Excerpt from TJ Hinrichs, “The Medical Transforming of Governance and Southern Customs in Song Dynasty China (960-1279 C.E.), Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 2003, pp. 62-72.

DISCOURSES OF SOUTHERN DEVIANCE

Southern China had long been known for the distinctiveness of its “magico-religious” traditions, and for the power of its shamans.[11] It was a frightening and alien place to northerners, a place to which exile or even posting as an official had long been a form of punishment.[12] The climate was out of kilter, the landscape was ominous, the people and their customs were disturbing, and northerners were susceptible to local diseases — something our current knowledge of disease ecology and immunology would suggest, and something that was well known, from age to age, in China.

Besides his orthodox “Bamboo branch lyric” composed to substitute for local shamanic songs in Lang Prefecture (in modern Hunan), Liu Yuxi (772-842) wrote a poetic exposition (*fu*) about his experience there.

> I had already been sent in disgrace to Wuling.[13] Its land of old had the border city of Ying and contains a mixture of Yelang and various other barbarians. In connection with heaven, Yin is humble and Yang is haughty. In connection with people, the mores are shamanic and the *qi* is sunken. It is clamorous and unsettled, and it is beneficial to live in upper stories. The watch towers on the city walls are actually next to my lodgings. To the four horizons there is no obstruction, and the myriad

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[11] Donald Harper, *Early Chinese Medical Literature: The Mawangdui Medical Manuscripts*, (New York: Paul Kegan International, 1998), pp. 159-183.

[12] Miyakawa, “The Confucianization of South China,” p. 27, 39.

[13] Commandery, formerly Lang Prefecture.

vistas pour in. So I spoke of what I acquired from distant and near, and composed the verse "Gazing out on Chu."[14]

In the zone of the Wings and Carriage constellations
Zhu Rong[15] administers the region.

Yin is pressed down [by Yang] and isolated;
In the fullness of its seclusion it generates foul vapors.

Heaven moistens and mists;
The Earth seeps and is muddy.

The air (*qi*) is rarely bright and clear;
The excessive *qi* clouds everything over.

It strikes people's limbs and body;
And becomes affliction and disease (*zhai*).

In order to broadly wash away one's troubles,
It is beneficial to live high away from things.

I divined that my dwelling should be in the corner of the city walls,
As though in a barbarian hamlet, the tower is wide and deep.
…

The spring in Yuan and Xiang[16] comes around before its season.
In the twelfth month at the coldest extreme, warm winds propagate growth.
…

The expansive summer *qi* issues forth in the spring season.
Passing the summer is like melting, and reaching autumn it is burning even more fiercely.

The courses of the heavenly bodies [here] have their particular *qi*,
And what is appropriate to the streams and valleys [that correspond to them] is different.

The people born among them
Have demonic customs and barbaric language.

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[14] Ancient state or region corresponding roughly to modern Hunan.

[15] A legendary ancient king and god of Chu. Edward H. Schafer, *The Vermillion Bird: T'ang Images of the South*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1967), p. 105.

[16] Rivers in Hunan.

> Summoning Sanlü (Qu Yuan) by making ballads;
> Blessing Fubo (Ma Yuan) with building him a shrine.
>
> Throwing rice pastries from rowboats;
> Raising bream and carp for sacrificial animals.
>
> The large twisted trees are quiet and deep,
> And demons adhere (*ping*) to them.
>
> Prayers for a prosperous harvest expel (*qu*) pestilence (*li*)
> With pure reverence for the might of the local gods. …[17]

Liu finds himself surrounded by miasmal and pestilential lands, sultry and clouded skies, dark demon-infested forests, barbarian tongues, and shamanic customs. He escapes the people and the miasmal vapors to a tower, but the landscape still pours in from all sides. He introduces some relief, both in the exposition and probably in his role of official, with Qu Yuan (*ca*. 340-278 B.C.E.) style ballads; a shrine to Han general Ma Yuan (d. 49 C.E.), famous for defeating uprisings by southern and western peoples early in the Later Han;[18] and prayers that drive away pestilence and revere earth gods.[19]

