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Autor(en): **Richter, Matthias**

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SELF-CULTIVATION OR EVALUATION OF OTHERS? A FORM CRITICAL APPROACH TO *ZENGZI LI SHI**

Matthias Richter, University of Hamburg

Most Early Chinese texts¹ are not works of individual authors but compilations drawing from different sources. Yet, while the heterogeneity of larger textual units (i.e. the transmitted compilations which are commonly referred to as “books”) is widely acknowledged, this does not seem to be the case with their smaller units (usually called “chapters”). The latter are—if not explicitly treated as homogeneous compositions—not yet sufficiently examined with regard to their heterogeneous nature.² This feature of these texts is, nevertheless, relevant for their interpretation. If a transmitted text draws from different sources, its constituent parts (be they words, individual statements or whole passages) have already been invested with meaning in the source texts. As with quotations and allusions in modern literature, the preconstructed meaning of quoted sources

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1 By this term I refer to the literature of the Warring States, Qin, and Early Han periods, i.e. roughly the 5th through 1st centuries B.C.

2 Prominent exceptions are compilations like *Lunyu* 論語 and *Laozi* 老子, in which the heterogeneity of relatively independent and moreover very short textual units is quite apparent. In the case of *Lunyu*, a recent example of the study of this problem is the attempt of Bruce and Taeko Brooks (1998) to reconstruct the gradual growth of the text and to rearrange its units in the presumed chronological order of their origin. It remains to be seen if the neatness of the proposed arrangement can be maintained in the long run. (For a critical discussion of this topic, see Simson 2000.) In the case of *Laozi*, matching passages of bamboo manuscripts excavated in 1993 from tomb no. 1 of Guodian 郭店, Hubei, confirm that the transmitted text as well as the Mawangdui 馬王堆 manuscript versions (about one century younger than the Guodian manuscripts) are the result of a certain choice from and rearrangement of pre-existing textual material. (For a discussion of this problem, see Boltz 1999.) *Zhuangzi* 莊子 is another example of a compilation the heterogeneity of which has been examined on the level of distinct textual units also within its individual chapters (*pian* 篇). (Cf. A. C. Graham’s [1981] rearrangement of these units according to their presumptive different sources.)

significantly influences the semantics of the resultant text. For Early Chinese literature, which largely consists of preconstructed material, this means that a certain word or statement may assume different meanings in different parts of the same text depending on the various sources those parts stem from. Thus, the interpretation of heterogeneous texts cannot rely on internal criteria alone but must also consider the nature of their source material. As these sources were probably in many cases utilitarian texts (e.g. civil or military instructions that had possibly been in practical use before they became part of transmitted literature), they probably contained specialised terminology that we are prone to misunderstand if we fail to recognise the life settings they stem from.

Particularly helpful approaches to heterogeneous texts are the methods of form criticism and redaction criticism which were developed in the first part of the past century in biblical studies and have since been applied also in other fields of scholarship concerned with transmitted texts.³ Form criticism is based on the assumption that a text consists of a number of relatively independent textual units, at least some of which are taken from earlier sources.⁴ Once one

3 Availing themselves of earlier traditions of literary criticism, i.e. J. G. Herder's (1744–1803) and the German Romantics' interest in forms of popular literature, scholars like Hermann Gunkel (1862–1932) and his students Martin Dibelius (1883–1947) and Rudolf Bultmann (1884–1976) developed what in New Testament studies is known as *Formgeschichte* (form history), a term coined by Dibelius (*Die Formgeschichte des Evangeliums*, 1919). *Formgeschichte* functioned as a corrective and complement to the earlier prevalent method of *Literarkritik* (literary criticism, though not quite synonymous with what is commonly understood by this term with regard to modern literature), which had itself embraced aspects of what I henceforth refer to as form criticism. The method of *Redaktionsgeschichte* (redaction history) was later developed by Günther Bornkamm ("Die Sturmstillung im Markus-Evangelium", 1948), Hans Conzelmann (*Die Mitte der Zeit: Studien zur Theologie des Lukas*, 1954), and Willi Marxsen (*Der Evangelist Markus*, 1956), who coined the term in analogy to *Formgeschichte*. With the terms "form criticism" and "redaction criticism" I am conforming to the established English usage, rather than the more literal translations "form history" and "redaction history", as these might suggest a claim to reconstruct the actual history of the literary forms and redaction of the transmitted texts, which can hardly be achieved for the texts in question. Likewise, I follow the simplified distinction of form criticism (embracing *Literarkritik* as well as *Formgeschichte*) and redaction criticism (as an equivalent of *Redaktionsgeschichte*) as the two complementary aspects of a complex method to be applied to Early Chinese literature. (For a summary introduction to form criticism and redaction criticism, see McKnight 1969, Perrin 1969, and Lührmann 1984.)

4 Such textual units can be discerned by means of internal as well as external criteria. Heterogeneous parts within a text can be indicated by various features of terminology and phrasing, such as regular syntactic patterns, rhyme and metre, catalogues, recurring formulas, or

isolates such units or—as I prefer to call them—form elements, one can then seek out identical or similar elements in other texts. If certain form elements typically occur in a certain context, this context may provide information about the original life settings⁵ of these form elements and thus about their original meaning and intentions. Moreover, if certain form elements occur in different texts, this not only confirms their independent character but also implies that they could be combined in different ways. It is the task of redaction criticism to investigate how the different form elements were transformed and combined in a particular way when the transmitted text was compiled, and to ask what purpose this redactional work served.

In sinology, form criticism and redaction criticism have been explicitly referred to by a few scholars such as Michael LaFargue in his study of *Laozi*, Harold Roth in his treatises on the relation of the *Guanzi* 管子 chapters *Neiye* 內業 and *Xinshu* 心術 (*shang* 上 and *xia* 下), and Edmund Ryden in his monograph on the Mawangdui Huangdi-texts.⁶ I will not discuss here the ways in which these scholars apply form criticism and redaction criticism to their different subject matter. Rather, I want to offer another approach suitable for certain kinds of texts. Whereas the aforementioned studies all deal with texts that are part of one compilation, I will in the following tentatively apply form criticism—and to some degree also redaction criticism—to one particular text in relation to parallels also from other compilations. I chose the text *Zengzi li shi*

caesurae marked either by introductory “夫...”, “凡...”, “X曰...”, “故(曰)...”, “X/吾/臣聞(之)...” etc., or concluding “曰... (也)”, “此之謂... (也)”, “謂之...”, “(可)謂...也/矣”, “言...”, or “也” after the last of a number of parallel sentences not concluded by “也”. Of course, these features do not necessarily indicate heterogeneity but frequently occur in homogeneous texts as well. A more reliable indicator of earlier independent textual units is multiple transmission, i.e. the phenomenon that similar or identical passages occur in different texts. If such parallels occur in two texts only, it may either be assumed that one of them is the source of the other, or that both draw from a third source which has not been transmitted (matters get more complicated, of course, in the case of parallels in more than two texts). If the latter is true, as it frequently seems to be the case, this lost source text may never have been fixed in writing at all. Especially texts meant for practical use, such as instructions or regulations, were probably transmitted orally over long periods of time. But form criticism can well do without speculating upon the question of orality.

5 The expression *Sitz im Leben* (life setting) was introduced by Hermann Gunkel. Although form criticism in biblical studies seems to generally assume oral source texts, the idea of the connection of a text to a certain life setting does not only apply to oral texts but to utilitarian texts in general.

6 Cf. LaFargue 1994, Roth 1994 and 1999, and Ryden 1997 (the four texts preceding the so-called *Laozi B* on a silk manuscript found in tomb no. 3 of Mawangdui 馬王堆 are commonly called either *Huanglao boshu* 黃老帛書 or *Huangdi si jing* 黃帝四經).

曾子立事 (mainly because it has a sufficient number of textual and structural parallels in other texts) in order to illustrate how such an approach can lead to relatively reliable assumptions about the nature of its source material, about the life setting which this material stems from, and about redactional changes applied to the source material in order to compose the transmitted text.

1. The title *Zengzi li shi* as a source of perplexity

Zengzi li shi is one of the so-called *Zengzi shi pian* 曾子十篇, i.e. the ten chapters (nos. 49–58) of *Da Dai Liji* 大戴禮記 ascribed to Zengzi.⁷ This explains the first part of the title. It is the second part, *li shi*, which seems to have caused bewilderment whenever it was considered at all. The words as such do not appear difficult to understand, *li* meaning “set up / establish” and *shi* “affair / service / office”. However, they are not very specific, and consequently the title does not give the reader a clear idea of what sort of text he has to expect. If the title is not specific enough for the reader to appreciate its meaning and thus does not fulfil its function to determine the lines along which the text should be interpreted, it is as well to proceed to the text itself and infer from it the meaning of the title.

Zengzi li shi appears not to be a strictly composed, consistent argumentation but rather a loosely ordered compilation of short textual units. The relation of the text to Zengzi is established merely by the words “*Zengzi yue* 曾子曰” at the very beginning. The text itself consists of a set of maxims for “the gentleman” (*junzi* 君子). The gentleman is called upon to seek his own faults and remedy them, to learn incessantly and fulfil his tasks correctly and in accordance with his position. He is requested to put into practice what he has learnt and excel in deeds rather than words. He must not seek premature fame but honestly earn his reputation. He shall avoid vice, strive for goodness, be prudent in his words and deeds, always being aware of their consequences. He must

7 Cf. Zhang Xincheng 1954: 618f, Gao Ming 1993: 139, and Kong Guangsen’s preface to his edition *Da Dai Liji buzhu*: “The following ten chapters are all taken from the writings of Zengzi. The section ‘Confucians’ [*Ru jia* 儒家] of the Han catalogue lists eighteen *pian* of Zengzi, eight of which are now lost.” (*Xulu* 序錄: 3a.) The *Zengzi* was recompiled about 1200 by Wang Zhuo 汪晫 (1162–1237) and submitted to the imperial court in 1274 by his grandson Wang Mengdou 汪夢斗 in conjunction with a text ascribed to Zengzi’s disciple Zisi 子思 (483–402 B.C.; personal name Kong Ji 孔伋), hence called *Zisizi* 子思子. Cf. *Siku quanshu zongmu* 92: 783f.

learn to check his temper and resist material and carnal temptations.—The text continues in the same fashion for about its first quarter. The first two units shall suffice to exemplify its general nature:⁸

