

Portents of protest in the Later Han Dynasty

The memorials of Hsiang K'ai
to Emperor Huan

Rafe de Crespigny



河氣鳥精

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Rafe de Crespigny

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INTRODUCTION

The policies of Emperor Huan

Emperor Huan of the Han dynasty 漢桓帝 came to the throne as a child in 146 A.D. and died in 167 at the age of thirty-five. For the first part of his reign the government was entirely controlled by his relatives by marriage, notably the General-in-Chief Liang Chi 梁冀, but in 159 Emperor Huan staged a successful *coup d'état* and took power into his own hands. For the rest of his reign he exercised personal authority over the empire.

In his victory over the Liang family, the emperor had received essential support from the leading eunuchs of his harem and comparatively little assistance from the officials and gentry of the court and the provinces. As a result, he tended to favour the eunuchs and their families and dependants, while the policies of his government caused unrest throughout the empire. Officials, gentry and scholars, always claiming the best principles of Confucian morality, presented a constant stream of protests and memorials of complaint against the pretensions and powers of the eunuchs and their relatives. By the end of the reign of Emperor Huan, the leaders of this opposition included some of the highest officials in the administration and they had the vociferous support of students at the Imperial University and junior officials in local government. In the Faction Incident of 167 numbers of these men were arrested and imprisoned, and although they were released later in the year the conflict continued and intensified in

the reign of Huan's successor, Emperor Ling 靈.

In 166 the scholar Hsiang K'ai 襄楷 presented two memorials of criticism to the throne. Though he held no official position, Hsiang K'ai was sympathetic to the cause of the opponents to the eunuchs, and in a series of arguments relying heavily upon astrology and other signs of warning he urged the emperor to change his policies and reform his government.

In two articles elsewhere I have discussed the politics of the court of Emperor Huan and the Great Proscription of scholars and officials, the *tang-ku* 黨錮, which was a major factor in the disintegration of the government of Later Han.¹ The present work offers, as illustration of the theories and political use of omens and portents at this time, a translation of the biography of Hsiang K'ai from *Hou Han shu*. In order to appreciate the significance of Hsiang K'ai's writings, however, it is necessary to add some preliminary notes on the political circumstances and on the philosophical background of his arguments.

The politics of 166 A.D.

Hsiang K'ai was a man from P'ing-yüan 平原 commandery, in the southeast of the Yellow Plain, the region of present-day Shantung province. Though he has been regarded by historians as a spokesman for the opposition party of officials, gentry and scholars, he never held political office, and he took no active part in anti-eunuch activities in his native territory. His journey to Lo-yang 雒陽 in 166 was one of the few occasions

that he visited the capital: there is no record of his attending the Imperial University, and he established his reputation entirely as a private scholar.

In the summer of 166, however, when Hsiang K'ai presented his memorials, the conflict between the eunuchs and their opponents was coming to a head. The immediate crisis concerned the fate of several senior officials of the government in the provinces, notably Ch'eng Chin ^{成璿}, the Grand Administrator of Nan-yang ^{南陽} commandery, and Liu Chih ^{劉質} (or ^瓚), the Grand Administrator of T'ai-yüan ^{太原}, both of whom had been condemned to death for attacking eunuchs and their clients.

In Nan-yang, a merchant named Chang Fan ^{張汎}, who supplied earrings and other trinkets for the palace trade and was a protégé of the eunuchs, was living in the city of Wan ^宛, the capital of the commandery (now Nanyang in Honan). He was arrogant and he oppressed the common people. On the urgings of two subordinate officials, Ts'en Chih ^{岑晷} and Chang Mu ^{張牧}, Ch'eng Chin arrested Chang Fan. By the terms of an imperial amnesty, it was ordered that Chang Fan should be released, but Ch'eng Chin had him executed; he also killed more than two hundred of Chang Fan's clansmen and retainers. In T'ai-yüan, a eunuch of the imperial household, Chao Chin ^{趙津}, was accused of making trouble and causing disorder in his native prefecture of Chin-yang ^{晉陽} (also the capital of the commandery, now Taiyuan in Shensi). Liu Chih sent a junior official named Wang Yün ^{王允} to arrest him, and though another amnesty was issued to pardon Chao Chin he too was

put to death.²

These incidents provide evidence of the tension and growing violence in the empire at this time, and they were not unique. While Ch'eng Chin and Liu Chih were under sentence of death, two other officials, Chai Ch'ao 翟超, the Grand Administrator of Shan-yang 山陽, and Huang Fu 黃浮, the Chancellor of Tung-hai 東海, were also dismissed and imprisoned. Chai Ch'ao had permitted one of his junior officers, Chang Chien 張儉, to destroy the buildings and parklands that the eunuch Hou Lan 侯覽 had expropriated from the local people. Huang Fu had arrested, tortured and executed the Prefect of Hsia-p'i 下邳, Hsü Hsüan 徐宣, who was a nephew of the eunuch Hsü Huang 璜, but who had governed his territory with the utmost ferocity and injustice. The two grand administrators sent reports to explain their actions, but the eunuchs presented their own version of events, and Chai Ch'ao and Huang Fu were sentenced to convict service.³

It is evident that the emperor and his advisers regarded the crimes of Ch'eng Chin and Liu Chih as the most serious, for both officials had carried out executions in defiance of an imperial amnesty, but all those involved in these attacks on eunuchs and their protégés were admired as heroes by the local gentry. Though the junior officials escaped serious punishment, they were celebrated throughout the empire, and Chang Chien later became a leader of the opposition movement among the students of the Imperial University.⁴ In the meantime, leading officials presented a series of memorials asking for pardon for the imprisoned

administrators: they were not successful, and at the end of 166 both Ch'eng Chin and Liu Chih were executed.

In the summer of that year, however, while the cases were still subject to considerable debate and protest, it seemed possible that Emperor Huan might have second thoughts about his policies. The arguments that Hsiang K'ai presented were designed to appeal both to his sense of justice and to his respect for the supernatural. Certainly, though the emperor did not accept his strictures, Hsiang K'ai fared better than some other critics of the time. Several of the points that he raised, such as the number of women in the imperial harem and the emperor's failure to produce an heir to the throne, were blunt and discourteous, and the officials who investigated his case urged that he should be executed. Emperor Huan, however, impressed by his use of omens and signs, reduced his sentence to a short period of convict labour. In due course, Hsiang K'ai returned home. He was respected for his learning in many regions of the empire, and he was invited to court during the reign of Emperor Ling, but he played no further part in the politics of his day.

The teachings of Hsiang K'ai

It is possible to recognise a loose thread of discussion linking the points of Hsiang K'ai's two memorials; this is his constant concern to overawe the emperor with warnings of misfortune and disaster brought on by bad government, and to encourage him to reform his personal and political conduct. The topics that he raises may best be set out in

tabular form:

Memorial No. 1

- (i) introduction on the significance of heavenly portents, and ominous signs in the stars;
- (ii) omens of extreme cold in the last winter, of strange lights in the night sky which frightened people, and of excessive frosts, hail and rain;
- (iii) the significance of these omens as signs of cruel punishments and warnings to the ruler that he may have no descendants; the specific case of Liu Chih and Ch'eng Chin, references to other political executions earlier in the reign, and a general accusation that the whole imperial government is callous and careless in the administration of the death penalty;
- (iv) criticism of the size of the imperial harem; the failure of Emperor Huan to produce an heir as further proof of his weakness in virtue;
- (v) warnings to the emperor based upon the appearance of a dead dragon and the fall of meteorites;
- (vi) the exceptional phenomenon of the Yellow River running clear: in times of bad government such as this, the omen serves only to intensify the other warnings;
- (vii) the collapse of the gates of the Imperial University, a sign that good teaching and the influences of civilisation are in serious decline;
- (viii) encouragement to the emperor that he should study and follow the teachings of the *T'ai-p'ing ching*

from the school of the master Kan Chi of Lang-yeh.

Memorial No. 2

- (ix) the wayward path of Venus and the failure of Mars to appear on time, a warning to the emperor that he should free Liu Chih and Ch'eng Chin and make recompense to other scholars who opposed the eunuchs;
- (x) eclipses and other signs: the misfortune that comes from failure to profit by the teachings of the *T'ai-p'ing ching*;
- (xi) the evil influence of the eunuchs, who should not hold high rank in the government; the fact of their emasculation may prevent the emperor from siring sons;
- (xii) the emperor's sacrifices to Huang-Lao and the Buddha; what is the point of worshipping these deities if he cannot follow their teachings of asceticism?

It is very possible, of course, that the *Hou Han shu* of Fan Yeh has abridged Hsiang K'ai's memorials to some small degree (see, for example, the commentary of Liu Chao to *HHS* 103 (*chih* 13), 12a, concerning his discussion of the collapse of the main gate of the Imperial University), but there is no question that the present text presents a fair picture of his philosophic interests. Like other critics of the court, he relied chiefly on the doctrines and texts of Confucianism, but he was also strongly influenced by the eclecticism of his day. The reference to Buddhism in section (xii) has been noted by P. Pelliot and E. Zürcher as evidence for the early history of that religion in China,⁵ and Hsiang K'ai was also an energetic advocate of the neo-Taoist scholar Kan Chi from the neighbouring commandery of Lang-yeh. The *T'ai-p'ing ching*

had been rejected by orthodox scholars as a heretical work, but the line of demarcation between approved and unacceptable theories of the supernatural was not always easy to draw. The Discussions of the White Tiger Hall in the first century A.D. show the significance of cosmological and supernatural speculation in the New Text School of Later Han Confucianism,⁶ and the recent work of Jack Dull has demonstrated the interest that scholars of the Old Text School were developing in the teachings of Taoism.⁷ During Former Han, it was regarded as axiomatic by political philosophers that the signs of astrology could act as warnings and guides to the government of the empire, while other phenomena, floods, droughts, and dire and unusual happenings had comparable significance. By the time of Emperor Huan, through the researches of such scholars as Keng Shou-ch'ang 耿壽昌 of the first century B.C., and Fu An 傅安, Li Fan 李梵 and Chang Heng 張衡 of the first and second centuries A.D., Chinese scholars had gained an effective understanding of such questions as the causes of eclipses and accurate calculations of the paths of the visible planets.⁸ At the same time, however, almost regardless of these scientific developments, the established belief in supernatural warnings continued, and even the rationalist philosopher Wang Ch'ung 王充 was not immune from such influence.⁹ Regardless of his interest in the heterodox work of the *T'ai-p'ing ching* and the alien teachings of the Buddhists, Hsiang K'ai was using omens and portents in a fashion well accepted by the main stream of Confucian philosophy of his time.

The significance of portents in the reign of Emperor Huan

In their two important articles, 'An Interpretation of the Portents in the Ts'ien-Han-shu' and 'The Political Function of Astronomy and Astronomers in Han China', Hans Bielenstein and Wolfram Eberhard have demonstrated how memorialising of portents to the throne was an important means of indirect criticism against imperial policy.¹⁰ The phenomena that could be taken as ominous ranged from the occurrence of eclipses and the movements of planets to the appearance of excessive or unseasonal weather, plagues among men or diseases among crops, and such various unlikely events as the appearance of a dragon or a change in colour of the Yellow River. In some cases, one may suspect that the hand of man rather than that of nature has been involved. On other occasions, even the memorialist is uncertain whether the incident has actually occurred. Whatever the truth, false belief and unexplained panic among the people can yet be grist to a diviner's mill. The two essential requirements were first that some disturbance of nature should appear to have taken place, and second that this event should be reported in suitable terms to the emperor.

There are three sections in *Hou Han shu* that contain information on the portents memorialised to the throne during the reign of Emperor Huan: the Treatise of Astronomy (*t'ien-wen-chih* 天文志), the Treatise of the Five Elements (*wu-hsing chih* 五行志), and the Imperial Annals (*ti-chi* 帝紀).¹¹ The treatises were formerly part of the *Hsü Han shu* of Ssu-ma Piao of the third century A.D. and they were incorporated into the standard history

during T'ang and Sung times,¹² but though the annals were compiled from court diaries, and the treatises from other archives, the annals mention all but a very few of the incidents reported in the Treatise of the Five Elements. The annals do not normally refer to the movement of planets, which is the major concern of the Treatise of Astronomy, but they do chronicle such heavenly signs as comets and eclipses, and for those topics they have in common they are consistent with the treatises. The one remarkable difference is that, while all the portents recorded in the treatises are interpreted as inauspicious signs of warning or disaster, there are a number of references in the annals to omens of good fortune.

Clearly, the favourable signs were reported by those who approved of the government of the day, and they do not represent the same body of opinion as those who memorialised on the warnings of heaven and nature. Compared with the portents in the treatises, the favourable signs in the annals are few and far between, but there were, for example, reports of yellow dragons in 147, 152, 165 and 167, and there was a white deer in 153 and a white bird in 155. During the time that Emperor Huan was in power, after his destruction of Liang Chi in 159, he could claim that favour had been shown not only by the appearance of the yellow dragons, but also by a fall of sweet dew (or manna) in 160 (presumably to honour his accession of power); in 167 the annals recorded sweet dew, a yellow dragon and a white pheasant. Considering the number of unfavourable portents that had been memorialised against it at that time, and the

political crisis of the Faction Incident in 167, one can imagine that the government felt the need for some signs of heavenly favour.¹³

Indeed, we may take it as axiomatic that the portents recorded in the histories do not reflect the disorders of nature so well as they do the discontents and political disagreements of man.¹⁴ In a sense, the numbers of portents memorialised each year provide a graph of the popularity of the imperial government among the officials and scholars who controlled the responsible bureaus, and who generally reflected the political opinions and prejudices of their colleagues. For this reason, in Figure 1 at the end of this Introduction, I present a graph to compare the numbers of portents recorded in each year of the reign of Emperor Huan. The graph distinguishes between favourable and unfavourable portents, and within the unfavourable portents there is indication of whether the omens took the form of eclipses of the sun, general astronomical phenomena as recorded in the Treatise of Astronomy, general natural and supernatural phenomena as recorded in the Treatise of the Five Elements, or the special category of fires in the imperial palace and among the tombs of the imperial ancestors.

I have distinguished eclipses from the other phenomena on the grounds that of all the portents recorded they are the major ones that are susceptible of specific checking.¹⁵ Although it is possible to trace the movements of the planets, and to check whether Chinese records of their observation agree with modern calculations, it must be borne in mind that all the five observable planets were visible to early

Chinese astronomers for the most part of every year, and it was therefore possible for any memorialist to choose which movements and positions would be reported as portents to the throne. In much the same fashion, there is no good way to determine the frequency of occurrence of such portentous events as earthquakes, floods and plague, and we must accept that the records of the Chinese officials in this field cannot be checked by any means now available. The memorialising and recording of general astronomical and natural or supernatural phenomena were governed primarily by the decisions of the officials concerned, subject only to the considerable penalties for forgery and fraud.

At the same time, within the graph, there is some reason to note the occurrence of reports of fires in imperial buildings. Often enough, these must have been accidental, but when great numbers are reported in a comparatively short space of time one may suspect that some were set deliberately in order to provide a portent; a fire that attacked the imperial palace or the tombs of the imperial ancestors would naturally appear as a sign of considerable importance to the dynasty.

The two most interesting observations that can be made on Figure 1 are first the general acceptance and approval of the Liang family during the later years of its period of dominance up to 159, and second the remarkable unpopularity of Emperor Huan's government from 161 onwards. In the early years of the reign, there was a comparatively large number of portents, generally associated in some way with the usurpation of power by Liang Chi, his suspected

murder of the boy Emperor Chih 質, Huan's predecessor, and his execution of two leading officials who opposed his power, Li Ku 李固 and Tu Ch'iao 杜喬. Within a few years, however, the government had gained fair acceptability, and at the beginning of the Yen-hsi period, on the eve of Liang Chi's overthrow, the omens provide small signs of discontent or danger.¹⁶

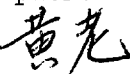
By definition, of course, the prognostication of an omen that appears in the histories is composed with the advantage of hindsight, and it is not always possible to tell what significance was given to the portent at the time it was first announced to the court. HHS 34 (*lieh-chuan* 24), 15b, the biography of Liang Chi, records that the Prefect Grand Clerk Ch'en Shou 陳授, encouraged by the eunuch Hsü Huang, sent in a memorial to the court advising that the eclipse of 13 July 158 should be regarded as a warning to the General-in-Chief Liang Chi, not to the emperor. Liang Chi, furious, had Ch'en Shou sent to prison and killed; a move that would certainly serve to discourage any direct criticism, whether associated with portents or not. Naturally enough, however, in the present text of the *Treatise of the Five Elements*, the eclipses of 157 and 158 are both related to the coup in the capital and the fall of the Liang family.¹⁷ It is clear that the interpretation of any portent could vary from one authority to another, depending on the political situation of the time, the real events that had taken place and could be attributed to the portent in question, and the personal opinion of the prognosticator himself.¹⁸ Though the interpretations

recorded by the histories may be interesting and valuable in themselves, it is the numbers of portents in any one period that provide the most effective basis for comparison.

In this way, the first year or so after Emperor Huan's seizure of power appears to have been a 'honeymoon' period, and it seems that at this stage the emperor's favouritism of his eunuch attendants had not reached a point where it caused major discontent at court or disturbance in the provinces. In 161, however, there is a remarkable increase, and no other year of the reign had such a number of omens of disaster. Many of the signs were interpreted as criticism of the Empress née Teng ^滕, who was generally regarded as a woman of poor family,¹⁹ but others were related specifically to the growing influence and power of the eunuchs and their dependants. In this and the following years, moreover, a number of the portents took the form of fires in the imperial palace or in the tomb buildings of the former emperors: as we have noted already, though some such outbreaks may have been accidental, it is possible to suspect that others could be set deliberately to provide a portent.

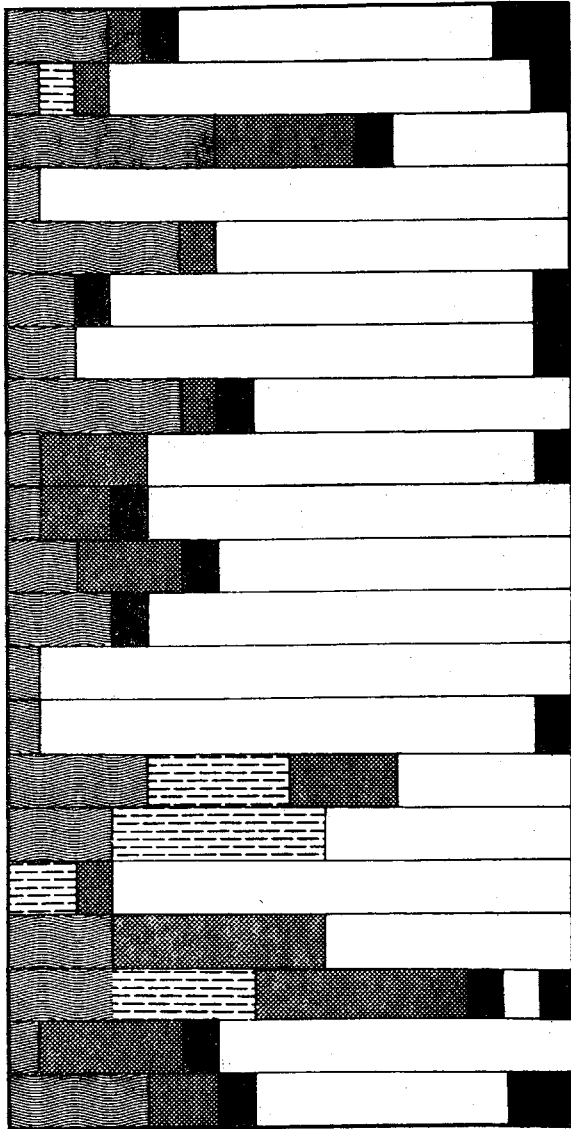
With a slight easing off in 163, the remaining years of Emperor Huan's reign continued to provide a high number of omens and warnings, so that when Hsiang K'ai presented his memorials in 166 he had a considerable number of officially recognised portents to use in support of his arguments. In many cases, Hsiang K'ai does agree with the observations and records of the treatises, and his interpretations are often used in the explanations the treatises provide. On occasion, however, he varies his approach: he does not, for example,

comment on the fires in the imperial palace, but he does make a special point of the retrograde motion of the planet Jupiter, which is actually an annual event and should not be a source of surprise to any trained astronomer.²⁰ The memorials, after all, were not designed primarily to instruct the emperor either in the natural sciences or in the art of fortune telling: they are essentially political polemics, intended to persuade him to a change in his policies of government, and Hsiang K'ai used every line of attack that he could find to appeal to his audience.