The barbarians on all sides had long been treated in Chinese script as non-human, as bestial. As a character radical, *chong* classified not only arthropods, reptiles, amphibians, and mollusks,[20] but the non-Han southern peoples Man and Min. The radical *zhi*, classifying animals with long bodies such as foxes, dogs, leopards, and worms, in antiquity also classified northern non-Han peoples known as Mo. The dog radical classified northern Di "barbarians," as well as the southern barbarians Liao, Man, and the “Jackal” Man, the Yao.[21] Many texts explicitly compare “barbarians” to wild animals, or even assert a concrete relationship, in their customs or bodily natures.”[22] Wild animals were even linked to barbarians as potential objects of moral transformation by the virtue of officials and rulers, or as resisting such enculturation.[23] Southern peoples, *chong*, and demons (*gui*) possessed in common propensities for metamorphosis, sometimes between these three categories.[24] Animals, spirits, and people were theorized as existing on a functional continuum, differing from each other and from those dangerous varieties of each in the coarseness of their *qi* or “blood and *qi*” or their position in Yin-Yang and Five Phases cosmology.[25]

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[17] Lu Yuxi, *Liu Yuxi ji jianzheng* (Liu Yuxi's collected works, annotated), Qu Tuiyuan, ann., (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1989), 1.11-13.

[18] See *Hou Hanshu* (History of the Later Han). Fan Ye (398-445), comp., (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1965), 24:827. On the deified Ma Yuan and his worship in the south, see Schafer, *Vermillion Bird*, pp. 97-99.

[19] On the misery of Tang northerner officials exiled to posts in the south, see Schafer, *Vermillion Bird*, pp. 37-44.

[20] See Chapter 6. Also see Donald Harper, *Mawangdui Manuscripts*, p. 74; Francine Fèvre, "Drôles de bestioles: qu'est-ce qu'un chong?" *Anthropozoologica* No. 18, (1993):57-65; Roel Sterckx, *The Animal and the Daemon in Early China*, (Albany, State University of New York Press, 2002), pp. 31, 90.

While Song official responses to southern customs were much stronger, Song literati reactions to southern lands and peoples were less apprehensive. If they were not natives of the south, they were much more likely to find people of their own class, much larger, especially in the south, in the Song than in any previous period. They would also find more communities of Han “Chinese” people who had emigrated from the north. Indigenous peoples, however, if less frightening, were still alien. In a 966 edict, Emperor Taizu identified the problem of “not examining or giving medicine” to sick parents and relatives as one of “the various peoples”

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[21] Zhou Qufei, *Lingwai daida* 10.115 *ff.*

[22] The dehumanizing implications of these classifications been pointed out by Edward Schafer. *Vermillion Bird*, Sterckx, *The Animal and the Daemon*, pp. 74, 159-161.

[23] Sterckx, *The Animal and the Daemon*, pp. 88-91, 132-134, 141-142, 147-148.

[24] Sterckx, *The Animal and the Daemon*, pp. 172, 176, 187.

[25] Writers in early China and in the Song saw insects and other animals as possessing virtues in common with humans, although differing from humans in being one-sided and incomplete. Early Chinese writers attributed the difference to coarseness of blood and *qi*, which were understood to include emotional, cognitive, and moral as well as physical attributes. Zhu Xi similarly attributed the differences to endowments of *qi*, placing this in his metaphysical-ethical framework. See Sterckx, *The Animal and the Daemon*, pp. 9, 69-92, 151-153; Yung Sik Kim, (Philadelphia: Memoirs of the American Philosophical Society held at Philadelphia for promoting useful knowledge, 2000), *The Natural Philosophy of Chu Hsi 1130-1200*, pp. 175, 194-197.