	曾子曰	Zengzi says:
1	君子攻其惡 [*·âk]	The gentleman shall attack his own faults,
2	求其過 [*kwâ]	seek his own mistakes,
3	彊其所不能 [*nêg]	fortify himself where he is incapable,
4	去私欲 [*giuk]	discard selfishness and desires
5	從事於義 [*ngia]	and perform his office within the range of duty.
6	可謂學矣 { *yok }	This may well be called “learning”.
7	君子愛日以學 [*yok]	The gentleman shall be sparing of daytime in order to learn,
8	及時以行 [*yǎng]	and when the right time has come he shall act.
9	難者弗辟 [*b'jieg]	He shall not shirk hardship
10	易者弗從 [*dz'jung]	and not pursue the easy way.
11	唯義所在 [*dz'êg]	Only in righteousness shall he dwell.
12	日旦就業 [*ngiǎp]	He shall take up his task at sunrise
13	夕而自省 [*sieng]	and in the evening examine himself,
14	(思)以歿其身 [*s'jen]	and adhere to this [practice] all his life. ⁹
15	亦可謂守業矣 { *ngiǎp }	This may certainly be called “attending to one’s task”. ¹⁰

8 The *Da Dai Liji* will be cited from the *Sibu congkan* 四部叢刊 reprint of the Han Yuanji 韓元吉 (1118–1187) edition (comp. Dai De 戴德 [1st c. B.C.], comm. Lu Bian 盧辯 [*fl.* 519–557]), which does not provide the “best text” but is a sound basis for a study focussing on the comparison of textual parallels. The numerous emendations, mostly of Qing scholars, are often based on just these parallels and thus gloss over their distinctive features. Nevertheless, critical editions have been taken into account in my translations. Emendations are indicated as follows: “(X)” means “character X deleted” and “[X]” means “character X inserted”. All translations are, if not otherwise indicated, my own. The line numbers on the left are given to indicate the position of the cited units in a text of about 300 of often, though not always, rhyming colons of varying length. Reconstructed pronunciations are those of Dong Tonghe, cited from Chou Fa-kao 1979. The pronunciation of the last word of a line is given in square brackets []; if the preceding word carries the rhyme, its pronunciation is given in braces { }.

9 *Qunshu zhiyao* (35: 20b) has 沒 instead of 歿, both characters here stand for the same word (“[to continue] to/until the end of ...”). Sun Yuanru 孫淵如 (cited by Sun Yirang in *Da Dai Liji jiaobu*: 200) on the basis of a parallel passage in *Da Dai Liji* 55 (cf. below p. 886) considers “思” to be an interpolation and suggests its elimination. Even without this parallel, the regular metre of the passage in *Zengzi li shi* alone seems to be sufficient justification for this emendation.

10 *Da Dai Liji* 49 (4: 19b).

As these examples show, the regulations for the gentleman appear in units of a few verses each. Their reference to the gentleman is established by the prefixed term *junzi* only. It seems to me quite probable that *Zengzi li shi* to a large extent derives from didactic poetry, i.e. metrically regular, rhymed verses which were easy to memorise.¹¹ In the case of the first two units of the text, the underlying pattern may have looked as follows:

- | | |
|-------------------|--|
| * 攻其惡 [*âk] | Attack your faults, |
| * 求其過 [*kwâ] | seek your mistakes, |
| * 去私欲 [*gjuk] | discard selfishness and desires, |
| * 從事義 [*ngja] | perform your office dutifully, |
| * 可謂學 [*yok] | —this may be called “learning”. |
| | |
| * 愛日以學 [*yok] | Be sparing of daytime in order to learn, |
| * 及時以行 [*yǎng] | act when the the time has come, |
| * 難者弗辟 [*b'jeg] | do not shirk hardship, |
| * 易者弗從 [*dz'jung] | do not pursue the easy way, |
| * 可謂守 [*xjög] | —this may be called “perseverance”. |

Although these forms are speculative assumptions rather than actual reconstructions, the speculation is not entirely arbitrary. Both units suggest that an alternating rhyme and a regular metre had been employed in the respective source texts. I suspect that there were originally two pairs of verses expounding the meaning of the term *xue* 學 which is then named in a concluding verse (line 6).¹² Line 3, which disturbs both metre and rhyme pattern, was presumably added as a commentary summing up the first of these pairs and later taken over

- 11 Rhymes, though an important feature of early Chinese literature, can hardly be established with a satisfactory degree of certainty, as there does not yet exist any generally accepted system of reconstructing Old Chinese pronunciations. I use here the admittedly outdated system of Dong Tonghe simply for the reason of easy accessibility. The pronunciations given are merely meant to point out possible rhymes that would be less apparent in modern or middle Chinese. However uncertain the pronunciations given here may be, it seems that assonance was often consciously used in ancient Chinese literature to create a rhyme-like effect. This especially applies to utilitarian texts, in which the choice of the correct expression and easy memorization ranked before poetic quality. Therefore, I do not apply *Shijing* rhyme groups as a standard but take assonant words as quasi-rhymes into consideration as well. The possibility of regional differences in pronunciation as a cause for deviations from what we would expect as rhymes in the strict sense has to be taken into account as well.
- 12 Similar forms are common in gnomic verses of various cultures. For a discussion of related questions in late mediaeval German literature, see Haug/Wachinger 1994 (esp. pp. 63ff.).

into the main text.¹³ The commentary may, moreover, have been intended to point out that the passage should be understood in relation to a certain tradition: the words *qiang qi suo bu neng* 疆其所不能 are reminiscent of a recurring formula in texts concerned with the characterological examination of people in view of their qualification for an office.

Mengzi says, “Therefore: Heaven, when it is about to assign a particular person¹⁴ to a high office, always first tests his resolution, exhausts his frame and makes him suffer starvation and hardship, frustrates his efforts so as to shake him from his mental lassitude, toughen his nature and make good his deficiencies [曾益其所不能].”¹⁵ The parallel texts *Wen wang guan ren* 文王官人 (*Da Dai Liji* 72) and *Guan ren jie* 官人解 (*Yi Zhou shu* 逸周書 58), both concerned with the evaluation of candidates for an office and thus titled *Guan ren* 官人, use a similar formula several times.¹⁶ I will revert to this question later.

As to the second unit of *Zengzi li shi*, line 11 was probably a gloss summing up the rather unspecific statements of the preceding two lines and was, like line 3, later integrated into the main text. The independent nature of the

- 13 Zhu Xi’s 朱熹 (1130–1200) commentary (*jizhu* 集注) to *Lunyu* provides some examples that show the probability of this assumption. *Lunyu* 1.14 is reminiscent of the beginning of *Zengzi li shi* and is also concerned with “learning”, though a different aspect of it: “The Master said, ‘The gentleman seeks neither a full belly nor a comfortable home. He is quick in action but cautious in speech. He goes to men possessed of the Way to have himself put right. Such a man can be described as eager to learn.’ [君子/食無求飽/居無求安/敏於事而慎於言/就有道而正焉/可謂好學也已.]” (Translation by D.C. Lau [1992:7].) Zhu Xi’s commentary explains “敏於事” as “to exert oneself [in order to mend] one’s deficiencies [勉其所不足]”. It may be speculated that, had *Lunyu* been a less generally known text, this commentary could have slipped into the main text as well. The assumption that this not very common phrasing “X 其所不 Y” was typical of commentarial language is further supported by Zhu Xi’s commentary to other parts of *Lunyu* (2.17 and 18.11): “強其所不知以爲知” resp. “若使得聞聖人之道,以裁其所過而勉其所不及則其所立,豈止此而已哉”. (Cheng Shude 1990: 52–53, 111, and 1299.)
- 14 The beginning of the passage mentions six exemplary rulers and politicians of the past who were raised to their positions from humble or even dishonourable circumstances. Although Mengzi, using the expression “是人”, seems to refer to these persons, the tests of the prospective officials are intended to be understood as universally valid.
- 15 *Mengzi* 6B15 (曾 is to be read as 增; translation adapted from D. C. Lau 1970: 181).
- 16 Both texts will in the following be cited from the *Sibu congkan* editions and will for convenience be called “*Guan ren* texts”. *Da Dai Liji* 72 is abbreviated “DL”, and *Yi Zhou shu* 58 “YZ”. “疆其所不足” (DL 10: 51a / YZ 7: 40a), “見其所不足” (DL 10: 51b / YZ 7: 40b), “防其不足伐其所能” (DL 10: 51b) vs. “防其所不足發其所能” (YZ 7: 40b), “少其所不足” (DL 10: 53a, 54a / YZ 7: 42a).

other three lines (12–14), which I have eliminated in the speculative form presented above, is indicated by a passage in another of the Zengzi-chapters (*Da Dai Liji* 55, *Zhi yan zhong* 制言中).

	<i>Da Dai Liji</i> 49	<i>Da Dai Liji</i> 55
7	君子愛日以學	君子思仁義
8	及時以行	
9	難者弗辟	晝則忘食
10	易者弗從	夜則忘寐
11	唯義所在	
12	日旦就業	日旦就業
13	夕而自省	夕而自省
14	(思)以歿其身	以(役)[歿]其身
15	亦可謂守業矣	亦可謂守業矣

Da Dai Liji 55: The gentleman shall be mindful of benevolence and righteousness. By day he shall forget to eat and at night forget to sleep. He shall take up his task at sunrise and in the evening examine himself, and adhere to this [practice] all his life.¹⁷ This may certainly be called “attending to one’s task”.¹⁸

The parallel verses have likely not been cited by one text from the other but stem from a different source. I surmise that in an earlier core text a short set of verses defined the virtue of “perseverance” (*shou* 守) without any reference to a particular “work” or “task” (*ye* 業). These verses were later reinterpreted in the sense of “persevering in one’s work” or “attending to one’s task” (*shou ye* 守業), when they were integrated into a larger, more elaborate composition in which they were followed by a passage that linked up the concepts of learning and tasks (line 16 of *Zengzi li shi*: “in learning the gentleman must start from his task”).¹⁹ This reinterpretation must at still a later stage of the genesis of the *textus receptus* have caused the interpolation of verses from another source, which were actually concerned with “perseverance in one’s work/tasks” and

17 役 is obviously the *lectio facillior*, erroneously written instead of 歿 (graphic error 彳 for 歹). The copyist probably found “to employ himself” more likely than the original 歿/沒 (“[to continue] to/until the end of ...”).

18 *Da Dai Liji* 55 (5: 28a).

