"O Soul, Come Back!" A Study in the Changing Conceptions of the Soul and Afterlife in Pre-Buddhist China

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IN this study I propose to investigate indigenous Chinese conceptions of the afterlife in the period before the arrival of Buddhism in China. I shall take the ritual of *fu* 復 "Summons" or "Recall" as the point of departure, for in my judgment this ritual was the crystallization of a variety of ideas about human survival after death that had developed in China since high antiquity. After a reconstruction of the ritual of *fu*, I shall proceed to inquire into the origin and development of the notions of *hun* 魂 and *p'o* 魄, two pivotal concepts that have been, and remain today, the key to understanding Chinese views of the human soul and the afterlife. Finally, I shall examine the changing conceptions of the two afterworlds before Buddhism transformed them into "heaven" and "hell."

A study of this kind must be based on every type of evidence now available—historical as well as archaeological, written as well as pictorial. My central purpose is to identify a common core of beliefs in Han China that were shared by the elite and popular cultures. In this particular area of Han thought, the boundaries between Confucian ideology and popular Taoist religion, which was a syncretism of all the indigenous religious beliefs and practices at the popular level, are blurred and often impossible to distinguish. For example, views about the *hun*-soul and *p'o*-soul found in the Han Confucian classic *Li chi* 禮記 bear a strong resemblance to those found in the

Ho-shang Commentary on the Lao Tzu 老子河上注, a popular Taoist text of Han origin.[1] For the same reason, the *T'ai-p'ing ching* 太平經 is also an indispensable source for the study of popular beliefs concerning the afterlife at the end of the Han period. Portions of this text are clearly traceable to the Han times and can throw important new light on our subject, especially when they are used with caution and in combination with other newly discovered documents of proven Han date.[2]

Finally, a word about the problem of cultural unity or diversity is also in order. The general picture presented below reflects what all our evidence tells us, but no claim is made that the beliefs described constitute in any strict sense a unified belief system, much less the only one, embraced by all the Chinese of the Han empire throughout the four centuries of its existence. Some of the beliefs and practices discussed in this study may well have been of only local sub-cultural importance. But, on the other hand, it would not be worthwhile to attempt to identify every belief or practice with the regional culture from which it originally arose. For example, the idea of *hun*, though possibly of a southern origin, had already become universally accepted by the Chinese by the third century B.C. at the latest, and the T'ai-shan cult had also assumed a nation-wide religious significance by the second century A.D. if not earlier. Throughout this study I shall identify, whenever possible, the date and local origin of each piece of supporting evidence. However, given our present stage of knowledge, it is not always clear what sorts of conclusions can be drawn from such identifications.

[1] This commentary, usually referred to as *Lao Tzu Ho-shang chu* 老子河上注, has been traditionally thought to be a post-Han work on account of the vulgarity of its language. See Chang Hsin-ch'eng 張心澂, *Wei-shu t'ung-k'ao* 偽書通考, 2 vols. (Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1954), 2:743–45. However, with the discovery of several Tun-huang manuscripts of earlier commentaries on the *Lao Tzu*, the origin of the Ho-shang text can now be traced to the second century A.D or earlier. See Jao Tsung-i 饒宗頤, *Lao Tzu Hsiang-erh chu chiao-chien* 老子想爾注校箋 (Hong Kong: by the author, 1956), pp. 87–92 and Kobayashi Masayoshi 小林正美, "Kajō shinjin shoku no shisō to seiritsu," 河上真人章句の思想と成立, *Tōhō shūkyō* 東方宗教 65 (May, 1985): 20–43.

[2] Particularly important are various kinds of inscriptions found in Han tombs. For the dating of the *T'ai-p'ing ching*, see note 47 below.

THE RITUAL OF *FU*

In Han China there was an important death ritual called *fu*, "The Summons of the Soul." It was the first of a series of rituals to be performed to the newly dead. Although this *fu* ritual, as variously reported in the *Chou-li* 周禮, *I-li* 儀禮, and *Li-chi* is a highly complex one, it may nevertheless be briefly described. As soon as a person dies, a "summoner" (*fu-che* 復者), normally a member of the family climbs from the east eaves to the top of the roof with a set of clothes belonging to the deceased. The summoner faces the north, waves the clothes of the deceased, and calls him by name aloud—"O! Thou so-and-so, come back!" After the call has been repeated three times, the summoner throws down the clothes, which are received by another person on the ground. The receiver then spreads the clothes over the body of the dead. Afterwards, the summoner descends from the west eaves. Thus the ritual of *fu* is completed.

According to the Han commentator Cheng Hsuan 鄭玄 (127–200) the purpose of the *fu* ritual is "to summon the *hun*-soul of the dead back to reunite with its *p'o* soul" (*chao-hun fu-p'o* 招魂復魄). In fact, the ritual is predicated on the belief that when the *hun* separates from the *p'o* and leaves the human body, life comes to an end. However, at the moment when death first occurs, the living cannot bear to believe that their beloved one has really left them for good. The living must first assume that the departure of the *hun*-soul is only temporary. It is possible, then, that if the departed soul can be summoned back the dead may be brought back to life. A person can be pronounced dead only when the *fu* ritual has failed to achieve its purpose, after which the body of the dead will be placed on the bed in his or her own chamber and covered with a burial shroud called *hu* or *fu* 幠.[3]

Remarkably, this Han ritual practice has been confirmed by recent archaeological discoveries. In 1972–74, three Han tombs were

[3] On the ritual of *fu* 復, see *Li-chi chu-su* 禮記注疏 (*Shih-san ching chu-su* 十三經注疏, 1815 edition), 4.20b, 21.9b–11a, 44.3a–5a; Hu P'ei-hui 胡培翬, *I-li cheng-i* 儀禮正義 (*Kuo-hsueh chi-pen ts'ung-shu* 國學基本叢書 edition, hereafter *KHCP*), 26.2–6; Sun I-jang 孫詒讓, *Chou-li cheng-i* 周禮正義 (*KHCP*), 5.16.20–22. Consult also James Legge, tr., *The Texts of Confucianism Part III: The Li Ki*, 2 vols. (*Sacred Books of the East*, ed. F. Max Müller), 1:368–69; John Steele, tr. *The I-li* or *Book of Etiquette and Ceremonial* (London: Probsthain & Co., 1917), 1:45.

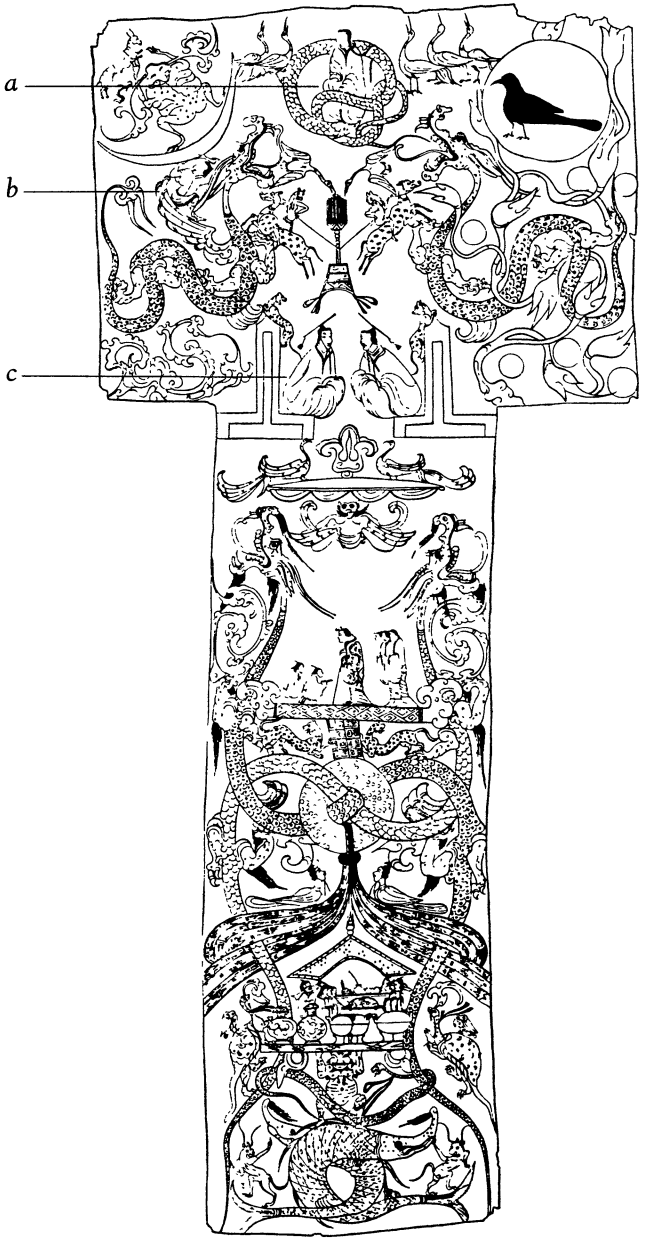

Fig. 1. Sketch of T-shaped silk painting from Ma-wang-tui tomb no. 1. Reprinted from *Ch'ang-sha Ma-wang-tui i-hao Han-mu* 長沙馬王堆一號漢墓, 2 vols. (Peking: Wen-wu ch'u-pan-she, 1973), 1: fig. 38.

excavated at Ma-wang-tui, in Ch'ang-sha, Hunan. At the time of its excavation, tomb no. 1 aroused worldwide attention primarily because of the well-preserved body of its occupant, the wife of Li-ts'ang 利蒼, the Marquis of Tai 軑, who probably died sometime after 175 B.C. (hereafter "Countess of Tai"). In tomb no. 3, dated 168 B.C. and belonging to Li-ts'ang's son, a large quantity of silk manuscripts of lost ancient writings were found. Since their discovery the scholarly literature on these two tombs and their unusually rich contents has been enormous and is still growing. My discussion below will be confined to the light that this spectacular discovery sheds on the *fu* ritual. For this purpose, I will focus on the two T-shaped polychrome paintings on silk from tombs no. 1 and no. 3 respectively. In addition to these two, similar paintings have also been found in other Han tombs. A Chinese archaeologist has recently summarized the contents of the Han paintings as follows:

> They are all of silk and are painted with fine colored pictures. The picture is divided into three sections, depicting, from top to bottom, heaven, man's world, and the underworld. Both heaven and the underworld are represented by mythological images; the heaven picture has sun, moon, and sometimes stars, and the sun has a golden crow and the moon has a toad and a white rabbit, and sometimes a picture of Changeh, the Goddess of the moon. The underworld picture shows various aquatic animals, representing an aquatic palace at the bottom of the sea. As for man's world, the picture depicts scenes from daily life and also a portrait of the master of the tomb.[4]

This characterization is on the whole accurate, taking as it obviously does the painting from tomb no. 1 at Ma-wang-tui as typical of its kind. Scholars are generally agreed that the central theme of the painting is the "Summons of the Soul." According to Yü Wei-ch'ao 兪偉超, the two male figures above the aged woman, who can be clearly identified as the Countess of Tai, are most likely the "summoners" (fig. 1, *c*). Judging by the position they occupy and the robes and hats they wear, these two men are represented as calling the departed soul back from a rooftop.[5] While other identifications have also been suggested, Yü's seems to fit with the main theme of the painting best, especially, as we shall see momentarily,

[4] Wang Zhongshu, *Han Civilization* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), p. 181.

