suicide: the Yellow Springs below are sad and dark, they cannot be avoided since man must die; a summons from a place called Kao-li has to be obeyed since victims of death can send no proxy... (*Han shu* 63; Needham, *ibid.*; Maeno I, p. 43).

There were also early beliefs in a separation of "flesh and bones which revert to the earth" from "the soul (*hun ch'i*) that roams around everywhere" (*Li chi*, Maeno I, p. 41). The *Huai-nan tzu* (ch. 7) speaks of "bones returning to earth and souls (*ching shen*) entering heaven". He describes four palaces in heaven (ch. 3) which "oversee (the administration of) recompenses and punishments". This might be the earliest allusion to a judgment in the afterlife. A funerary chant called *Kao-li* explains that the *hun* and *p'o* souls of

sages and fools alike have to go there. Kao-li is the name of one of the lower peaks around Mount T'ai in Shantung. Another Han poem (*Yüan shih hsing*) laments that human life cannot be prolonged; all men wherever they roam in the four directions all are tied to the registers in Mount T'ai, and in the middle of life's joy suddenly they have to return to the Eastern Peak (= Mt. T'ai; Maeno I, p. 43). In later tales, the "registers" in Mount T'ai turn out to be the archives of the tribunals that judge the dead. A late Han magician tells of his pilgrimage to Mount T'ai when he was ill. He made a petition to (the god of the mountain) concerning his lifespan (*Hou Han shu*; Ngo, 1976, p. 111).

In the third and fourth centuries stories abound on the way of the souls to the subterranean empire inside Mount T'ai. Maeno points out several tales in which the realm where the dead exist is limited to a house and to their clan, i.e. their tomb and those of their family already buried there. In these stories he sees a preliminary stage to a more complex organisation of the netherworld in a society modeled on the Han administration and situated in Mount T'ai. In this context it is interesting to note that a late Han tomb in Wang tu (Hopei) symbolizes not only the residence of the deceased but very manifestly his *office*, complete with doorkeepers (whose titles are taken from Han administrative nomenclature) and rows of officials paying their respects. Discussing this tomb, Croissant suggests that, since the tribunal of the shades in Mount T'ai is not yet fully developed in the Han period, individual tombs endowed with all the signs of rank and honor (some of them posthumously bestowed) might have played the role of the netherworldly residence *and* yamen which we find later in Mount T'ai, where deceased judges continue to pronounce sentence, deceased criminals meet their punishment, while others might simply have existed there with all the comfort with which their surviving descendants had endowed their tombs.

As far as all these beliefs are concerned, the two Han dynasties are a complex period of transition. Great changes become manifest around and after the collapse of the empire. Taoists perfected techniques to avoid death and those who died went to have their netherworldly fate settled in the registries and offices of Mount T'ai. These changes were not abrupt. Deathlessness was an ideal in

the second century BC, Kao-li and Mount T'ai are mentioned in laments on death by Han poets. Both themes do not owe anything to the arrival of Buddhism (in the first and second centuries AD).

As to the Taoist techniques, we have repeatedly stumbled over the unclear concept of immortality which does not do justice to the elaboration of methods to bypass death. This vagueness in fact obscures a major question that should have been asked in this book: why does one find the paradises and deities of the *immortals* (as well as other such tokens, like the pottery birds with elixir vessels on their wings, cf. Needham, V, 2, p. 113) in the tombs of those who have not succeeded to avoid death? Are the pictures of heaven on the banner and of the Queen Mother's paradise on the tomb reliefs only a wishful afterthought, magically invoking an unattainable apotheose for the deceased who did not succeed to preserve himself intact and whose scattered vital forces and souls will now have to join the dark world of the shades? Or was there, in the Han period, a belief that these celestial regions can be reached after passing through the disintegration of physical death? There is evidence, considerably later, for both of these possible explanations. Some centuries later Taoism evolved means to make the souls of the dead pass through a purifying "smelting" in a kind of purgatory located in the south (= fire), in order to enable them to ascend as immortals. The "wishful afterthought" theory can be illustrated with a very far fetched comparison taken from Japanese Buddhism: in medieval Japan, the funerary procession took the coffin through all stages of the Buddhist way, from the first Bodhisattva vow to the ultimate Awakening, enacting symbolically what the deceased should have done in his lifetime (and should do in his future incarnations; cf. Seidel, 1982, II, p. 582-84).