19 Passage in core text (lines 7–10 + 15) *愛日以學/及時以行/難者弗辟/易者弗從/可謂守, followed by a passage of less regular form beginning with “君子學必由其業” (line 16). It should be noted that “learning”, not “work/tasks”, remains the constant theme throughout the first five units of *Zengzi li shi* (up to line 32).

served to confirm the new interpretation of lines 7–10.²⁰ The independent character of these interpolated verses is confirmed by their appearance in a different context in *Da Dai Liji* 55.²¹

Whatever the actual models of its individual units may have been like, the apparent theme of *Zengzi li shi* is the self-cultivation of the gentleman, and it is just along these lines that the text has traditionally been interpreted—in neat accordance with the professed authorship of Zengzi. Its title, however, does not fit as neatly and calls for an explanation. Richard Wilhelm’s literal translation “Aufrichtung von Werken” (The setting up/erection/establishment of deeds/works) appears detached from his translation of the text, whereas Benedykt Grynpas in his rather liberal translation offers three different renderings of the title which are not as close to the original and moreover inspecific to a degree that glosses over any possible inconsistencies in the relation of the text and its title.²²

The commentaries of Chinese scholars are more helpful and besides give a typical example of a common mode of traditional textual criticism. Gao Ming’s 高明 translation into Modern Chinese says about the title: “By using the two characters *li shi* as a title, affairs of establishing oneself and practising the Way (*li shen xing dao* 立身行道) are referred to.”²³ He adopts this explanation—like many others—from an earlier commentator, in this case Wang Pinzhen 王聘珍 (18th–19th c.).²⁴ The origin of Wang Pinzhen’s interpretation is quite evident—Zengzi is the professed author of the *Xiaojing* 孝經, and in one of its first sentences this canonical Confucian text says: “To establish oneself, practise the Way and make one’s name known to posterity in order to glorify one’s parents is the perfection of filial piety.”²⁵ Wang Pinzhen apparently expected his

20 Interpolated passage: *日旦就業/夕而自省/夕而自省/以歿其身/可謂守業。

21 In *Da Dai Liji* 55, the redundancy and change of structure (two parallel verses are followed by a set of three verses, the first two of which show a less strict parallelism) lacks the literary quality we might expect if it were as a whole the genuine composition of an individual author. The same is true for the corresponding passage of *Zengzi li shi*. It rather looks as if in both texts two apothegms were combined because they fitted the same head, both being a praise of diligence or perseverance respectively.

22 Cf. Wilhelm 1994: 132, and Grynpas (1972: 16, 17, 74): “Le rétablissement du *Li* de TSENG TSEU” (The re-establishment of *Li* by Zengzi), “le redressement des affaires” (the redressing / rectification of affairs), “(Dialogue) de Tseng Tseu (sur) l’agir correct” / “Agir correctement” ([Zengzi’s talk about] acting correctly).

23 “篇名用立事二字是說立身行道的事。” (Gao Ming 1993: 139.)

24 “名曰立事者君子所以立身行道也。” (*Da Dai Liji jiegou: mulu* 目錄 2b.)

25 “立身行道揚名於後世以顯父母孝之終也。” (*Shisan jing zhushu* 2545b.)

readers to recognise the allusion. He interprets *Zengzi li shi* as a text about self-cultivation with the aim of acquiring a social position in order to serve one's ancestors. But none of this is indicated in the text itself. Besides, the title is neither *li shen* nor *xing dao*. Wang Pinzhen does not really explain the title but rather transcribes it according to a preconceived idea of the text, which is in turn inspired by the latter's association with Zengzi.

This line of interpretation, however, has an even longer tradition. Ruan Yuan 阮元 (1764–1849) in his edition of the ten Zengzi-chapters deems only the title of this particular text to demand an explanation. He relates that Zengzi undertook daily self-inspections²⁶ and points out that the text exclusively deals with self-cultivation (*xiu shen* 修身).²⁷ He further mentions that already in late Song times Gao Sisun 高似孫 (1160–1230) and Wang Yinglin 王應麟 (1223–1296) registered this text under the title *Xiu shen*. It should be added that parts of the text are cited under the same title in the political compendium *Qunshu zhiyao* 群書治要在 the early 7th century.²⁸

However, if we continue to read the text, it becomes clear that a considerable portion of it does not deal with self-cultivation at all. The focus gradually shifts from the gentleman himself to his fellow-beings. First there are regulations for the gentleman's adequate behaviour towards others, which may, admittedly, still be understood as concerned with self-cultivation. But then—from about the middle of the text onwards—there follow descriptions of blameworthy personalities, concluded by the remark that the gentleman must not allow himself to join such people or be associated with them. I again cite only two units representative of a much larger portion of the text:

- 148 博學而無行 [*yǎng] He who learns extensively but does not put [what he has learnt] into practice,
 149 (進)[捷]給而不讓 [*ńǎng] who is quick-witted and unyielding [in an argument],²⁹

26 Cf. *Lunyu* 1.4: “Zengzi said: ‘I daily examine myself in three respects’ [曾子曰吾日三省吾身].”

27 “此篇所言皆修身之事” (*Huang Qing jingjie* [Zengzi zhushi 曾子注釋] juan 111: 目錄).

28 *Qunshu zhiyao*, compiled by Wei Zheng 魏徵 (580–643) et al. by imperial order and submitted to the throne in 631, had already been lost in Song times and was retrieved only in the 18th century from Japan; cf. *Siku quanshu zongmu*: 1852b–c.

29 Sun Yirang reads “進” as a graphic error for “捷”, referring to the technical term 捷給 (or 接給), which is repeatedly used in similar contexts. Cf. *Da Dai Liji jiaobu*: 201 and the passages *Da Dai Liji* 48 (“博聞強記接給而善對者謂之承”; *Da Dai Liji jiegū* 3.4b) and *Guanzi* 18 (7.11a: “隰朋聰明捷給可令爲東國”) noted there. Unlikely as this graphic

- 150 好直而(徑)[徑] [*kieng] who tends to be straightforward to the point of bluntness,
 151 儉而好儻者 {*śjəg} who is overly thrifty and tends to be mean,³⁰
 152 君子不與也 {*dʒag} is a person with whom the gentleman shall not be
 associated.
- 153 夸而無恥 [*t'jəg] He who is boastful and shameless,³¹
 154 彊而無憚 [*d'ân] who is forceful and reckless,
 155 好勇而忍人者 {*ñjen} who tends to be daring and ruthless,
 156 君子不與也 {*dʒag} is a person with whom the gentleman shall not be
 associated.

These descriptions of despicable personalities are linked to the gentleman merely by the recurring formula “君子不與也”. The text later proceeds from describing types of persons in a few sentences each to a new form in which each type is defined by one sentence only. First, each of these sentences indirectly names an essential quality that is required of the member of a certain age group.

error may seem in the modern standard type of the characters 進 and 捷, their graphic similarity is apparent in some Clerical (*lishu* 隸書) and Small Seal (*xiao zhuan* 小篆) forms, and even more so in the so-called Chu script (*Chu xi wenzi* 楚系文字). Determinative 162 (辵) is a combination of 辵 with a “foot” (i.e. modern 止 / 乚 / 之 / 士). In Chu script both parts are usually still unconnected: 辵, which often strongly resembles the left part of 捷 (det. 64), being placed on the left side of the character and the “foot” element on the lower right, where 捷 has exactly the same element. This shows that in such types of script the difference between 進 and 捷 is essentially that of 隹 and the upper right part of 捷, both dominated by horizontal strokes crossed by one vertical stroke. A copyist could easily have mistaken 捷 for 進, which he probably expected because of the following 給, 進給 being a common word combination. The error is thus one of a typical *lectio facilior*. (For the old forms of the characters and their elements, see Chen Jiangong 1991, Li Zhengguang 1998, He Linyi 1998.) Like 捷給, 讓 is here used in the specialised meaning of a technical term regarding a person’s performance in disputation which is typical of texts about the evaluation of character. (Cf. Richter 2002:566.)

- 30 Lu Bian 盧辯 (fl. 519–557), glosses 儻 as 塞 and explains it as “to be exceedingly oppressive and restrictive in one’s behaviour to inferiors [儻塞也... 太逼塞於下也]”. Kong Guansen gives *zhi* as the pronunciation (“儻音窒”). Cf. *Da Dai Liji buzhu* 4.4a. The interpretation of 儉 and the emendation of 徑 to 徑 are based on an earlier passage in the same text (lines 110, 114–116): “The gentleman shall be [...] generous and not overly thrifty, straightforward but not blunt—this may certainly be called wisdom [君子... 惠而不儉 / 直而不徑 / 亦可謂知矣].” In a different context, *Liji* 4 (25/2–3) labels a blunt expression of one’s feelings as a lack of refinement typical for the Rong and Di (“有直情而徑行者戎狄之道也”).
- 31 The *Sibu congkan* print has “耻”, an allograph of the standard “恥”.

A following catalogue then defines certain negative qualities of character without any reference to a certain social group. Again a few examples shall suffice:

- | | | |
|-----|-------------------|---|
| 191 | 少稱不弟焉恥也 {*t'jəg} | A young person found to be irreverent—this is shame. |
| 192 | 壯稱無德焉辱也 {*ńjuk} | An adult person found to be without virtue—this is disgrace. |
| 193 | 老稱無禮焉罪也 {*dz'wəd} | An old person found to be without propriety—this is guilt. |
| 194 | 過而不能改倦也 {*g'jwan} | To be incapable of correcting one's mistakes—this is lassitude. |
| 195 | 行而不能遂恥也 {*t'jəg} | To be incapable of completing one's actions—this is shame. |
| 196 | 慕善人而不與焉辱也 {*ńjuk} | To admire those who are good but not join them—this is disgrace. |
| 197 | 弗知而不問焉固也 {*kəg} | Not to know something and fail to inquire about it—this is stubbornness. |
| 198 | 說而不能窮也 {*g'jəng} | To be incapable of expounding problems—this is to be out of one's wits. ³² |
| 199 | 喜怒異慮惑也 {*ɣwək} | To allow emotions (pleasure and anger) to lead one's thoughts astray—this is confusion. |
| 200 | 不能行而言之誣也 {*mjwag} | To speak about something which one is not really able to do—this is imposture. |

Nothing indicates that these statements refer to the gentleman. The text obviously no longer deals with the self-cultivation of the gentleman but rather with the evaluation of people in general. This is confirmed by the following parts of the text, which expound the foundation and methods of character diagnosis.