[5] See Yü Wei-ch'ao's 兪偉超 view in a symposium on the Han tomb no. 1 at Ma-wang-tui in *Wen-wu* 文物 (hereafter *WW*), 1972.9:60–61.

when the function of painting is clarified.[6] Moreover, the lady below the moon (fig. 1, *b*), instead of being the goddess of the moon (Ch'ang-eh 嫦娥 or Heng O 姮娥), may well have been a representation of the departed soul of the Countess of Tai herself. A comparison with the T-shaped silk painting from tomb no. 3 shows that the most noticeable difference between the two heavenly scenes lies in the absence of the so-called Ch'ang-o in the latter.[7] Michael Loewe has also made an interesting suggestion that the beautiful woman's figure ending in a serpentine tail at the central apex of the painting (fig. 1, *a*) may not be intended to represent any of the mythological figures that scholars have put forth. Instead it may have been the artist's intention to represent the final stage of the countess' journey to heaven when she has reached her destination.[8] In other words, one of the two figures must be a representation of the countess' *hun*-soul. It is important to note that in the round central space of the second painting, the female figure is replaced by a male figure. This difference of gender makes better sense when we take into consideration the gender of its occupant. It is quite reasonable to assume that the male figure in this case is also a representation of the soul of the countess' son in heaven.[9]

The establishment of the central theme of the T-shaped paintings as the summons of the soul also helps to identify the function of the silk painting. While the suggestion that the painting was a banner used in funeral processions cannot be completely ruled out, it is more likely that it was the burial shroud, *hu*, frequently referred to in Han texts in connection with the *fu* ritual. In the Han inventories of funeral furnishings found in both tombs there is an item listed as "*fei-i*, 12 feet long," which has been identified with the T-shaped

[6] *Ch'ang-sha Ma-wang-tui i-hao Han-mu* 長沙馬王堆一號漢墓, 2 vols. (Peking: Wen-wu ch'u-pan-she 1973), 1:41 identifies the two men as "the guardians of the heavenly gate," and An Chih-min 安志敏 "Ch'ang-sha hsin fa-hsien ti Hsi-Han po-hua shih-t'an" 長沙新發現的西漢帛畫試採, *K'ao-ku* 考古 (hereafter *KK*), 1973.1:45–46, identifies them as *ta ssu-ming* and *shao ssu-ming*. For a detailed and technical study of this painting in English, see Michael Loewe, *Ways to Paradise, The Chinese Quest for Immortality*, (London, Allen and Unwin, 1979), chapter two.

[7] Wang Po-min, 王伯敏 "Ma-wang-tui i-hao Han-mu po-hua ping-wu Ch'ang-o pen-yüeh" 馬王堆一號漢墓帛畫並無嫦娥奔月, *KK* 1979.3:274.

[8] Loewe, *Ways to Paradise*, p. 59.

[9] See Chin Wei-no, 金維諾 "T'an Ch'ang-sha Ma-wang-tui san-hao Han-mu po-hua," 談長沙馬王堆三號漢墓帛畫, *WW* 1974.11:43.

silk painting.[10] The identification seems firmly grounded. *Fei-i* 非衣 means "mantle," "shroud," or "cover." Moreover, in ancient ritual texts, *fei* and *hu* are interchangeable in meaning. According to Han commentators, a *hu* was a cloth painted red and used to cover the corpse of the newly dead and, later, the coffin.[11] This description agrees perfectly with the silk painting. The current view that it was a *ming-ching* 銘旌 or "funerary banner," is therefore questionable, to say the least. For, literally, *ming-ching* means "inscribed funerary banner." The basic purpose of a *ming-ching* was "to identify the departed *hun*-soul" by means of a name inscribed on a banner. The use of the *ming-ching*, widespread at the time of Hsün-tzu (third century B.C.), continued throughout the Han period.[12] In fact, none of the *ming-ching* excavated from Han tombs in recent decades lacks such an inscription.[13] Since the names of either the mother or her son are not inscribed on the T-shaped paintings, they must not be *ming-ching*.

To conclude this section, it seems reasonable to assert that the T-shaped paintings not only take the ritual of *fu* as their main theme, but their function is also closely related to that same ritual. We may say that these paintings provide archaeological confirmation of the ritual of *fu* as recorded in the various Han writings on ritual.

THE *HUN* AND *P'O* SOULS

The ritual of *fu*, as pointed out earlier, is based on the belief of *chao-hun fu-p'o*, to summon the *hun*-soul to reunite with the *p'o* soul. In order to grasp the full meaning of this ritual practice, we must

[10] For tomb no. 1, see Shang Chih-t'an, 商志醰 "Ma-wang-tui i-hao Han-mu 'fei-i' shih shih" 馬王堆一號漢墓非衣試釋, *WW* 1972.9:43–47. For tomb no. 3, see also *KK* 1975.1: 57.

[11] For *fei* and *hu* as interchangeable words in ancient ritual texts, see the views of T'ang Lan 唐蘭 and Yü Wei-ch'ao in *WW* 1972.9:59–60.

[12] Sun I-jang, *Chou-li cheng-i* 50.35–36.

[13] An Chih-ming, pp. 50–51; Ma Yung, 馬雍 "Lun Ch'ang-sha Ma-wang-tui i-hao Han-mu ch'u-t'u po-hua ti ming-ch'eng ho tso-yung, 論長沙馬王堆一號漢墓出土帛畫的名稱和作用, *KK* 1973.2:119–22; Hsü Chuang-shu 許莊叔, "Fu-p'o ching-chao k'ao" 復魄旌旐考, *Wen-shih* 文史, 17 (Peking, June 1983): 261–63. It is somewhat puzzling that in spite of the fact that a *ming-ching* is by definition "inscribed" and that all the *ming-ching* excavated from Han tombs so far invariably bear the names of the dead, both An and Ma still insist on identifying the two uninscribed T-shaped paintings as "inscribed funerary banners."

proceed to trace the evolution of the Chinese concept of soul from antiquity to the Han times.

Before the dualistic conception of *hun* and *p'o* began to gain currency in the middle of the sixth century B.C., *p'o* alone seems to have been used to denote the human soul. The character *p'o* 魄 (or its variant *pa* 霸) means "white," "bright," or "bright light," deriving originally from the growing light of the new moon. The earliest form of the character has recently been found on a Chou oracle bone inscription datable to the eleventh century B.C. It is used in the term *chi-p'o* 既魄 which, according to Wang Kuo-wei, stood for the period from the eighth or ninth to the fourteenth or fifteenth of the lunar month. The term *chi-ssu-p'o* 既死魄 may also be found on another piece of oracle bone indicating the period from the twenty-third or twenty-fourth to the end of the month.[14] These two terms were later used repeatedly in early Chou historical documents as well as bronze inscriptions in the standard forms of *chi-sheng pa* 既生霸 and *chi-ssu pa* which may be translated, respectively, as "after the birth of the crescent" and "after the death of the crescent."[15]

Since the ancient Chinese took the changing phases of the moon as periodic birth and death of its *p'o*, its "white light" or soul, by analogy they eventually came to associate, by the early sixth century B.C. if not earlier, the life or death of a man with the presence or absence of his *p'o*.[16] Two examples from the *Tso chuan* 左傳, the

[14] See "Shensi Ch'i-shan Feng-ch'u ts'un fa-hsien Chou ch'u chia-ku wen," 陝西岐山鳳雛村発現周初甲骨文, *WW* 1979.10: 41 and Fig. 5 on p. 43. Consult also the original *chi-ssu-p'o* inscription reproduced in Plate 6, 2 (H 11:55). For the identification of *chi-p'o* and *chi-ssu-p'o*, see further discussions summarized in Wang Yü-hsin 王宇信, *Hsi-Chou chia-ku t'an-lun* 西周甲骨探論 (Peking, 1984), pp. 82–83. The only Chinese scholar who has expressed some reservations is Yen I-p'ing 嚴一萍. See his "Chou-yüan chia-ku" 周原甲骨, *Chung-kuo wen-tzu* n.s., 1 (Taipei, March 1980): 166.

[15] See Wang Kuo-wei's 王國維 classic study "Sheng-pa ssu-pa k'ao," 生霸死霸考 in *Kuan-t'ang chi-lin* 觀堂集林 (Peking: Chung-hua shu-chü, 1959), vol. 1, pp. 19–26. According to the statistics recently worked out by the Institute of Archaeology in the Chinese Social Science Academy, out of more than 390 Chou bronze inscriptions, the term *chi-sheng-pa* appears 59 times and the term *chi-ssu-pa* 26 times. See Liu Yü, 劉雨 "Chin-wen 'ch'u-chi' pien-hsi" 金文初吉辨析, *WW* 1982.11:77. For further discussions of Chinese ideas of life and death related to the changing phases of the moon, see my "New Evidence on the Early Chinese Conception of Afterlife," *JAS* 41.1 (November 1981): 81–85.

