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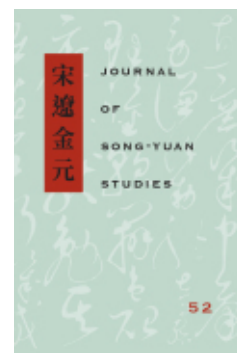
Cong Tianshu shidai dao guwen yundong: Bei Song qianqi de zhengzhi guocheng by Chang Wei-ling 常伟玲 (review)

Charles Hartman

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Chang Wei-ling 張維玲. *Cong Tianshu shidai dao guwen yundong: Bei Song qianqi de zhengzhi guocheng* 從天書時代到古文運動——北宋前期的政治過程 [From “Heavenly Texts” to the Guwen Movement: Political Process in the Early Northern Song Dynasty]. Guoli Taiwan daxue wenshi congkan 國立臺灣大學文史叢刊 158. Taipei: Guoli Taiwan daxue chubanshu zhongxin, 2021. Pp. 362. NT\$520 (paper). ISBN 978-9863505563.

Studies of the Song dynasty—and of middle period Chinese history in general—often suffer from the preference of most scholars to conceive and present their research within the confines of the self-contained silos of modern disciplinary knowledge. Thus, we have histories of Song politics, society, literature, art, economics, or “thought.” Useful as such histories often are, culture is lived as a seamless fabric of experience. The Song artists, poets, and politicians of our scholarly imaginations all lived their lives in a larger indivisible culture that remains beyond our ability to reconceive as a whole. True, on the one hand, intrepid interdisciplinarians may occasionally venture a cross-disciplinary comparison. But, since few scholars are equally proficient in more than one discipline, cross-references from the weaker discipline usually act as mere grace notes to the stronger, dominant discipline. On the other hand, proficient interdisciplinary scholars face the daunting challenge of deciding for any given research problem where and how they should best converge two disciplinary histories.

Chang Wei-ling’s book reconceptualizes the history of early Song by merging the hitherto separate silos of political, intellectual, and literary history. She understands the “political process” of the title as that common ground of scholarly inquiry where political and intellectual history intersect; in other words, where ideas manifest as concrete political action. This focus is crucial, since, clearly, not all ideas result in political action, nor does all political action originate from ideas. To date, most scholars of Song history have treated what Chang calls the “era of the Heavenly Letters” (*tianshu shidai* 天書時代) as political history, and they treat the ensuing “antique prose movement” (*guwen yundong* 古文運動) as intellectual or literary history. By examining the cultural and literary foundations of the former and the political origins of the latter, Chang’s work places both phenomena within the same arena of scholarly inquiry. The result is a brilliant re-creation of the larger picture of the lived world of early Song political culture and carries major implications for the separate histories of Song politics, thought, and literature.

The book is divided into two parts, the first on the Heavenly Letters, the second on the *guwen* movement. After a short introduction (1–16), Part One contains three chapters. Chapter One reviews the Taizu 太祖- and Taizong 太宗-era origins of the concept of the Great Peace (*Taiping* 太平) and its relationship to the *fengshan* 封禪 sacrifices that came to dominate the ensuing Heavenly Letters era, which Chang defines as 1008 through 1033 (19–79). Chapter Two offers a detailed account of the intellectual foundations of this ritual program under Emperor Zhenzong 眞宗 (968–1022; r. 997–1022) (81–138), and Chapter Three describes the larger political culture that grew up around this program (139–201). In the book's second half on *guwen*, Chapter Four treats the emergence of the first challenges to the political culture of the Heavenly Letters era in the years after Zhenzong's death in 1022 (205–267), and Chapter Five describes in detail the complex political forces that gave rise to the developed *guwen* movement along with related measures to question the traditional Han-Tang commentaries on the classics (269–332).