- | | | |
|-----|-----------------|--|
| | 故 | Therefore: |
| 218 | 目者心之浮也 {*b'jög} | It is the eyes wherein the heart emerges ³³ |

32 窮 is, like 捷給 and 讓, a technical term referring to performance in disputations. Cf. fn. 29.

33 Perhaps also “the eyes tally with the heart” (or, more awkwardly, “the eyes are a truly representative counterpart of the heart”). *Zengzi li shi* employs here a form which is found in several texts, always in the context of assessing a person's suitability for a certain social function: In *Hanshi waizhuan* 4.5 (27/1–3) Dongguo Ya 東郭牙, in a dialogue with Guan Zhong 管仲 and Duke Huan of Qi 齊桓公, says: “the eyes are representative of the mind, and [...] words are the indicators of action. Now knowledge of men is not to be had for the asking. By regarding a man's demeanor, investigating his motives, and determining his choice, you will get to the bottom of his nature.” (目者心之符也, 言者行之指也. 夫知

219	言者行之指也	{*k̂jed}	and it is words that indicate deeds.
220	作於中則播於外也	{*ngwâd}	Whatever arises within makes itself known without.
	故曰		Therefore it is said:
221	以其見者	{*ɣiän}	From the visible
222	占其隱者	{*·iän}	infer what is hidden.
	故曰		Therefore it is said:
223	聽其言也	{*ngiän}	It is by listening to his words
224	可以知其所好矣	{*xôg}	that you can recognise his inclinations,
225	觀說之流	{*liög}	and by observing his fluency in expounding problems
226	可以知其術也	{*d'iwät}	you can recognise his skills.
227	久而復之	{*b'jok}	By repeating [what he has said] after a long time
228	可以知其信矣	{*sjen}	you can recognise his trustworthiness,
229	觀其所愛親	{*ts'jen}	and by observing how he cares for those near to him
230	可以知其人矣	{*níen}	you can recognise his personality.

Zengzi li shi here evidently uses different gnomic verses or other preconstructed “small forms”.³⁴ The individual forms can easily be distinguished by changes in phrasing and by the even more obvious “故(曰)” explicitly marking the caesurae. The immediately following catalogue of instructions for the examination of certain qualities of a person, although not marked off by “故曰”, can be

者之於人也，未嘗求知而後能知也。觀容貌[*mög], 察氣志[*t'jæg], 定取舍[*s'jäg], 而人情畢[*pjät] 矣) Translation by Hightower (1952: 129). The section *Xing shou* 行守 of the text *Shiliu jing* 十六經 in the *Laozi B* silk manuscript of Mawangdui has: “Therefore, words must be faithful representations of the heart, mien is an [unreliable?] adornment of the heart, it is [a person’s] *qi* wherein the heart emerges. Whenever there are words without the corresponding deeds, this is called insincerity.” (是故言者心之符 [*b'jug] 【也】，色者心之華 [*ɣwäg] 也，氣者心之浮 [*b'jög] 也，有一言無一行，胃 (謂) 之誣 [*mjwag]; *Mawangdui Han mu boshu* vol.1, 1980: 78 [136a–b].) Note that the last sentence closely corresponds to the preceding line 200 of *Zengzi li shi*. *Guoyu* 11 (1b) relates the reasons why a man called Ying 嬴 decides against joining Grand Tutor Yang 陽: “When I saw his appearance I wished [to follow him], but having heard him speak, I detested him. Now, a person’s appearance is an adornment of his true condition, and his words are the decisive element of his appearance. The true condition of a person is formed within. Words are a refinement of the self. This refinement is brought forward in speech. So, if the words are congruous [with the person uttering them], they will be put into practice; if they are incongruous, there will be calamity.” (吾見其貌而欲之，聞其言而惡之。夫貌情之華也，言貌之機也。身為情成於中，言身之文也。言文而發之，合而後行，離則有變。)

34 I here adopt the term “Kleinformen” (resp. “Kleinstformen” or “einfache Formen”) well established in the study of German literature. Cf. Jolles 1972 and Haug/Wachinger 1994.

clearly distinguished from the preceding passage by a different sentence structure and stricter parallelity.

231	臨懼之而觀其不恐也	{*k'jũng}	Terrify him and observe if he is not afraid.
232	怒之而觀其不愠也	{*m̄wǎn}	Infuriate him and observe if he does not lose his countenance.
233	喜之而觀其不誣也	{*mj̄wag}	Delight him and observe if he is not insincere.
234	近諸色而觀其不踰也	{*dj̄ug}	Approach him with sensual pleasures and observe if he does not transgress.
235	飲食之而觀其有常也	{*z̄jang}	Wine and dine him and observe if is unswerving.
236	利之而觀其能讓也	{*ń̄jang}	Procure him benefits and observe if he can renounce them.
237	居哀而觀其貞也	{*t̄jeng}	When he is in mourning, observe his constancy.
238	居約而觀其不營也	{*ḡjweng}	When he is in straits, observe if he is not dazzled.
239	(動)[勤]勞之而觀其不擾人也	{*ń̄jen}	Let him exert himself and observe if he does not cause disturbance. ³⁵

The passages presented above (lines 218–239) are all concerned with the correspondence of a person's external and internal features and of his words and deeds. These correspondences are the essential foundation of character diagnosis. The method of diagnosis lies chiefly in observing a person's deeds and other external (and thus visible) features and inferring from these his inner qualities, which are not accessible to direct perception (lines 218–230). The rhymed catalogue of actual tests (lines 231–239) may be seen as a refinement of this general method. In two of these nine tests (lines 237–238) the examinee is observed in a given situation with regard to a certain quality, whereas in the seven others a test situation is specially arranged to examine a required quality. In the remaining portion of the text, the topic of the gentleman's self-cultivation is resumed.

35 Kong Guangsen (*Da Dai Liji buzhu* 4.5b) points out that “動” was in the Song edition erroneously written for “勤”, which is found in the Yuan edition.

2. Cognate form elements in texts other than *Zengzi li shi*

The parts of *Zengzi li shi* described above deserve special attention as they belong to a genre which is remarkably widespread in Early Chinese literature.³⁶ The most complete and systematic representatives of this genre, however, are the two parallel texts about the recruitment of officials (*Guan ren* in *Da Dai Liji* 72 and *Yi Zhoushu* 58) already mentioned above. They derive from a common ancestral text, which collected and systematised contemporary knowledge about human character.

In these texts—and in different degrees also in other texts concerned with character diagnosis and the recruitment of officials—three form elements can be clearly distinguished as typical of the genre. These elements are: firstly statements about the foundation and methods of character diagnosis (A), secondly descriptions or definitions of types of character (B), and thirdly instructions for the examination of particular qualities of a person (C). Of the latter there are two subtypes: the examination of a person in given circumstances of life and examinations in special test situations. A, B, and C neither necessarily appear in this order nor are always all of them present in a given text. I have here ordered these designations in what appears to be the logical progression from the more general to the more specific. The discussion of the individual form elements below will, however, begin with form element C, which is the most conspicuous indicator of the genre and has the closest parallels in other texts, and then proceed with A and B.

2.1 Form element C

All the above-mentioned form elements are represented in *Zengzi li shi*. The most obvious one is the catalogue of examinations in lines 231–139. All nine examinations have a counterpart in the *Guan ren* texts, where the corresponding catalogue is larger and more systematic. The *Guan ren* catalogue lists some thirty tests, the first sixteen of which refer to given circumstances of life and the rest to specially arranged test situations. The first four tests examine a person in

36 It is represented in texts as diverse as *Zhuangzi* 莊子 32, *Liu tao* 六韜 6, 19 and 20, *Xunzi* 荀子 12, *Heguanzi* 鶡冠子 4, 6 and 9, *Shizi* 尸子 1, *Yanzi chunqiu* 晏子春秋 63, *Lüshi chunqiu* 呂氏春秋 3.4, *Hanfeizi* 韓非子 48, *Huainanzi* 淮南子 13, *Wenzi* 文子 11, *Hanshi waizhuan* 韓詩外傳 3.6, *Shuoyuan* 說苑 2.5, *Shiji* 史記 44, *Hanshu* 漢書 60, and traces of it can be found in many others. This tradition culminated and was further systematised and refined in Liu Shao's 劉邵 (*fl.* 196–248) *Renwu zhi* 人物志 (c. 240–250).

poverty or wealth and in favoured or straitened circumstances, the latter of which—“as to someone in straitened circumstances, observe if he is not despondent and fearful [隱約者觀其不懾懼]”—bears some resemblance to line 238 of *Zengzi li shi*. The following tests—reminiscent of lines 191–193 in *Zengzi li shi*—concern people of different age groups:

Da Dai Liji 72 (DL)

其少觀其恭敬好學而能弟也
其壯觀其潔廉務行而勝其私也
其老觀其意憲慎[強其所不足]而不踰也

Yi Zhoushu 58 (YZ)

其少者觀其恭敬好學而能悌
其壯者觀其廉潔務行而勝私
其老者觀其思慎而[口彊
其所不足者觀其]不愉

DL: As to young people, observe if they are courtly and respectful, fond of learning and able to be reverend. As to adults, observe if they are immaculate and honest, are zealous in their actions and overcome their selfishness. As to the aged, observe if they are prudent in thinking³⁷ [thus compensating for their deficiencies] and do not transgress.³⁸

The next four tests regard the relations between father and son, elder and younger brothers, lord and subject, and those of people with a common (family of regional) background. They are followed by another set concerning persons in their everyday life, in a situation of bereavement, and in their social intercourse. The second of these tests—“examine him when he suffers bereavement, and observe his constancy and goodness [省其喪哀觀其貞良]”—has a counterpart in line 237 of *Zengzi li shi*. The *Guan ren* texts then move on to a catalogue of examinations for which special test situations are arranged. I will in the following cite only its central portion which has counterparts in *Zengzi li shi*:

37 I follow Yu Yue (*Qunjing pingyi*, in: *Huang Qing jingjie xubian* 192b.10a), who reads 憲 in the sense of 思 or 慮.

38 *Da Dai Liji* 72 (10: 51a); *Yi Zhoushu* 58 (7: 40a). The translation of the *YZ* version is omitted, as in the only passage where it differs significantly from *DL* it is evidently corrupt. The phrase “強其所不足”—originally commenting on “意憲慎” resp. “思慎” and interpolated into the main text already at a certain stage of the development of the ancestral text *Guan ren*—must in the *Yi Zhoushu* version have led to the assumption of a fourth group of examinees besides the young, adults and aged. This mistake was obviously caused by the fact that the preceding and the following examinations both come in blocks of four. Note that “彊其所不足” was presumably also interpolated in the opening lines of *Zengzi li shi*. The phrase “X其所不 Y” as a recurring formula typical of commentarial language has been discussed above, cf. notes 13 and 16.

