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From Guan Li to Eighteen-year-old Oath Ceremony
A Study of Chinese Initiation Rituals in the Perspective of Historical

Anthropology

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Introduction

As we seek to recognize and understand the changing of the world, at the same time we are trying to understand ourselves. In comparison, we find it more difficult to know ourselves than to know the world. This situation is also expressed in a Chinese poem of the Song Dynasty: ‘a man cannot see the real mountain scenery, for he is in the mountains himself.’¹ What is the purpose of human life? This question has puzzled us for a long time. We have attempted to answer this question from the perspective of many disciplines, such as biology, archeology, history, psychology, and sociology. These research areas focus on different aspects of human beings including the body, culture, behavior, and social structure. The knowledge and understanding of anthropology is rooted in participant observation and experiences of people, which cannot be separated from social thoughts and practices. To examine how people live in the world, anthropology started by examining non-Western, ‘primitive’, ancient and simple societies and looked at the basic levels of human life to allow us to feel the possibilities and limitations of life, and to better understand the times in which we live and judge them rationally. Rituals as a central concept of anthropology offer a good opportunity to observe human behavior, living conditions and relationships, and social structures and power systems.

Initiation Rituals as a Kind of ‘Rites of Passage’

Research on rituals is an important issue in historical anthropology and is regarded as a new method and perspective for revealing the mystery and process of human development. This process is not only the result of human history and culture, but also a way to help humans to know themselves, nature, and the wider world. Rituals play a great part in life, and help humans to realize self identity and build relationships with others. They make people step out from their own inner worlds and serve as bridges to get in contact with the outer world. Rituals are understood as performative cultural

¹ One sentence of the poem *Ti Xi Lin Bi* (题西林壁) written by Su Shi (苏轼) (1037~1101) of the Song Dynasty (trans. Zhang).

worlds. They are essential for the emergence, practice and change of religion, politics, society, community, economics, law, science, art, and education.²

The Historicity of Rituals

According to Fernand Braudel's theory of history, historical time can be divided into three types: a) Short periods of time, the 'event'. What the mass media covers are usually events, which are an uncertain and deceptive form of time. b) Middle periods of time, the 'situation'. Research on the cycle of capitalist development is an example, which lasts about twenty to fifty years. c) Long periods of time, which create societal structures. This research focuses on the structures of daily material life in a period of time between five hundred to five thousand years, to assure a stable structure of history.³ As a historical phenomenon a ritual can be influenced by all three periods of time at once. On the one hand, the initiation ritual is an event existing in every historical period; on the other hand, this ritual is a product of a special historical structure that represents the stability in short period of time and the fluctuation in long period time. Rituals are important parts of society and culture. The history of human beings consists of innumerable thoughts and events, in which rituals play an important role. Ritual as a cultural event continues in history and has helped humans to create their own history. Chinese 'rites of passage' are influenced by Chinese history and are mirrors reflecting Chinese history. As we know, the traditional ritual of Guan Li⁴ came to its end in the late period of the Qing Dynasty. At that time great changes took place in China. The leaders and governments of the Qing Dynasty were weak and could not control the situation, and the demise of the 'old and bad' dynasty could not be halted. China was a big 'cake', divided in colonies by the Western countries. The lost war against the Western powers and the peasant revolution made the Qing government lose its power. At the same time the development of capitalism in China became increasingly influenced by Western ideas. Chinese traditional education and culture were at a crossroad between three political and economic roads: the enslaving

² Wulf/Zirfas, c.f. Performative Welten-Einführung in die historischen, systematischen und methodischen Dimensionen des Rituals, in Wulf/Zirfas 2004, pp.7-45.

³ Braudel, 1992.

⁴ Guan Li means putting on cap, a ritual of transition from childhood to adulthood.

education of imperialism, feudal education of landlords, and the modern cultural education of capitalism.⁵ In this period the feudal time was coming to an end in China; that was facing great challenges in Chinese culture, society, ideology and political superstructure. The Chinese ritual Guan Li, like other traditional cultural phenomena, failed to survive the social upheaval and change. From 1860, China degraded into wars and revolutions for about one hundred years. In 1949, the People's Republic of China was founded, but at that time China was in ruins and needed to be rebuilt. Through the New-Democratic Revolution and early construction of Chinese socialism, China made great progress, but, the revolution was so strong and comprehensive that some Chinese traditional culture was seen as a relic and thus forbidden or destroyed. The practice of Guan Li had been 'asleep' since the period of Reform and Opening in the 1980s.

The Culturality of Rituals

Many immaterial 'aspects' of culture and history have become visible in rituals and other cultural practices. Three aspects are important. The first aspect stresses the performative character of the language. The second aspect consists of the fact that rituals and other social practices are cultural performances, in which cultures present and express themselves. Third, the performativity characterizes the aesthetic side of the body-based performance of rituals and performances.⁶

China is a large country with a long history and rich culture; Chinese people account for one quarter of the world population and have made great contributions to human civilization. The development of China and the Chinese people is not easy to describe; however based on rituals we can demonstrate important parts of the history and cultural development of China. China is a country based on rituals and family rules, through which Chinese society has been formed, sustained and developed. Chinese ritual culture is a very complex system. According to ancient standards, which are in the book *Li Ji- Wang Zhi*⁷ there are six kinds of rituals. They are Guan

⁵ Chen 2001.

⁶ Wulf, c.f. Kulturelle Vielfaltung Immaterielles Kulturelles Erbe, in Wulf/ Poulain/Triki 2006b, pp.248-259.

⁷ *Li Ji*(礼记) is a work of Confucianism, which deals with ancient Chinese rules and rituals, edited by Dai De(戴德) and Dai Sheng(戴圣) in the Han Dynasty.

(initiation ritual), wedding, funeral, fete, building good relations with neighbours, and communication. Each category of rituals can be looked at as an independent unit; but all rituals also function together in constructing Chinese society and cultivating Chinese people. In this type of study 'rites of passage' — initiation rituals — are discussed. Chinese initiation rituals have played a key role in the forming the Chinese character, life attitudes and values of life.

'Rites of Passage' and Initiation Rituals

'Rites of passage' are rituals that mark a change in a person's social or sexual status, e.g., the initiation ritual. The term *rites of passage* was popularised by the ethnographer Arnold van Gennep (1873-1957) in the early part of the twentieth century. Further theories were developed by Mary Douglas and Victor Turner in the 1960s. According to van Gennep, 'rites of passage' have three phases: separation, liminality, and incorporation. In the first phase, people withdraw from their existing status and begin moving from one place or status to another. In the third phase they re-enter a new face or status of life. The liminal phase is the period between status during which people have left one place or state but not yet joined the next one. It is a state of in between.

Definition and Aims of This Research

Chinese People

China has many ethnicities; it is impossible to indicate how many ethnic groups there were in the past: Today China has 56 ethnicities, of which Han has the largest population. For Wen Zhongyi Chinese people can be understood in the following way: a) 'Chinese people' cover a so wide range of ethnic groups. Therefore usually the term 'Chinese people' refers to people of the Han ethnicity. b) Han people live in all parts of China, however, in different areas they have different characteristics. c) China has such a long history that we cannot say that the people of Shandong province have the same characteristics as the people who lived in the Lu State (ancient Shandong) of the Warring States 2,200 years ago. We should analyze Chinese people according to different times and different regions.

Chinese Initiation Rituals and the Distillation of Chinese Culture

When the relation between initiation ritual and Chinese culture is mentioned, we should first discuss the relations between ritual and culture. What are the characteristics of culture? Has puzzled people for so long and led them to a variety of opinions? E. B. Taylor defined culture in 1871: ‘Culture . . . is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.’ Starting from this definition, culture can be seen as a sum of all the living forms and contents of human life. Although there are some shortcomings of this concept, e.g., that it does not take into account aspects of material culture, we still see that culture from the Western viewpoint consists of morals and customs. Rituals as an important part of customs therefore make a great contribution to culture. Now, we take a look at culture in Chinese society. In his work ‘Towards the concept of ‘cultural industry’’, Wan Li⁸ indicates that there are eight explanations of culture, two of which are closely related to this study. The first point, culture refers to the institution and moralization of Li and Yue (rituals and music). *The Analects - Zi Han*⁹ says: ‘After the death of King Wen, was the cause of truth not lodged here in me?’ ‘The cause of truth’ in Chinese is the same word as ‘culture’, but here refers to the institution of rites and music. In the book *Shangshu - Dayumo* there is a sentence: ‘Disseminating the culture to the Four Seas.’ ‘Four Seas’ refers to the world and ‘culture’ here means good morality and cultivation. The second dimension of culture has the meaning of etiquette and constitution. It is indicated in *Xun Zi - Li Lun*¹⁰: ‘When the monarch gets *it* the country will be governed; losing *it* the country will be in chaos; *that* is culture.’ Culture in this context means laws and rules. The dimensions of two examples demonstrate that culture can be regarded as social constitutions and ethical rules, which belong to the deeper layers of culture. So, it is concluded that in China, especially in ancient China, culture often refers to theories and practices of etiquette

⁸ <http://www.hfnec.edu.cn/offices/jks/xuebao/2001-1/19.htm>.

⁹ In *The Analects-Zi Han* (论语·子罕). *The Analects* or *The Confucian Analects* is a book in which the Chinese Master (Confucius(551 B.C.-479B.C.)) discusses with his disciples and unveil his preoccupations with society.

¹⁰ *Xun Zi-Li Lun* (荀子·礼论), in *Xun Zi*: a representative work of Hsun Tzu(313 B.C.-238 B.C.).

and rules. In chapter four I will discuss the relationship between rituals, rites and etiquettes, and will conclude that rituals are the concrete manifestation of etiquette. Therefore, we can assume that rituals are an important expression of Chinese culture.

After the comparison of Western culture and Chinese culture, it is clear that rituals play an important role in both societies and those rituals are an essential part of human culture. Rite of passage is a representative of Chinese rituals.

Methodology

Historical anthropology signifies the manifold, interdisciplinary efforts, which explores the phenomena and structures of humans after the 'death of man', i.e. after the end of the acceptance of an abstract anthropological norm. Historical Anthropology characterize by the tension between the history and philosophy as a discipline and the contribution of history as a discipline to anthropology. It tries to reflect on the relation between the historicity of its perspectives, and the historicity of its object. Historical Anthropology embraces not only the results of the humanities, but also the critique of anthropology and the development of new paradigmatic issues. At the core of their efforts is an unrest of thinking, which can not be stopped. In the reflection of their own historicity, historical anthropology does not agree with the Eurocentrism of the humanities, nor it is interested in an outdated concept of history; it promotes research on the open issues of the present as well as the future.¹¹

Ritual research has its own particular methods, which can be classified as qualitative social research; they are also often applied in ethnography, cultural Studies, symbolic interactionism, organization analysis, etc. Rituals can be understood as windows on a respective culture or society. As points of cultural crystallization they demonstrate their implicit social and symbolic organizational principle. On the other hand, rituals serve to examine processes of the organization of interactions and institutions themselves (e.g. context analysis, conversation analysis).¹²

¹¹ See back cover of *Klanganthropologie, Performativität-Imagination-Narration, Paragrana* Band 16. 2007, Heft 2.

¹² Wulf/Zirfas, c.f. *Performative Welten-Einführung in die historischen, systematischen und methodischen Dimensionen des Rituals*, in Wulf/Zirfas 2004, pp.7-45.

Organization of the Dissertation

Chinese initiation rituals are analyzed in the perspective of historical anthropology. In the first chapter, the development of Chinese initiation rituals will be classified and reviewed. Ancient Chinese initiation rituals, including Guan Li and Ji Li¹³, are introduced step by step. The modern form of Chinese initiation ritual, the Eighteen-year-old Oath Ceremony will be illustrated with case studies. Chinese initiation rituals can be divided into five stages: appearance, growing up, decline, waking up, and rebirth. Guan Li is the ancient form of an initiation ritual for men, and is of seventeen steps. And accordingly Ji Li is the initiation rite for women, which is simpler and of less social importance than Guan Li. After a period, when rituals did not find adequate public intention, initiation rituals now have been rediscovered in the Chinese society. Eighteen-year-old Oath Ceremony appeared in contemporary China at the end of twentieth century. With great support from Chinese government this oath ceremony was supported and very quickly spread all over China.

In the second chapter the research about Chinese initiation rituals is summarized and the methodology of this research is discussed. After careful examination, we discovered that these Chinese initiation rituals have never been forgotten as cultural phenomena and social activities. In ancient times, attention was paid to the recording and discussion of the procedures and content of initiation rituals. In modern times, some people pay attention to the origin and process of ancient initiation rituals on one hand; and others are willing to consider. In light of my present research, it is easy to find numerous materials and information about Chinese initiation rituals. However, most of them are news paper articles. There has been very little research or analysis of these rituals. It is therefore necessary to carry out research on Chinese initiation rituals in the perspective of anthropology, which meets the needs of Chinese reality and development. Historical anthropology takes the human body as the centre of its analysis, among which ritual, mimesis, performance, imagination, language, gesture, and behaviour play important roles in the analysis of cultural phenomena. From the

¹³ A kind of initiation ritual-putting hairpins for girls.

perspective of historical anthropology, Chinese initiation rituals can be represented and reconstructed historically.

Chapter three is the core of this study. As Chinese initiation rituals from different periods are represented, the historicity and culturality of these rituals will be taken into consideration. There is a great deal of artifacts concerning ancient Chinese initiation rituals. Due to the mimetic and performative reinvention, Guan Li and Ji Li appear again in a new form. The 'Eighteen-year-old oath ceremony' is the new form of initiation ritual in contemporary China. Using concepts of historical anthropology such as mimesis, imagination and ritual, this initiation ritual is deconstructed. After research on rituals, we understand the positive educational function of good practice examples and understand the mimetic process taking place during oath ceremonies. One ritual, in two forms, has continued over thousands of years. We follow the route of Chinese initiation rituals from Guan Li to 'Oath Ceremony'. What we see is not only the changing of performance, but also the changing of Chinese society and culture.

Rituals can only be correctly explained and understood in reference to their historical and cultural background. For this reason, I elaborate Chinese characteristics, Chinese philosophy and cultural complexity, which should help readers to better understand Chinese ritual culture, and to reveal the hidden power system incorporated in the Chinese rituals.

The development and construction of theory is based on practice. In chapter five I attempt to build a conceptual framework of historical anthropology, in which many basic concepts such as the body, ritual, mimesis, performance, image, and gestures are considered and connected. In short, the body is the center in reference to which the elements of rituals interact and function. Rituals are a product of history and culture. That is, rituals are also influenced by politics, philosophy, economy, society, aesthetics etc. Through rituals we can understand different countries, peoples, cultures, and societies.

In chapter six I return to views on Chinese initiation rituals. By comparing Chinese initiation rituals with those of other countries we also have to discuss current

problems and difficulties of modern Chinese initiation rituals. As an educator and socialist, I value Chinese initiation rituals on one hand, but on the other hand I worry about the reality and the development of this important ritual that has a central impact on the growth of the young generation. Fortunately, the Chinese society is realizing the negative consequences of the loss of tradition more and more. Schools are trying to add more traditional elements to educational activities, in which I think rituals play a very important role. Taking the growing popularity of initiation rituals, there could be a rediscovery of rituals in general in the Chinese society. That will help China to integrate traditional cultural elements in the modern society and to support the development of Chinese cultural identity in a globalizing world.

Chapter seven summarizes the research and presents an open attitude for further studies of Chinese initiation rituals and Chinese ritual culture.

Rituals are one central research areas of historical anthropology; rituals play an irreplaceable role in human development. China is a nation of ceremonies, hence we can say without rituals there would be no China. Through the window of Chinese Initiation Rituals we understand Chinese culture, history and society. The path to understand rituals is not easy, which again demonstrates the following traditional saying ‘a man cannot see the real mountain scenery, for he is in the mountains himself’,¹⁴ but also like ‘...hundreds and thousands of times, for her I searched in chaos, suddenly, I turned by chance, to where the lights were waning, and there she stood.’¹⁵ Facing the uncertainties of tomorrow we are happy to know which role rituals can play to establish a solid fundament of the society.

¹⁴ See note 1.

¹⁵ One sentence of the poem *Qing Yu An-Yuan Xi* (青玉案-元宵) written by Xin Qi Ji (辛弃疾) (1140-1207) of the Song Dynasty (trans. Zhang).

Chapter 1

Initiation Rituals in China

Rituals were known as Li¹ in ancient Chinese, and they played a very important role in social life. There are ‘Five Li’ recorded in the book *Zhou Li- Chun Gong- Da Zongbo*². These ‘Five Li’ consist of ‘ceremonies to celebrate an auspicious affair, to appease evil spirits, to welcome guests, to bolster the military, and to offer praise’. ‘Six Li’ are indicated in the book *Li Ji- Wang Zhi*, which are Guan (initiation ritual),³ wedding, funeral, fete, building good relations with neighbours, and communication. In *Da Dai Li Ji- Ben Ming* ‘Nine Li’ are listed. The ritual of transition conceptualized by van Gennep as ‘initiation rituals’ from childhood to adulthood is a very important ritual in China, described in the ‘Five Li’, ‘Six Li’ and ‘Nine Li’. Guan Li, the Chinese term for male initiation ritual, was an important event in an individual life because it created a new starting point. Based on this point a young man actually began his social life. In ancient China there was a traditional belief that men were superior to women, and the position of women was low, so they had fewer social rights. As a result, the transition rituals for women were seldom recorded. Ji Li is the most popular form of initiation ritual for women in ancient China.

1.1 Initiation Rituals in Ancient China: Guan Li and Ji Li

We have generalized the development of Chinese initiation rituals above. Over the long history two main forms of the transitional ritual can be picked out: the ancient form, namely Guan Li and Ji Li, and the modern form, that is the Eighteen-year-old Oath Ceremony. Next, I would like to introduce the two forms of initiation rituals.

¹ In Chinese, the meaning of ‘Li’ sometimes refers to the meaning of ritual.

² *Zhou Li (周礼)* is a sutra of Confucianism finished in the Warring States Period. This volume covers a very wide field from astronomy, geography to laws and arts, and it is regarded as a valuable cyclopedia about ancient China

³ Guan Li means putting on cap, a ritual of transition from childhood to adulthood.

1.1.1 Guan Li

‘Guan’ in Chinese means cap and ‘Li’ has many meanings and one important meaning refers to ritual or ceremony. For example, in the book *Yi Li-Shi Guan Li*⁴ Guan Li is described in detail and we find that Guan Li is very complex, comprised of about seventeen main steps as outlined below:

- 1) Divining the date for the ritual. The family that will hold the ritual should select an appropriate date for the ritual using the way of ‘Shi’(蓍). ‘Shi’ is a mystical divining method which uses grass to make predictions.
- 2) Notifying the guests who will attend the ritual. There is a formal dialogue between the inviter and the guests. The inviter says: ‘*** has a son named ***. The son will be capped, and would you please attend the capping ritual?’ The guest answers unobtrusively: ‘I am not so good to participant in the ritual.’ The inviter says: ‘I am sure you can teach my son during the ritual.’ The guest says: ‘This rite is very important for your son and I could not refuse your invitation, could I?’
- 3) Divining the honored guest who should preside over the ritual. This divining is done in the family temple three days before the ritual, also using the Shi method.
- 4) Inviting the guests. The host personally invites each guest individually. On the same day an assistant of the honor guest will be invited.
- 5) Layout. The ritual will be held in the family temple. In the morning all the things should be well prepared. A ‘Xi’ (basin) is placed in the east of the hall. The clothes matching the caps are put in the east room, north of the hall. Three deacons stand in the east in the hall and each holds up a box with a different cap.
- 6) Being in position. The host stands under the east steps of the hall facing west; the brothers of the man being initiated stand on the east of the ‘Xi’ facing west; the other male members of the household stand out of the east room by the hall; the young man who will be capped in the ritual waits in the east room.

⁴ *Yi Li* (仪礼) is a Confucian Classic (from the Warring States Period(476 B.C.-221 B.C.) to the Han Dynasty (202 B.C.-220).

- 7) Welcoming the guests. The host stands outside the family temple to welcome the guests. The host bows to guests three times with hands folded in front and after that the guests enter the temple. The host returns to the east of the hall, and faces west. The guests come to the west of the hall and face east. The honored guest, who will put the caps on the son, stands in the southeast of the hall facing west after washing his hands in the 'Xi'. A bamboo mat is placed by the east wall of the hall, on which a comb, a hairpin and a piece of silk tape are carefully placed.

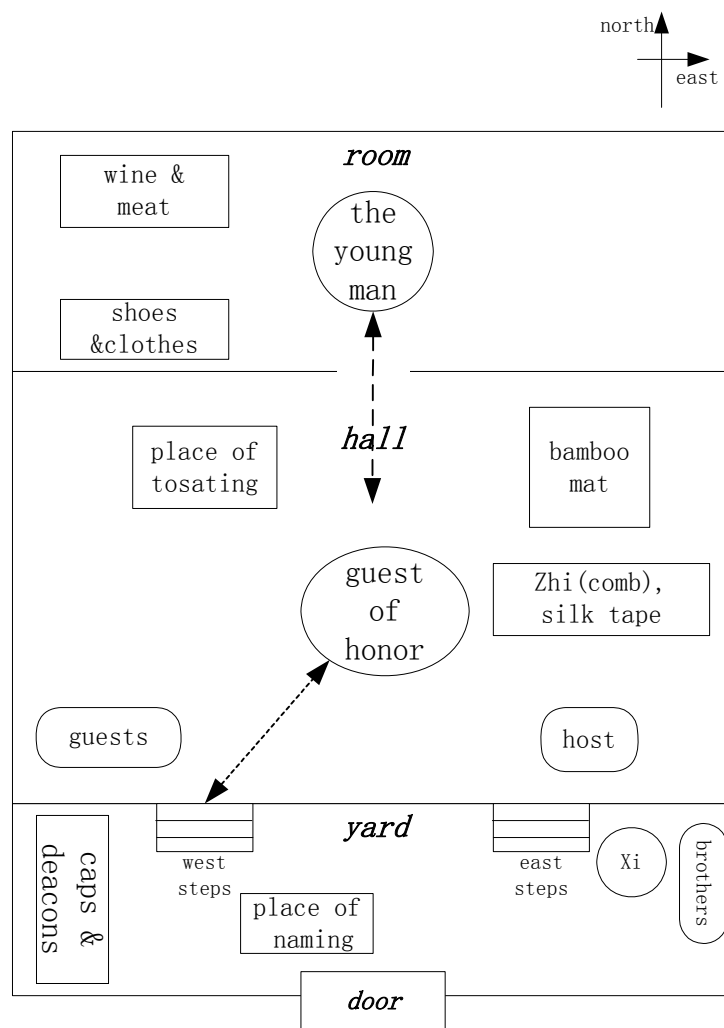


Figure 1.1: Map of the family temple

- 8) The first capping. The young man comes out of the room into the hall then stops, facing south. The honored guest invites the young man to sit down on his knees on the bamboo mat. Then the honor guest also sits on his knees beside the young man

and begins to do up the hair of the young man and binds up the hair with a hairpin and a piece of silk tape. The honored guest stands up and goes down the west steps, followed by the host, to wash his hands in the 'Xi'. Then he comes back and makes the silk tape on the hair of the young man more straight with his hands, and afterwards he walks down one step of the west steps to take the cap of black cloth from the first deacon. The honored guest holds the cap with the front part of the cap in his left hand and the back part of the cap in his right hand. An important activity called 'Jin Rong' comes next, which involves giving an example of how gentlemen should walk and behave. Before dressing the cap, the honored guest goes to the young man and puts the cap on the young man. The young man stands up and returns to the east room and dresses in the clothes matching the black cap that he is now wearing. Then he comes out and makes a bow to the people in the hall with his hands folded in front. At this time all the guests will congratulate him with the words: 'Today is a nice day and you are wearing a new cap and a new suit, which indicates that you are coming of age. From now on you should leave infancy and try to be a man with the highest virtue. May you have a long life with good luck, and you will be given bright happiness.'



Figure 1.2⁵: Capping

⁵ http://game.163.com/game2002/editor/edit_jianzhi/050901/050901_488195.html.

- 9) The second capping. The young man sits back down on the bamboo mat. The honored guest does up the hair of the young man again and dresses him with a hairpin. After washing his hands the honored guest further straightens the hair of the young man, and after that he walks down two steps of the west steps and takes the leather cap from the second deacon. He then walks to the young man holding the leather cap like the first time, with the front part of the cap in his left hand and the back part in his right hand. The honored guest solemnly puts the leather cap onto the head of the young man and then the young man stands up and goes back to the east room to change into the suit matching the leather cap. Then he comes out and salutes to the guests and in the meanwhile the guests sing another well-wishing song.
- 10) The third capping. The process is nearly the same as the former two, with the difference that the third cap is a cap made of peerage.
- 11) Banquet. After the process of dressing caps a banquet is given, at which point the young man drinks a special sweet wine with the guests.
- 12) Visiting his mother. After the banquet the young man meets and thanks his mother taking a piece of fried pork crisp near to the east wall of the yard.
- 13) Being named. The honored guest gives him a second name, which can be used in social life from that point afterwards. This procedure is the second climax of the whole ritual.
- 14) The young man formally meets his brothers, sisters and aunts, now as a man.
- 15) The young man pays formal visits to his elders and gentlemen of his village wearing his black cap and clothes.
- 16) Gifts. The host presents gifts to the guests such as silk and double deerskin.
- 17) Seeing the guests out. The host and family members see the guests out and tidy up the ritual artifacts.

1.1.2 Ji Li

Ji Li is the ritual of transition from a young girl to a woman in ancient China. 'Ji' is an

old hairpin made of bone, jade or bronze used before the Qin Dynasty. Ji Li is recorded in minute detail in many old books. In the book *Li Ji- Nei Ce* it is recorded: 'Girls will wear 'Ji' when they are 15 years old', which means that parents should hold an initiation ritual when their girl is 15 years old. Ji Li is an important ritual for girls and in this ritual the style of girl's hair will be changed by putting in a hairpin (Ji), and she will wear different clothes afterwards. Compared to Guan Li, the ritual for girls is simpler and smaller in size, because of the Chinese traditional idea that men were superior to women. In families the position of girls is lower than boys and in society women have few rights in politics, economy and education. Therefore, the significance of Ji Li is to indicate that a girl is grown up and can be married. That is the only social meaning of this ritual. Reference to *Rites of Family Zhu* this transitional ritual consists of these steps:

- 1) The family informs female guests three days before the ritual.
- 2) The hostess invites the honored guest (female) who will dress the hairpin for the girl. This happens one day before the ritual and all things should be well prepared for the ritual.
- 3) Welcoming the guests. The ritual is held at home and in the morning the hostess waits for the guests outside the house.
- 4) Dressing the hairpin (Ji). The honored guest puts the 'Ji' for the girl.



Figure 1.3: Ancient Chinese 'Ji'

- 5) Clothing. The girl dresses in new beautiful clothing to match the hairpin.
- 6) Toasting. The young woman should present sweet wine to the guests.
- 7) Naming. After the toast the honored guest talks to the young woman and gives her a new name (this procedure is seldom carried out).

- 8) Worshipping her ancestors. The young woman is led by her father to worship her ancestors in the family temple.
- 9) Banquet. After her visiting the seniors, a banquet begins.

Here two points should be added. First, generally speaking, soon after the ritual of Ji Li the young woman is going to be married. However, if a girl has no engagement when she is 15 years old, then at the latest this ritual should be held when she is 20 years old. Second, the ritual held by common families is not so complex, but the Ji Li of the aristocracy is very complicated. Ji Li in the palace additionally includes dressing caps, saluting, playing musical instruments, etc..

1.2 Initiation Rituals in Contemporary China

When the theme of initiation rituals is concerned, there are many rituals which can be seen as initiation rituals in contemporary China. Among them, the Eighteen-year-old Oath Ceremony can be chosen as the most representative one because this ritual is ordered by the Chinese government and is regularly and well organized in all provinces and big cities in a formal model. As follows we take a look at the Eighteen-year-old Oath Ceremony

1.2.1 Eighteen-year-old Oath Ceremony

In 1993 the first contemporary rite of passage was held in Jiading District, Shanghai. This activity was highly commended by the committee of the Communist Youth League in Shanghai. In the year 1994 a countrywide policy named ‘Outline of Patriotism Education’ was issued by the Chinese Communist Party Central Committee stating that, ‘the governments or institutions of all areas should organize the young people over 18 years old to take part in the rite of passage vowing in front of the national flag.’ After this suggestion the rite of passage appears in some areas and institutions, especially in some schools and colleges. On 18th, April, 1996 the central committee of the Communist Youth League issued another outline ‘temporary

suggestions to the educational activity of Eighteen-year-old Oath Ceremony’, which legitimized this activity and helped its development.

Generally speaking, an oath ceremony includes the following steps: raising the National Flag (singing the National Anthem), students taking oath in front of the National Flag, speeches given by government leaders, a blessing from elders, speeches of the participants and giving souvenirs. The oath ceremony usually takes place in medium and large cities where the education situation good, such as Beijing, Shanghai, Tianjin, Hong Kong, Dong Guan in Guangdong Province, Jiaxing in Zhejiang Province, etc.. The oath ceremony is always held collectively. Students over 18 play the main roles of this activity and the other participants are teachers, parents, and leading authorities who come from the areas of education, government, the Committee for the Next Generation, etc.. These ceremonies are often organized on May 4th or in October, because these days are memorial, national or political days. Some patriotic education places will be selected as the sites of the rituals besides school, such as the Great Wall, the Monuments to the Revolutionary Heroes, the Martyrs Mausoleum and the War Memorial. The ceremony can also be held in historical or pedagogical places, such as the Confucian Temple. Next, I would like to cite an example of the ‘Oath Ceremony’.

A Case of Eighteen-year-old Oath Ceremony⁶

Time: 16:50, November 17. 2005

Site: Small Hall of Experimental Middle School of Fu Tian, Shenzheng, Guangdong Province

Participants: students over 18 years old

Procedure:

- 1) Raising the national flag, singing the national anthem
- 2) Wishes given by teachers and alumni representative
- 3) Expectations of parents
- 4) Voice of ‘being adult’(representative of students)
- 5) Taking the oath

⁶ Mr. Jin Junqiang working in this school took the video of the ceremony for my research.

6) Oath ceremony for new members of the Communist Youth League

7) Signature and souvenirs (students over 18)



Figure 1.4: Taking oath



Figure 1.5: Signature and souvenirs

Oath

I am a citizen of the People's Republic of China. On the occasion of being 18 years old, facing the flag I take a solemn oath:

I am determined to be a socialist citizen with ideal, morality, knowledge and discipline. Comply with the Constitution and laws. Love my socialist motherland. Support the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party. Exercise our civic rights properly, carry out civic duties actively, abide by social ethics consciously. Serve others and dedicate the community; advocate science and pursue the genuine knowledge; perfect my personality and strengthen my physique. Work hard and struggle in my all life for the Chinese prosperity, democracy and civilization.

1.2.2 Other Forms of the Initiation Rituals in China

Eighteen-year-old Oath Ceremony is an official initiation ritual, however on the opposite side there exist some other forms of initiation rituals. The College Entrance Examination, enlistment in the army, marriage, leaving home for work and other aspects also play a similar role in being an adult. Wang Mingming argues that the graduation ceremony in university serves the purpose of 'rite of passage' and he also indicates that after the ceremony students become part of the workforce. They enter a socialized phase and practice and transfer social regulations in social ways.⁷

⁷ Wang 2003.