Chang grounds her treatment of each part upon a historiographical deconstruction of their standard received narratives. In the first case, the story goes: Wang Qinruo 王欽若 (962–1025), jealous over of his rival Kou Zhun's 寇準 (961–1023) success in negotiating the Chanyuan 澶淵 Treaty of 1005, convinced Emperor Zhenzong that the treaty terms made Song look weak. He thus convinced the emperor to undertake a grandiose ritual program that would convince the superstitious Kitan that Heaven indeed supported Song. In preparation for the *fengshan* sacrifices, in 1008 Wang forged “letters from Heaven” (*Tianshu* 天書) that signaled Heaven's support for the dynasty, for Zhenzong personally, and for the proposed sacrifices. Chang shows (276–80) that this tale developed from anti-Wang Qinruo sentiment that Wang Zeng 王曾 (978–1038), Wang's political opponent, had already inserted into official history in the late 1020s, soon after Wang Qinruo's death. Over the next century, private accounts by Tian Kuang 田況 (1005–1063), Sima Guang 司馬光 (1019–1086), and Su Che 蘇轍 (1039–1112) enhanced the tale, which the Yuan historians eventually wrote into their official verdict on Zhenzong's reign in the *Song History* of 1345. And this narrative now forms a staple of received Song history, the definitive *Cambridge History* citing both Sima Guang and the *Song History* as sources for the tale.¹

1. Lau Nap-yin and Huang Kuan-chung, “Founding and Consolidation of the Sung Dynasty under T'ai-tsu (960–976), T'ai-tsung (976–997), and Chen-tsung (997–1022),” in *The Cambridge*

In contrast to this narrative that locates the motives for the Heavenly Letters in petty bureaucratic jealousy and imperial vanity, Chang demonstrates in Chapter One that Zhenzong's ritual program built upon and fulfilled long-standing dynastic plans for proclaiming legitimacy. Anxious to distinguish themselves from their short-lived predecessors, the founders, especially Taizong, aspired to perform the *fengshan* sacrifices to confirm that the dynasty had brought about an era of Great Peace. Upon assuming the throne in 976, he proclaimed as his inaugural reign title "Let Us Lift up Our State unto the Great Peace" (*Taiping xingguo* 太平興國). The notion of a cosmic and political Great Peace was embedded in canonical Confucian and Daoist texts where it described "a state of cosmic harmony in which all the concentric spheres of the organic Chinese universe, nature as well as human society, were perfectly attuned and communicated in a balanced rhythm of timeliness which brings maximum fulfillment to each living being."² As Chang explains, four conditions were required: 1) political unity, 2) no warfare, 3) domestic prosperity, and 4) auspicious signs from Heaven that these conditions had been met (23–25). Although Taizong's defeat at the battle of Qigou Pass 岐溝關 in 986 forced him to adjust the interpretation of these criteria, it remained dynastic policy to perform the *fengshan* rites.

Chang attaches great importance to the role of factional tensions in the development of the dynasty's pursuit of political legitimacy through ritual. She identifies Xu Xuan 徐鉉 (917–992) and his disciples as providing the ideological, intellectual, and performative guidelines for this ritual program, first by Xu Xuan himself under Taizong and later by his disciples under Zhenzong. Xu Xuan was a southerner who entered Song service in 975 when Taizu conquered the Southern Tang dynasty (937–975). Xu's father had earned the *jinshi* degree in late Tang, and the son was a leading scholar of the traditional Tang canon but was also versed in the Daoism that was popular in Jiangxi, the Southern Tang heartland. Xu and his disciples brought their southern learning, a direct extension of Tang court scholarship, north with them, and the group came to constitute a distinct "southern" cohort at the Song court.

History of China, Vol. 5, Part One: The Sung Dynasty and Its Precursors, 907–1279, ed. Denis Twitchett and Paul Jakov Smith (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 270–73. For further details on the development of the historical image of Zhenzong, see Charles Hartman, *The Making of Song Dynasty History: Sources and Narratives, 960–1279 CE* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 189–90.

2. Anna Seidel, "Taoist Messianism," *Numen* 31.2 (1984), 163–64.

Taizong welcomed them, as did the native northern scholars under Li Fang 李昉 (925–996), and they contributed to the dynasty’s cultural productions. But despite their scholarship and ritual expertise, Taizong never fully trusted the southerners with political power, and their full acceptance by the Song monarchy came only when Zhenzong embraced their plans for his completion of the Song ritual program (50–79). As Chang points out at the conclusion of this chapter, Zhenzong’s support for the southerners accorded them political power for the first time, and so brought them into increased tension with the northern group.³