There is, of course, a major contradiction in this situation. In order to judge what is abnormal, it is first necessary to define the normal; and so we find astronomers predicting with remarkable accuracy the timing of the planets and the details of a sophisticated calendar, then using their knowledge to devise omens that indicated the wrath of heaven. And at the same time, it is hard to tell who believed in these omens: we know that Emperor Huan was interested in the metaphysical teachings of his day; he patronised the worship of the mystical deity Huang-Lao  and he showed admiration for the scholarship of Hsiang K'ai, but that is no reason to suppose he was completely credulous. Very possibly, many of the portents of warning and the occasional omens of good fortune were used by both the emperor and his officials as a means of conducting debate at one remove and also of generating propaganda for their respective positions among a wider public opinion.

In the end, however, regardless of the science and

cosmology lying behind them all, the purpose and function of omens and portents in Han China was political. The real danger to Emperor Huan came not from the portents themselves, but from the number of them that were memorialised. The portents were an important sign that the officials of the empire were out of sympathy with the government, and the general good will of the officials, scholars and gentry was essential to the survival of the traditional Chinese state. Despite occasional edicts of self-searching and reform, the emperor made no real change in his policies, and he made no effort to re-establish contact with the men of position and good family. By rejecting the opinion of his officials and by ignoring their criticisms, Emperor Huan confirmed their lack of sympathy for his rule, and by this he brought his dynasty another stage closer to its final disaster.



Chien-ho	1 (147)
	2 (148)
	3 (149)
Ho-p'ing	1 (150)
Yüan-chia	1 (151)
	2 (152)
Yung-hsing	1 (153)
	2 (154)
Yung-shou	1 (155)
	2 (156)
	3 (157)
Yen-hsi	1 (158)
	2 (159)
	3 (160)
	4 (161)
	5 (162)
	6 (163)
	7 (164)
	8 (165)
	9 (166)
Yung-k'ang	1 (167)

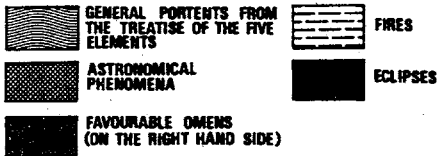


FIGURE 1: Portents recorded 147-167 A.D.

Figure 1 presents a histogram to show the number of portents recorded for each year of the reign of Emperor Huan. The bars on the left indicate unfavourable portents recorded in the Treatise of Astronomy and the Treatise of the Five Elements; the bars on the right indicate favourable portents recorded in the imperial annals.

Some portents recorded in the history have not been included in the graph. These are items which cannot be precisely dated, as for example popular songs, which were recorded as ominous both at the beginning and the end of the reign of Emperor Huan (*HHS* 103 (*chih* 13), 11a-13a), fashions in clothing (*HHS* 103 (*chih* 13), 4b-5a), and a reference to the arrogance of the Liang family in their riding through the capital (*HHS* 103 (*chih* 13), 3a). Besides this, there are a few items in the annals which might be regarded as unfavourable portents (e.g. an avalanche in 155 (*HHS* 7, 7a)), but which do not appear in the appropriate list in the treatises and are therefore not included; there are a negligible number of these. None of the omissions would appear to have significant effect on the pattern of the graph.

The Treatise of the Five Elements in *HHS* 108 (*chih* 18), 10b, refers also to two lunar eclipses in 157 and 165, which are said to have taken place at the wrong time (see also note 15). It seems more appropriate that these items should be charted in the astronomy section of the graph, however, rather than in the general portents section.

For the thirteen years from Chien-ho 1 to Yen-hsi 2 there are fifty-seven unfavourable portents recorded, an average of

fewer than 4.5 per year. For the eight years from Yen-hsi 2 to Yung-k'ang 1, the period during which Emperor Huan was exercising personal government, there are sixty unfavourable portents recorded, an average of 7.5 per year. This may be compared with the calculations and charts of Bielenstein, 'The Portents of the Ts'ien-Han-shu', p. 133, and Eberhard, 'The Political Function of Astronomy and Astronomers in Han China', pp. 42-3, where it appears that the average number of portents per year in Former Han was approximately two. See also Bielenstein, 'The Restoration of the Han Dynasty', II, pp. 157-62, where it may be observed that indirect criticism by means of portents (other than eclipses) reached a high of 3.1 per year during the reign of the incompetent and homosexual Emperor Ai, and that the greatest number of portents memorialised against the usurper Wang Mang in any one year of his rule was six.

From a general survey of the treatises of *Hou Han shu*, however, it appears that unfavourable portents were reported very much more frequently in Later Han than in Former Han. Overall, by the measurement of portents, Emperor Huan was not the most unpopular ruler of Later Han: in the eighteen years reign of Emperor An 安, from 107 to 125, more than 130 omens are recorded, being an average of more than seven per year. Many of these can be connected to the devastating rebellion of the Ch'iang 羌 in the northwest of China, which lasted from 107 to 118, but two notable peaks, in 116-17 and 124-5, were ascribed to the fortunes of the regent Empress-Dowager née Teng 滕 and later to the political ambitions of the

unpopular relatives of Emperor An's own Empress née Yen 閻 .
The reign of Emperor Shun 順 , who succeeded An on the
throne, was marked by significantly fewer portents, save
only for the year 138, when a large number of astronomical
observations, many involving the planet Venus, were
interpreted primarily as a sign of a eunuch's plot against
the power of the Liang family (HHS 101 (*chih* 11), 11b).
For the most part, under the administration of Liang Chi,
the earlier part of the reign of Emperor Huan followed the
same pattern. It was only in the time of the emperor's
personal government, with the alliance of his eunuchs,
that the level of indirect criticism by portent rose to
the peak of unpopularity.

THE BIOGRAPHY OF HSIANG K'AI

HHS 30B (*lieh-chuan* 20B), 15b-22a

Hsiang K'ai had the style Kung-chü. He was a man from T'o-yin in P'ing-yüan.²¹ He was a keen scholar, widely read in the affairs of the past, and he was expert in the crafts of astrology and of divination by *Yin-yang*.

In the time of Emperor Huan, the eunuchs dominated the government of the court and punishments were harsh and cruel. Moreover, the emperor's sons had died one after another,²² and there were great numbers of disasters and portents. In the ninth year of Yen-hsi [166 A.D.] Hsiang K'ai came as a private person to the palace and sent in a memorial:²³

Your subject has heard that august heaven does not speak, but rather uses signs and portents as the means of instruction. Though Yao and Shun were sages, they still ensured that there were calculations and delineations of the sun, the moon, the stars, and the positions of the zodiac,²⁴ and they made careful note of the movements of the five planets.²⁵ It was for this reason that they were able to maintain long life for a hundred years and set a model for all future generations.

My humble observations have noted that in the fifth month of last year Mars entered the T'ai-wei enclosure, invading the imperial seat. It went out by the Main Gate, not following its proper path.²⁶ In the intercalary [seventh] month, on the day keng-ch'en, Venus entered the House constellation, invaded a small star of the Heart

constellation, and shook the central major star.²⁷

This central star represents the king of heaven, and the small stars at the side are the sons of the king of heaven. Again, the T'ai-wei is the heavenly court, the seat of the five emperors. According to divination, since the 'punishing' stars of Metal [Venus] and Fire [Mars] both spread their light amongst them, this indicates misfortune for the Son of Heaven.²⁸ When [Venus] also entered the House and the Heart, this was a sign that there will be no descendants and successors.

This year, Jupiter remained a long time in the T'ai-wei. It actually travelled west to the [Right] Lateral Gate and then went back to cut between the Law Keeper stars.²⁹ Jupiter represents the essence of Wood, which loves life and hates death. So when it delays and does not leave, this indicates that the virtue of humanity is not cultivated, and that the executions and punishments are too severe.

In the twelfth month of the year before last [Yen-hsi 7], Mars and Jupiter both entered the Chariot constellation, and they retrograded for more than forty days. It was under these circumstances that the Empress née Teng was executed.³⁰

During that winter it was extremely cold, killing birds and beasts, harming fish and tortoises. On some of the bamboo and cypress trees by the city walls the leaves were withered and dry. On this point, I have heard from my teachers that 'When the cypress is withered and the bamboo is dry, then in less than three years the Son of Heaven will suffer the same fate'.³¹

Recently in the city of Lo-yang there have been people

calling out at night, without any reason, but claiming that there is the light from a fire. In divination, clamour among the people comes in the same category as the dry bamboo and cypress.³²

Since spring and summer, there have been repeated frosts and hail, and also heavy rains and thunderstorms. This is caused by subjects who flaunt their personal power and prosperity, and by punishments that are excessively cruel.³³

Liu Chih, Grand Administrator of T'ai-yüan, and Ch'eng Chin, Grand Administrator of Nan-yang, are men with ambitions to eliminate evil and wickedness. The executions they carried out fulfilled the hopes of the people. Yet your majesty has given ear to slanders from your castrate minions, and in this way, without paying close attention to the matter, you have ordered that they should be interrogated and put in prison.³⁴ The three ducal ministers have sent in letters begging that you show pity on Liu Chih and his fellows, but no further investigation has been made and the dukes themselves have been severely reprimanded.³⁵ So ministers concerned for their country will now be reluctant to open their mouths.

I have heard it said that if innocent people are killed and worthy men are punished, misfortune will extend to three generations [of those who are responsible for such injustice]. Since the beginning of your majesty's reign, there have been continual executions. The Liang, K'ou, Sun and Teng families have all been destroyed, while great numbers of

their associates, far too many of them, shared in their fall.³⁶ Li Yiin sent in a memorial of the type no wise ruler can ignore; Tu Chung asked for death with a sincerity that should have affected all your court. Yet for neither was there pardon or compassion, and both of them were slain.³⁷ Every man in the empire recognised the injustice. Since the time that Han arose there has never been a period like the present for rejecting good advice, executing worthy men, and using the law with such excessive severity!

According to the old statutes of the Yung-p'ing period, anyone liable to a heavy sentence should be kept in jail until the winter, and prior consent must be obtained before the punishment is carried out. This showed that men's lives were regarded as important. For the last thirty years and more, however, the officials of provinces and commanderies have become lax. They regard this custom as something unimportant. They try not to bother themselves with appeals on doubtful points [to the Commandant of Justice at the capital]. They even claim that they are unwell, and cannot take the trip. As a result, great numbers of people die in prison. When local officials decide on their own initiative whether a man shall be executed, many of the people who die are innocent.³⁸ Their ghosts and spirits gather with a sense of injustice, but they have nowhere else to vent their grievances and so the bitterness of their wrongs brings sickness and pestilence [to the whole country].

In former times, King Wen had only one wife, but she bore him ten sons.³⁹ Your palace women are numbered in the thousands, but I have not yet heard that any of them are

pregnant.⁴⁰ You should cultivate virtue and reduce punishments, and then you may obtain the full blessings of the Chung-ssu⁴¹ Ode.

Again, on the thirteenth day of the sixth month of the seventh year [of Yen-hsi] there was a dragon several hundred feet long lying dead on Yeh-wang Mountain in Ho-nei.⁴² Falling stars and stones came down in [Yu-] fu-feng, with a sound that could be heard in three commanderies.⁴³ Now in form and appearance, dragons are not always the same. Some are large and some are small. The Book of Changes of the Chou compared them to the Son of Heaven, and emperors and kings have taken the dragon as their auspices and insignia.⁴⁴ Some people heard the reports of the dead dragon in Ho-nei, but out of respect for the supernatural being they preferred to describe the creature as a snake. Yet a dragon can change its form, and even a snake has spiritual qualities. Neither of them should be dead. In former times, when the empire of Ch'in was approaching its end, the Spirit of Hua Mountain held a jade pi ring and gave it to Cheng K'e, informing him that 'In this year the ancestral dragon will die'. The First Emperor fled from this warning, but he died at Sha-ch'iu.⁴⁵ In the time of Wang Mang, in the second year of T'ien-feng, there was a false rumour about the miraculous appearance of a dead dragon in the Huang-shan Palace. Later the Han destroyed Wang Mang, and Emperor Kuang-wu restored the dynasty: so even a false rumour had effect. How much more will this apply if the report [of the dead dragon at Yeh-wang] is true?⁴⁶

Now the stars and constellations are the adornments of

heaven, in the same way that the myriad kingdoms are in attendance on the true king. When those in lower positions are planning to rebel against the authority above them, it is then that the stars turn against heaven [and fall away]. Stones are things that should remain at rest; when they fall it is a sign of loss. In the time of the Ch'un-ch'iu, five stones fell upon Sung, and later Duke Hsiang was captured by Ch'u.⁴⁷ At the time of the destruction of Ch'in, a stone fell in Tung commandery.⁴⁸ And now there have been things falling on Fu-feng, very close to the tomb parks of the former emperors.⁴⁹ Either the emperor will die, or there will surely be a rebellion.

Now it is my observation that, since the time of the Ch'un-ch'iu, and in all the reigns of emperors and kings in the past, there has been no occasion that the Yellow River has run clear, nor have the gates of the university ever collapsed of their own accord. In my opinion, the Yellow River holds the position of the feudal lords. Clearness is an attribute of yang and muddiness is an attribute of yin. When the river that should be muddy has instead turned clear, that is a sign that the yin wishes to become yang and that the feudal lords wish to become emperor.⁵⁰

The university is the palace of teaching and of civilising influence for the Son of Heaven. When its gates collapse of their own accord and without any reason, this is a sign that the forces of civilisation are nearing disaster, while teaching and influence are being destroyed.⁵¹

The Yi-chuan of Ching Fang says: 'When the Yellow River runs clear, the empire will have peace'.⁵² But now heaven is displaying strange portents, earth spits forth uncanny creations, and men have pestilence and disease.⁵³ With these three situations all together, even if we still have the Yellow River running clear, it is like the time that a unicorn appeared in the Ch'un-ch'iu period when it should not have done so and Confucius recorded it as something extraordinary.⁵⁴

Some time ago, I presented the throne with the sacred writings of Kan Chi, which had been passed on to me by Kung Ch'ung of Lang-yeh, but they did not accord with the emperor's opinions.⁵⁵ I have heard that it is the duty of the cuckoo to cry in the first month of summer, and the crickets must sound at the beginning of autumn.⁵⁶ Just as small things like these can maintain their duties, so even the humblest of men may offer words of loyalty. Though I myself am the least of your subjects, yet I do wish that you may grant me some of your leisure time in order that I may explain my arguments to you in fuller detail.

The document was sent in, but nothing was done about it. Some ten days later, he sent in another memorial:

It is my humble observation that Venus has been moving northwards for several days, and has now reappeared to the east.⁵⁷ This is a sign that there will be heavy fighting, that China is weak and the barbarians are strong. I have also calculated that Mars should now be making its appearance, but is instead remaining hidden.⁵⁸ There must be some secret plot. And all this is because there is so much injustice in

the administration of the law and loyal ministers have been killed and disgraced. It is for this same reason that the Virtuous Star [Jupiter] remained so long near the Law Keeper stars.⁵⁹ Your majesty should recognise the advice of heaven and should make proper examination of those who are wrongfully imprisoned. You should abrogate the punishments of Liu Chih and Ch'eng Chin, and you should give special appointment to the sons and descendants of Li Yin and Tu Chung in posthumous recognition [of their real loyalty].⁶⁰

Now if the Son of Heaven treats heaven without filial respect, then the sun will be eclipsed and the stars will be in conflict. One year after another, the sun has been eclipsed on the first day of the first month,⁶¹ the sun, moon and stars have lost their brightness, and the five planets have strayed from their proper paths. That sacred book which was presented by Kung Ch'ung bases its teaching on respect for heaven and earth and on obedience to the five elements, and it also deals with the techniques required for bringing the state to flourish and for helping maintain a plentiful succession. The writing is easy to understand, and it fully accords with the classics. Yet Emperor Shun did not put this into practice, so his successors did not flourish: Hsiao-chung and Hsiao-chih, one after the other, had their time of prosperity cut short.⁶²

And I have made another observation: if the people or the things that a ruler loves do not accord with the true Way, then the spirits will bring trouble. In this way, when the Chou dynasty was in decline, and the feudal lords used their strength against each other, that was the time when

men such as Hsia Yü, Shen Hsiu, [Nan-kung] Wan of Sung, P'eng Sheng and Jen Pi were alive.⁶³ When King Chou of the Yin dynasty was fond of women, that was the time Ta-chi appeared.⁶⁴ When the Duke of She loved dragons, a real dragon came to his court.⁶⁵ The officials of the Yellow Gates and the Regular Attendants are creatures who have been punished by heaven,⁶⁶ but your majesty loves them and accepts them, and you constantly pour favours upon them. If you have still failed to obtain an heir, are you sure this has nothing to do with it?⁶⁷

In the official system of heaven, the eunuch stars are found not in the Purple Palace but in the Heavenly Market: it is clear that their duties should be concerned with markets and streets.⁶⁸ But now instead they occupy the position of a chief minister,⁶⁹ quite contrary to the advice of heaven.

Again, I have heard that sacrifices have been instituted in the palace to Huang-Lao and to the Buddha.⁷⁰ Their teachings are those of purity and emptiness, with particular emphasis on wu-wei non-action. They love life and hate killing, they eliminate desires and they reject ostentation. Your majesty has not rejected lust and desire, and you apply the punishment of death far more than there is need. If you disobey their doctrines in such a fashion, how do you expect to gain blessings from them?

There are some who say that Lao-tzu went among the barbarians and became the Buddha.⁷¹ The Buddha did not sleep three nights under the [same] mulberry tree, for he did not want to remain too long in one place lest he develop

feelings of affection: this is the perfection of purity and separation from worldly affairs. When a heavenly spirit presented him with beautiful girls, the Buddha said: 'These are nothing more than bags of skin, filled with blood', and he never looked at them again.⁷² With such a degree of mental concentration, one may then achieve the true Way. Your majesty has licentious girls and seductive women, the most beautiful in the empire. You delight in fine food and splendid wine, and you demand every delicacy. How can you expect to equal Huang-Lao?