Da Dai Liji 72 (DL)

示之難以觀其勇
 煩之以觀其治
 淹之以利以觀其不貪
 (藍)[濫]之以樂以觀其不(寧)[荒]
 喜之以物以觀其不輕
 怒之以觀其重
 醉之以觀其不失也
 縱之以觀其常

Yi Zhoushu 58 (YZ)

示之以難以觀其勇
 煩之以事以觀其治
 臨之以利以觀其不貪
 濫之以樂以觀其不荒
 喜之以觀其輕
 (□)[怒]之以觀其重
 醉之酒以觀其恭
 從之色以觀其常

DL: Confront him with hardship to observe his courage. Burden him [with duties?] to observe if he can manage [his tasks?].³⁹ Immerse him in profits to observe if he is not greedy. Seduce him with pleasures to observe if he is not wanton.⁴⁰ Delight him with material goods to observe if he is not light-minded. Infuriate him to observe what he takes seriously. Intoxicate him to observe if he loses his countenance. Give him free rein to observe his firmness of principles.⁴¹

YZ: Confront him with hardship to observe his courage. Burden him with duties to observe if he can manage his tasks. Confront him with profits to observe if he is greedy. Seduce him with pleasures to observe if he is not wanton. Delight him to observe what he treats lightly. Infuriate him to observe what he takes seriously.⁴² Intoxicate him with wine to observe his courtliness. Let him indulge in sensual pleasures to observe his firmness of principles.⁴³

39 Especially in *DL*, another conceivable interpretation would be: “Annoy him to observe his self-control.” The corresponding line 239 of *Zengzi li shi* (“勤勞之而觀其不擾人也”), though, suggests yet another reading: “Burden him [with duties] to observe his orderliness.”

40 More literally: “inundate / flood / shower him with pleasures”; however, 濫 is here clearly used in the well attested sense “seduce / entice” (藍, which does not make sense in this context, obviously being a graphic error for 濫). The graphic error 寧 for 荒 becomes conceivable if one considers the allograph 甯 of the former. The latter emendation is not merely based on the *YZ* parallel but, more importantly, on the fact that 荒 was in ancient Chinese literature conventionally used in conjunction with sensual pleasures. Cf. *Shangshu* 8 (11/13f) “Those who excessively indulge in sensual pleasures within [the court] and excessively indulge in hunting [when outside the court], who enjoy wine and music [...] have never escaped perdition. (內作色荒外作禽荒甘酒嗜音[...]未或不亡)”, *Guoyu* 21 (3a-b) “When I was young and had not yet attained constancy, I excessively indulged in hunting when leaving [the court] and excessively indulged in sensual pleasures within when returning to [the court]. (吾年既少未有恆常出則禽荒入則酒荒)”, and the recurring formula “樂而不荒 (to enjoy pleasures without going to excess)” in *Zuozhuan Xiang* 27 (294/25f. and 303/13) as well as “樂而毋荒” in *Liji* 32 (33.11/149/27).

41 *Da Dai Liji* 72 (10: 51b).

42 The emendation is justified chiefly by the text-internal parallelism. As 重 at the end of the sentence has the antonym 輕 as its counterpart in the preceding line, 怒 may justly be expected at the beginning of the sentence as the conventional antonym of 喜 in the preceding

Although the catalogues of examinations in *Zengzi li shi* and the *Guan ren* texts are markedly different in scope and to some degree also in content and phrasing, there is still enough similarity to realise that they follow a common pattern and apply essentially the same way of testing a person's character. Candidates are tested in mourning and hardship; furthermore, they are tested by exposure to fear and strain, by procuring them benefits, by provoking their fury or pleasure or by material or carnal temptation. In the conspectus below, I have rearranged the order of examinations in *Zengzi li shi* so that they are on the same line with their counterparts in the *Guan ren* texts.⁴⁴ This does not imply that this represents the original order of examinations in a possible archetype of this catalogue.

	<i>Zengzi li shi</i>		<i>Guan ren</i>
	<i>Da Dai Liji</i> 49	<i>Da Dai Liji</i> 72	<i>Yi Zhoushu</i> 58
237	居約而觀其不營也	隱約者觀其不懾懼也	隱約者觀其不懾懼
238	居哀而觀其貞也	省其喪哀觀其貞良	省其喪哀觀其貞良
231	臨懼之而觀其不恐也	示之難以觀其勇	示之以難以觀其勇
239	動勞之而觀其不擾人也	煩之以觀其治	煩之以事以觀其治
236	利之而觀其能讓也	淹之以利以觀其不貪 藍之以樂以觀其不寧	臨之以利以觀其不貪 濫之以樂以觀其不荒
233	喜之而觀其不誣也	喜之以物以觀其不輕	喜之以觀其輕
232	怒之而觀其不也	怒之以觀其重	□之以觀其重
235	飲食之而觀其有常也	醉之以觀其不失也	醉之酒以觀其恭
234	近諸色而觀其不踰也	縱之以觀其常	從之色以觀其常

2.2 Form element A

Another form element (A), i.e. statements about the foundation and methods of character diagnosis, has already been mentioned as evidently present in *Zengzi li shi*. Again, a conspectus below shows parallels in the *Guan ren* texts, the

line; the *Qunshu zhiyao* (8.8b) edition actually does have 怒. The *DL* parallel merely serves as additional evidence.

43 *Yi Zhoushu* 58 (7: 40a).

44 Here and below, the arrangement of passages from *Zengzi li shi* and other texts in a conspectus does not claim to present textual parallels in the strict sense but rather structural parallels, i.e. similar patterns which suggest that the respective texts are modelled upon common sources.

more obvious of which are marked by bold print (in all three cases I present only part of a longer passage):

<i>Zengzi li shi</i> 曾子立事		<i>Guan ren</i> 官人	
	<i>Da Dai Liji</i> 49	<i>Da Dai Liji</i> 72	<i>Yi Zhoushu</i> 58
97	見其一	誠在其中	誠在其中
98	冀其二	此見於外	必見諸外
99	見其小	以其見	
100	冀其大	占其隱	
	[...]	以其細	
218	故目者心之浮也	占其大	
219	言者行之指也	以其聲	以其聲
220	作於中則播於外也	處其氣	處其實
221	故曰以其見者	[...]	[...]
222	占其隱者	聽其聲	聽其聲
223	故曰聽其言也	處其氣	處其氣
224	可以知其所好矣	考其所爲	考其所爲
225	觀說之流	觀其所由	觀其所由
226	可以知其術也	察其所安	
227	久而復之	以其前	以其前
228	可以知其信矣	占其後	觀其後
229	觀其所愛親	以其見	以其(隱)[顯]
230	可以知其人矣	占其隱	觀其(顯)[隱]
		以其小	以其小
		占其大	占其大

I will in the following only give a translation of the parts that have not yet been presented above:

Zengzi li shi (lines 97–100): On beholding one [thing], hope for (look out for? / note?) another. On beholding the small, hope for (look out for? / note?) the great.

DL: If something is really present within, it will become visible without.⁴⁵ From the visible infer what is hidden; from the minute infer the great. By his voice you may judge his *qi* (character?). [... there follow catalogues which relate the sound of voice of persons to their characters ...] Hear his voice to judge his *qi* (character?). Examine his deeds, observe

45 Cf. the similar statement in *Mengzi* 6B6: “有諸內必形諸外”.

whence he proceeds, find out wherein he finds contentment (and calm).⁴⁶ From what is in front infer what is behind; from the visible infer what is hidden;⁴⁷ from the small infer the great.⁴⁸

YZ: Whatever is really present within will inevitably become visible without. By his voice you may judge his genuine self. [... *there follow catalogues which relate the sound of voice of persons to their characters ...*] Hear his voice to judge his *qi* (character?). Examine his deeds and observe whence he proceeds. From what is in front observe what is behind; from the visible observe what is hidden; from the small infer the great.⁴⁹

The three texts, despite their differences, make essentially the same statements about the diagnosis of character: inner conditions become visible on the outside, therefore it is possible to infer what is inside from what we see outside. Another representation of form element A is to be found in *Da Dai Liji* 72 towards the end of the text. It is a rhyming catalogue in which King Wen 文王 prescribes for his Grand Master (*taishi* 太師) the principles to be applied in the selection of persons eligible for certain offices:⁵⁰

46 Cf. *Lunyu* 2.10: “The master said, ‘Look at the means a man employs, observe the path he takes and examine where he feels at home. In what way is a man’s true character hidden from view? In what way is a man’s true character hidden from view?’ [子曰視其所以觀其所由察其所安人焉廋哉人焉廋哉]”; translation by D. C. Lau (1992: 13). Confucius has to say more about character diagnosis. His disappointment with his disciple Zai Yu 宰予 (also: Zai Wo 宰我) made him change his attitude towards others: “Formerly I used to listen to what a person said and trust him to act accordingly, but now I listen to their words and then observe their actions [始吾於人也聽其言而信其行今吾於人也聽其言而觀其行].” (5.10) Moreover, a man of penetrating insight must “examine a persons words and observe his mien [察言而觀色]”(12.20). In *Mozi* 9 (9/6), words similar to *Lunyu* 5.10 are used with regard to the appointment of officials by the sage: “He prudently assigns offices by listening to their words, tracing their actions, and examining their capabilities [聽其言跡其行察其所能而慎予官].”

47 The emendation is justified not only by the parallel text *DL* but by the parallelism of the whole passage and its quite unmistakable intention.

48 *Da Dai Liji* 72 (10: 52a–b).

49 *Yi Zhoushu* 58 (7: 41a).

