



# Genetic Study on Jade as the Origin of Chinese Civilization

Juan Wu

School of Foreign Language, Beijing Institute of Technology, China

E-mail: janewu@pku.edu.cn

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## Abstract

This paper, based on the recent scholarship by Chinese mythologists' on jade ideology, introduces the theoretical and methodological innovation of Chinese mythology, explores the genetic mechanism of Jade-as-God model, exams the integrated function of jade in the material and spiritual resource possession and distribution, analyzes its relation with the Chinese cultural origin and demonstrates the necessity and capacity of inter-disciplinary interpretation.

**Keywords:** Jade, Comparative Mythology, Myth history, Cultural Origin

## 1. Introduction

When we explore into the genes of a culture, we should grasp the core values of a special society during the interaction between material and concept. In the recent years, the Chinese comparative mythology, initiated by the leading scholar Ye Shuxian proposes that Chinese jade function not only as a material symbol of civilizational origin, but also as a centripetal force that promote the development of prehistoric multi-cultures toward the integrated civilization of Central Plains. Inspired by the proposal, this paper selects and surveys recent scholarship by sinologists, classicists' on myth and the cultural identity, inspects jade myth and the cultural identity as fluid and interrelated phenomena and explore the core values that accompanied the formation of Chinese civilization and how they function as the spiritual bonding in the formation of Chinese identity.

## 2. Integrated Paradigm of Western Comparative Mythology

In fact the Chinese tradition does not even have a word for myth and the term does not exist until 1902 when Liang Qichao uses it in one of his essays on "new historiography." (Liu Xicheng, 2006: 19). From then on, many a scholar put forward rigid research and insightful observation on the Chinese myth. In *The Heir and the Sage*, Sarah Allan says that, "Ancient Chinese literature contains few myths in the traditional sense of stories of the supernatural but much history." (Allan, 1981: ix). At the time when mythology is introduced into China at the beginning of the last century, while "the problem of myth for Western philosophers is a problem of interpreting the meaning of myths and explaining the phenomenon of myth-making" as Allan remarks, "the problem of myth for the sinologist is one of finding any myths to interpret and of explaining why there are so few." (Allen, 1991: 19) Since the yigu (School of Doubting Antique) movement of the 1920s' the historicization of myths carried out by the literati of the Zhou and Han dynasties has been the main explanation for the dearth of myth in ancient Chinese texts. For Allan, however this paucity has deeper root in "the structure of Chinese religion." (Allen, 1991: 19) Utilizing Claude Levi Strauss's structuralist theory and methodology in her analysis of the foundation and succession myths of early Chinese dynasties Allan shows that "history, as it appears in the major texts from the classical period of early China (fifth-first centuries B.C.), has come to function like myth." (Allan, 1981: 10) Referring to this sort of "historical myth-or mythical history" (Allan, 1981: 12) as "legend", Allan concludes that the legend types (whether archetypes or stereotypes) in Chinese thought have affected Chinese politics and literature throughout history, and in the end of *The Heir and the Sage*, Allan suggests additionally that the problem of Chinese historical fiction's reliance on such types "must be left for another study." (Allan, 1981: 145)

Regarding myths as "stories of the supernatural" (impossible in natural not cultural reality), Allan's definition of myth is one of the simplest which Anne Birrell criticizes as so narrow that Allan has to prefer legend over myth as the term for analysis in *The Heir and the Sage* (Birrell, 1994: 78) In her later works, however Allan sometimes uses another definition of myth, "sacred narrative" and considers it as necessarily linked with "a religious context" (Allan, 1981: 126) since Alan Dundes distinguishes "sacred" from "secular and fictional and associates myth with "all forms of religion." (Dundes, 1984: 1) But defining a myth as "a sacred narrative explaining how the world and man came to be in their present form," (Dundes, 1984: 1) Dundes also applies "myth" to such topics as child archetype (Dundes, 1984: 244-255) and George Washington (Dundes, 1984: 336-342), which surely enlarge the scope of myth beyond religion or the supernatural.

In lieu of Allan's seemingly narrow definition, Birrell opts for William Doty's eclectic synthesization (Doty, 2000: 28-34) and insists on viewing myth as "a human experience that must be understood on its own terms and in its own right" with "its own autonomy." (Birrell, 1993:4-5) Mark Lewis, however criticizes Birrell's view "incoherent" and

“illusory”, because it is groundless to see myth as an autonomous realm, while myth should rather be historicized “within its own culture,” where its “place(s) and meaning(s)” (Lewis, 2009:553-554) may vary over time in accordance with its interest and utility to the people who keeps telling it in one way or another.