China is a big country with 56 ethnicities and in addition to the initiation rituals of the Han ethnicity there are many different interesting rituals of passage among other groups. Next some examples will be introduced.

Painting Teeth

Painting teeth is an important part of the ‘rite of passage’ for the Bulang people. Bulang people whose teeth are not painted can not participant in social activities. The teeth painting ceremony is very simple. Before painting the person must eat some sour fruits or moisten their teeth with sour juice, then a piece of pine oleoresin is lighted and a hot turpentine is dropped on tiles and wood to produce black smoke which can blacken the teeth. This work is repeated many times over the next days until the teeth are turned black. The Buyi people have a more painful teeth ritual in which Buyi teenagers have their two front teeth pulled out when they are of fifteen or sixteen years old.

Tattoo- Memory of Pain in the Body

Tattooing is the biggest characteristics of the rite of passage of the Dai people. In the ritual the young man’s body and legs will be tattooed. There is a proverb in the Dai group: ‘even the legs of frog have patterns, why doesn’t man have tattoos on his legs?’ Men see tattoos as glorious and if someone has no tattoo then he will be seen as lowly, and weaker than frogs. As a result he may be regarded as a coward and will be difficult to find love. Tattooing is done when the young man is fourteen or fifteen years old. Before the tattooing the young man drinks some narcotics, then patterns are painted on the skin, after that the person begins to tattoo with a needle with ink.



Figure 1.6: Tattoo

Changing Dresses

The Mosuo people, the Naxi people, and the Yi people change outfits to realize being an adult. Girls change skirts and boys change trousers. After changing outfits girls and boys begin looking for their loves. The Naxi people hold dressing trousers rituals and dressing skirts rituals for the young people on the Chinese Spring Festival or on their birthdays. These rituals always happen when the young girls or boys are thirteen years old because the Naxi people believe that twelve years is a circle according to the Chinese zodiac tradition of birth year, and after twelve years there is a new beginning.⁸ The teenagers of the Mosuo people attend the ritual of passage when they are thirteen years old and the ritual is held on the morning of Spring Festival. During the ritual young man stands beside the left pillar in his house (girl stands beside the right pillar in her ritual). His left foot stands on a piece of pork and his right foot stands on a bag full of rice, which symbolizes that the young adult will not need to worry about food in his life. In the ritual for the girl, her mother dresses her in a beautiful skirt, does her hair up, and helps the girl put on a necklace, earrings and bracelets. In the ritual for boys, the uncle of the boy dresses the young man with new clothes and helps the young man to put on a broadsword.

Challenges

The boys of the Yao people participant in a rite of passage when they are fifteen or sixteen years old. The ritual comprises of challenges such as ‘climbing knives mountain’, ‘passing through a sea of fire’, ‘sleeping on an ice bed’ and the other difficult programs. Today, the challenges have been reduced with ‘jumping down from a cloud platform’ as the main program. The ‘cloud platform’ is made of four wooden pegs, which are four meters high. The young man is led up by the honored guest onto the platform. After the speech given by the honored guest, the young man will take an oath: no firing or killing, no stealing or robbing, no kidnapping or raping, no abusing parents, and no framing lies to good persons. After this vow the young man extinguishes the fire in the water, symbolizing that if the young man breaks his word he would have the same fate as the fire. Then the young man jumps down into a

⁸ Bai 2001.

vine net held by guests and they twirl the net quickly. At the same time a great crying bursts out to praise the braveness of the young man and to congratulate a new adult entering the society.

1.3 The History of Initiation Rituals in China

‘Li’ in Chinese not only has the meaning of ritual, but can also be seen as an important rule system adhered to social life strictly in the Zhou Dynasty. The most rituals at that time were arranged in noble classes including royal class and the class of scholar-bureaucrat (Shi Da Fu 士大夫). During ‘Spring and Autumn’ period and ‘Warring States’ period Confucian learning expanded rapidly. As a result, rituals were not longer only carried out by the upper classes and common people became increasingly influenced by rituals. *Li Ji -Li Yun* describes the reality of that time: ‘Punishment is also given to scholar-bureaucrats when they break laws; the common people are also can be treated with ‘Li’, when the situation is possible.’ In the Han Dynasty Emperor Wu was persuaded by Dong Zhongshu to establish Confucianism as the sole philosophy taught and used in the whole country. Other theories and philosophies, such as Taoism, Mo, Ming, Fa, Nong, Yin Yang, and Zong Heng were forbidden. From then on Confucianism became the national philosophy and a thinking system which has strongly influenced Chinese culture, politics, society, ethics, economy and people for more than 2,000 years.

According to the scale and influence of Guan Li the development of this ritual can be divided into five phases: appearance, growing up, decline, silence, and rebirth.

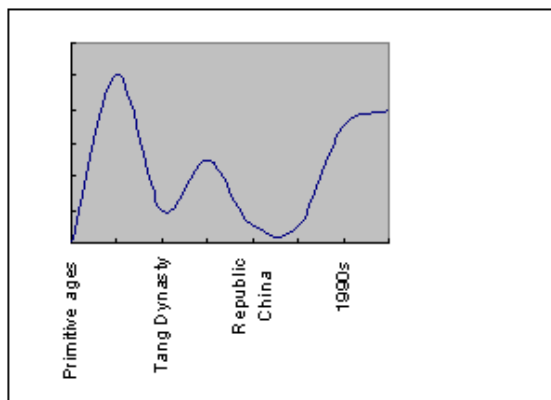


Figure 1.7: The development of Chinese initiation rituals

1.3.1 Appearance

It is impossible to determine an exact time when initiation ritual appeared in China because there are no historic documents or information regarding its origin. However, we can make conjecture based upon other rituals and cultural phenomena. In the late primitive ages, human beings slowly changed from living together into living in tribal clans. From then on marriage became an important way to form family and community groups. The forms of marriage are supposed to include several steps such as group marriage, polygamous marriage, and pair marriage. The ritual of marriage developed after these previous forms. Generally speaking, before marriage a young man and young woman had already entered the period of sexual maturity, so in many tribes or communities initiation rituals were held. These rituals symbolized an individual transition from childhood into adulthood. These rituals were known as ‘Cheng Ding Li’, which means ‘becoming an able-bodied man’. At that time people did not understand their bodies very well, hence much mysticism and superstition was incorporate into initiation rituals. The young man or woman was wounded, tattooed, or had their teeth broken. Symbols were made in their bodies to serve as physical identifications of new social members; after these rituals new adults had the rights of attending sacrificial rites and of discussing family affairs, and also took up the duty to protect their families and community by fighting in wars.

1.3.2 Growing up

The emergence of private ownership of property brought society into a new epoch, in which social structure and cultural issues changed greatly. People were divided into several classes. Wealth, poverty, authority, weakness, violence, crime, and many other products of civilization arose one by one. To make classical society run well a strict set of rules and ethics system were necessary, creating the historic need for rituals. Wulf argues that with the help of rituals the world and personal relationship

can be ordered and interpreted; rituals can also be experienced and constructed.⁹ Society and community are not only displayed through a collective sharing of symbolical knowledge¹⁰, but also through ritualized interactions and communication forms, in which and with which rituals produce this knowledge.¹¹ *Zhou Li* is regarded as the basis of the development of Chinese classical society. Its theory and practice have done much for the construction of politics, culture, economy, and humanity in China, especially in the feudal period over 2,000 years. From a general point of view, *Zhou Li* covered almost all rules and rituals happening in the daily and social life of the Zhou Dynasty. We can also determine the arrangement and execution of the rituals at that time through other relatively old documents. The ritual of passage from childhood to adulthood was called Guan Li (for men) and Ji Li (for women) in ancient China. In the Zhou Dynasty the nepotistic system of power of the imperial clan carried out after its founding and governors began to use 'Li' to manage their state. Many people who had the same family name with the Zhou emperor were conferred his territories and later Guan Li was spread into other noble families.

In the Han Dynasty (206 BC-220) and the 'Three States' Period (220-280) Guan Li was carried out differently among different groups and social classes. The emperors finished the rituals as stipulated, but the noble class always held rituals in a simple manner, and the common people reformed the initiation ritual and a similar rite of passage emerged named 'Shang Tou' (binding up the hair). There is a record describing the importance of the ritual of 'Shang Tou': 'When Hua Bao (a man) was eight years old, his father came to safeguard the city of Chang An. While his father was leaving, he said to his son Hua Bao: 'Hua Bao, wait for my return to hold the initiation ritual for you.' Later, Chang An fell into enemy hands and Hua Bao's father died in the final battle. It was said that Hua Bao did not have the ritual of 'Shang Tou' and did not marry all his life.'¹²

⁹ Wulf/Zirfas, c.f. Performative Welten-Einführung in die historischen, systematischen und methodischen Dimensionen des Rituals, in Wulf/Zirfas 2004c, pp.7-45.

¹⁰ Douglas 1986.

¹¹ Eder, c.f. Institution, in Wulf 1997, pp.159-168.

¹² *Nan Qi Shu-Xiao Yi Zhuan*(南齐书-肖义传), *Nan Qi Shu* is a history book written by Xiao Zixian(487-537).

1.3.3 Decline

Buddhism, instead of Confucianism, was very popular during the Tang Dynasty and this change influenced politics, culture and philosophy. Guan Li and other ancient rites became merely symbolic. Even emperors did not take the ritual seriously, for instance, in the year 631 the emperor Tang Tai Zong suggested that the Guan Li of the prince should be held in February, yet the emperor thought that February was the right time for seeding, so the time of Guan Li should be altered to October. He insisted upon his decision and refused to listen to other advices.¹³ Guan Li is on the first place of ancient 'Five Rituals' according to Chinese Confucianism, thus it should be held in the spring for following the same steps with natural time. Tang Tai Zong changed the time of the important ritual, which indicated that Confucian rituals were losing importance at that time. Liu Zong Yuan (773—819) in his work *Da Wei Zhong Li Lun Shi Dao Shu* says that forefathers attached importance to Guan Li, and viewed this ritual as the way for a young man to become an adult with the mind of a sage. However, people had not carried it out for the past several hundreds years.¹⁴ Another case is recorded in *Si Bu Cong Kan*. A man named Sun Chang Yi took Guan Li very seriously for his son, but after that his fellow officials ridiculed him when he told them about the ritual.¹⁵ The Confucian scholars sighed: 'If Guan Li degenerates, there are no real adults in the country.'¹⁶

This situation continued for a long time until the rise of new Confucianism (School of Cheng and Zhu) in the Song Dynasty, then Guan Li again gained prominence.

1.3.4 Reawakening

The Song Dynasty completed the second integration of China into one entity. To

¹³ *Zhen Guan Zheng Yao*(贞观政要), Vol.8, *Si Bu Cong Kan*(四部丛刊), Part of History.

¹⁴ *Da Wei Zhong Li Lun Shi Dao Shu*(答韦中立论师道书) of Liu Zong Yuan(柳宗元)(773-819) in the Tang Dynasty.

¹⁵ *Zeng Guang Zhu Shi Yin Bian Tang Liu Xian Sheng Ji*(增广注释音辩唐柳先生集), Vol.34, *Si Bu Cong Kan*.

¹⁶ *Zhong Shuo*(中说), Vol.6 in *Si Bu Cong Kan*(四部丛刊), Part of Zi(子).

recover moral principles and rebuild the feudal nepotistic system of power for the imperial clan, the governors tried their best to support Confucianism. The famous school head, Sima Guang, wrote a book titled *Shu Yi*. In this book Sima Guang adjusted the arrangement of Guan Li based on social reality such as the ritual age of the young man who would undergo the ritual. Sima Guang argued: ‘it is better to make capping ritual for him when man is older than fifteen and can read *Xiao Jing* (*The Book on Filial Piety*) and *The Analects*, and know the principle of Li (rules and laws).’¹⁷ Not only scholars but also the emperors tried to redevelop this old ritual. The emperor Hui Zong (1082-1135) in the Song Dynasty compiled a book titled *The Development and Reform of Guan Li* and forced the bureau of Li (rules and laws) to organize the ritual and carry it out.

After the Song Dynasty, the traditional ‘Li’ system regained acceptance in the social life of the common people. The rituals belonging to the noble classes became the rituals for the common people at that time. This integration of orders of higher and lower classes became a trend during the Ming Dynasty and the Qing Dynasty.

Zhu Yuanzhang was the founder of the Ming Dynasty and he did his best to save and maintain the ‘Li’ system, for example, during his 30 emperor’s years he ordered the writing and compiling of many books about rules and rituals, such as *The Collection of Ming Li* that was the famous book about ‘Li’ in the Ming Dynasty. The Ming government tried to rebuild the influence of Confucianism over the country. Other famous books about ‘Li’ in the Ming Dynasty and the Qing Dynasty were *Rites of Family Zhu* and *Rites of Family Wen*. Although *Rites of Family Zhu* refers to one family rituals, it received a large amount of support from the government and attained a leading position in social life. Emperors of the Qing Dynasty also gave ‘Li’ (rituals) a very important position but they thought that there were some problems with the old rituals. For example Emperor Qian Long said: ‘rituals described in *Rites of Family Zhu* are complicated and scholar-bureaucrat may follow them, but it is difficult to

¹⁷ *The Book on Filial Piety*, a Classic of Confucianism written about in the time of the Qin Dynasty and the Han Dynasty.

carry out among the common people.’¹⁸ So they decided to compile *General Rituals of the Qing Dynasty*.

Traditional Guan Li completely crumbled during the Qing Dynasty due to reasons of culture and politics. The most obvious characteristic of Guan Li is binding hair and capping, which is the symbol of being adult. The hair style of the Qing Dynasty is cutting hair to make a pig-pail, a ritual which destroyed the traditional hair style of the Han people, and in fact binding hair as a symbol of Guan Li lost its role and meaning. It is recorded in *Chorography of Linhai* in Qian Long period (1736-1796) of the Qing Dynasty that in the Ming Dynasty man attended Guan Li when he was twenty years old and this rite always was taken on the day of Midwinter or New Year’s Day. Scholar-bureaucrats were given a piece of headband and the common people were dressed with a kind of round cap. People over twenty who had not taken part in Guan Li were afraid to dress in caps. In the Qing Dynasty men’s hair was cut into a pig tail. They dressed in cool caps in summertime and wore warm caps in wintertime. This habit was carried out by all classes and age groups.

From the Qing Dynasty till the period of the Republic of China Guan Li among the lay people were combined with wedding ceremony.

1.3.5 Rebirth of the Initiation Rituals

The hands of the historical clock turned to the 1990s and China had made great progress in social and economic fields after over the 10 years’ of reform. However, unfortunately there was a huge gap between the increase of the Chinese economy and the mental world of the people. Society became unstable and Chinese people lost themselves in the huge wave of economic development. Facing this situation, the Chinese government began to think about the problem of education and focused on the ideological and moral education of children and young people. To strengthen the sense of responsibility of the young generations, initiation ritual came into the minds of the people and this old ritual became ripe for rebirth. Obviously, Guan Li did not

¹⁸ See the Preface of the *Qing Rituals*(*清通礼*), in *General Rituals of the Qing Dynasty*(*御制大清通礼序*).

come back in its original form, but the spirit of this ancient ritual still kept the same power. A new form of initiation ritual called the ‘Oath Ceremony’ stepped onto the contemporary Chinese stage.

The emergence of Chinese initiation rituals indicates that the forbearers of Chinese civilization are entering a new phase of civilization. The early form of Chinese initiation ritual, named ‘Cheng Ding Li’, symbolized that the family got a new labor force. Guan Li as a developed form of initiation ritual grew quickly in the Zhou Dynasty and was mostly practiced by the upper classes. Guan Li helped Chinese feudal governments to rule ancient China for over 2,000 years and finally was replaced by the ‘Oath Ceremony’ in the 1990s. Though the meaning and function of initiation rituals remain, the form and content are mostly different between the past and present. The development path of Chinese initiation rituals has not been smooth. Initiation rituals grew quickly in the Zhou Dynasty, then declined during the Tang Dynasty, struggled in the Song Dynasty, and faded away by the end of 19th century. In the next century many important events took place in China, such as the establishment of the People’s Republic China, Cultural Revolution(1966-1976), Reform and Opening-up, during which Chinese young people experienced so much. These matters and movements accompanied the growth of the young people and witnessed their coming of age. Currently, Chinese initiation rituals are undergoing regensis in an entirely new form. Chinese initiation rituals have survived in such different and difficult times, and have received so great attention and interest that people have recorded and investigated them in different ways throughout time. However, most of these efforts are either descriptions of the ritual activities, or are evaluations of family and social functions of these rituals. It is a really significant attempt to get a systematic understanding and analysis of Chinese initiation rituals historically, culturally and socially. To this question, historical anthropology stands out and offers an opportunity for us to make a deep and scientific representation, reconstruction and understanding of Chinese initiation rituals.

Chapter 2

Focus and Research on Chinese Initiation Rituals and an Overview of Historical Anthropology

2.1 Focus and Research on Chinese Initiation Rituals

Initiation rituals in China have a history of several thousands years. These rituals played an important role in ancient times, and are making a comeback in daily Chinese life. However, despite their re-emergence, we understand very little about these rituals. The few research works into initiation rituals do, however, offer a good resource of firsthand material and open a door into Chinese history and culture.

2.1.1 Guan Li Recorded in Ancient Works

2.1.1.1 Original Recordings of Guan Li

In ancient China Guan Li was an important ritual recorded and described in many books, the main works are *Zhou Li*, *Yi Li* and *Li Ji*.

***Zhou Li* (周礼)**

Zhou Li records many historical stories and legends of the Zhou Dynasty. Many researchers think that *Zhou Li* was written by Zhou Gong, a great minister of the Zhou Dynasty living around 1,200 B.C. According to archaeological discoveries of the Zhou Dynasty artifacts, many bronze inscriptions indicate that the official system was similar with that recorded in *Zhou Li*. We can therefore reasonably assume that *Zhou Li* was written during the Zhou Dynasty, more specifically, in the Warring States Period.

There are five main rituals described in *Zhou Li*: ceremonies to celebrate an auspicious affair, to appease evil spirits, welcome guests, bolster the military, and offer praise. Guan Li belongs to the category of ‘ritual of offering praise’. *Zhou Li*

describes ‘using the rituals of ‘wedding’ and Guan Li to make a man and a woman and also set a relationship between them.’ In ancient China a young man was expected to take part in the ritual of Guan Li, and after that he was ready to marry. A girl attended the ritual of Ji Li when she was fifteen years old, and then she was waiting to be married.

Yi Li (仪礼)

Yi Li describes the rituals and ceremonies of ancient China. It is not easy to know when *Yi Li* was written or who the author was. Many scholars argue that it was written by Confucius and his disciples in the second half of the Zhou Dynasty. *Yi Li* is sometimes shortened to ‘Li’ and also sometimes known as *Li Jing* or *Shi Li*. Guan Li takes a very important position in the book, and a detailed recording of the practice of Guan Li during the Zhou Dynasty appears in the first chapter. The whole ritual process is recorded in this book, and it influenced the practice of Guan Li for a long time.

Li Ji (礼记)

Li Ji is a great work, at a length of over ninety thousand Chinese characters, describing the politics, law, morality, philosophy, history, sacrifices, art, daily life, calendar, and geography of the pre Qin Dynasty period. The book expresses the thoughts and ideas of ancient Chinese politicians and philosophers. *Li Ji* is thought to be the work of many Confucian scholars, among them students of Confucius. *Li Ji* was completed in the Han Dynasty. *Li Ji* was written in prose and some articles are worthy as fine literature. Deep and complex meanings exist in its short stories. *Li Ji* represents ancient China before the Han Dynasty. The ritual of Guan Li is mentioned in chapter 43. *Li Ji* expresses that rituals and morality are the basis of what makes us human. With the help of rituals and morality, the relationships between ruler and officials, father and son, and elders and the young, can be generated and sustained. Therefore, after the ritual of Guan Li a young man should dress in decent clothes, rectify his face and body and organize his speech to pass the role as an adult. It is said that ‘Guan Li is the beginning of rituals’, and ancient leaders valued the capping ritual - Guan Li. Through the capping ritual, four obligations were given to a young man:

being a son, being a brother, being an official and being the younger generation. The importance of these duties shows the importance of the ritual. When a young man can behave filially, friendly, loyally and obediently, he can be a man. After being a man he can be a leader to rule the people.

2.1.1.2 The Development and Deterioration of Guan Li

The above three ancient texts emphasized the importance of the ritual of Guan Li as well as telling people how to carry out the ritual. The following books focus on the practical aspects of Guan Li.

Family Rituals of Sima Family

In the Song Dynasty a scholar named Sima Guang would regulate his family by advocating and holding the old rituals. He made a brave attempt to change and reform the old rituals to adapt to social reality and need. He made a great effort to maintain traditional Chinese rituals. People of the time preferred simpler rituals. Thinking of the social condition of that time he advised that traditional rituals should be simplified and reduced. In his opinion, simplification was the only way to help the old rituals to go through that difficult period. For example, the capping ritual was changed, and the three formal and expensive caps were replaced by a headband, a normal cap and a 'Fu Tou'¹.

Family Rites of Zhu Zi

The *Family Rites of Zhu* is the most famous and successful book describing the practice of Guan Li.

Guan Li

Family Rites of Zhu records the conditions and steps of the ritual in the Song Dynasty.

1) Conditions:

- Age of the capped young man

A young man should be capped between 15 to 20 years old. After the age of fifteen, young men can understand the theory and idea of *Xiao Jing* (a book about filial piety) and *The Analects* and could also behave with good manners.

¹ A popular cap made of cloth worn in the Tang Dynasty and the Song Dynasty.

➤ Date of the ritual

The capping ritual, namely Guan Li, could not be held during a period of mourning. For the ancient ritual of capping, the ceremony date must be divined in a special way, but in the time of the Song Dynasty this divining method was losing favor with the people, and any day in January could be chosen to hold Guan Li.

2) Steps:

- informing the ancestors
- notifying the honored guest
- inviting the honor guest again
- layout
- taking their places
- welcoming the guests
- first capping
- second capping
- third capping
- drinking
- naming
- worshipping the ancestors
- greeting parents and family members
- banquet
- visiting gentleman and good friends of his father

Ji Li

Ji Li is also mentioned in *Family Rites of Zhu*. It is recorded that girls should take part in the ritual of Ji Li when they are fifteen years old. The mother of the young girl will be the host. The honored guest is selected from among the female relatives of the family and the chosen woman must be virtuous and courteous. The procedure of the ritual is similar with Guan Li.

2.1.2 Research on Guan Li in Modern Times

In the past century Guan Li as a historical phenomenon received attention from several socialists. Systemic research about Chinese initiation rituals emerged in the 1920s. Jiang Shaoyuan's paper, 'the Initiation Ritual in Ancient China'², was serialized in the newspaper *Chen Bao Fu Kan*³ from June to September, 1926. Jiang discussed the details and significance of Guan Li as it was held before the Qin Dynasty, and the new ideas in his article are seen as a beginning applying anthropological theory to research into Guan Li. In the 1960s, Yang Kuan wrote an article named 'New Research of Guan Li' in *Symposium of Chinese Culture and History* (Vol. 1). Yang made an analysis of the genesis, the meaning of naming and the significance of the three-time capping⁴. In the 1990s, Zhou Xuanlong published his article in *Research of Folklore* (Volume 1. 1994), in which he indicates the origin of Guan Li, the process of Guan Li and the meaning behind Guan Li. Other studies include, 'From the Continuity and Change of Guan Li to the Cultural Demonstration Meaning in Traditional Social Life'⁵, 'Shang Tou' and 'Qing Hao': Guan Li since the Dynasty of Ming and Qing'⁶, 'the Characteristics of Chinese Ancient Guan Li'⁷, and 'Analysis of Zhao Wu's Guan Li'⁸.

2.1.3 Eighteen-year-old Oath Ceremony

2.1.3.1 Organization

Called for by the Chinese government, the Eighteen-year-old Oath Ceremony is usually organized by the Communist Youth League of schools. The Communist Youth League of communities, factories and the governments of rural areas should

² Capping Ritual refers to Guan Li.

³ The resume publication of Morning Edition.

⁴ Yang, c.f. New Research of Guan Li, in *Symposium of Chinese Culture and History*, Vol.1, 1962, pp.21-42.

⁵ Xiao, From the Continuity and Change of 'Guan Li' to the Cultural Demonstration Meaning in Traditional Social Life, in *Research on Folk Works and Literatures*, 2003, pp.263-275.

⁶ Xiao, 'Shang Tou' and 'Qing Hao': 'Guan Li' since the Dynasties of Ming and Qing, in *Chinese Literature and History*, Vol.1, 2004, pp.107-112.

⁷ Dai, The Characteristics of Chinese Ancient 'Guan Li', in *Zhong Zhou Journal*, Vol.3, 2006, also <http://engine.cqvip.com/asp/login.asp>.

⁸ Bai, Analysis of Zhao Wu's 'Guan Li', in *Academic Journal of Jinyang* Vol.4. 2006, pp. 124-125.

help to organize this activity. The leader of Chinese Communist Party in schools and the leaders of schools should direct and support this ceremony. If possible, good conditions should set up by the ‘Coordinating Committee of Eighteen-year-old Oath Ceremony’ for promoting this significant activity.

2.1.3.2 Websites

Some websites have been set up where the theory and practice of Eighteen-year-old Oath Ceremony are introduced and reported. Here are two representative websites about Eighteen-year-old Oath Ceremony:

- <http://www.18year.net.cn>
- http://www.hzyouth.com/pp_crxs/index.php

2.1.3.3 Books

Schools and some related organizations have published some books to specify and promote this ceremony, such as:

- *Walking Well on Each Step of Life- Education of Rites for Youth*, Shanghai Education Press, Shanghai, 2004.
- *Steps of the Youth –Guiding Book of ‘Eighteen-Year-Old Oath Ceremony’ in Shanghai*, Ma Chunlei, Hua Dong Normal University Press, Shanghai, 2001.

2.1.3.4 Related researches

If you search for the Chinese term for ‘initiation rituals’ in ‘Google’, over 121,000 results will be found (October 2007). The results can be divided into three fields: news, regulations, and research. However, the discussion about the influence of the ritual on students and society is very little. In the past ten years there have been three articles published in magazines: ‘Time Is Like Song-Writing On The Ritual Of Eighteen-Year-Old Oath Ceremony’⁹, ‘Eighteen-Year-Old Oath Ceremony In Guang Zhou in 2006’¹⁰, ‘Our School Holding The First Eighteen-Year-Old Oath Ceremony’¹¹. Sixteen reports about the activity appear in newspapers. An outstanding example of the ceremony should be mentioned here. A college girl named Yang Jing

⁹ In *Good Parents* Vol.21. 2006.

¹⁰ In *Youth Discovery* Vol.6. 2006.

¹¹ In *Journal of Police College of Ji Lin* Vol.2. 1996.

launched and organized a very successful research: Eighteen-year-old Oath Ceremony in Wuhan in 2006. Before the ceremony she did a careful investigation over several months, after which she designed an Eighteen-year-old Oath Ceremony in traditional form. For more information about her work see her Internet blog¹².

As I investigate, that there is no systematical research about Eighteen-year-old Oath Ceremony. Thus, more and deeper studies about this important ritual are necessary.

My research examines several issues. How can we revive this ritual? What conditions are contributing to the re-emergence of this ancient ritual? Which kind of position does the initiation ritual hold as a *social drama* in Chinese social life? What is the relationship between this ritual and Chinese tradition, philosophy, culture, and education? The initiation ritual is a cultural phenomenon with historical and social implications. How can we see these more clearly? To deal with these problems, a proper frame of reference and research methods are very fundamental. The fields of sociology, history, literature and education have attempted to provide some explanations and understanding about the ritual. In contrast to these works, my research takes a historical and anthropological perspective, and also incorporates other research methods, such as qualitative methods, video analysis, historical exploration, philosophical criticism, hermeneutics, literature research, and social investigation. From the historical anthropology perspective, a multidimensional research of history, culture, society and education of Chinese initiation ritual will be practiced, after which we can better understand the importance of initiation ritual to Chinese history, culture, and society.

2.2 Historical Anthropology - A New Perspective

Historical anthropology is applied as a designation for manifold, interdisciplinary efforts, and explores the phenomena and structures of humans after the ‘death of man’,

¹² <http://yangjingjean.blogcn.com/diary,116556728.shtml#comment>.

i.e. after the end of the liability of an abstract anthropological norm. Historical Anthropology combines history and anthropology. Historical anthropology may summarize the results not only of the human sciences, but also of anthropology based on historical philosophy — critiques and the examination of new paradigms. At the core of this effort is a disquiet of thinking which cannot be halted. Historical anthropology agrees neither with the Eurocentrism of the humanities field, nor the antiquarian interest of the field of history; it has the advantage of examining issues of the present as well as the future¹³.

The human body plays a central role in the new discipline of historical anthropology. The other important aspects are mimesis, performance, gesture, ritual, and imagination. These subjects are connected with each other and function in the cultural phenomena and our social life.

2.2.1 The Genesis of Historical Anthropology

Anthropology is a new and independent field of research. The first appearance of the term anthropology appeared in the work of Galeazzo Capella in 1533. With the development of civic society and the philosophy of enlightenment, anthropology became a special discipline regarding the knowledge and understanding of what it means to be human. After Kant's pragmatic anthropology, Johamm Gottfried and Wilhelm Humboldt developed comparative anthropology, which focuses on the historical and cultural events and phenomena of societies. Later, Humboldt changed his focus to the realm of education and tried to answer how much humans can be improved through education. Nietzsche and Foucault added understanding about nations to research of the history and culture of the Europe. Historical anthropology is a product of these developments. Historical anthropology has historical-cultural characteristics, which emphasize the historicity and culturality of the research object. Historical anthropology seeks to discuss the human sciences and the results of anthropological criticism built on historical-cultural philosophy.¹⁴.

¹³ Back cover of *Paragrana* Band 16. 2007. Heft 2. Klanganthropologie Performativität-Imagination-Narration.

¹⁴ Wulf 2004a.

2.2.2 Characteristics of Historical Anthropology

As an interdisciplinary subject, historical anthropology takes the nuances of the natural characteristics of human beings as its main issues, hence, it focuses its research on the structure and phenomena of being human and attempts to explore the variety of human life. It is clear that historical anthropology not only focuses on the history of anthropology, but also talks about the contribution of historical research to anthropological work. Historical anthropology has a double-historicity: the historicity of the research object and the historicity of the research methods and perspectives. Generally speaking, the following are the main characteristics of historical anthropology¹⁵:

- There is no clear discipline for historical anthropology
- It is a thinking method about human phenomena
- Under the influence of historical anthropology, belief and human history are affected and constructed in a rational way.
- Some objects and themes can be seen as the perspectives, under which historical anthropology defines its range.
- The question of 'self-knowing' about social life and cultural life is raised and this question is regarded as the research object and theme.
- Rethinking the possibilities and limitation of the understanding of historical anthropology, focusing on its culturality and historicity.
- From the organizational view, historical anthropology is a multi-trans-disciplinary field which constructs the central content of modern cultural science.
- Local and international cooperation in historical anthropological research has profound and real significance for the understanding of globalization.

¹⁵ Wulf, c.f. Grundzüge und Perspektiven Historischer Anthropologie-Philosophie, Geschichte, Kultur, in Wulf/Kamper 2002b, pp. 1103-1110.