When this letter was sent in, [Hsiang K'ai was] immediately summoned to the imperial secretariat to explain himself further. Hsiang K'ai said: 'I have heard that in former times there were originally no eunuch officials. It was only at the end of the reign of Emperor Wu, when he was an old man and often went to the harem, that they were first established.⁷³ Later, their duties became gradually more important, and by the time of Emperor Shun they were extremely numerous. And now his majesty has granted them honours ten times that of the past,⁷⁴ and if he has no sons to succeed him, is it perhaps just his liking for them that causes this situation?'⁷⁵

The imperial secretariat reported on this reply, and an edict was issued that the senior officials should decide on his case. The imperial secretariat knew what was expected of them [by the eunuchs] and advised that: 'The office of eunuchs is not something that has been established only in recent generations. At the beginning of Han, Chang Tse became Grand Internuncio and assisted [Chou Po] the Marquis

of Chiang to destroy the Lü family.⁷⁶ Emperor Hsiao-wen allowed Chao T'an to share his imperial carriage, but his sons and grandsons were numerous and flourishing.⁷⁷ Hsiang K'ai has not put forward a proper discussion. He is dealing with matters of major importance, but his arguments are based on trivial detail, they are not correctly presented, and they harm good order. He disregards the models of the classics, he misrepresents the signs of the stars and constellations, and he makes false claim to spiritual authority. He juggles all these points to agree with his private and personal ideas, distorting the facts to make wrongful accusations against his superiors. We ask that the question be handed down for the Director of Retainers to assess K'ai's crime according to law'.⁷⁸

Hsiang K'ai was arrested and sent to the Lo-yang Prison. The emperor, however, considered that although Hsiang K'ai's words had been far too outspoken he had nevertheless relied in every case on signs from heaven and other portents. For this reason he was not executed, but he was sent to serve sentence as robberguard.⁷⁹

Before this, in the time of Emperor Shun, Kung Ch'ung of Lang-yeh had come to the palace and had presented a sacred book in a hundred and seventy chapters, which his master, Kan Chi, had obtained by the waters of the Ch'ü-yang Spring. It was all [written on] pale green silk, with vermilion borders, dark green headings and vermilion titles. It was called 'The Book of Great Peace and Pure Guidance'.⁸⁰ The text dealt mainly with the *Yin-yang* and Five Elements School, and it had a number of sayings from witches and shamans. The officials

reported that the work Kung Ch'ung had presented was unorthodox and false, outside the canon of the classics; nevertheless it was received and retained [in the imperial library]. Later, Chang Chüeh had some of [the text of] its teachings.⁸¹

When Emperor Ling came to the throne [in 168], he believed that the things Hsiang K'ai had written in his letters had been correct, and the Grand Tutor Ch'en Fan recommended him as Sincere and Upright. He did not accept office.⁸² In his own district he received honour, and every Grand Administrator who came to take up appointment there would always visit him with ceremony. In the Chung-p'ing period [184-189] he and Hsün Shuang and Cheng Hsüan were all invited to the court as Erudites, but Hsiang K'ai did not go.⁸³ He died in his own home.⁸⁴

*Discussion*⁸⁵

The men of ancient times have said: 'Those who are expert in explaining [the will of] heaven can surely give judgement in the affairs of men'.⁸⁶ And Chang Heng has remarked that 'the signs of heaven and the calculations of the calendar, the divination by the *yin* and *yang*, these are the urgent questions of the present day, which deserve our most urgent attention'.⁸⁷

Lang Yi⁸⁸ and Hsiang K'ai could look up with respect [at the heavens] and look down with care [upon the earth], and they made use of their observations to report upon the affairs of men. Their readings of omens for both good and ill fortune were in each case borne out by events, and the doctrines that they derived from these various situations were always clear.

Surely this is the real contribution that scholars of such arts can make to the people of their time, and those who come after them may take their teachings as an example for their own conduct.

Yet it is the weakness of such men that they love to deal in witchcraft,⁸⁹ and for this reason the true gentleman will not pay great attention to such matters.

*Eulogy*⁹⁰

Chung-huan was a man of deep art, the carriages with rush-bound wheels arrived in a constant stream;⁹¹ Su Ching, with a flying brush, purified our ancient city of Yin;⁹² the warnings of misfortune from Hsiang and Lang were brought to reality by the sins of the imperial government.

COMMON ABBREVIATIONS AND REFERENCES

- HHS Fan Yeh 范曄 (398-446), *Hou Han shu* 後漢書 :
annals and biographies with commentary by Li Hsien
李賢 (651-684) and others; treatises from the
Hsü Han shu 續漢書 of Ssu-ma Piao 司馬彪
(d. 305) with commentary by Liu Chao 劉昭 (6th
century); in *Hou Han shu chi-chieh* 集解 edition
of Wang Hsien-ch'ien 王先謙 (Changsha, 1923).
- HS Pan Ku 班固 (32-92) and others, *Han shu* 漢書
with commentary by Yen Shih-ku 顏師古 (581-645);
Po-na 百衲 edition.
- SC Ssu-ma Ch'ien 司馬遷 (145-86 B.C.?), *Shih chi*
史記 with commentaries; *chi-chieh* 集解 by P'ei
Yin 裴駟 (5th century); *so-yin* 索隱 by Ssu-ma
Chen 司馬貞 (8th century); *cheng-yi* 正義 by
Chang Shou-chieh 張守節 (8th century), Po-na
edition.
- SKC Ch'en Shou 陳壽 (233-297), *San-kuo chih* 三國志,
with commentary compiled by P'ei Sung-chih 裴松之
(372-451); Po-na edition.
- TCTC Ssu-ma Kuang 司馬光 (1019-1086), *Tzu-chih t'ung-chien*
資治通鑑 with commentary by Hu San-hsing 胡三
省 (1230-1302), and Ssu-ma Kuang, *k'ao-yi* 考異
commentary of critical examination on various points of
conflict in the original sources (Peking, 1956).

Shih ching 詩經, *Shu ching* 書經, *Ch'un-ch'iu* 春
秋 and *Tso chuan* 左傳 are cited from the text and
translation in James Legge, *The Chinese Classics*, 5 vols.

(Hong Kong, 1960). Unless otherwise indicated, other Chinese works are cited from the edition of the *Ssu-pu ts'ung-k'an* 四部叢刊 .

Official titles generally follow the system of H.H. Dubs as given in Rafe de Crespigny, *Official Titles of the Former Han Dynasty* (Canberra, 1967). A glossary of titles for Later Han may also be found in Rafe de Crespigny, *The Last of the Han* (Canberra, 1969), pp. 519-31.

Western equivalents of Chinese dates have been calculated according to the Julian calendar, using the table in Hsüeh Chung-san and Ou-yang I, *A Sino-Western Calendar for Two Thousand Years 1-2000 A.D.* (Hong Kong, 1961).

Identifications of Chinese with Western astronomical constellations are based on Gustave Schlegel, *Uranographie chinoise* (The Hague and Leiden, 1875), and Ho Peng Yoke, *The Astronomical Chapters of the Chin Shu* (Paris and The Hague, 1966). These are referred to in the notes simply as Schlegel and Ho.

NOTES

Introduction

1. Rafe de Crespigny, 'Political Protest in Imperial China: the Great Proscription of Later Han 167-184', *Papers on Far Eastern History* 11 (Canberra, March 1975), 1-36; and 'The Harem of Emperor Huan: a Study of Court Politics in Later Han', *Papers on Far Eastern History* 12 (Canberra, September 1975), 1-42. A third article, 'The Second Year of Yen-hsi: Notes to the Han Chronicle of 159 A.D.', *Journal of the Oriental Society of Australia* 10 (Sydney, June 1975), 7-25, also discusses events at the time of Emperor Huan's *coup d'état* against the Liang family.
2. These two incidents are described in several places in *Hou Han shu* as well as in the memorial of Hsiang K'ai translated below. The texts, however, vary in their estimate of the importance of the grand administrators and the junior officials in deciding on the executions. The biographies of Ts'en Chih in *HHS* 67 (*lieh-chuan* 57), 12a-b, and of Wang Yün in *HHS* 66 (*lieh-chuan* 56), 10a, naturally place chief emphasis on the initiative of these junior officials (the more so since Ts'en Chih was already popular among the students of the Imperial University and Wang Yün, as chief minister at court during the reign of Emperor Hsien 獻 in 192, became celebrated for his loyal opposition to the military brutality of the warlord Tung Cho 董卓 and his lieutenants; on the later career of Wang Yün, see, for

example, the chronicle of the year 192, in *TCTC* 60, 1933-38, translated by de Crespigny, *The Last of the Han*, pp. 89-97). On the other hand, the annals of Emperor Huan in *HHS* 7, 14b, and the biography of Ch'en Fan 陳蕃 in *HHS* 66 (*lieh-chuan* 56), 4b ff., which contains a memorial of protest written by Ch'en Fan in support of Ch'eng Chin and Liu Chih, refer primarily to the grand administrators. See also de Crespigny, 'Political Protest in Imperial China', pp. 9, 20, and note 22.

3. *HHS* 78 (*lieh-chuan* 68), 10b-11a and 12a; *HHS* 67 (*lieh-chuan* 57), 18b; de Crespigny, 'Political Protest in Imperial China', pp. 8-9.

As an example of the atrocities of this time, we may cite the record of Hsü Hsüan, Prefect of Hsia-p'i. It is said that he asked to marry a daughter of the local magnate Li Hao 李曷, who had formerly held position as Grand Administrator of Ju-nan 汝南 commandery, but he was refused. So he led the guards of the prefectural office to Li Hao's house, brought the girl back to the yamen, and amused himself there by shooting arrows at her until she was dead. When the Chancellor of Tung-hai, Huang Fu, heard about these deeds of his subordinate, he arrested Hsü Hsüan and his followers, put them to torture, and then sent Hsü Hsüan to public execution.

4. The biography of Chang Chien is in *HHS* 67 (*lieh-chuan* 57), 18b-19b. See also de Crespigny, 'Political Protest in Imperial China', pp. 9, 28, 35, and

note 29.

5. P. Pelliot, Review of Ed. Chavannes, 'Les pays d'Occident d'après le Wei Lio' (*T'oung Pao* 2(6) (décembre 1905), pp. 519-71), in *Bulletin de l'Ecole française d'Extrême-Orient* 6 (Hanoi, 1906), pp. 361-400, see pp. 385 ff.; E. Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China: the Spread and Adaptation of Buddhism in Early Medieval China*, 2 vols. (Leiden, 1959), I, pp. 36-8.
6. Tjan Tjoe Som, *Po hu t'ung: the Comprehensive Discussions in the White Tiger Hall*, 2 vols. (Leiden, 1949-52), I, pp. 120-4 and 141 ff.; II, pp. 489-92.
7. Jack L. Dull, 'The Confucian Origins of Neo-Taoism', paper contributed to the Second International Conference of Taoist Studies, Harvard University, September 1972 (mimeograph).
8. On Chinese knowledge of astronomy in the second century A.D., see, for example, Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilisation in China, Volume III: Mathematics and the sciences of the heavens and the earth* (Cambridge, 1959), particularly Table 33 on p. 401, pp. 359-62 and 398-400. In the first century A.D., the calendarist Li Fan had calculated the sidereal and synodic period of Jupiter to a high level of accuracy, and in the first part of the second century the mathematician Chang Heng had constructed an armillary sphere driven by water power, which traced the paths of the five visible planets among the fixed constellations.

9. See, for example, Alfred Forke, *Lun Hêng, Part I, Philosophical Essays of Wang Ch'ung* (Leipzig, London and Shanghai, 1907), pp. 109-29, 173 and 372-3.
10. Hans Bielenstein 'An Interpretation of the Portents in the Ts'ien-Han-shu', *Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities (BMFEA)* 22 (Stockholm, 1950), 127-43; Wolfram Eberhard, 'The Political Function of Astronomy and Astronomers in Han China', in John K. Fairbank (ed.), *Chinese Thought and Institutions*, (Chicago, 1957), pp. 33-70.

For the further development of Bielenstein's views on the role of portents in the political affairs of Han China, see his 'The Restoration of the Han Dynasty: with Prolegomena on the Historiography of the Hou Han shu', *BMFEA* 26 (1954), 156-61, and 'The Restoration of the Han Dynasty, Volume II: The Civil War', *BMFEA* 31 (1959), 232-48.

Among Eberhard's other works in this field, the following deserve particular attention: *Beiträge zur kosmologischen Spekulation der Chinesen der Han-Zeit* (Berlin, 1933); 'Beiträge zur Astronomie der Han-Zeit, I. Inhalt des Kapitels über Zeiteneinteilung der Han-Annalen' (with R. Henseling) and 'Beiträge zur Astronomie der Han-Zeit, II' (with R. Müller and R. Henseling), in *Sitzungsberichte der Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, phil.-hist. Kl. 23 (Berlin, 1933); 'Contributions to the Astronomy of the Han Period III: the Astronomy of the Later Han', *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies (HJAS)* I (Cambridge, Mass.

1936), pp. 194-241.

11. The Annals occupy the first nine *chüan* of HHS, the Treatise of Astronomy is in HHS 100-2 (*chih* 10-12) and the Treatise of the Five Elements is in HHS 103-8 (*chih* 13-18).
12. On the text history of *Hou Han shu*, see Bielenstein, 'The Restoration of the Han Dynasty', I, 9-20. Two major historians of the Later Han period are known to have been involved in the compilation of the treatises of astronomy and the five elements. Ts'ai Yung 蔡邕 (133-92), who was a contemporary of Emperor Huan, was one of the editors appointed for the continuation of the official history of the dynasty in 172, the work which is now known as the *Tung-kuan Han-chi* 東觀漢紀. Ts'ai Yung's biography in HHS 60B (*lieh-chuan* 50B), 14a, remarks that he was particularly concerned with the Treatise of Astronomy and the Treatise of the Five Elements. As the T'ang commentary of Li Hsien remarks, these treatises of *Tung-kuan Han-chi* have not survived; but it is likely that the records in the imperial archives incorporated some of Ts'ai Yung's work, and it is known that the treatises of the *Hsü Han shu* were composed from the records of the imperial archives. The second historian is Ying Shao 應劭 (fl. 190), who is mentioned at the beginning of the Treatise of the Five Elements as one of the chief compilers of that text as it now stands (HHS 103 (*chih* 13), 1a), and who is recognised as one of the leading historians of the last generation of Han. His

biography is in HHS 48 (*lieh-chuan* 38).

13. On at least one occasion, however, the attempt to use a favourable portent as a means of showing approval for the dynasty may be seen to have backfired. The report of the yellow dragon which is recorded in the annals of 167 (HHS 7, 15a) is mentioned in the Treatise of the Five Elements as a fake:

In the eighth month of Yung-k'ang 永康 1, Pa 巴 commandery (in the region of present-day Szechwan) reported that a yellow dragon had appeared. When the junior official Fu Chien 傅堅 heard that the commandery office was proposing to send such a report to the capital, he went in and explained that it was nothing but a joke, and urged that no report should be sent. The grand administrator paid no attention to his protests.

Later, Fu Chien explained [to officials at the capital] that some people had gone to a lake to bathe because it was a hot day. They saw that the water was muddy, and so they joked amongst themselves, saying: 'There must be a yellow dragon in there'. Then the rumour spread among the people, and the commandery office thought they would make something good out of it, and that is why they reported it.

The historians of that time recorded this report in the imperial annals. During the reign of Emperor Huan, the government was in decline and corrupt, and there were many reports of omens and

signs, all in this category. Moreover, the scholars of the past have told how when omens arise at the wrong time they are really calamitous. When false stories among the people cause rumours about dragons, these are dragon disasters. (HHS 107, (*chih* 17), 2b-3a)

For Hsiang K'ai's remarks about favourable omens appearing at the wrong time, see his comments to the reports of the Yellow River running clear, e.g. note 50 below. One may observe also that the report in the annals of a yellow dragon appearing in 165 (HHS 7, 12b) was not mentioned by Hsiang K'ai, though he gave considerable discussion to the dead dragon observed on Yeh-wang Mountain in the previous year (e.g. note 42 below).

14. For a clear discussion of this point, see Bielenstein, 'Portents in the Ts'ien-Han-shu', p. 132.
15. Eclipses of the sun are described by *Hou Han shu* with the phrase *jih yu shih chih* 日有食之 'the sun had (something which) ate it', and also by the special term *shih* 食. The eclipses memorialised to the throne are recorded by the annals and also by HHS 108 (*chih* 18), 1a-9a, which is the last chapter of the Treatise of the Five Elements and which is devoted to phenomena related to the sun and moon. On the calculations of solar eclipses for the Han period, see H.H. Dubs, *The History of the Former Han Dynasty* by Pan Ku, 3 vols. (Baltimore, 1938-55), I, 161-6, and Dub's comments on the eclipses of each reign of Former Han at the end of

the chapters of his translations. See also Bielenstein, 'Portents in the Ts'ien-Han-shu', p. 142 and graph.

On the Han Chinese ability to predict eclipses, see Needham, *Science and Civilisation in China*, III, 420 ff. Among the portents recorded in the reign of Emperor Huan there are two occasions, in 157 and 165, on which the full moon was eclipsed by the shadow of the earth 'in the wrong month' (*fei ch'i yüeh* 非其月 : HHS 108 (*chih* 18), 10b). However, though Hsiang K'ai referred in his second memorial to solar eclipses in 165 and 166, he did not mention the lunar eclipse of 165.

Solar eclipses that were recorded during the reign of Emperor Huan are listed below, together with their number according to the catalogue of Th. von Oppolzer, *Canon der Finsternisse* (Vienna, 1887), pp. 130-3. They are listed in order in HHS 108 (*chih* 18), 7a-8a; references to HHS annals are given after each entry:

18.II.147	HHS 7, 2a	Oppolzer 3249
23.VI.149	HHS 7, 4a	Oppolzer 3256
19.VIII.152	HHS 7, 6a	see below
25.IX.154	HHS 7, 7a	Oppolzer 3267
24.VII.157	HHS 7, 8a	Oppolzer 3274
13.VII.158	HHS 7, 8a	Oppolzer 3276
28.II.165	HHS 7, 12a	Oppolzer 3291
17.II.166	HHS 7, 14a	Oppolzer 3294
4.VII.167	HHS 7, 15a	Oppolzer 3298

All of these listed by Oppolzer, with the exception of no. 3294, were umbral eclipses (i.e. they were visible

on some part of the earth's surface as total). During this period of twenty years there were some eclipses mentioned in Oppolzer's catalogue which may have been discernible from China, but none would appear to have had more than slight effect on the sun, and none is recorded.

On the other hand, the Chinese record of an eclipse on 19 July 152 cannot be justified by Oppolzer's calculations. Oppolzer mentions two eclipses in 152: no. 3262 on 22 April and no. 3263 on 15 October. Neither would have been visible in China: no. 3262 affected the Arctic Circle north of Canada, and no. 3263 would have been effective in China only during the night, reaching its apparent ecliptic conjunction at about 1845 G.M.T., or 2.00 a.m. in China. *HHS* 108 (*chih* 18), 7a, notes that the eclipse recorded for 19 July was not observed by the astronomical bureau at the capital, but was reported from Kuang-ling 廣陵 commandery, north of the Yangtse estuary. This was not an unusual procedure: the genuine eclipses of 147, 157 and 166, for example, were also reported from the provinces; but it seems clear that in 152 the report was false.

The prognostication for the eclipse of 152 claims that it was caused by the young emperor's excessive fondness for music, but it is possible, of course, that it was originally sent in as a criticism of the Liang family usurpation of power, and that dangerous attribution was later removed. As Dubs remarks, in

discussing a similar false report of an eclipse in 184 B.C., the reporting of such a false portent, should it be discovered, would almost certainly be punished by death (*History of the Former Han Dynasty*, I, 211-13). It was most unusual for a false eclipse to be reported, and even in the second part of the reign of Emperor Huan, when criticism by portent was at its height, the critics contented themselves with the eclipses that actually took place. The false report of 152 is a remarkable exception to the general reliability of Chinese observations.