Quoting classicists and mythologists like Walter Burkert, Georges Dumezil and Geoffrey Kirk, Lewis defines myth as any traditional tale with secondary, partial reference to something of collective importance, where “traditional” means that it has no identifiable author but appears in several sources and develops over time. These stories express dramatically the ideology under which a society lives, reflect on the elements and tensions that form a society and justify the rules and traditional practices without which everything in a society would disintegrate. Myths thus belong to and serve to define particular group. As the groups change across time, the form of the myths and their uses will likewise change, or the stories will simply be forgotten. (Lewis, 2009:549) This account is of the sage kings, suitable for describing what Lewis calls “mythology analysis of myth with the Warring States and early imperial China and avoids the mythology of the Shang period “tentatively reconstructed” by Chen Mengjia, Kwang-chih Chang, and Allan (Lewis, 2009:548)

### 3. Theoretical Innovation of “Mythical China” and “Myth History”

When Allan writes her second book *The Shape of the Turtle*(1991), she relies mostly on Chinese mythological scholarship from the first half of the twentieth century in particular the Gushibian volumes edited by Gu Jiegang on one hand and the works of Henri Maspero, Marcel Granet, Wolfram Eberhard and Bernhard Karlgren on the other. (Allen, 1991: 2) Since the early 1980s, however Chinese scholars such as Yuan Ke have made the abundance of Chinese myths clear to mythologists and sinologists. In fact as early as in 1933, Chinese scholars have started to question the validity of the prevalent view that myths in China are scarce, fragmentary, and unsystematic (Zhong Jingwen, 1994: 185); more recently, they reject such a view as “a profound mistake” (Yuan ke, 1993: xi) or “a false proposition” (Liu Xuyi, 2005: 19) and argue instead that “despite their protean and contradictory forms, Chinese myths “are more reliable documentary evidence of a primitive and archaic oral tradition in the world of myth.” (Yuan ke, 1993: xii) For the generation of New Cultural History scholars the “problem of myth” above-mentioned is no longer why Chinese myths are few, but how to recover lost myths and advance comparative mythology through up-to-date approaches. (Liu Xicheng, 2006: 779)

Some distinguished scholar has made mythological study the continuity of Chinese civilization, which consists of has two related layers of meanings: first, Chinese civilization never stops from the ancient to now and still enjoys a vital energy, which enchants the west scholars; second, there is a structural continuity of belief, ritual, politics and economics within Chinese civilization system, which is proposed by Tu Weiming as “the continuity of being”. He then introduce a peculiar omnipotent and omnipresent Chinese concept “Qi” (air) to explore the particularity of Chinese thoughts. He raised a question about the origin of “Qi”, “in what sense do the most unintelligent substances, such as stones, and the most intelligent embodiments, such as the heaven, constitute of the same thing – Qi?” (Tu Weiming, 1981: 6) Here, “Stones” and “heaven” listed exactly correspond to jade and “jade-as-god” ideology in the jade oriented theory. Thus, jade theory enjoys potential in the illumination and interpretation of the continuity and integrity of Chinese philosophy, the inner logic of the underlying ideology and derivative tradition can be seen.

In the late 80s, a younger generation of scholars emerges especially the New Cultural History School led by Xiao Bing and Ye Shuxian, who apply archetypal theories and cultural anthropology to the rediscovery and reconstruction of Chinese mythology. Supported by archaeological findings over the past few decades and mythological theories like those of Mircea Eliade and Roland Barthes, Ye Shuxian differs from earlier scholars such as Mao Dun and Yuan Ke who confine myth to the realm of literature. Instead, Ye propagates literary anthropology and advocates a paradigm shift in Chinese mythology, to treat myth as the cultural gene, social code, and psychological source, from which literature, art, philosophy, religion politics education, law, etc. have all originally derived; while “eighty years ago the gushibiau scholars adhering to the tenet of historical positivism, tried to revert ancient Chinese history to myth or false history,”Ye rather expects “an anti-movement” that interprets from myths and legends the lost clues of ancient history, or histories with a multitude of marginal narratives.” (Ye Shuxian, 2009: 20-26)

Although largely in line with Li Xueqin's interdisciplinary studies of Chinese antiquity, Ye's literary anthropology offers some novelties and nuances. Instead of searching for “Chinese myth”, Ye calls for a “mythical China” (Ye Shuxian, 2009: 33-38) that contains a holistic understanding of Chinese culture, the code of which encompasses the structure of religion that Allan seeks to find. Here, Ye follows the Levi Straussian logic of mythical thought similarly utilized by Allan that myths “derive their meaning as part of a system” and “their structural relationship can, to a certain extent be decoded” (Allan, 1991: 125), even if some scholars would disagree with this broadly conceptualized scope of myth, since scholars in different fields have no consensus on a working definition of with more than fifty individualized definitions (Doty, 2000: 28-30) Drawing the notion of “mythistory” from Joseph Mali's *Mythistory: The Making of a Historiography* (2003), Ye has pushed forward the focal point of myth-history. Following the narrativist turn in historiography exemplified by Hayden White, as well as echoing the dictum of gushibian scholars that “history is myth”, Ye confirms Allan's argument that history functions like myth in early China with a rather postmodern recognition that historical narrative is by nature mythical as a sort of “myth history”.