2.2.3 The Main Concepts of Historical Anthropology

Historical anthropology takes the human body as its research core, along with other important concepts such as mimesis, performance, ritual, gesture, imagination, etc. Next, we briefly introduce some main concepts, and in the third part of this paper deal with the practical use and understanding of historical anthropology.

2.2.3.1 The Human Body

The human body is an obvious proof of the existence of human beings, which is regarded as the material basis of our mental activities. The human body changes over time, which indicates the development of biology and civilization. This ability to change differentiates humans from other creatures. Over the history of our species, humans have used our intelligence and emotions to miraculously develop our civilization. The body is the channel between the inner and external worlds. Objective information enters the inner subjective world through the senses. On the other hand, after working with these pieces of information, humans can express, introduce, perform themselves, and understand. Herder assumes that ‘my body is, I feel it/me, so I am’, and from the particularity of the human body, an independent anthropology is founded.¹⁶ The human structures and dimensions of the human body were developed from an evolutionary process. The human body is the starting point of historical anthropology, less emphasis is placed on the differences with animals than on historical and cultural characteristics.¹⁷ We can understand the human body from several perspectives, such as biological, social, philosophical and historical.

The human body as the center of anthropological research started from the beginning of the twentieth century. The body is a medium of immaterial cultural inheritance.¹⁸ We carry out research into the variety of human body in a culture and historical view. The following aspects of the body are of great importance in the present research: dematerialization, technologization, fragmentation, sexuality and performativity. These changes and characteristics have mutual effects. The body

¹⁶ Müller 1998.

¹⁷ Wulf 2004a.

¹⁸ Wulf, c.f. Kulturelle Vielfaltung Immaterielles Kulturelles Erbe, in Wulf/Poulain/Triki 2006b, pp.248-259.

works not only as a bridge between the inner world and the outer world, but is also a medium between nature and culture. Mimesis is an important characteristic of the body, through which the body learns and practices gestures and behaviors. Performance makes it possible for the body to play a central role in social activities.

2.2.3.2 Mimesis

Mimesis is a *conditio humana* (human condition), which is responsible for variations among individual human beings. A spectrum of meanings for mimesis have unfolded over the course of its historical development, including the act of resembling, of presenting the self, and expression, as well as mimicry, imitation, representation, and non-conscious similarity.

The history of the conception of mimesis can be traced back to ancient Greece. Plato and Aristotle discussed concepts behind mimesis in their books. Plato assumes that mimesis happens in the transformation from oral culture to writing culture. Plato's attitude to mimesis is paradoxical. On the one hand he values the importance of mimesis; on the other hand he is afraid of the immeasurable power of mimesis. Aristotle makes a break of the understanding of mimesis. He attempts to explore the significance of mimesis in the field of aesthetics. For Aristotle, art is mimesis. Music is a special mimesis of spirit, and painting and sculpture can create visual figures. In contrast, music creates an inner movement of hearing. Mimesis is not a copy of reality, for the mimetic result differs from the model. Mimesis is an integration of redoing and changing, a kind of 'development', and a 'constructive imitation'.¹⁹ The history of mimesis is a history of the discussion on the power of the generation of the symbolic world. Mimesis makes a connection between power, the real world, and the symbolic world.

Culture and art developed little in the Middle Ages, and there were no new contributions to the conception of mimesis until the 18th century. During the wave of enlightenment thinking in Europe, researchers again began to focus on mimesis. The relationship between mimesis and aesthetics became the central point of the debate. Nicolaus von Cues in his work, *The Spoon – Cutter* (1450), represents the new

¹⁹ Wulf 2002a.

self-conscious man as he appears in his daily life, for whom art is no longer the mimesis of nature, but the mimesis of the 'infinite art' of God. Blumenberg assumes that creative man is constituted through sudden inspiration. Man attains perfection in the presentation of original genius which makes mimesis of nature seem like a limitation of man's power.²⁰ Rational disciplines play an important role in the mimetic process, with which order can be made in relation to the whole, and this rationality can help people to know the order, symmetry and entirety of nature. In the late period of the Enlightenment, the concept of natural mimesis in poetic theory was criticized. Jean Paul, in his book *Pre-School of Aesthetics* (1804), addresses how the subjectivity of the world provides us with a developing view through our subjectivity, and in this development, the independent and self-constructive elements of mimesis are stimulated, yet, poetry is just the expression of the process.

Now, with the appearance and development of historical anthropology, mimesis has become a focal point for researchers. Mimesis can be identified as the behaviors and processes of the human body, and the body is taken as the research core of historical anthropology, so research on mimesis is therefore a basic subject of historical anthropology.

Mimesis is a creative power which cannot be seen or controlled. Mimetic processes are not remaking or copying processes. Mimesis makes it possible for humans to face the world, to feel the world, and to affect the world. Mimesis bridges the subject and the outside world, and the world to other people; it reduces the subject-object-split and sharpness of difference between being and should be. It fosters an understanding of 'between', which is experienced in the process of a subject simulating the outer world or another person.

²⁰ Tubach, c.f. Die Naturnachahmungstheorie. Batteaux und die Berliner Rationalisten, in *Germanisch-Romanische Monatsschriften*, Vol 13, 1963, pp.262-280.

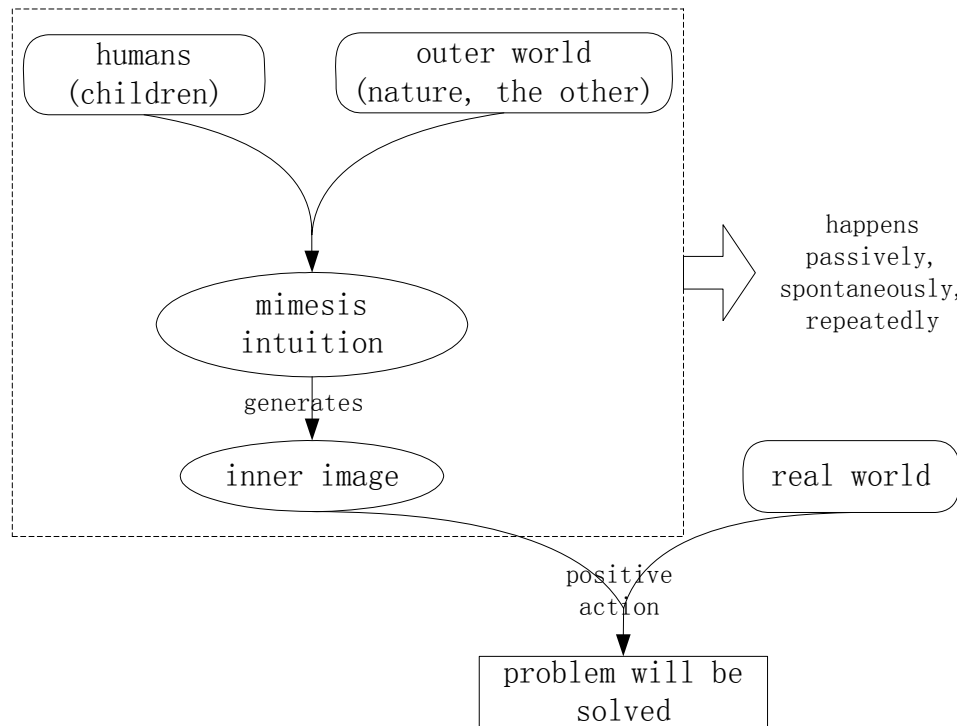


Figure 2.1: The dynamic system of mimesis

Wulf would like to insist upon the great importance and frequency of this mimetic dimension in the social world. At the same time, mimesis must not be misunderstood, must not be grasped in that false sense which would make of it a universal phenomenon. Acts are mimetic only if:

- they are movements referring to other movements;
- they can be considered as physical scenes, which in addition possess a representative as well as a demonstrative aspects;
- and if they are not just autonomous and admit of being understood in themselves, but also make reference to other acts or other world.

2.2.3.3 Performance

Where the conception of ‘performance’ is concerned, it is very difficult to make out a clear and simple description because performance plays different roles in different fields and contexts. Strine, Long and Hopkins argue that performance has become just a concept, developed in an atmosphere of ‘sophisticated disagreement’ by participants. Noam Chomsky makes a clear distinction between linguistic competence and linguistic performance. He addresses performance as the actual articulation of

knowledge in a given speech situation. Marvin Carlson states that ‘Performance implies not just doing or even redoing, but a self-consciousness about doing and redoing, on the part of both performers and spectators.’²¹ Austin’s original notion of performative language is of interest to Derrida, and compatible with his principles of deconstruction to the extent that Austin’s account challenges the traditional semiotic notion of communication as the transportation of a pre-existent and contained unit of meaning. Derrida sees ritual and theatrical expression as the archetypal forms of language par excellence. For Judith Butler there are two distinct though connected modes of performativity. Goffman clearly conceives of performance as performance for the other. ‘A correctly staged and performed scene leads the audience to impute a self to a performed character, but this imputation — this self — is a product of a scene that comes off, and is not a cause of it.’²² Turner associates ‘performative turn’ with postmodernism: ‘It is obvious that Goffman, Schechner, and I constantly stress process and processual qualities: performance, move, staging, plot, redressive action, crisis, schism, reintegration and the like. To my mind, this stress is the ‘postmodern turn’ in anthropology.’²³

As mentioned above, performance can be discussed from the perspective of many different fields. Alice Lagaay sums up the discourse of performance in four realms: (language, society, culture, and art.)²⁴

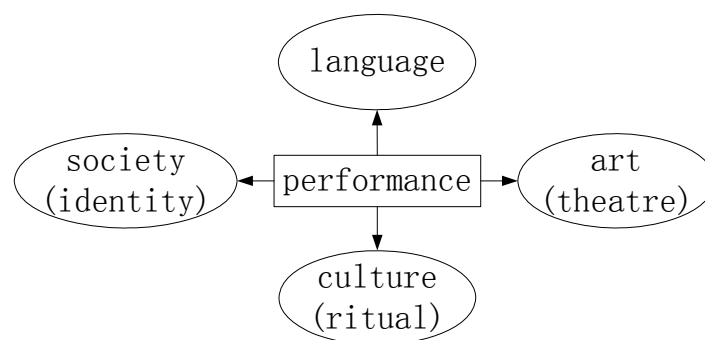


Figure 2.2: Research fields of performance

²¹ Carlson 1996, p. 195.

²² Goffman 1959, p. 252.

²³ Turner 1982, p. 76.

²⁴ Lagaay 2001, p. 44.

- The issue of the performativity of language, which, at its core, concerns the relation between human language and the world: discourse is seen to create the subject it makes out to describe;
- The question of social identity in terms of performance, challenging the essentialist notion of the subject whilst pointing to the structures of repetition that define identity, society and social behavior;
- The specific analysis of the contemporary phenomenon of performance art particularly in its relation to traditional theatre.

My starting point in this deliberation is what happens at the level of the human body. Speaking, acting, and manner are performative topics.²⁵ In my opinion, acting and manner can be seen as the movement of body, so these movements may be defined as behavior.

Behavior

There are many expressions with body in terms of language and behavior in rituals, and these expressive characteristics of the human body are essentially realized in the form of performances. If we take the symbolic structure of human behaviors as a text to read or to deal with in the way of hermeneutics, we will gain another understanding of our behaviors.²⁶

Speaking

Performances are expressions of language as well as behaviors. However, not all spoken words are performances. There are four characteristics of performative speaking which help us to distinguish performative speaking.²⁷ First, performative speaking has a self-referential character. Second, performative speaking has a declarative character. Third, performative speaking is often connected with social institutions, for example, wedding speeches. Finally, performative speaking consists of pre-produced performative speeches.

2.2.3.4 Gestures

²⁵ Wulf 2004a.

²⁶ Wulf op.cit.

²⁷ Bohle/König, c.f. Zum Begriff des Performativen in der Sprachwissenschaft, in Fischer-Lichte/Wulf 2001, pp. 13-34.

Gestures are bodily movements, they are states or actions done by certain parts of the body, aimed at expressing ideas and feelings to compliment or even replace the expression of language. Generally speaking, gestures usually refer to hand actions. Different hand states and actions have different meanings, for examples, forefinger and middle finger forming a sign like 'V' means victory; making a closed fist means power. Gestures also consist of the states and actions of other parts of the body, such as the head, legs and feet.

Gesture as a method of expression and communication appeared earlier than language. It is believed that up-right walking was earlier than speaking and up-right walking makes it possible to make gestures. In ancient times, humans mainly used their body to finish productive works, including material production and the production of the human subject itself. The body was also used to fight against animals and enemies. The human body also played a role in communication, from eyesight to hands clapping, from nodding to raising a leg. We can suppose that in ancient times, before the appearance of language, primitive man also needed to transmit information to each other. How did they do this? They could wave their hands to call somebody towards them; they could jump to show their happiness. With the progress of mentality and the human's understanding of their bodies, some occasional actions were formed and used popularly, and widely and slowly these actions and movements became special actions with special aims and meanings. At first these gestures were only admitted and used in one group, then in a community and between groups, and at last these gestures were developed into a kind of symbol system. Symbols are a product of culture. For Yi Siyu, symbols of cultural system consist of characters, pictures and imagination.²⁸

There are two types of gestures: iconic gestures and symbolic gestures. Iconic gestures are simple 'pictorial' gestures. Their meanings are independent of history or culture. Some hands gestures are good examples, such as putting two combined hands on one side of the head means tiredness or to go sleeping. The meanings of symbolic gestures are decided by the history and culture. Hence, to know the relative historical

²⁸ Yi 2005.

and cultural context is a precondition for understanding these gestures.

Communication facilitates the generation of gesture. Humans cannot live or work without communication. Before the appearance of language and characters, it was very difficult to communicate. Early gestures might be someone's performance and we can imagine this performance with the movements of hands, head, body and feet, even including screaming. At the beginning there might have been no regular reactions as rules, so we cannot draw the conclusion that early gestures were only individual expressions of happiness, angry, fear or sadness. These movements were repeated and developed in one group and between groups. Individual expressions were admitted, understood and reacted to. With the help of mimesis, some gestures with clear meanings and aims are fixed, symbolized and spread. Gestures are mimetic movements of the body, with which humans can make themselves and the world alike, appropriate themselves to the world, and express and perform themselves.²⁹

2.2.3.5 Ritual

Ritual is a central concept of historical anthropology and also the theme of this paper. Rituals are produced by the performance of bodies, a cultural activity including mimesis and characterized by historicity. Rituals can be found in all fields and institutions, such as religion, politics, the economy, science, family, schools, etc. Rituals are a hot topic in different fields and have become a trans-disciplinary and inter-disciplinary concept. Therefore, it is very difficult to give a concrete definition for rituals. Rituals promise a compensation for the modern loss of common experiences, possibility of communication, the identity, order, stability, tardiness, and presence-experience. They are connected with the diagnostic tendency to individualism, the appearance of virtualization- and simulation, the erosion of social and cultural systems, and chronocracy of modern society.³⁰

²⁹ Wulf/Göhlich/Zirfas, c.f. Sprache, Macht und Handeln- Aspekte des Performativen, in Wulf/Zirfas 2001b, pp.9-24.

³⁰ Wulf/Zirfas, c.f. Performative Welten-Einführung in die historischen, systematischen und methodischen Dimensionen des Rituals, in Wulf/Zirfas 2004c, pp.7-45.

In a narrow sense, not all habitual behaviours, such as toothbrushing, can be seen as a ritual. For Axel Michaels there are five components for the definition of rituals.³¹

Reason

Rituals are associated with temporal or spatial changes. Life cyclic rituals associated with biological, physical or age-changing: coronations, housewarmings, examinations, birth, naming, initiation, weddings, and funerary rituals. Axel calls these components *causa transistionis*.

Formal decision

Rituals need a formal, mostly oral, decision to carry out the ritual: an invitation, oath, or promise. These decisions are often accompanied by acoustic or visual signals: ringing a bell, beating a drum, or raising flags. Axel calls these components *intention solemnis*.

Form

Ritual behaviours must be filled with formal criterions. They must be a) formal, stereotypical and repetitive (and imitable), b) public, and c) interactive; and in many cases, d) liminal. They are not spontaneous, private, retractable, singular or optional for everyone. The formality functions to codify, and make rituals repetitive, normative and prescriptive. Ritual behaviors are not rational, so people cannot easily change the aims of the ritual, nor reach the aims in a better, faster or cheaper way. Formality builds a central criterion in all definitions of ritual.

Motive

Every ritual behavior has an ordinary context. Michaels gives three modal behavioral criterions: *Communitas*, *Individualitas*, and *Religio*. For him, *Communitas* comes from the meaning that all are connected with the community on the functions of the ritual: solidarity, hierarchy, control, and standardization. *Individualitas* refers to the behavioral aspect of a single person, such as experience and interest. *Religio* includes the transcendent intentions which are related with the next, higher, and sacred world, which referred to by Rudolf Otto as 'Numinose'.

³¹ Michaels, c.f. Das Heulen der Schakale---Ein Tier-und Menschen-Opferritual in Nepal, in Wulf/Zirfas 2004, pp.217-236, and <http://www.unicom.uzh.ch/static/unimagazin/archiv/1-98/ritual.html>.

Change

Finally, a ritual must meet a noticeable change; people must not have a given competence or a new social status with social consequence beforehand.

Rituals have the following characteristics: physical, scenic, performative, expressive, spontaneous, symbolic, and ludic (playful). Some points are introduced below:

Physical

When the physical dimension of rituals is discussed, the human body is the first topic. Without the body rituals are impossible, that is to say, body movement plays an important role in rituals. Using the body, people can experience the ritual room and rhythm as the learning structures of space and time. However, participants are unconscious of other bodies; rituals supply the opportunity to show the logic of the human body. Gestures are basic elements of body movements in rituals which bring cultural and historical meanings into rituals, and as a result the participants are infected.

Performative

In every ritual there is a space for showing relative behaviour, and between the showing space and behavior exists a relation. Behaviors and this space are not always coordinated and at these times there is a tension between them. To build a new balance it is necessary for both sides to make adjustments. Performance plays a role at this moment, which is the meeting point of space and behaviour. Performative elements are constructive characters of ritual. Ritual theory argues that performative thinking is meaningful, when the focus of interest is moved on behavioural- and effective ritualized situations, ritual performance, scenic representation, the relation between actors and audiences as well as the physical presentation.³²

Ludic

The ludic component of rituals offers room for individual arrangement and variation, but also for distance and fundamental changes, which contributes much to the preservation and effect of rituals. The ludic characteristics grant the possibility of

³² Wulf/Zirfas, c.f. Performative Welten-Einführung in die historischen, systematischen und methodischen Dimensionen des Rituals, in Wulf/Zirfas 2004c, pp.7-45.

decision, without which the ritual loses its function and power. With its inner fixed social structure built with behaviours, the ludic element stands in tension. The ludic component represents itself on the edges of social work and structure, also in the field of community.³³ The ludic characteristic of rituals helps the individual to be free from the control of ritual structure and power, and in succession a spontaneously collective understanding and solidarity can be formed.

According to the reasons of their formation, Wulf sums up types of ritual activities as follows³⁴:

- 'rites of passage' (birth, childhood, adult, marriage, death),
- rituals of institution or official initiation (handover of a new work or position),
- seasonal rituals (Christmas, birthday, Memorial Day, Independence Day),
- rituals of intention (eating, party, love, sex),
- rituals of rebellion (anti-war movements, environmental protection move-ments),
- interactive rituals (greetings, farewells, conflicts).

Also, in term of execution, rituals can be divided into convention, ceremony, liturgy, party and ritualization.

With the help of rituals, the world and human relationship are ordered and interpreted. In rituals, social order and relations are experienced and constructed. Rituals generate a connection between the past, the present, and the future; they make it possible to realize continuity and changing, structure and community and also experiences of transition and transcendence. Rituals have seven functions³⁵:

- Communication: Rituals function as communication, rituals can produce, restore and arrange societies, and in these processes emotions and symbolic

³³ Turner 1977; 1982.

³⁴ Gebauer/Wulf 1998.

³⁵ Wulf/Zirfas, c.f. Performative Welten-Einführung in die historischen, systematischen und methodischen Dimensionen des Rituals, in Wulf/Zirfas 2004c, pp.7-45.

cohesion are ensured.³⁶

- Stabilization: Ritual as the power of order can bring up a special regularity, conventionality and rightness, which imply a practical knowledge horizon and perceivable horizon for society.³⁷
- Identification and transformation. Transformations of space, time, identification and social positions will be changed, especially in ‘rites of passage’.
- Establishing memory: Rituals establish a temporal coherence among participants and they also have an influence on assurance of continuity and future orientation. Rituals build a temporal synthesis of social memory and communicational future outline.
- Dealing with crisis: Some rituals can ease the pain of mind of participants and try to explain regarding life and death. In this relationship, rituals build a relative, clear, and homogeneous channel, in which communities can handle integration and segregation.³⁸
- Transcendence and magic: In rituals, situations that in ‘real’ life cannot be totally finished or controlled are built and attempted. Rituals have mimetic and performative powers influencing reality not only the inner, but also the outer.
- Difference: A ritual is a behavioral system of differentiation. The new difference generates with the appearance or maintenance of difference.

2.2.3.6 Images (Pictures) and Imagination

Images (Pictures)

When we attempt to talk about images, what comes to our minds is painting or pictures. To take Chinese traditional painting as an example, both painting with meticulous detail and painting in the impressionistic manner are regarded as parts of spiritual life and have little relation with the real world. The following discussion of

³⁶ Eder, c.f. Institution, in Wulf 1997, pp.159-168.

³⁷ Wulf/Zirfas, c.f. Performative Welten-Einführung in die historischen, systematischen und methodischen Dimensionen des Rituals, in Wulf/Zirfas 2004c, pp.7-45.

³⁸ Girard 1972.

images belongs to the above understanding, and the concept of image is much broader, and more vivid and open. Images are the representations of the real world. Images always have a hieratic-magic character and there are three types of these images: a) The picture as magic operational: Pictures which have not yet become works of art, such as statutes, masks, cult pictures, and sacral pictures; b) The picture as mimetic representation: in Plato's idea, pictures become representations of something and they are not themselves; c) The picture as technical simulation: Today everything has a tendency to become a picture: even opaque bodies are transformed, and become transparent and fugitive.

Images are a kind of silent language, a visual presentation of thinking, artwork and a new medium. Images are products of imagination rooted in the human body, which consist of inner images and outer images³⁹. Inner images are the absorption, preservation, digestion and reformation of outer images; outer images are the stimulation, alternation and application of inner images. Many pictures of the collective pictorial world are products (inside) of the pictures of humans, who have the possibility of making their internal pictures articles and forms of the external world or of transferring and of spreading them through media.

Imagination

In Greek, one means for making the external world into the interior world partially in form of pictures is called fantasy, which was translated by the Romans as imagination, and transferred by Paracelsus as *Einbildungskraft* in German, and today French authors often call it the imaginary. Imagination is one of the most puzzling human powers, which penetrates the environment and manifests itself in different forms. Locke regards imagination as the power of the mind. Coleridge understands imagination as a human ability. Imagination differentiates into two forms. Imagination covers also the ability to dissolve existing connections, and to destroy and create new ones. Imagination can produce pictures or destroy them, and connect their elements to new pictures in a reciprocating motion.⁴⁰ For Herder imagination is

³⁹ Wulf 2004a.

⁴⁰ Wulf 2004a.

the connection between bodies and spirit, and for Kant and Fichte imagination is a bridge between reason and the senses. With respect to a rather historical perspective, Vilém Flusser differentiates 'a new imagination' in connection with human history. Firstly, one withdraws from the environment in order to imagine it. Then, one withdraws from imagination in order to analyze it.⁴¹

2.2.3.7 Language

The use of language is one of the most obvious differences between humans and animals. It is said in the field of paleobiology that the earliest form of language appeared 100,000 years ago, perhaps even as early as 200,000 years ago, and furthermore, that languages with systematic rules may have emerged 35,000 years ago. Upright-walking and the enlargement of brain volume offered the necessary conditions for language, and on the other side, language pushed the progress of civilization of human being.

For Chomsky, human language, i.e. the ability to syntax, is so unique that it can be considered an emergent phenomenon, which is not based on evolutionary forerunners. The development of the language is, like André Leroi Gourhan shows, the relationship justified in the structure of the human body between hands and words. Arnold Gehlen drew attention to the point that there is also a structural parallel besides the genetically caused neural connection between hands and face. With this structural parallelism, touch movements can be transformed into sound movements. Three forms of articulation of language based on physical structure of humans should be regarded. a) The first form refers to the articulation with sound tools and the production of the sounds of language; it is a direct activity and movement of the human body. b) William von Humboldt often refers to this articulation as structure. Structure works out the knowledge of language; in it the physical and the non-physical mental sides are not connected to an unsolvable unit. c) A third form of articulation which is inseparably connected with the first two forms is simultaneously listening to the languages articulating voice and the articulated thoughts.

⁴¹ Flusser, c.f. Eine neue Einbildungskraft, in Bohn 1999, pp. 115-126.

2.2.4 Approaches and Methods of Historical Anthropology

Taking advantage of its interdisciplinary nature, historical anthropology makes use of various methods. As Wulf suggests, 'For the research of the historical anthropology it is necessary of a variety of methods, within whose framework the interaction of historical source work, ethnographical procedures and philosophical reflection plays an important role.'⁴²

2.2.4.1 Quantitative Method and Qualitative Method

Quantitative methods, such as demographic investigations, can supply a constructional contribution to historical anthropology.⁴³ Quantitative methods are research methods dealing with numbers and anything that is measurable. Counting and measuring are common forms of quantitative methods. The result of quantitative research is a number or a series of numbers. These are often presented in tables, graphs or other forms of statistics. In most physical and biological sciences, the use of either quantitative or qualitative methods is uncontroversial, and each is used when appropriate. The modern tendency (and in reality the majority tendency throughout the history of social science) is to use eclectic approaches. Quantitative methods might be used with a global qualitative frame. Using quantitative methods, it is possible to give precise and testable expression to qualitative ideas.

Qualitative method is the method that the researchers as the tool stepping into the research locale and interact with the people and alternatives and try to get information then obtain understanding explanation. Unlike quantitative research, qualitative research relies on reasons behind various aspects of behavior.

There are several features of this kind of research method.

- The probing tradition of naturalism
- The interpretative understanding of the meanings
- Research is a process of development
- Induction is employed

⁴² Wulf 2004a, p.135 (trans. Zhang).

⁴³ Wulf op.cit.

Researchers can enter the studied surrounding openly, secretly or half-secretly according to different situations.

As information is concerned researchers can many measures such as *literature investigation, objects searching, field survey, interview*.

2.2.4.2 Phenomenological Method and Procedure

Phenomenology began as a movement in philosophy that deals with the essences of objects, or phenomena as they present themselves in human consciousness. The founding father of phenomenology, Husserl, believed that through rigorous examination of objects as they are presented in one's consciousness, a person could come to intuitively know the essence of those objectivities, or realities. He proposed that other disciplines might benefit from phenomenology as a way of identifying the main objectivities with which the discipline deals, before undertaking other inquiry. The phenomenological method outlines the steps of such an investigation.⁴⁴

2.2.4.3 Philosophical Methods

In the research of historical anthropology, amazement (the Greek *thaumazein*), radical asking, philosophical criticism, and self criticism play important roles. These conditions and forms of philosophy as methods can be only insufficiently described.

Philosophical method (or philosophical methodology) is the study of how to do philosophy. A common view among philosophers is that philosophy is distinguished by the *methods* that philosophers follow in addressing philosophical questions. There is, however, not just *one* method that philosophers use to answer philosophical questions. Some common features of the methods that philosophers follow (and discuss when discussing philosophical method) include⁴⁵:

- Methodic Doubt - a systematic process of being skeptical about (or doubting) the truth of one's beliefs.
- Formulate a problem - formulate the doubts in a philosophical problem, or question. Explain the problem clearly and carefully.

⁴⁴ Gray, c.f. Application of the phenomenological method to the concept of occupation, in *Journal of Occupational Science, 1997*, pp. 4-17.

⁴⁵ <http://www.orientalia.org/wisdom/Philosophy/Introduction.shtml>.

- Offer a solution - offer a solution to the problem: either something like a philosophical analysis or a philosophical explanation.
- Argument - provide an argument or several arguments supporting the solution.
- Dialectic - present the solution and arguments for criticism by other philosophers, and help them judge their own.

2.2.4.4 Hermeneutics

Apart from the text-referred methods of historical, art and literature science, hermeneutic procedures as methods of qualitative social research are given great attention in historical anthropology.⁴⁶

Hermeneutics may be described as the development and study of theories of the interpretation and understanding of texts. In contemporary usage in religious studies, hermeneutics refers to the study of the interpretation of religious texts. It is more broadly used in contemporary philosophy to denote the study of theories and methods of the interpretation of all texts and systems of meaning. The concept of 'text' is here extended beyond written documents to any number of objects subject to interpretation, such as experiences. A hermeneutic is defined as a specific system or method for interpretation, or a specific theory of interpretation. However, the contemporary philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer has said that hermeneutics is an approach rather than a method and, further, that the Hermeneutic circle is the central problem of interpretation. Essentially, hermeneutics involves cultivating the ability to understand things from somebody else's point of view, and to appreciate the cultural and social forces that may have influenced their outlook. Hermeneutics is the process of applying this understanding to interpreting the meaning of written texts and symbolic artifacts (such as art or sculpture or architecture), which may be either historic or contemporary.

Other methods are also available, such as video analysis, media theory, historical criticism and historical and cultural self-reflection.

As an inter- and trans-disciplinary subject, historical anthropology cannot be

⁴⁶ Wulf 2004a.

defined as a single and rigid subject. Historical anthropology carries out international and cross cultural research to reveal the essence of what it means to be human. All kinds of people and cultures can serve as research objects. Chinese culture and people are integral parts of the world, and research on Chinese people and culture can contribute to the understanding of all humans. Further, rituals are a main issue of historical anthropology and the rite of passage is an important ritual in China, which logically leads to the analysis of Chinese initiation rituals in view of historical anthropology. Using historical anthropology we can better discern the elements and characteristics of Chinese rituals and outline the development of Chinese culture clearly over its long history.

In the first half of this chapter we had an overview of the recordings and research of Chinese initiation rituals. With the benefits of these works, people can know and reproduce the history, process, management and aims of this kind of ritual. Meanwhile, these efforts in some degree pushed Chinese initiation rituals continue and advance for thousands years. In the second half of this part is an introduction of historical anthropology. One Chinese saying goes: ‘when a workman wishes to get his work done well, he must have his tools sharpened first’, it is necessary and important to choose proper perspectives and methods for this research. Through the processual analysis of Chinese initiation rituals with the perspectives and methods of historical anthropology, we can not only ‘see’ the procedures and atmosphere of Chinese initiation rituals, but also survey the position of this kind of ritual in Chinese culture and the relationships among Chinese people, society, education and politics in a historical macroscopic view.

Chapter 3

Process Analysis of Chinese Initiation Rituals

The Sphinx's Riddle

In Greek mythology, the Sphinx sat outside of Thebes and asked his riddle of all travelers who passed by. If travelers failed to guess the riddle, then the Sphinx killed them; if the traveler answered the riddle correctly, then the Sphinx would commit suicide. This is the riddle:

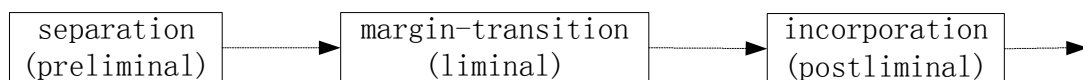
What goes on four legs in the morning, on two legs at noon, and on three legs in the evening?