[16] Hu Shih, "The Concept of Immortality in Chinese Thought," *Harvard Divinity School Bulletin* (1945–46): 30. See also Nagasawa Yōji, 永澤要二 "Paku kō" 魄考, *Kangaku kenkyū* 漢學研究 n.s., 2 (March 1964), esp. p. 51.

chronicle of the state of Lu compiled probably in the fourth century B.C., will serve to illustrate our point. In 593 B.C. a man named Chao T'ung 趙同 behaved erratically at the court of Chou. One official made the following prediction: "In less than ten years Chao T'ung will be sure to meet with great calamity. Heaven has taken his *p'o* from him."[17] Fifty years later, in 543 B.C., a nobleman named Po-yu 伯有 in the state of Cheng (in central Honan) had shown a marked decline in reasoning power and judgment, which also led a contemporary to remark: "Heaven is destroying Po-yu and has taken away his *p'o*."[18] In both cases, the *p'o* is identified as the soul of the man, something that when taken away, by heaven, causes the man to lose his intelligence. Clearly, the *p'o* must have been conceived as a separate entity which joins the body from outside.

But toward the end of the sixth century B.C. the concept of *hun* as a soul had also become widespread. In 516 B.C. Yüeh Ch'i 樂祁, an official at the court of the state of Sung (in eastern Honan) had the following to say about the Duke of Sung and a guest named Shu-sun 叔孫 from Lu because both had wept during a supposedly joyful gathering:

> This year both our lord and Shu-sun are likely to die. I have heard that joy in the midst of grief and grief in the midst of joy are signs of a loss of mind (or heart, *hsin* 心). The essential vigor and brightness of the mind is what we call the *hun* and the *p'o*. When these leave it, how can the man continue long?[19]

Here both the *hun* and the *p'o* are regarded as the very essence of the mind, the source of knowledge and intelligence. Death is thought to follow inevitably when the *hun* and the *p'o* leave the body. We have reason to believe that around this time the idea of *hun* was still relatively new. To the mind of an ordinary Chinese, it was probably not very clear in precisely what way the *hun* and the *p'o* were related to each other. In 534 B.C. the state of Cheng was deeply disturbed by a series of events resulting, reportedly, from a nobleman's ghost having returned to take revenge on his murderers. This nobleman was the above-mentioned Po-yu 伯有 who had been not only expelled

[17] *The Ch'un Ts'ew with the Tso Chuen*, (hereafter *Tso Chuen*) in James Legge, tr., *The Chinese Classics*, 5 vols. (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1961 reprint), 5:329.

[18] *Tso Chuen*, p. 551.

[19] *Tso Chuen*, p. 708.

from Cheng but also assassinated by his political enemies. As a result of the loss of his hereditary office, his spirit was also deprived of sacrifices. The disturbances supposedly caused by this avenging ghost terrified the entire state. The wise statesman and philosopher, Tzu-ch'an 子産, therefore reinstated Po-yu's son in his former office. Finally, as our story goes, the ghost was satisfied and disappeared. Afterwards a friend asked Tzu-ch'an whether there was any explanation of this strange phenomenon: what does a ghost consist of? How is it possible for a ghost to disturb the human world? The following answer given by Tzu-ch'an is of central importance to our study because it is the *locus classicus* on the subject of the human soul in the Chinese tradition.

> When man is born, that which is first created, is called the *p'o* and, when the *p'o* has been formed, its positive part (*yang* 陽) becomes *hun* or conscious spirit.
>
> In case a man is materially well and abundantly supported, then his *hun* and *p'o* grow very strong, and therefore produce spirituality and intelligence. Even the *hun* and *p'o* of an ordinary man or woman, having encountered violent death, can attach themselves to other people to cause extraordinary troubles . . . The stuff Po-yu was made of was copious and rich, and his family great and powerful. Is it not natural that, having met with a violent death, he should be able to become a ghost?[20]

To begin with, it is important to point out that the very fact that Tzu-ch'an found it necessary to offer such a detailed explanation of the relationship between the *p'o* and the *hun* indicates that the *hun* as a concept of soul was not yet familiar to the Chinese mind. This point can be further seen from the fact that he took the *p'o* to be fundamental and the *hun* derivative. In his emphasis on physical nourishment as the foundation of the soul, Tzu-ch'an's analysis strongly suggests a materialistic point of view. On the whole, I believe, this interpretation is best understood as reflecting Tzu-ch'an's personal view of the subject rather than being a common conception in sixth-century B.C. China. It is true that Tzu-ch'an's statement, as quoted above, later became, the orthodox doctrine of *hun* and *p'o* in the Confucian (including Neo-Confucian) philoso-

[20] *Tso Chuen*, p. 618. Here the English translation is adapted from Alfred Forke, tr., *Lun Heng* (New York: Paragon 1962 reprint), Part I, pp. 208–9.

phical tradition.[21] However, as we shall see later, it was not the view to be accepted by the common man in China in subsequent, especially Han, times.

We know relatively little about the origin of *hun* as a concept of soul. It is quite possible that the concept was more fully developed in the south and then spread to the north sometime during the sixth century B.C.[22] This possibility finds some support in the textual evidence at our disposal.

According to the "T'an-kung" 檀弓 chapter of the *Li-chi*, generally believed to be a pre-Han text, Prince Chi-cha 季札 of the southern state of Wu (in Kiangsu) lost his son while travelling in the north in 515 B.C. At the burial ceremony, he is reported to have expressed the following view about the dead: "Destined it is that his bones and flesh should return to the earth. As for his soul-breath (*hun-ch'i* 魂氣), it goes everywhere, everywhere."[23] It is important to note that in this passage the idea of *p'o* is conspicuously missing, which seems to indicate that it was not as widespread a concept as in the north. For the "bones and flesh" refers to the corpse, not the *p'o*-soul. At any rate there can be little doubt that in the southern tradition the *hun* was regarded as a more active and vital soul than the *p'o*. This is clearly shown in the ancient anthology *Ch'u Tz'u* 楚辭 ("The Elegies of Ch'u"). Two of the songs, datable to the early third century B.C., describe the shamanistic ritual of "soul summons." The following lines appear repeatedly in these two songs:

O soul, come back! In the east you can not abide. O soul, come back! In the south you cannot stay. O soul, go not to the west! Oh soul, go not to the north! O soul, come back! Climb not to heaven above. O soul, come back! Go not down to the Land of Darkness.[24]

[21] The orthodox Confucian view is best presented in Ch'ien Mu, 錢穆 *Ling-hun yü hsin* 靈魂與心 (Taipei: Lien-ching ch'u-pan-she, 1976). Tzu-ch'an's view may be interestingly compared to Aristotle's as expressed in *De Anima*: 413a/4; "The soul is inseparable from its body, or at any rate that certain parts of it are (if it has parts)—for the actuality of some of them is nothing but the actualities of their bodily parts. Yet some may be separable because they are not the actualities of any body at all." (In Richard McKeon, ed., *The Basic Works of Aristotle* [New York: Random House, 1941], p. 556).

[22] Hu Shih, "Concept of Immortality," pp. 31–32.

[23] *Li-chi chu-su* 10.19b.

[24] These lines can be found in David Hawkes, *Ch'u Tz'u, The Songs of the South* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1962), pp. 104–105, 110.

The "soul" in each and every case refers invariably to the *hun* and therefore confirms completely the belief of the southern prince Chi-cha that the *hun*-soul indeed goes everywhere.

Probably as a result of the fusion of cultures, by the second century B.C. at the latest, the Chinese dualistic conception of soul had reached its definitive formulation. A most succinct statement of this dualistic idea may be found in the *Book of Rites* (*Li-chi*, "Chiao t'e sheng" 郊特牲 chapter): "The breath-soul (*hun-ch'i* 魂氣) returns to heaven; the bodily soul (*hsing-p'o* 形魄) returns to earth. Therefore, in sacrificial-offering one should seek the meaning in the *yin-yang* 陰陽 principle."[25] It may be noted that several dualities are involved in this formulation. In addition to the basic duality of *hun* and *p'o*, we also see the dualities of *ch'i* and *hsing*, heaven and earth, as well as *yang* and *yin*. We shall explain the ideas of *ch'i* and *hsing* at a later juncture. Briefly, the dualism may be understood in the following way: Ancient Chinese generally believed that the individual human life consists of a bodily part as well as a spiritual part. The physical body relies for its existence on food and drink produced by the earth. The spirit depends for its existence on the invisible life force called *ch'i*, which comes into the body from heaven. In other words, breathing and eating are the two basic activities by which a man continually maintains his life. But the body and the spirit are each governed by a soul, namely, the *p'o* and the *hun*. It is for this reason that they are referred to in the passage just quoted above as the bodily-soul (*hsing-p'o*) and the breath-soul (*hun-ch'i*) respectively.

The identification of the *hun-p'o* duality with the *yang-yin* principle was a later development, resulting evidently from the rise and popularity of the *yin-yang* cosmology in the late fourth and early third centuries B.C. Although in the above-quoted statement by Tzu-ch'an the *hun* is defined as the *yang* or positive part of the *p'o*, the *p'o* itself, or the remainder of it, is not described as *yin*. The equation of the paired concept of *hun-p'o* with that of *yin-yang* had yet to be developed. Now, according to the *yin-yang* cosmology, there are two basic opposite but complementary forces at work in the cosmos.

[25] *Li-chi chu-su* 26.21b. For a comprehensive discussion of the relationship between the *hun* and the *p'o* on the one hand, and the idea of *ch'i* as a cosmic life force on the other, see Kurita Naomi 栗田直躬, *Chūgoku jōdai shisō no kenkyū* 中國上代思想の研究 (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1949), pp. 75–146.

Yin is the supreme feminine force while *yang* is its masculine counterpart. As two basic principles, the *yin* is characterized, among other things, by passivity and negativity, and the *yang* by activity and positivity. But life, whether cosmic or individual, comes into being only when the two forces begin to interact with each other. Heaven and earth, for instance, being the highest embodiment of *yang* and *yin*, operate in response to each other to form cosmic life. It was, therefore, quite natural for ancient Chinese to fit the *hun-p'o* duality into this yin-yang framework. By Han times at the latest, as the above-quoted passage from the *Book of Rites* shows, it already became a generally accepted idea that the *hun* belongs to the *yang* category and is hence an active and heavenly substance and the *p'o* belongs to the *yin* category and is hence a passive and earthly substance.