(*zhuseren*) of western Sichuan.[26] In his 985 edict, charging senior clerks of Yong, Rong, Gui, and Guang Prefectures[27] with "transforming and guiding" the people concerning a range of customs, including "not seeking medicine when someone is sick," Emperor Taizong attributed the roots of the problem to blockage from northern Chinese winds (*feng*) — i.e., northern mores.

> The borders outside of the Lingjiao Mountains[28] are well secluded and have long been blocked from Chinese (*Hua*) mores (*feng*), so that they have become stained (*ran*) with polluted customs.[29]

In his 1023 memorial Xia Song described his jurisdiction as a complex ethnic mix:

> Your servant, in this prefecture leads the Seven Min [peoples] to the east, and controls the Hundred Yue [peoples] to the south. The registered populace consider demons proper, and by old custom honor shamans.[30]

For moderns accustomed to the racial and ethnic discourses of the last two centuries, these references are tame. These few identifications of "various peoples," "Min," and "Yue" are far less common or prominent than identification of customs with trust in and honoring of "shamans and demons." The emphasis here is not on race or ethnicity, but on behavior and allegiance. The basis of southerners' difference was, furthermore, not essential to their semi-human condition, but contingent on their geographical circumstances.

In the Southern Song, we find a deepened sense of severance from the nurturing and normative northern heartland. While earlier writings had attributed strange customs to particular southern lands, we now find stronger statements of the absence of perverse customs from a north known by this time largely by hearsay. Cheng Jiong (*jinshi* 1163) wrote:

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[26] *SHY xingfa jinyue,* 2.1a; *SS* 2.24 and *CB* 7.172.

[27] These prefectures are scattered across Guangnan E. and Guangnan W. Circuits, modern Guangdong and Guangxi.

[28] Wuling Mountains. South thereof is mainly Guangdong and Guangxi, and at other times in Chinese history times included modern Vietnam.

[29] *SHY xingfa jinyue* 2.3. Also see *CB* 26.8ab, *SS* 5.76.

[30] *SHY* li 20.10b-13a.

> I have come to see that the people of the central plains [of the north] trust in physicians and do not trust in shamans. Relatives have never parted from the sides [of the sick]. Thus, many fully recover. In the rustic customs of Jiangnan they trust in shamans and do not trust in physicians. Relatives discard them and many die.[31]

Ouyang Shoudao reports knowledge of the north through books.

> Epidemic *qi* is severe in the south. There are many Heat and few Cold diseases, and it is certainly suited to having epidemic years, even though the north also has them. Today in the villages of the Yangzi [people devote themselves] exclusively to the sayings of the spirits and the people solely take this disease as a deep taboo. In the past I saw a tomb inscription written for Mei Shengyu[32] in the *Collected writings of Mr. Ouyang Wenzhong* [Xiu]. Once [Ouyang Xiu] had spoken of his worthiness and moreover his wisdom, he wrote of his dying by an epidemic. He also said that when Shengyu was sick, the high ministers and officials made their thatched huts [for visiting] and visitors blocked the roads. These then are the customs of the Central Plains. How could they ever use the issue of whether it is an epidemic or not to interfere with [matters] of good and evil. Yet in those households sick with an epidemic, the noble ministers of the court all made their way there. Where could they have what is called " avoiding and shunning"? [33]

Ouyang placed southern human difference in the context of the south's peculiar climate and diseases. Remember that Liu Yi had made similar links:

> Because [Qian's] land was near the lower Ling Mountains and inclines toward the southeast, it has an abundance of Yang *qi*, its seasons and weather are unbalanced,

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[31] Cheng Jiong, *Yijing zhengben shu*, pp. 5-6.

[32] (1002-1060) Personal name of Mei Yaochen. He was a poet and friend of Ouyang Xiu, who wrote several letters and prefaces for him. *SZZS*, 3.2683-2634.

[33] Ouyang Shoudao, *Xunzhai wenji*, 4.14b-15a.