Oedipus solved the riddle, and the Sphinx destroyed herself.

The answer Oedipus gave was 'man'. This riddle describes the three stages of a man's life: infant (childhood), adulthood and old age. Relatively, 'rites of passage' raised by Arnold van Gennep play very important roles between these stages.

3.1 Three Phases in 'Rites of Passage'

Initiation rituals are a kind of 'rites of passage', hence we can achieve relative understanding of initiation ritual by talking about 'rites of passage'. Arnold van Gennep defined *Les rites de passage* as 'rites which accompany every change of place, stage, social position and age.' Van Gennep has shown that all 'rites of passage' or 'transition' are marked by three phases: separation, transition (or limen, signifying 'threshold' in Latin), and incorporation. In van Gennep's words these three phases are also regarded as: preliminal, liminal and postliminal.¹



¹ van Gennep 1960.

Figure 3.1

The first phase (separation) comprises symbolic behavior signifying the detachment of the individual or group either from an earlier fixed point in the social structure, from a set of cultural condition, namely a 'state', or from both. The second phase is a 'liminal' period. During this period, the characteristics of the ritual subject (the 'passenger') are ambiguous. People have left one place or state but have not yet entered or joined the next. People in society will experience change from one role to another role and in this process there is a transitional phase that is a special space-time. This space-time always works as a mysterious separation in simple societies, but is realized through symbolic rituals in complex societies. This state has few or none of the natures of the past or coming one. The third phase is aggregation or incorporation. In this phase the passage is finished. The ritual subject, individual or group, is in a relatively stable state once more and, by virtue has rights and obligations vis-à-vis others of a clearly defined and 'structural' type. They are expected to behave in accordance with certain customary norms and ethical standards binding on incumbents of social position in a system of such positions.²

On the one hand, these three liminals in common people's lives mark out the periods of birth, living and death; on the other hand, in one ritual such as initiation rituals, they also refer the three phases in the ritual.

3.1.1 Liminality

Here, liminality becomes central and van Gennep employs prefixes attached to the adjective 'liminal' to indicate the peripheral position of structure. Liminality is a period of transition where normal limits to thought, self-understanding, and behavior are relaxed - a situation which can lead to new perspectives. The concept of 'structure' can help us to understand the meaning of liminality. For Turner, 'structure', as before, 'social structure', is used by the majority of British social anthropologists, which is a more or less distinctive arrangement of specialized mutually dependent

² Turner 1977.

institutions and the institutional organization of positions and/or of actors which they imply.³ Liminality does not appear only in one field and may happen in time, places, situations, cultures, people and others. It refers to the transition between two states.

3.1.2 Communitas

Turner prefers the Latin term 'communitas' to 'community' to distinguish this modality of social relationship from an 'area of common living'. It is as though there are two major 'models' for human interrelatedness, juxtaposed and alternating. The first is of society as a structured, differentiated, and often hierarchical system of politico-legal-economic positions with many types of evaluation, separating men in terms of 'more' or 'less'. The second, which emerges recognizably in the liminal period, is of society as an unstructured or rudimentarily structured and relatively undifferentiated *comitatus*, community, or even communion of equal individuals who submit together to the general authority of the ritual elders.⁴

At the level of practice, the three-stage-pattern of van Gennep is argued against by some researchers who do not take this model of 'rites of passage' as universal. In other words, some 'rites of passage' do not consist of these three phases completely. However, Chinese initiation rituals in this paper can be discussed in the three-stage framework, within which we can observe the outline and structure of Chinese initiation rituals more clearly and find the relationship and correspondence between rituals and their historical and cultural contexts.

3.2 Guan Li in the Perspective of Historical Anthropology

If we attempt to understand the ritual of Guan Li in the theoretical frame of van Gennep, according to the three liminal phases (separation, liminal period, reaggregation), then we can divide the whole ritual process into three parts: the preparation of the ritual, capping and naming, and visiting mother and other people.

³ Turner 1977.

⁴ Turner op.cit.

3.2.1 Ritual Preparation-the Preliminal Stage

As far as the process of the ritual itself is concerned, the preparative parts include from the first step, 'Select the date of ritual', to the seventh step, 'Welcome the guests'. These steps are just the preparation for the main parts of the ritual and it would be not so important and necessary to talk more about the technical and procedural work. What is more meaningful is to introduce the background knowledge and conditions of the ritual, which will help us to understand Chinese ancient ritual Guan Li more clearly.

Rituals are social and cultural activities and can not change the physical or biological aspects of participants. Ritual is a 'naming', 'declaring' or 'identifying', not a 'deciding' or 'producing' process. In fact, the participant is also himself/herself and what has been changed is his/her social position and after that he/she gets a historical meaning in social life. In this paper, on the one hand the ritual of initiation declares that the boy or girl has become an adult, and on the other hand through this ritual the boy or girl will be given a social identity.

3.2.1.1 Ritual Time

When considering rituals, the element of time cannot be neglected. The time factor decides the beginning, the process, and the end. The time of the ritual is the common presence of the members in a community, whose time is sequenced temporally by the ritual again.⁵

It is recorded in *Xia Xiao Zheng* (the history of the Xia Dynasty (2070BC-1600 BC)) that Guan Li was often held in February⁶ in the Xia Dynasty. Before the Qin Dynasty (221BC-206 BC) Guan Li might happen in late spring. '... the last month of spring, with the dress of the season all complete, along with five or six young men who have donned the cap, and six or seven boys, I would wash in the Yi river, enjoy the breeze among the rain altars, and return home singing.'⁷ Also, some emperors held the rituals of Guan Li in the spring, and for instance the emperor Xiao Zhao of

⁵ Wulf, c.f. *Zeit und Ritual*, in Bilstein/Miller-Kipp/Wulf 1999a, pp.112-122.

⁶ Months in this part refer to the months of traditional Chinese calendar.

⁷ See *The Analects-Xian Jin* (trnas. Zhang).

the Han Dynasty (206 BC- 220) held his Guan Li in middle spring.⁸ However, after the Han Dynasty the ritual of Guan Li was held in January. ‘Since the later period of the Han Dynasty emperors usually held Guan Li in the first month.’⁹ *Si Min Yue Ling* was written by Cui Shi of the Han Dynasty and describes the agricultural activities which took place from January to December. The first month is recorded in *Si Min Yue Ling* in this way ‘this month is the beginning of a year and people can hold Guan Li for their children in this month.’¹⁰ Chinese people believe that humans are united with the nature. From this point, the beginning of the year symbolizes the beginning of a person’s life. Therefore, the ritual of Guan Li was held in the spring, indicating that social activity was in harmony with the rule of nature.

The body itself is spatial and it is subject to the passage of time like all organisms.¹¹ Cui Shi points out that space and time are also conditions of the human body. Next, I explore the spatial factor in the ritual of Guan Li.

3.2.1.2 Ritual Place-Family Temple

Guan Li was always held in family temple. It is written in *Yi Li - Ben Yi*: ‘Temple is a scared place where gods live and the ancients held important rituals in temples surely.’ Family temples have always played a very important role in Chinese society and culture. There was no religion in prehistorical China and what Chinese people believed in are the nature and their ancestors. Natural altars were built for the belief in the power of nature, and family temples were built for the belief in the power of ancestors. In ancient China from the Zhou Dynasty (1046BC-221 BC) to the Song Dynasty (960-1276), the houses of the upper classes must be built according to strict regulations. According to the regulations a building should have a big hall facing the south with two steps connected to the hall. With the two steps the big hall was divided into three parts: the east hall, the middle hall, and the west hall. The steps to the east hall were named ‘host steps’ or ‘Zuo steps’ only used by the host, and the west steps were called ‘guest steps’, used by guests. Behind the halls, three rooms were built and

⁸ Sima 1965.

⁹ Shen 1974, p.335 (trans. Zhang).

¹⁰ Miao 1981, p.1 (trans. Zhang).

¹¹ Wulf, c.f. Raumerfahrungen im Umbruch-Körper, Bewegung, Globalisierung, in Liebau/Miller-Kipp/Wulf 1999b, pp.14-21.

the middle room connected with the middle hall was called ‘Shi’, and the rooms connecting to the east hall and the west hall were named ‘Fang’. In front of the halls was a yard, if the house was used as family temple there must stand an upright stone tablet in the yard which was also used to show time. On the south of the yard there was a door against the middle hall, but this door was not a normal door with two door panels; it was more like a small house including three rooms. The middle room with doors was a small hall and the rooms on each side were named ‘Shu’.

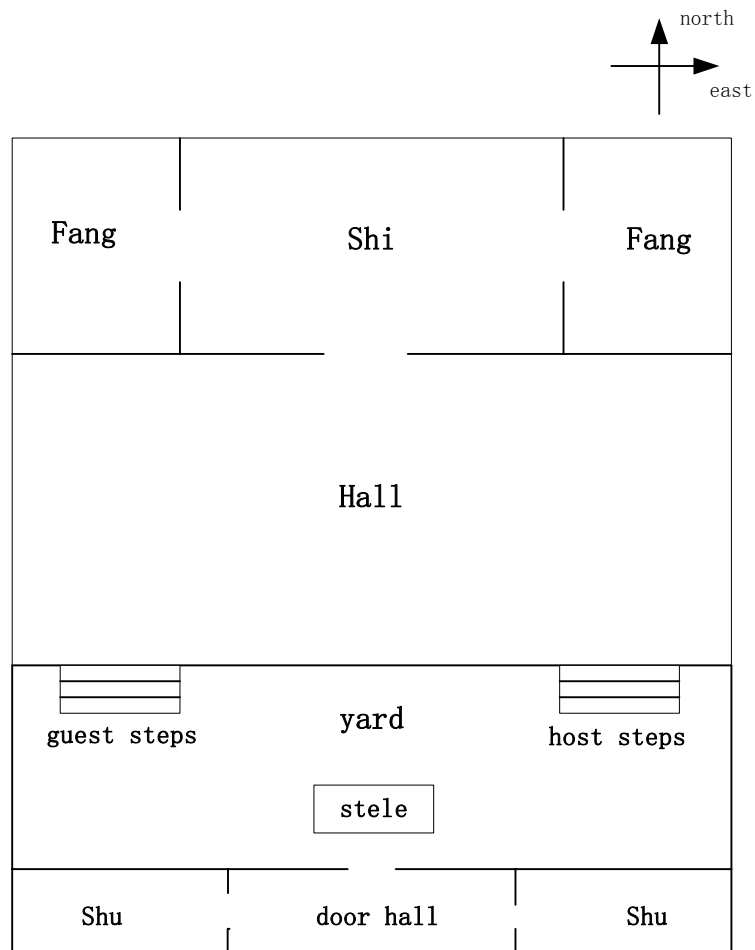


Figure 3.2: Construction of a family temple in ancient China

One hall with three parts, or rooms, is the biggest characteristic of Chinese traditional architecture. Whether it was the palace of the emperor, a temple, or people’s houses buildings were always constructed based on the three rooms model. The middle room is the most worshipful; the rooms on the side were less sacred, and

the other rooms or parts played subordinate roles.¹²

Andrew Strathern thinks that a house has a close relationship with the human body. He takes a house as the cultural representation of the human body. For example, Maori people considered that houses belong to their chieftain, so they looked at the house as the body of their chieftain. Analogically, we can regard family temple as the body of families in ancient China. Young people took part in rituals of Guan Li in family temples, which was a good method helping young men to know their families deeply and to strengthen their senses of belonging to their families.¹³ It is believed that the family temple is the body of the family.

3.2.1.3 The Novice-the Coming Scholar

3.2.1.3.1 Before Guan Li

In the book *Li Ji · Qu Li Shang* it is indicated that ‘a boy goes to school when he is ten years old; the young man will be capped when he is twenty years old.’ In ancient China there was a kind of school named ‘Pi Yong’(辟雍) set up by the government, where the boys of noble families learned knowledge, techniques and arts, such as etiquette, music, dance, poetry, writing, archery, and riding. The noble boys began to live and study in primary schools in cities when they were ten years old and when they were fifteen years old they should move into the ‘Pi Yong’ in the suburbs to receive higher and practical education and training until they were twenty years old. After that they attended the ritual of Guan Li to become a real member of society. That is to say, from ten to twenty every boy of noble classes had to learn and practice and this outside and collective life took ten years.

Guan Li was like the threshold between childhood and adulthood and this ritual could also deal with the relationship between youth and elders. In ancient China, teenagers ‘must wear no fur, stand straight and listen carefully.’ ‘When they meet their fathers they cannot come closer without invitation, they cannot leave without permission, and cannot answer without being asked.’ ‘If someone is twice his age, he should treat them as his father; if someone is ten years older than he, he should treat

¹² Li 1977.

¹³ Strathern 2005.

him as his elder brother; if someone is five years older than he, he should follow him shoulder after shoulder; if five young men live together, the oldest one should sit beside them as a leader.’ ‘When a young man walks with an elder, he should hold the elder’s hand with his two hands. When the elder asks him, he should answer the elder while hiding his mouth. When following a scholar the young man should not surpass him to talk; when meeting a scholar the young man should come to the scholar quickly and stop to make a bow with hands formally; when the scholar talks with the young man, he can talk, if the scholar does not talk to him, he should leave politely and quickly. When a young man goes up a hill with an elder, he should watch in the direction that the elder watches; the young man should not point when he is climbing a castle and when on the wall of the city he should not cry.’¹⁴

Guan Li was an important ritual held by the upper classes and made people different in the sense of society.¹⁵ After Guan Li the new adult would begin a lifestyle of the scholar (Shi). What are Chinese scholars like?

3.2.1.3.2 Chinese Scholars (Shi,士)

Shi was the term for scholars in ancient China, and the group of Shi was very big. a) Young men. Shi in many love poems in the book of *Shi Jing* refers to the young man. b) Warriors. In the period of the Shang and the Zhou dynasties, Shi were engaged as guards. c) General name of nobles. In ancient China nobles were divided into several classes: duke, minister, senior official, and scholar. Shi is the lowest class of nobles, which exists between the upper classes and common people and has the complex characteristics of culture of different levels. As a result Shi had a representative of Chinese ritual culture, and belonged to the upper cultural level.

Before the Qin Dynasty Chinese society went through a period of conflict and the strict system of ‘Li’ was challenged. Shi got more freedom and their schools of thought were more active. Many different schools of thought appeared, such as Confucian, Mo, Taoism, legalistic, Ming, Yinyang, agricultural, Zongheng, military, and literary. Many famous politicians, militarists, educators, writers and thinkers were

¹⁴ *Li Ji-Qu Li Shang*(礼记-曲礼上) (trans. Zhang).

¹⁵ *Li Ji-Qu Li Shang*(礼记-曲礼上) (trans. Zhang).

Shi. After the unity of the Qin Dynasty the situation of Shi underwent great change. The power of the emperor was stronger and controlled society; slowly the tension between authority and culture was building up. Confronting the difficult situation governments had taken measures to limit the thought and activities of Shi, for example, the movement of ‘burning books and burying scholars alive’ in the Qin Dynasty; ‘deposing other schools, revere Confucianism’ in the Han Dynasty; ‘imperial examinations’ in the Sui Dynasty; and ‘literary persecution’ in the Ming Dynasty and the Qing Dynasty.¹⁶

There are some important elements of the life of Shi: books, painting, music, chess, travel, wine and prostitutes. Shi lived in these elements and tried to live a glamorous and carefree life. Shi took the future of the country as their responsibility and they wanted to use knowledge to realize their plans. To attain a political position they had to learn very hard, so books became their best friends. In daily life Shi had a view of ‘valuing freedom’, i.e. Shi thought and decided always based on their own wills. Visiting beautiful mountains and rivers was a big hobby of Shi and they finished countless poems and paintings during their travels. Playing the lyre, chess, calligraphy and painting were elegant enjoyments for Shi. Prostitutes played an important role in the life of Shi. But the relationship between Shi and prostitutes was not only sex, the more important were flirtation, friendship and understanding, which was the practice of rational freedom. In general, the life tracks of Shi included learning, imperial examinations, being an official, obtaining benefits, and bringing honor to the ancestors.¹⁷ Of course for poor families the striving process was the same, but it was more difficult in every stage, especially in the first and second steps, in which the poor must make more efforts than noble families.

Characteristics of Shi

Strong Historical Sense of Responsibility and Worrying Mentality

A historical sense of responsibility is a kind enthusiasm of going into society. Scholars took politics as their own duties and regarded ‘to govern the country and to

¹⁶ Sun 2004.

¹⁷ Zhang 2004.

control the world' as their highest aims. Shi had a worrying mentality because they recognized the difficult situation of human beings. Fan Zhongyan, a scholar of the Song Dynasty, pointed out in his poem *Yue Yang Lou Ji*: 'when I take a high position sitting on the high palace, I am worried about my people; when I am living in the country far from the government I am worried about my emperor. I will be always worried whatever.' And he concluded: 'Be the first to bear hardships, and the last to enjoy comforts.'

Confucian Rational Character

Three levels:

- a. A Shi should learn and encourage his friends; a Shi should promote harmony among brothers. A student of Confucius named Zi Lu asked, 'What qualities must a man possess to entitle him to be called a scholar?' Confucius said, 'He must be thus: earnest, urgent, and bland - among his friends, earnest and urgent; among his brethren, bland.'¹⁸
- b. Confucius thought that those who in their conduct maintain a sense of shame, and when sent to any quarter will not disgrace their prince's commission, deserve to be called an officer (Shi).¹⁹
- c. A man as Shi can benefit his people, and will be able to assist all.

Taoist Ideal Character

Taoism stands for an ideal character of naturalism. Humans should be in harmony with nature. Shi should do nothing to govern and be together with the nature.

The Confucian outlook on life is positive, while the Taoist outlook is pessimistic, and out of the alchemy of these two strange elements emerges the immortal thing we call the Chinese character. Chinese people are Confucian when they are successful, and Taoists when they fail. The Confucian in us builds and strives, while the Taoist in us watches and smiles.²⁰

¹⁸ *The Analects-Zi Lu* (论语-子路)(trans. Zhang).

¹⁹ *The Analects-Zi Lu* (论语-子路).

²⁰ Lin 1935.

3.2.2 The Climaxes of Guan Li: Capping and Naming

3.2.2.1 Capping

Capping plays a central role in the ritual of Guan Li. There are three times of capping in the ritual. Each time the young man would be put on a different cap, each referring to different social status, but the process of every capping is the same. The repetition of capping strengthens the young man's feeling of being an adult. In this section, the body, ritual, mimesis, performance, language and silence, imagination and other anthropological concepts will be taken advantage of to analyze the process of the 'margin-transition'.

First let us review the process of capping in the ritual of Guan Li. The young man comes out of the room into the hall, and then stops, facing south. The main guest invites the young man to kneel on a bamboo mat. Then the main guest also kneels beside the young man and begins to do up the hair of the young man and binds up the hair with a hairpin and a piece of silk tape. The main guest stands up and goes down the west steps to wash his hands with 'Xi', followed by the host. Then he comes back and straightens the silk tape on the hair of the young man, and afterwards he walks down one step of the west steps to take the hat of black cloth from the first deacon. The main guest holds the hat with the front part of the hat in his left hand and the back part of the hat in his right hand. An important activity called 'Jin Rong' comes next, which means to set up an example about how gentlemen walk and behave. Before dressing the hat, the main guest goes to the young man and puts the hat on the young man. The young man stands up and returns to the east room and puts on the clothes matching the black hat that he is wearing. Then he comes out and bows with hands folded in front to the people in the hall. At this time all the persons will congratulate him saying, 'Today is a nice day ...and you will be given a great deal of bright happiness'.

3.2.2.1.1 Hair as One Part of the Body

The human body is forming and reforming social activities, and meanwhile it is also shaped by the changing society. Hence, the body is a central issue in social theory.

Some studies suggest that the body should serve as an organizing principle for sociology. Bryan Turner has coined the term ‘somatic society’²¹ to describe how the body in modern social systems has become ‘the principal field of political and cultural activity’. The body for Bourdieu, and for Elias, is an unfinished entity which develops in conjunction with various social forces and is integral to the maintenance of social inequalities. Both recognize that there is an interrelationship between the development of the body and people’s social location, and both view the management of the body as central to the acquisition of status and distinction.²²

Ancient Chinese people believed that the growth stages for males and females were different: They believe that males teethed at eight months, replaced baby teeth at eight years, reached puberty sixteen years, and at sixty-four years the reproductive system began to deteriorate. For females it was teething at seven months teethes, replacing baby teeth at seven years, reaching puberty at fourteen years old, and their reproductive system deteriorates at forty-nine years.²³ With this understanding we can see that the ancient Chinese conception of the body led to the age for boys in the initiation ritual being set at twenty and for girls at fifteen.

The human body represents social and cultural meanings. Guan Li is related to two Chinese words; ‘Guan’ means the cap or capping and ‘Li’ here has the meaning of ritual. Obviously, Guan Li has a close relationship with the head. Hair plays an important role in the ritual of Guan Li, so I plan to cite here some examples of how the body is involved and cultivated during the ritual and describe the relationship and interaction between the human body and rituals.

General Understanding of Hair

Hair is a special part of the human body with abstract meanings. Comparing to other body parts, a unique quality of hair is that it grows all the time in a person’s life. Hair is always growing, although it is cut frequently, which shows the great vitality of hair. The growing continuity of hair helps to construct the temporal dimension of the body

²¹ Bryan S. Turner 1992.

²² Shilling 1993.

²³ *Records of the Grand Historian* (*史记*) written from c.a.104 BC to 91 BC, was the magnum opus of Sima Qian(c.a. 145 BC-90 BC), in which he recounted Chinese history from the time of the Yellow Emperor until his own time over three thousands years.

helping people to feel the change of the body and understand the limits of his/her lifetime. Hair is usually exposed in the open air and it can protect the head by keeping out the cold. Above-mentioned are the natural aspects of hair. With the development of clothes, humans began to use clothes to protect their bodies and at the same time, hats and shoes appeared. Then hair was joined by hats and hair decorations, and shortly hair began to play a role in social life together with its accessories. It is interesting that the people of different ethnicities have different hair from colors to fashions; even in one ethnicity, people have different ideas of hair in religion and in common customs. Hair also plays an important role in Christianity. For example, Augustinus questioned what would happen to hair when its owner dies. In Japan, some religious anthropologists argue that human life is based on the presence of the Tama or animating spirit residing in the body. But this spirit can leave the body and wander elsewhere, causing illness, unconsciousness, and death.²⁴ In Buddhism there is a doctrine named 'Eradicating the six roots', which requires the believers to forget and give up their desires and only in this way they can be real saints and be reborn human. The hair, therefore, must be cut while a person is being converted to Buddhism. In the tradition of Islam, women should wrap their heads with a scarf, for it is thought in Islam that a woman's hair should be concealed, and only exposed to her family, otherwise it is a big shame when her hair is seen by others. There is much to value of hair in our daily life. First, hair is usually looked upon as a symbol of gender, men typically have short hair and women typically have long hair; secondly, hair can express desires indirectly, so many women have their hair dyed and waved, and furthermore, by using shampoo and perfume women increase their charms. Hair sometimes can be used in sexual attracting; thirdly, hair can transfer ideas and hopes, and people declare their differences through colors and styles of hair. For example, today young people have dyed their hair red, green, and other colors, which is a rebellion against society controlled by adults and also can be seen as an indication of

²⁴ Ebersde, c.f. Long black hair like a seat cushion: hair symbolism in Japanese popular religion, in Hildebeitel/Miller 1998, pp.51-68.

their hopes for freedom.²⁵

Hair is becoming a valuable theme in various research fields. In ‘Dialectic of Enlightenment’ Horkheimer and Adorno have pointed out that on principle, the hair of man and woman, the hair on the head and over body, pubic and armpit hair are losing their importances. Long, strong and thick hair is especially regarded as expression of strength and power in fairytales and myths. In the stories of the Old Testament, the strength and length of hair in the first line is in combination with man, however in myths, legends and fairytales there are many stories that tell the special magic of female hair as well.²⁶ Paracelsus argued that people know well that hair can be changed in different ways [...]. It can be yellow, red, black, white, grey [...]. Hence many of the characteristics are emphasized in experiences of physiognomic art, in which they have falsely evaluated people by hair, when they should have evaluated people more basically.

There is a corpus of work that debates the symbolic meaning of hair. Much of this earlier work has focused on either the psychological manifestations and meanings of hair²⁷ or the symbolic aspects.²⁸ Theorists have acknowledged that hair can have both social and personal significances (Firth 1973), that the cultural context is essential in understanding hair,²⁹ and that hair can act as both a sign and a symbol (Firth 1973). It is also well documented that hair styles have symbolic meanings that vary across cultures and sometimes even within a single cultural context³⁰. Jeannette Mageo wrote that at one level of analysis, ‘As a part of local symbol systems, hair has significances that are only local’³¹. This is echoed in Carol Delaney’s piece on the meaning of hair in Turkey³². Obeyesekere demonstrates how the psychological,

²⁵ Zhang, c.f. The Fate of Black Hair-Hair in Rites of Passage in China, in Werler/Wulf 2006, pp.165-181.

²⁶ Stephan, c.f. Das Haar der Frau, in Benthien/Wulf 2001, pp.28-47.

²⁷ Hallpike, c.f. Social Hair, in *Man* (n.s.) Vol. 4, 1969, pp. 256-264); Leach, c.f. Magical Hair, in *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 88, 1958, pp. 147-164.

²⁸ Firth, c.f. Hair as Private Asset and Public Symbol, in Firth 1973, pp. 262-298; Hershman, c.f. *Hair, Sex and Dirt*, in *Man* (n.s.) 9, 1974, pp. 274-298.

²⁹ Uberoi, c.f. On Being Unshorn, in *Transactions of the Indian Institute of Advanced Study* (Simla) 4, 1967, pp. 87-100.

³⁰ Leach, c.f. Magical Hair, in *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 88, 1958, pp.147-164.

³¹ Mageo, c.f. Hairdos and Don'ts: Hair Symbolism and Sexual History in Samoa, in *Man* Vol. 29, No. 2, 1994, pp.407-432.

³² Delaney, c.f. Untangling the Meanings of Hair in Turkish Society, in *Anthropological Quarterly* 1994, pp.159-172.

symbolic, and practical come together to create sets of meanings around the practice of growing and maintaining matted hair in a particular cultural context. For Obeyesekere, as with others, hair is intensely symbolic and has deeply personal meanings as well as broader cultural meanings that are ‘articulated to personal experience’.³³ Mageo provides an excellent summary of the psycho-symbolic approaches to analyzing hair using her ethnographic data from Samoa to treat the various hypotheses. Julia K. Thompson focuses on how local cultural meanings around hair are not fixed but are flexible and polyvocal. He thinks that sometimes hair styles mark gender, caste, ethnicity national, or age-set identities, which at other moments, actors are positioned to reject, rework, and reconceptualize these identities and their associated meanings.

Hair in Chinese Culture

‘There is a dragon in the immemorial East, and its name is China; there live a couple of people, and they are the children of that dragon. We are growing up under the feet of the dragon, and become the later generations of the dragon; we have black eyes, black hair and yellow skin, and we are the later generations of this dragon forever.’ These lines are from a song named *The Later Generations of the Dragon*. From the lyrics of the song we can see that black eyes, black hair and yellow skin are the outer characteristics of Chinese people. Black hair is a mark of eastern Asians and a mark of Chinese. Not only is black hair symbolic of the Chinese people, but also Chinese take black hair as a self-identification, which is deeply rooted in their minds.

Chinese people began to pursue the understanding of hair a long period of time ago, even before the history of writing. Ancient Chinese regarded hair as a sacred part of the body that could not be damaged. They thought that hair was the spirit of the body and that hair could protect the soul. Even today, an ancient convention of this thought is still popular in circles of the Han ethnicity. When cutting the hair for a new born baby, the hair on the top of head should always remain, because the top of a baby’s head is so weak that the soul could fly out without the protection of hair.³⁴ In

³³ Obeyesekere 1981.

³⁴ Yi 2005.

northern China, especially in rural areas, people are forbidden to cut their hair in the first month according to Chinese calendar every year. It is believed if one had his/her babies' hair cut, his/her uncle would die. There is also a proverb saying 'Jie Fa Fu Qi', which means that a couple love and help each other and spend their time hand in hand. This proverb comes from an old ritual of wedding. In ancient China when a man and a woman got married, a string of hair would be cut from the man and be combined with the woman's hair and that ritual indicates that hair holds the spirit. There is an ancient ritual in some areas in China that when a new born baby was three months old, the hair of the baby would be cut.³⁵ These stories sound interesting and impossible, but we can find some relation between hair and personal life. Hair helped the construction of Chinese ethics. *Book of Filial Piet* indicates that 'One's hair and skin are given by parents, so he/she has no right to cut or damage them, which is considered the beginning and basis of Xiao (filial piety).' This idea shows the relationship between the body, oneself, and parents. The freedom of someone and his/her body do not belong to himself/herself, and even after the deaths of his parents, his body is still the remains of his parents, so one can not have his own body. 'A son, he should not ascend a height, nor approach the verge of a depth; he should not indulge in reckless reviling or derisive laughing...A filial son will not do things in the dark, nor attempts hazardous undertakings, fearing lest he disgrace his parents. While his parents are alive, he will not promise a friend to die (with or for him), nor will he have wealth that he calls his own.'³⁶ Under the influence of Xiao ethics, Chinese did not cut their hair until the 'Xin Hai Revolution' in 1911. Caring for and protecting hair was a component of Confucian rites. According to the book of *Li Ji*, a man's hair should be neat and protected by a cap. Only upon the death of his parents could he publicly unbind his hair and unbuckle his clothes to exhibit his sorrow.³⁷ In ancient China hair was sometimes more important than life. For example, at the end of the East Han Dynasty there was a famous prime minister named Cao Cao. One day Cao Cao led his troops marching pass the city of Xu. He ordered his troops, 'The person who tramples

³⁵ See *Li Ji-Nei Ze* (礼记-内则).

³⁶ *Li Ji-Qu Li Shang* (礼记-曲礼上)(trans.Zhang).

³⁷ See *Shisanjing Zhushu* (十三经注疏) (*Thirteen Classics with Notes and Commentaries*).

the wheat will be beheaded immediately'. Suddenly Cao Cao's horse was shocked by a bird flying out of the wheat field and the horse with Cao Cao had trampled a big piece of cornfield. Cao Cao wanted to commit suicide with his sword but was prevented by his attendant. At last Cao Cao cut down a wisp of his hair instead of being beheaded. From this story we can conclude that hair was no less important to ancient Chinese than the head. In 1644, the troops of Manchu defeated the troops of the Ming Dynasty and founded the Qing Dynasty. The Qing government forced the people to change their hair fashions. Men had to have their hair cut and leave a pigtail. This order was resisted fiercely by the people all over the country and facing this situation, the Qing government took a very brutal measure, which was called 'Keep your head, lose your hair; keep your hair, lose your head'³⁸. As a result, countless people lost their lives in this conflict. For instance, Hua Yuncheng, a member of the Donglin faction in the late Ming Dynasty, was arrested by the Qing government because he refused to wear the queue. Before his execution, he addressed his departed parents, generations of ancestors, and spirits in Heaven, saying, 'Yuncheng's hair cannot be cut, nor will his body surrender'.³⁹ In traditional China, men's long and bound-up hair epitomized the Confucian norm of filial piety, Han culturalism, and magical power. Hair cutting meant social control, not only supported by the conventionalized and morally approved fashions, but also regulated and supervised by the political authorities. This control, however, does not conform to Hallpike's simple formulation: long hair = being outside society; cutting hair = reentering society⁴⁰. The form of social control varied with the changing historical context. In the Ming and before, long hair = social control; cutting hair = anti-social control. During the Qing Dynasty, tonsured head = social control, full hair and short hair = social control; tonsured head (and queue) = anti-social control.⁴¹

Chinese peoples' respect for their elders and pride in their cultural legacy

³⁸ Wakeman, C.f. Localism and loyalism during the Ch'ing conquest of Kiangnan, in Wakeman/Grant 1975, pp. 43-85.