16. The only portent recorded for the year 159 took the form of heavy summer rain at the imperial capital, lasting more than fifty days (*HHS* 7, 8b; *HHS* 103 (*chih* 13), 4a).
17. *HHS* 108 (*chih* 18), 7b. The commentary of Liu Chao quotes another version of the story of Ch'en Shou (personal name here written as Yüan 援) from the *Liang Chi pieh-chuan* 別傳 'Additional Biography of Liang Chi'.
18. See, for example, note 46 below.
19. *HHS* 104 (*chih* 14), 3b; *HHS* 105 (*chih* 15), 5b; *HHS* 106 (*chih* 16), 4a. See also de Crespigny, 'The Harem of Emperor Huan', pp. 12 and 20 and note 15.
20. See note 30 below. It should be noted, of course, that Hsiang K'ai was a private scholar, known primarily for his skills in divination. Though he was widely respected as an astrologer, his scientific knowledge was clearly not comparable to that of the scholars at the imperial bureau of astronomy. Cf. note 8 above.

The Biography

21. The characters of Hsiang K'ai's style are **公矩**. The text here gives his place of origin as **隰陰** Hsi-yin, but the commentary of the Ch'ing scholar Ch'ien Ta-hsin **錢大昕** points out that this should be written **濕陰** and sounded T'o-yin. HHS 112 (chih 22), 4a, lists T'o-yin prefecture in P'ing-yüan **平原** commandery. HS 28A, 27b, gives the name of this prefecture as **濕陰** T'o-yin, and **濕** is an alternative form of **濕**. The former city lay west of present-day Linyi **臨沂** in Shantung.
22. The implication of the phrase **比矢皇子** is that imperial children had miscarried or were still-born or died in infancy. According to the annals, the late Empress née Liang had been jealous of the emperor's favourites among the palace women, and had arranged that none of the concubines who became pregnant should come to full term (HHS 10B, 6a: **每宮人孕育鮮得全者**). The Empress née Liang, however, died in 159, and HHS 10B, 17a, lists three daughters of Emperor Huan, personal names Hua **華**, Chien **堅** and Hsiu **修**, who were enfeoffed as princesses (**kung-chu 公主**) in 158, 164 and 166 respectively. These were evidently the children of concubines. Emperor Huan was thus not infertile, but he had no son to succeed him.
23. From internal dating, particularly the astronomical observations at the beginning of the second memorial (see note 58), it appears that Hsiang K'ai came to

the capital and presented his memorials in mid-summer of Yen-hsi 延熹 9, June 165.

24. See *Shu ching*, the *Canon of Yao* 堯典, in Legge, *The Chinese Classics*, III, 18.

25. The five planets are here described by the phrase *wu wei* 五緯 'the five that cross the sky'. In traditional Chinese astronomy their names are *Ch'en-hsing* 辰星 'Hour Star' (Mercury); *T'ai-po* 太白 'Great White' (Venus); *Ying-huo* 熒惑 'Fitful Glitterer' (Mars); *Sui-hsing* 歲星 'Year Star' (Jupiter) and *T'ien-hsing* 填星 'Aged Star' or *Chen-hsing* 鎮星 'Exorcist' (Saturn). See Schlegel, pp. 613 ff., and Needham, *Science and Civilisation in China*, III, pp. 398 ff. The outer planets of the solar system, Uranus, Neptune and Pluto, were not visible to the ancient Chinese astronomers.

Ho, pp. 122 ff., translates the descriptions and prognostications of the planets from the *Astronomical Treatise of Chin shu*, and on pp. 34-41 he explains a number of technical terms that may be used to describe their movements. They include the characters *fan* 犯 'to transgress' or 'to invade'; *ju* 入 'to enter' and *shou* 守 'to guard' or 'to remain in' (a particular constellation).

26. The *T'ai-wei* Enclosure (*T'ai-wei yüan* 太微垣) is described by Schlegel, pp. 534 ff., and Ho, pp. 76-8, as ten stars in the Western constellations of Virgo and Leo which have the appearance of a circle. *Tuan men* 端門 'The Main Gate' is the space between two of

the stars of this circle, β and η Virginis. Within the enclosure, the Western star β Leonis and four smaller stars nearby are known to the Chinese as the 'Five Emperors' (*Wu-ti* 五帝 : Ho, pp. 77 note h and 78 note a). See Figure 5. In the light of the reference to 'the seat of the five emperors' below, it seems likely that Hsiang K'ai's phrase 'the imperial seat' (*ti-tso* 帝坐) here refers also to this group.

According to the Treatise of Astronomy, HHS 102 (*chih* 12), 2a, on Yen-hsi 8:5: *jen-wu* (14.VI.165) Mars was in the close neighbourhood of *Yu chih-fa* 右執法 'The Keeper of the Law on the Right'. This star is identified with β Virginis, one of the two stars which flank the *Tuan men* (Schlegel, p. 472; Ho, p. 76). These observations are in essential accord with present calculations of the relative positions of Earth and Mars (See Figure 2).

27. The *Fang* 房 'House' and *Hsin* 心 'Heart' constellations, classified by Chinese astronomy among the twenty-eight *hsiu* 宿 'lunar mansions', both contain stars of Western Scorpio. *Fang* is β , δ , π , and ρ Scorpii, *Hsin* is α , σ and τ Scorpii (Schlegel, pp. 113 and 138; Ho, pp. 96 and 97). The phrase *chung-yao* 中耀 'the central major star' in this context must refer to Antares, α Scorpii, which is the middle of the three stars of the *Hsin* group, and far the brightest.

HHS 102 (*chih* 12), 2b, records that on Yen-hsi 8 : int.7: *chi-wei* (19.IX.165) Venus invaded the 'front star' (*ch'ien-hsing* 前星) of *Hsin*. 'Front star' must refer

here to σ Scorpii, which lies closest to the *Fang* constellation.

The intercalary seventh month of this year began on the day *chia-wu*, thirty-first of the sexagenary cycle, and did not therefore contain a day *keng-ch'en* 庚辰 (cyclical no. 17). Hsiang K'ai's reference to *keng-ch'en*, however, could be a mistake for *keng-tzu* 子 (cyclical no. 37), *keng-wu* 午 (47) or *keng-shen* 申 (57). Yen-hsi 8: int.7: *keng-shen* was 20.IX.165.


If we allow for the amendment of the date from *keng-ch'en* to *keng-shen*, the Chinese records indicate that the planet Venus had appeared in the region of β and δ Scorpii early in September, then moved further east close to σ Scorpii on 19 September, and appeared the following night in the near neighbourhood of α Scorpii. These observations accord generally with present calculations (see Figure 3).

28. In Chinese astrology the planets Venus and Mars were identified with the elements (*hsing* 行, better understood as 'forces') of Metal and Fire and thus with weapons and warfare (Schlegel, pp. 636 and 626-7; Ho, p. 122 note b). In particular, Mars was associated with the heat of summer, with fierce fighting and with official justice; Venus, belying its usual concerns in the West, was associated with autumn and hence with executions as well as with sharp weapons.

Not surprisingly, Chinese astrology recognised several different stars and constellations as having connection with one or other aspect of the emperor's

power and position, and Hsiang K'ai here is using two observations of planetary movement, in different parts of the sky, as argument for his warning to Emperor Huan. First, he points to the appearance of Mars within the T'ai-wei enclosure, and in particular to the planet's approach to the 'Five Emperors' group, about β Leonis (see note 26). Second, he remarks on the near conjunction of Venus with the star Antares, and its close neighbours in the constellation Scorpio, which he associates with the king of heaven and his sons. (The Astronomical Treatise of *Chin shu*, translated by Ho, p. 97, identifies Antares with the throne of the Son of Heaven.) Both these events, according to Hsiang K'ai's interpretation, indicate danger and loss to the emperor.

It may be noticed, however, in some contrast to Hsiang K'ai's argument, the Astronomical Treatise of *Chin shu* (translated by Ho, p. 77) remarks that '..... the path of the moon or one of the Five Planets entering the T'ai-wei (Enclosure) can be regarded as a good omen. When (the moon or one of the Five Planets) trespasses upon the central thrones it tells that all the punishments are completed'.

29. HHS 102 (*chih* 12), 3a, records that on Yen-hsi 9:1: *jen-ch'en* (19.II.166) Jupiter entered the T'ai-wei and after fifty-eight days (i.e. on 18.IV.166) it came out by the *Tuan men*. As we have observed in note 26, the *Tuan men*, or 'Main Gate', is the space between the two stars β and η Virginis, which are known as Yu 

and *Tso chih-fa* 左執法 'The Keepers of the Law on the Right and on the Left'.

The traditional architecture of China regularly provided for a main gate to have two lesser portals, one on each side, and Chinese astronomers recognised the same pattern in the stars. Thus the *T'ai-wei* has two *Yi men* 掖門 'Lateral Gates': the 'Left Lateral Gate' is the space between β and γ Virginis, being to the east of the Main Gate; the 'Right Lateral Gate' is the space between η Virginis and σ Leonis, to the west of the Main Gate (Ho, p. 76; on this point Schlegel, p. 475, is mistaken). From the context, it appears that Jupiter was observed to retrograde in the area of Western Virgo, reaching its westernmost point at the edge of the constellation Leo. See Figure 5.

30. The name of the *Hsien-yüan* 軒轅 constellation is rendered as *Char* 'Chariot' by Schlegel, p. 452. However, as one may observe from the description of the individual stars in Schlegel and in Ho, p. 93 (where the name of the constellation is not translated), almost all of the seventeen stars of the group are associated with the empress, the empress-dowager, imperial concubines and various imperial relatives by marriage. *Hsien-yüan* is equivalent to α , γ , ϵ and other stars of Western Leo, and the brightest star is α Leonis, Regulus, which is equated with the 'Female Ruler' (*nü-chu* 女主 i.e. the empress).

According to present calculations, the planet Jupiter did appear in the vicinity of Western Leo

(Chinese *Hsien-yüan*) in September 164, and it was again in *Hsien-yüan* four months later, in the twelfth month of the Chinese year (e.g. 23 January 165, see Figure 4). Both Hsiang K'ai and the Treatise of Astronomy are therefore correct, and the planet was retrograding for several months during this period.

However, it is curious that Hsiang K'ai should have remarked on the retrograde motion of Jupiter. Calculated in degrees of orbit around the sun, Jupiter moves very much more slowly than Earth and every year, as Earth comes to the same side of the sun as Jupiter and 'overtakes' that planet, Jupiter first appears stationary and then moves westwards among the constellations. Figure 4 shows the relative positions of Earth and Jupiter in the period 164-5, and it may be appreciated that this situation of conjunction and the consequent retrogression will occur every year and will last approximately the same time. In these circumstances, it is hard to see that a Chinese astronomer was justified in regarding it as a special portent.

The situation is somewhat similar with regard to Mars, which has a synodic period of 780 days, and is therefore overtaken and passed by Earth at approximately two-year intervals. On each occasion that this happens, the planet will retrograde for some six weeks or more. In 165 this phenomenon could be observed from late January until May: during this period Mars would have appeared either stationary or moving westwards night

after night (see Figure 2).

However, since the official astronomers of the Han dynasty had achieved very close estimates for the synodic period not only for Jupiter but also for Mars (Eberhard, 'Contributions to the Astronomy of the Han Period III', pp. 208-9, and Needham, *Science and Civilisation in China*, III, 401), and since a forty-day retrogression could be regarded as normal for the planet Mars, it is again surprising that Hsiang K'ai remarked upon it.

The Treatise of Astronomy, in fact, does not mention the retrograde motion of either Jupiter or Mars at this time. *HHS* 102 (*chih* 12), 2a, does record, however, that on Yen-hsi 7:12: *yi-ch'ou* (28.I.165) Mars encroached upon the second star of the *Hsien-yüan* constellation, presumably γ Leonis. This agrees with the statement of Hsiang K'ai and also with modern calculations. The official prognostication for this and some other observations during the year was linked with the fall of the Empress née Teng and her relatives at the beginning of 165.

31. *HHS* 7, 14b, records that in Yen-hsi 9:12 the bamboos and cypresses that grew in the city of Lo-yang suffered some injury to their leaves. Since Hsiang K'ai was writing his memorial in the middle of Yen-hsi 9, however, there must be some error either in the present text of the memorial or in the date of the portent.

In his *k'ao-yi* commentary to *TCTC* 55, 1791, Ssu-ma Kuang observes that the date in *HHS* 7 is mistaken, but

that the Treatise of the Five Elements, in *HHS* 104 (*chih* 14), 5b, has the year as Yen-hsi 7, and this is correct. The Ch'ing scholar Hui Tung 惠棟, in his *Hou Han shu pu-chu* 補注, quoted in the *chi-chieh* commentary to *HHS* 7 and to the memorial of Hsiang K'ai, follows Ssu-ma Kuang's amendment.

The present text of *HHS* 104, however, both in the *chi-chieh* edition of Wang Hsien-ch'ien and in the Po-na edition (p. 9a) which is based on Sung blockprints, gives the date of the portent as Yen-hsi 9, and it prognosticates the death of the emperor in the following year. Neither Hui Tung nor any other scholar has commented on the text of *HHS* 104 at this point.

The best solution to the question appears to be that one should accept Hsiang K'ai's dating of the severe winter at the end of Yen-hsi 7, assume that Ssu-ma Kuang had access to a text of the treatise which also gave that date, and regard the present-day editions and *HHS* annals as mistaken.

32. *HHS* 104 (*chih* 14), 4a, records that on Yen-hsi 9:3: *kuei-ssu* (21.IV.166) there was the light of a fire moving about the capital at night, and the people in the city were frightened and called out to one another in alarm. The main text of the treatise does not indicate any prognostication for this event, but the commentary quotes the *Hou Han shu* 後漢書 of Yüan Shan-sung 袁山松 of the fourth century which links the portent in general terms to the proscription crisis, the hegemony of the eunuchs, and the failure

of the emperor to father a successor.

The annals of the reign of Emperor Huan, however, in *HHS* 7, 14a, also mention this phenomenon, and since the next entry in the annals refers to a serious famine in Ssu-li 司隸 (the province of the capital) and Yü 豫 province, it is possible that one school of divination related the panic in Lo-yang to this natural disaster.

This light of a fire was possibly a manifestation of the Aurora Borealis (see Needham, *Science and Civilisation in China*, III, pp. 482-3). It may be observed that both *HHS* 104 and the annals in *HHS* 7 contain references to a number of fires in the palace and the imperial tomb buildings in the years 165 and 166, but Hsiang K'ai makes no mention of them in his memorial.

33. *HHS* annals 7, 14a, records an edict of Yen-hsi 9:1: *chi-yu* (8.III.166) which refers to a poor harvest and offers tax relief to affected districts, but the annals make no particular mention of frosts, rain or thunderstorms in this period.

In China, most rain falls during the summer months. According to *HHS* 103 (*chih* 13), 4a, there had been continual rain for more than fifty days in the summer of 159, just before the overthrow of Liang Chi. According to *HHS* 105 (*chih* 15), 5b, there had been remarkable hailstorms in 161 and 164, both of which were connected by prognostication with the career of the Empress née Teng and also with the executions

carried out by Emperor Huan. There had not been any noteworthy thunderstorms since 149 (*HHS* 105 (*chih* 15), 7a). On the possibility of an increasingly cold cycle of climate developing in China at this time, see, for example, Chu K'o-chen ^{竺可楨} *Chung-kuo chin wu-ch'ien nien lai ch'i-hou pien-ch'ien ti ch'u-pu yen-chiu*

^{中国近五千年来气候变迁的初步研究}, *Kao-ku hsueh-pao*
^{考古学报} 37 (Peking, 1972), 15-38.

34. On Liu Chih and Ch'eng Chin see pp. 3-5 above.

35. The three dukes (*san-kung* 三公), highest-ranking officials in the bureaucracy, were at this time the Grand Commandant Ch'en Fan ^{陳蕃}, the Minister over the Masses Hu Kuang ^{胡廣} and the Minister of Works Liu Mou ^{劉茂}. According to the biography of Ch'en Fan in *HHS* 66 (*lieh-chuan* 56), 4b f., Emperor Huan was extremely annoyed by the protest. Two of the three dukes were intimidated, and said nothing more on the matter, but Ch'en Fan sent in another memorial in his own name. The text of the joint memorial is not preserved in the main text of *Hou Han shu*, but the text of Ch'en Fan's individual one appears in his biography.

The short biography of Liu Mou in *HHS* 39 (*lieh-chuan* 29), 12a, also mentions the joint memorial and its unfavourable reception, but both *HHS* 39 and *HHS* 66 say that the Minister over the Masses who took part in the protest was Liu Chü ^{劉矩}, not Hu Kuang. As the Ch'ing dynasty commentator Ch'ien Ta-hsin points out, however, Hu Kuang had been Minister over the

Masses since the fifth month of Yen-hsi 9, and his immediate predecessor, Hsü Hsü 許翊, had been in that post since Yen-hsi 6 (HHS 7, 11b-14b). Hu Kuang remained Minister over the Masses until after the death of Emperor Huan. Liu Chü was Grand Commandant during the period 161-2 (HHS 7, 10b and 11b), but he did not hold ducal rank again until the reign of Emperor Ling. His biography in HHS 76 (*lieh-chuan* 66), 12b-13b, makes no mention of any memorial in favour of Ch'eng Chin and Liu Chih.

HHS 7 records that Ch'en Fan was dismissed from his post in the seventh month of Yen-hsi 9 and Liu Mou in the eleventh month. The biographies of both men, in HHS 66 and HHS 39, mention these dismissals as a consequence of their protest. Since Hu Kuang's biography in HHS 44 (*lieh-chuan* 34), does not refer to the incident, it is possible that he did not take part in the joint protest (see TCTC 55, 1989 and *k'ao-yi* commentary). It is also possible that the memorial was sent in earlier in the year and that Hsü Hsü was one of the signatories.

The whole affair was quite long drawn out: both the joint memorial and Ch'en Fan's individual one were sent in during the summer of 166, but the case of Ch'eng Chin and Liu Chih was not finally decided until their execution at the end of that year. HHS 7, 14b, says that they were executed in the ninth month, but HHS 102 (*chih* 12), 3a, says that they died in the eleventh month. Two other officials, the Chancellor of Tung-hai 東海 Huang Fu 黃浮 and the Grand Administrator

of Shan-yang 山陽 Chai Ch'ao 翟超 had also been accused of anti-eunuch activities. They were not executed, but they were sentenced to convict service. (See the Introduction, p. 4 and note 3.)

There is a curious additional reference to the memorials of Ch'en Fan and his colleagues in *HHS* 104 (*chih* 14), 4a. The Treatise of the Five Elements at that point refers to a series of fires in the capital at the end of 165, and the commentary of Liu Chao to this passage quotes from the *Hou Han shu* of Yüan Shan-sung 袁山松 of the fourth century, which preserved an account of the memorial of remonstrance sent in as a response to these phenomena by Ch'en Fan and 'Liu Chih-mou' 劉智茂. The commentator Hui Tung remarks that 'Liu Chih-mou' must be an error, and he suggests that the phrase refers to the two officials, Liu Chü and Liu Mou. In the light of the arguments above, however, it seems more reasonable to regard the character *Chih* as an error of addition, and to accept the memorial as one written jointly by Ch'en Fan and Liu Mou. The text as it is quoted contains no specific reference to Liu Chih and Ch'eng Chin: it may be an extract from the memorial in their favour, or it may be a more general remonstrance; but it is interesting to observe that the argument relies heavily upon warnings from omens and portents.

36. The General-in-Chief Liang Chi 梁冀, brother of the Empress née Liang of Emperor Shun and of the Empress née Liang of Emperor Huan, had been the effective ruler of

the empire until his overthrow by a *coup d'état* of Emperor Huan in 159. Liang Chi committed suicide, many of his family and clients were killed, and others were sent to convict service or exiled.