It is worthwhile to notice that the conceptual innovation of “myth history” is triggered not only by the post-modern views of history, such as the New Historicism, but also by the prolong debates between Yigu (School of Doubting Antique) and Gushibiau (School of Defending Antique) in Chinese history studies. The leading scholar of Doubting Antique, Gu Jiegang, regards all history recorded by ancient myths as nonsense and what myths record is merely the

later generations' authoritative narration. The Doubting Antiquity School' denying the historical significance of myths has its ground in the scientific conception of history in China's modern history studies, which keeps alert for the authoritative narration in history records. However, it fails to realize the dialectical relation between the truth and the false in myths, thus completely denies the myths' possibility and capability of narrating history. In contrast, the School of Chinese Mythology holds a rational and impartial view towards myth, believing that myth enjoys priority in narrating and interpreting history. While "eighty years ago the School of Defending Antique scholars adhering to the tenet of historical positivism, tried to revert ancient Chinese history to myth or false history," this school rather expects "an anti-movement" that interprets from myths and legends the lost clues of ancient history, or histories with a multitude of marginal narratives." (Ye Shuxian, 2009: 20-26)

In addition, based on the Wang Guowei's dual attestation and Rao Zongyi's triple attestation for textual criticism, Ye's literary anthropology proposes and advocator quadruple attestation, seeking evidence from not only canonical texts and excavated documents but material culture, narrative of objects or icons (Ye Shuxian, 2010: 1-8) and intangible heritage, which was usually studied by folklorists and ethnologists. (Ye Shuxian, 2011: 87-90) Such methodology of quadruple attestation, however ambitious theoretically surpasses other scholars' practices, including Allan's, whose versatile expertise ranges from early Chinese philosophy and history to etymology and archaeology (ritual bronzes oracle bones, bamboo slips). The "literature" and "philosophy" in myths is associated by mythological images, while the reproduction of the authentic history in myths relies on the concept of "myth history" which is brought up by Ye. Though it has its theoretical support in western mythological research, it is still closely rooted in Chinese native materials. Given mythology is multi-faceted and also the "prototype" that constructs Chinese civilization, Ye even uses the concept "mythological China" to generalize the self-expression of Chinese civilization. Owing to the activation of myths' multi-interpretation capacity and the penetrating understanding of the relations between mythology and history, "Mythistory" offers methodological support for Ye's deep exploration of the origins of Chinese civilization.

#### 4. Basic Characteristics of Mythological Mode of Chinese Civilization Exploration

In May, 2013, on the international symposium on literary anthropology held at the Shaanxi Normal University, the Chinese comparative mythologists adopt a pair of western anthropological terms "little tradition" and "great tradition" and redefine the "little tradition" as the cultural tradition marked by metal and characters, "great tradition" as the cultural tradition before the appearance of characters, metals and nations (Ye Shuxian, 2011: 8). On the basis of the redefinition of tradition, Ye Shuxian integrates jade-relevant multiple-evidence, that is the literary textual evidence, the material evidence, the unearthed archeological evidence, and the anthropological evidence, to propose that jade, as the material symbol of civilization origin, functions as a centripetal force that promotes the prehistoric multi-cultures to the integrated civilization of Central Plains. This proposal gave rise to heated debate. Thus, the basic characteristics of the mythological mode of Chinese civilization exploration should be analyzed to interpret the cultural encoding of the jade mythology.

It should be notice that the jade theory is taken with "Asian-American Shamanism" theory initiated by Kwang-chih Chang, could its inner logic and theoretical foundation could be more fully illustrated. On the basis of Peter Frost's "Asian-American Shamanism", Kwang-chih Chang put forward the "Asian-American Shamanism as the basement" theory and the Maya-Chinese continuum theory. He thought that the re-construction of "Asian-American Shamanism" shall be extended to the east of ancient world, especially China, instead of being limited to the Central and South America region. Since ancient China shares many similarities in many aspects, such as religion and arts, with the Central and South America, they could be placed in the same category as Shamanistic Civilization. (Li Hongwei, 2003:18) The "Asian-American Shamanism" theory provides sordid conceptual foundation and spacious interpretative room for the jade theory, which is correspondingly reflected, verified and echoed not only in the jade-ritual obsession but also the conceptual logic of from "worshipping the heaven with jade" to "jade as god" ideology.