³⁹ Wen, c.f. *Nanjing Yishi*, in *Taiwan Wen Xian Cong Kan*, 1959, pp.220-229.

⁴⁰ Hallpike, c.f. Social Hair, in *Man* (n.s.) Vol. 4, 1969, pp. 256-264.

⁴¹ Cheng, c.f. Politics of the queue: agitation and resistance in the beginning and end of Qing China, in Hildebeitel/Miller 1998, pp. 123-138.

strengthened the stability of hair fashions and their function as a medium of political and social transition. The Han hair style was treasured by Confucian literati as a trait distinguishing Chinese culture from that of the ‘barbarians’. The identification of barbarism with strange dress and hair styles goes back to the Analects, where Confucius, praising Guan Zhong for having kept out the barbarians, said: ‘But for Guan Zhong, we should now be wearing our hair unbound, and the lappets of our coats would button on the left side’⁴². Civilizing the customs of barbarians was one of Mencius’s doctrine⁴³. Long and bound-up hair was the symbol of Chinese civilization.

Hair in Guan Li

Hair comes on to the stage in the ninth step of the ritual of Guan, where it is noted: ‘The guest of Zan does up the hair of young man and puts on the hairpin’. Though only one sentence and though the action takes at most only several minutes, the importance of this process cannot be measured. After that point, the social identity of the young man has been changed. Based on archaeological studies it is known that the hair style of children and teenagers in ancient China was the ‘double buns’ style.



Figure 3.3: Children’s hair style of the Zhou Dynasty

Before the capping ritual, the young man must take a bath and wash his hair carefully and do up his hair in the style of childhood. While donning the hat, the honored guest unfolds the hair, then combs the hair with a Zhi (an ancient Chinese comb), and next binds up the hair with a hairpin and a piece of black silk. Then, the hair is bound up firmly and straightly. With the changing of hairstyle the young man

⁴² In *Shisanjing Zhushu* (十三经注疏) (*Thirteen Classics with Notes and Commentaries*) (trans. W. Cheng).

⁴³ See *Shisanjing Zhushu* (十三经注疏) (*Thirteen Classics with Notes and Commentaries*).

leaves his childishness behind and becomes strong and straight like his hair. The black silk is bound together with black healthy hair, which increases his spirit of vigor and integrity.

Letting hair hang down and hair in two buns are not only the symbols of early childhood and teenager, but meanwhile, hair of this period is just like the hair-wearer, having more freedom of movement. Children and teenagers are not controlled by families and society as much as an adult, as is recorded in ancient books that children and people over 70 years old are free from penalty. Though there is no language component of the process of hair style changing, the hair is bound and the free mind of the young boy is also strictly tied. After that he would say farewell to his dreaming childhood and teenage years, instead, he would come into the actual society and obey the rules of family and nation like a component working in the huge social machine.

The black silk-bounded hair is also vested with social value. Black is the respected color of the Zhou and Qin dynasties, so a man putting on black means he is coming into society and becoming a social member.

Hair in Ji Li

Though in this paper the initiation ritual of girls is not the focus, hair plays a special role in this kind of ritual, so I would like here to make a brief analysis. In ancient China young women were married at fifteen or sixteen. Under the oppression of ancient Chinese traditional rules of propriety, women had few rights. For example ‘the three obediences and four virtues (Confucian ethics) imposed on women’ were like a rope to control women; ‘obedience to father before marriage, to husband after marriage, and to son after husband’s death.’ Obviously, though marriage is an important transitional point in a woman’s life, there is no hope after marriage at all. The ritual of ‘Ji’ (wearing hairpin) is a ritual of passage for women which symbolizes the sexual maturation of a girl. After that point, the young woman is old enough to be married. The changing of hairstyle and wearing of a hairpin is the most important step of the ritual. The influence brought to young women is different from that to young men. First, the scale of Ji Li is smaller and the ritual is held at home, but Guan Li takes place in the family temple. That indicates the lower position of women in the

family. Secondly, all the guests are female and the young woman in this atmosphere could be schooled by the traditional idea of ‘to be a wife and to be a mother’. In this process there is much mimesis, as she can observe the female participants and learn from them imitatively. Thirdly, because Ji Li is held only once and there are not as many rituals in a woman’s life, the main actress would concentrate on the ritual to mentally prepare herself for the following stage of her life. Finally, after wearing the hairpin, the young woman will begin her new life. She will be busy in preparation for her marriage. After the ceremony, her clothing should be more mature and her manners should be more dignified.



Figure 3.4: The fashion of ‘double buns’
of girls



Figure 3.5: ‘Ji’ fashion of woman

3.2.2.1.2 Performative Dimension

My starting point in this deliberation is what happens with the body. Speaking, acting and manner are topics that are denoted as performative. (Wulf 2004) In my opinion, trappings are also an important factor which helps the actor in performing. In the ritual of Guan Li the young man should change his caps and clothes three times. Obviously trappings could not be neglected when we focus on his performance. Additionally, acting and manner can be seen as the movement of the body, so these movements may be defined as behavior. I would like to develop the performative dimension of the capping activity in the following realms: trappings, speaking and behavior.

Trappings

Generally speaking, trappings includes many parts or forms, such as clothes, caps, shoes, gloves, scarves, etc. Because in the ritual of Guan Li the young man should be

capped and change clothes three times, we draw a simple development line of Chinese caps.

'Guan'-Cap

Guan Li is namely the ritual of 'Guan'. Now I tell the story of 'Guan'. The Chinese word 'Guan' means cap, which has a long history. At the beginning 'Guan' referred to a small mantle on the head, which could not cover the whole top of the head. In the Han Dynasty (206 B.C.-220A.D.) there were many forms of 'Guan' such as crown 'Guan', long 'Guan', travel 'Guan', etc. In the early time of the Han Dynasty men, whether they were rich or poor, wrapped up their hair with a piece of cloth named 'Jin Ze'(Figure 3.6), and at the same time 'small caps' were popular among gentlemen, which were put over the buns of hair with a hair pin. In the Tang Dynasty (618-907), 'Jin Ze' developed into many different kinds of caps named 'Fu Tou' (Figure 3.7).

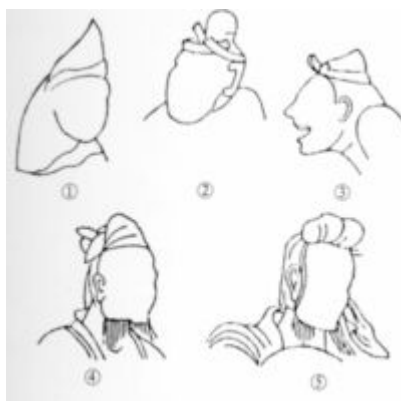


Figure 3.6: Jin Ze of the Han Dynasty



Figure 3.7: Fu Tou in the Tang Dynasty

'Fu Tou' developed into different forms in the Song Dynasty (960-1279) and were chosen as the official caps, which were woven with canes and grasses and covered with black muslin. 'Fu Tou' of the Song Dynasty had two horns (Figure

3.8). 'Fu Tou' with straight horns was allowed to be worn by all men, but 'Fu Tou' with horns whose ends rise up were reserved for the emperor and high officials. And at that time many gentlemen favored a square cap named 'Dong Po Jin' (Figure 3.9). Until the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) more and more forms of caps appeared, among them the 'Confucian Cap' (Figure 3.10) and 'Square Cap' became popular with gentlemen. In the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) China was governed by the Manchu ethnicity. The caps of officers were different from the traditional Han ethnicity, and scholars and common people had daily caps and formal caps (Figure 3.11). After the Qing Dynasty, China came into the period of the Republic of China. At that time western culture and clothes were knocking on the door of China and many gentlemen began to dress in suits and top hats (Figure 3.12) as symbols of class and social rank. After the founding of the People's Republic of China, the 'green army cap' (Figure 3.13) was very popular with young people, especially in the period of Cultural Revolution (1966-1976). Today caps are only an accessory and have no meanings of class or rank, and in fact are seldom worn in daily life.

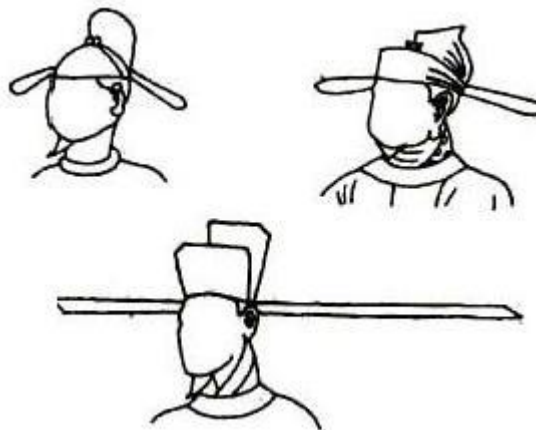


Figure 3.8: Fu Tou of the Song Dynasty



Figure 3.9

Figure 3.10: Confucian Cap of the Ming Dynasty



Figure 3.11: Daily cap (left) and official cap (right) for man of the Qing Dynasty



Figure 3.12: Formal cap (top-hat) for man of 'Republic of China'



Figure 3.13: Green army cap

Besides trappings, there are many expressions with body in terms of language and behavior in rituals and these expressive characters of human body are realized in the form of performances.

Speaking

Language is a direct form of body performance ritual. But not all spoken words are performances. There are four characteristics of performative speaking which help us to distinguish performative speaking⁴⁴ First, performative speaking has a self-referential character; second, performative speaking has a declarative character; third, performative speaking is often connected with social institutions, for example speaking at a wedding, or job appointment ceremony; finally, performative speaking consists of pre-produced performative speeches. According to this idea, the speaking

⁴⁴ Bohle/König 2001.

in Guan Li can be seen as a performance. Each time when the young man is dressed and shows himself with new cap and clothes, the other participants will say some felicitations to him: 'Today is a nice day and you are wearing a new cap and a new suit, which indicates that you are coming of age. From now you should leave infantility and try to be a man with highest virtue. May you have a long life with luck, and you will be given a great deal of bright happiness.' Obviously, these words are only some hopes and wishes, but from the perspective of performance communication is made and the participants are not only audience members anymore and at this time also become actors performing in the ritual. To this point what the audiences have said also has the function of constructing the framing of rituals, which is just like Wulf's statement: 'in order to make an event an artistic performance, it requires an appropriate framing. The participants and a temporal spatial context belong to this framing, especially, the spectators who play a constitutive role for the happening.'⁴⁵

Behavior

Performances in the form of language and behavior are the most direct form of performance. If we take the symbolic structure of human behaviors as a text to read or to deal with in the way of hermeneutics, we will get another understanding of our behaviors.⁴⁶ Wulf's idea provides us an opportunity to analyze the behavioral performance in Guan Li. Within the step of capping in Guan Li, many behaviors were performances and these behaviors were often and mostly accompanied with mimesis. Wulf indicates that changing and new acting are the main components of mimetic process, which can be described as performance.⁴⁷ The step of capping consists of much mimesis factors in performances. Clearly the main part of performance of capping is done by the honored guest, otherwise in these performances the young man gains much knowledge mimetically. The practical knowledge the young man gains here can be regarded as keys for him to behave in social life. Before capping the young man has never had his hair fashioned before. When the honored guest binds his

⁴⁵ Wulf 2001, p. 109 (trans. Zhang).

⁴⁶ Wulf 2004a.

⁴⁷ Wulf op.cit.

hair, although he cannot see that process in detail, he has achieved influence. The movement of the honored guest brings the young man a direct feeling of contact. Through watching and hearing the performance of the honored guest the young man imagines the scene of combing and binding his hair, which is a transferring process from the outer to the inner, then to the outer. Also, the young man may have the experience of participating in the capping rituals of others, and as an audience member can develop inner pictures of his own capping. This mimesis process takes place in the interaction of saluting and action of 'Jin Rong', as practiced by the guest of honor. 'Jin Rong' can be seen as a typical and pure performance. In the process of 'Jin Rong', the guest of honor holding the hat with his hands should walk and move like a troupial (a bird), airily and leisurely. This is a good example of walking and stopping and the young man should watch carefully and mimesis and then practice later. From then on, the young man should stop childish behaviors and try his best to move genteelly and speak decently. But mimesis is not a simple process of copying; the young man should attempt to preserve all he has watched and felt as images in his mind. These images can be intensified in similar situations. After that, the young man would present the inner images physically, according to his own characteristics when required in reality. This representation is filled with creation and development — the entire process of mimesis. In terms of performance, the young man also plays a very important role. After each capping the young man stands up and returns to the east room to dress himself with the clothes matching the black cap he is wearing, and after dressing he comes out and bows with his hands folded in front of him to the people in the hall. His changing clothes and presenting to the others is his chance to perform like an actor playing on stage. In his performance the practical knowledge he mimetically learned before could be practiced and developed. With the wishes sung by the others, the young man's performance is recognized and encouraged. This performance of the young man is repeated three times which strengthens the quality of the performative behavior for the young man.

Performance is the red line going through the step of capping. The honored guest, the young man and the other participants perform together interactively. Everyone

will be influenced and especially the young man will rehearse his coming social life by performing various roles. The young man immerses himself in the world of imagination, shuttling between time and space. He identifies himself in reality and fantasy and constructs his structure of life.

3.2.2.2 Naming

After meeting with his mother, the young man will be named in the family temple. The guest of honor gives him a second name, which from now on can be used in social life. This procedure can be seen as the second climax of the whole ritual. Naming bound with capping creates the identification of the new adult.

3.2.2.2.1 Chinese Naming System

Traditionally, Chinese names (for men) were a little bit complex. Besides the family name there are two or three parts of the second name, in which one part is 'Ming' (名) used by the family, and one part is 'Zi' (字) used in society, and the third part is 'Hao' (号) which was a 'hobby name' given by himself later. Now I will cite some examples, the first one being Confucius (551 B.C.-479 B.C.), whose family name is 'Kong', his 'Ming' is 'Qiu', and his 'Zi' is 'Zhongni'; the second one is the famous Tang Dynasty poet Li Bai (701-762), whose family name is 'Li', his 'Ming' is 'Bai', 'Tai Bai' is his 'Zi' and his 'Hao' is 'Qing Lian Ju Shi'; the third one is Mao Zedong (1893-1976), the founder of the People's Republic of China, whose family name is 'Mao', his 'Ming' is 'Zedong' and his 'Zi' is 'Run Zhi'. Generally speaking, 'Hao' was not very popular and family name, 'Ming' and 'Zi' were always used in daily life. As we all know that today's Chinese people only have family name and 'Ming', 'Zi' and 'Hao' as historical phenomena have been lost for about 100 years.

Name is more than a sign of a person in China. A name represents one's family, indicates one's position in relation to his brothers, shows the elder's hopes for the person, and reveals the will of the person. In the views of Wulf and Gebauer there is a mimetic influence in the act of naming. They address that 'in the act of naming a relation will be made between the child and the example person who has the same name. To these the child is to step into a relationship of the imitation. In the execution of such mimetic processes the child becomes a new member of the society, with

determined models, tasks and obligations.’⁴⁸ So, names are very important, and can help people know themselves and their family, be identified by society and also remembered after death. In this sense, naming has a significant meaning to a person. Different parts of the name were given in different time and ways. In ancient China it is said the ‘Ming’ of a child was given by his father when the baby was three month old. ‘At the end of three months after birth, one day is chosen and the hair of the baby is cut into a lucky style...the father gives a name (‘Ming’) to the baby by taking the baby’s right hand.’⁴⁹ Children were not allowed to attend social activities before the ritual of Guan Li and in this ritual a second name (‘Zi’) would be given. ‘Capping and naming, after that the name will be respected.’⁵⁰

Since ‘Zi’ would be given in the ritual of Guan Li, we should dedicate more time to focus on the analysis of ‘Zi’. Traditionally, the ‘Zi’ name should have a meaning related to that of the ‘Ming’ name, and the two names could have a similar or opposite meaning. In the Zhou Dynasty, the ‘Zi’ of man comprised three words. The first word showed the position relative to his brothers, for instance ‘Bo’ means the first (the oldest), ‘Zhong’ means the second, ‘Shu’ means the third and ‘Ji’ means the youngest; the second word was related with ‘Ming’; the third word was called ‘Fu’ (甫) that meant ‘man’, which was a fixed work in all the names of ‘Zi’. There are many instances in old books, such as Bo Yang Fu (伯阳甫) in the book *Guo Yu - Zhou Yu Shang* (《国语-周语上》), Bo Lin Fu (伯林甫) in the book *Shi Ben* (《世本》), Shu Yuan Fu (叔原甫) in the book *Chen Gong* (《陈公》) etc. Later, three-word-‘Zi’ were seldom used and two-word-‘Zi’ appeared.

There are few records about the ‘Zi’ of women and only some cases have been found in the inscriptions on historical relics. Some important women had ‘Zi’, which included three or four words. The first word was the name of her position relative to her sisters, the second word was the family name, the third name was a word given by her elder, the fourth word was a fixed word ‘Mu’ (母) .

3.2.2.2.2 Naming and Guan Li

⁴⁸ Gebauer/Wulf 2003, p.37(trans.Zhang).

⁴⁹ *Li Ji-Nei Ze*(礼记-内则)(trans. Zhang).

⁵⁰ *Li Ji-Jiao Te Sheng*(礼记-郊特牲)(trans. Zhang).

Guan Li is thought to come from initiation rituals of the tribal time and the activity of 'naming' in Guan Li is an adaptation of the customs of the Zhou Clan. Guo Mo Ruo indicates that because the semi-blood bounded marriage system existed for a long period of time, the 'Zi' of man had the same word 'Fu' ('Fu' refers to father), and the 'Zi' of women had the same word 'Mu' ('Mu' means mother). At that time, the Zhou people followed the early tradition of children having many mothers and fathers, for it was difficult to identify one's real father without marriage. Afterwards, for some reason, the word 'Mu' was deleted from the 'Zi' of women. However 'Fu' and 'Mu' were the forms of marking man and woman. 'Fu' in Chinese has the same tone with the word axe, so the word 'Fu' refers to axe. As we all know that in the Stone Age stone axes were an important tool used by men, so the axe was a symbol of men. In terms of Chinese characters there are two points in the word 'Mu' (母), which is just like a body with two grown breasts, so the word 'Mu' appearing in women's 'Zi' means that the girl is grown up.

In the Zhou Dynasty 'naming' as a part of Guan Li not only meant that the young man had a second name, also from then on the young man was given the privileges of his noble family. After naming a man could use 'Ming' and 'Zi', but when a woman was married only her 'Zi' was in use but her 'Ming' was not used any more because she must follow her husband and cut off close relations from her own family.

3.2.3 The Third Phase (Incorporation): Visit

After capping and naming the initiation ritual comes to the third phase: incorporation, or aggregation. In the ritual of Guan Li this phase includes visiting his family members and other important persons such as gentlemen, officers, or even the king. Visiting these people can prove that the young man can attend social activities as a social member. Beneath the changes of his position and behaviors some 'invisible' changes should be mentioned.

3.2.3.1 Rights and Obligations

'Zhou Li' originated in the Zhou Clan and were the rituals and rules carried out in the

Zhou Dynasty. In order to strengthen their positions and organizations and strengthen the control over the people, the lords of the Zhou Dynasty kept the patrilineal family system from the Zhou Clan and changed it into a nepotistic system of power of the imperial clan, with which the noblemen could protect the monarchial power, family power, husband power and thearchy. Meanwhile, they developed all kinds of rituals and made reforms and additions to uphold the four authorities above.⁵¹

Rights

Three times of capping in the ritual of Guan Li have different meanings and functions. The first capping with a black cloth hat means to give the young man the right to ‘control the people’; the second capping with a leather cap tells the young man that he has the obligation of service in the army; the third capping with a peerage hat declares that the young man has the right to attend activities in temples. It is said in the book *Li Ji - Guan Yi* that after being capped the new nobleman could act filially, friendly, devotedly and obediently, and then he could be a man and after that he was able to govern the people. At the family level, after Guan Li the young man could marry and have children, which influenced and decided the future of the family. Guan Li could insure the organization based on blood and cement the nepotistic system of power of the imperial clan.

In addition, I want to examine Ji Li. In ancient China the thought that ‘man is superior to woman’ was so strong that women had little rights and did not have any power in social life. The initiation ritual of Ji Li for women was a declaration that the young woman was old enough to be married, which came to the meaning of family. Before the ritual of Ji Li the young woman might have been engaged and was waiting to be married. ‘Before man marries he must be capped in the ritual of Guan Li and the precondition for girl’s marriage is she must be put with hair pin in the ritual of Ji Li’.⁵² The young woman was ready for the rest of her life, because in Chinese tradition the most important values for women were marriage, having babies and respecting the groom's parents.

⁵¹ Li 1954.

⁵² See *Bai Hu Tong*(白虎通), *Bai Hu Tong* is a meeting record (79) in the Han Dynasty compiled by Ban Gu(班固)(32-92)(trans. Zhang).

Obligations

Besides the rights there were some obligations that the new adult must take. The first one was to serve in the army and to fight for his country. A real example will be cited about it. It is recorded in *Yan Tie Lun-Wei Tong Pian* that ‘in the old days the young man went to school when he was fifteen years old and did a little work; he attended the ritual of Guan Li when he was twenty years old, and afterwards he could serve in the army.’⁵³ In the Zhou Dynasty the army of the King or the dukes was comprised of noblemen, in which ‘Jia Shi’ (the first class of soldier) were the young men who had undergone the ritual of Guan Li.

Guan Li as the ancient form of initiation ritual in China has gone, but in fact the flame of Chinese initiation ritual does not go out. Eighteen-year-old Oath Ceremony as the modern form is carried out in contemporary China, and next I continue to investigate this ritual and attempt to make a reconstructive understanding of it.

3.3 A Historical Anthropological Reconstruction of Chinese Eighteen-year-old Oath Ceremony

In 1996 the Central Committee of the Communist Youth League prescribed that the main actors of the initiation ritual is the young people of eighteen years old; the content of the activity includes: education about being an adult prior to the ritual, voluntary service and the ceremony of ‘being adult’; the aim of the activity is to teach young people the Constitution and laws, be clear about the rights and duties under the law, and to improve the sense of obligation of family, society and the country; the procedure of the ritual includes: raising the national flag, singing the national anthem, taking an oath in front of the national flag; a speech given by an official, blessing of the elders, a speech from the representative of the young people; presenting gifts as souvenirs; the organizer can be the committee of the Communist Youth League in school, community, country or enterprise; the logo of the activity is a flying bird

⁵³ *Yan Tie Lun*(盐铁论) is a history book recording the Meeting of Yan (Salt)Tie(iron) in 81 B.C., the author: Huan Kuan (桓宽)of the Han Dynasty (trans. Zhang).

formed with the number '18', because '18' refers to the age threshold of being an adult, the flying bird symbolizes young people becoming adults; the four feathers on each wing indicates that the new generation should have lofty ideals, moral integrity, good education and a strong sense of discipline; the color red implies passion and maturity.



Figure 3.14: the Logo of Eighteen-year-old Oath Ceremony

It is said in the decree of the Central Committee that before the oath ceremony training is needed. This period of voluntary service can be seen as a 'separation' phase of the whole ritual of passage, and the oath ceremony is just the 'transition' phase, and after the ceremony comes the phase of 'incorporation'. However, in fact many schools and ritual organizers take more efforts on the oath ceremony and the other phases are often overlooked. For this reason the oath ceremony as the transition phase plays a significant role in the whole process of initiation. Van Gennep indicates that "rites of passage" as a special category, which under further analysis may be subdivided into rites of separation, transition rites, and rites of incorporation. Transition rites may play an important part, for instance, in pregnancy, betrothal, and initiation.⁵⁴ So, in this section the oath ceremony will be the focus of analysis.

3.3.1 The Phase of 'Separation': Voluntary Service and Pedagogical Activities

According to documents regarding the initiation rituals practiced by some tribes, the separation phase often consisted of some special measures and activities, such as isolation of the novice far away from his/her home and village, being ordered to do heavy work for a period, and suffering coldness or hunger. For instance, in some

⁵⁴ van Gennep 1960, pp.10-11.

tribes of Congo, ceremonies of initiation can last two months to six years. In the first phase the novice is separated from his previous environment. He is taken into the forest, where he is subjected to seclusion, purification, flagellation, and intoxication with palm wine, resulting in anesthesia.⁵⁵ These trials and practices are rarely carried out in today's modern societies. However, the phase of separation is kept in some ways in some initiation rituals. Voluntary service or pedagogical activities of the students, namely the novices, are required and organized before the oath ceremony, which can be regarded as the phase of separation. For example, in Guangdong province a service work system of youth volunteers was set up and runs very effectively. This system includes associations, service centers, service stations and service teams, which organize and help students to carry out various kinds of activities of service and education.⁵⁶ In my view, the separation phase is just a preparation for the next transition phase. The voluntary service done by the students who will attend the oath ceremony comprises several sorts of activities:

- Planting trees
- Service in the rest home of old people
- Taking part in the work of communities
- Cleaning the city, such as sweeping the streets
- Visiting and greeting the soldiers of the army
- Visiting the patriotism educational places, such as war museums
- Some activities pertaining to situations or events, such as the activity of constructing the 'Smile Circles' of the Beijing Olympic Games⁵⁷

3.3.2 The Oath Ceremony

Taking an oath is the main event of the ceremony, so this ritual is always known as the 'Oath Ceremony'. I should first cite some versions of the oath and attempt to survey the position and function of oath in rituals, such as the educational effect. In

⁵⁵ van Gennep op.cit.

⁵⁶ <http://www.cycnet.com/zuzhi/investigation/text/dcysk32.htm>.

⁵⁷ <http://sports.sina.com.cn/o/2007-03-03/17052778663.shtml>.

contrast, silence as the opposite side of speaking is also very important in rituals as well in the context of Chinese culture. Different from the analysis of the ritual of Guan Li, in which performative elements are very obvious and definitive, when we examine the oath ceremony we will find that mimesis plays an important role in the ritual. Accompanied with mimesis speaking, imagination, ritual properties, and sound/music also greatly influence the ritual atmosphere and quality.

3.3.2.1 Oath

3.3.2.1.1 Some Versions of the Oath of ‘Oath Ceremony’

In order to standardize the oath ceremony the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Youth League compiled a version of oath and recommends that local committees use it. Although some cities and areas also write some other versions, the main spirit of the oath is contained and the educational meanings are similar. In the following some oaths will be compared.

The Standard Version (issued by the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Youth League)

I am a citizen of the People’s Republic of China. On the occasion of being 18 years old, facing the flag I take a solemn oath:

I am determined to be a socialist citizen with ideals, morality, knowledge and discipline. I should comply with the Constitution and laws. I should love my socialist motherland. I should support the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party. Exercising our civic rights properly, carrying out civic duties actively, abiding by social ethics consciously. Serving others and dedicating the community; advocating science and pursuing the genuine knowledge; perfecting my personality and strengthening my physique. I must work hard and struggle of all life for the prosperity, democracy and civilization of Chinese nation.

A Version Used in Zhucheng in Shandong Province

My age is eighteen, I am an adult;

Be sensible and know the reason, be independent and self-reliant;

Owe parents, respond with filial respect;

Edify sentiments, improve refinements;

Raise sights, learn hard;
Enhance confidence, steel wills;
Be concentrated, gather power;
Struggle and win in the third grade on the base of the second grade (in a senior high school);
Challenge ourselves, observe disciplines;
Be not arrogant and not discouraged, vow to be the first;
Learn to be useful, repay our country.

A Version Written by Han Guoqiang, Shanghai

At the moment of being an adult, I as a citizen of People's Republic of China vow solemnly:

Uphold the sacred Constitution, safeguard the dignity of laws;
Carry out the obligations as citizens, assume social morality and justice;
The development of the country comes first, take the people's interest as supreme;
Be full of public spirit, serve the society;
Be worthy of the training by the country;
Work hard and make achievements;
Never fail to live up to the elders' expectations of us.
Use my ambitions to create a totally new future;
Use my vitality to strengthen my beautiful motherland.

3.3.2.1.2 Taking Oath

Oath taking as a form of speaking plays a central role in the ceremony. Man can find the educational dimension in rituals and this effect is always implemented with mimesis. Wulf suggests that children make central areas of life into social experiences in rituals and ritualization, which have a lasting effect on their educations.⁵⁸ Taking an oath is the core of the whole transition ritual. All participants are well organized, standing at attention, staring at the flag, raising their right hands and making a fist to the right side of the head. This series of actions does not happen in the students' daily

⁵⁸ Wulf, c.f. Die innovative Kraft von Ritualen in der Erziehung- Mimesis und Performativität, Gemeinschaft und Reform, in Wulf/Zirfas 2003, pp.9-16.

lives and few young people have experienced this before. So, this is a total mimetic process in accordance with the model. Although there is no obvious difference of these actions among the students, every student will have his/her individual understanding and feeling about the symbolic actions. The strength of making a fist is changing with the fluctuation of mood and the oath. A national flag is unfolded in front of the participants and this flag is like a magical window, through which participants can see their past, present, and future. This window can tell them what is possible and what is impossible. Heroes would come out from this window. The students could find their parents' eyes shining with expectations, hear the applause, watch the beautiful scenery of the motherland, and recall the struggles of history for national independence. Every word of the oath is beating in their hearts. At this time, the students are not spectators; they have seen themselves appearing in every image they have imagined. They are playing the roles and cheering for themselves, singing for themselves. Now, mimesis realizes the benefit of language and imagination. As we know, many scenes and roles have no relation to the narrow place of school. Mimesis makes a succession, a separation, a penetration and a leap. Young people have settled themselves in society and are ready to perform in the imaginable stage. Clifford Geertz points out that the model meanings of rituals between ideas and values by the ritual objectification of these ideas in symbols, which are able to make the participation become emotional in a ritual.⁵⁹

Following are some photos of students' taking oath in the Eighteen-year-old Oath Ceremony in various areas of China.



Figure 3.15: Taking oath in March 2007 in Beijing No.166 Middle School.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ Wulf op.cit.

⁶⁰ <http://sports.sina.com.cn/o/2007-03-03/17052778663.shtml>.



Figure 3.16: Taking oath in April 2000 in Harbin, Heilongjiang Province (north China)⁶¹

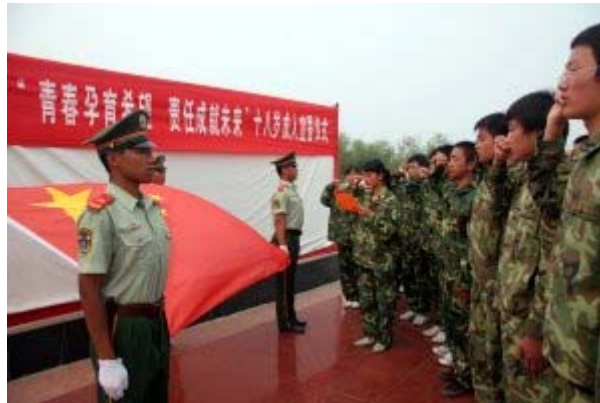


Figure 3.17: Taking oath in August 2006 in Tianjin Qingguang School. (northeast China)⁶²



Figure 3.18: Taking oath in December 2006 in Hangzhou No.9 Middle School, Zhejiang Province (east China)⁶³

⁶¹ <http://www.people.com.cn/GB/channel1/13/20000429/53541.html>.