Chapter Two delves deeply into the intellectual and ideological foundations of the ritual program that Xu Xuan and his disciples devised. The Xu Xuan disciples most versed and most active in Zhenzong-era ritual were Wang Qinruo, Chen Pengnian 陳彭年 (961–1017), and Du Hao 杜鎬 (938–1013).⁴ Chang describes how these true “scholar-officials” constructed a ritual program that drew upon and thus mirrored their own intellectual heritage. The last of five emperors to have performed the *fengshan* rites was the Tang Emperor Xuanzong 玄宗 (r. 712–756) in 725, and Xu Xuan framed his reign as an ideal fusion of Confucian and Daoist principles and consequentially a Great Peace apex of Tang prosperity. In Xu’s analysis, Xuanzong had elevated *dao* to the status of an ontological and political first principle. The relationship between ruler and minister replicated that between Heaven and Earth and produced effective governance by internalizing the *dao*, which they achieved in turn by exercising “filial piety” through worship of Daoist deities such as Laozi, the dynasty ancestor, and the Jade Emperor. The resulting harmonious manifestations of the *dao* (between Heaven/Earth; ruler/minister; humans/deities) translated into political stability and prosperity. Ancient sovereigns

3. An earlier and more detailed version of this material appeared as Chang Wei-ling, “Song-chu nanbei wenshi de hudong yu nanfang wenshi de jueqi—jijiao yu Xu Xuan ji qi houxue de kaocha” 宋初南北文士的互動與南方文士的崛起——聚焦於徐鉉及其後學的考察 [Interactions between northern and southern scholars during the early Song and the sudden rise of southern scholars—a study focusing on Xu Xuan and his disciples], *Taida wenshizhe xuebao* 臺大文哲學報 85 (2016): 175–217.

4. Wang and Chen were members of the so-called “Five Demons” (*wugui* 五鬼) that also included Ding Wei 丁謂 (966–1037), Lin Te 林特 (d. 1026), and the eunuch Liu Chenggui 劉承珪 (950–1013). For a positive assessment of their contributions to Zhenzong-era governance, see Wang Zhiyong 王智勇, “Lun Song Zhenzong chao ‘wu gui’” 论宋真宗朝“五鬼” [On the Five Demons at the court of Song Zhenzong], *Sichuan daxue xuebao* 四川大学学报 118 (2002): 107–16.

had attained this condition of Great Peace through non-action (*wuwei* 無爲), but later rulers relied upon the written “standards” set forth by Laozi and Confucius, whereby the former provided the “essence” (*ti* 體) and the latter its “application” (*yong* 用) (106–10).

Another cornerstone that the southern scholars built into Zhenzong’s ritual program was the Han-era scholarship on what we might call the “messaging” between Heaven and terrestrial leadership (93–104). Communications from Heaven sent to confer legitimacy and instructions upon ancient sage rulers included the “writings from the Luo River” (*Luoshu* 洛書) and the “River Chart” (*Hetu* 河圖), both of which the *Yijing* mentions. The Han apocrypha developed these references into a complex system of numerological, astronomical, and calendrical omens, portents, and auspicious signs to bolster the legitimacy of the Han restoration Emperor Guangzu 光祖 (r. 25–57). Han and Tang scholars incorporated much of this material into the official Han and Tang commentaries on the Confucian classics (*zhushu* 注疏) that formed the base of the Tang and early Song examination corpus. As soon as the Heavenly Letters appeared in 1008, they were likened to the Luo River Writings and interpreted as support for Zhenzong and his pursuit of Great Peace governance through the political principles of non-action and “purity and tranquility” (*qingjing* 清靜). The new reign title adopted at this time, “Auspicious Talismans of Grand Centrality” (*Dazhong xiangfu* 大中祥符), reflects this positioning of the Heavenly Letters in the ideological context of the Han apocrypha.