Sun Shou 孫壽, the wife of Liang Chi, committed suicide with her husband in 159. Her relatives had shared in the former prosperity of the Liang family and had been notorious for their extravagance and cruelty. See HHS 34 (*lieh-chuan* 24), 11b ff., translated by T'ung-tsu Ch'ü, *Han Social Structure*, edited by Jack L. Dull (Seattle, 1972), p. 472.

K'ou Jung 寇榮 was a man of family from the northern commandery Shang-ku 上谷, who had made enemies among the eunuchs of the palace because of his snobbery. Some time in the early 160s, he was slandered by the eunuchs and fled into exile. After several years he returned and sent in a petition for mercy, but he was arrested and executed and his family was reduced to poverty and ruin (HHS 16 (*lieh-chuan* 6), 22a ff.).

The relatives of the Empress née Teng of Emperor Huan had risen to prosperity in the period after her enthronement in 159, but when she was dismissed in 165 her cousins Teng Wan-shih 滕萬世 and Teng Hui 滕會 were executed and other members of the family were imprisoned and dismissed (HHS 10B, 7a). On Liang Chi, Sun Shou and the Teng family, see also de Crespigny, 'The Harem of Emperor Huan', pp.17-18, 19 and 24.

37. In 159, after the overthrow of Liang Chi, the eunuchs who

- had assisted the emperor in his coup were all rewarded with marquisates. The junior official Li Yün 李雲 sent in a memorial protesting against this policy. The emperor was furious at both the criticism and the terms in which it was expressed, and Li Yün was arrested and sent to prison. Many officials interceded for him, and one man, Tu Chung 杜象, asked that he should share Li Yün's punishment. Despite all protests, the emperor remained adamant, and both Li Yün and Tu Chung were executed. See HHS 57 (*lieh-chuan* 47), 10b-11a, de Crespigny, 'Political Protest in Imperial China', p. 10 and note 11, and 'The Second Year of Yen-hsi', pp. 16-7.
38. Yung-p'ing 永平 was the reign period of Emperor Ming 明 of Later Han, 58-75 A.D.

On the moral and legal obligations for executions at appropriate seasons under the Han dynasty, see A.F.P. Hulswé, *Remnants of Han Law, Introductory Studies and an Annotated Translation of Chapters 22 and 23 of the History of the Former Han Dynasty* (Leiden, 1955), pp. 103-9. It seems very likely that Hsiang K'ai's citation of the Yung-p'ing period refers specifically to Hulswé's item 8 on p. 105: in Yung-p'ing 1 the minister Fan Shu 樊豐 and others recommended that 'punishment should wait until the months of autumn, in order to conform to the emanation of the seasons', and this recommendation was approved by Emperor Ming, presumably in the form of an edict (HHS 32 (*lieh-chuan* 22), 3b-4a).

The essential point of the system was that

criminal cases involving capital punishment were supposed to be cleared up by the end of winter and before the life-giving months of spring. Hsiang K'ai, however, is also raising another important point: that where any case involving a capital crime presents room for doubt, there should be a special review before final punishment is applied.

According to Hsiang K'ai's contemporary, the scholar Cheng Hsüan 鄭玄 (127-200, style K'ang-cheng 康成), the provincial administrations of this time were supposed to send their chief prosecutors to the capital to consult with experts in the office of the Commandant of Justice (the minister responsible for legal administration and interpretation) on any doubtful points concerning serious cases (see Cheng Hsüan's commentary to *Chou li* 周禮 9, 22a). Moreover, within the provinces and commanderies, there was provision for travelling investigators sent out by various senior officers in local government to check on the judicial proceedings of lower courts (Hulsewé, *Remnants of Han Law*, pp. 81-3 and 86). Sentence might be passed at any time of the year, but punishment was delayed until this further check had been made.

Hsiang K'ai, however, claims that the system of review was then maintained only in the most cursory fashion and that the regulations were frequently ignored for quite trivial reasons. As a result, some prisoners were left in jail without being either punished or released, while on other occasions local

officials took the law into their own hands and killed their suspects without proper trial or any reference to higher authority.

39. According to Chinese tradition, the founder of the Chou dynasty, known by his posthumous title King Wen 周文王, had one chief wife called T'ai-ssu 太姬. She bore him ten sons, of whom the second became the conquering King Wu 武 and the fourth was the sage regent Duke of Chou 周公 (SC 35, 1a-b, translated by E. Chavannes, *Les mémoires historiques de Se-ma Ts'ien*, 5 vols. (Paris, 1895-1905), IV, pp. 152-3.
40. In fact, as we have observed in note 22 above, this comment is not quite fair: Emperor Huan had three daughters. Hsiang K'ai's point, however, was that a son was necessary for the succession, and for this purpose daughters might as well not exist. Compare the second of Hsiang K'ai's memorials, at note 67, where he expresses himself still more forcefully.
41. The *Chung-ssu* 冬 其 斯 'Locust' Ode, No. 5 of the Odes of Chou and the South 周南, in the *Kuo feng* 國風 section of *Shih ching*, is translated by Legge, *The Chinese Classics*, IV, pp. 11-12. Like other poems in this group of odes, it is interpreted by commentators as praise for the virtues and fertility of T'ai-ssu, the wife of King Wen (see note 39), and the first verse runs: Ye locusts, winged tribes,
How harmoniously you collect together!
Right it is that your descendants
Should be multitudinous!

42. HHS 107 (*chih* 17), 2b, and HHS 7, 12a, both record the appearance of a dead dragon on Yeh-wang 野王 Mountain in Ho-nei 河內 commandery: HHS 107 gives the date as Yen-hsi 7:6:*jen-tzu*, which was the thirteenth day of the month, equivalent to 19.VII.164; HHS 7 says that it appeared in the seventh month. Yeh-wang Mountain is a ridge of the Taihang Shan near the site of the Han prefecture of that name, now Qinyang 沁陽 in Honan.
43. HHS 7, 12a, records that on Yen-hsi 7:3:*kuei-hai* a meteorite (*yün-shih* 隕石) fell at Hu 鄗. HHS 102 (*chih* 12), 6b, says that one meteorite fell at Yu-fu-feng 右扶風 and two fell at Hu. All made a sound like thunder.

In fact, there was no *kuei-hai* day in the third month of Yen-hsi 7, and it seems most likely that the date in both citations should be Yen-hsi 7:2:*kuei-hai*, which is equivalent to 1.IV.164.

Hu was a prefecture in Yu-fu-feng commandery (HHS 109 (*chih* 19), 26b), now Hu county in Shensi. Since HHS 102 distinguishes between the meteorite that fell at Yu-fu-feng and the two that fell at Hu, it is possible that the reference to Yu-fu-feng indicates the capital city of that commandery, situated in Huai-li 槐里 prefecture, now southeast of Xingping 興平 in Shensi.

44. The commentary of Li Hsien to this passage quotes from the *Yi ching* 易經, hexagram Ch'ien 乾, commentary to 'Nine in the fifth place', which is

translated by Richard Wilhelm, *The I Ching or Book of Changes*, rendered into English by Cary F. Baynes, 2 vols. (London, 1951), I, p. 8, as 'Flying dragon in the heavens. It furthers one to see the great man.' Li Hsien explains the phrase 'great man' as 'Son of Heaven'.

45. The Chi-ku-ko edition, followed by *HHS chi-chieh*, refers here to *Shih-wang* 始王, but the Po-na and Palace editions read *Shih-huang* 始皇. The First Emperor of the Ch'in dynasty died at Sha-ch'iu 沙丘 in 210 B.C. The site of Sha-ch'iu is now northeast of Pingxiang 平鄉 in Hopeh.

According to *Shih chi* 6, 27a-b, translated by Chavannes, *Mémoires historiques*, II, pp. 183-4, in the year 211 an envoy of the emperor was entering the passes on his way to the capital, Hsien-yang 咸陽 (now north of Xian 西安 in Shensi). When he came to the territory of P'ing-shu 平舒 in Hua-yin 華陰 prefecture (now Huayin in Shensi), he met a man who asked him to take a jade pi 璧 ring to the Lord of Hao-ch'ih 滎池君, and told him also: 'This year, the ancestral dragon (*tsu-lung* 祖龍) will die'. When the envoy attempted to question him further, the man disappeared, leaving behind only the jade ring. When the envoy came to the capital and told his story to the court, it was found that the jade ring was the same one that the First Emperor had thrown into the Yangtse six years before. In the following year the First Emperor went on another tour of the eastern part

of the empire, and he died on his way back to the capital.

Another, evidently later, version of this story, in *HS* 27B1, 33a-33b, gives the name of the envoy as Chang K'e 張安, and says that he met the Lord of Hua Mountain 華山君 riding in a plain cart drawn by a white horse, that he was asked to take a letter to the Lord of Hao-ch'ih, and was given the jade ring with the same information about the death of the dragon. The commentary of Li Hsien to this passage of *HHS* quotes an extended version from the *Ch'un-ch'iu hou-chuan* 春秋後傳 'Later Chronicle of Spring and Autumn' by Yüeh Tzu 樂資 of the Chin dynasty, a work that survives now only in fragments. In this account, it is said that Chang K'e went to Hao-ch'ih and knocked with an inscribed stone on a great catalpa tree, whereupon a magical palace appeared. He delivered the letter to the custodian of the gate, and it was then that he was told, 'This year, the ancestral dragon will die'.

Hao-ch'ih, also written 鎬池, was evidently a lake close to Hao-ching 鎬京, the legendary capital of King Wu of Chou, which is now identified as a place southwest of Xian in Shensi. The commentator Chang Yen 張晏 suggests that the Lord of Hao-ch'ih was the spirit of King Wu, but Yen Shih-ku discounts the suggestion (*HS* 27B1, 33b).

For a variant version and a discussion of this legend by the scholar Wang Ch'ung of the first century

A.D., see his *Lun heng* 22, 8a-9b, translated by Forke, pp. 230-3.

46. The second year of the T'ien-feng 天鳳 period of Wang Mang 王莽 was equivalent to 15 A.D. The false story about a (yellow) dragon that fell from the sky and died in the Huang-shan 黃山 palace is mentioned in *HS* 99B, 30b, translated by Dubs, *History of the Former Han Dynasty*, III, pp. 351-2. Since the colour that Wang Mang had chosen for his reign was yellow, this portent appeared extremely unfavourable, and Wang Mang made considerable efforts to find out who had started it. In this, he was unsuccessful, but it was presumably the work of opponents within the palace and the capital, and it certainly attracted widespread interest among the people.

HHS 107 (*chih* 17), 2b, quotes Hsiang K'ai's comments on the relationship between dragons and emperors, and also this incident of the rumour in the time of Wang Mang. However, where Hsiang K'ai in 166 took the report of the dead dragon as a sign of coming misfortune for the individual Emperor Huan, the compiler of the treatise, Ssu-ma Piao, with the advantage of hindsight identifies the portent with the fall of the dynasty fifty years later. Compare, on the other hand, the commentary of Liu Chao, who objects that fifty years is too long an interval between the portent and the event.

47. The *Ch'un-ch'iu* chronicle for the sixteenth year of Duke Hsi 僖 (643 B.C.), translated by Legge, *The Chinese*

Classics, V, pp. 170-1, refers to stones falling upon the state of Sung 宋 and to six fish-hawks flying backwards past the capital. The *Tso chuan* text that accompanies this entry explains that the falling stones were actually stars (*hsing* 星) and that the birds were being driven back by an exceptionally strong wind. Duke Hsiang 襄 of Sung, encouraged by a particular interpretation of these portents, embarked on a series of diplomatic and military campaigns intended to gain him hegemony among all the rival states. In Hsi 21 (638 B.C.), however, he was taken prisoner, probably at the instigation of the ruler of Ch'u, during a conference of feudal lords, and although he was soon released his army was heavily defeated by the forces of Ch'u 楚 in the following year. He died in Hsi 23 (636 B.C.) (Legge, *The Chinese Classics*, V, pp. 182-6).

48. The text here says that the meteorite fell in 'the eastern part' (*tung-pu* 東部, i.e. of the empire), but SC 6, 26b-27a, translated by Chavannes, *Mémoires historiques*, II, pp. 182-3, says that in 211 B.C. a falling star landed in Tung commandery 東郡 (the region of western Shantung, near the Yellow River). It is said that some of the commoners carved an inscription on it: 'When the First Emperor dies, the empire will be divided'. The emperor had many people arrested and killed, and the stone was destroyed by fire, but it was recognised as an unfavourable omen, and was followed shortly by the incident of the Lord of Hua Mountain (see note 45). This meteorite in

Tung commandery is also referred to in *HS* 27A1, 33b.

49. The tombs of the emperors of the Former Han dynasty were in the old capital district about Ch'ang-an 長安, in Yu-fu-feng, Tso-p'ing-yi 左馮翊 and Ching-chao-yin 京兆尹 commanderies.

50. *HHS* 7, 12b, says that in Yen-hsi 8:4 (April-May 165) the Yellow River ran clear in the territories of Chi-yin 濟陰 Chi-pei 齊北 and Tung commanderies. In the following year, about the same time, the phenomenon was reported from the same three commanderies and also from Hsiang K'ai's native commandery of P'ing-yüan. *HHS* 105 (*chih* 15), 4a, also records this portent, but mentions only Chi-pei in Yen-hsi 8. (*HHS* 105 and *HHS* 8, 3b, also claim that the Yellow River ran clear in the time of Emperor Ling a few years later, in the spring of 171.)

The course of the Yellow River in the second century A.D. was approximately the same as it is at present, and the territories of Chi-yin, Tung commandery, Chi-pei and P'ing-yüan lay in a rough line northeast along the river in the eastern part of present-day Shantung province.

One must sympathise with Hsiang K'ai in his surprise at the reports; it is hard to believe that they were accurate. The Treatise of the Five Elements in *HHS* 105 follows Hsiang K'ai's interpretation that feudal lords may seek to become emperor, but then interprets it by reference to the accession of Emperor Ling, former Marquis of Chieh-tu Village 解濟亭.

in the following year after the death of Emperor Huan. This seems, in fact, a milder explanation of the portent than Hsiang K'ai might have proposed: his references to the feudal lords could be understood as a prophecy that the Han dynasty would be divided among the competing warlords, as in the reign of Emperor Hsien a generation later, and it is a little surprising that the treatise did not make more of this. Compare note 46.

51. According to *HHS* 7, 11a, on Yen-hsi 5:4:*chi-ssu* the West Gate of the Imperial University (*t'ai-hsüeh* 大學) collapsed of its own accord. There was no *chi-ssu* day in the fourth month of Yen-hsi 5, but Yen-hsi 5:5:*chi-ssu* was 17.VI.162. *HHS* 103 (*chih* 13), 12a, mentions this accident, and quotes Hsiang K'ai's comments, then relates the portent to the general downfall of the Han empire.
52. Ching Fang 京房 (77-37 B.C.) originally had the surname Li 李. His style was Chün-ming 君明 and he was a man from Tung 東 commandery. He was celebrated as a scholar of the *Yi ching*, and he is referred to as one of the masters of the Book of Changes in *HS* 88, 9b-10a (see also Tjan Tjoe Som, *Po hu t'ung*, I, p. 85 and Table I). His biography is in *HS* 75, 6a-11b. (This Ching Fang of the middle first century B.C. should be distinguished from another scholar of the same name, also a master of the *Yi ching* school, who lived in the time of Emperor Wu. See the commentary of Yen Shih-ku to *HS* 88, 8b.)

As an expert in portents and divination, Ching Fang was involved in political moves and protests against the powerful eunuch Shih Hsien ^{石顯}, who dominated the court of Emperor Yüan. Ching Fang was removed to an appointment in the provinces and was later executed. See Dubs, *The History of the Former Han Dynasty*, II, pp. 297 and 330-1.

Ching Fang was the author of several works listed in the Treatise of Bibliography of *Han shu*, including a commentary to the Book of Changes in 11 p'ien (HS 30, 2a). However, this *Yi-chuan* ^{易傳} does not appear in the bibliographical treatises of the *Sui shu* or the two T'ang histories. The present-day edition of the *Yi-chuan* (also known as *Ching Fang Yi-chuan* or *Ching-shih* ^氏 *Yi-chuan*) traces its text history only to the bibliographical treatise of the *Sung shih* (206, 27a). It now contains three *chüan* and has a commentary ascribed to Lu Chi ^{陸績} of the third century state of Wu. (See also *Wen-hsien t'ung-k'ao* ^{文獻通考} by Ma Tuan-lin ^{馬端臨} of the Yüan dynasty, 175, pp. 1513-14 in the *Shih-t'ung* ^{十通} edition of the Commercial Press, 1936, and *Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu tsung-mu t'i-yao* ^{四庫全書總目提要}, 22, pp. 2252-3, Commercial Press, 1933.)

However, in his article *Ching-shih Yi-chuan cheng-wei* ^{證偽}, published in *Chung-kuo yü-wen-hsüeh yen-chiu*, *Chung-hua shu-chü* ^{中華書局} (Shanghai, 1935), pp. 7-18, Shen Yen-kuo ^{沈延國} argues that the present text is a forgery of the Sung period, and

that it bears small relationship to the original teachings of Ching Fang. As he points out, besides the biography and scholarly discussion of Ching Fang in *Han shu*, there are several quotations from the *Yi-chuan* scattered through *Hou Han shu* and other contemporary texts, and few of them bear close relationship to the present text.

The *Shui-ching chu* 水經注 of Li Tao-yüan 酈道元 of the sixth century (5, 12a-b) has a slightly different version of this passage from Hsiaog K'ai's memorial, though the quotation from the *Yi-chuan* reads 河水清天下平 in both texts. These characters, however, do not appear in the present text of *Yi-chuan*.

53. HHS 107 (*chih* 17), 6b, and HHS 4, 10a, 6b, mention a plague in the spring of Yen-hsi 4 (161). The commentary of Liu Chao to HHS 107 quotes from the *T'ai-kung liu-t'ao* 太公六韜, a work ascribed to Lü Wang 呂望, legendary minister of the early Chou dynasty, which suggests that one cause of plague among the people is the love of their ruler for expensive palaces paid for by heavy taxation (cf. *Liu-t'ao* 3, 15a-16a).
54. Legge, *The Chinese Classics*, V, pp. 833-5, gives the text and translation of the *Ch'un-ch'iu* chronicle for the fourteenth year of Duke Ai 哀 (480 B.C.), which records how in the spring of that year, some hunters in the west of Lu captured a *lin* 麇. According to the Kung-yang 公羊 commentary and the *K'ung-tzu chia-yü* 孔子家語 4, 16b-17a, the latter of which is

translated by Legge, the animal was brought to Confucius, who said: 'It is a *lin*. Why has it come? Why has it come? Then he wept, and explained. 'The *lin* comes [only] when there is an intelligent king. Now it has appeared when it is not the time for it to do so, and it has been injured. This is why I was so much affected.'

The capture of the *lin* is the last event recorded in the *Ch'un-ch'iu*, and tradition claims that it was the appearance of this sacred beast which inspired Confucius to compose the chronicle.

55. On the school of the Taoist masters Kan Chi 干吉, whose surname also appears as Yü 于, and Kung Ch'ung 宮崇, and the *T'ai-p'ing ch'ing-ling shu* 太平清領書 'The Book of Great Peace and Pure Guidance', see below and notes 80 and 81.
56. Pu-ku 布穀 refers to the Chinese cuckoo (*shih-chiu* 鳴鳩), *cuenlus canoris*. Hsi-hsi 蟋蟀 is a general name for the cricket.
57. It is difficult to appreciate what Hsiang K'ai was describing here, or whether it bears any relation to astronomical reality. *HHS* 102 (*chih* 12), 3a, notes that in Yen-hsi 9:6: *jen-hsü* (19.VII.166) Venus travelled into the lunar mansion *Yü-kuei* 轸鬼 'The Chariot of the Spirits', which is the Western γ , δ , η and θ Cancrui (Schlegel, p. 435; Ho, p. 103). This observation accords with modern calculations (see Figure 3), but there is no mention in the treatise of any apparent northward movement, nor of Venus disappearing

and then reappearing.