50 This last fifth of *Da Dai Liji* 72 does not have a counterpart in *Yi Zhoushu* 58. However, just this catalogue is cited, though in a slightly different version, in *Lunheng* 33 (163/3–6): “King Wen’s rules for the appointment of officials say: Consider his past deeds when you assess his coming words; listen to his coming words to reconsider his past deeds. Observe his bright sides to examine his dark sides; find out about his interior by assessing his exterior. Therefore: those who pretend to be good and feign temperance can be recognised, those who are pretentious and not genuine can be discerned, those who have a sincere disposition and abide in goodness can be obtained, those who cherish loyalty and preserve temperance can be beheld. [文王官人法曰：推其往行/以揆其來言/聽其來言/以省

王曰太師	The king said: Grand Master!
女推其往言 [*ngjǎn]	You must infer from his past words
以揆其來行 [*yǎng]	what his coming actions will be;
聽其來言 [*ngjǎn]	listen to his coming words
以省[其]往行 [*yǎng]	to reconsider his past deeds.
觀其陽 [*djang]	Observe his bright sides
以考其陰 [*jam]	to examine his dark sides;
察其內 [*nwâd]	find out about his interior
以揆其外 [*ngwâd]	by assessing his exterior.
是故隱節者可知 [*tjæg]	Therefore: those who feign temperance can be recognised,
僞飾無情者可辨 [*b'jan]	those who are pretentious and not genuine can be discerned,
質誠居善者可得 [*tâk]	those who have a sincere disposition and abide in goodness can be obtained,
忠惠守義者可見也 {*kiän}	the loyal and kind who attend to their duty can be beheld. ⁵¹

The inclusion in this catalogue of the temporal aspect (“past words—coming actions”) shows the element of prognostication that is to some degree inherent, at least potentially, in diagnosis of any kind. In *Wuzi* 吳子 1 (36/3–4), Wu Qi 吳起 says to Marquis Wen of Wei 魏文侯: “From the visible I infer what is hidden, and from the past I find out about the future. [臣以見占隱以往察來]”. It is not surprising that these maxims should play a rôle in military texts like *Wuzi*. A similar passage occurs, though with a less obvious prognostic element, in the military manual *Liu tao* 六韜 13 (11/21–22): “You must see his bright sides as well as his dark sides and you will recognise his heart; you must see his outer as well as his inner aspects, and you will recognise what he has in mind; you must see from what he stays away and what he keeps close to, and you will recognise his true condition [必見其陽又見其陰乃知其心必見其外又見其內乃知其意必見其疏又見其親乃知其情].”⁵²

其往行/觀其陽以考其陰/察其內以揆其外/是故詐善設節者可知/飾僞無情者可辨/質誠居善者可得/含忠守節者可見也]”。

51 *Da Dai Liji* 72 (10: 54b).

52 Character diagnosis is, of course, dependent on a context of social hierarchy. It is conceived of as conducted downwards from the superior to his subjects. The superior, on the other hand, has to make sure that he remains impenetrable to his subjects. This is expressed in language that appears just like a reversal of form element A. In *Liu tao* 9 (7–8), Taigong 太公—again in the context of selecting officials—advises King Wen of Zhou to that effect: “As to the way of the ruler, he must be like the dragon’s head—dwelling in the heights and watching out afar, looking deep into things and listen closely; he must show his outer form and hide his true (inner) condition. Like the height of the skies he cannot be reached; like the depth of abysses he cannot be fathomed [夫王之道[*d’ôg] 如龍[之]首[*xiǒg] 高居

2.3 Form element B

Whereas the form elements A and C as represented in the *Guan ren* texts have close textual parallels in *Zengzi li shi*, the presence in the latter of form element B (i.e. descriptions of types of personality) is not as obvious as that of the other two. Nevertheless, there are significant similarities between some passages in *Zengzi li shi* and form element B in the *Guan ren* texts, where extensive catalogues list descriptions of positive and negative types of personalities. These descriptions come in textual units of varying length. They usually consist of four to five short sentences (or verses) describing some traits of character and are concluded by a summary definition in one sentence. The conspectus below is to show that the textual units in the first part of *Zengzi li shi* follow a similar pattern. Again, the translation of *Zengzi li shi* that has already been given above is not repeated.

<i>Zengzi li shi</i> 曾子立事		<i>Guan ren</i> 官人	
<i>Da Dai Liji</i> 49		<i>Da Dai Liji</i> 72	<i>Yi Zhoushu</i> 58
1	君子攻其惡	其貌直而不(傷)[傷]	其貌直(□□□)[而不止]
2	求其過	其言正而不私	其言正而不私
3	彊其所不能	不飾其美	不飾其美
4	去私欲	不隱其惡	不隱其惡
5	從事於義	不防其過	不防其過
6	可謂學矣	曰有質者也	曰有質者也
7	君子愛日以學	其貌固嘔	其貌曲媚
8	及時以行	其言工巧	其言工巧
9	難者弗辟	飾其見物	飾其見物
10	易者弗從	務其小微	務其小證
12	日旦就業	以故自說	以故自說
13	夕而自省	曰無質者也	曰無質者也
14	(思)以歿其身		
15	亦可謂守業矣		
	[...]	[...]	[...]
148	博學而無行	素動人以言	動人以言
149	進給而不讓	涉物而不終	竭而弗終

而遠望[*mjwang] 深視而審聽[*t'ieng] 示其形[*yieng] 隱其情[*dz'ieng] 若天之高[*kôg] 不可極也{*g'jək} 若淵之深[*s'jəm] 不可測也{*ts'ək}.”

150	好直而徑	問則不對	問則不對
151	儉而好倥者	(詳)[佯]爲不窮	佯爲不窮
152	君子不與也	色示有餘 有道而自順	口貌而有餘 假道而自順
153	夸而無恥	用之物	因之口初
154	彊而無憚	窮則爲深	窮則託深
155	好勇而忍人者	如此者隱於文藝者也	如此者隱於文藝者也
156	君子不與也		

DL: Someone whose manner is straightforward and not light-minded,⁵³ whose words are correct and not selfish, who does not exhibit his merits,⁵⁴ who does not hide his faults and does not cover up his mistakes, is a person who has substance.

Someone who is self-complacent, whose words are clever and artful, who exhibits his ‘visible things’ [appearance/wealth?], who devotes his attention to sophistry and resorts to deceit⁵⁵ to excuse his own faults is a person who lacks substance.⁵⁶ [...]

Someone who simply impresses others with words, who approaches a subject but does not carry it through, who cannot adequately answer questions, who [then] feigns not being out of his wits⁵⁷ but [instead] takes on airs of abundance [with regard to his wisdom], who has a way [of arguing] and follows only his own line of argumentation which he applies to the problem, who, if at a loss what to say, pretends profundity—a person like this is someone who hides behind refinement and skills.⁵⁸

YZ: Someone whose manner is straightforward and not reticent,⁵⁹ whose words are correct and not selfish, who does not exhibit his merits, who does not hide his faults and does not cover up his mistakes, is a person who has substance.

Someone who is submissive and fawning, whose words are clever and artful, who exhibits his ‘visible things’ [appearance/wealth?], who strives for testimonies [of his goodness?] and resorts to deceit to excuse his own faults is a person who lacks substance.⁶⁰ [...]

53 The emendation (graphic error, *lectio facillior*) follows Wang Niansun (*Jingyi shuwen* 經義述聞 13.1b–2a).

54 Cf. line 84 of *Zengzi li shi*: “(The gentleman) exhibits his merits without boasting [飾其美而不伐也].”

55 For *gu* 故 as a technical term meaning “deceit, contrivance”, see Richter 2002:551–571.

56 *Da Dai Liji* 72 (10: 51b).

57 The emendation is justified not so much by the *YZ* counterpart as by a parallel in *DL* only a few sentences earlier: “慮誠不及 / 佯爲不言 / 內誠不足 / 色示有餘”. Kong Guangsen (*Da Dai Liji buzhu* 10.6a.) points out that the Ming edition of Zhu Yangchun 朱養純 has 佯 instead of 詳. For the terminological use of 讓, see fn. 29.

58 *Da Dai Liji* 72 (10: 53a).

59 The *lacunae* derive from the Yuan 元 edition; all other editions have “而不止”. Cf. Huang Huaixin et al. 1995: 820. 止 [*tjæg] is apparently a phonetic error for the *lectio difficilior* 傷 [*djeg] in *DL*.

60 *Yi Zhoushu* 58 (7: 40b).

Someone who [wants to] impress others with words but is soon at his wit's end and cannot carry [his argumentation] to the end, who cannot adequately answer questions, who [then] feigns not being out of his wits but [instead] takes on <...>⁶¹ appearance of abundance [with regard to his wisdom], who has a fake way [of arguing] and follows only his own line of argumentation, following this <...> beginning, who, if at a loss what to say, pretends profundity—a person like this is someone who hides behind refinement and skills.⁶²

The verses in *Zengzi li shi*, exhorting the gentleman to do this and that and not to associate with such and such a person, may originally have been statements defining certain types of character. The length of these textual units is roughly the same as that in the *Guan ren* texts. The individual lines frequently take the form “X 而(不) Y”, and there is some similarity in content and terminology. As to the positive types (examples 1 and 2 of *Zengzi li shi*, i.e. lines 1–15), the different phrasing of the conclusive sentences as compared to the *Guan ren* texts is a secondary stylistic feature. They also vary in the *Guan ren* texts (“曰 X Y 者也”, “如此者 X Y 者也”; elsewhere also “如是者 X Y 者也”, “如此者 X Y 也”, and “此 X Y 者也”). Semantically, “可謂 X Y 矣” in *Zengzi li shi* amounts to the same. It is quite probable that the prefixed “君子” was added to the source material in the redaction of *Zengzi li shi* and served to transform descriptive statements into prescriptive ones, i.e. to transform definitions of types of personality into instructions for the gentleman's self-cultivation. In the case of the third and fourth examples (lines 148–156), the concluding sentence could in an earlier source have been something like “(曰) 儉而好僇者也” or “(曰) 好勇而忍人者也” respectively. The phrase “君子不與也”, albeit in a different sense which shall be discussed presently, would then have functioned as the title of a catalogue of several such descriptions of undesirable characters.⁶³ In a later redaction of the text, the words “曰” and “也” would have been dropped from the conclusive sentences of the individual descriptions, and “君子不與也” would, instead of concluding the whole catalogue of descriptions, have been appended to each unit separately, in order to shift the focus from the described person to the *junzi*.

61 “<...>” indicates that this part of the text cannot even tentatively be reconstructed.

62 *Yi Zhoushu* 58 (7: 41b).