This discrepancy between the netherworldly fate of the dead as it was conceived according to the texts and the visions of immortals' paradises found in the tombs, seems to me the most interesting problem resulting from the study under review. Further research on Han funerary cults should investigate the possibility that Han tombs contain, besides tokens of immortality, some objects that point to the beliefs in a more or less organized netherworld. The tomb in Wang tu is already an administrator's office. Also, Han tombs already contain coffers filled with clay replicas of gold coins

(Loewe, p. 27), the kind of spirit money which sources from the sixth century AD explain as being intended to pay (or bribe) the administrators in the world of the dead (cf. Hou Ching-lang, 1975; Seidel, 1978). Such objects might clarify the stages of the transition from the Chou period's Yellow Springs to the later administration of the shades in Mount T'ai. They might even tell us how the theme of immortality fits into the Han vision of the life after death.

The tide of new archeological discoveries in China and of their presentation in an increasing number of Chinese books, journals and exhibitions shows no signs of abating. Han concepts of immortality are but one among a multitude of major topics that can be elucidated, as never before, by this wealth of new material. The author's skillful selection and meaningful correlation of pictorial and textual sources as well as the clarity and depth of his inquiry provide an exemplary model which should encourage and inform all further endeavors to evaluate archeological evidence in order to revise and complete our knowledge of China's past. The actuality of his subject and the success of his masterful study are evidenced by the number of reviews being written on it (Finsterbusch, Cahill). Furthermore, *Ways to Paradise* vividly demonstrates how valuable such studies can be not only to the sinologist but to all students of archeology, religion, folklore, art history and history of science.

VI. *Remarks on details*

— p. 12 note 22 belongs somewhere higher up in the text since the passage in Maspero to which reference is given, does not mention jades or the sealing of body orifices.

— p. 64 point 2 speaks of two TLV mirrors made from a positive instead of a negative mould. The Museum of Hanoi has what is possibly a third, cf. Vandermeersch, 1960, p. 12 no. 18.289 and pl. VII (other TLV mirrors, *ibid.*, pl. VIII-XI, XIV). A fourth one is mirror X 9003, cf. above, fig. 2.

— p. 122: In what way does the shape of the jade pillow from Wang tu indicate "that the Queen of the West and the King of the East together hold the cosmos in their keeping"? Elsewhere (legend of pl. XXI) it is doubted, perhaps with reason, if this scene really represents Hsi wang mu at all.

— p. 134 note 5: Another valuable attempt to treat the *Huai-nan tzu* to critical scholarly examination is the little known German translation and study of chapters 1 and 2 by Eva Kraft, *Monumenta Serica* 16 (1957) p. 191-286; 17 (1958) p. 128-207.
— p. 146 note 49 to the text on p. 74 refers the reader to explanations on the selfsame p. 74 where this note figures (?).
— p. 148 note 6 refers to Kominami, p. 75 note 13 (not 11).
— p. 151 note 76: In the mirror design reproduced by Hayashi (1973) p. 39 (not p. 38), fig. 32, the positions of the Queen Mother of the West and the Lord King of the East are indeed reversed, but so are those of the Dragon (with the Lord of the East) and the Tiger (with the Queen of the West). Here again, the simple statement that they are situated "incorrectly" might have to be reconsidered, in case we do find one day a key to the numerous "irregularities" in cosmological mirror patterns.
— p. 187 mirror X 1009: The text of the outer inscription starts between tortoise and dragon, i.e. in the north-east.

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APPENDIX:

REMARQUES SUR LES MIROIRS TLV DANS LEUR RAPPORT AVEC LES TABLES *LIU-JEN*

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La parution récente de l'étude que M. Loewe a consacré aux miroirs TLV constitue à ce jour la plus importante contribution faite sur ce sujet. Tant par la présentation et l'étude minutieuse des travaux antérieurs que par le large éventail des pièces offertes à l'attention du lecteur, nous sommes ici en présence d'un ensemble appelé à fournir le préliminaire indispensable à toute investigation future des problèmes posés par ce type de miroirs. Dans un tel contexte, il est dommage que l'auteur se soit engagé outre mesure dans une analyse de l'origine et de la signification des motifs décoratifs représentés sur les miroirs en relation quasiment exclusive avec les tables de divination (*shih*) du type *liu-jen* (désignées par l'auteur au moyen du seul terme *shih*, "diviner's board") à la description desquelles est consacré l'*Appendice trois* de son ouvrage. Ce qui chez Kaplan (1937) n'était qu'une simple constatation fondée sur la similarité du symbolisme propre à ces deux types d'objets et chez Needham (*Volume III*, p. 305) un simple compte-rendu parmi d'autres de l'hypothèse de Kaplan, revêt chez Loewe la forme d'une parenté si étroite que le lecteur est porté, d'une

part, à considérer les miroirs TLV comme une simple version stylisée des tables *liu-jen* et, d'autre part, à en interpréter le symbolisme en relation univoque avec celui présenté par ces instruments mantiques.