Chapter Three details how Zhenzong and his advisors developed these intellectual foundations into a political theocracy that dominated the age of the Heavenly Letters and, at least in its later stages, into a “political movement” (*zhengzhi yundong* 政治運動) (13). Although Chang does not make the comparison, her use of this phrase to characterize this distinctive political culture brings to my mind the coordinated central agendas and orchestrated popular passions of more recent “movements” in China. Over the course of the *Dazhong xiangfu* era (1008–1017), the Song court would recreate Tang Xuanzong’s program to make the emperor a Daoist deity and to extend the dynasty’s political control by mandating popular worship of the emperor and his “ancestors.” Over the decade, Zhenzong conducted the *fengshan* sacrifices to Heaven at Taishan 泰山 (1008), to Earth at Fenyin 汾陰 (1011), received a visit from the Song Sage-Ancestor (*Shengzu* 聖祖) and ordered his worship throughout the country (1012), sacrificed to Laozi at his birthplace in Bozhou

亳州 (1014), conferred new titles upon the Jade Emperor (1015), and ordered new rituals and shrines for worship of the Sage-Ancestor, Laozi, and the Jade Emperor (1018). The cumulative effect of these moves was to privilege Daoism over Confucianism as the intellectual base for dynastic legitimacy. Because the deities of this pantheon, including the Song Sage-Ancestor, were “anterior to Heaven” (*xiantian* 先天), they thus ranked above the Supreme Emperor of Vast Heaven (Hao Tian shangdi 昊天上帝), the top deity in the traditional Confucian rites (145–61).⁵

After a few fascinating pages on Zhenzong’s own pursuit of immortality (162–65), Chapter Three concludes with a description of the administrative ramification of this ritual program. Because he was—at least by implication—also a personification of the *dao* and “anterior to Heaven,” by definition the emperor’s rule was one of “non-action” (*wuwei*), meaning not that he did nothing but that, because the world had attained the condition of Great Peace, nothing needed to be done. His primary function was to instruct his officials and to lead them and the people in “filial” behavior, i. e., sacrifices to his ancestors to ensure the continued flow of harmony and prosperity. Should events transpire that gainsayed the Great Peace, for example a palace fire in 1015 or a plague of locusts in 1016–1017, Zhenzong refused, as Confucian theory demanded, to accept the events as “retribution from Heaven” (*Tianqian* 天譴) or to solicit remonstrance but ordered the execution of those responsible for the fire and decreed the plague was a “routine pattern” (*changshu* 常數), in other words, a naturally occurring event that local officials, who had disregarded his instructions, had failed properly to remedy. He issued a general amnesty, ordered additional temple building and sacrifices, punished the responsible officials, and thereby restored the equilibrium of the Great Peace (173–76).

At the same time, officials strove to submit evidence of their effective administration by offering testaments to attainment of the Great Peace in their jurisdictions. These included all manner of auspicious natural phenomena and manmade talismans of prosperity as referenced in the Han apocrypha and in popular lore. More importantly for Chang’s argument, there emerged a distinctive literary genre that lauded Zhenzong’s political culture—effusive paeons to his divinity, eulogies to his ritual pageants, and florid descriptions of the auspicious talismans of the Great Peace cult. These works utilized the

5. For the classic and still definitive English-language account of Zhenzong’s ritual program, see Suzanne E. Cahill, “Taoism at the Sung Court: The Heavenly Text Affair of 1008,” originally published in 1980, reprinted with a “new appreciation” by Mark Halperin in *JSYS* 50 (2021): 7–31.

parallel prose style of the Six Dynasties and Tang that demanded rigid syntactic parallelism and an intricate allusive rhetoric (191–98).

But not all officials endorsed the “movement.” As early as 1010, Sun Shi 孫奭 (962–1033) objected that the reign of Tang Xuanzong had hardly been an era of Great Peace nor was his administration worthy of emulation (105–6). Sun Shi is hardly a household name in either Song political or intellectual history. Chapter Four (205–67) traces how the emergence of a fortified Confucianism in the 1030s and 1040s emerged from the political tensions between two opposing forces in the years after Zhenzong’s death. On the one hand, the need for imperial legitimacy and continuity under Empress Dowager Liu 劉皇太后 (in power as regent 1022–1033) and Emperor Renzong 仁宗 (1010–1063; r. 1022–1063) constrained the monarchy’s ability to diverge from Zhenzong rituals and policies. On the other hand, Zhenzong’s death removed him as the religious center and impetus, if not the political rationale, for the cult, a void that neither the empress dowager nor the young emperor could fill. A broad base of officials, of whom Sun Shi is an early example, grew uneasy with the waning political culture of the Heavenly Letters era. This discontent manifested itself in three ways: 1) the movement to “doubt the classics” undermined the authority of the Han-Tang commentaries and the apocrypha they cited; 2) the *guwen* movement challenged the florid parallel prose of the cult of Great Peace; and 3) the Qingli 慶曆 reform attempted to change administrative practices from the Great Peace era.