63 Titles or “headlines” of textual units of different length were in early Chinese texts commonly placed at the end. As to shorter textual units, this position is very common in gnomic or didactic verses not only of China (cf. note 12). In the case of written documents, placing the title at the end was certainly useful if they were stored with the beginning of the text in the centre of the scroll.

presumed form of source material	transmitted form
[...]	[...]
博學而無行	博學而無行
進給而不讓	進給而不讓
好直而徑	好直而徑
曰儉而好僇者也	儉而好僇者
	君子不與也
夸而無恥	夸而無恥
彊而無憚	彊而無憚
曰好勇而忍人者也	好勇而忍人者
	君子不與也
[...]如此者君子不與也	

If this assumption be correct, “君子不與也” must originally have meant something other than “with such people the gentleman must not be associated”, as it is traditionally interpreted. If *Zengzi li shi* once was a text not about the self-cultivation of the gentleman but about character diagnosis or, more specifically, about the evaluation of people for the recruitment of officials, then “君子不與也”⁶⁴ must be interpreted as “this is a person to whom the gentleman does not assign an office”, as the character 與 not only writes the word *yù* “to be connected with / join / be associated with” but also the word *yǔ* “to give”.⁶⁵

3. The original life setting of the form elements

The recruitment of officials is the life setting which the above-mentioned form elements of texts about character diagnosis stem from. It is easily conceivable that it was not the knowledge of human character as such that generated so

64 As a variant form “君子弗與也” occurs once (in line 144).

65 Moreover, *yǔ* < *djag 與 / 𠄎 “to give” is closely related to *jǔ* < *kjag 舉 / 擧 / 擧 “to raise / to raise somebody to a higher position, i.e. to promote him, to assign him to an office”. The characters for these two words, which phonetically differ only in their initials, are both written with the phonetic element 与 (a tooth, *yá* < *ngǎg 牙) and use different forms of the hand element as their determinative—the character for *jǔ* having an additional hand below the four hands present in both characters. The form of writing does not, of course, necessarily reflect the semantics of a word. However, the fact that both words were written so similarly makes it highly probable that at the time when the way of writing them was established they were felt to be closely related.

intense an interest; character diagnosis figures so prominently in Early Chinese literature rather because it was applied in the process of recruiting officials. As to the *Guan ren* texts, this is evident not only in the title and narrative frame of both texts but also in a passage at the end of *Da Dai Liji* 72 which has no counterpart in *Yi Zhoushu* 58. First, nine types of persons fit to be employed in certain spheres are listed in a numbered catalogue called “*jiu yong* 九用”. In a subsequent catalogue, called “appointment to offices according to ability” (or “appointing the able to offices”), these types of persons are then related to the spheres in which they are to be employed. These two interrelated catalogues appear to be a further refinement of form element B.⁶⁶ Only parts of the catalogues will be cited below to give an idea of their structure:

66 This form also frequently occurs in literary texts, where it is integrated in historical narratives so that it is almost indiscernible. To cite just one example that has already been mentioned above (cf. note 29), in *Guanzi* 18 (7.11a–b) Guan Zhong 管仲 advises Duke Huan of Qi 齊桓公 to appoint certain people to certain tasks on account of their particular qualities: “Xi Peng is perceptive and quick-witted in argument. He can be ordered to manage the states to the east. Bin Xuwu is firm, strong and good. With him the lands to the west can be managed. [隰朋聰明捷給, 可令爲東國; 賓胥無堅強以良, 可以爲西土]”, and so forth. In fact, large parts of this *Guanzi* chapter appear to be transformations of form element B into a historical narrative. Towards the end of the chapter (7.14a–15b) there are antithetically interrelated catalogues evaluating people of different social groups in order to confer upon them appropriate rewards and punishments. Catalogues listing persons to be rewarded take the following form: “[Duke Huan] ordered Bao Shu to bring forth the great officers who had, in exhorting the state, achieved success without [causing] later regrets. These were placed first. Those who had a well-ordered administration, who made fields out of wastelands and further had few uprisings and were not arrogant in handling complaints, were placed next. Those who, in exhorting the state, had achieved success but caused later regrets, who had a well-ordered administration yet were not able to make fields out of wastelands, and further had numerous uprisings and were arrogant in handling complaints, were placed last. [勸國家得之成而不悔, 爲上舉; 從政治(爲次), 野無原, 又(多不)[不多]發起, 訟不驕, 次之; 勸國家得之成而悔, 從政雖治而不能野原, 又多發起, 訟驕, (行此三者)爲下]”, and so forth. Later, catalogues list those to be punished, e.g.: “Those who have been guilty of the following three—in exhorting the state have not achieved success but caused later regrets, have not had a well-ordered administration and were unable to make fields out of wastelands, and furthermore had many uprisings and were arrogant in handling complaints—have committed a crime and should not be pardoned. [勸國家不得之成而悔, 從政不治, 不能野原, 又多而發, 訟驕, 凡三者有罪無赦]”, and so forth. Translations are adapted from Rickett 1985 (303, 309, 310). For the emendations, see Rickett’s well-founded commentaries.

一曰取平(人)[仁]而有慮者 First: choose those who are poised, benevolent and resourceful.

[...]

八曰取接給而廣中者 Eighth: Choose those who are quick-witted and hit the mark in a wide range of topics.⁶⁷

九曰取猛毅而度斷者 Ninth: Choose those who are courageous and resolute, yet carefully weigh their decisions.

此之謂九用也 This is called “nine types of persons to be employed”.

平仁而有慮者 Those who are poised, benevolent and resourceful

使是治國家而長百姓 shall govern the state and direct the Hundred Families.

[...]

接給而廣中者 Those who are quick-witted and hit the mark in a wide range of topics

使是治諸侯而待賓客 shall govern the feudal lords and attend to guests and visitors.

猛毅而度斷者 Those who are courageous and resolute, yet carefully weigh their decisions,

使是治軍事爲邊境 shall govern military affairs and take care of border areas and frontiers.

因方而用之 They must be employed methodically.

此之謂官能也 This is called “appointment to offices according to ability”.⁶⁸

The tradition of categorising people and cataloguing types of character, and finally the tradition of character diagnosis are quite probably related to the rise of a new policy, i.e. the recruitment of officials according to ability, a principle that was to substitute earlier modes of assigning offices which had to consider kinship relations or even a system of hereditary ranks. In other words, this textual tradition reflects the decline of Zhou feudal structures and the rise of meritocratic bureaucracy during the Warring States period.

The appearance of such traces of utilitarian texts that may have been in actual practical use is, of course, a literary phenomenon which cannot be treated as reliable historical information. However, if the form elements in question repeatedly occur in similar contexts in entirely different texts that are not otherwise related to each other, this accumulation of evidence may nevertheless reflect actual historical conditions. It is conspicuous that the form elements typical of texts concerned with character diagnosis and the recruitment of officials are frequently related to military traditions, and that, if they appear in

67 For the technical term “接給”, see note 29.

68 *Da Dai Liji* 72 (10: 54b–55a).

narrative literature, they are set in historical contexts that feature administrative reforms.

In *Da Dai Liji* 72 it is Taigong 太公, the legendary patron of the military, who is responsible for the recruitment of officials. The form elements in question—although represented most systematically and extensively in the *Guan ren* texts—occur nowhere as often as in the military manual *Liu tao*, professedly a work of Taigong.⁶⁹ The association with Taigong is of course, clearly fictitious and merely of an emblematic value. I will revert to this point later.

But the form elements also occur in narrative texts that provide a much more probable historical background for the development of meritocratic principles in the recruitment of officials. It is just the best preserved⁷⁰ version of form element C (catalogues of examinations of character qualities) that is in several texts set in the same historical situation: In *Shiji* 44 (1840), *Hanshi waizhuan* 3.6 (16/29–17/14), and *Shuoyuan* 2.5 (13/7–22) it is used by Li Ke 李克 as an argument for suggesting to Marquis Wen of Wei (reg. 445–395) a certain person as chancellor.⁷¹ A variation of this catalogue occurs in *Shizi* 尸子 1 (1.1b–2a) as a quotation of Quhou Fu 屈侯附 / 鮒, another advisor to Marquis Wen of Wei. The important point is not that the textual tradition under dis-

69 Catalogues of examinations (form element C) occur in chapters 6 (5/22–30) and 20 (19/24–20/11). An example of form element A from *Liu tao* 13 has been cited above. Catalogues of types of persons (form element B) occur several times, especially in chapters 19–20 (18/11–19/17), “The assessment of commanders” (*Lun jiang* 論將) and “The selection of commanders” (*Xuan jiang* 選將): a catalogue of five talents (*wu cai zhe* 五材者) and one of ten faulty ones (*shi guo zhe* 十過者), and further one of fifteen types of character whose outward appearance does not accord with their true inner condition (*waimao bu yu zhong qing xiang ying zhe shiwu* 外貌不與中情相應者十五). A catalogue of nine grades of talent to act as a commander is only preserved in the *Liu tao* fragments in *Qunshu zhiyao* (31.11a–b). The grades rank from one who is only able to command his own household, one who can command ten people, a hundred, a thousand and so forth up to, as the ninth rank, the ruler of the world. To cite just one example: “One who is earnest but quibbling, who does not make use of admonitions but rashly resorts to punishments, not exempting his own kin, is fit (only) to be the commander of a hundred men [切切截截不用諫言數行刑戮不避親戚此百人之將也].”

70 The catalogue occurs in similar, if not identical form in a number of texts: *Shiji* 史記 44, *Hanshi waizhuan* 韓詩外傳 3.6, *Shuoyuan* 說苑 2.5, *Huainanzi* 淮南子 3.6, *Wenzi* 文子 11, *Lüshi chunqiu* 呂氏春秋 3.4, *Yanzi chunqiu* 晏子春秋 63, *Hanshu* 漢書 60, *Heguanzi* 鶡冠子 6.

71 The catalogue is first recited by Li Ke in his talk to the Marquis directly. Afterwards he repeats his conversation word by word in answer to an enquiry by one of the candidates. This word by word repetition serves to emphasise the special importance attached to the meritocratic ideas expressed by Li Ke.

cussion should have originated with the court of Marquis Wen or with Li Ke or any other particular person. But its persistent association in literature with this context may well reflect the actual historical circumstances under which the tradition developed.

Wei was the first of the feudal states that launched economic and administrative reforms. The example was followed not much later by the states of Zhao 趙, Chu 楚, Han 韓, Qin 秦, and Qi 齊.⁷² There is some historical evidence that suggests that the development of meritocratic principles for the recruitment of officials first developed in the military.⁷³ As regards Zhao, it is expressly stated that the person in charge of the recruitment of officials was an officer in the rank of a *zhongwei* 中尉.⁷⁴ Li Ke and Wu Qi,⁷⁵ the leading figures in the reforms in Wei and Chu, were both involved in the conquest of new areas for Wei.⁷⁶ Li Ke governed Zhongshan 中山, and Wu Qi conquered areas west of the Yellow River for Marquis Wen of Wei and later played an important rôle in the expansion of Chu.