Ye's "deified images" explains the origin and occurrence of literature in a cross-cultural, cross-time manner, which exhibits the typical features of the myth-archetype criticism. The inner relations that associate mythology to history and philosophy are revealed. Consequently, mythological research is introduced to the origins of thoughts and history. In exploring the origins of thoughts, Ye regards mythical images as the intrinsic expression of the philosophy of Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu (Lao-Chuang philosophy). His integrated analysis of the physical archetypes of philosophical concepts, such as Tao, Zhiyan, and Tian Jun, is characterized with comparison of thoughts and archeology of conceptions. The exploration of the starting point of Chinese civilization has, for more than a hundred years, been the core of Chinese civilization source research. Thanks to Ye's collaborative innovation of "mythology" and "history" in his "myth history" concept, this exploration has made significant progress.

Ye's mythological mode of exploring civilization origins has its distinctive characteristics and unique approach. Before analyzing its uniqueness, we can take a look at how it complements those traditional modes of academic research. With the increase of archeological discoveries, exploration of civilization origins is obliged to connect as many verified Chinese civilization forms as possible on the timeline. Previous civilization exploration tries to specify the exact time, however, what numerous archeological discoveries offer is the chronological development of civilization. It has been common sense that civilization is gradually shaped and started. The searching for an exact time stops being the only pursuit of civilization exploration. Scholars also devote themselves to another topic: what's the driving force of the long evolution of Chinese civilization? The search for the driving force of civilization origins has become an important theoretic issue. Scholars have proposed theories including the "oasis theory" (R. Pempelly), "two revolutions" theory (V. G. Childe), "unequal distribution of resources", "population pressure theory" (M. J. Harner) and "religion forces" (T. Earle), all of the various theories attempt to explore the origin of civilization. While, the mythological method,

providing the theosophical concepts, is actively trying to search for the underlying forces that promote the birth of civilization. The jade-as-god model shares two commonalities with other kinetics: firstly, what invokes the civilization is material (jade); secondly, the social distribution or configuration of material resources implies that of conceptual and spiritual resources.

Besides these two commonalities, the jade-as-god model enjoys obvious superiorities. Instead of separating the material and spiritual resources, it integrates them as the combined forces of civilization origin, which can be analyzed by Marxism's separation of materials and spirits. According to the "road of jade", the fight for spiritual resources go along with the striving for material resources. This theory considers both the material and the spiritual, which results from the unification and fusion of mythological thoughts. Ye points out that, at the very beginning of civilization, humans must have undergone such kind of era that man and god are equal and that the sacred and the secular are not divided. This means, the jade theory does not only bring us to the star of civilization, but also presents the outlook of the integration of the material and the spiritual. With the confusion of spiritual factors, the exploration of civilization origin is enriched with the favor of the archeology. The theoretical appeal of boosting the national confidence and pride of civilization is approaching in this way.

### 5. Genetic Mechanism of Jade-as-God Model

In order to grasp the core value that implies in the jade- theory, it's necessary to analyze the driving force of "jade as god" model. Jade, as a natural mineral, enjoy certain characteristics that are superior to other minerals. Firstly, it's formed in extremely harsh conditions, which makes it rare and special. Secondly, it has special physical properties, such as, the hardness, color and luster, and the touch. Numerous phrases and idioms in *Book of Odes*, including "a gentleman is as gentle as jade", "a gentleman always wear jade", a gentleman shall cultivate his morals the way jade is sculpted — by "cutting, polishing, carving and rubbing", and the concept of "jade virtues": all these are related to jade's physical properties. However, Ye explains them the literary expression of jade could be traced back to the jade myths of 5000 years ago. "Jade myths" are particular to Chinese mythology, and the mythological mode of thoughts provide a panoramic view of the origin of Chinese civilization.

Since Muller suggested the search for supernatural powers that pre-exist the materials, where does the supernatural power of jade come from? Different from the Newtonian mechanics, Nietzsche's "the will to power" or Freud's libido, Supernatural power follows neither the equilibrium law of the acting force and counter-acting force, nor Aristotle's logic of cause-and-effect. The core feature of the supernatural power is eternity and mysteriousness. Its eternity is roughly explained in the description of the place where King Mu of Zhou got jade bough and leaf. Where did King Mu of Zhou get the jade bough and leaf? According to *The Classic of Mountains and Seas*: "Clear water springs out of the Chong Mountain, which is warm and windless. Flying birds and various animals feeds here. Former kings called it "Xian Pu"(the Fairyland). The Son of Heaven (King Mu of Zhou) got the jade bough and leaf here" (Ye Shuxian, 2012: 22).