This identification led to a new conception of the relationship between the *hun* and the *p'o*. During the Han dynasty, there was a widely shared belief in both the elite culture and the popular culture that in life the *hun* and the *p'o* form a harmonious union within the human body and at death the two souls separate and leave the body. This belief may have originated in a much earlier period because we already find a clear expression of the idea of "the separation of the *hun* from the *p'o*" in *The Elegies of Ch'u (Ch'u-tzu)* of early third century B.C.[26]

However, when the *hun* and the *p'o* separate, they also go their separate or, more precisely, opposite ways. The *hun*-soul, being a breath-like light substance, (*hun-ch'i*), has a much greater freedom of movement. By contrast, the *p'o* soul being associated with the physical body is conceived as a heavier substance with only restricted mobility. Therefore, at death the *hun*-soul goes swiftly upward to heaven whereas the *p'o* soul moves downward to earth at a much slower pace. This explains why, in the ritual of *fu*, it is the *hun*, but not the *p'o*, that has to be recalled from the rooftop. For the same reason, *The Elegies of Ch'u* speaks of "summoning the *hun*-soul" but never "summoning the *p'o* soul."[27]

[26] The original expression is *hun-p'o li san* 魂魄離散, but in Hawkes' translation (p. 103) it is rendered simply as "His soul has left him."

[27] See Wen I-to 聞一多, *Wen I-to ch'üan chi*, 聞一多全集 4 vols. (Shanghai: K'ai-ming shu-tien, 1948), 2:458.

In order to clarify the term *hun-ch'i*, a word may be said about the complex and difficult concept of *ch'i* as the "source of life." The concept has a broad as well as a narrow meaning. In its broad sense, *ch'i* is a primal and undifferentiated life force which permeates the entire cosmos. However, when the *ch'i* becomes differentiated and individuated to form all the things in the universe, it then varies in purity. Thus, as succinctly summed up by D. C. Lau, "the grosser *ch'i*, being heavy, settled to become the earth, while the refined *ch'i*, being light, rose to become the sky. Man, being half-way between the two is a harmonious mixture of the two kinds of *ch'i*."[28] It is in this broad sense that a Taoist philosophical treatise of the second century B.C. says that the *hun* is made up of the refined, heavenly *ch'i* and the *p'o* the grosser, earthly *ch'i*.[29] But in its narrow sense, the *ch'i* refers specifically to the heavenly *ch'i*. It is in this narrow sense that the *hun-ch'i* or the breath-soul is distinguished from the *hsing-p'o* or bodily soul.

We have seen that it was a general belief in Han China that the *hun* owes its existence to the refined *ch'i* from heaven while the *p'o*, being always associated with the body, is composed of the coarse *ch'i* from earth. But how are the two souls, *hun* and *p'o*, distinguished from each other in terms of specific functions? According to Cheng Hsüan (127–200), *ch'i* or *hun*-soul forms the basis of a man's spirit and intelligence whereas the function of the *p'o* soul is specifically defined as "hearing distinctly and seeing clearly."[30] In other words, the *hun* governs man's spirit (*shen* 神 including *hsin*, mind or heart)

[28] D. C. Lau, "Introduction" to his translation of *Mencius* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1970), p. 24.

[29] Liu Wen-tien 劉文典, *Huai-nan hung-lieh chi-chieh* 淮南鴻烈集解 (*KHCP*), 9.2a.

[30] *Li-chi chu-su* 47.14a–15a. In this connection I wish to call the reader's attention to Mencius' famous distinction between the *ta-t'i* 大體 and *hsiao-t'i* 小體 ("The parts of greater importance and the parts of smaller importance of the person of a man.") According to him (*Mencius*, 6A/14, D. C. Lau's translation), the *hsiao-t'i* consists of "the organs of hearing and sight" which "are unable to think and can be misled by external things" whereas the *ta-t'i* is identified as "the organ of the mind or heart" whose function it is "to think." Mencius specifically singles out this thinking organ of the mind or heart as the gift that man alone receives from Heaven. Therefore, he defines "a great man" as one who is guided by the interests of his *ta-t'i* (i.e., the thinking mind) and "a small man" as one who is guided by the interests of his *hsiao-t'i* (i.e. the organs of hearing and sight). Moreover, Mencius further holds that there is a "flood-like *ch'i*" ("*hao-jan chih ch'i*" 浩然之氣) in the cosmos that is, in the highest degree, vast and unyielding. It is this *ch'i* that provides the mind or heart with the very source of moral power. (*Mencius*, 2A/2) Clearly, then, Mencius must have shared the cosmological view current in the fourth century B.C. that man's body consists of the grosser,

and the *p'o* governs his body (including the senses.) It is interesting to point out that a similar distinction between the *hun* and the *p'o* can also be found in Han Taoist literature. According to the *Ho-shang Commentary on the Lao Tzu*, heaven feeds man with five kinds of *ch'i*, which enter his body from the nostrils and are stored in his heart (or mind). The five kinds of *ch'i* are pure and subtle and therefore go to form man's spirit, senses, voice etc. Thus a man has a soul called *hun*. The *hun* is masculine; it goes out and comes in through the nostrils and communicates with heaven. Earth feeds man with five tastes which enter his body from the mouth and are stored in the stomach. The five tastes are impure and therefore go to form a man's body, bones and flesh, blood and veins, as well as six emotions. Thus a man has a soul called *p'o*. The *p'o* is feminine; it goes out and comes in through the mouth and communicates with earth.[31] Although there are differences between the Confucian and the Taoist versions with regard to the respective functions of the *hun*

earthly *ch'i* while his mind or heart is the seat of the refined, heavenly *ch'i* (see D. C. Lau's "Introduction" in *Mencius*, p. 24). Although Mencius did not mention the ideas of *hun* and *p'o* in his philosophical discussions, it is nevertheless unmistakable that his distinction between the *ta-t'i* and the *hsiao-t'i* bears a resemblance to the distinction between the *hun* and *p'o* as defined by Cheng Hsüan, not only structurally but also functionally. In view of the gradual fusion of the ideas of *hun* and *p'o* since the sixth cetury B.C., I find it difficult to resist the temptation to link this Mencian formulation to a contemporary dualistic conception of the soul as a possible model. If so, then Cheng Hsüan's interpretation of the different functions of the *hun* and the *p'o* may well have been of a much earlier (i.e. pre-Han) origin. Traditionally, it has been contended, especially by the Ch'ing philologists, that the commentaries written by Han Confucian exegetes may, by and large, be viewed as depositories of ideas of classical antiquity transmitted orally from generation to generation down to Han times. It seems likely that Cheng Hsüan's ideas about *hun* and *p'o* have precisely such ancient origins.

[31] *Lao Tzu tao-te ching* 老子道德經 (*SPTK* edition), A.3b. Here the *hun-ch'i* is clearly described as a breath-like life force. In this respect, the Chinese idea of *hun* is certainly comparable to its counterparts in other ancient cultures. The Greek *psyche* and *thymos*, the Roman *animus* and *anima*, and the Jewish *nephesh*, for instance, were all associated with breath. See Richard Broxton Onians, *The Origins of European Thought About the Body, the Mind, the Soul, the World, Time, and Fate*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1954), esp. pp. 44–46 and 66–69 (for *thymos*); 93–95 (for *psyche*); 168–73 (for *anima* and *animus*); 481–82 (for *nephesh*). Onians is basically right in pointing out the similarity between the Chinese idea of *hun-ch'i* and the Greek and Roman ideas of soul, even though his discussions of "Chinese conception of the soul" (pp. 520–30) are full of factual errors as well as anachronisms. For *psyche* as something airy and breath-like, see the classic study of Erwin Rohde, *Psyche*, tr. by W. B. Hillis, (New York: 1925), pp. 4–5; also Emily Vermeule, *Aspects of Death in Early Greek Art and Poetry*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979), pp. 212–13 (note 11 to chapter one); and Bruno Snell, *The Discovery of the Mind, The Greek Origins of European Thought*, tr. by T. G. Rosenmeyer (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1953), pp. 8–12 (for a discussion of *psyche* and *thymos*).

and the *p'o*, the basic structural similarity is nevertheless unmistakable. This similarity testifies fully to the universality of the distinction between the *hun* and the *p'o* in Han China, the former being a "spiritual" soul and the latter a "bodily" soul.

BELIEF IN AFTERLIFE

The above discussion of the changing Chinese conception of soul from antiquity to the Han period naturally leads to the problem of afterlife. Does the departed soul continue to possess knowledge and feelings? Can the soul exist as an independent entity forever? Where does the soul go after its separation from the body? Admittedly, these are not easy questions to answer owing to the paucity of the sources on the subject. However, thanks to the recent archaeological discoveries, it is now possible to attempt a reconstruction of a general picture.

Long before the rise of the dualistic conception of the soul, there had already been a common Chinese belief in an afterlife. The notion that the departed soul is as conscious as the living is already implied in Shang-Chou sacrifices. Shang people generally took sacrifice to be an actual feeding of the dead.[32] According to a Chou bronze inscription, the kinds of animals offered sacrificially to ancestral spirits were identical with those presented to the reigning king as food.[33] As far as daily needs were concerned, no sharp distinction was drawn between the departed soul and the living. In fact, ancient Chinese were extremely hunger-conscious about their ancestors in the afterworld. In 604 B.C. a nobleman from the house of Jo-ao 若敖, apprehending the forthcoming disaster of extermination of his whole clan, wept and said: "The spirits of the dead are also in need of food. But I am afraid those of our Jo-ao clan will be sure to suffer starvation."[34] What he meant is that when the entire clan is wiped out, there will be no one left to offer regular sacrifices to the ancestral spirits. His concern lies at the very cornerstone of Chinese ancestor-worship, for the Chinese have believed until re-

[32] H. G. Creel, *The Birth of China* (New York: Reynal and Hitchcock, 1937), pp. 198–9.

[33] Kuo Mo-jo 郭沫若, *Chin-wen ts'ung-k'ao* 金文叢考, rev. edition (Peking: Jen-min ch'u-pan-she, 1954), pp. 8b–9a.