There are two possible astronomical explanations of Hsiang K'ai's statement about the northward movement of Venus, though neither is really satisfactory. First, as Hsiang K'ai was evidently presenting his memorial in late June or early July (see note 58), Venus (and the sun) would have shown a northward movement on the horizon until the summer solstice on 21 June, although this was extremely slight and probably undetectable.

Second, it may be that Hsiang K'ai was observing the movement in declination of the planet relative to the sun due to the inclination of Venus's orbit in relation to the ecliptic plane (a maximum of 3.39° north or south of the sun). Since Venus completes an orbit in eight months, during any four months of continual observations the planet could appear to move some six or seven degrees between extreme south and north. This is a very gradual change, and it is, of course, a regular phenomenon.

Modern calculations of Venus's orbit, which can only be regarded as approximate, suggest that at the beginning of June 166 Venus was some 45° back from the ascending node (the point at which the orbit of Venus crosses the ecliptic). At that time, therefore, Venus would have been moving north along the eastern horizon morning after morning, and this process continued during June. By the end of June or the beginning of July, Venus had continued this northward movement for two months, and it is possible that this effect of

orbital inclination may have combined with the period of the solstice to exaggerate the appearance of northward movement at this time.

With regard to the 'reappearance', the position is equally uncertain. Venus at this time was a morning star on the eastern horizon in close proximity to the sun, but was moving lower each day as it came closer to a position of superior conjunction (on the opposite side of the sun to Earth) and thus to a period of invisibility (after which it would reappear as an evening star). It is possible that on some mornings, when observations were impeded by dust haze or other atmospheric conditions, Venus may have been rendered invisible by the glare of the sun, and when conditions improved the planet then reappeared, still as a morning star in the east, a few days later. Since the *Treatise of Astronomy*, as cited above, refers to observation of Venus on 19 July, it is evident that the planet did not fully disappear from the morning sky until later in that month.

58. By the time of the Later Han dynasty, Chinese astronomers had obtained estimates for the synodic period of the visible planets which were very close to the true values (see Needham, *Science and Civilisation in China*, III, p. 401 and note 30) and it is not surprising that Hsiang K'ai was able to judge accurately when the planet was due to appear. At the end of June and early July of 166 Mars was just becoming visible in the early morning close to the horizon, having been obscured by the sun

in daylight during previous months (see Figure 2).

The planet, however, would have appeared extremely faint, since it was on the far side of the sun, almost at maximum distance from Earth. Since this was the time of the summer solstice, it is very possible that Mars was too faint to be observed with the naked eye against the morning light, and Hsiang K'ai had some justification for his remarks.

HHS 102 (*chih* 12), 3a, notes that on Yen-hsi 9:7: *yi-wei* (21.VIII.166) Mars travelled into *Yü-kuei* (in Western Cancer) and then into *Chih-hsing* 質星 'The Essence', which is the Nebula of Cancer (Schlegel, pp. 437-8). The prognostication for this portent was linked with the appearance of Venus in *Yü-kuei* one month earlier (note 57), and was explained as a sign of mourning and the killing of ministers. In fulfilment of the portent, the treatise refers to the cases of Liu Chih and Ch'eng Chin (see the Introduction, pp. 3-5 and note 34) and also to the faction incident, the seizure of power by the eunuchs and the proscription of Emperor Ling. (The Astronomical Treatise of *Chin shu* 11, 15b, translated by Ho, p. 103, describes the Nebula of Cancer by the name *Chi-shih* 積尸 'Accumulated Corpses' or *Fu-chih* 斧鑕 'Axe of Execution', and notes that it governs death, mourning, sacrifices to the dead and state executions; this agrees with the interpretation of the Treatise of Astronomy in *Hou Han shu*.)

The fact that Hsiang K'ai referred to Mars not appearing at the proper time indicates that this

memorial was submitted no earlier than late June or early July of 166, while his failure to cite the portent of the two planets invading the *Yü-kuei* constellation seems to provide a *terminus post quem* for his observations. On this basis, it is most likely that his two memorials were presented to the throne in mid-summer, the fifth Chinese month of Yen-hsi 9.

59. The commentary of Li Hsien identifies the 'Virtuous Star' (*te-hsing* 德星) as the Year Star (Jupiter). This sentence thus appears as another reference to the movements of Jupiter in the *T'ai-wei* enclosure earlier in the year (see 29).

Needham, *Science and Civilisation in China*, III, pp. 422-3, gives examples of the use of the term *te-hsing* as a reference to the phenomena of 'earth-shine', when the sunlit earth illumines by reflection the unlighted part of the moon. It does not seem possible that the term should have this significance here.

60. On the execution of Li Yün and Tu Chung in 159, see note 37.
61. *HHS* 7, 12a, and *HHS* 108 (*chih* 18), 7b, refer to an eclipse of the sun on Yen-hsi 8:1:*ping-shen* (28.II.165). This observation is confirmed by Oppolzer, being eclipse no. 3291, which was visible in Lo-yang in the mid-afternoon of that day. The *ping-shen* day, however, was the last day of the month, not the first.

HHS 108 (*chih* 18), 7b, also refers to an eclipse of the sun on Yen-hsi 9:1:*hsin-mao* (18.II.166); the

hsin-mao day was the first day of the month. HHS 7, 14a, has the date as Yen-hsi 9:1:*hsin-hai*, but *hsin-hai* 辛亥 is evidently an error for *hsin-mao* 辛卯. HHS 108 observes that this eclipse was not visible in Lo-yang, but it was reported from the provinces, a statement which fits well with Oppolzer's calculation (no. 3294) that this was a partial eclipse, visible in China only in the early morning.

62. Liu Ping 劉丙, son of Emperor Shun 順, came to the throne on the death of his father in 144. He was then aged two, but he died at the beginning of the following year. His posthumous title was Chung 冲, with the prefix Hsiao 孝 'Filial' which was common to all but the founding emperors of Han (HHS 6, 14b-15a).

Liu Tsuan 劉綰, a descendant of Emperor Chang 章 of Later Han, was chosen for the succession by the General-in-Chief Liang Chi and his sister the Empress-Dowager née Liang. He was eight years old when he came to the throne and he died in the middle of the following year. It was believed by many that he was poisoned by Liang Chi (HHS 6, 18a, and HHS 34 (*lieh-chuan* 24), 10b). His posthumous title was Hsiao-chih 質. He was succeeded by the child Emperor Huan.

63. Hsia Yü 夏育 was a celebrated hero and strong man of the state of Wey 衛 in the Ch'un-ch'iu period (SC 79, 6a and 21a).

As the commentary of Li Hsien to this passage in HHS remarks, there is no clear tradition of the career

of Shen Hsiu 申休 . The Ch'ing scholar Hui Tung, however, draws attention to the commentary of Li Shan 李善 of T'ang to the *Tung-hsiao fu* 洞簫賦 by Wang Pao 王褒 of the first century B.C. in *Wen-hsüan* 17, 20b-21a (SPTK edition of *Liu-ch'en chu Wen-hsüan* 六臣註文選). Wang Pao mentions the names Yü 繡 and Po 博 : Li Shan explains Yü as an ancient variant form of Yü 育 , the personal name of Hsia Yü; and he then quotes from the *Hsia-Po tsan* 夏博贊 of Lu Chi 陸機 of the third century A.D., which refers to Shen Po 申博 as a rival of Hsia Yü in strength and courage. (The *Hsia-Po tsan* is no longer preserved among the collected works of Lu Chi, e.g. SPTK edition.) From this, Hui Tung suggests that Shen Hsiu may be identified with the legendary Shen Po.

Nan-kung Wan 南宮萬 , a high officer of the state of Sung 宋 , was insulted by Duke Min 湣 of Sung and therefore killed him. The assassination is dated 682 or 681 B.C., and is described in *Ch'un-ch'iu* (Chuang 莊 12), translated by Legge, *The Chinese Classics*, V, p. 89, and in *SC* 38, 11a and 42, 6a, translated by Chavannes, *Mémoires historiques*, IV, pp. 233 and 461.

P'eng Sheng 彭生 , a nobleman of the state of Ch'i 齊 , killed Duke Huan of Lu 魯桓公 by crushing him in his arms. The assassination was ordered by Duke Hsiang 襄 of Ch'i, who had established incestuous relations with his younger sister who was the wife of Duke Huan of Lu, and the event is dated 694 or 693 B.C.

It is described in *Ch'un-ch'iu* (Huan 18), translated by Legge, *The Chinese Classics*, V, pp. 70-1, and in *SC* 14, 23b; 32, 5b; 33, 11a; 42, 6a; the last three citations are translated by Chavannes, *Mémoires historiques*, IV, pp. 43, 109 and 460.

Jen Pi 任鄙 was one of the great warriors in the service of King Wu of Ch'in 秦武王 at the end of the third century B.C. (*SC* 5, 28a, translated by Chavannes, *Mémoires historiques*, II, p. 76, and *SC* 71, 3b.)

64. Ta-chi 妲己 was the wife of the legendary King Chou 紂, last ruler of the Yin 殷 (formerly Shang 商) dynasty. Her love of luxury and her pride encouraged Chou in his misrule of the empire, and when the Yin dynasty was overthrown by King Wu of Chou 周武王, Ta-chi was put to death (*SC* 3, 10b and 13a, translated by Chavannes, *Mémoires historiques*, I, pp. 199 and 207, and *SC* 49, 1a).
65. The commentary of Li Hsien quotes from the *Hsin hsü* 新序 of Liu Hsiang 劉向 of Former Han: the philosopher Tzu-chang 子長 went to visit Duke Ai of Lu 魯哀公 but was received without proper courtesy. He said to the duke, 'You like scholars and gentlemen in the same way that the Duke of She 莒 liked dragons'. He then told the story of how the Duke of She was extremely fond of dragon figures for decoration in his palace, but when a real dragon of the sky heard about this and came to visit She the duke was completely terrified (*Hsin hsü* 5, 14a-b).

66. The phrase *t'ien-hsing* 天刑 'punishment of heaven' is a reference to castration.
67. At this point, Hsiang K'ai is raising the possibility of sympathetic magic: just as the rulers' love for war brought out fighting men in the time of the Chou dynasty, and the imitation dragons of She caused a real dragon to come down, so it may be that the favours which Emperor Huan shows to the emasculated servants of his harem are causing the male *yang* force in the palace to decline and discourage the production of male children.
68. *Tzu-kung* 紫宮 'The Purple Palace' is a reference to the enclosure *Tzu-wei yüan* 紫微垣, a ring of stars in the northern part of the sky extending through the Western constellations Draco, Ursa Major, Cepheus and Camelopardis (Schlegel, pp. 508 ff. and Ho, p. 71). The enclosure surrounds the North Celestial Pole, and Chinese astrology identified it with the emperor's dwelling place and the imperial throne. As Hsiang K'ai remarks, however, no stars in this constellation are identified with eunuch officials.

In Chinese astronomy, the *Huan-che* 宦者 'Eunuch' stars are the four small stars known in the West as 32, 34 and 37 Ophiuci and 60 Herculis (Ho, p. 85; cf. Schlegel, p. 519). In Han times, these stars were regarded as part of the 'Enclosure of the Celestial Market' (*T'ien-shih yüan* 天市垣 or *Shih-yüan*), which included stars from the Western constellations of Corona Borealis, Serpens, Ophiucus, Aquila and Herculis,

all arranged about the star α Herculis, which is identified as *Ti-tso* 帝座 'The Imperial Throne' (Ho, pp. 84-5).

The commentary of Li Hsien quotes from the *Shan-yang kung tsai-chi* 山陽公載記 'The Parallel Annals of the Duke of Shan-yang' (i.e. of Emperor Hsien of Later Han after his deposition by Ts'ao P'i 曹丕, first emperor of Wei, in 220) by Yüeh Tzu 樂資 of the Chin dynasty. This text makes the same comment on the position of the eunuch stars in the heavens, and draws the same moral as does Hsiang K'ai.

69. On the title *Ch'ang-po* 常伯 as chief minister in the government of the Chou dynasty, see the *Li cheng* 立正 chapter of *Shu ching*, translated in Legge, *The Chinese Classics*, III, p. 508 (where the title is rendered 'president').
70. On the sacrifices made by Emperor Huan to the sage Lao-tzu 老子 at Hu 苦 prefecture in 165 and 166, and the special ceremony in his palace at Lo-yang to the combination deity Huang-Lao chün 黃老君 (Huang-ti 黃帝 (the Yellow Emperor) plus Lao-tzu), see de Crespigny, 'The Harem of Emperor Huan', pp. 34-42, and Anna K. Seidel, *La divinisation de Lao Tseu dans le Taoisme des Han* (Publications de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient LXXI, Paris, 1969), pp. 36-43.

The annals of Emperor Huan and the Treatise of Sacrifices, *HHS* 7, 14b, and *HHS* 98 (*chih* 8), 8b, describe the ceremony only as a sacrifice to Huang-Lao or Lao-tzu. In the Discussion of *HHS* 7, 15b,

however, it is said that the Buddha was also worshipped. HHS 7 gives the characters for the Buddha as 淨圖; this memorial of Hsiang K'ai has 淨圖: Bernhard Karlgren, *Grammata Serica Recensa* (Stockholm, 1957), gives the sounds of the characters as b'iōg/b'iau/fou; d'o/d'uo/t'u and d'o/d'uo/t'u (nos. 1233b, 64a and 45i).

For other translations and discussion of this paragraph and the text, see Pelliot in BEFEO 6, pp. 387-9, Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China*, I, pp. 37-8, and Lü Ssu-mien 呂思勉. *Ch'in-Han shih ch'ien-shih* (Shanghai, 1947), p. 828.

71. On the significance of Hsiang K'ai's reference to this theory of Lao-tzu's conversion of the barbarians (hua-hu 化胡), see Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China*, I, pp. 290 ff. The earliest reference to this legend is in the biography of Lao-tzu in SC 61, 2b-3a, which tells how the sage left China for the lands of the west. At the request of a frontier guard he wrote down the essence of his teachings, the text which is now known as *Tao-te ching* 道德經, but 'no-one knows where he died'. Pelliot in BEFEO 6, p. 388 note 1, points out that this story probably dates from only a short time before Ssu-ma Ch'ien's compilation of *Shih chi* in the second century B.C. The book of *Chuang tzu* 莊子 refers to the death of Lao-tzu (ch. 3, p. 19, in *Chuang-tzu chi-chieh* 集解 edition of Wang Hsien-ch'ien 王先謙, Peking, 1954), and *Shui ching* 水經 19, 1b, refers to a tomb of Lao-tzu at Huai-li 槐

里 in the Han commandery of Yu-fu-feng 右扶風 ,
now southeast of Xingping 興平 in Shensi.

As Zürcher remarks, it is clear that the story of Lao-tzu travelling to the west was not originally an anti-Buddhist theory, but developed in later times as one of the counter-attacks of the Taoist church against the Buddhists: the argument being that when Lao-tzu travelled to the west his teachings became the original form of Buddhism; thus the doctrines of Buddhism being brought into China were only the corrupt versions of true Chinese teaching. Zürcher suggests that the theory was developed by opponents of the Buddhists in the second half of the second century A.D., and this reference by Hsiang K'ai is one of the early citations. (One may observe, however, that the Buddhists were able to present an alternative interpretation of the same legend: that Lao-tzu had further developed his teachings and had transmitted them in a more refined form, so that the creed of Buddhism which was coming into China was in fact a more perfect version of the essential Chinese philosophy.)

72. Both these anecdotes on the Buddha appear in different, but recognisable, forms in the *Sutra in Forty-two Sections* (Fu-shuo ssu-shih-erh chang ching 佛說四十二章經, item 784 of the *Taishō shinshū Daizōkyō* 大正新修大藏經 or *Taishō issaikyō* 大正一切經 (Tokyo, 1924-34), ch. 17), pp. 722/2 and 723/3. Both anecdotes are well known in the Hindu-Buddhist tradition

of India.

Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China*, I, p. 38, discusses the significance of the two citations as proof of the early date of the sutra and also as evidence of the corruption of the present-day text. See also vol. II, p. 329 note 63 for bibliographical references to translations and text criticism of the sutra, and T'ang Yung-t'ung (楊用彤), 'The Editions of the *Ssu-shih-erh-chang-ching*', in *HJAS* 1 (1936), pp. 147-55.

Zürcher remarks that the citations by Hsiang K'ai demonstrate his familiarity with the contents of the work and therefore provide a *terminus ante quem* for the existence of the original version of the text, but that they also demonstrate the considerable variation between the original text and even the most archaic extant version, 'provided that Hsiang K'ai is quoting literally'.

It may be, however, that this last is too large an assumption. There is nothing in Hsiang K'ai's memorial to indicate that he is quoting directly from any text, and it is possible that he was only referring to stories that were common coin in the Buddhist community of his day. The citations provide strong evidence for the existence of the *Sutra in Forty-two Sections* at this time, but they do not give us direct evidence of the text itself.

See also Pelliot in *BEFEO* 6, p. 387 note 2, and T'ang Yung-t'ung, *Han Wei Liang-Chin Nan-pei-ch'ao fu-chiao shih* 漢魏兩晉南北朝佛教史

(Peking, 1955), I, pp. 33-4.

73. As the commentary of Li Hsien points out, Hsiang K'ai is here following the argument of Hsiao Wang-chih 蕭望之, a senior Confucian scholar at the court of Emperor Yuan 元 of Former Han, against the employment of eunuch Shih Hsien 石顯 and others in the period 48-47 B.C. See HS 78, 11a-11b, and Dubs, *History of the Former Han Dynasty*, II, pp. 294-6 and 309-10.

In fact, of course, there is no question that eunuchs had long been used in their essential function of guarding the harems of kings and noblemen in centuries of Chinese history before Ch'in and Han. Ku Yen-wu 顧炎武, the distinguished scholar of the early Ch'ing period, has pointed out that the term *huan-che* 宦者 appeared as the description of a eunuch official only during Ch'in and Han. Before that time, the common term was *ssu* 寺 (a variant form of *shih* 侍 'to serve, wait upon'), on which see the commentary of Cheng Hsüan to *Chou li* 1, 8a, also 2, 28b), and examples of its use may be found in such ancient texts as *Shih ching* (e.g. Legge, *The Chinese Classics*, IV, pp. 190, 349 and particularly 561, translating the third stanza of the *Chan ang* 瞻仰 Ode from the Decade of T'ang 蕩). See *Jih-chih lu* 28, 11a (*Ssu-pu pei-yao* 四部備要 edition of *Jih-chih lu chi-shih* 日知錄集釋 with sub-commentary compiled by Huang Ju-ch'eng 黃汝成).

74. On the changing organisation of eunuch offices at the imperial palace, see HHS 78 (*lieh-chuan* 68), 2a-2b. As

an example of the increase in numbers and authority by the eunuchs, we may observe the position of Palace Regular Attendant. During Former Han, this post had been granted only to men, but from the beginning of Later Han it became the highest post available to eunuchs. At first, the rank was indicated by a nominal salary of one thousand *shih* 石, but this was later raised to two thousand *shih* equivalent, almost as high as the most senior ministers at court, and the numbers of Palace Regular Attendants increased from an establishment of four in the time of Emperor Ming about 60 A.D. to ten in the time of Emperor Huan a hundred years later (see also *HHS* 116 (*chih* 26), 5a).