Chapter Four concludes with a penetrating analysis of how these three developments failed to resolve the ideological and political tensions between the monarchy and the literati who advocated these changes. Chang properly identifies the Qingli reforms of the mid-1040s as a major turning point in Song conceptions of governance, away from Daoist non-action and the primacy of the *dao* toward a more activist (*youwei* 有爲) stance based on the Confucian primacy of Heaven. But the Qingli reforms themselves were short-lived and failed for two reasons. The first was political discord among their literati adherents. As she explains in detail in Chapter Five, Fan Zhongyan 范仲淹 (989–1052) and his allies were but one group among many officials who promoted aspects of these three early Renzong-era departures from Zhenzong-era norms. But many, including Sun Shi’s disciples, saw the concrete Qingli reforms that Fan Zhongyan and his allies formulated as a factional power grab that would result in their own exclusion from power (250–53). Second, although Emperor Renzong acknowledged the reality that the Tangut wars of

the early 1040s had undermined Song state finances and domestic prosperity to the point where continued claims to the Great Peace were now untenable, he refused either to abandon its ideology or drastically to alter established dynastic ritual practice; and he preferred to express his own aspirations for dynastic renewal as a reaffirmation and reformulation of Great Peace (253–58).⁶

Chapter Five begins with a historiographical deconstruction of the “textbook [more precisely ‘paradigmatic’] narrative” (*dianfan xushi* 典範敘事) of the *guwen* movement. This narrative runs as follows: Inspired by the example of Han Yu 韓愈 (768–824), Liu Kai 劉開 (947–1000) developed an “antique” prose style that embodied an affirmation of Confucian moral governance (*gudao* 古道). But the practice by Yang Yi 楊億 (974–1020) and Liu Yun 劉筠 (970–1030) of an antithetical parallel prose that lacked any moral dimension opposed and thwarted the spread of Liu Kai’s style. Finally, Fan Zhongyan and Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修 (1007–1072) once again promoted *guwen*, resulting in the definitive triumph of “antique” over Yang Yi’s florid and “modern” parallel prose.⁷

Chang demonstrates (269–72), however, that this narrative derives from only one text and indeed from a misreading of that one text: Fan Zhongyan’s “Preface to the Collected Works of Yin Zhu” (*Yin shilu Henan ji xu* 尹師魯河南集序). She argues that this preface—true to its generic character—developed the “textbook narrative” as a framing device to showcase and laud Yin Zhu’s 尹洙 (1001–1047) writings. Modern intellectual and literary historians have accepted this hyperbole as sober history. Her fifth chapter demonstrates that a closer reading of the politics of the Zhenzong-Renzong transition, when Yin Zhu was active, does not support the “textbook narrative.” She argues that Liu Kai was a minor official who lacked the political status to exert on a national scale the literary influence the preface attributes to

6. It is precisely in this political context that the first literati efforts to recast the Song founders Taizu and Taizong as Confucian monarchs took shape; see Hartman, *The Making of Song Dynasty History*, 231–33, 274–77. Although Confucian literati sought to redefine the Zhenzong-era parameters of the Great Peace, its attainment remained an approved goal of the Song state for the remainder of the dynasty. For a recently discovered poem by Emperor Lizong 理宗 (1205–1264; r. 1224–1264) from 1262 that lauds his own attainment of a redefined Great Peace, see Cho-ying Li and Charles Hartman, “Primary Sources for Song History in the Collected Works of Wu Ne,” *JSYS* 41 (2011): 333–41.

7. Chang (5) cites five twentieth-century formulations of the “textbook narrative” in scholarship by Jin Zhongshu 金中樞 (1963), Liu Zijian 劉子健 [James T. C. Liu] (1963), He Jipeng 何寄澎 (1992), Zhu Shangshu 祝尚書 (1995), and Qi Xia 漆俠 (2002).

him.⁸ Nor did Fan or Ouyang Xiu, when the preface was composed (sometime between Yin's death in 1047 and Fan's own death in 1052), wield anything like the influence necessary to "totally turn the writing of the empire toward the antique" (天下之文一變而古). The preface, in fact, predates by almost a decade Ouyang Xiu's famous promotion of *guwen* at the *jinshi* examinations of 1057, and, as is well-known, that promotion encountered strong resistance. In short, at the time of its composition, the preface offered an idiosyncratic account of the stylistic origins of the writings of one, mid-level literatus to a small audience of like-minded friends and devotees.