The core message here is that all jades come from the water, which shares "similarity of mode" with Hetian jade peddles that come from the river. This fact ought to be the basis on which ancient people set the mythological context of the origin of jade. Crops that grow in water can rear people and can grow year after year. Their lives are endless, which guarantees the eternity of human beings. Similarly, jade "comes from the water" and becomes the symbol of eternal life, which conforms to the "resemblance law" of James George Frazer. The mythical logic can be describe like this: crops growing in water changes and renews with seasons and have the eternal life; the eternity of crops guarantees the eternity of humankind; since the crops come from the water, their eternity must also come from the water; another rare mineral, jade, also coming out of water, shall have eternal life too. Records proving jade's coming out of water can be found in *The Classic of Mountains and Seas*: the Xishan Jing chapter describes the Gui Mountain: "there is no tree but many jades there. The Qi River, originating from the Mountain and going west into the sea, contains many jades, gold and cinnabars." The Shuli Mountain: "the Chu River, originating here and going south into the Wei River, contains many white jades." The Longshou Mountain: "Tiao River, originating here and going south-east into the Jing River contains many beautiful jades." (Ye Shuxian, 2012: 15-16). According to *Book of the Later Han*, Yu the Great "swam to the East Sea" and got jade bar there. The association between water and life is testified by Mircea Eliade, the leading star of comparative religion, in his *Patterns in Comparative Religion*, a whole chapter is dedicated to scan the related myths around the world. In the following chapter, the eternity concept of supernatural stones is analyzed. Notably, stones, which can make women fertile, give birth to stones and marry plants etc., is directly related to the source and the eternity of life. Eliade separately analyzed the eternity symbols —the water and the stone (jade), which, in Chinese civilization, are connected by the archetypal narrative of "jades come from the water". It means the "resemblance law" shall be built between the two images of Eliade. (Eliade, 2008: 224)

Attribution the source of supernatural power to the water is an exploration of the driving force of Chinese civilization in the domain of great tradition. The concept of water as the source is also fully reflected in the small tradition of Chinese culture: Lao Zi compared Tao to water in the chapters 8, 43, 61, 66 and 78 of *Tao Te Ching*; Confucius sighed to the river, "life goes away like water"; Mencius compared benevolence to water; Hsün Tzu compared the people to water, etc. *Water Embodies Tao*, one of the Guodian bamboo slip writings of ancient Chu State, explicitly places water at the center of universe. Discussion about the water as the source of thought in the small tradition of written records has been done by many scholars both home and abroad. American contemporary Sinologist Sara Allan confirmed the water and plants as the ideological origin of Chinese thoughts, and holds the view that water and plants is the metaphor of many native Chinese philosophical concepts. (Allan, 2010: 23)

The implied meaning of water is the source of life and the eternity, which confirm each other: water the invariable source of life; the eternity of life comes from the water's endless circulation in the universe. In the circulation theory of western literature development, Canadian literary critic Northrop Frye made an analogy of the circulation of literary images and the circulation of water which brought together the source of literary images and the endlessness of the water circulation, thus, the inner driving force of literature development is also a metaphor of water. Though flowing to the lower places, water nourishes all, and drives the spreading of civilization in the early uncivilized world. The practical reason why water is lined with the circulation and re-birth, is that ancient people know the water's circulation in the universe. Similar to Frye's "psychoanalysis" on water, Chinese always believes that "the water of the Yellow River comes from the Heaven", and terms like "Heaven Han river" or "Heaven River" connect the water and the heaven which shows water's symbolic significance of eternal life.

The psychoanalysis of jade leads us to water as civilization source, which in turn verifies the jade-as-god concept as the ideological source of Chinese civilization. Since jade can connect man and god and give man eternal life, jade turns into a spiritual resource in integrated mythical thoughts. Jade's supernatural power of eternity is conveyed in "holy narrative", for example, Yellow Emperor ate jade cream, planted the jade flower (Ye Shuxian, 2012: 22), Qi of Xia treated the dukes and princes with jade at Yuan Platform (Ye Shuxian, 2012: 19), all gods and ghosts feed on jade (Ye Shuxian, 2012: 22) etc. The "secular version" of this holy narrative is the medical care function, "a gentleman never leaves his jade" or "jade nourish people".

Another link between jade and eternity is the same color shared by the sapphire (gray jade) and the sky. Ye adopted the patterns of comparative religion in comparing Sumerian lapis lazuli, Hebrew jade in the Garden of Eden, Buddhist Rudraksha tree and Chinese jade. He pointed out that jades that are worshiped these nations have the same azure blue color as the sky, which may be the source of jade's supernatural power. All of these jades aren't necessarily bluish green, but bluish-green jades' function of connecting man and god and symbolizing eternity is confirmed in various nations. In Ye's opinion, ancient Chinese use jade to worship the heaven because they noticed jade's similar color to the sky (Ye Shuxian, 2012: 20). Ye come to this conclusion by the comparative method, "viewing from the metaphorical usage of lapis lazuli in Sumerian mythology, the colour of lapis lazuli reminds the Sumerian the colour of the night sky, which extends to be the original colour of the whole heaven. The heaven is the world of gods, so the colour of heaven gets the supernatural holiness." (Ye Shuxian, 2012: 179). Meanwhile, he realized that the colors of sapphire (green jade) and lapis lazuli have obvious distinction, so he made other evidences and further argumentation. He proves the correctness of color analogy by give the example of Liuli, which is closest to lapis lazuli in color and enjoys high status. The name of man-made Liuli may be transliteration of lapis lazuli's Latin proper name. Later generation created two imitations of Liuli — Liuli-colored glaze and glass, whose color is also close to the natural mineral lapis lazuli.