⁶² <http://past.tianjindaily.com.cn/docroot/200608/10/qxb/10271312.htm>.

⁶³ <http://www.hjz.com.cn/printpage.asp?ArticleID=406>.



Figure 3.19: Taking oath in Shanghai Environment School (east China)⁶⁴



Figure 3.20: Taking oath in October 2003 in Conghua No.6 Middle School, Guangzhou (south China)⁶⁵



Figure 3.21: Taking oath in November 2007 in Urumqi No.4 Middle School, Xinjiang (northwest China)⁶⁶

⁶⁴ <http://www.encollege.cn/ArticleDetail.aspx?DetailID=1812>.

⁶⁵ <http://www.conghua.gov.cn/no6/2003-10-21/20031021171414.htm>.

⁶⁶ <http://news.qq.com/a/20071202/000507.htm>.



Figure 3.22: Taking oath in May 2006 in Chengdu, Sichuan Province (central China)⁶⁷

3.3.2.2 Mimesis in the Chinese Eighteen-year-old Oath Ceremony

The Chinese Eighteen-year-old Oath Ceremony is a historical product, which can outline a historical, cultural, and social process of Chinese youth growing up. Mimesis is a very important and constructive concept of historical anthropology. From the perspective of mimesis we can not only see what the process of ritual is, but also examine the relation and interaction between participants, the meaning of ritual objects and find the problems concealed in the ritual.

3.3.2.2.1 Collective Mimesis and Individual Mimesis

The process of ritual can be considered an interactive process of individuals in a group. In this process there is a two-sided mimesis; or we can assert that it is a combination of two kinds of mimetic power, which affects the feeling and acquirement of each participant directly and decides the quality of the whole ritual. According to this two-sided mimesis, I propose that one is individual mimesis and the other is collective mimesis.

Individual Mimesis

Gebauer and Wulf address that the perception of the other happens before such experience. The observed relations between my mimetic expression and the other's expression can give me information about others. Merleau-Ponty focuses on the origin

⁶⁷ <http://scnews.newssc.org/system/2006/05/04/000108246.shtml>.

of inter-subjectivity. This point of view arises through the inside relation between my body, my consciousness and his/her body, which makes the other the completion of this system.⁶⁸ When my glance meets with others, there is a basic experience of the reciprocity lying between me and the other. Plessner addresses that man looks with his eyes, but he for himself is invisible. His eyes steps into the relation of exchange as glance-sender and also as glance-receiver.

Mimesis in Groups — Collective Education

More and more people are infected by the mass; they abolish their individual borders and extend them infinitely. As a result an undifferentiated feeling of community and solidarity is generated. Canettis points out that this feeling will further develop; equality arises in this feeling; it loves density; it searches for a direction. The four characters melt in the mimetic competence of being human. The growing of the mass is carried out by infection. As it were, excitement and ecstasy are transferred from body to body. Conscious demarcation in relation to the spreading excitation does not succeed; the vortex of the equality resists the individual also. Differences are dissolved; the leveling of all differences takes place towards one aim.⁶⁹

The Eighteen-year-old Oath Ceremony is held collectively. Usually, in this ritual boys and girls wear the same clothes, for instance school uniforms. They take the same oath and participate in the ritual with the same procedures. Keeping all these factors the same plays down the gender difference between young men and young women, and also makes them melt together in the group. Although we promote 'equality between man and woman', the exact same situation for man and woman is not our aim. For the building of each mass, mimetic movements of constituent members are facing one goal. Mutual mimesis of the individual bodies is important. In the double-mass, 'men and women' are given a mimetic relation like each mass including the life of the other. The relative mass develops beside the others in a mimetic relationship. In every mass there is a comparable process that is different from other masses.

⁶⁸ Gebauer/Wulf 2003.

⁶⁹ Gebauer/Wulf op.cit.

3.3.2.2.2 Advanced Figures and Deeds as Models in Rituals

As we all know, praising advanced figures and deeds is often an important part in an oath ceremony. Applying this method the ritual organizer wants to set good examples for the young people. These fine models are all good young people who act very well in their studies and works. On the one hand, these fine young people may not study or work with the participants together, for example, they are an advanced student of another school, a model worker at the province level, or an Olympic champion. On the other hand, they can be students coming from among the participants. He/she does very well at school, receives competitive marks, or is always ready to help others. When these fine models are publicized in oath rituals, their paradigmatic functions will be enlarged. Transitional ritual from teenager to adult plays an important role in man's whole life, which marks the rebirth of a person. After this ritual a teenager will become a real social person. From the perspective of physiology, people of eighteen years have basic recognition and judgment. Through this initiation ritual they can obtain identifications about school, parents and society, and it is also a process of self-identification. By this time, the young people already have the consciousness to increase their sense of responsibility from their inner being because this ritual declares: You are becoming an adult! From the legal perspective, when a person is eighteen years old, he/she will enjoy the rights conferred by law and meanwhile undertake the obligations. Of course the exact beginning of man's capacity for legal transaction is not determined by an oath ceremony, but this ritual can be looked as a collective declaration to society.

Van Gennep assumes that there is a liminality in this ritual, which is just an ambiguous attitude and position. In the oath ceremony, liminality plays an important role. Participants will bid farewell to being teenager, but they have not entered the next stage of life. So they will step into a special period of time and a foreign place which determines the quality of their next life stages. Arrangement, procedures and content of ritual play a leading role to the state of liminality. These elements of ritual can provide all participants a relevant space, draw them a picture of future. Setting good examples in rituals belongs to this function, which can evoke beautiful

imagination and pursuit.

Schools and families are the main living spaces for students. Though they are over eighteen, they have little experience and knowledge of society. Their future is not clear to them, so fine models perform a great function to their future life. The influences of good examples take place in the process of mimesis.

3.3.2.2.3 The Social Function of Oath Ceremony Through Mimesis

Oath ceremonies take place on school-days in an educational institution, but mimesis means they are not separate from the effect of social power.

Mimesis takes social effect in rituals. Wulf indicates that mimesis is the ability to express, represent and reconstruct human behaviors, actions and situations, and man should grasp it in a social context. He also argues that between earlier, present, and future ritual actions exists a mimetic relationship, in which new actions will emerge with reference of proceeding.⁷⁰

There are many mimetic actions in the oath ceremony, such as lining up, making a speech, taking the oath, signing names, sharing feelings, etc. When the representative of the student makes a speech, his/her bearing, tone, words, and speaking style stimulate many of the senses, e.g. seeing, hearing, feeling, and imagining. As a result, each signal of the speech becomes a model to the other participants. Every attendant student will select and grasp some stimulations according to what they need, and then the students will deal with this information and images in order to build new inner images based on his/her own situation and character. It is only half of the whole mimetic process. 'This operation builds an access from outer world to man's inner world. In subsequent appropriate occasions, such internal images will be in the same or different ways demonstrated. When new outer images are created, subject will get a reflection, which can be seen as a conformation of the whole mimetic process. Social behaviors are reconstructed and run as pictures, sound sequences or moving sequences into themselves mimetic behaviors. They will be parts of the internal picture, sounding and movement world,

⁷⁰ Wulf, c.f. Die innovative Kraft von Ritualen in der Erziehung- Mimesis und Performativität, Gemeinschaft und Reform, in Wulf/Zirfas 2003, pp.9-16.

and settle in the imagination and can be activated and modified in new connections.’⁷¹

3.3.2.3 Ritual Properties

As properties are concerned in the oath ritual, the national flag and national anthem should be mentioned, because these cannot be reduced and without them an oath ceremony is impossible. Jean Baudrillard argues in his first book, *The System of Objects*, that the pure function is related to the inner structure of objects, which for him is the ‘essence’ of objects. The changes of these objects happening in daily requirement, practical psychology and sociology are the ‘unessential’ factors of objects. The analysis of the ideology of objects is about the losing process of the pure function of objects and focuses on how functions of objects are coded by ideology. However, the relationship between people and objects is a ‘Utopia’. People catch objects through the ideology of objects (weakening the pure functions), and at the same time we people are enslaved by ‘the system of objects’.⁷²

3.3.2.3.1 The National Flag

In almost all school activities, the government, and other serious social fields, the national flag always takes a very important position. In the directions of the Central Committee regarding the oath ceremony, there are two points emphasized about the national flag, including to raise the national Flag and to vow in front of the national flag. Next, I talk a little about Chinese national flag.

The History of Chinese National Flag

On 15th June 1949, the preparatory meeting of National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) was held in Beijing (a previous name of Beijing). In this meeting, the work of the sixth group was to collect designs and suggestions for a national flag, national anthem, the way of counting calendar years, and to choose the capital city. The sixth group placed an advertisement in the newspapers and by August 1949, 2,992 designs for the national flag were collected and finally the work of Zeng Liansong was selected. The national flag designed by Zeng has many meanings: the large star refers to the Communist Party of China, the

⁷¹ Gebauer/Wulf 2003. p.113(trans. Zhang).

⁷² Baudrillard 2006.

four smaller stars respectively stand for the people, including the working-class, the peasant class, the petty bourgeoisie in cities and the national bourgeoisie. The encirclement of the large stars by the four small stars means that the Communist Party of China (CPC) is the leading center of Chinese revolution and development. The color of the flag is red, which seems warm and symbolizes the revolution; the stars are yellow standing for the skin color of Chinese. This design was also praised by the chairman of the CPC, Mao Zedong. He said that the victory of Chinese revolution was a result of united struggle under the leadership of the CPC, based on the alliance of workers and peasants, uniting the petty bourgeoisie, national class and the capitalist class. That is the real history of Chinese revolution. Later, we would build socialism. This design represented the situation of the Chinese revolution and symbolizes solidarity of Chinese people.⁷³

The Historical and Political Significance of the ‘Five-Star Red Flag’

The government explains the symbolic meaning of the national flag by saying, ‘the national flag of the People’s Republic of China is a ‘five-star red flag’ which represents the solidarity of Chinese revolutionary people.’⁷⁴

After the founding of the new China, the relationship between the Chinese Communist Party and the Chinese people played a definitive role in shaping the meaning of the ‘five-star red flag’. The new China was controlled by a system of party-nation and the Communist Party of China (CPC) was the nerve center of Chinese politics. The victory of the Chinese revolution of the CPC was so great that Chinese people loved CPC more than the country, especially at the early time of founding. As the leader of the CPC, Mao Zedong was the ‘great messiah’ of new China and all Chinese people. Mao was regarded as a great hero and respected all over the country. During the years of culture revolution, Mao was elevated as a god and became a symbol beyond the function of the ‘five-star red flag’ for the country. After Mao’s death, the personality cult surrounding him faded, and China began its

⁷³ Peng, c.f. *The Genesis of the National Flag, National Emblem, National Anthem, the Way of Counting the Years and the Capital*, in Shi 1987, p.258 (trans. Zhang).

⁷⁴ See *Here Rising the Five-star Red Flag*, edited by the History Research Institute of Chinese People's Political Consultative Committee 1984, p.505 (trans. Zhang).

period of reform and opening. The economic reform led political reform; as a result the CPC and the nation began to separate and the concept of nation became more distinct. In politics, the fervor of revolution faded, and instead, the new policy became one of peace, development and stability. The position of the national flag is increasingly elevated. On 28 June, 1990 the first edition of ‘The Law of National Flag’ was enacted, in which the symbolic meaning of the design of the national flag was described. In recent years the symbolic meaning of the ‘five-star red flag’ has changed: ‘the solidarity of revolutionary people’ was replaced by ‘the solidarity of all Chinese people’.⁷⁵ The symbolic meaning of the ‘five-star red flag’ has become a historical thought after generations, and forms a common social memory. This social memory is necessary for social order. It is considered that images from the past make the present social order reasonable and legal. If social memory cannot be accepted, then social members cannot share experiences or imaginations, hence, all members in any social order should share a common memory.

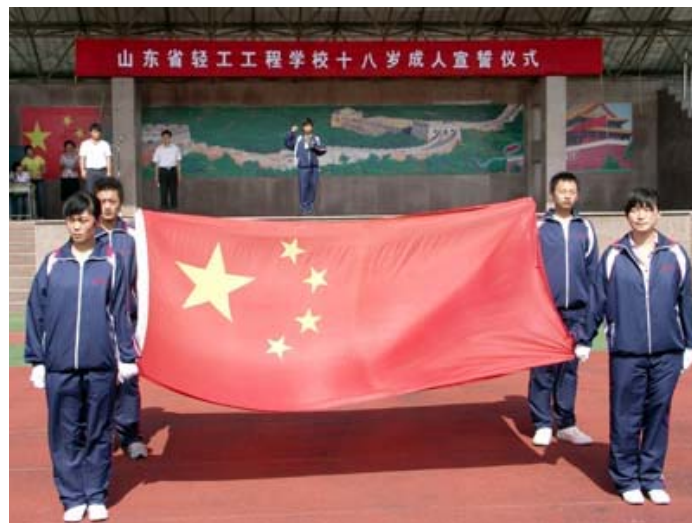


Figure 3.23: Chinese national flag in Eighteen-year-old Oath Ceremony⁷⁶

3.3.2.3.2 The National anthem

The national anthem of China has a short history. Before the 19th century there was no Chinese national anthem. In 1896 Li Hongzhang, the prime minister of the Qing

⁷⁵ Zhang 1999.

⁷⁶ <http://www.sdqg.com/news-xs/070707-3.html>.

government, visited Russia and Europe. It was planned to play the national anthem of the guest countries at one reception, and Mr. Li had to compose a melody named 'the Music of Prime Minister Li' as the national anthem of the Qing Dynasty. After that, the Qing government used this melody as the national anthem in great rituals and ceremonies. In September 1911, the Qing government issued an official national anthem named 'Gong Jin Ou', which is considered the first public national anthem of China. In 1912, the Nanjing Provisional Government of the Republic of China issued a national anthem named 'the Republic of Five Nationalities' and in the same year another national anthem was issued in Beijing by the Northern Warlords Government of China. In 1927, the Nanjing national government made the song of the Republic Party the national anthem. In 1949, before the People's Republic of China was set up, the new national anthem was sought, but none was selected, and at last, the Chinese government decided upon the song of the 'March of Volunteers'⁷⁷ as the new national anthem.

The national anthem in Eighteen-year-old Oath Ceremony

The national anthem, named the 'March of Volunteers', not only declares a strong will of advancement, but also describes a special and difficult period for Chinese people. This catastrophic time of struggle became an eternal memory for Chinese, from generation to generation and the rise of the Chinese national flag along with the 'March of Volunteers' tells the world that this difficult period is over and that the Chinese people have stood up. Playing the national anthem in the ritual of Eighteen-year-old Oath Ceremony can help to represent history, which stimulates the participants to recall the history and shared memory of the struggle of the heroes. When the historical feelings motivated by the national anthem are connected with the rising of the national flag, then proud patriotic emotions will be aroused in the young participants. Therefore, the playing of the national anthem during the ritual of the Eighteen-year-old Oath Ceremony not only creates a musical atmosphere, but moreover it constructs a profound historical background for the ritual scenes, through which participants can go back to the history to have a resonance with the ritual

⁷⁷ *Yi Yong Jun Jin Xing Qu*(义勇军进行曲) in Chinese.

scenes, making the ritual come alive.

3.3.3 After the Oath Ceremony

Following the pattern of a ritual, after the oath ceremony the ritual should come the third phase — incorporation. However, in fact, most of the participants of the oath ceremony will continue their studies in the same school or in the same institution, that is to say, the atmosphere or situation of the ritual participants is the same as before. After middle school the students will have different choices, such as attending university, joining the army, looking for a job, or staying at home. Until this moment, the participants step into the phase of incorporation in a theoretic way. It is not necessary to investigate the period after the oath ceremony, because under the same situations the students have to do the same things as before, to say the same words as before, to have the same life as before. That is the incomplete part of the Eighteen-year-old Oath Ceremony, which damages the meaning and function of the ritual and is gaining increasing attention and criticism in society. Starting from this point I will diagnose the fate of the Chinese initiation ritual and try to reconstruct this ritual, and give some suggestions for its reform and development in part five.

Above I have analyzed Chinese initiation rituals from the ancient form of Guan Li to the contemporary form of the oath ceremony from the perspective of historical anthropology. ‘Chinese Initiation Ritual’ is a big theme and it is obviously not possible to conduct a comprehensive investigation. For a deeper and complete recognition of Chinese initiation rituals it is suggested to survey the hidden dimensions behind them. In the next chapter some influential factors are discussed, such as the inner world of Chinese people, Chinese traditional moral philosophies, and the relationship among Chinese individuals, family and nation. These essential factors combine to make initiation rituals an important role in Chinese culture and society.

Chapter 4

Hidden Dimensions of Chinese Initiation Rituals

In the above analysis, the combination between the theory and methods of historical anthropology and the practice of Chinese initiation rituals has been examined. On the one hand, we can understand the ritual of Guan Li better; on the other hand, this ritual as a different research object can enrich the theories and practices of historical anthropology. Historical anthropology has a double historicity. One is the historicity of the perspective and method and the other is the historicity of objects. Historical anthropology also incorporates philosophical criticism and an open character. Criticism works through philosophical reflection; the open characteristic works through the elimination of time and space, i.e. time is neither limited to one period, nor space fixed to one place, allowing for an intact presentation of historicity.

Rituals cannot survive without a social basis. Social basis is an invisible and complicated condition which pertains to cultural reality, economic development, ethics and ideas of governing. Rituals emerge on this basis, and change, develop, fade, or even die out all together. The influences of these hidden factors realize the variety and specialty of rituals and can be seen as the interpretation of the historicity of rituals themselves.

4.1 The Spiritual World of Chinese People

Rituals are the representations of the human spirit. Besides symbolizing the maturation of the body, the cultural aspect of initiation ritual and social meanings are also important, and it seems much clearer in contemporary China. Chinese ancient rituals of Guan Li and Ji Li identify the natural character of human beings. Through these rituals boys or girls were declared to be adults and could marry. However, Eighteen-year-old Oath Ceremony tells the students that they have left their teenage

years and enter the world of adults. According to Chinese laws, eighteen years old is too young to marry and so that they can focus on learning, students are forbidden to carry on love affairs. In this sense, the Eighteen-year-old Oath Ceremony is a social, cultural and political activity. This oath ceremony identifies not only the natural character of young people, but their social, cultural and political characteristics. It is impossible for the spirit to leave the body, and when the unnatural characteristics of the body are on the subject of focus, spirit controls society and at the same time it is controlled by society, culture and history. Here rises a new question: what does the Chinese spirit look like?

4.1.1 Family and Nation

In the above discussion we find that ancient initiation rites were centered on the 'family', and that the contemporary 'Oath Ceremony' centers on the 'nation'. We should note this change of focus from 'family' to 'nation', even though family and nation are always connected in Chinese traditional thinking. Times, social structures and state forms have changed throughout the long history, which raises the problem of isomorphism and isomerism of family and nation. The transformation of isomorphism and isomerism connects the spiritual line of Chinese initiation rituals from the individual to the state and society, which influences the development of Chinese nationality and Chinese history.

In ancient China there was formerly no concept of 'family system' as a sociological term. However, 'family was the base of the nation' or rather the basis of society. This system colors all aspects of our social life. It is personal, just as our conception of government is personal. It teaches our children the first lessons in social obligations between man and man, the necessity of mutual adjustment, self-control, courtesy, a sense of duty, which is very well defined, a sense of obligation and gratitude toward parents, and respect for elders. It very nearly takes the place of religion by giving man a sense of social survival and family continuity, thus satisfying man's craving for immortality, and through ancestor worship it makes the sense of

immortality very vivid. It breeds a sense of family honor, for which it is so easy to find parallels in the West.

4.1.2 Spirit of Chinese People

Principally speaking, the spiritual fulfillment of Chinese people is based on personal relationships. They gain happiness from the love between each other. The maintaining of personal relationships and the happiness from it can be represented as ‘faith and filial piety’. Faith to the country and filial piety to parents, are two aspects with the same basic meaning. People get fulfillment from the activities of ‘faith and filial piety’. In fact, people have these fulfillments not from what they have done, but from the recognition of others to what they have done, namely ‘social identification’. Chinese scholar Wang Xiaobo called this ‘self encouragement’ or ‘society being an amplifier’. People are controlled in the relations between people and society and made crazy. They have a kind of dependence upon spiritual fulfillment, but this dependence needs a high price such as losing oneself. Freedom is thrown back away for the ‘spiritual happiness’. We are discussing initiation rituals following the line of ‘spiritual fulfillment’. First, the ancient ritual of Guan Li and Ji Li held by families expressed the spirit of filial piety; second, the Eighteen-year-old Oath Ceremony organized by government and schools has an aim of telling the young people to be ready to serve their motherland.

Above we have talked about the two borders: inner border and external border. Next, I want to transfer this point into the reality of Chinese children and teenagers. We all know that China is very huge, and it has a large population and which is unevenly distributed. The population density of eastern China is higher than other parts of China. In order to control and reduce the large population, the Chinese government decided to promote a ‘one child policy’ from the end of the 1970s. This population policy is like a double-edged sword. On the one hand it helped to curb the rapid population increase. On the other hand it has hindered the healthy development of Chinese children. Generally speaking, childhood and living together with sisters or

brothers are very important for a child's normal growing up. In these interactions the inner border of a child can be built. However, the Chinese 'one child policy' destroys the normal situation, and as a result Chinese children are often lonely. They become a single actor or actress playing on a special stage, the idol of their family and of society, experiencing joy and sorrow in an egoistic world. For parents, they have only one child and look upon them as a 'little emperor'. They do not know how to care for and love their child and many families lose the direction and rational methods of educating children. All the demands of the child are be met, which makes many children develop abnormally. In some families a child can ask the parents to buy toys very often, and make noises impudently, and even some children can even abuse or beat their parents without being repercussions. Family is the epitome of the society, so the social atmosphere cannot be better than that in each family. Numerous Chinese children are losing themselves in the 'loose lonely' growing situation. Since the implementation of the 'one child policy' about thirty years has passed, and generations and generations of 'little emperors' have grown up.

4.2 Ideology of Chinese Initiation Rituals

4.2.1 Confucianism and Taoism

4.2.1.1 The Relationship between Confucianism, Taoism and the Chinese Philosophical Tradition

Confucianism and Taoism are the most important philosophies in China, which formulate the characteristics of Chinese people, decide Chinese culture and leads the history of China. Modern philosopher Sun Yikai of Anhui University indicates that Confucianism and Taoism work together to embody Chinese philosophy. From the historical perspective, Confucianism and Taoism developed in the Spring and Autumn period without interruption. In the Jin Dynasty, Taoism developed into a religion that survived in this difficult period and Confucianism has been valued almost all the time. Sun Yikai makes a good example of a tree to explain Chinese philosophy. The complementation of Confucianism and Taoism forms the trunk of the tree of

philosophy, and the root of the tree is the philosophy of Tao. Taoism provides the ontology for Chinese philosophies and created a dialectical thinking. Taoism formulated some important concepts including Tao, morality, Taiji, and existence and non-existence, which are all fundamental aspects of Chinese philosophy. Based on Taoism, the other schools of thought such as Mo, Ming, and Fa, Yinyang constructed their philosophical system using dialectical thinking with the elements of Dao and morality. Taoism and other schools of thought interacted over the long history, which advanced the development of Chinese philosophy. Lu Xun said that the root of China was Taoism. English scholar Dr. Joseph Needham declared that if there was no Taoism in China, it would be just like a big tree without roots.

In my opinion, Taoism and Confucianism have some similarity in their core ideas. 'Li', emphasized in Confucianism, and 'Dao', in Taoism, have similar meanings. On the one hand 'Li' refers to morality and ethics, but in an external sense 'Li' also means the degree and control of human thought and behavior, which is the rule of the community and the order of society. These regulations, orders and habits come from the knowledge and adaptation of humans to nature, namely the artificial law of nature. In Confucianism 'Li' proposed that the laws of nature are applied in human society. The design and regulation of 'Li' are closely simulated to the laws of nature and we can find the origins of 'Li' in the natural world.¹ 'Li is the law of cosmos, the meaning of the earth, the behavior of people', which can also be found in ancient books *Zuo Zhuan - Zhao Gong Er Shi Wu Nian*. It is said in *Li Ji - Yue Ji* that Li is the order of heaven and the earth. On the other hand, the central meaning of 'Dao' in Taoism refers to the laws of cosmos and nature, and further refers to the process and the movement of human life. In this sense, 'Li' of Confucianism and 'Dao' of Taoism can be understood together and we find a channel between Confucianism and Taoism.

¹ Peng 2004.

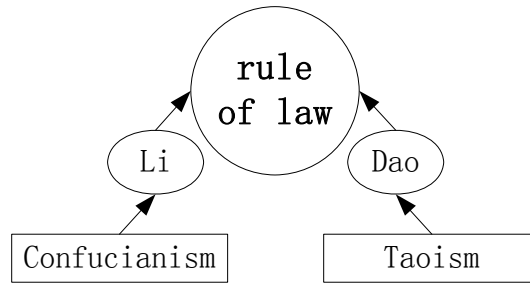


Figure 4.1

4.2.1.2 Confucianism in Guan Li

Before the country was founded, the community was built upon the relations of blood and marriage. After the formulation of the country the relations of blood and marriage were absorbed into the laws and ethics, which became a part of social rules.

Guan Li was the conjunction of family-country, the relations of blood, marriage and regions. In order to make this point clear I would like to start with the ritual place and participants. From the perspective of anthropology, ‘ancestors’ refers to the persons worshiped by descendants and these ancestors have close relations to ‘ancestor cult’, ‘ancestor worship’ and other religious practices. Some researchers think that the family temple as the place where people worship ancestors is related to the public property of the village, which forms the foundation of economic structure of Chinese society. The research on Chinese folk religions and rituals explains the ‘ancestor worship’ from another perspective, which indicates that ancestors and Chinese belief of ‘gods’ and ‘ghosts’ formed a boundary of the village community. Ancestors define the village from the inside, and gods and ghosts construct a social room from the outside.² As Guan Li is concerned in this term, we can make a further discussion. First, Guan Li was held usually in a family temple where the family remembered the ancestors and discussed important family issues. The family temple was the symbol of family spirit and order. The ritual of Guan Li was held in this place to emphasize the concept and sense of ‘family’, and moreover when the young man had the ritual in the family temple, though his body was in his ‘family’, he was ready for his country at the same time. ‘Rite of passage’ has the characteristic of liminality

² Wang 2003.

and transition and Guan Li as an initiation ritual (rite of passage) marked that a young man would enter a new world-his country and society, where the young man must work hard to serve the country for himself and also for his family and then got his identification. Here, family did not refer to a nuclear family, but to an extended family with the same family name. The extended family had the same structure with the country and in this sense the country also was an extended family. So the ritual of Guan Li for the young man had two levels of meaning. On the one hand, the ritual made a boundary between teenager and adult through which the young man said 'good bye' to his childhood and teenage years and became a new adult. On the other hand, from the perspective of the combination of family and country, as the young man entered society, one of his feet was also planted firmly with his family. As is suggested in *Li Ji - Da Xue*, the educational process and the life aims of a man include eight steps: investigating things, achievement of knowledge, being sincere, being honest, cultivating morality, organizing a family, governing a country, and controlling the world. Guan Li was just a ritual dividing the phases among 'cultivating morality', 'organizing a family' and 'governing a country'. The new adult had to consider and work for both families. Marriage served to realize filial piety and to continue his family; work to carry on loyalty to the country. However, two families are not easy to achieve and people always face great difficulty.

4.2.2 The Modern Situation and the New Initiation Ritual 'Eighteen-year-old Oath Ceremony'

Since 1978, the 'one child policy' has been carried out and as a result children are treasured by parents and society. Too much love has been given to children and they have become the center of the family. Without the life experience of brothers and sisters the child has little sense of sharing. In their minds, everything belongs to them, parents, food, toys, opportunities, and love. They lose their sense of limitations in relation to other people and also to themselves. They do what they want and are raised like the rulers of their families. They have little consideration for others and are not

able to cooperate with others or become independent even after growing up. These serious situations make Chinese people very worried about the future of their children. As Chinese schools are concerned, one cannot escape from the control of exam-oriented education system, though in recent years reform based on ‘education for all-round development’ has been attempted. For this reason, the main task and aim for schools is the examinations and to force knowledge into students’ heads, though schools have the obligation to cultivate students with good manners, morality and a sense of civic duty. Under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party, all the young generations should be molded into the constructors of Chinese socialism. Dedication and collectivism are called for all the time. However, with the policies of reform and opening China has been pushed onto the world stage and Chinese young people are facing increasingly complex situations. They become more and more puzzled floating between ideals and reality. The problem of ‘how can the young generation grow up?’ is being urgently raised in China. Families, schools and society should do something to deal with the severe situation. Due to these difficulties, Chinese society has carried out a series of measures under the leadership of the Chinese government. For example, President Hu Jintao, the leader of the Chinese Communist Party, has issued a moral education standard for all Chinese named the ‘Eight Honors and Eight Shames’, which aims at helping to construct morality in contemporary China. On March 4th, 2006 President Hu Jintao made an important speech when he visited the representatives of the Fourth Session of the Ninth National Committee of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference. Hu Jintao called all people, especially young people, to build up a socialist sense of honor and shame. The eight honors and eight shames are as follows ³: Loving country is an honor and doing harm to the country is a shame; Serving people is an honor and deviating from people is a shame; advocating science is an honor and being ignorant is a shame; working hard is an honor and being lazy is a shame; holding together and helping each other is an honor and profiting from the expense of others is a shame; being honest and keeping one’s word is an honor and forgetting one’s integrity when

³ <http://www.barongbachi.net.ru/html/rongruguanjiaitan/2006/1211/161.html>.

tempted by personal gain is a shame; observing the relevant code of conduct and the law is an honor and violating the law and discipline is a shame; striving is an honor and being prurient is a shame.

Besides these activities, rituals as social activities can build the community and help to order the society. So, using rituals to cultivate children and students is a practical and effective method. Above we have argued that the initiation ritual that happens in the transformation from teenager to adult is just an important ritual to contribute to the healthy development of Chinese students.

4.3 The Relationship between Ritual and the Chinese System of Li

The theme of this paper is about Chinese initiation rituals, behind which the development of Chinese rituals and their complicated historicity cannot be overlapped. Since the Zhou Dynasty, rituals have been closely bound with the Chinese system of Li.

4.3.1 Li (礼, 禮)

It is indicated in *Shuo Wen Jie Zi - Shi Bu*:⁴ ‘Li refers to action, especially the worship of god and ghost.’ This explanation indicates two points, on the one hand Li is similar with the Chinese word ‘shoe’, and ‘shoe’ is related with the meaning of walking and acting, so Li has an indirect idea about the rule of human behavior and action. On the other hand, these actions can be traced back to the worship of nature, god and ancestors. Chinese anthropologist Li Anzhai argues that Chinese Li includes folk customs, mores, institutions, rituals, political order, etc.⁵ Dr. Wang Mingming considers that Li could be understood as a force of order in ancient China. The ideas and thoughts of Li came into being during the Zhou Dynasty. Li firstly is a political concept, and secondly is a moral and cultural concept. It was people in positions of authority who made Li and loved it very much. No matter how Li is painted with beautiful colors on its surface, Li is a mark of social classes at its root. Li as the

⁴ *Shuo Wen Jie Zi* (说文解字) is the first big Chinese dictionary, which was finished by Xu Shen(许慎) (58-147).