Chang's deconstruction does not question the integrity of Fan Zhongyan's commitment to *guwen* nor the preface's literary analysis of the origins of Yin Zhu's style. But Fan's narrative of the political rise of *guwen* is selective and partial, shaped both by the generic conventions of the preface as an introduction to the writings of Yin Zhu and by the defeat of his own partisans in the struggles over the Qingli reforms. Building on prior scholarship by Feng Zhihong 馮志弘 and Chen Zhi'e 陳植鏗, Chang demonstrates that there is much more to the rise of *guwen* than the "textbook narrative" contains. She argues its proximate origins lay in the growing opposition to the literary culture of the era of the Heavenly Letters in the decade after Zhenzong's death in 1022 and identifies two groups of influential officials who spearheaded this change (272–84). First, the disciples of Yang Yi controlled the drafting agencies from 1020 through 1037. From these positions, they determined court literary style and supervised the *jinshi* examinations. With the support of Wang Zeng, chief councilor from 1022 through 1029, they adopted a more utilitarian prose and pushed for a decreased focus on poetry and more on policy essays in the *jinshi* exams, especially after the death of Empress Dowager Liu in 1033 (284–292).

By Wang Zeng's second tenure as chief councilor in 1035–1037, this change had garnered widespread support. Already in 1029, an edict issued under Renzong's name mandated a change in examination standards. Castigating the florid style of the time as "useless for the way of good governance" (無益治道), the young emperor ordered the Ministry of Personnel to instruct students to focus on "the way of the former Sages" (先聖之道). A similar edict reminded students that "what writing should privilege must be to order the facts and probe the intent of our classic texts (文章所宗, 必以理實爲

8. I have myself elsewhere pointed out the problematic nature of Liu Kai as a *guwen* progenitor and Confucian exemplar; see Hartman, "Zhu Xi and His World," *JSYS* 36 (2006): 112–13.

要, 探典經之旨趣). As Chang notes, these injunctions clearly anticipate the developed *guwen* movement's insistence on the "antique" moral value of the style (286–87). In short, Chang demonstrates that although the Yang Yi group penned panegyrics to Great Peace culture during Zhenzong's reign, they later advanced major tenets of the *guwen* movement. The second group to advance *guwen* during these years were the disciples of Liu Kai, who formed a geographical base centered in Shandong and whose most politically prominent member was Li Di 李迪 (971–1047), chief councilor in 1033–1035. Chang argues that, although Liu Kai was in truth not the originator of Song *guwen*, the success of his disciples conferred upon him this distinction (292–307).

She also insists it is necessary to contextualize within the politics of the Zhenzong-Renzong transition both this incipient, broad-based expression of *guwen* ideals and the movement's insistence on the Way (*dao*) that developed later as an affirmation of the Confucian Way of Han Yu and its relation to governance. The frequent rhetorical emphasis, especially in the developed *guwen* sources from the late 1030s and 1040s, that the Way in question is "the Way of Yao, Shun . . . the Duke of Zhou, and Confucius" is not mere philosophical precision but a repudiation of Zhenzong's Daoist Way of non-action and of survivals of Zhenzong-era governance. Chang also views this rhetorical formulation as directed against the pro-Buddhist policies of Empress Dowager Liu and her ally Lü Yijian 呂夷簡 (979–1044), who served as chief councilor (1029–1037 and 1040–1043) and who adhered to the Great Peace politics of the preceding era. Chang's view that this rhetoric asserting a Confucian understanding of the Way (*dao*) parallels the development of the Song remonstrance organs and provided a greater latitude for literati input into policymaking (284) aligns well with the similar views of Christian Lamouroux on the creation of a new literati political space for remonstrance during this period.⁹

In conclusion, I would make three points about the methodology and conclusions of this book. Many of Chang's arguments rest on her identification of four distinct groupings of literati actors, whom she terms *paibie* 派別, a word whose English connotations range from the neutral "group" through "schools of thought" to a "political clique." She distinguishes four of these, named after their figureheads: Xu Xuan, Yang Yi, Sun Shi, and Liu Kai. Intellectual and literary historians treat such groups as master-disciple lineages