75. This is the second occasion that Hsiang K'ai has suggested that Emperor Huan's lack of male heirs may be due to his favouritism of eunuchs (see note 67). It could even be that the phrase 'liking for them' (*hao chih* 好之) implies a homosexual attachment to some catamite, as in the case of Emperor Ai 哀 of Former Han and the favourite Tung Hsien 董賢 (see Dubs, *The History of the Former Han Dynasty*, III, pp. 8-10), but the size of Emperor Huan's harem and the existence of three imperial daughters renders the possibility very faint. There is no evidence elsewhere in the histories that Emperor Huan had homosexual or bisexual tendencies.
76. Chang Tse 張擇 (also written 擇, and also known as Chang Shih 釋, Chang Ch'ing 卿 or Chang Shih-ch'ing 釋卿), was a eunuch in the household of the

Empress née Lü 呂 of Former Han. In 180 B.C., shortly before the empress's death, he was appointed Palace Internuncio (*chung yeh-che* 中謁者). See Dubs, *The History of the Former Han Dynasty*, I, 200, and cf. HS 35, 2a, where the title is given, probably mistakenly, as Grand Internuncio (*ta yeh-che* 大謁者).

When the Empress died, the Lü clan was destroyed by the Marquis of Ch'iang 絳侯 Chou P'o 周勃 and other senior officials loyal to the Liu 劉 family. When it was claimed that the Young Emperor 少帝 who had been designated to succeed the Empress née Lü was actually a member of the Lü family and should therefore be deposed, several of the officials were reluctant to support such action. However, Chang Tse, now Prefect of the Eunuchs (*huan-che ling* 宦者令), made the official proclamation, and the Young Emperor and his three brothers were all executed. Liu Heng 恆, King of Tai 代王 and the future Emperor Wen 文, was placed upon the throne. See HS 40, 24a-b, HS 35, 2a ff., and Dubs, *The History of the Former Han Dynasty*, I, pp. 209-10.

77. Chao T'an 趙談, a eunuch, is mentioned in the Biographies of the Imperial Favourites, HS 93, 1a and 3a. The biography of the official Yüan Ang 袁盎 tells that on one occasion Emperor Wen was riding in a carriage with Chao T'an when Yüan Ang came up and criticised him for sharing place with this 'mutilated remnant of a man' (*tao-chü yü-jen* 刀鋸餘人). Emperor Wen laughed, and pushed Chao T'an out of the

carriage (HS 49, 3a).

Emperor Wen had several children, and his son Liu Ch'i 啓, who later became Emperor Ching 景, had fourteen sons and numerous daughters, more children than any other ruler of Han. Hsiang K'ai's critics appear to have established their point: that the early emperors did have eunuch favourites and attendants, without necessarily causing harm to the succession; yet the anecdote about Yüan Ang and the carriage would seem to imply that the ruler should not be too familiar with his attendants, and some reproof could also be implied for Emperor Huan.

78. The Colonel Director of Retainers was the chief of the censorate in the territory about the capital, with authority to arrest and impeach both officials and private citizens (HHS 117 (*chih* 27), 8a f.). The Lo-yang Prison was therefore under his jurisdiction. Hsiang K'ai was held there until a final decision was reached about his punishment.

It appears to have been the practice at this time when memorials such as Hsiang K'ai's were received, and there was suspicion of *lèse-majesté*, discourtesy or some improper expression of opinion, that the first investigation was made by the Masters of Writing (*shang-shu* 尚書), the imperial secretariat. After they had held an oral interrogation, which might give the examinee an opportunity to justify himself, they reported their findings to the court with a recommendation for the next procedure to be followed. A

similar example of investigation by the Masters of Writing may be found in the case of the celebrated historian Ts'ai Yung in 178 A.D. during the reign of Emperor Ling (HHS 60B (*lieh-chuan* 50B), 16a).

79. The punishment described as 'robber-guard' (*ssu-k'ou* 司寇) was equivalent to two years hard labour as a convict. Hulsewé, *Remnants of Han Law*, pp. 130-2, 336 and 382, discusses this penalty as it applied in Former Han and its further use in Later Han, remarking that the nominal duties which might be implied by this and similar titles did not necessarily agree with reality. Convicts sentenced to various periods of hard labour could be used on a variety of projects, including the maintenance of roads and the construction of water-control works. The two-year period of convict service was one of the lightest penalties in the code of Han.
80. The text here gives the title of the book as *T'ai-p'ing ch'ing-ling shu* 太平清令錄書. Another reference, however, in the *Chih lin* 志林 of Yü Hsi 虞喜 of the Chin dynasty, quoted in the commentary to SKC 46 (Wu 1), 15a, refers to it as the *T'ai-p'ing ch'ing-ling tao* 青領道 'The Way of Great Peace, with Dark Green Headings', which could be accepted as a reference to the format of the manuscript. See Fukui Kōchun 福井康順, *Dōkyō no kiso teki kenkyū* 道教的基礎的研究 (Tokyo, 1952), pp. 83-5.

The commentary of Li Hsien identifies the Ch'ü-

yang Spring 曲陽泉 with a river in the Later Han prefecture of Ch'ü-yang in Hsia-p'i 下邳 commandery (HHS 111 (*chih* 21), 24a), now southwest of Donghai 東海 in Kiangsu. As he remarks, both Kan Chi and Kung Ch'ung were men from Lang-yeh 琅邪 commandery, and this was close to their native district.

In his first memorial, Hsiang K'ai said that he had presented the work of Kan Chi on behalf of Kung Ch'ung (see note 55), but Fan Yeh here implies that Kung Ch'ung came in person to the palace to offer the book to Emperor Shun, presumably about 140 A.D. The Ch'ing scholar Hui Tung, in his commentary to the text of Hsiang K'ai's memorial, cites also the *Shen-hsien chuan* 神仙傳 'Biographies of Immortals' by Ko Hung 葛洪 of the fourth century (ch. 10) which attempts to give the *T'ai-p'ing ching* an even earlier date. According to this story, Kan Chi and Kung Ch'ung acquired the sacred text in the time of Emperor Yüan of Former Han, about 40 B.C. It seems probable that this represents a later development of the tradition, designed to establish the antiquity of the *T'ai-p'ing ching* among the earliest history of the school, which is first referred to in the imperial annals during the time of Emperor Ch'eng (32-7 B.C.). On this early history of the *T'ai-p'ing* school, see Anna K. Seidel, 'The Image of the Perfect Ruler in Early Taoist Messianism: Lao-tzu and Li Hung', in *History of Religions* 9, (2/3) (Nov./Feb. 1969-70), pp. 217-8.

Leaving aside this surprising reference to the

reign of Emperor Yüan, a combination of traditions suggest that the Taoist master Kan Chi lived to a very considerable age. P'ei Sung-chih's commentary to SKC 46 (Wu 1), 14b-16b, describing the death of the warlord Sun Ts'e 孫策 about 200 A.D., quotes not only from *Chih lin*, as cited above, but also from the *Chiang-piao chuan* 江表傳 'Chronicle of the Lands Beyond the Yangtse' by Yü P'u 虞溥 of the third century, and from the *Sou-shen chi* 搜神記 'Inquiry into the Spirit World' by Kan Pao 干寶 of the Chin dynasty. Both state that Sun Ts'e executed Kan Chi, and then died as a result of the magical powers which Kan Chi had possessed: *Chiang-piao chuan* says that Sun Ts'e was simply jealous of Kan Chi's popularity among his followers; *Sou-shen chi* also involves Kan Chi's rainmaking powers. However, as *Chih lin* and other commentaries have remarked, since Kan Chi is described already as the master of Kung Ch'ung in the time of Emperor Shun, it would appear from these records that he lived to be more than a hundred. There may, of course, be a confusion of names and identity between two successive wandering scholars.

The book now known as *T'ai-p'ing ching* 太平經 'The Classic of Great Peace' is preserved in the Taoist canon (*Tao-tsang* 道藏 746-756, Yi-wen yin-shu kuan 藝文印書館, Taipei, 1963), but the best edition now available is the *T'ai-p'ing ching ho-chiao* 合校 edited by Wang Ming 王明 (Peking, 1960). The original text was said to contain 170 *chüan* -

seventeen *chüan* in each of ten sections arranged according to the Ten Celestial Stems 天干 - but fifty-one of these *chüan* are now lost and can be reconstructed only from fragments.

Indeed, according to tradition, the *T'ai-p'ing ching* disappeared for a considerable time during the period of division between Han and T'ang, and there is some disagreement how much the present text preserves the teachings of the Han school of Taoism and how much is a forgery of the sixth century. In a paper delivered at the Symposium on State, Ideology and Justice in Early Imperial China held at Leiden in September 1975, Mr B.J. Mansvelt Beck presented a survey of the arguments put forward by such scholars as Fukui Kōchun and Ōfuchi Ninji 大淵忍爾 ('*Taiheikyō no raireki ni tsuite* 太平經の來歴にヨリて' in *Tōyō Gakuhō* 東洋學報 27 (1940), p. 2). He concluded: 'I think we are on safe grounds in treating the TPJ as a genuine Later Han text, notwithstanding its shaky text history and notwithstanding a possible late Six Dynasties rearrangement of the material'. On the traditional text history of the work, see also *Wen-hsien t'ing-k'ao* 225, p. 1807, and *Hou Han yi-wen chih* 後漢藝文志 by Yao Chen-tsung 姚振宗 編 of Ch'ing in *Erh-shih-wu shih pu-pien* 二十五史補編 (Shanghai, 1936-7), II, pp. 2443-4.

The commentary of Li Hsien to this passage in the biography of Hsiang K'ai quotes an extract from the *T'ai-p'ing ching* which remarks on the magical significance

of the colours green (*ch'ing* 青) and vermilion (*ch'ih* 赤) which were used in the format of the original manuscript. This passage does not occur in the body of the *T'ai-p'ing ching*, but Wang Ming uses the authority of Li Hsien to cite this extract on p. 647 of his collated edition, with the remark that it should appear at the beginning of *chüan* 114 or somewhere in *chüan* 115 and 116.

81. On the Yellow Turban (*huang-chin* 黃巾) rebellion of the Taoist preacher Chang Chüeh 張角, which broke out in 184 A.D., see *HHS* 71 (*lieh-chuan* 61), 1a ff., and *TCTC* 58, 1864 ff., translated in de Crespigny, *The Last of the Han*, pp. 7 ff. The doctrine of 'Great Peace' remained a slogan and symbol of religious rebellion throughout the history of imperial China, as for example the Taipings of the mid-nineteenth century.
82. Sincere and Upright (*fang-cheng* 方正) was a formula of recommendation for appointment to commissioned office in the imperial civil service of Han. See de Crespigny, 'The Recruitment System of the Imperial Bureaucracy of Later Han', *Chung Chi Journal* VI. 1 (Hong Kong, November 1966), p. 71.
83. The biography of the celebrated scholar Cheng Hsüan is in *HHS* 35 (*lieh-chuan* 25). The biography of Hsün Shuang 荀爽, member of a leading gentry clan in Ying-Ch'uan 潁川 commandery, and also well known as a scholar, is in *HHS* 62 (*lieh-chuan* 52). On the position of Erudites (*po-shih* 博士), the professors of the Imperial University who could also take part as advisers in the court, see *HHS* 115 (*chih* 25), 2a.

The *Hou Han chi* of Yüan Hung (*ch.* 25, 7a) refers

to an invitation to Cheng Hsüan, Hsün Shuang and others in Chung-p'ing 5 (188 A.D.). One of the scholars mentioned is Li K'ai 李楷, and though Yüan Hung gives his style as Kung-ch'ao 公超 and his place of origin as Ho-nan commandery, it seems probable that this is a reference to Hsiang K'ai (see also the *chi-chieh* commentary to the present passage quoting the *Tu-shu ts'ung-lu* 讀書叢錄 by the Ch'ing scholar Hung Yi-hsüan 洪闕煒, in *Ts'ung-shu chi-ch'eng* 叢書集成 359, p. 104).

This recommendation for office was an attempt on the part of the imperial government to establish some reconciliation with scholars and gentry after the years of proscription from 169 to 184 (see de Crespigny, 'Political Protest in Imperial China'), but few scholars obeyed the summons, and those who were obliged to come to court showed no interest in an official position (e.g. HHS 35, (*lieh-chuan* 25), 11a-b).

84. As the Ch'ing dynasty commentator Ho Cho 何焯 remarks, there is one further reference to Hsiang K'ai in the histories of this time. The *Chiu-chou ch'un-ch'iu* 九州春秋 'Spring and Autumn Annals of the Nine Provinces', by Ssu-ma Piao of the third century A.D., says that about the year 188 Ch'en Yi 陳逸, the son of the former chief minister Ch'en Fan who had been destroyed by the eunuchs in 169, met with Hsiang K'ai at the residence of Wang Fen 王芬, Inspector of Chi 冀 province (the headquarters of Chi province were at Kao-yi 高邑 in Ch'ang-shan

常山, now close to Gaoyi in Hopeh (HHS 110 (*chih* 20), 23a-b). Hsiang K'ai remarked, 'The stars are not favourable to the eunuchs. All the Yellow Gates officials and the Regular Attendants will surely be destroyed.' Ch'en Yi was pleased and encouraged by this prophecy, and he and Wang Fen and others made a plan to depose the emperor and take over the government. The plot was discovered and failed, but Hsiang K'ai's prediction about the massacre of the eunuchs did come true after the death of Emperor Ling in 189.

This passage from the *Chiu-chou ch'un-ch'iu* is quoted in *SKC* 1 (Wei 1), 3a-b PC, while the plot is also mentioned in the main text of *SKC*. See also *TCTC* 59, 1890, translated by de Crespigny, *The Last of the Han*, pp. 39-40.

85. The Discussion (*lun* 論) and the Eulogy (*tsan* 贊) which are attached to the end of this chapter of *HHS* refer not only to the career of Hsiang K'ai but also to the other scholars mentioned in *HHS* 20A and 20B. The biographies of Su Ching 蘇竟 and Yang Hou 楊厚 are in *HHS* 20A, and the biography of Lang Yi 郎顛 occupies the first part of *HHS* 20B.
86. The commentary of Li Hsien to this passage remarks that these words (*shan yen t'ien che, pi yu yen yü jen* 善言天者必有驗於人) are taken from the edict of Emperor Wu of Former Han at the time of the establishment of the *hsiu-ts'ai* 秀才 category for recommendation to office. (The *hsiu-ts'ai* recommendation was known as *mou* 茂 -*ts'ai* during Later Han in order

to maintain taboo on the personal name of Emperor Kuang-wu founder of Later Han. The character *ts'ai* sometimes appears in the variant form 材).

The *hsiu-ts'ai* recommendation was established in Yüan-feng 元封 5 (106 B.C.), and the edict which announced it has been recorded in *HS* 6, 24a-b, translated in Dubs, *History of the Former Han Dynasty*, II, p. 97. A well known literary text, the edict is also preserved in *Wen-hsüan* 35, 25a-26a and has been translated, among others, by Erwin von Zach, *Die Chinesische Anthologie*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, Mass., 1958), II, pp. 639-40. The sentence in question, however, as quoted by the Discussion of this chapter in *HHS*, does not appear in the present text of the edict.

87. The biography of Chang Heng 張衡 (78-139) is in *HHS* 59 (*lieh-chuan* 49). One of the leading scholars of Later Han, a noted mathematician and astronomer (see, for example, Needham, *Science and Civilisation in China*, III, 110 and 216 ff.), Chang Heng was also the author of several *fu*, including the *Fu* on the Western and Eastern Capitals (*Hsi-ching fu* 西京賦 and *Tung 東-ching fu* in *Wen hsüan* 2 and 3, translated by von Zach, *Die Chinesische Anthologie*, I, pp. 1-37; see also E.M. Hughes, *Two Chinese Poets: Vignettes of Han Life and Thought* (Princeton, 1960). All extant writings of Chang Heng have been collected by Yen K'o-chün 嚴可均

of the Ch'ing dynasty in his *Ch'üan Shang-ku San-tai Ch'in Han San-kuo Liu-ch'ao wen* 全上古三代秦漢三國六朝文 (Canton, 1887) (*Ch'üan*

Hou-Han wen chs. 52-55). However, the sentence cited here, *t'ien-wen li-shu yin-yang chan-hou, chin so yi chi yeh* 天文歷書陰陽占候今研直急也 does not appear anywhere in Yen K'o-chün's compilation.

The biography of Chang Heng in HHS 59 (*lieh-chuan* 49), 1b, refers to Chang Heng's studies in the field of *t'ien-wen yin-yang li-suan* 算, a phrase very close to the first part of the sentence in this Discussion, and Chang Heng himself did make statements on similar lines to that recorded here. One may observe, for example, his memorial quoted in HHS 59 (*lieh-chuan* 49), 11a, where he remarks on the efficacy of such traditional tools of divination as the calendar, the trigrams of the *Yi ching*, astronomy and the sounds of the wind; on the other hand, in this and similar passages he criticises explicitly the multitude of apocryphal books that attempted divination by incorrect means (*pu-chan chih shu* 不占之書).

With regard to the sentence which is attributed to Chang Heng by this Discussion, there is no way to tell whether the historian was paraphrasing Chang Heng's opinion, or whether he was quoting from some writing which is now lost.

88. The biography of Lang Yi is in HHS 30B (*lieh-chuan* 20B), 1a-15b. Lang Yi was a man from Pei-hai 北海, on the Yellow Plain near the northern coast of the Shantung peninsula, and his father, Lang Tsung 宗, was known as a follower of the Ching Fang school of

studies upon the *Yi ching* (see note 52), with some reputation for his ability to foretell the future. Lang Tsung held minor office as an imperial official in the provinces, but then resigned and refused further appointment.

Lang Yi followed in his father's tradition of scholarship. He never took an official position, but in 133, in the reign of Emperor Shun, a series of portents at the capital led to the issuing of a special invitation that Lang Yi should comment on current events. In two long memorials he warned against corruption and cruelty in the court and government, and he praised the scholar-officials Li Ku 李固 and Huang Ch'iung 黄瓊 : both rose to the highest positions at court, and Li Ku was executed for his opposition to the tyranny of Liang Chi (de Crespigny, 'Political Protest in Imperial China', p. 6, note 3; the biography of Li Ku is in *HHS* 63 (*lieh-chuan* 53), and that of Huang Ch'iung is in *HHS* 61 (*lieh-chuan* 51)). Moreover, with references to the *Yi ching*, and with use of astrology, numerology and other techniques of divination, Lang Yi presented a series of prophecies of earthquake, drought and a rebellion of the Ch'iang 羌 barbarians in the northwest, all of which took place within the year.

Lang Yi was invited to take office, but he never accepted. He died at the hands of a local bully who had sought association with him but whom he had refused.

89. According to the commentary of Li Hsien, the phrase 'it is their weakness that they love dealings with witchcraft'

(*ch'i pi hao wu* 其敝好巫) reflects the preface of the scholar Fan Ning 范寧 of the fourth century A.D. to the Ku-liang 穀梁 commentary of *Ch'un-ch'iu*, where he remarks of the *ts'o chuan* that though its writing is very fine, 'its weakness is its [devotion to] witchcraft' (*ch'i pi yeh wu* 其敝也巫). In fact, however, the text of Fan Ning's preface (p. 3a) now reads *shih* 失 instead of *pi*, though the meaning of the two versions is the same.