Après avoir défini le miroir standard comme étant du type de ceux qui furent fabriqués entre -50 et +150 environ (catégorie C, "regular type"), l'auteur tente de montrer que ce miroir standard représentait l'ajustement le plus favorable des deux plateaux d'une table *liu-jen* et qu'il était par conséquent conçu comme une version stylisée de ces instruments, ayant pour fonction de perpétuer le souvenir de l'ajustement obtenu. Or, comme nous allons le voir dans un instant, rien ne permet d'assigner aux miroirs TLV la fonction de fixer pour l'éternité le résultat d'un pronostic divinatoire quel qu'il soit, pas plus que les similitudes discernables dans le symbolisme commun à ces deux types d'objets n'autorise à tracer une ligne d'influence directe entre eux.

Par définition, la manipulation d'une table *liu-jen* à des fins divinatoires aboutit pour chaque demande d'oracle à un dispositif spécifique des éléments inscrits sur les deux plateaux de l'appareil. Si les miroirs TLV avaient eu pour fonction de représenter d'une manière ou d'une autre un ajustement particulièrement favorable d'une table de divination, il va de soi que ceux-ci accuseraient ici ou là des différences significatives dans la répartition de leur éléments constitutifs. Comme on peut s'en rendre compte en parcourant les nombreux exemplaires reproduits par l'auteur et la nomenclature générale des miroirs existants donnée dans l'*Appendice deux*, il n'en est rien. Les marques TLV, les bosses et autres motifs décoratifs forment une structure géométrique quasiment immuable; la série des douze *branches terrestres* est toujours répartie sur le pourtour du carré selon les critères universellement reconnus sous les Han, tels qu'ils furent fixés dans les premières décennies de l'empire et probablement dès le troisième siècle avant notre ère par les calendriers rituels du type *Yüe-ling*, des ouvrages comme le *Huai-nan tzu*, le *Ch'un-ch'iu fan-lu* et une multitude de traités connexes moins importants (*tzu* = Nord, *chou* = N-NE, etc.); les représentations zoomorphes et tout particulièrement les animaux emblématiques *szu-shen* des quatre secteurs de l'espace sont toujours identifiables et leur position est là aussi pratiquement invariable (dragon = Est, oiseau = Sud, tigre = Ouest, tortue = Nord). Selon l'auteur, les quelques variantes constatées dans la répartition de ces divers éléments sur les miroirs du type standard sont à imputer, soit à des vices de fabrication pour les modèles authentiquement Han, soit à une erreur de datation pour les copies tardives de miroirs d'époque, mais en aucun cas à une volonté du fabricant de rendre compte d'un agencement particulier obtenu à l'aide d'une table *liu-jen*. A. Seidel qui, dans le présent compte-rendu,

s'est efforcée de faire ressortir ce que ces quelques variantes avaient malgré tout de significatif, à identifié deux cas (C5001, X9003) où l'agencement représenté pourrait témoigner de l'apport d'un procédé divinatoire apparenté au *shih*. Ce qui est déjà peu dans le seul contexte des variantes existantes le devient d'autant plus au regard de l'important corpus des miroirs standards sur lesquels se fonde avant tout le jugement émis par l'auteur. N'apportant lui-même aucune preuve venant étayer son hypothèse de départ, on comprend difficilement pourquoi il a jugé bon d'en faire état.