The eternity concept in jade-as-god theory is the Chinese version of the pursuit for eternal life in mythical thoughts. The association of jade and water is the exploration of the source of eternal life; the color analogy places the highest form of eternal life in heaven, which can be proved by mythical imagination like "Jade Emperor" and "jade halls— palace in the moon". Actually, in his spiritual archeology of mythical imaginations like hero myths, Sun myths and the Totem of Bear, which illustrates the interchangeability between "bear" and "capacity" (Ye Shuxian, 2007), Ye continuously focused on the mythological expression of eternal life.

The association of water as the source and the color similarity with the sky provides mythical logics for jade's holiness. Holy narratives, like "Heaven River", Nüwa (a Chinese goddess) repairing the heaven with "five-colored stones", jade being the essence from "the combination of heaven and earth", intensifies jade's holiness by integration of both the water as the source and the color similarity. As the driving force of Chinese civilization, jade-as-god concept integrates the material and spiritual elements of Civilization origin. The pursuit of jade mineral and the privilege of "worshiping god with jade" bred the bud of early Chinese civilization. And jade that integrates the material and spiritual resources becomes a holy gold apple that attracts various power groups, invoking the birth of Chinese civilization.

## 6. Kinetic Analysis of Jade Material and Jade Ideology

According to the view of "myth history" that mythology and history are both opposite and complementary to each other, the jade proposal provides a kinetic mode that is worth pondering on to the research on civilization origin. It has unmatched theoretical advantages in offering a multi-dimensional view of the starting point of civilization which connects man and god and combines the material and the spiritual. The kinetic analysis on the jade is the analysis of the flow direction of the mysterious power that offers people eternal life. This differentiates the way of jade from secular forces like greed. What affect the early people are the unpredictability and the mystery of this power. The theory of greed or desire, distinguishing the sacred and the secular, highlights the secular greed as an important driving force, but betrays and ignores the spiritual condition at the beginning of civilization, where the sacred and the secular is unified. The supernatural power is manifested in the long-standing fight for jade, Shaman's sincerity in worshiping god with jade, the all-around social input in acquiring jade and the amazing jade-polishing techniques. Analysis of the complex kinetic system will be made from the following aspects.

### 6.1 Competition for Materials Fortunes and Ideological Power

Ye showed the competition for scarce resources at the birth of various civilizations. But the cause of competition is not the scarcity, but the underlying conceptual identical awareness, namely: both competing parties fight for the jades' infinite supernatural power, so the spiritual concepts disseminated together with the material competition. With the formation of jade's cross-cultural identity, the arduous pursuit for jade and the competition between tribes turned into

the fight for social control and ideological power. Ye points out that: “the ideology molded by jade myths include the concepts of regarding jade as god, the symbol of celestial body and the symbol of eternal life, Shamanist rituals of worshiping god and ancestors with jade; folktales that respect and uphold jade; moral standards (virtues of jade) and teaching or learning patterns (cutting, polishing, scalping and rubbing) derived from jade; social practice of wearing jade (a gentleman must wear jade)”; linguistic customs formed from the supreme values of jade — names that contain jade (jade girl, Zhuanyu, Qiongyao, Tang Guizhang etc. ); numerous Chinese characters that is formed with jade as a component and various idioms and proverbs with the jade myths as the core information. The previous examples, through cultural transmission and interaction, constructed the state of royal powers in the Central Plain, and also the identity of many states and peoples beyond the Central Plain.” (Ye Shuxian, 2012: 29)

Viewing from the influences jade-as-god view has on the multi-aspects of Chinese society and life, the jade theory doesn't highlight the process of forming social entity through wars (which, of course existed), but the fusion of nation spirits on the basis of the widely acceptance of the jade-as-god concept. According to the jade theory, besides the physical unification of political community, namely, early state, the gradual formation of Chinese civilization also means the chelation of spiritual ideas, such as ideology. As a spiritual “chelate”, jade-as-god view is more stable, which is embodied in both the heaven worshiping with jade in Shamanism and the gold medal inserted with jade in the 2008 Beijing Olympics. Ideology created by the jade-as-god view, surmounting the great and small tradition and integrating the spiritual and material, is the ultimate force that drives the formation of Chinese civilization. The road of jade provides a more dimensional view of the starting point of Chinese civilization.