90. The Eulogy at the end of this chapter of *HHS* is composed of six four-character verses, of which the second, fourth and sixth verses rhyme. The final characters are 尋, 陰 and 程; Bernhard Karlgren, *Grammata Serica Recensa*, gives the sounds as *dzið m/zid m/sin*, *sün* (GSR 662a), *idm/id m/yin* (GSR 651y) and *dida/id m/yin* (GSR 657b).

91. Chung-huan 中桓 was the style of Yang Hou (72-153), whose biography is in *HHS* 20A, 4b-6b. There is also a biography in *Hua-yang kuo chih* 華陽國志 10B, 2a-b, which gives Yang Hou's personal name as Hsü 序.

The phrase *p'u-ch'e* 蒲車 describes a chariot with wheels bound in rushes (*p'u*). *SC* 6, 9b, translated by Chavannes, *Mémoires historiques*, III, p. 231, refers to chariots with padded wheels being used in the ancient *feng* 封 and *shan* 禪 sacrifices in order that they should not damage the rocks and plants of the sacred mountains (see also the *So-yin* commentary of Ssu-ma Chen of T'ang to this passage of *SC*). *HS* 6, 2a, translated by Dubs, *History of the Former Han Dynasty*, II, 30, refers to an

an-ch'e p'u-lun 安車蒲輪 'a comfortable carriage with wheels [wrapped in] rushes' which was sent with a messenger in 140 B.C. to invite the scholar Shen P'ei 申培 to take office at the court of Emperor Wu of Han.

Yang Hou, member of an important family in Shu 蜀 commandery, in present-day Szechwan, with a reputation for the interpretation of omens and portents, was repeatedly recommended for office. He did serve for some time at court under Emperor Shun, but he then returned to private scholarship in the doctrines of Huang-Lao (see note 70), and he refused all further invitations.

92 The biography of Su Ching (40 B.C. to 30 A.D.) is in HHS 20A, 1a-4b. In the reign of Emperor P'ing of Former Han, about 5 A.D., Su Ching became Erudite Scholar of the *Yi ching*, and he was recognised as an expert in the apocryphal texts (*wei 緯*) on that work of divination. He held office for a time as Grand Administrator of Tai 代 commandery on the northern frontiers of the empire, then took court office at Lo-yang and retired shortly before his death.

During the period of civil war after the fall of Wang Mang in 23 A.D., the warlord Yen Ts'en 延岑 had sent one of his officers, Teng Chung-k'uang 滕仲况 to occupy Yin 陰 prefecture in Nan-yang 南陽 commandery (now west of Guanghua 光化 in Hupeh). Liu Kung 劉龔, a nephew of the scholar Liu Hsin 歆 and a member of the imperial clan, was

a counsellor to Teng Chung-k'uang. Su Ching wrote a long letter to Liu Kung, and he persuaded both Liu Kung and Teng Chung-k'uang to change sides and join Emperor Kuang-wu. (On Yen Ts'en and his forces in Nan-yang commandery, see Bielenstein, 'The Restoration of the Han Dynasty', II, e.g. pp. 26, 154-7, 229.)

The letter to Liu Kung, which was probably written in 29 A.D., occupies most of Su Ching's biography in *HHS*. The commentary of Li Hsien to this Eulogy explains that Nan-yang was the home commandery of Emperor Kuang-wu, and it is for this reason that the phrase *wo-chiu*

我舊

'our old' is used.

PLANETARY MOVEMENTS, 164-166

Figures 2-4 chart the positions of the planets Mars, Venus and Jupiter in relation to Earth and various stars and constellations at different dates during the years 164-6. Each is arranged with the sun at the centre and the First Point of Aries in the present epoch at $0/360^{\circ}$; all orbits are charted anti-clockwise.

The position of any planet among the constellations as viewed from Earth on any date may be calculated by taking the straight line connecting that planet with Earth and observing the reading of the parallel line from the Sun to a point on the circumference of the chart. As an example of this process, the parallel line indicating the direction of Venus as observed from Earth on 19 September 165 has been constructed in Figure 3, and it will be observed to cut the circumference of the chart very close to α Scorpii; Scorpio being the constellation with that degree of ecliptic longitude. Similar readings may be made for all other positions of Earth and the planets upon these charts, though it must be noted that the scale of the diagrams, the elliptical shape of planetary orbits and the time lapse of some 1800 years means that calculations and observations can only be approximate.

It is also possible to check the positions of the sun and the planets in the tables presented by Bryant Tuckerman, *Planetary, Lunar and Solar Positions A.D. 2 to A.D. 1649*, published by the American Philosophical Society (Philadelphia, 1964). These readings, from an IBM 7090-7094 computer, indicate the tropic celestial latitude and longitude of the

sun, moon and planets, as viewed from the terrestrial longitude of Babylon (45°E) at 7.00 p.m. local mean time. At the same moment in Lo-yang, the capital of Later Han, about longitude $112^{\circ} 30' \text{E}$, the time was 11.30 p.m. on the same day. It should be observed, however, that Tuckerman's tables are related to the mean equinox of date: due to the precession of the equinoxes, Tuckerman's readings for the period 164-166 A.D. must be increased by $24^{\circ}.5$ if they are to be related to the longitudes of the present epoch and modern maps of the constellations. When this is done the readings of the tables, which are Earth-centred, agree with the observations indicated in the sun-centred diagrams presented here.

In *Figure 2*, the positions of Earth and Mars are calculated to show the apparent position of the planet on the following dates:

- 14 June 165, to illustrate note 26;
- 28 January and 15 May 165, to illustrate note 30
(including the retrogression from January until May 165);
- 1 June, 30 June and 21 August 166, to illustrate note 58.

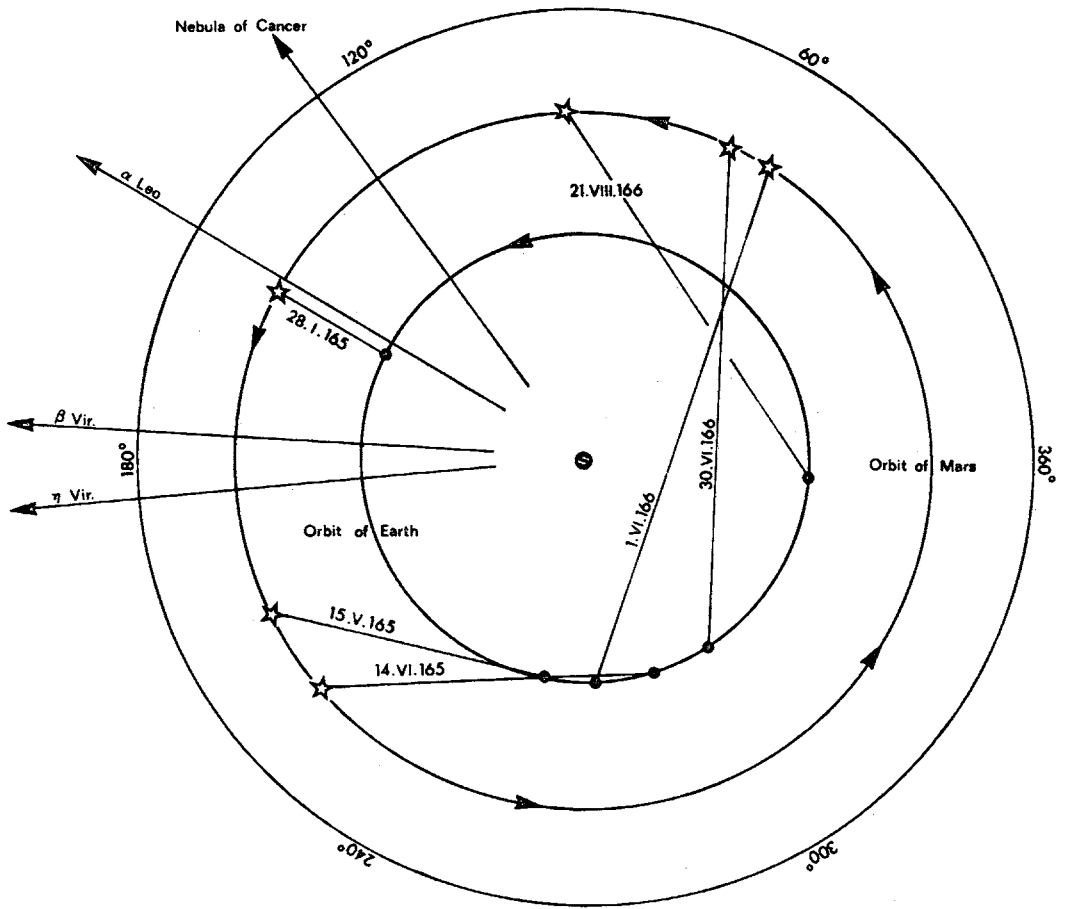


FIGURE 2

Mars: movements *c.* 166

In *Figure 3* the positions of Earth and Venus are calculated to show the apparent position of the planet on the following dates:

19 September 165, to illustrate note 27;

19 July 166, to illustrate note 57.

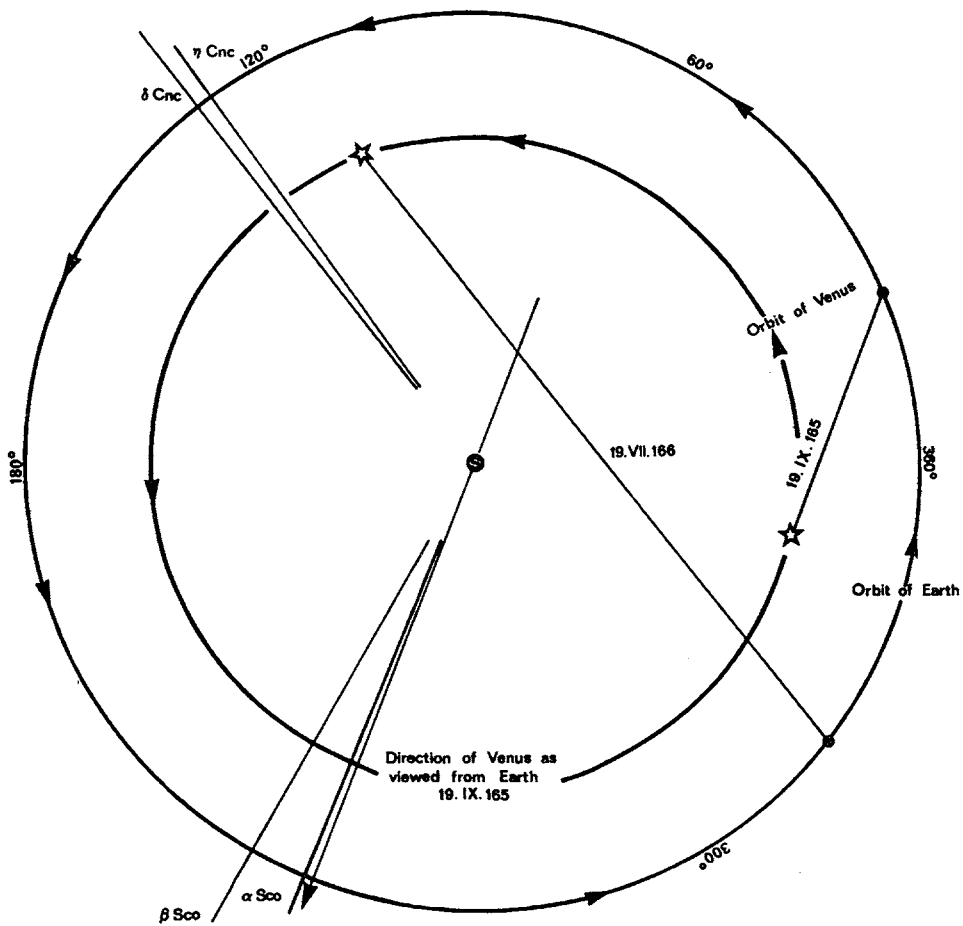


FIGURE 3

Venus: movements c. 166

In *Figure 4* the positions of Earth and Jupiter are calculated to show the apparent position of the planet on the following dates:

19 February and 18 April 166, to illustrate notes 29 and 59;

25 September 164 and 23 January 165 (with 18 April 165 to show the period of retrogression), to illustrate note 30.

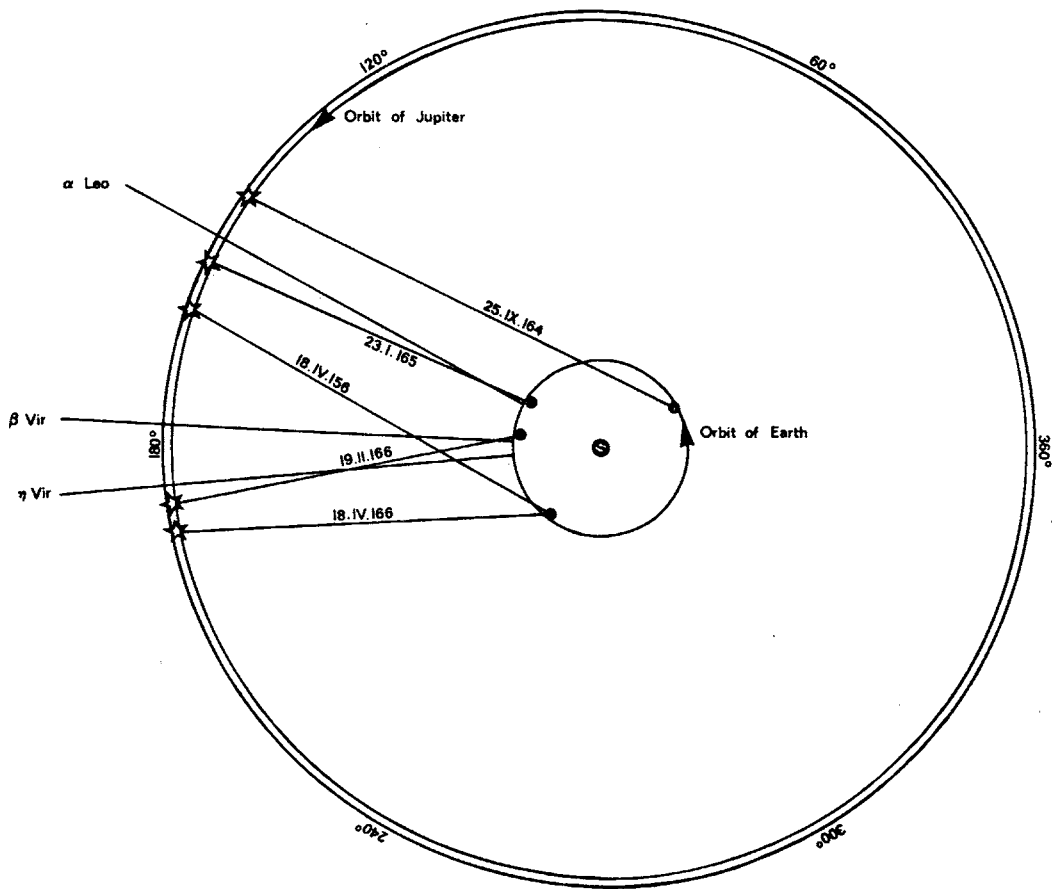


FIGURE 4

Jupiter: movements c. 166

Figure 5, designed to illustrate notes 26, 28 and 29, presents a sketch plan of the T'ai-wei Enclosure, including the Western names for the stars concerned, and an indication of the apparent paths of Mars and Jupiter in this region of the sky during the period described by Hsiang K'ai. Three of the 'gates' recognised by Chinese astronomers and referred to by Hsiang K'ai are identified: the stars β Virginis and η Virginis, between the Right Lateral Gate and the Main Gate and between the Main Gate and the Left Lateral Gate, were known as the Keeper of the Law on the Right (*Yu-chih-fa*) and the Keeper of the Law on the Left (*Tso-chih-fa*). See note 26.

THE 'A' ENCLOS

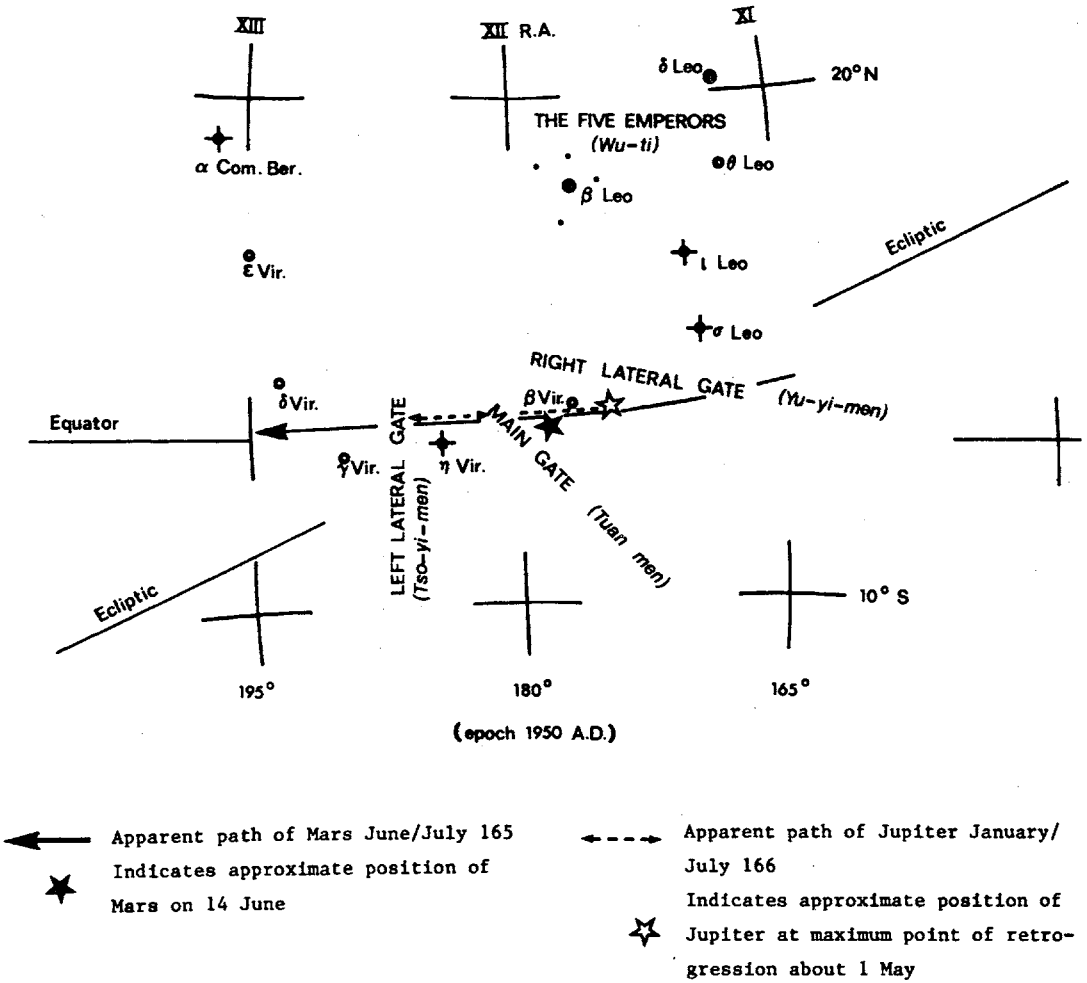


FIGURE 5

The T'ai-wei Enclosure

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Among the chief reasons for the weakness and ultimate collapse of the imperial system of Han were the social and political divisions which arose between the emperor and the scholar-officials who served him.

Portents of Protest, which forms part of a continuing study of the reigns of the Emperors Huan and Ling, the last effective rulers of Han, discusses the criticisms that were made of imperial policies and the philosophical background to the debate. It studies in some detail the means by which critics of the imperial government sought to urge their case by reference to supernatural or unusual phenomena as warnings to the throne.

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