On pourrait bien sûr supposer que l'"ajustement favorable" que les fabricants de miroirs cherchaient à reproduire était celui où les deux parties des tables *liu-jen* se trouvaient en position neutre, de telle sorte que les éléments communs aux deux plateaux soient répartis les uns face aux autres. Dans ces conditions, les données portées sur l'instrument n'offrent aucune caractéristique particulière. A l'instar des miroirs TLV, elles se bornent à reproduire le dispositif classique défini par la théorie des correspondances au début des Han. De plus, cet ajustement spécifique (que les manipulateurs des tables *liu-jen* nomment "résonnance cachée" *fu-yin*), n'apportant au devin aucune des oppositions d'aspects nécessaires à l'établissement de son pronostic, est en général considéré comme plutôt néfaste: "Dans cette position, les esprits mensuels (éléments portés sur la partie circulaire des *shih*, *cf* Loewe, p. 206 -b-) sont tous à leur place (sur les cases correspondantes de la base carrée), les aspects propres aux *branches* et aux *troncs* (*idem*, -c-) ne sont pas en opposition... ..Aucun choix n'est possible... ...Il ne convient ni de sortir de chez soi, ni d'entreprendre une action car elle serait vouée à l'échec" (*Huang-ti chin-k'uei yü-heng ching*, p. 9b-10a, *Tao-tsang* 135, *HY* 284).

Le seul argument pouvant d'une certaine façon témoigner de l'utilisation d'un procédé mantique dans la conception des miroirs TLV réside dans le fait que le début des inscriptions disposées en général en rond autour du carré central varie d'un exemplaire à l'autre. Il n'est pas impossible ici qu'on ait fait appel au devin pour décider de l'endroit précis (par rapport au carré central) où il convenait d'entamer le défilement de cette inscription qui constitue, précisons-le, le seul élément personnalisé à figurer sur les miroirs. Etant donné que sur les quatre-vingt dix inscriptions analysées par l'auteur, près de la moitié (trente-sept) commence dans le coin Nord-Est du carré (*branche yin*, premier mois du printemps, début de l'année civile sous les Han), il y a tout lieu de supposer que le fabricant choisissait dans la plupart des cas l'endroit qui lui semblait le plus propice à être utilisé comme point de départ. Pour le reste, même s'il avait éprouvé la nécessité d'avoir recours à un procédé mantique quelconque,

rien ne permet d'affirmer qu'il eut fait appel à une table *liu-jen* plutôt qu'à l'achilléomancie ou à l'une ou l'autre des multiples techniques divinatoires en usage sous les Han.

Passons maintenant à la question du symbolisme commun aux miroirs TLV et aux tables *liu-jen*. Les motifs inscrits sur les miroirs sont habituellement répartis en deux catégories: la trame TLV et le décor de fond. Ce dernier, d'après la périodicité établie par l'auteur, accuse une évolution que nous résumerons de la manière suivante: 1) les miroirs pré-standards (types A et B) dont la caractéristique est l'absence d'éléments symboliques en relation directe avec la théorie classique des correspondances (miroirs *ts'ao-yeh* et *shou-chou*); 2) les miroirs standards auxquels nous avons déjà fait allusion; 3) les miroirs post-standards qui utilisent des éléments symboliques sous une forme altérée et non conforme à l'usage Han (type X). Les miroirs du type D, dont la principale irrégularité est l'omission de la formule personnalisée, représentent une catégorie intermédiaire entre le type C et le type X. Bien entendu, les décors de fond peuvent être ou non assortis de la trame TLV, quelle que soit la période envisagée.

Comme on a pu le constater, c'est par l'intermédiaire des miroirs standards que l'auteur tente d'établir une filiation avec les tables *liu-jen*. Ceci nous amène en premier lieu à l'affirmation suivante que la tradition des miroirs TLV n'est pas liée en ses origines aux tables de divination, mais seulement à partir de la fin des Han antérieurs, date à laquelle commencent à apparaître les premiers miroirs du type standard. Par ailleurs, l'hypothèse d'un rapport fonctionnel entre les tables de divination et les miroirs (à la manière du lien qui lie le résultat d'une opération mathématique à la règle à calculer qui a permis de la réaliser) étant sans fondement, l'existence d'un symbolisme commun à ces deux sortes d'objets n'illustre, en dernier ressort, que le fait qu'ils sont contemporains l'un de l'autre (les découvertes archéologiques n'ont jusqu'à ce jour jamais démontré le contraire; *cf* D. Harper 1980-1981, p. 48). C'est à la lumière de la structure de l'idéologie Han et de ses systèmes de représentations dont l'auteur trace les grandes lignes dans son chapitre introductif que doit être interprétée la similitude des motifs portés, ici sur les miroirs TLV, là sur les tables de divination *liu-jen*. Tout particulièrement durant cette période d'effervescence qu'a constitué la formation de l'empire chinois, il n'est pratiquement pas de domaine (institutionnel, rituel, scientifique, artistique ou philosophique) qui n'ait moulé son discours et ses théories sur une conception du monde dont les miroirs Han se sont eux aussi faits l'écho. C'est pourquoi, s'il est clair que les deux types d'objets qui nous intéressent ici sont révélateurs d'un univers mental commun, rien ne prouve par contre qu'il existe entre eux une relation d'influence mutuelle ou d'emprunt réciproque, ni sur le plan fonctionnel, ni sur le plan symbolique.