> and the people get a lot of epidemic diseases. The folk customs are ignorant … [and trusted] in shamans and worship demons.[34]

These associations between cosmology, geography, climate, disease, and ignorant customs had a long history. The compound term "mores and customs" is made up of the characters for wind (*feng*) and for customs (*su*). In a Later Han book on customs, the relationship between the two was explained as follows:

> By "wind" we mean the cold or warmth of the Heavenly *qi*, the difficulty or ease of the Earthly terrain, the excellence or pollution of waters and springs, and the hardness or softness of grasses and trees. By "customs" we mean the way in which creatures with blood imitate these and live.[35]

Southern cultural and even bodily deviance had long been depicted as rooted in its being cosmologically, geographically, and seasonally askew.[36] This furthermore made it prone to generating noxious (*xie* or *du*), miasmic (*zhang*), and pestilential (*li*) *qi*, and to producing toxic plants, animals, and diseases as well as licentious people and cults[37] — never mind the customs thought to produce poisonous animal-demons like *Gu*.[38]

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[34] Zeng, *Duxing zazhi* 3.23-24. Also see *SS* 334.10728.

[35] Translation by Mark Lewis of passage in Ying Shao, *Fengsu tongyi* (*Comprehensive Meanings of Mores and Customs*). Mark Edward Lewis, *Sanctioned Violence in Early China*, (Albany: State University Press of New York, 1990), p. 216. On early Chinese formulations of the general relationships between locales, wind or *qi*, flora and fauna, and human customs, see Lewis, *Sanctioned Violence*, pp. 215-218; Sterckx, *The Animal and the Daemon in Early China*, pp. 103-110.

[36] Marta Hanson, "Inventing a Tradition in Chinese Medicine: From Universal Canon to Local Medical Knowledge in South China, the Seventeenth to the Nineteenth Century," PhD diss., 1997, pp. 62-68. For extensive twelfth century examples regarding Lingnan, see Li Qiu and Zhang Zhiyuan, *Lingnan weisheng fang*, *passim*. For a canonical medical outline of the temperance of "central" health and climate in contrast to the other four directions and the accompanying severity of their diseases and treatments, see *Huangdi neijing suwen*, section 12.

[37] The discourse tends to contrast the healthy, temperate, and balanced "north" from the unhealthy, seasonally/Yin-Yang-askew "south," but many sources make observations concerning more narrowly specified regions such as Min, Jiangnan, Lingnan, Chu/Jing, or Sichuan, or specific prefectures. See Hsiao Fan, "Han Song jian wenxian suojian gudai zhongguo nanfang de dili huangjing yu difang bing ji qi yingxiang" (The geographical environment, local diseases, and their influences in the south in Ancient China as seen through the literature of the Han through the Song), *Zhongyang yanjiuyuan lishi yuan yanjiusuo jikan* (Bulletin of the Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica) (1993) 63.1:67-171; Hugh Clark, *Community, Trade, and Networks*, pp. 12, 105. The Lingnan region of Guangdong and Guangxi is even more famously associated with virulent and miasmatic diseases. See

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Edward Schafer, *Vermillion Bird*, pp. 130-134; and Marta E. Hanson, “Inventing a Tradition in Chinese Medicine: From Universal Canon to Local Medical Knowledge in South China, The Seventeenth to the Nineteenth Century,” PhD diss., University of Pennslyvania, 1997, pp. 69-75.

[38] For historical accounts of *gu*, see J. J. M. de Groot, *The Religious System of China*, (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1892-1910; repr. Taipei: Southern Materials Center, 1989), Vol. 5, pp. 826-869; Schafer, *Vermillion Bird*, pp. 102-103; and in H. Y. Feng and J. Shryock, “The Black Magic in China Known as *Ku*,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 55 (1935):1-30. These sources give varied accounts of the preparation and properties of *gu*. Common features of *gu* include a demonic dimension, the ability to poison, and the cultivation and appearance of *gu*-demons as poisonous insects, centipedes, toads, or snakes.