### 6.2 Multi-regional Cultures and Social-strata Competition within Single Civilization Community

The competition among different regional cultures, both spiritual and material, is a comprehensive, whole-scale war during the forming of civilization, which is a force that leads to complexity. This force does not only initiate the bud of one single civilization, but the world-wide mutual initiation between various civilizations. Similarly, in one single civilization, with different groups sharing the same jade-as-god identity, they compete for jades and the jade-as-god view. The fight inside a society results in the formation of social strata and the supreme ruling class that monopolize the privilege of “worshiping god with jade”. According to *Discourses of Chu* in the book *Discourses of the States*: King Zhao of Chu asked Guan SheFu, “according to the *Book of Zhou*, Zhong and Li separated the heaven and the earth, why is that? If they didn't, can humans go up to the heaven?” Guan Shefu answered, “the fact is not so... In Shao Hao's ruling, the Jiuli tribe didn't behave virtually. Man and god were mixed. Ceremonies were performed by ordinary people and Shamanism was done at home. There was no stress on god's holiness ... when Zhuanyu took over the country, he ordered that Nan Zhengchong be in charge of the heaven and confer it to god and Huo Zhengli in charge of the earth and confer it to the man... which is the separating the man from the heaven.”

Zhuanyu's “separating the man from the heaven” is the process of limiting the power of man-and-god communication to the hand of the supreme rulers. Before this, “man and god were mixed” and “Shamanism was done at home” showed that, every human being can communicate with god, which is described on a broader scale of “Asian-American Shaman worship” by Kwang-chih Chang. Shaman is a representative of the winning class who has monopolized jade and the power to communicate with the heaven. This winning class, in that way of “the winner takes all”, comprehensively monopolizes the resources and many other powers in the social entity. With “state” – this political entity – the supreme rulers take charge of the unpredictability of the power in “jade-as-god” view. Such mysteriousness of power is also reflected in the little tradition, such as the saying that “the holy jade of state can't be shown to ordinary men”. In the ancient world, the mysterious power is the “charisma” in the sages, such as the Buddha, Mohammed, Confucius and Jesus; in modern world, the mysterious power is the “mana” (Ye Shuxian, 2012: 222) in native beliefs, which is defined by Max Weber as the charming personality “revealed” in those leaders. Ye points out that, though Joseph Needham innovatively liked “virtue” of the Chinese to “mana” of the primitive societies, he overlooked the links between virtue and jade. Joseph's liking can be extended by Ye's interpretation pattern, namely, virtue, jade and mana are mutually linked, forming a circulation of forces. The social stratification and the consolidation of the supreme ruling class's status changed the body of society, from complex unity of multi powers to a relatively stable self-organized structure. After the consolidation of the social strata, there are a lot of internal stresses inside it, which has the potential of sudden outburst, like the infinite energy hidden inside the earth after its formation.

### 6.3 Transverse Force and Longitudinal Force

Through the jade and ideology competition among different regional cultures, competition for the supernatural power is established among paralleled civilizations. Kwang-chih Chang holds the view that all three dynasties, Xia, Shang and Zhou, moved their capitals for many times, because of the pursuit for the important political property – copper and tin. These two metals formed the bronze ware, which was the center of the three dynasties' political fights. “For the three dynasties, the bronze ware wasn't luxuries or decorations in the palaces, but the necessary tools for the political power struggles. Without the bronze ware, the three dynasties wouldn't have been established; without the copper and tin, there wouldn't have been the bronze ware.” (Zhang Guangzhi, 2013: 60) Ye Shuxian depicted the longitudinal force of jade by focusing his recent research on “the Silk Road” and “the Jade Road”, and the “route map” of “the Jade Road” along the Yellow River.

Before the formation of the hierarchy political entity, i.e. state, the competition is among the different peoples in the same region and finally forms the ideological unity within which the peoples support and compete with each other. However, the competition among different cultures is the competition for the supernatural power. The transverse force that comes from the competition among different peoples in one same region is embodied, on one hand, in their fight

for the supreme ruling power in the formation of states, on the other hand, in the fight for supreme power of communicating with god and ideological dominance by acquiring the ruling power. “Jade-as-god” view triggered the fight for resources and power among paralleled cultures, which actually was the fight for the embodiment of supernatural power. In exploring the origin of civilization, researchers used to focus on the material symbols. With the research going deeper, more and more researchers come to realize the importance of spiritual force. The jade-as-god view presents the integration of the spiritual and material forces.

Spiritual force changes, so the spiritual completion never ends. The transverse force leads ultimately to the pursuit of the supreme spiritual power. Jade’s communicating man and go becomes the compass that directs the spiritual force, attracting human beings with the incredibility of supernatural power and leading them into the house of civilization. The discontent for civilization development is more than the secular greed identified by Werner Sombart (1863-1941) when he did research on the source of the capitalist spirits. This discontent that provides an upward force is already rooted in the source of civilization. Besides the secular material desires, humans also desire for spiritual resources.