Venons-en maintenant à la trame TLV. Nous l'avons vu, sa présence sur les miroirs n'est pas liée à un décor de fond particulier; tous les types existants s'en accommodent. Cette indépendance est encore accentuée par le fait que la trame se retrouve telle quelle sans aucun décor de fond sur les plateaux *liu-po* (reproduction *in* Needham, *Volume III*, p. 304 et *figure* 127). Signalons à ce propos que le seul lien difficilement discutable entre les tables de divination (*liu-jen*?) et la trame TLV nous est fourni par un motif pictural Han (site funéraire de Wu Liang, + 147 environ; Needham, *idem*, p. 314) représentant deux personnages occupés à manipuler un objet identifié à juste titre comme une table de divination tout en ayant à proximité un plateau *liu-po*. Il n'est pas impossible que la manipulation des tables de divination était alors liée à ce type de plateau qui servait au devin de support pour y disposer des pions chargés de représenter les résultats du comput entrepris (*cf* aussi le *Shih-chi* qui évoque l'usage du *shih* en ces termes: *hsüan-shih cheng-ch'i* "faire pivoter le *shih* et disposer les pions [sur un support]"; chapitre 127, p. 3218 de l'édition de Pékin). Dans la mesure où la trame TLV est ici concernée, le lecteur aurait aimé avoir une discussion plus précise sur ce point. Tout comme il se serait attendu à trouver une étude détaillée des causes de la présence de cette même trame sur les cadrans solaires Han (reproduction *in* Needham, *Volume III*, p. 306, *figure* 128) et de la relation éventuelle entre ces instruments et le report des marques TLV sur les miroirs. La solution de l'énigme posée par ces cadrans solaires est actuellement la seule voie d'une meilleure compréhension de la nature des liens qui régissent les trois composantes du corpus TLV aujourd'hui à notre disposition, à savoir les cadrans solaires, les miroirs et les plateaux *liu-po*.

Plutôt que de s'engager dans cette voie et non sans avoir pris soin de donner un résumé du compte-rendu présenté jadis par Needham (*Volume III*, pp. 302-309), l'auteur a préféré tourner toute son attention vers les tables *liu-jen*, sur la seule évidence que le décor de fond des miroirs standards (type C) accusait certaines similitudes avec la structure générale de ce type de tables.

Rien ne permet, de prime abord, de déceler un apport quelconque de la trame TLV au dispositif représenté sur les tables *liu-jen*. L'auteur cherche toutefois à établir que la présence des quatre traverses reliant deux à deux les quatre coins et les milieux des côtés de certaines tables peuvent être considérées comme équivalentes à ce que sont sur les miroirs les marques TLV (les T comptant pour les quatre extrémités des traverses verticale et horizontale, les V pour celles des deux traverses diagonales). Là aussi, il prend pour une relation spécifique un symbolisme courant largement attesté dans les sources avant même la constitution de l'empire: la division

de l'espace en huit secteurs orientés auxquels sont appariés les huit Vents (*cf* par exemple, *Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu*, chapitre *Yu-shih*). En assimilant les marques TLV à de simples indicateurs d'orientation, c'est toute la difficile question de leur fonction technique sur les cadrans solaires qui est évacuée. Les travaux faits dans ce domaine montrent que les marques TLV sont indissociables de l'ensemble du dispositif géométrique représenté sur ces appareils et que cet ensemble devait être utilisé à des fins astronomiques, probablement le calcul des dates solsticiales, du point vernal ou de tout autre fonction déductible à partir des mouvements solaires (Need-