[34] *Tso Chuen*, p. 297.

cent decades—indeed some may still continue to believe today—that a spirit cannot as a rule enjoy the sacrifices offered by some one other than his own flesh and blood, namely, his male descendant, owing to the incommunicability between different kinds of the individuated *ch'i*. Apparently, it was believed that without sacrificial food, the hungry ancestral spirits would disintegrate more quickly. The original Chinese term for "the spirits of the dead" in the above passage is *kuei* 鬼. As clearly shown in oracle inscriptions, the character *kuei* had already acquired the meaning of "the soul of the dead" as early as the Shang period.[35] The *p'o* or the *hun*, on the other hand, was distinguished from *kuei* by being a name for "the soul of the living."

The belief that the departed soul actually enjoys the sacrificial food offered by the living was widely held in the popular culture of Han China. As vividly described by the critical philosopher Wang Ch'ung 王充 (A.C. 27–100?) from Kuei-chi (in Chekiang): "People never desist from urging the necessity of making offerings, maintaining that the departed are conscious, and that ghosts and spirits eat and drink like so many guests invited to dinner."[36] This description has been archaeologically confirmed by the large quantities of food and food vessels found in Han tombs excavated in the past three decades.[37]

On the other hand, the idea that the individual soul can survive death indefinitely seems to have been alien to the Chinese mind. In this regard, once more, we may take the Chou sacrificial system as an illustration. Perhaps partly as a result of the shift from the predominantly lateral succession of the Shang period to the lineal succession, the Chou system set a limit to the number of generations in ancestor-worship according to social status. The royal house, for example, would offer sacrifices to no more than seven generations of

[35] In oracle bone inscriptions, it may be noted, *kuei* and *wei* 畏 "fear" are sometimes interchangeable. See the various interpretations of the two characters in Li Hsiao-ting 李孝定, ed., *Chia-ku wen-tzu chi-shih* 甲骨文字集釋 (Taipei: Academia Sinica, 1965), 9:2903–04 (*kuei*) and 2909–12 (*wei*). For a more recent discussion, see Ikeda Suetoshi 池田末利, *Chūgoku kodai shūkyōshi kenkyū* 中国古代宗教史研究 (Tokyo: Tōkai daigaku shuppankai, 1981), pp. 155–98.

[36] A. Forke, *Lun Heng*, Part I, p. 509.

[37] Wang Zhongshu, *Han Civilization*, pp. 206–07. See also Ying-shih Yü, "Han" in K. C. Chang, ed., *Food in Chinese Culture: Anthropological and Historical Perspectives* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), pp. 53–84.

ancestors while the common people to only two generations, that is, their dead parents and grandparents. Therefore every new generation would have to suspend sacrifices to the uppermost generation previously sacrificed to. An exception was made for the founding ancestor, who had to remain as a symbol of the collective identity of the lineage. The system was apparently predicated on the assumption that after a certain period of time the spirits of the dead gradually dissolve into the primal *ch'i* and lose their individual identities. As for the differences in number of generations for different social groups, the justification was probably based on a materialistic interpretation of the relationship between the body and the soul. As Tzu-ch'an's remark, quoted earlier, makes abundantly clear, the soul of a nobleman is stronger than that of an ordinary man or woman because, being from a great and powerful family, his physical body is much better nourished than a common person's. As a result, his departed soul disintegrates more slowly.

The idea that the departed soul gradually shrinks with the passing of time is well attested to by the ancient saying that "the spirit of a newly dead is large and that of an old one is small" 新鬼大故鬼小.[38] The same idea was later expressed in a slightly different way. In a literary work of the early fourth century A.D., the soul of a newly dead is described as much heavier than that of an old one.[39] Thus both the elite culture and the popular thought in ancient China shared the belief that the departed soul can survive, in the words of Hu Shih, "only for a time varying apparently in length according to its own strength, but gradually fades out and ultimately disintegrates entirely."[40] This materialistic conception of the soul explains the great importance ancient Chinese had attached to the body of the dead. As recent archaeology has shown, people in the Han period often went to all lengths to preserve the body of the dead. Evidently, ancient Chinese, just like ancient Egyptians, believed that the soul could not survive much longer unless the body itself were preserved.[41]

[38] *Tso Chuen*, p. 234.

[39] Kan Pao 干寶, *Sou-shen chi* 搜神記 (*KHCP*), p. 28.

[40] Hu Shih, "Concept of Immortality," p. 33.

[41] See Loraine Boettner, *Immortality* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1956), pp. 61–62.

THE AFTERWORLD: SEPARATE ABODES FOR THE *HUN* AND THE *P'O*

Finally, to answer the question of where the soul goes after its separation from the body we must take a closer look at the conception of the afterworld. Before we proceed, however, we must correct a deep-rooted misconception about the origin of the Chinese belief in an afterworld. Early in the seventeenth century, Ku Yen-wu 顧炎武, based on a preliminary historical investigation, came to the conclusion that the Chinese did not have a clear notion of an afterworld until the end of the Han dynasty when Buddhism arrived on the scene.[42] In modern times, this thesis has received further support from Hu Shih's study of the history of Chinese Buddhism. He emphatically maintained that it was Buddhism which gave the Chinese the idea of tens of heavens and many hells.[43] More recently, Joseph Needham, taking issue with the distinction between "this-worldly" and "other-worldly" *hsien* 仙 immortality I proposed two decades ago, has said:

> If one bears in mind the conceptions of different peoples (Indo-Iranian, Christian, Islamic, etc.) there was no such thing as an "other world" in ancient Chinese thought at all—no heaven or hell, no creator God, and no expected end of the universe once it had emerged from primeval chaos. All was natural, and within Nature. Of course, after the permeation of Buddhism, "the case was altered."[44]

Indeed, it is true that in ancient Chinese thought the contrast between "this world" and "other world" was not as sharp as in other cultures. One may also legitimately argue that, put in a comparative perspective, the early Chinese idea of an "other world" ap-

[42] Ku Yen-wu 顧炎武, *Jih-chih lu* 日知録, (*Wan-yu wen-k'u* 萬有文庫 edition, Taipei, 1965), vol. 10, pp. 28–29.

[43] Hu Shih, "The Indianization of China: A Case Study in Cultural Borrowing," in *Independence, Convergence and Borrowing in Institutions, Thought, and Art*, Harvard Tercentenary Publications (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1937), pp. 224-25. However, it must be mentioned that in his later years Hu Shih apparently modified this extreme view considerably and came to realize that there was also an indigenous Chinese origin of the idea of hell. See *Hu Shih shou-kao* 胡適手稿, eighth collection (Taipei: Hu Shih chi-nien-kuan, 1970), vol. 1, where a vast amount of early materials relating to the idea of the underworld in ancient China may conveniently be found.

[44] Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilization in China*, 5.2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974), p. 98 (note C).

pears to be "refreshing" because it is rather differently conceived. But to say that there was no such thing as an "other world" and no heaven or hell at all is obviously an exaggeration and a position that is contradicted by known historical and archaeological facts.

We have noted that as early as the Shang period there had already arisen the idea of a "heavenly court" which, however, may have been reserved only for the long-lasting, if not immortal, souls of the kings and lords as a depository of social authority.[45] From about the eighth century B.C. on, the term Yellow Springs (*huang ch'üan* 黃泉) began to be used in historical and literary writings to denote the home of the dead. The Yellow Springs was imagined to be located beneath the earth, a place conceived of as dark and miserable. But the idea is on the whole a vague one and very little detail about it exists in the written record.[46] As we have seen, in the "Summons of the Soul," one of the *Elegies of Ch'u*, the soul is advised "not to climb heaven above" or "go not down to the Land of Darkness" (*yu-tu* 幽都). Thus, for the first time, we encounter both "heaven" and "hell" in the same poem. However, Chinese imagination of the afterlife did not become fully developed until the Han period. With the tremendous progress of Han archaeology in recent decades, we are now able to reconstruct in its general form the early Chinese conception of afterlife, including the related beliefs of heaven and hell.

As noted earlier, the two T-shaped silk paintings from Ma-wang-tui clearly reveal the belief that at death the *hun*-souls immediately "return to heaven," just as the above-quoted *Li-chi* passage says. Although we are in no position, given our present state of knowledge, to identify each and every one of the mythological elements in these paintings, the two paintings do provide us with concrete evidence that by the second century B.C. the Chinese already had a vivid conception of a heavenly world above and an underworld below.

The notion of a government in heaven overseeing human activities was developed later in Han popular culture. In the earliest Taoist canon *T'ai-p'ing ching* 太平經, datable to the second century

[45] Jacques Choron, *Death and Western Thought* (New York, 1963), p. 24.
[46] Needham, *Science*, pp. 84–85.

A.D., that is before appreciable Buddhist influence on Chinese life and thought, we find at least four *ts'ao* 曹 or "departments" in the celestial government. They are the *ming-ts'ao* 命曹 ("Department of Fate"), *shou-ts'ao* 壽曹 ("Department of Longevity"), *shan-ts'ao* 善曹 ("Department of Good Deeds") and *o-ts'ao* 惡曹 ("Department of Evil Deeds").[47] The term *ts'ao*, it may be noted, is a direct borrowing from the Han governmental organization. There were, for instance, four *ts'ao* in the office of the *shang-shu* 尚書 ("Masters of Documents") which, since the time of Emperor Wu, had become "the key organ of the state."[48] This also explains why in the *Hsiang-erh Commentary on the Lao-tzu* 老子想爾注, the celestial government is also referred to as the *t'ien-ts'ao* 天曹 ("Heavenly Departments"), an idea which has been perpetuated in Chinese popular culture ever since.[49] The *T'ai-p'ing ching* also reveals something about how the various departments conduct their business. Each department keeps detailed personal dossiers on all living persons. When a person has accumulated enough merits, for instance, his dossier, after evaluation, may be transferred to the Department of Longevity.[50] On the other hand there is also the possibility that a person formerly of good conduct may eventually end up in the Department of Evil Deeds, if he is later found to have committed many sins. Thus, not only are the personal records of all living beings updated on a daily

[47] Wang Ming 王明, ed., *T'ai-p'ing ching ho-chiao* 太平經合校 (hereafter *TPC*; Peking: Chung-hua shu-chü, 1960), pp. 526, 546, 551, 552. The dating of the *TPC* has been highly controversial. See B. J. Mansvelt Beck, "The Date of the *Taiping Jing*," *TP* 66.4–5 (1980): 149–82. However, modern scholars generally agree that although it contains many later interpolations, parts of the work can be dated to the second century. See Ying-shih Yü, "Life and Immortality in the Mind of Han China," *HJAS* 25 (1964–65): 84, n. 17, and Max Kaltenmark, "The Ideology of the *T'ai-p'ing ching*," in Holmes Welch and Anna Seidel, eds., *Facets of Taoism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979), pp. 19–45. More recently, further efforts have been made by two Chinese scholars to establish the Han origin of the text. See Wang Ming 王明, "Lun T'ai-p'ing ching ti ch'eng-shu shih-tai ho tso-che" 論太平經的成書時代和作者, *Shih-chieh tsung-chiao yen-chiu* 世界宗教研究, 1982.1:17–26 and T'ang I-chieh, 湯一介 "Kuan-yü *T'ai-p'ing ching* ch'eng-shu wen-t'i" 關於太平經成書問題, *Chung-kuo wen-hua yen-chiu chi-k'an*, 中國文化研究集刊, no. 1 (Fudan University Press, Shanghai, March 1984): 168–186.