For the birth of civilization, the significance of transverse force that results from the competition among regional cultures and the upward force of spiritual pursuit is fully displayed in one article – *The transportation of Jade from the West to the East and the Formation of Chinese Civilization*. “The cultural and historical meaning of the transportation of jade, different from that of the transportation of gas from the west to the east, lies in what it has brought into Chinese tradition – spiritual forces, i.e. the national mainstream of core values.” (Ye Shuxian, 2013) Ye pointed out that, “Viewing the source of jade ware in east Asia from the perspective of mythology, the main line of Chinese mythology is jade myths and the related faiths. We can see that certain corresponding jade-as-god concept lies behind every type of jade ware. Observing the time and place of the unearthed jades, we can outline the spreading route of jade-as-god view.” Such route predicts the direction of the driving force of civilization, which is the very theoretical focus of Ye’s two main directions of explaining the civilization spreading. “According to the great tradition, from 8000 years ago to 4000 years ago, the spreading of jade culture can be simplified in two direction: from north to south and from the east to the west.” (Ye Shuxian, 2013)

The driving forces of civilization which are implied in the “road of jade” took on the multi-elemental, multi-directional and multi-polarized complex. The previous analysis from three levels is set out for the sake of labor saving. The exploration of Chinese civilization origin requires the mobilization of multi-forces in the “road of jade”, so that a multi-dimensional view of the starting point of civilization can be formed. The “road of jade” presents the complex kinetic structure of civilization, which is scattered in Ye’s works that analyze jade in the multi-dimensional perspective. Correspondingly, the driving force has been paid much attention to in recent research on civilization origins. The kinetic analysis on the way of jade has proved the methodological support for the research.

## 7. Conclusion

Firstly, jade theory illuminates that jade as the gene of Chinese culture, which plays an integrated function in the material and spiritual resource possession and distribution. The critical link between mythology and cultural origin lies in the special cultural factors that mold the ideology. Jade mythology can be the key to open how Chinese civilization came into being in its special fashion. At the turning point to the civilization, jade articles function as the bonding that integrate the Central Plains and the surrounding areas. Such bonding was both material (from the mining, exploitation, transportation, exchange to the processing and distribution of jade minerals), and spiritual (the cross-region spreading and unification of jade’s mythological concept). The long-term interaction of material and spiritual demand finally brought to the eve of Chinese civilization (the era before the Bronze Age) its core values: jade as holy, jade as treasure, and jade ware as the sign to communicate man and heaven (man and god).

Secondly, jade theory reveals the Chinese cultural continuity in the panoramic manner. From the historical background of “worshiping the heaven with jade” to the gold medals inserted with jade in the Beijing Olympics, from the “virtue of jade” emphasized by Confucian morals to the “fortune of jade” acquired by jade business and trade, from being buried minerals in the primitive age to the symbol of sublimity in the civilization age, from its natural reserved, modest and mild properties to humans’ quarreling and fighting for it, jade has gone through the building of Chinese civilization with various gestures, which provides us a panoramic perspective to know about the integrity and continuity of Chinese civilization. The jade as the source of civilization has not only confirmed the typical jade type of different civilization age, but also revealed the most essential particularity of Chinese jade ritual. To figure out the motivation or spiritual resource of the rituals, which is verified by the various material evidences, including unearthed sacrificial pottery, jade and bronze vessels, we probably should resort to the mythological mode of thoughts of Chinese ancestors.

Thirdly, jade theory demonstrates the necessity and capacity of inter-disciplinary interpretation. The prolong history of jade mythology can be verified by the unearthed prehistoric jade articles, which expands the mythological studies from the textual-constrained domain to the mutual-related and multi-dimensional evidences of archeology, religion, anthropology etc. The integration does not confine to the research patterns of all related natural principles in empirical archeology, but also extend to the integration of different views and methods of empirical natural principles, social principles and interpretive humanities. With the deep involvement in civilization exploration, the jade theory is characterized with the empirical favor, analysis methods of social science (the sociological analysis on the route of jade) and the interpretation feature of humanities (“spiritual archeology” of the jade-as-god view). If the cultural continuity is the outward feature of the formation of Chinese civilization, the transfer from “jade as god” to “virtue of jade” is the conceptual thread going through the great and little traditions. And the transformation of “worshiping the heaven”, a mythological view, to rituals set as political rules, shows that the great tradition and the small tradition share the same

ideological regulation structure. Max Weber says, “The supreme goal of social sciences is not to pursue the construction of new ideas or new concepts, but to make efforts in understanding the cultural meaning of concrete historical links”. (Weber, 1999: 60) Jade theory decodes the reason why Chinese give the priority in the onward time sequencing line, which can be random, to jade, rather than other materials and offers an alternative way to the motivation and genetic study on Chinese rituals, which is the peculiar features of Chinese civilization.

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