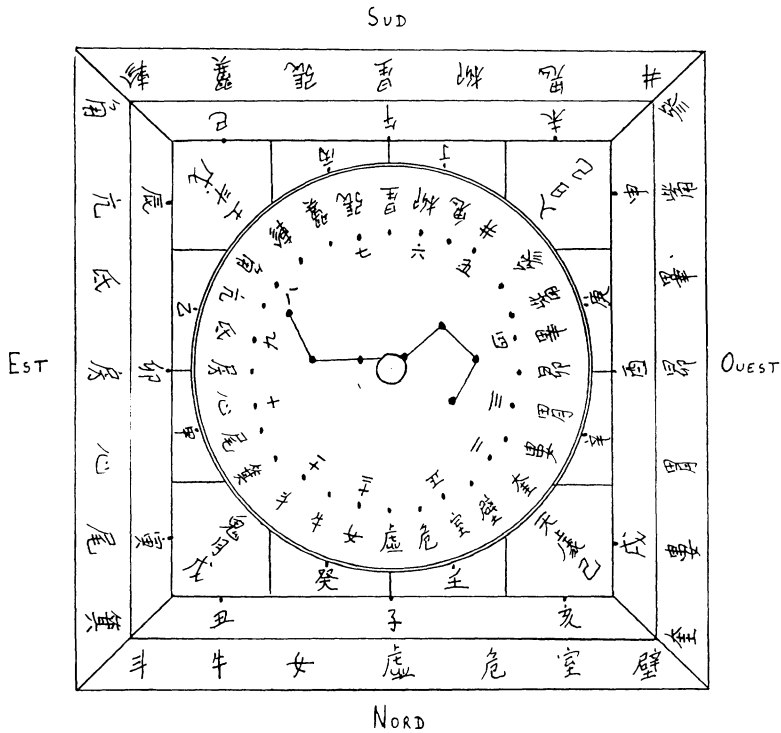

Fig. 5. Schema of the oldest known specimen of a diviner's board *shih* (165 BC; cf. *Wenwu* 1978, 8, pp. 12-31; *Kaogu* 1978, 5, pp. 338-43).
This instrument consists of a square base (Earth plate) surmounted by a smaller round disc (Heaven plate). The board was manipulated by rotating the round central disc and thus achieving various combinations of the elements represented on the Earth plate and the Heaven plate. The graph in the center of the instrument represents the Big Dipper. On the outer rim of both plates figure the twenty-eight equatorial constellations, represented twice. In the central band of the Earth plate are inscribed the twelve chronograms (or Terrestrial Branches).

ham, *Volume III*, pp. 305-308). Par ailleurs, l'importance accordée aux traverses dans la structure générale des tables *liu-jen* (l'auteur y consacre deux des cinq caractéristiques des *shih* sous les Han; p. 75, points 2 et 3) est elle aussi sujette à caution. En effet, le plus ancien modèle de table *liu-jen* connu à ce jour (-165) et découvert en 1977 dans la province du Anhui (*cf K'ao-ku*, 1978-5, pp. 338-343 et *Wen-wu*, 1978-8, pp. 12-31) ne comporte aucun dispositif particulier qui mette en valeur, soit les quatre coins, soit les milieux des quatre côtés de l'appareil (*cf* fig. 5). Malheureusement la présente étude était déjà sous presse au moment où paraissaient en Chine les premiers compte-rendus de fouilles (*cf Appendice 3*, note au sous-titre). Ce qui est d'autant plus regrettable que la découverte simultanée de plusieurs types distincts de tables de divination a permis aux spécialistes de ces questions de clarifier voire même de préciser la vision globale que nous avions de ces instruments astro-calendériques et de la fonction mantique qu'ils avaient sous les Han antérieurs.

Signalons enfin que les animaux emblématiques, éléments si importants du décor de fond des miroirs standards et post-standards, ne sont pas du tout représentatifs de la facture des tables *liu-jen* sous les Han. Une seule apparition sur les quatre exemplaires identifiables et il s'agit précisément de la table (♀1 dans la classification de l'auteur) dont l'attribution Han est un fait de tradition et non une réalité archéologique. Mis à part la présence de motifs animaliers, cette table présente en effet plusieurs autres irrégularités qui en font un objet à part dans le corpus des tables *liu-jen* authentiquement Han (absence de pivot central permettant le mouvement du plateau circulaire autour de la base carrée, facture en bronze plutôt qu'en bois laqué).