[48] Wang Yü-ch'üan, "An Outline of the Central Government of the Former Han Dynasty," in John L. Bishop, ed., *Studies of Governmental Institutions in Chinese History*, (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard-Yenching Institute, 1968), p. 38.

[49] Jao Tsung-i, *Hsiang-erh chu*, pp. 33, 77.

[50] *TPC*, pp. 602, 625.

basis, these records are also constantly subject to transfer from one department to another. Indeed, activities of this kind constitute a major function of the celestial bureaucracy.[51]

Now, let us turn to the idea of "underworld" in Han times. On this subject, fortunately, very interesting evidence has also been found in the Ma-wang-tui tomb no. 3. A wooden document from this tomb reads as follows:

> On the twenty fourth day, second month, the twelfth year [of Emperor Wen's reign, 168 B.C.] Household Assistant Fen to the *lang-chung* 郎中 in charge of the dead: A list of mortuary objects is herewith forwarded to you. Upon receiving this document, please memorialize without delay to the Lord of the Grave (*chu-tsang chün* 主藏君).[52]

This document reveals two interesting points about Han beliefs of an underworld. First, since the silk painting from the same tomb shows that the *hun*-soul of the dead goes to heaven, the present document makes sense only if understood as dealing with the journey of his *p'o* soul to the underworld. Second, the bureaucratic structure of the underworld is, like that of the heavenly world, modeled on that of the human world. It is interesting to note that before 104 B.C. there was an office of *lang-chung-ling* 郎中令 ("Supervisor of Attendants") whose function it was to render personal services to the emperor.[53] Thus the analogy between the status of Household Assistant Fen in the marquisate of Tai and the *lang-chung* in the underworld is unmistakable. In other words, Family Assistant Fen was notifying his counterpart in the court of the Underworld Lord of the arrival of the newly dead, in this case, the son of Marquis of Tai. This practice is also confirmed by two similar wooden documents found in the Han tombs at Feng-huang Shan 鳳凰山, (in Chiang-ling 江陵, Hupei) in 1975. The first one from tomb no. 168, dated 167 B.C., was issued in the name of the Assistant Magistrate of Chiang-ling and sent to the Underworld Assistant Magistrate. The former informed the latter of the immigration of a newly dead under his jurisdiction to the underworld and requested the case be

[51] *TPC*, p. 552.

[52] "Ch'ang-sha Ma-wang-tui erh-san-hao mu fa-chüeh chien-pao" 長沙馬王堆二三號墓發掘簡報, *WW* 1974.7, p. 43 and Plate XII, no. 11.

[53] Wang Yü-ch'üan, "Central Government," p. 52 (note 52) and pp. 20–21.

reported to the Underworld Lord.[54] The second one, dated 153 B.C., is found in Tomb no. 10. In this case, the document was submitted to the Underworld Lord (*ti-hsia chu* 地下主) directly in the name of the dead, Chang Yen 張偃, himself. Unlike the Ma-wang-tui case, the two occupants of the Feng-huang Shan tombs were neither noblemen nor officials, but common people of some means, a fact that testifies fully to the universality of this belief.[55]

Since the *p'o* soul is closely associated with the body, therefore, at death it returns to earth when the body is buried. However, it seems to have been a widespread idea in Han times that the life of the *p'o* soul in the underworld depends very much on the condition of the body. If the body was well-preserved and properly buried, then the *p'o* soul would not only rest in peace and remain close to the body but probably also last longer. Lavish interment and body preservation thus are quite characteristic of Han tombs belonging to families of some means. Needless to say, not every family could afford the Ma-wang-tui type of burial. But the simplest way to preserve the body was, according to Han death ritual, to put a piece of jade into the mouth of the dead.[56] This ritual practice has been amply confirmed by recent archaeology.[57] It was generally believed in ancient China that jade can prevent the body from decay. The world-renowned "jade shrouds," discovered in the tomb of an early Han prince at Man-ch'eng, Hopei, in 1968, were obviously intended to have this effect.[58]

To sum up: the combination of textual and archaeological

[54] "Hu-pei Chiang-ling Feng-huang Shan i-liu-pa hao Han-mu fa-chüeh pao-kao" 湖北江陵168號漢墓發掘報告, *WW* 1975.9: 4 and Plate III, no. 1. See also the remarks by Yü Wei-ch'ao in a symposium published in the same issue, pp. 12–14, where other similar documents are compared. For further discussions of the document, see Ch'en Chih, 陳直 "Kuan-yü 'Chiang-ling Ch'en' kao 'Ti-hsia Ch'en' " 關於江陵丞告地下丞, *WW* 1977.12: 76 and Huang Sheng-chang 黃盛璋, *Li-shih ti-li yü k'ao-ku lun-ts'ung* 歷史地理與考古論叢 (Chi-nan: 1982), pp. 201–06 where the social status of the occupant of tomb no. 168 is discussed in considerable detail.

[55] Quoted in Yü Wei-ch'ao's remark in *WW* 1975.9:13.

[56] Yang Shu-ta 楊樹達, *Han-tai hun sang li-su k'ao* 漢代婚喪禮俗考 (Shanghai: K'ai-ming shu-tien, 1933), pp. 73–74.

[57] For examples see *WW* 1972.12: 12 and *WW* 1975.9:7.

[58] *Man-ch'eng Han-mu* 滿城漢墓 (Peking: Wen-wu ch'u-pan-she, 1978): 25–26. See also Shih Wei 史為, "Kuan-yü 'chin-lü yü-i' tzu-liao chien-chieh" 關於金縷玉衣資料簡介, *KK* 1972.2:48–50.

evidence suggests that pre-Buddhist Chinese beliefs about a heavenly world above and an underworld below were closely related to the dualistic conception of soul, the *hun* and the *p'o*. At death the *hun* and the *p'o* were thought to go separate ways, the former returning to heaven and the latter to earth. The idea of heaven and hell as opposing sites as reward and punishment in the afterlife was not fully developed in Chinese thought until the coming of Buddhism.

THE RISE OF *HSIEN* IMMORTALITY AND THE RESTRUCTURING OF THE AFTERWORLD

A historical account of the Chinese conception of afterlife, however, would remain incomplete without a brief discussion of the fundamental transformation it underwent during the reign of Emperor Wu of Han (140–87 B.C.). By this transformation we refer to the development of the cult of *hsien* 仙 immortality.[59]

Hsien was a unique idea in ancient Chinese thought and probably began as a romantic conception of total spiritual freedom. A prototype of *hsien* immortal may be found in the beginning chapter of the *Chuang Tzu* 莊子 where a Divine Man is described as follows:

> There is a Divine Man living on faraway Kuyeh Mountain, with skin like ice or snow, and gentle and shy like a young girl. He doesn't eat the five grains, but sucks the wind and drinks the dew, climbs up on clouds and mists, rides a flying dragon, and wanders beyond the four seas.[60]

The important thing to note here is that the Divine Man does not eat anything earthly such as the five grains but only "sucks the wind and drinks the dew," phenomena that come from heaven. Elsewhere the *Chuang Tzu* also mentions the method of regulating or manipulating the *ch'i* or breath (*tao-yin* 導引) as a way of cultivating long life.[61] It seems then that the idea of the *hsien* was originally conceived in terms of the *hun*-soul which being made up entirely of the heavenly *ch'i*, is able to ascend to heaven.

[59] For a more comprehensive study of the Han cult of *hsien* immortality, see my "Life and Immortality in the Mind of Han China."

[60] Burton Watson, tr., *The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968), p. 33.

[61] Ibid., p. 168 (note).

The only difference between the *hun* and the *hsien* is that while the former leaves the body at death the latter obtains its total freedom by transforming the body into something purely ethereal, that is, the heavenly *ch'i* 氣. Thus regulation of *ch'i* or breath and "abstention from grains" were widely believed to be the two most important means of achieving *hsien* immortality.[62] The "Far-off Journey" 遠遊 in the *Elegies of Ch'u* describes a scene of some ancient *hsien* immortals' ascension to heaven in the following lines:

> With the ether's (i.e. *ch'i*'s) transformations they rose upwards, with godlike swiftness miraculously moving. Leaving the dust behind, shedding their impurities—never to return again to their old homes.[63]

In view of the fact that both the *Chuang Tzu* and the *Elegies of Ch'u* are products of the Ch'u culture in the south, the family resemblence between the idea of *hsien* and of *hun* can hardly be a matter of historical coincidence.

As we have seen, in early philosophical and literary imagination a *hsien* immortal is someone who rejects this human world. He must "leave the dust behind" and "never return home again." However, as soon as the idea of *hsien* immortality attracted the attention of the worldly rulers, such as princes of the Warring-states period and emperors of the Ch'in and Han dynasties, it began to develop into a cult of a this-worldly character. Princes and emperors were not interested in transforming themselves into *hsien* immortals because they had suddenly developed a renunciatory attitude toward the honors and pleasures they enjoyed in this world. On the contrary, they were motivated by a strong desire to prolong their worldly pleasures forever.