⁵ Li 2005.

component of social political system is necessary for the construction and stability of society. In conclusion from the ancient to the present Li has been explained and understood as comprising the following aspects:

4.3.1.1 Li-the Basis and Guideline of Government

This assumption can be clearly seen in the government practices and social class system in the periods of slave society and feudal society for thousands of years in China. *Zuo Zhuan -Shao Gong Shi Wu Nian*⁶ records: ‘Li is the basic method of rule for the king.’ *Zuo Zhuan -Yin Gong Shi Wu Nian* accounts: ‘Li can govern the country, stabilize the land, order the people and make it possible for the next leader to continue.’ Obviously, Li was at such a high position that it did not refer to the normal institutions or laws, but directed and prescribed the organization and activities of the state. With Li the society was stable, people lived happily and the country ran smoothly and made progress. Li in the ancient Chinese perspectives was as high as heaven, and as basic as the earth. Li was the order and rule of the unity of the heaven, the earth and people, which must be obeyed. Li is the genesis and rational base of all institutions and civil laws and without Li it is impossible for the country to be built and consolidated.

4.3.1.2 Li- the Reason, the Principle and the Truth

This meaning was very important for Chinese feudal governments. When the people accepted the idea, they would like to be controlled under the power of feudalism and considered that feudal government was natural and unquestioned. Additionally, the people’s admittance of the inevitability of being governed helped Chinese slave and feudal societies to last for such a long period of time.

4.3.1.3 Li- the Etiquette and Manner of Communication

There is a Chinese idiom: ‘Li Xian Xia Shi’ which means someone is not only polite to the person with knowledge and good moral, but can also make friends with lower people. Here Li refers to being polite, having good manners and showing respect. Actually, this meaning is the most practical dimension of Li in our daily life, which is

⁶ *Zuo Zhuan*(左传) is the first oldest chronicle in China recording the history from 722 BC. to 464 BC., which is regarded as an interpretation of *Chun Qiu* of Confucius. Its author is Zuo Qiuming(左丘明)(556 BC.- 451 BC.).

not so high and abstract like the heavenly order for the country, but takes effect in social life. Li is the cultivating earth of good expressions and manners, and provides an effective and easy way for communication and friendship.

4.3.1.4 Li- Gifts

For example, when celebrating a birthday, paying a visit, or congratulating people, there is usually an exchange of gifts, which in Chinese is ‘presenting Li’. Li here means presents.

4.3.1.5 Li - Ritual and Ceremony

In the book *Zhou Li - Chun Gong - Da Zong Bo* it is mentioned that there are five kinds of important rituals and ceremonies in the Zhou Dynasty including: ceremonies to celebrate an auspicious affair, to appease evil spirits, welcome guests, bolster the military, and offer praise. These Li are rituals with special forms and procedures for various aims. Li as rituals from the activities of worship of nature, god ancestors to wedding, birthday party and funeral, constructs the spiritual space and frame of human being, which not only enriches the content of human daily life, but also soothes the human mind and feelings.

4.3.2 Yi (仪)

After talking about Li, next we focus on Yi. Following are the main meanings of Yi:

- Yi means the institution, laws and rules of political practice. *Shi Ji - Qin Shi Huang Ben Ji* says: ‘clear laws are carried out, the country is in order, Yi must be in effect all the time.’ Here Yi refers to norms and laws.
- Yi refers to propriety and manner. Usually Yi is used to describe good appearance and refined manners.
- Yi sometimes has the meaning of gifts that are presented in various situations and ceremonies.
- Yi means ritual and ceremony. For, the book *Yi Li* written in the Zhou Dynasty, carefully records the rituals and ceremonies of that time.

We have introduced Chinese Li and Yi and find that there are many similarities

between them, such as the meanings of laws, gifts and rituals. From the importance of Li and Yi we can conclude that rituals played a central role in ancient Chinese political and social activities and also people's daily lives. Li and Yi can sometimes be used interchangeably, but Li is more often mentioned and used to mean Chinese ritual culture.

4.3.3 Li and Chinese Culture

Fortunately, there has been no big break or fracture in the development of Chinese culture and society. For this reason, research about Chinese traditional rituals is valuable and practical. On the one hand, through the research ancient Chinese life and social images can be represented. On the other hand, we can observe and analyse contemporary Chinese society and culture from a historical perspective.

What position does Li occupy in Chinese culture? Famous Chinese historian Qian Mu gave us an appropriate description when he talked with American scholar Dennerline in 1983. Mr. Qian considered that Li was the core of Chinese traditional culture. Chinese culture was built through the efforts of Chinese scholars over several centuries, and Chinese scholars have common characteristics. Different from European scholars, Chinese scholars have one culture wherever they come from. From the Western view, culture is bound to a relevant place, and different cultures are signed with different customs and languages. But for Chinese people, culture is universal; and custom, folklore, and accent are tied to a geographic area. In order to make a clear understanding, we had better to know the concept of Li. He continued that there was no Western word similar to Li. Li was the rules of all customs and behaviors in the whole Chinese society, which showed the particularity of China. Just because there was no concept of Li in foreign languages, customs were used to differ the various cultures, and it seemed that culture influences all the customs of the related area. If you wanted to understand the Chinese customs of all parts of China, then you would find that there were big differences among customs. Though China is so big that the customs are different, Li is always the same. Li is a family rule

regulating all inner and external things, such as birth, death, marriage, etc.. Analogically, Li is also a rule of the government, which directs the organization and diplomacy. In his view it is impossible to understand Chinese culture without Li, because Chinese culture is not equal to customs. Next, Mr. Qian made a brief introduction about the relationship between Li and family. He pointed out that Chinese culture has a special concept that the western culture lacks, which is kin. Li is spread through families, but we must make a distinction between ‘family’ and ‘kin’. Through kin, social relationships are extended from family members to relatives. In other words, Li makes the formation of kin possible, and furthermore, ‘nation’ is the result of the further extension of the scope of Li. Because Li builds rules of social relation for China, Chinese people became a nation. When practices are not in accordance with Li, these are the changed objects, which are influenced by the local customs and economy.⁷

4.3.4 Li (Rule) and Custom

Generally speaking, Li was popular among the noble classes; folk customs existed among the common people. But Li and folk customs have a close relationship. It is argued that Li comes from customs. Here, customs refers to daily habits. Zheng Xuan of the Han Dynasty explained in his book *Zhou Li - Di Guan - Da Si Tu*: ‘customs are the daily habits that appear in areas.’ ‘Areas’ here mean the living conditions, and in addition different living conditions make for different customs like a Chinese saying that ‘one area cultivates one kind of people.’ It is indicated in *Li Ji - Wang Zhi*: ‘the eastern is named Yi, where the people loosen their hair, tattoo themselves and eat uncooked food; the southern is ‘Man’, where the people have tattoos on their foreheads, men and women bathe in the same river and they also eat raw meat; the western is called ‘Rong’, where the people have loose hair, tattoos and do not eat grain; the northern is ‘Di’, where the people are dressed in feathers and do not eat grain.’ The Zhou Dynasty was founded in the 11th century B.C. The founder of the

⁷ Deng 1995.

Zhou Dynasty analyzed the destruction of the former dynasty, the Shang, and found the importance of morality, so he established a policy called ‘politics of morality’. ‘Politics of morality’ included two aspects: firstly, establish a new political system; second, set up a good regulation of conduct. These two points form Li. Li was developed by Confucius and Xun Zi, and was not only a suggestion for the governors, but also a requirement of intellects and gentlemen.⁸

Rituals exist in Li and customs. They are the representations of classes and build communication between different classes. Rituals come from the political requirement and from the beginning Li lost its natural characteristics. Rituals are a way through which people learn and accept Li (rules); rituals are a method through which people get feelings; rituals produces an atmosphere in which people learn how to think. Rituals provide people a possibility to know the external world and express their feelings. There is a meditative relationship among people, rituals, and object: people have desires on one object and then obtain a feeling in return. Between the two actions is the operation of ritual-the presentation of Li.

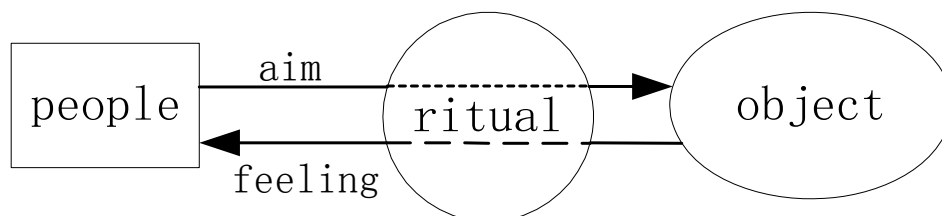


Figure 4.2: The relationship between people, ritual and object

In ancient China, even though the instruction of ritual was a symbolic system, it had strong political function and the effect of integrating society. The principle of order, communication, limitation and harmony in rituals can decide social structure, form customs and organize social resources. Rituals can also coordinate social order and people’s relationships. Confucius said, ‘The gentleman who takes the right as his material to work upon and ritual as the guide in putting what is right into practice, who is modest in setting out his projects and faithful in carrying them to their

⁸ Peng 2004.

conclusion, he indeed is a true gentleman.⁹ The words of Confucius mean that love and modesty are the inside, and rituals are the outside; modesty is content and ritual is form.

In this chapter I start from the point of the historicity of researching object and discuss the hidden factors of Chinese initiation rituals. Correspondingly, a reconstruction of the main concepts and ideas of historical anthropology as a reflection follows, which is the interpretation of its second historicity. After the analysis of Chinese initiation rituals, the concepts and view points of historical anthropology are examined and activated. Many new ideas and understandings are generated like sparks in the interaction of historical anthropology and these old and new initiation rituals in the East, which encourages us to frame a dynamic network of concepts of historical anthropology.

⁹ *The Analects-Wei Ling Gong* (论语-卫灵公), (trans. Arthur Waley, 1998, p.205).

Chapter 5

A Constructive Understanding of the Theory of Historical Anthropology

In the previous chapters Chinese initiation rituals have been investigated and analyzed from the perspective of historical anthropology, through which the culturality and historicity of Chinese initiation rituals have been discovered and considered. Meanwhile this work brings an opportunity to make a review and reflect on historical anthropology. Precisely, a relationship among the basic concepts and themes of historical anthropology is emerging. Among the fundamental concepts of historical anthropology, the body no doubt takes central stage. Concepts are directly or indirectly connected or combined with the central issue 'the body'. This radiant structure makes possible the openness of the system. In addition, historical anthropology is an inter-and trans-disciplinary field, hence in terms of form and content the concepts system has an obviously open characteristic.

The Body, ritual, performance, gesture, image, imagination, mimesis, language and other concepts form the basic dimensions and starting points of historical anthropology. These concepts help us to deal with the problem of existence and the development of human beings, among which there is a complicated dynamic system. This structure, like a net, has open and transparent characteristics. Every concept is an interconnected point having a special function for the structure. For example, the body is the material foundation, ritual is the best integrative appearance, mimesis is the communicative power and system between inner and external worlds, language and gesture are the methods that make the performance possible, image and imagination are important elements for the process of cognition and interaction between body and the world, and so on. Figure 5.1 indicates the main relations among the concepts. In the following I would like to explain some relationships and interactions among the

concepts. In order to examine these ideas I will divide these concepts into three parts: the body, the image and the ritual.

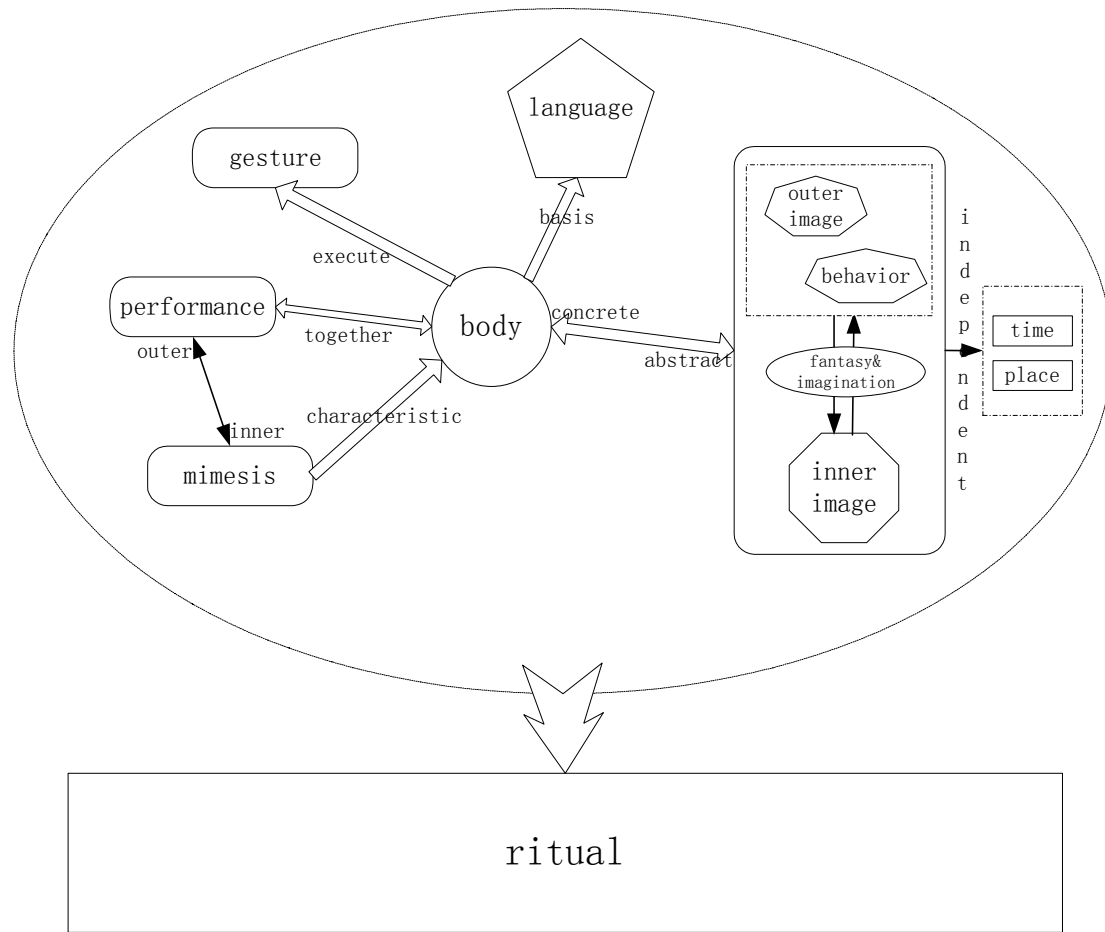


Figure 5.1: The dynamic concepts system of historical anthropology

5.1 Body

5.1.1 Body and Rituals

Rituals result from movements of the body which have a beginning and an end. Rituals are arranged and assign positions to participants. Rituals can be understood as symbolically coded body processes, which produce, interpret, receive and change social realities. They are carried out in place, are implemented in groups and are normative. They cover standardized elements and make it possible deviations from them. In the execution of rituals, emotions are produced by the body movements, which contribute for the change of the ritual actions. So the constructional social

potential of rituals develops.¹

Through ritual behaviors and manners social standards and values are written into bodies. If rituals are productions and performances of bodies, they have more social weight than discourses. With their physicality, ritual behaviors bring ‘more’ into the social situation than only linguistic communication. This ‘more’ is rooted in the materiality of the body, the founded existence of humans, and its physical presence.

5.1.2 Body and Performance

There are many expressions of the body in terms of language and behavior in rituals and these expressive characters of the human body are essentially realized in the form of performances. If we take the symbolic structure of human behavior as a text to read or to deal with in the way of hermeneutics, we will get another understanding of our behaviors.² Wulf’s idea has been demonstrated in the above analysis of the behavioral performance in Guan Li.

On the other hand, from the perspective of performance communication is made and the participants are not only audiences any more at this time, they also become actors performing in the ritual. In fact the spectators participate and help to construct the performance with their bodies. To this point what the audiences have said and done have the function of constructing the framing of performance.

5.1.3 Body and Mimesis

We learn expressions, gestures and behaviors mimetically and the power of mimesis is an integral part of the *condition humana*, the human condition. Mimetic processes are sensitive; they are bound to the body, refer to human holding back and carry out themselves frequently unconsciously.³

¹ Wulf, c.f. Ritual, Macht und Performanz-Die Inauguration des amerikanischen Präsidenten, in Wulf/Zirfas 2004b, pp.49-61.

² Wulf 2004a.

³ Wulf, c.f. Kulturelle Vielfaltung Immaterielles Kulturelles Erbe,inWulf/Poulain/Triki 2006b, pp.248-259.

5.1.4 Mimesis and Performance

Mimesis is a creative operation including absorbing and presenting processes, which are based on the characteristics of the executant. Most mimetic processes are unconscious and with these processes a practical knowledge, a behavioral relative knowledge, and a physical habitus will be generated. Mimesis provides a system for performance. Wulf thinks that in mimetic process the same impression of staging and performance is obtained through performative arrangement, internalized in the world of imagination and picture, embodied in the following. He also points out that changing and new acting are the main components of the mimetic process, and which can be described as performance⁴. Ricoeur regards the processes of pre-figuration, configuration and transfiguration as three kinds of mimesis. He considers the difference among the processes of pre-figuration, configuration and transfiguration, and furthermore, in his opinion performance seems like a form of articulation of mimetic process.⁵ Social and cultural behaviors are mimetic-performative in some way, when these behaviors come back to their origins, when the connection between individual and society is made, when an expression of body happens, when the continuity and change of society is formed. Between mimesis and performance there is a conjunct point, 'repetition', that is, a 'mimetic repetition' with innovative and creative elements. Repetition is located in the center of performative mimetic processes, in which a reference of preceding takes place, which however never leads to the same result. Rather, in these processes it comes to a copying change and organization of the preceding. Here, the innovative and creative moment of mimetic processes and their meaning lie in performative acting.⁶

5.1.5 Body and Performative Gestures

Performance realizes the connection of natural character and social character of human body. Using the body, gestures work as communicational signs. Performance

⁴ Wulf 2004a.

⁵ Ricoeur 1983.

⁶ Gebauer/Wulf 1998.

is related to gesture, for gesture is one form of performance, like language, and gesture has a performative character. Wulf assumes that gesture is related to activities of hand, to expressive and performative movements of one part of the human body, to the performativity of body and social behaviors.⁷

With the increasing complexity of human life and productive activities, culture becomes more and more various and complicated, which brings a flourishing of the use of gestures. We are human beings, so we have the communicative capability of thinking, logic, and feeling. As a result, so many people in different areas and cultures use similar gestures, for example when we meet friends we all smile to offer our goodwill and we nod when we agree with others. However, we cannot ignore the differences between gestures coming from various countries, cultures, religions and histories. There is a Chinese proverb that 'different lands nurture different people', which indicates clearly the relation between people and condition. Gestures are the products of culture and we can say 'different cultures nurture different gestures.' The variety of gestures includes two aspects: first, people in different cultures use different gestures to express the same ideas. For example, in ancient China people bowed with hands folded in front when friends departed, however, Western people embrace when friends depart. Second, the same gestures can sometimes have different meanings in different cultures. For instance, raising the right hand and using the thumb and forefinger to form a right angle and the other fingers closing to form a fist, this gesture in China can refer to the number 8, which in Western is for making an imaginary gun, but. Knowing the variety of gesture can help people better communicate and understand other cultures and people.

A further issue appears in this paper which is the relationship between gestures and etiquette. Etiquette is a strict system in China. Etiquette is only one meaning of the Chinese word Li(礼). Li has many meanings. On the one hand it denotes the rules that can cultivate one's morality, the governing method of state; on the other hand, in communication Li becomes a set of actions and behaviors which can be observed and learnt mimetically. These bodily movements are used in daily life and promote the

⁷ Wulf, c.f. Sprache, Macht und Handeln-Aspekte des Performativen, in Wulf/Zirfas 2001, pp.9-46.

construction of society. Etiquette is the concrete performance of gesture. It is implicit, ardent, warm and beautiful. Since 1982 Wulf and Kamper have worked together following the trend of 'the return of the body' and raise the approaches of body, mimesis, gesture, and rituals. In Wulf's view gestures are movements and actions of the body, which can refer to one part of the body or the whole body. People use gestures to perform something and gestures are the component. We mainly learn gestures by a mimetic process. There are two kinds of gestures. One is general, for example showing someone's height with a hand; the other is special, that is, related to culture and which has specific symbolic meaning. In conclusion gestures are a product of culture and have a historical side. From the angle of research, gestures can be divided into two levels: a wide range, for example, gesture as dance or gesture as work; or a narrow range, for example, that a dance can be divided into about ten or several tens of gestures.⁸

5.1.6 Body and Image

It is clear in the early petroglyphs that the paintings depicting gods, people, and animals are seeking to explain the existence of human beings, in which the body is the most direct proof of existence. The bodies painted in images always have certain meanings. Both the description of the present life and the assumption of life after death are performed with the body. Images, like mirrors, reflect reality and through these mirrors we can see the wider spectrum of life and remain an eternal reality. Kamper thinks that the first pictures developed from fear of death, more exactly, out of fear that man has to die, has no experience, long before the raising of consciousness. From this perspective, pictures have the purpose of covering the wound from which humans originate. But this purpose is unsolvable. Pictures are not only a 'mirror' on the wall, nor do they reflect the reality. There are also pictures in everyday life that can be seen and felt. For example, if I see an accident in the street this is a picture in my mind. In the brain old pictures are brought together with the

⁸ A speech of Wulf in the Workshop *Hidden Dimensions of Education* on December 4th 2006 in FU Berlin.

new. With the imagination a change occurs in the brain.

Humans do not live in the real world today. They do not even live in languages. They live rather in their pictures, in the pictures which they have made from the world, themselves, and others. And they live rather badly in this imaginary immanence.⁹

5.2 Pictures (Images)

Picture or image is 'eikon' in Greek, 'imago' in Latin and 'bilidi' in Old High German. For Old High German, 'bilidi' has many meanings. 'Bilidi' names on the one hand '(miracles) – indication', 'natures', 'shape'; on the other hand 'picture, reflection, reproduction'.

In order to develop a regulation, one needs two premises, what is a picture, what are pictures. Against the fear of death the only chance for humans is to make a picture. Therefore, the desires for immortality stick to the pictures. Therefore, the orbit of the imaginary is eternally adjusted; and therefore today humans suffer the fate to be already dead as living persons.

Picture means, among other things, the operational readiness level, the representation, and the simulation of an absent thing.

5.2.1 Image and Imagination

If I saw an accident, the real-life pictures would be combined with imaginary ones. Perhaps I would have no time to look at the accident until the end, then I think, what happens, will the people go to the hospital? I see a landscape, I see a city, and it energizes the senses. The picture becomes an important term, because it energizes the imagination. The picture has a close relationship to imagination. Everything goes over seeing. Without a model one cannot have imagination.

We can take advantage of painting or printing to conjure the development of images, from stone, earth, silk, cloth or paper, to photosensitive materials, and to today's digital media. Images have made great progress. Although the capability of

⁹ Kamper, c.f. Bild, in Wulf 1997, pp.589-594.

image recording and performance is more powerful than before and the quality is much better, we have to admit that images are facing a big challenge even threat. Especially with the emerging and using of digital media the reality of images is being destroyed and many things which are illusions cannot be distinguished as such, leading some researcher to exclaim that images do not exist anymore.

The possibility of making the external world in the form of pictures partially for the human interior world, of retaining it in the memory, as well as at the same time internal imagination-and picture world outside of humans for objectifying, is a *condition humana*.¹⁰ In pictures, fantasy and imagination represent themselves, which cannot be seized from them independently. Pictures produce and destroy imagination, and connect their elements to new pictures in a reciprocating motion.¹¹

5.2.2 The Relationship Between Images and Time, Space

Outer images have no obvious characteristics of time or space. Every picture or each piece of video records or describes an event happening at a certain time and place, which endows images with historicity. However, images can escape from their temporal and spatial condition since they can exist in the reconstruction of time and space, which is the supernatural power of images. Images are not the simple copies of real things and the creativity of images is the result of mimesis, with which images can possess an expressive force.

5.2.3 Pictures (Images) and Mimesis

The mimetic process consists of the fact that the viewer makes himself similar to the picture they see, and through this picture their internal picture world is extended. (This concerns metaphorical formulations like ‘internal picture world’, and ‘similarity to a picture’.) With respect to the mimetic appropriation of a picture, two intercrossing phases can be differentiated. First, the picture lies before the eyes of the

¹⁰ Wulf 2004a.

¹¹ Wulf op.cit.

viewer; second, the picture is already taken up into the internal picture world.¹²

5.2.4 Fantasy (Imagination) and Cultural Limitation

Fantasy as a special character of humans comes from reality and surpasses reality, thus separating humans from reality. Fantasy is the widest free space for humans, but this free space also has its own borders that are decided by individual age, gender, character and other inner factors, and are also influenced by external factors such as individual experience and knowledge, culture, history and politics. In term of these elements, conditions will become limitations that control human imagination and fantasy. Chinese culture has characteristics of connotation, reservation and carefulness, which can cultivate Chinese intellectuals to be careful and modest, but it is undeniable that this atmosphere of culture is like a padlock enchaining the wings of the fantasy of Chinese people. As a result the ability of fantasy of Chinese people is weakened and the space of imagination becomes smaller and smaller. Fantasy is the ‘mother’ of creation, if the ability to fantasize is unchained, then our creative capacity will soar. Fantasy can bring individuals freedom of spirit, hope, and happiness. For each one fantasy is independent and various, and simply speaking, every person will have some fantasy when they are stimulated and even for the same stimulation people will have different imaginations. For individuals, the creative ability building in fantasy works as a power for their development. In modern China, from schools to society, ‘the sense of innovation’ is being elevated and valued, but the potential for creation cannot exist without any base, and building a free space of fantasy is an effective method for the advancement of collective creativity. Family education, school education, social atmosphere and cultural innovation are good ways through which children even adults are given the possibility to think freely. In this sense the ritual of Eighteen-year-old Oath Ceremony as a collective educational activity should have an effect on the building of the creative capability of young people. However, in fact, in order to make it true some appropriate reforms of the form and content of the

¹² Wulf 2004a.

ritual must be carried out.

5.2.5 Generalization of Images and the Imaginization of the World

With the development of technology, the form and characteristics of images have undergone many changes. TV, satellite and the Internet allow news, information, and images to instantaneously spread all over the world. Consequently, our world is covered with images. Cultural diversity is overwhelmed in the wave of globalization. The mainstream consciousness, the dominant culture in the form of the cultural crisis has begun to show in economic globalization. People are showing similarities or even homogeneity in the cultural and aesthetic areas. Moreover, coupled with the rapid spread of media, the whole world seems to see the same images. Images of the world are becoming more simplified and mandatory in performance. Whether the generalization of images, or the world coming into images, we have to worry that the real meaning of images are being lost and that we should urgently call for the 'return' of images.

5.3 Rituals

5.3.1 Ritual and Mimesis

Mimesis plays an important role in rituals, and in addition mimesis also produces the practical knowledge acquired by ritual behaviors. Body participation is the most common condition of rituals, but people are not free in rituals, for their speech and behaviors must follow certain regulation or custom, which are the practical knowledge of rituals. This practical knowledge is generated, changed, transmitted and continued through mimesis. Mimesis makes it possible for people to take part in rituals smoothly and successfully. Procedures, figures, images, and behavioral models of rituals are imitated and renewed and reformed in new rituals.

Some rituals take place with many participants playing various roles and enjoying the same ritual process, such as cooperation, comparison and moderation, such as

dancing, handclapping, vowing, singing etc. These actions follow certain rules, yet, between participants there are differences. Mimesis creates similarity and variety among actors, for mimetic process is a creative process based on their respective conditions. Rituals produce a harmonious and magical circumstance in which participants obtain a sense of belonging or a feeling of relief.

In addition, mimesis exists also between rituals, and this mimetic relation reveals the historicity of rituals. The procedures and behaviors happening in rituals have various meanings and aims in different historical contexts, which are the products of contradiction between history and reality. This marks the successions and reform of rituals.

Paradoxically, rituals continue to develop because they can be never specified congruently, but are always mimetic because in these processes the creative potentials are already built through repetition.¹³

5.3.2 Ritual and Performance

Turner stresses explicitly the connection between ritual, performance (ritual performance), and experience: resorting to the etymology it makes clear that 'performance' derives from the old-French *parfournir*, which is understood as the completing and locking of an experience ('what was lived-through')¹⁴. Every ritual has its performative space for behaviors and in each performative space some appropriate actions will appear. In some cases the behavior may not be suitable for the situation and this contradiction brings an instability, then two possibilities emerge: modifying the frame (situation) or changing the action. This movement can be seen as a function of performance in rituals. From the performative point of view rituals can be described as a structure of action which brings them out. Rituals unfold these effects because they quote cultural standards; the power of the standard is produced in each performance. If we make a deeper discussion about the performative dimensions

¹³ Wulf/Zirfas, c.f. Performative Welten-Einführung in die Historischen, Systematischen und Methodischen Dimensionen des Rituals, in Wulf/Zirfas 2004c, pp.7-45.

¹⁴ Wagner-Willi, c.f. Liminalität und Soziales Drama. Die Ritualtheorie von Victor Turner, in Wulf/Göhlich/Zirfas 2001, pp. 227-251.

for a ritual study, there are six main elements addressed by Wulf and Zirfas: complexity, scenic performance, ludic characteristics, physicality, mimesis, and power.¹⁵

For ritual theory a performative view is of as much importance as these action-filled courses –such as the effects of a ritualized situation, ritual performance, scenic representations and requisition, the connection of participants and spectators as well as the physical presentations moving into the focus of interest. In this sense ritual performance can be understood as performance of artistic or social actions, which take place at a determined time as performance for and/or with spectators.

Rituals become recordable from the performative point of view as an action structure. Rituals cause these effects because they quote cultural standards; the power of the standard is reproduced in each performance, which embodies it.¹⁶ The performative character of rituals permits different interpretations of the same ritual, without which the variability of the interpretations would negatively affect the ritual.¹⁷ To the minds of Austin and Goffman, the ritual education to that extent is a metaphor formative framework that can stabilize, explain and canonize the form and power of performative interactions and communications in the situation.

5.3.3 Practical Knowledge in Rituals

For Wulf and Zirfas ritual knowledge is practical, implicit knowledge. The form of this knowledge is a means by which knowledge can come by itself. It has an investigatory and discovery character because it connects purpose and means as praxeological knowledge, and is to that extent reflexive. Knowledge can be mediated from rituals, and at the same time rituals are also a performance of this knowledge. Ritual knowledge is physical, a form of physical (collective) self communication. As physical knowledge it is an action knowledge, a knowing how, which is not

¹⁵ Wulf/Zirfas, c.f. Die Performative Bildung von Gemeinschaften. Zur Hervorbringung des Sozialen in Ritualen und Ritualisierungen, in Fischer-Lichte/Wulf 2001a, pp. 93-116.

¹⁶ Wulf/Zirfas, c.f. Performative Welten-Einführung in die Historischen, Systematischen und Methodischen Dimensionen des Rituals, in Wulf/Zirfas 2004c, pp.7-45.