En somme, les seuls éléments véritablement communs et que l'on trouve sans équivoque possible à la fois sur les miroirs TLV et les tables *liu-jen* sont les bosses et les douze *branches terrestres*. C'est peu, surtout quand on pense que la constellation du Boisseau ainsi que les vingt-huit constellations équatoriales qui constituent l'essence même des tables *liu-jen* sous les Han ne furent jamais transposées sur un seul des miroirs TLV existants.

La tentative faite par l'auteur de rattacher la fabrication des miroirs TLV sous les Han à la manipulation des tables *liu-jen* est cependant loin d'avoir été négative. On doit lui reconnaître le mérite, d'une part, d'avoir abordé la question sous tous ses aspects en prenant soin de donner au lecteur une présentation brève mais précise de ces instruments mantiques encore mal connus du public non spécialisé et, d'autre part, d'avoir fait ressortir l'influence exercée par la cosmologie Han et les pratiques qui la fondaient sur certains aspects de l'art religieux de cette dynastie.

Ch'an 禪
Ch'ang-o 嫦娥
Ch'ang-sha 長沙
Chao-hun 招魂
chi li 吉禮
ch'i 棊
ch'i-lin 麒麟
chia-yin 甲寅
ch'ien 乾
Ch'ih-sung 赤松(誦)
ching-hun 精魂
ching-shen 精神
chou 丑
Chuang-tzu 莊子
Chu-lung 燭龍
Ch'u-tz'u 楚辭
Ch'un-ch'iu fan-lu 春秋繁露
fang-chu 方諸
Fu Hsi 伏羲
Fu-sang 扶桑
fu-yin 伏吟
Han-shu 漢書
Han Wu-ti 漢武帝
Hou Han-shu 後漢書
hou-t'ien 後天
Hsi-lao 西老(=姥)
Hsi-mu 西母
Hsi-wang-mu 西王母

hsiang-ch'i 象棊
hsien 仙
hsien-jen liu-po 仙人六博
hsiu 宿
hsüan 巽
Hsüan-chung hsiang-chuan 玄中象傳
hsüan-shih cheng-ch'i 旋式正棊
Hsüan-tsang 玄奘
hu (gourd) 瓠
hu (vase) 壺
hu-lu 瓠盧
hua-kai 華蓋
Huai-nan tzu 淮南子
huang-ch'üan 黃泉
Huang-ti chin-k'uei yü-heng ching 黃帝金匱玉衡經
hun 魂
hun-ch'i 魂氣
I-nan 沂南
k'an 坎
k'ang 亢
Kao-li 高里
ken 艮
kua 瓜
kuei 鬼
k'un 坤
K'un-lun 崑崙
kuo-pao 國寶

Lao-chün 老君
Lao-mu 老母
Li-chi 禮記
liu-jen 六壬
liu-po 六博
Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu 呂氏春秋
Ma-wang tui 馬王堆
Mu wang 穆王
Nü kua 女媧
nü-kung 女工
P'eng-hu 蓬壺
P'eng-lai 蓬萊
pi-hsieh 辟邪
p'o 魄
pu-lao pu-szu 不老不死
shan 山
Shan-hai ching 山海經
Shao-kou 燒溝
shen (chronogram) 申
shen (deity) 神
sheng 勝
Sheng-mu 聖母
shih (board) 式
shih (beginning) 始
Shih-chi 史記
Shou-chou 壽州
Ssu-ma Ch'ien 司馬遷
szu-shen 四神
Ta hsing po 大行伯
Tai (Countess of) 軑
T'ai (Mountain) 泰山
T'ai-p'ing kuang-chi 太平廣記
Tao-te ching 道德經
Tao-tsang 道藏
T'ien-ti 天帝
tou 斗
Ts'ao-yeh 草葉
Tso-chuan 左傳
ts'un 寸
Tu Kuang-t'ing 杜光庭
Tung Chung-shu 董仲舒
Tung-wang kung 東王公
tzu (chronogram) 子
tz'u-t'ang 祠堂
Wang Ch'ung 王充
Wang Mang 王莽
Wang-tu 望都
wu-hsing 五行
Wu Liang 武梁
Wu-ti 武帝
yang-sheng pu-szu 養生不死
yang-sui 陽燧
yin (chronogram) 寅
yu (chronogram) 酉
Yu-shih 有始
Yüan-shih hsing 怨詩行
Yüan-yu 遠遊
Yüe-ling 月令