This worldly cult of *hsien* immortality had already gained considerable popularity among the princes of various states before the unification of China in 221 B.C. But it reached its zenith in the time of Emperor Wu of Han. Emperor Wu was led to believe, by a number of professional "necromancers," that a meeting could be arranged between him and some *hsien* immortals on the top of

[62] *Shih-chi* 史記 (Peking: Chung-hua shu-chü, 1959), 55.2048. Both practices have now been confirmed by the discovery of a pre-Ch'in text at Ma-wang-tui. See *WW* 1975.6:1, 6–13, 14–15.

[63] David Hawkes, *Ch'u Tz'u*, p. 82.

Mount T'ai 泰山, the sacred mountain in ancient China, as a preparation for his final ascension to heaven. At this time a story had been fabricated that the legendary Yellow Emperor did not really die but flew to heaven on a dragon's back together with his court assistants and palace ladies after having performed imperial sacrifices to Heaven and Earth at the central peak of Mount T'ai. Taken in by this story, Emperor Wu made his imperial pilgrimage to Mount T'ai in 110 B.C. and carried out all the religious rituals supposedly in the tradition of the Yellow Emperor. He returned to the capital assured that he would eventually join the Yellow Emperor in heaven as a *hsien* immortal. By the turn of the first century A.D., at the latest, the cult of *hsien* immortality had already spread from royal and aristocratic circles to the common people. A Han stone inscription relates that, in A.D. 7, a yamen underling in the local government of Han-chung 漢中 (in modern Shensi) named T'ang Kung-fang 唐公房 succeeded in his pursuit of *hsien* immortality. Consequently, he ascended heaven not only with his whole family but also his house and domestic animals.

The great popularity of this cult transformed the Han conception of the afterlife in a fundamental way. According to the *T'ai-p'ing ching*, only the *hsien* immortals who had embodied the great Tao were admitted to heaven.[64] Since the immortal *hsien* and the dissolvable *hun* were conceived as belonging to two completely different categories of beings, they were not supposed to mix in the same heaven. As a result, a new abode had to be found to accommodate the *hun* souls. Thus, the governmental structure of the underworld was expanded. Based on a variety of historical and archaeological evidence, this new conception of the underworld may be briefly reconstructed as follows: First, from around the end of the first century B.C. a belief gradually arose that there was a supreme ruler called Lord of Mount T'ai (*T'ai-shan fu-chün* 泰山府君) whose capital was located in a place named Liang-fu 梁父, a small hill near Mount T'ai.[65] Liang-fu, it may be noted, was traditionally the place

[64] *TPC*, p. 138.

[65] For the development of the cult of Mount T'ai as a place for the dead, see also Chao I 趙翼, *Kai-yü ts'ung-k'ao* 陔餘叢考 (Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1957), 35.751–52; Édouard Chavannes, *Le T'ai Ch'an* (Paris: Leroux, 1910), chapter six; Sakai Tadao 酒井忠夫, "Taizan shinkō no kenkyū" 泰山信仰の研究, *Shichō* 史潮, 7.2 (June 1937).

at which imperial sacrifices had been made to the supreme earthly deity, the Lord of Earth (*Ti chu* 地主).[66] It was indeed only a small step to transform the Lord of Earth into the Lord of the Underworld (*ti-hsia chu* 地下主). The title Lord of Mount T'ai—*T'ai-shan fu-chün*—also requires a word of explanation. The term *fu-chü* must not be taken to mean "lord" in a general sense. In fact, it was a popular name referring specifically to provincial governors in Han times. Nor should "T'ai-shan" in this case be understood as the sacred mountain itself. Instead it was a reference to the province named after the sacred mountain in which Liang-fu was also located.[67] In other words, calling the supreme ruler of the underworld *T'ai-shan fu-chün* was to indicate both the location of his residence and the bureaucratic rank of his office. Since he was in charge of the dead, he was therefore assigned an official position lower than the supreme ruler of the human world, the emperor, by one rank. This fits perfectly well with some other popular names by which he was also known. For example, stone inscriptions found in Han tombs often refer to him either as "Lord of Mount T'ai" or as "the provincial governor in the underworld."[68] Moreover, a popular Han religious tract says that he is the "grandson of the Heavenly God."[69] The last instance is particularly revealing. Clear-

[66] Due to limitations of space the following discussion is highly condensed. For a detailed study see my Chinese article, "Chung-kuo ku-tai ssu-hou shih-chieh kuan ti yen-pien" 中國古代死後世界觀的演變, *Yen-yuan lun-hsueh chi* 燕園論學集 (Peking, Peking University Press, 1984), pp. 177–96. *Shih-chi* 28.1367; Burton Watson, tr., *Records of the Grand Historian of China* 2 vols. (New York, Columbia University Press, 1961), 2:24.

[67] This is rightly pointed out in Hu San-hsing's 胡三省 commentary on *Tzu-chih t'ung-chien* 資治通鑑 (Peking: Chung-hua shu-chü, 1956), 20.678.

[68] Quoted in Fang Shih-ming 方詩銘, "Tsai-lun ti-chüan ti chien-pieh," 再論地券的鑑別 *WW* 1979.8: 84. For more details of the transformation of the Lord of Mount T'ai, see Okamoto Saburō 岡本三郎, "Taizan fukun no yurai ni tsuite," 泰山府君の由来について, *Tōyōgaku kenkyū* 東洋學研究, 1 (November 1943): 63–98.

[69] We owe this information to a fragment of the *Hsiao-ching yüan-shen ch'i* 孝經援神契, preserved in Chang Hua's 張華 (A.D. 232–300) *Po-wu chih*, see Fan Ning 范寧, ed., *Po-wu chih chiao-chu* 博物志校注 (Peking: Chung-hua shu-chü, 1980), p. 12. This perhaps also explains why, as recent archaeology amply shows, the Heavenly God often sent envoys to warn underworld officials of all levels that they must not harass the souls under their jurisdictions. See Hayashi Minao 林巳奈夫, "Kandai kijin no sekai" 漢代鬼神の世界, *Tōhōgakuhō* 東方學報, 46 (March 1974): 227–28 and note 14, pp. 297–98.) Obviously, Han Chinese believed that the souls in the underworld were subject to the taxes and labor services demanded by underworld officials. See the inscription from a Han tomb dated A.D. 173 in Kuo Mo-jo 郭沫若, *Nu-li chih shih-tai* 奴隸制時代, (Peking, 1972), p. 94.

ly, the idea of "grandson of the Heavenly God" was derived analogously from that of the "Son of Heaven," that is, the emperor.

Second, like the supreme ruler of the human world, it was believed that the Lord of Mount T'ai also had a bureaucracy to assist him in governing the dead. Judging by the various official titles found in Han tombs and other texts, the bureaucratic structure of the underworld was closely modeled on the administrative system of the Han empire. The first thing the newly dead had to do was to go to the capital of the underworld to register. There is further evidence suggesting that the underworld government could send for the souls of those whose alloted span on earth, according to the Register of Death, was up. As time wore on, the idea of post-mortem punishment also found its way into the Han belief about the afterlife. The *T'ai-p'ing ching* of the second century A.D. has the following vivid description of the administration of justice in the underworld.

> If a man commits evils unceasingly, his name will then be entered into the Register of Death. He will be summoned to the Underworld Government (*t'u-fu* 土府) where his body is to be kept. Alas! When can he ever get out? His soul will be imprisoned and his doings in life will be questioned. If his words are found to be inconsistent, he will be subject to further imprisonment and torture. His soul is surely going to suffer a great deal. But who is to blame?[70]

This new conception of the underworld may well have been a faithful reflection of the cruel realities of interrogation and torture in the imperial and provincial prisons, especially during the second century A.D.[71]

Third, we have reason to believe that as the supreme ruler of the underworld, the authority of the Lord of Mount T'ai was originally conceived to be exercised over the *hun*-souls. Several historical and literary sources specifically link the *hun*, but not the *p'o*, to Mount T'ai, which itself calls to mind the underworld in which the Lord

[70] *TPC*, p. 615 and also pp. 598–99. In contrast to ancient Greece, the Chinese idea of post-mortem punishment is a much later development. See Emily Vermeule, *Aspects of Death*, p. 8, and E. R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1951), pp. 137, 150–51.

[71] Lü Ssu-mien 呂思勉, *Ch'in-Han shih* 秦漢史, 2 vols. (Shanghai: K'ai-ming shu-tien, 1947), 2:704–09.

of Mount T'ai reigns supreme. The *hun*-soul is said to be either "returning" or "belonging" to Mount T'ai.[72] It may be recalled that heaven was now populated by the *hsien* immortals; it was no longer a place to which the *hun*-souls could return. For the Han Chinese, therefore, Mount T'ai was the highest place imaginable, second only to heaven. Strictly speaking, however, the *hun*-souls could not even ascend the central peak of that sacred mountain because it had also been transformed into a meeting place between the emperor and the *hsien* immortals. The *hun*-souls could only travel to Liang-fu, the capital of the underworld in which the Lord of Mount T'ai operated his central administration. It may be further noted that in Han popular culture, Mount T'ai itself, especially its peak, was a symbol of life and immortality whereas Liang-fu was that of death. However, the simple fact that Liang-fu was not only located in the vicinity of Mount T'ai but also fell under the jurisdiction of the province bearing the name of the holy mountain gradually gave rise to widespread confusion in Han popular beliefs about the afterlife. With the province bearing the name of Mount T'ai inextricably confused with the mountain itself, texts from the second century A.D. on often speak of the departed *hun*-souls as if they were to "return" to the holy mountain. But it is important to point out that in all probability the original conception was that the *hun*-soul of the newly dead would go to the Liang-fu hill in T'ai-shan province, in order to register its name with the underworld government.