For obvious reasons the conquest of new territory demanded the establishment of a new administration by the conqueror. In these areas, traditional family-structures were less likely to get in the way of meritocratic principles for the appointment of officials. As the governor of such a territory could not—or at least did not have to—build upon old-established families in the distribution of power, he could—or even needed to—apply criteria for the selection of suitable personnel independent of kinship relations. New methods for the appointment of officials must not only have become necessary in the peripheral areas of the reform states but also in their heartland, especially when changes in the power structure occurred: The feudal states became increasingly independent of the royal house of Zhou (in the case of Han, Wei, and Zhao also from Jin 晉), and

72 Reforms were initiated in Zhao by Gongzhong Lian 公中連 under Marquis Lie 烈 (reg. 408–386), in Chu by Wu Qi under King Dao 悼 (reg. 401–380), in Han by Shen Buhai 申不害 under Marquis Zhao 昭 (reg. 362–332), in Qin by Shang Yang 商鞅 under Duke Xiao 孝 (reg. 361–337), and in Qi by Zou Ji 鄒忌 under King Wei 威 (reg. 356–319). Cf. Yang Kuan 1997: 191–215.

73 Robin D. Yates (1988: 224) gives additional reasons for this when he observes, referring to the same period, “that the actual practice of war had become much more complex [...] and the correct choice of generals and officers had become of paramount importance.”

74 Cf. Yang Kuan 1997: 195.

75 The occurrence of form element A as a citation of Wu Qi has already been mentioned above (cf. p. 899).

76 Cf. Qian Mu 1956: 132, Yang Kuan 1997: 196, Lewis in Loewe/Shaghnessy 1999: 603ff and 617f.

new concepts of rule in these states were also manifested in the act of their rulers' assuming the title of kings.⁷⁷

If the aforementioned association of the meritocratic tradition with Taigong is of emblematic value, what does Taigong, then, stand for? As a historical figure he was instrumental in the conquest of Shang by King Wen of Zhou 周文王—thus his association with the military sphere. He was appointed to the post of Grand Master (*taishi* 太師) and was—besides Zhougong 周公 and Shao-gong 召公—one of the *san gong* 三公, which were the highest positions next to the king himself. As a member of the Jiang 姜 clan he was connected to the Zhou royal house by marriage alliance.⁷⁸ But what determines the emblematic meaning of Taigong as a motif in Warring States and Han literature is not so much his kinship relation to the royal house, but rather his being depicted as a person of obscure origin and humble circumstances who had a special gift for recognising talents and was himself, despite his low social position, recognised by King Wen and raised to his superior position.⁷⁹

As a reward for his merits in the conquest of Shang, Taigong was enfeoffed with Yingqiu 營丘, the core of the later state Qi. All this shows that as a literary figure Taigong stands for the tradition of Qi and the Jiang clan and on the other hand for the principle of appointing officials according to ability regardless of kinship relations. As meritocratic ideas were propagated especially frequently in texts related to the state of Qi, I presume that this ideological tradition was in Qi connected with the usurpation of power by the Tian 田 clan. Tian He 田和 (reg. 404–385), the first ruler of his family to be recognised by

77 In Wei and Han the immediate successors of the rulers who had initiated the reforms assumed the title of kings (Wei Huiwang 惠王, reg. 369–335; Han Xuanhuiwang 宣惠王, reg. 332–312); in Qi, which was the latest of the states to begin with the reforms, the ruler under whom the reforms were implemented, was the first to call himself a king. In Zhao the title was assumed only by the third successor to the reformer Marquis Lie, King Wuling 武靈 (reg. 325–299). Qin under Duke Xiao pursued a unique policy, it “strove hard to fulfill the role of royal protector and [...] balanced radical internal reforms with a conservatism in interstate relations, the outward preservation of the formal status quo.” (Sage 1992:100) Yet, the successor of Duke Xiao also assumed the title of a king (Huiwen 惠文, reg. 338–325).

78 The grandfather of King Wen was married to a member of the Jiang clan, and King Cheng 成 married a daughter of Taigong.

79 The stress laid on the humble origin of Taigong lends additional force to the ideal of meritocracy. One has only to remember the story of the birth of Jesus to see that creating strong contrasts of this sort in the narrative literature not only of China served to emphasise particularly important ideas symbolised by or attached to the respective figure. For the construction of the Taigong figure by a synthesis of legends, see Allan 1972/73.

the Zhou king (in 386), was styled Taigong, and his next but one successor Tian Wu 田午 (reg. 374–357) was named Duke Huan (Huangong 桓公) after Duke Huan of the Lü 呂 clan (685–643), who had raised Qi to the position of a hegemonial power. The seventh century Duke Huan and his minister Guan Zhong 管仲 are—just like King Wen of Zhou and Taigong—regularly associated with the idea of recognising talents and raising them to high positions.⁸⁰ The new ruling clan's adopting the names of the two most famous rulers in the history of Qi was a very clever, if audacious, way of legitimising their usurpation of power. Conceivably, their propaganda strove to make sure that these names carried not only authority in general but also stood for the principle of meritocracy as opposed to succession in office according to kinship relations. Many if not most of the texts exalting meritocratic principles are in some way related to the state of Qi, in particular to the legendary Jixia 稷下 academy said to have been founded under Duke Huan (Tian Wu) and—after a temporary decline probably due to increased military activity of Qi—flourished under King Xuan 宣 (reg. 319–301).⁸¹ The emphasis laid in the characterological texts on adroitness in rhetorics and disputation may be further evidence for the connection of the tradition with the academy.

4. Conclusion

As shown, *Zengzi li shi* provides all of the three form elements that are typical of texts dealing with characterology as applied in the recruitment of officials. These form elements constitute, moreover, the greater part of the whole text. Thus, we can infer that a text devoted to just this subject was the core out of which the transmitted *Zengzi li shi* grew. This assumption is also confirmed by a number of textual parallels and terminological similarities that *Zengzi li shi* shares with the *Guan ren* texts and other texts dealing with the same subject. This core text was presumably composed out of textual material that catalogued meritocratic criteria for the choice of officials. It was probably the military of feudal states which established these criteria as they sought to fulfill the need to install an administration in newly conquered areas, where old family structures did not stand in the way of a modern form of government. The composition of

80 Two examples of this have accidentally been mentioned above: *Guanzi* 18 (cf. notes 29 and 66) and *Hanshi waizhuan* 4.5 (cf. note 33).

81 For an introduction to sources about the Jixia academy, see Zhang Bingnan 1991.

such a text under the title *Zengzi li shi* presumably served the purpose of claiming the respective ideas for a Zengzi school or tradition.

Taking all this into account, the title “*Li shi*” is no longer puzzling. It means nothing other than “the appointment of officials” or—more literally—“the establishment of offices”. This meaning of *li shi* is well attested in the *Li zheng* chapter of *Shangshu*, where the phrase *li zheng li shi* 立政立事 is used repeatedly and has been explained by several commentators as “the establishment of higher and lower offices”.⁸² So the original title of *Zengzi li shi* seems to be *Li shi* rather than *Xiu shen*. At a later time, when the text became increasingly detached from its original life setting (i.e. the appointment of officials), possibly at some time in the Early Han period, it was reinterpreted by erudites (quite probably *ru* 儒) to express a certain image of themselves. The criteria for the selection of officials were redefined as normative standards of membership of their social group. In this process of reinterpretation the text was transformed and added upon by new material that was unrelated to the recruitment of officials, but described the standard qualities of an erudite. We cannot reconstruct the actual redactional changes the text underwent in the process of its reinterpretation and transmission, but we may assume that the further the text was removed from its original practical purpose, the more abstract became its ideas and the stronger its moralising tendency. This may have led to the attachment of the alternative title *Xiu shen*, e.g. in the compilation *Qunshu zhiyao*.

It may be asked why one should have taken the trouble to reinterpret a text about the appointment of officials and turn it into a treatise about the self-cultivation of the gentleman rather than simply composing an entirely new text. The answer is that only this type of literature offered the most detailed and explicit descriptions of human character, and ideas about this subject were invariably linked to the texts in which they had been developed, just as most ideas of Western morality are ultimately linked to the Jewish/Christian tradition and biblical vocabulary. Moreover, adapting popular forms of literature has the advantage that they lend authority and argumentative force to the new text, even

82 According to Creel (1970: 447–463), *Li zheng* does not belong to the *Shangshu* chapters that can be dated to as early a time as the Western Zhou period. The text is an instruction about the choice of suitable candidates for government offices, given to young King Cheng by Zhougong. Legge (1994: 508ff.) translates the title as “The Establishment of Government”. The phrase *li zheng li shi* is explained by Kong Yingda 孔穎達 (574–648) as follows: “我王其與立政謂大臣也，其與立事謂小臣也” (*Shisan jing zhushu* 232b). Wang Yinzhi 王引之 (1766–1834) says “立政謂建立長官也，立事謂建立群職也” (*Jingyi shuwen* 3.26a–b) and Qu Wanli 屈萬里 (1907–1979) “立政謂建立長官，立事謂建立群職” (Qu Wanli 1997: 155, 160).

if it contradicts the adapted model. To change a popular saying in order to say something new is an act of appropriation that usually goes along with an implicit claim of correcting it. Moreover, the texts about the appointment of officials formulated very high standards; they described an ideal type of official rather than real people. Reinterpreting these high standards as their defining characteristics was an act of propaganda on the part of the erudites that allowed them to claim these qualities for themselves and thus to underpin their claim that they deserve to be entrusted with the administration of the empire. Therefore, the observations made above about the text *Zengzi li shi* have relevance beyond the study of this text alone. They show that many of the Early Chinese ideas about human character, the evaluation of persons and ultimately about self-cultivation have emerged against the historical background of a rising meritocratic bureaucracy.

I believe, moreover, that the specific mode of form criticism presented above is applicable to quite a number of other texts as well. Early Chinese literature abounds with such small forms that occur in variations in a number of different texts. Only very seldom will one be able to reconstruct the actual forms of texts that were disseminated for practical use as utilitarian texts before being integrated into larger literary texts—and quite probably there never existed one particular “orthodox” version of the respective text from which all the transmitted variants stem. Still, I consider it worthwhile to devote attention to these textual parallels as indicators of common sources shared by texts that are otherwise unrelated. Even if this method cannot reconstruct in detail the redactional history of a particular text, form critical reading enhances the depth of focus in its interpretation, and thus makes its perusal aesthetically more rewarding as well.

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