9. "Song Renzong's Court Landscape: Historical Writing and the Creation of a New Political Sphere (1022–1042)," *JSYS* 42 (2012): 45–93.

that transmitted a common scholarly or literary philosophy, whereas political historians treat them as “factions,” a political alliance that acted for common political advantage. Chang’s choice of the multivalent *paibie* to characterize these groupings highlights the interactive dynamic she perceives between the intellectual and political aspects of these lineages. They are formed by varied and always varying combinations of interpersonal connections, master-disciple relationships, shared ideology, and political stance (9–10). That said, she does not regard these groupings as monolithic. Because their membership and the perspectives of individual members were fluid, she is careful to document their cohesion or lack thereof, issue by issue, year by year. The result is a nuanced and sensitive intellectual and political history that does credit to the full complexity of one of the formative periods in Chinese history.

Second, I have already noted Chang’s keen historiographical sense. Her Introduction (10–11) contains a succinct summary of her creative approach toward sources in general. She relies, of course, on the indispensable chronological history of the period, Li Tao’s *Long Draft Continuation of the Comprehensive Mirror that Aids Governance* (續資治通鑑長編), citing over 500 passages from the work. Yet she acknowledges recent research that demonstrates how Li Tao’s historiographical perspective caused him, when utilizing the eleventh-century primary sources available to him in the twelfth century, to underweight his coverage of the Zhenzong period and overweight that of the Renzong period.¹⁰ To redress this imbalance, she has extracted roughly 120 Zhenzong-era entries from the *Song State Compendium* (宋會要輯稿) and fifty from the *Collection of Major Song Edicts* (宋大詔令集) that Li Tao has omitted from the *Long Draft*. Alternatively, to help balance the *Long Draft*’s pro-Qingli, pro-Fan Zhongyan narrative, she has relied on the surviving *wenji* 文集 of figures with more broad-based, complex intellectual and political outlooks, such as Shi Jie 石介 (1005–1045), Song Xiang 宋庠 (996–1066), and Song Qi 宋祁 (998–1061). A particular strength is her use of official pronouncements on ritual actions, imperial amnesties, and other imperial edicts, especially those found in the *Song da zhaoling ji*. These are first-order primary documents; but scholars often dismiss or overlook such documents because of their dense, formulaic rhetoric. Chang has an impressive ability to read through this rhetoric and extract from these rarely tapped sources valuable clues about subtle changes in policy direction.

10. Hartman, *The Making of Song Dynasty History*, 23–102.

Third, Chang recognizes the Zhenzong-Renzong transition as the end of the millennium-long domination of the Han apocrypha on the interpretation of the classical canon and on the ritual expression of those values, particularly as they related to dynastic legitimacy. Zhenzong was the last emperor in Chinese history to perform the *fengshan* rites. As Chang writes, “the unsettled Renzong era, full of explosive, destructive power, rejected the previous era of auspicious talismans and Heavenly Letters that had been forged from multiple elements of Han-Tang ideology and inaugurated the prolific period of flourishing Song Confucianism” (15–16). This splendid work of meticulous and innovative scholarship brings to the fore the full magnitude of this transition.

I also note that Chang’s work presents the potential to integrate even more “silos” into a larger understanding of this formative period of late imperial culture. Chang, understandably, does not attempt to incorporate economic history or the history of Song financial administration into her synthesis. Yet the pioneering work of Christian Lamouroux has demonstrated how the practical institutions and administrative procedures set up to administer Zhenzong’s physical journeys to perform his ritual program centralized and standardized Song financial administration. The same “Five Demons” that devised the Heavenly Letters to support Song legitimacy also devised the financial structures that sustained that same legitimacy.¹¹ Although the political culture of the era of the Heavenly Letters would wane, these financial structures remained largely in place for the remainder of the dynasty.

CHARLES HARTMAN
THE UNIVERSITY AT ALBANY

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11. “Rites, espaces et finance. La recomposition de la souveraineté dans la Chine du 11^e siècle,” *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales* 51.2 (March-April 1996): 275–305; *La Dynastie des Song* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2022), 85–96, 502–6.