Finally, a word about the *p'o* soul is in order. Since the *hun*-soul now went to the underworld instead of heaven, what happened to the *p'o*? It is interesting to observe that the *p'o* was under the care of a separate department of the underworld government. According to Tung-fang Shuo, the court jester of Emperor Wu's time, the office in charge of the dead is called *po* 柏. Clearly, *p'o* and *po* share the same etymological root; the name *po* may well have been derived

[72] *Hou Han shu* 後漢書 (Peking: Chung-hua shu-chü, 1965), 90.2980. It is important to point out that here the fragment of the *Hsiao-ching yüan-shen ch'i* preserved in the *Po-wu chih* (see note 69 above) is also quoted by the T'ang commentator to support the statement of the *Hou Han shu*. The *Hou Han shu* text says: "The *hun*-soul (*hun-shen* 魂神) of the dead returns to Mount T'ai," and the commentary, quoting *Po-wu chih*, says: "Mount T'ai, the Grandson of the Heavenly God, is responsible for summoning the human *hun*-souls" (90.2981). The two passages agree with each other exactly.

from the belief that it is the abode of *p'o* souls. Moreover, the same jester also defined *po* as "the court of the ghosts" (*kuei-t'ing* 鬼廷).[73] In Han times the term *t'ing* commonly designated the yamen of a county magistrate, just as *fu* was the popular name of the office of a provincial governor.[74] This fits perfectly well with the bureaucratic hierarchy of the Han underworld: the deity in charge of the *p'o* souls was lower by one level in rank than the deity in charge of the *hun*-souls, the Lord of Mount T'ai. In approximately the middle of the first century B.C., the name Kao-li 蒿里 suddenly gained popularity as an abode for the dead. Interestingly, it turns out that Kao-li was another place of deep religious significance at the foot of Mount T'ai, where Emperor Wu performed the ritual of sacrifice to the Lord of Earth in 104 B.C.[75] Later in Han popular literature Kao-li also came to be identified as the Lower Village (*hsia-li* 下里) or the Yellow Springs in which the dead take their permanent residence.[76] At first it seems puzzling that there should be two different places in the Han underworld for the departed souls. However, the puzzle disappears as soon as we remember that each person was believed to be in possession of two separate souls, the *hun* and the *p'o*. There is clear evidence from inscriptions found in Later Han tombs that both the *hun* and the *p'o* are subject to the call of the underworld government.[77] This suggests the good possibility that the *p'o* soul of

[73] *Han shu* 漢書 (Peking: Chung-hua shu-chü, 1962), 33.2845.

[74] For *fu* 府 and *t'ing* 廷 as popular names of the governor's and the magistrate's offices respectively, see vol. 1 of Yen Keng-wang 嚴耕望, *Chung-kuo ti-fang hsing-cheng chih-tu shih* 中國地方行政制度史, Part 1 (Taipei: Chung-yang yen-chiu-yüan li-shih yü-yen yen-chiu-so, 1961), p. 216.

[75] *Han shu* 38.1991.

[76] For the term Kao-li meaning underworld, see *Han shu* 63.2761 and Yen Shih-ku's commentary on p. 2762. For Kao-li and *hsia-li* 下里 in Han popular literature, especially in inscriptions on tombstones, see Wu Jung-tseng 吳榮曾, "Chen-mu-wen chung so-chien tao ti Tung-Han Tao wu kuan-hsi" 鎮墓文中所見到的道巫關係, *WW* 1981.3: p. 59. In his *Taoism and Chinese Religion* (tr. by Frank A. Kierman, Jr., Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1981), Henri Maspero gives a brief account of the *T'ai-shan fu-chün* in later Taoist tradition in which the underworld is localized in "the hillock Hao-li," (pp. 102–04). Here "Hao-li" is a variant reading of Kao-li. Though much distorted, this later tradition nevertheless shows unmistakable traces of its Han origin.

[77] See some of the examples given in Wu Jung-tseng, "Chen-mu-wen," pp. 60–61. It has often been pointed out that Han beliefs in the afterlife as revealed in the vast amount of literary and archaeological sources are full of contradictions and inconsistencies. I would argue that on the whole the various ideas about death rituals, heaven, and hell discussed

the newly dead would be required to report to the underworld government in Kao-li in a way similar to the *hun*-soul's journey to Liang-fu. As a response to the rise of the popular cult of *hsien* immortality, which prevented the *hun*-soul from returning to heaven, the Chinese underworld seems to have been fundamentally restructured along a dualistic line to accommodate the *hun* and the *p'o* respectively.

This dualistic structure of the pre-Buddhist Chinese underworld is clearly reflected in the following four lines from a song about Mount T'ai by the famous writer Lu Chi 陸機 (261–303):

> On the hill of Liang-fu there are hostels (*kuan* 舘),
> In Kao-li there are also lodges (*t'ing* 亭) for the travellers,
> Along the dark path stretch ten thousand ghosts (*kuei*),
> one following the footsteps of another,
> In the spiritual houses (*shen-fang* 神房) are gathered hundreds
> of spirits (*ling* 靈).[78]

Here the poet is describing imagined scenes of the trips of both the *hun*-souls and the *p'o*-souls to their separate destinations—Liang-fu and Kao-li. In his imagination the poet introduces the Han system of travellers' inns (*kuan* and *t'ing*) into the underworld.[79] There can be no question that the term *kuei* ("ghosts") refers specifically to the *p'o*-souls and the term *ling* ("spirits") to the *hun*-souls. In a Confucian treatise on the "Meaning of Sacrifice" ("Chi-i" 祭義) of Han date, *kuei* and *shen* are defined as the names of *p'o* and *hun* respec-

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above make good sense if we keep in mind that in Han times people generally believed not only in the separation of the *hun* and the *p'o* at death but also in the possibility of achieving *hsien* immortality and ascension to heaven. While contradictions and inconsistencies are certainly there, they do not invalidate or render meaningless the cluster of Han beliefs we have been examining. On the contrary, there is every reason to think that these beliefs occupied a central place in the daily life of Han Chinese irrespective of their social status. Moreover, as recent religious studies in the West have shown, beliefs in heaven and the afterlife do not depend on logical consistency for their validity. On this point, see Robert N. Bellah, "Christianity and Symbolic Realism," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 9 (Summer 1970): 89–96, and Bradley R. Hertel, "Inconsistency of Beliefs in the Existence of Heaven and Afterlife," *Review of Religious Research* 21.2 (Spring 1980): 171–83.

[78] See *Lu Shih-heng wen-chi* 陸士衡文集 (*SPTK* edition), 7.28.

[79] See Ying-shih Yü, *Trade and Expansion in Han China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), pp. 32–34.

tively when the pair separate at death.[80] The identification of *kuei* as the name for *p'o* after death is already confirmed by the saying of Tung-fang Shuo, quoted above. The term *ling* in the poem can also be shown to be a variant of *hun* or *shen*. For example, Lu Chi's brother, Lu Yün 陸雲 (262–303), in his "Teng-hsia sung" 登遐頌 uses *ling-p'o* 靈魄 instead of *hun-p'o*.[81] It is therefore safe to conclude that even as late as the third century the Han dualistic conception of afterlife was still very much alive in the Chinese mind, namely, at death when the *hun* and the *p'o* part company the former returns to Liang-fu and the latter to Kao-li. However, it is important to note that neither the nature of the two souls nor their relationship underwent any basic change as a result of the restructuring of the underworld. The original idea that the *hun*, being made of the heavenly *ch'i* and light, moves upward and the *p'o*, being made of the earthly *ch'i* and heavy, moves downward was retained without change. For in this new conception the destination of the *hun*-soul is located high on the Liang-fu hill whereas that of the *p'o*-soul down in Kao-li, identified as the Lower Village (*hsia-li*) in popular culture. This point is also further borne out by another poem of the same writer in which it is explicitly stated that after death the *hun* "flies" and the *p'o* "sinks."[82]

In conclusion, it is important to point out that the popular belief in Han China linking the underworld to Mount T'ai prepared the ground for the Chinese people to adjust themselves to the much more powerful Buddhist idea of "hells" in the centuries to come. It is interesting that in some of the earliest Chinese translations of Buddhist sutras attributed to the Parthian monk An Shih-kao 安世高 (second century) and the Sogdian monk K'ang Seng-hui 康僧會 (third century), the term *niraya* ("hell") is often rendered as "the underworld prison in Mount T'ai" (*T'ai-shan ti-yü* 泰山地獄). One trans-

[80] See *Li-chi chu-su* 47.14a–b and K'ung Ying-ta's 孔穎達 *Cheng-i* 正義 in *Tso-chuan chu-su Shih-san-ching chu-shu*, 1815 edition 44.13a–14a: 改生之魂曰神, 改生之魄曰鬼 "[After death] the name of *hun* in life is changed to *shen* and that of *p'o* to *kuei*.

[81] *Lu Shih-lung wen-chi* 陸士龍文集 (*SPTK* edition), 6.33. It may be pointed out that the *Hou Han shu* (90.2980) also uses *hun-shen* and *shen-ling* 神靈 interchangeably to refer to the *hun*-soul.

[82] See the poem "Tseng ts'ung-hsiung Ch'e-ch'i" 贈從兄車騎 in *Lu Shih-heng wen-chi* 5.18: 營魄懷茲土, 精爽若飛沉. Here *ying* 營 is a variant of *hun*. See *Lao Tzu* (chapter 10).

lated text even says something to the effect that both the *hun* and the *p'o* souls are harshly tortured in the *T'ai-shan ti-yü*.[83] This description agrees remarkably well with the indigenous Chinese idea of post-mortem punishment as found in the *T'ai-p'ing ching* quoted earlier. Needless to say, as Buddhism gradually gained ground in China, Chinese conceptions of the soul and afterlife were to be totally transformed. As a result, the pre-Buddhist belief of a dualistic underworld was eventually replaced by the Buddhist belief of "Ten Hells" each governed by a "King" (*yama-rāja*). But the Han tradition about the Lord of Mount T'ai in charge of the dead survived this radical transformation. Instead of being completely forgotten, the Lord of Mount T'ai secured a permanent place in the Buddhist underworld as one of the Ten Kings—King of Mount T'ai.[84] It is a point worth stressing that popular Chinese beliefs about the afterlife in their post-Han form, which developed under the influence of Buddhism, cannot be fully understood without knowledge of indigenous beliefs in pre-Buddhist China.

[83] *Hu Shih shou-kao*, eighth collection, 1:83–107.

[84] Ibid. pp. 13–42. For the popular version of the "Ten Kings of the Underworld," see Anthony C. Yu, tr., *The Journey to the West*, 4 vols. (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1977), 1:110.