¹⁷ Wulf/Zirfas, c.f. Die Performative Bildung von Gemeinschaften. Zur Hervorbringung des Sozialen in Ritualen und Ritualisierungen, in Fischer-Lichte/Wulf 2001, pp. 93-116.

prospective or reflexive-acquired in the execution. Ritual knowledge is a transformational knowledge, an engaged knowledge, which can change and constitute things, the world and the cosmos. Ritual knowledge is the implicit certainty that is neither the copy nor the reflection of the world but rather their constitution and transformation, and this logically leads to breaking the world. In this sense ritual knowledge is cosmological knowledge as knowledge about the central meaning of ritual acting, as knowledge that the world does not appear or is not represented in the symbolic structure of the ritual, but is rather produced in the performative execution of the ritual: The ritual is metaphysical.¹⁸

In Bourdieu's view, every ritual is a kind of practice knowledge that can take effect in people's daily life.¹⁹ Chinese anthropologist Peng Zhaorong indicates that rituals are processes of personal 'practical knowledge' of participants, and meanwhile rituals are adhering forms of collective traditional values, so rituals are the succession processes, in which collective 'practical knowledge' is gathered. In short, there are four kinds of practical knowledge: context practice, strategy practice, misrecognition practice, and regulation practice.²⁰

Obtaining this kind of practical knowledge is a sharpening process of the mind and body which influences the quality and result of one's life. Researcher Wang Mingming addresses that, 'this transformation is a series of tests and he who cannot withstand the tests may have an antisocial sense of anti-society with unbalanced emotions and thus becomes an 'abnormal person'...or even a madman or criminal. Society will control or punish the 'abnormal person' and the 'normal person' will be awarded correspondently.'²¹

5.3.4 Ritual as Product of Culture and History

Culture appears far less as a system of behaviors and institutions than as a repertoire of meanings, values, signs and metaphors, which leads to social organization. In the

¹⁸ Wulf/Zirfas, c.f. Performative Welten-Einführung in die Historischen, Systematischen und Methodischen Dimensionen des Rituals, in Wulf/Zirfas 2004c, pp.7-45.

¹⁹ Bourdieu/Wacquant 1992.

²⁰ Peng 2007.

²¹ Wang 2003, p.108 (trans. Zhang).

sense rituals appear as significant interaction and communication models, which set and harmonize society and culture. Rituals work as communicative mechanisms of transgression, and define continuity and flexibility of the social order, or others: Rituals constitute culture.²²

Geertz works from the perspective of culture and ritual not only from the point of ritual meaning for the cultural life altogether, but also the meaning of the scientific view of the ritual for the analysis of cultures. Rituals are heuristic scripts which can be analyzed by ethnologists. Rituals do not serve the function of the solution of social crises or re-establishment of a joint cosmos, but merely represent these possibilities. Lives are accompanied by 'rites of passage' and when we think about our life journeys we have to consider the influences of the 'rites of passage' on us. Ritual as 'container of tradition' is valued by anthropology and sociology. Geertz indicates that in a ritual the world as lived and the world as imagined are fused by a single set of symbolic forms, and become the same world, thus producing thus that idiosyncratic transformation in one's sense of reality which I quote Santayana on in my epigraph.²³

The other constructive dimension of ritual is history. History is the continuous, systematic narrative of past events as relating to the human race. Rituals as one sort of human activities are the contents and products of history. In this sense every ritual has its own historicity, which reveals the context of the temporal and spacial imporation. Rituals can only be observed and understood accurately in their historical context.

Rituals are the representations of culture and the products of history. Additional dimensions include politices, religion, economy, philosophy, aesthetics, and morality, which all influence and shape rituals. For example, when the Chinese ritual Guan Li is concerned, it is impossible to perform it without considering its history, because the ritual of Guan Li developed over such a long time and was different among peoples, classes and families. Rituals are shaped by the circumstances in which they develop and if we want to examine a ritual we must examine this ritual-generating mechanism. Rituals are dynamic and develop from a seemingly contradictory process of stillness,

²² Wulf/Zirfas, c.f. Performative Welten-Einführung in die Historischen, Systematischen und Methodischen Dimensionen des Rituals, in Wulf/Zirfas 2004c, pp.7-45.

²³ Geertz 1973.

balance, contradiction, preservation, modification, deconstruction, and reconstruction.

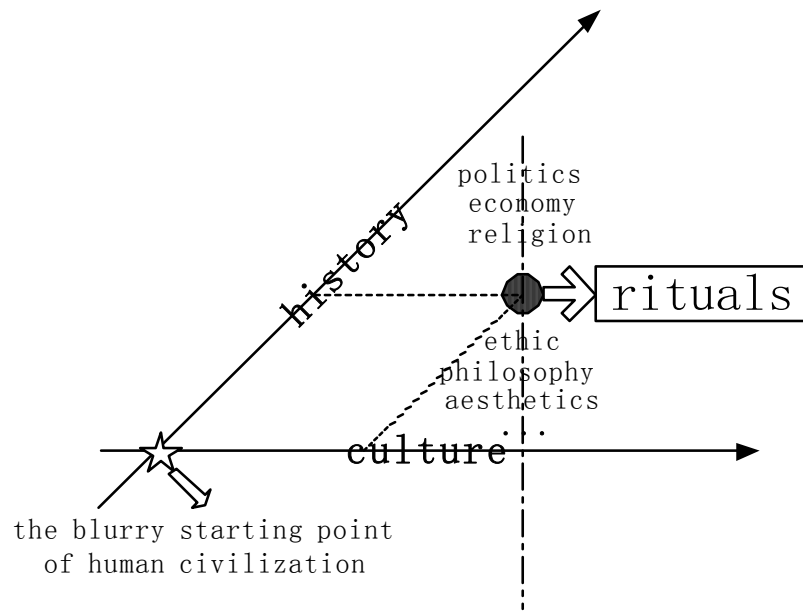


Figure 5.2: Rituals-generating mechanism

Historical anthropology is a new research field focused on human cultural activities and phenomena historically. Its open character makes it possible to accept other ideas, perspectives and methods critically. This study of Chinese initiation rituals examines the quality of the perspectives and methods and also reconstructs the relationship among the basic concepts, and also rethinks the theories and methods concerning the development of Chinese initiation rituals.

Chapter 6

Challenges and the Future of Chinese Initiation Rituals

An understanding of history can lead to a better recognition of present and a prospect of future. Historical anthropology carves out a path through thousands of years, which lets us 'see' the old initiation rituals Guan Li and Ji Li, and 'participate' in the contemporary 'Oath Ceremony'. Another valuable aspect of historical anthropology is its ability to act like a mirror that makes us understand ourselves more objectively. The initiation rituals of other ethnic groups and in other countries force us to reexamine the Chinese ones and introduce new and challenging ideas which lead us to question certain aspects of Chinese ritual culture.

6.1 Initiation Rituals in Other Eastern Countries

Initiation rituals have also been held in other Eastern Asian countries such as Japan and South Korea for a long time. Now we take a look at this ritual in those two countries and I am sure what I am introducing is not only a comparison, but will also allow us another way of analysis.

6.1.1 Initiation Rituals in Japan

In Japan initiation rituals happen on the second Monday in January. It is said that Japan copied Chinese initiation rite and the history of Japanese traditional initiation rites can be traced back to the year 683. In 1948 the Japanese government called for all young people to attend the initiation ritual when twenty years old. It is stipulated in Japanese laws that young people under twenty years old are not adults, so they cannot smoke or drink alcohol and they have no political rights. After twenty the young people become adults and as social members they should take on more responsibilities. Every year the persons who are twenty years old will be invited by the government to

take part in the initiation ritual. The ritual includes oath taking, congratulations from parents, sacrifice to shrines, and entertainment.

For example, it is reported that on 12, January 2004, 4,565 young people of twenty years old were invited to take part in a ritual held by the government of Jiangdong district in Kyoto. In the ceremony, all the young people wore Japanese traditional clothes or formal suits. The councilors of Jiangdong district and the parents presented their hopes and congratulations to the new adults. The participants expressed their feelings at that moment. A girl said: 'Time flies very quickly. Now I am twenty, from now I must try my best and be good in the future.' A young man said: 'Happy new year! Today I am very happy to see many old friends. I have a dream to be a football player.' Another young man said: 'I am twenty years old and it is legal to smoke and drink, however, more obligations come to me. I will be more free and independent from my parents.'



Figure 6.1: Initiation ritual of boys¹



Figure 6.2: Initiation ritual of girls²

6.1.2 Initiation Rituals in South Korea

It is difficult to know the exact date when initiation rituals appeared in Korea. Generally, since the time of 'Korai maru', namely the eleventh century, initiation rituals have been popular in Korea. Confucianism plays a central role in Korea and in

¹ <http://pic.people.com.cn/GB/31655/4015107.html>.

² <http://japan.people.com.cn/2004/1/13/2004113153842.htm>.

the Confucian tradition a rite of passage marks a teenager becoming an adult. After the rite the young man will have the rights and duties of an adult and must have good morals and try to practice filial piety, friendship, faithfulness and obedience. Only in this way can they be a good son or daughter, brother or sister, citizen and descendant. Korean ‘rites of passage’ include a ‘capping ritual’ for boys and ‘putting hairpin’ for girls, just like traditional Chinese rituals Guan Li and Ji Li. The ritual of ‘capping’ has three steps: Sigarye (the first capping), Jaegarye (the second capping) and Samgarye (the third capping). An honored guest is invited to put on the caps for the young man and after every capping the honored guest congratulates the young man with different words which intensifies the various meanings of the three cappings. This ritual impresses the participant deeply and helps him to build self-confidence and to strengthen his courage to face the challenges in the future. The ritual ‘putting hairpin’ for girl is simpler, but the social meaning is just as important as the ritual for man. It is reported that on 21st May 2007 the 35th initiation ritual was held in the Qingxi Palace in Seoul. Hundreds of young people over twenty in traditional dresses took part in the ritual.



Figure 6.3: Initiation ritual of boys in South Korea³

³ http://cn.bbs.yahoo.com/message/read_undergo_11756.html.



Figure 6.4: Initiation ritual of girls in South Korea⁴

6.2 Reality of the Initiation Rituals in Contemporary China

In order to talk about this problem we will use an investigation below done by a Chinese college student named Yang Jing in 2006 as a good resource.⁵

6.2.1 Imbalance of Development

Since the decree about the Eighteen-year-old Oath Ceremony was issued by the Central Committee of the Communist Youth League as an important educational activity in 1996, twelve years have passed. The contemporary initiation ritual has been held in Shanghai, Wuhan, Hong Kong, Beijing, Guangzhou, Jinan, Zhengzhou, Changchun, Tianjin and other cities. But these cities account for only 3% of all large and middle sized cities in China. Since 2002, every May 16th has been set as the Day of being adult in Wuhan and the government there supports the activities of this day. After the return of Hong Kong to China in 1997 initiation rituals have been held by the Hong Kong Youth Committee on the Youth Day of May 4th. But on the other hand, this ritual is neglected in some undeveloped areas and cities such as in the middle and western provinces of China.

⁴ http://cn.bbs.yahoo.com/message/read_undergo_11756.html.

⁵ <http://yangjingjean.blogcn.com/diary,116556434.shtml>.

6.2.2 Acknowledgement among Different Groups

Among the investigated parents and teenagers the Eighteen-year-old Oath Ceremony is not well known. Media coverage of the ceremony is very little, so the influence of this activity is not as much as might be expected, which is really a pity.

The rate of the investigated parents knowing the activity is 73.2%, and the rate of students is 61.5%. From this data we can draw the conclusion that the initiation rite has gained more attention among parents than in students. The investigation shows that parents with a higher level of education are more likely to know about the ritual. For example, parents with the education levels of junior middle school, high school, college, master and doctor have rates of acknowledgement at 15%, 63.8%, 80.3%, 95% and 100%, respectively.

6.2.3 Participation

It is showed in a report that there are 370 million adolescents and children around and under eighteen years old, but among them only 50 thousand students have ever taken part in the initiation ritual. Among the 455 respondents in this report, 13.8% have had direct experience with the ritual and 47.5% would be willing to attend. Only 10.6% of the students who have been investigated have attended the initiation ritual and 18.4% of the investigated parents had children who had participated or had participated themselves. How can we accept this situation 11 years after the issue of the outline by the Chinese central government?

When people are asked: 'Would you like to send your children to attend the initiation ritual?' 47.5% of them say yes, 34.7% will think it over, 14.7% informants are not willing to accept it but not against, and 3.1% are strongly against holding the ritual. If the income as one factor is concerned the people having more income welcome the ritual more than the less incomers and all the informants whose monthly income is over 3000 Yuan would happily let their children participate this ritual.

6.2.4 Sense of Being an Adult

This investigation shows that the sense of being an adult and having social responsibility are too low among the investigated students. There are only 6.8% students with a very strong sense, 21.3% with strong sense, 46.2% with a normal sense, 17.4% with some sense and 8.3% with little sense. By comparison, the parents of the students have more sense of that and the respective rates are 7.5%, 22.3%, 48.3%, 14.7% and 7.2%. (Figure 6.5) According to their ages, young people between nineteen and twenty-five have the strongest senses of being adults and having social responsibility, and the respondents from twenty-six to forty have the least senses of that. We may say that the young people from nineteen to twenty-five are in the stage of becoming an adult and so they have more feelings and understandings about that important process. As the future main actors of society they have more confidence and power. Unfortunately, the young people between fourteen and eighteen have less confidence about their coming of age. With a population of over 370 million, these people play the main role in ritual of passage. If we could not build or strengthen these young people's sense of being an adult and having social responsibility, then our society and nation will meet great difficulties in its development. This serious problem cannot be neglected and it is the key reason why recently there have been increasing calls for holding the initiation ritual.

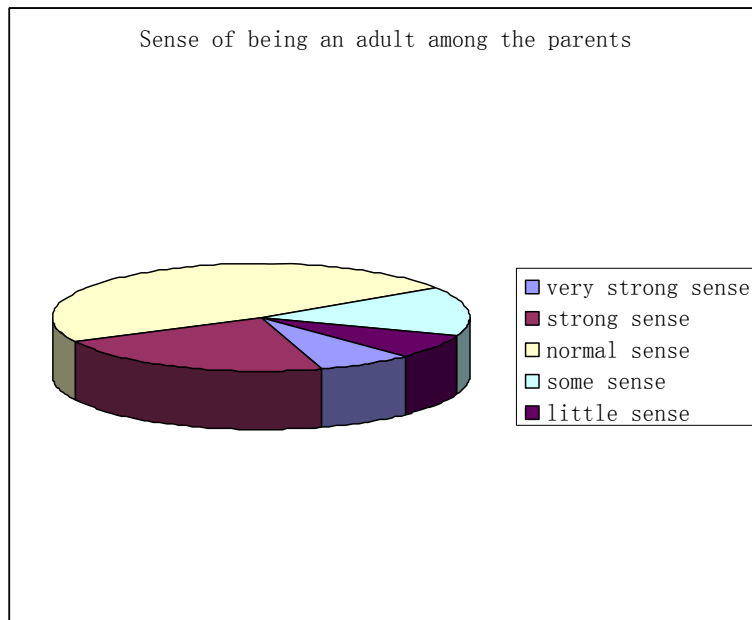
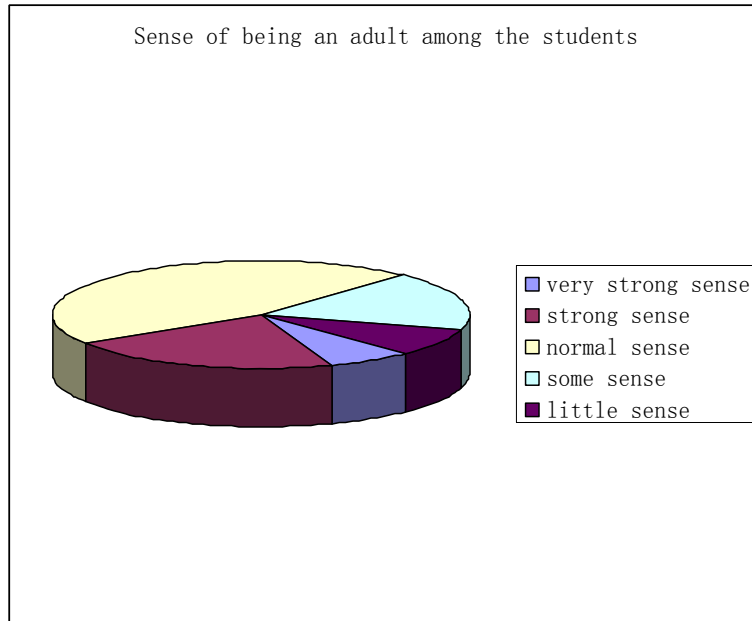


Figure 6.5: Sense of being an adult among the students and the parents

6.3 Enlightenments and Problems

The attitude of parents is more active than students. If we make a further comparison we can find that there are 80.6% of respondents between twenty-six and forty who think the ritual is necessary, and accordingly the rate for the respondents between fourteen and eighteen is 70%. At the same time, some realizations, problems and challenges come to light.

6.3.1 Enlightenment

When should the initiation ritual be held?

It is reported in the investigation that 32.3% of the informants would like to hold the initiation ritual at the end of the study of high school; and 29.7% would like to hold the ritual at the beginning of university study. Other answers: 6.2% are willing to have the ritual during the period of military training⁶; 7.7% are ready to have the ritual after the lesson of education for human sexuality; 8.8% agree that this ritual should be held at emergent moments of the country and the people such as natural disasters. Parents are inclined to hold the ritual at the end of high school, but the students would rather to take this ritual at the beginning of university, and the percentages are 37.9% and 31.7%, respectively. Furthermore, 81.1% of the interviewees agree that the initiation ritual should be held when the young people are eighteen years old, which shows that the initiation ritual is well rooted in Chinese tradition and society.

opinions	Rate
at the end of high school	32.3%
at the beginning of university	29.7%
during the period of military training	6.2%
after the lesson of education for human sexuality	7.7%
at emergent moments of the country and the people such as natural disasters	8.8%
others	15.3%

Table 6.1: Investigation: When should the initiation ritual be held?

The form of the ritual

⁶ In contemporary China before the students begin their studies of high schools or especially before they go to colleges and universities, they should receive a military training for about 20 days organized by schools/universities and military institutions. The aim of this kind of military training is to toughen the young people up, which plays an important role in the whole school education.

40.2% of the informants think that the ritual of passage should 'sustain the ancient ritual in combination of the ancient and the modern'; 24.8% of the informants argue that 'ancient rituals should be kept and used'; 22.0% of the informants hope that 'the system of ancient rituals should be sustained through reform and creation'; 13.0% of the informants have the idea that 'civilization should be sustained but the system of ancient rituals must be abolished'. These answers tell that a majority of people welcome initiation rituals in some form and only a minority reject initiation rituals all together.

This investigation indicates that the oath ceremony as an initiation ritual is a special cultural phenomenon appearing in the transition period of reform and opening in China. Only with the spirit of 'succession and combination' can this traditional ritual be developed. Chinese contemporary society is totally different from thousands of years before. The simple attempts of 'returning to the ancient' have no chance in contemporary Chinese society. If the ritual cannot meet the needs of today's society, then the future of this ritual will be uncertain and difficult.

6.3.2 Problems

Using the oath ceremony as a new form of initiation ritual in contemporary China is facing some serious problems. Many socialists argue that the new ritual form is far apart from Chinese tradition and has little relation to the original spirit of ancient rituals. A report in a popular Chinese newspaper expresses a similar idea. As it is said, on May 4th (Chinese Youth Day) in 2005 one Eighteen-year-old Oath Ceremony was held in Tian'anmen Square. There were 10,000 students taking part in this activity. This ritual followed the current form used in other cities: dressing in the same school uniforms, taking an oath, a teacher giving speech, and so on. To say the truth this form had little practical effect. Many participants had the same feeling: this ritual had little sacred, solemn or cultural sense so the students could not learn or feel very much and were not moved very deeply. The reporter indicates that the close relationship between the ritual and Chinese traditional culture and history has been cut. Compared

with the ancient ritual the new ritual is far from traditional culture both in form and the content. From the cultural perspective the ritual culture which was developed over thousands years has been cast aside.⁷ Besides, on the level of practice there are some issues to be dealt with:

- Only big cities and schools have the condition and possibility to hold the initiation ritual.
- Not all the 18-year old students can attend the ceremony, and as a result sometimes for the reason of time and place only the good students as representatives participate in the ritual.
- Eighteen-year-old Oath Ceremony as the only form of the ritual is a little simple and boring, and has no real effect or profound meaning.
- Eighteen-year-old Oath Ceremony has too many political connotations, which cannot totally awake the inner emotion of students. The new form of initiation ritual, Eighteen-year-old Oath Ceremony, is a cultural and historical result. The novices are not only waiting for some speeches and demands. Hence, it is suggested that more cultural and traditional elements should be added into the ritual and let the participants take part in the ritual with cultural and historical feelings.
- Add more individual performances into the ritual. The present Eighteen-year-old Oath Ceremony is too big and collective in terms of organization so that the participants have little individual feeling and understanding during the ritual. Each participant is too small and becomes unimportant.

We have to concede that in the eleven years after the call of the Central Committee of the Communist Youth League the initiation ritual has not been very widely held in China. This reality is far from the expectations of the sponsor and organizer, and which must be given exclusive attention from the whole Chinese society.

⁷ http://zqb.cyol.com/content/2005-05/10/content_1113616.htm.

6.4 Return of the Ancient Form of Chinese Initiation Rituals

To confront these difficult situations some reforms of the contemporary initiation ritual have been made in some areas. Interestingly, most of the attempts make some return to the ancient form of Chinese initiation rituals. Next, a couple of examples are cited to this viewpoint.

Case 1⁸

It is reported in the *Nanfang Daily* that a special ritual was held in an independent school established by Taiwanese businessmen in Dongguan on April 23, 2005. On that day 66 students dressed in scholar clothes of the Ming Dynasty took part in an initiation ritual in the ancient form according to the rules of the Ming Dynasty. Mr. Chen, the Headmaster, said: 'this is the first time to hold such a ritual of passage for students from Taiwan on the mainland and we will continue to hold this kind of ritual in the future. This activity is designed with the sprit of ancient rituals of Guan Li and 'Drinking with the Folks' of the Zhou Dynasty. We want to take it as a good opportunity for the development of our high school students. We hope that the students can learn something in the ritual, rethink themselves, build a proper attitude for facing society and understand the importance of the duties they will have later.' Teacher Li introduced that these students were more active on that day. They got up earlier and tidied up their things much better and some students even cleaned the floors voluntarily. These 66 students were aged from 16 to 20. They were divided into seven groups to walk on the red carpet to face the memorial tablet of the ancestors. After that the Headmaster and teachers of the school and the parents capped the students and presented gifts to them. The ritual was accompanied by traditional Chinese music and the emcee sang the ancient ritual words beside the memorial tablet: 'Today is a nice day and you are wearing a new hat and a new suit, which indicates that you are coming of age. From now you should leave infantility and try to be a man with the highest virtue. May you have a long life with luck, and you will be given a great deal of bright happiness'. The capped students made a thanking gesture bowing

⁸ <http://www.nanfangdaily.com.cn/southnews/tszk/nfrb/dggc/200504270758.asp>.

with hands together before the chests and bowed to the memorial tablet. Finally, the students took an oath together: ‘meet the expectations of teachers and parents, become the backbone of the country.’



Figure 6.6: The memorial tablet



Figure 6.7: Capping

This ritual influenced the students strongly and left so much to them. ‘From this day onwards I am an adult!’ said Lin Gangcheng, a high school student. He added: ‘soon I will go back to Taiwan to go to college, but today I thought a lot about my future and I should know the direction of my development!’ The ritual was so interesting that many students were moved by it. A student named Lu Yilin said, ‘such a rite of passage makes me feel that I am coming of age. Although we have learned knowledge about rituals and etiquette in lessons of Chinese and history, and we know how to welcome and entertain guests and friends at home, this ritual is very special.’ Zhang Zhewei, an 18-year old student, said, ‘such a ritual happens only once in one’s life, and I feel that I should begin to mature. I look at this ritual as a turning point in my life.’ Another student named Chen Ziyin said, ‘today’s ritual in the ancient form is very different and it shows that our school takes much account of our being adults, and yet students in other schools don’t dress in long gown in this initiation rite. Without the ancient form the ritual would be very hasty and unimportant.’

Case 2

In the following we will look at a contemporary Ji Li ritual in its ancient form. On July 2, 2006 the female students and the teachers of Shandong Art College and Jinan University went to Li Qingzhao memorial hall in Jinan Baotu Fountain Park to hold a traditional ritual of Ji Li for a student named Pang Lihua from Shandong Art College.

The ritual was according to the tradition of the Song Dynasty with procedures and costumes of that era. The ritual included ‘welcome guests’, ‘declare the start of the ritual’, ‘three times of putting hairpins’, ‘three times of saluting’ and 17 other steps. All the participants had great interest in Chinese traditional culture. The organizers did a lot of research work and prepared and planed dresses, ritual implements and procedures strictly according to historical records.



Figure 6.8⁹



Figure 6.9¹⁰

A student spectator said that the ritual of Ji Li in modern time should awake the independence of women, which is different from the ancient ritual of Ji Li. Other students hoped that people should wear Chinese traditional dressing on traditional days and in some rituals such as initiation rituals and weddings, through which Chinese people can feel Chinese culture more strongly.

⁹ <http://news.163.com/06/0703/09/2L3L9Q0E00011229.html>.

¹⁰ <http://news.163.com/06/0703/09/2L3L9Q0E00011229.html>.

6.5 The Inner Paradox and the Outer Challenge

The contemporary initiation rituals are struggling for their development amidst rapid economic development of China. Adjustment and reform are good for adapting this ritual to the complicated modern situation. Chinese initiation rituals are strongly influenced by the contemporary Chinese conditions, especially the Chinese education system, because the most important participants of the ritual are students. Meanwhile Chinese initiation rituals are representative of Chinese culture, and Chinese culture is facing a big challenge brought by technical modernization and globalization. China cannot isolate itself from the rest of the world. Economic globalization affects the cultural diversity among countries and nations, and will make the world homogenous. How can China survive this great challenge of globalization?

6.5.1 Chinese Education System and Initiation Rituals

Reform of the Chinese education system is a huge and complex issue and it is impossible to describe and analyze it in a few sentences. To this point I want to tell an anecdotal story from today's China. A young Chinese boy named Han Han is against Chinese contemporary educational system and lives a different life. Han Han has become a pop star because of his book *Three Doors*. When the book was published, Han was seventeen years old and studied in Shanghai Songjiang High School. His book was popular with students, but at that time his grades in school became so bad that he was forced to leave school in 1999. This event received much attention and led to a hard discussion about the school education in China. A reader of the book, named Ru Xiaojing, in her article 'Reviews of Chinese Contemporary Education' indicates that in the present educational system, students like Han Han have no free space to develop. Now the aim of our education is to cultivate all students into the same mold. Maybe that is the reason why there are so few Chinese who have won the Nobel Prize. However, Han Han, a high school student, is different from normal students. If some years later Han is not successful, he will get sneers and criticism. But if he succeeds in

this way, he will be applauded. Chinese people only admit success but not failure.¹¹ Han Han argues in his book *Three Doors* that if in our time well-rounded students can be brought up, then he would say it is the ‘luck’ of the examination-oriented education system and the misfortune of our time. If there is a well-rounded student, he will be the king of us, but it is a pity that there is no such person. What our time needs are talents in learning. Huang Xinyan points out that we must abandon the contemporary Chinese examination-oriented education system. The phenomenon of ‘Han Han’ has become a hot topic because Han Han attempts to say ‘no’ to the questionable examination-oriented education system.¹² Han Han challenges the rigid Chinese education system and the traditional idea of ‘being a good student’ in his own way. He was about eighteen years old and he did not follow the others to become an adult in the form of the ‘Oath Ceremony’. He is an exception, but from a different view he also declares that there is another possibility of ‘being adult’, which should lead all Chinese parents and educators to deep reflection.

6.5.2 Chinese Ritual Culture Surviving in Globalization

We cannot deny that we connected to a huge worldwide movement: globalization. Globalization is the processes of strengthening and speeding up interaction and integration among the people, companies, and governments of different nations, driven by international trade and investment and aided by information technology, which makes globalization different from the international trade of the past. Today the processes of globalization pervade all areas of life widely and deeply and have increased the complexity of people’s lives. The young generation is influenced during these processes through new media, new ways of communication, and the global market. These processes make their effect felt across all cultural differences, though what they achieve is similarity, not sameness. Sameness to some degree means nothingness and emptiness, so there would be a resisting power against attempts to reduce similarity to sameness in order to smooth over differences, and within this

¹¹ http://www.hotea.com/article_view.asp?id=6954.

¹² <http://wanjuanshu.com/xdwx/h/hanhan/xg/001.asp>.

framework one would justifiably try to preserve the integrity of unique cultures.¹³ For this mimesis plays a very important role. We are in a wholly mimetic time from material to spirit, from mode of production to pattern of consumption. What we see with our eyes, hear with our ears, eat with our mouths, and touch with our hands are all mimetic productions that have been our senses and brains.¹⁴ We should be clear that mimesis here usually refers to a ‘process of copy’, not a creative mimetic process. In this copying process we are losing our cultures, histories, and nations. If there were more mimetic processes instead of more copying, then globalization would be send as a promoter of ‘cultural variety in globalization’ and a protector of ‘local culture’.

Obviously, globalization refers to not only the fields of economics and politics, but also cultures. Facing the strong wave of globalization, Chinese culture as a special national culture cannot escape but must face the challenges of globalization. Chinese culture as Qian Mu understands it is centered on humanity, which means all the reality and dreams of community. Ritual culture as it is concerned in this paper is one main part of Chinese culture and also falls into a difficult situation. Most Chinese rituals are remnants of Chinese traditional culture, which makes the crisis even heavier. Fortunately, the Chinese government and more and more Chinese people have recognized this critical situation. Some suggestions and measures have been given and adopted. First, pay attention to the arrangement of rituals in social life, especially in traditional forms, such as Ji Li, Guan Li and weddings; second, make rituals known by other peoples in other cultures, which is my main goal; third, take the idea of ‘like, but not same’ as the starting point and destination in the movement of globalization.

Some things are unable to be globalized. The things which can be globalized are that the things which can be described clearly, such as things which can be counted and are logical. From this perspective, the economy can be globalized, technology can be globalized, and civilization can be globalized. But culture that has strong character as a stable result of the human spirit is difficult to globalize. If one culture is really

¹³ Wulf 2002a.

¹⁴ Zhang 2004.

globalized, for example if all cities were like New York, then human culture would become simple and boring. This would be against humanity and terrible to the development of human beings. Wulf suggests that all the countries should sit together and reach agreement that ‘the variety of culture is a human right’, and that we need different cultures. As resolute resistance formed in the international community against this development, the convention on the protection of cultural diversity was presented with overpowering majority on the General Assembly of UNESCO in the fall of 2005. In short, the variety of rituals represents the vitality of different cultures, which makes our world beautiful and charming.

6.6 Suggestions and Predictions on the Future of Chinese Initiation Rituals

This reality of cultural break is a big problem for China. If we take a careful look at ancient ritual culture in the central level of Chinese culture, it is not difficult to find that ancient rituals can be used in daily life in some ways. Of course there are some negative factors in Chinese traditional culture, and if we can eliminate them then Chinese traditional ritual culture will get a new life in contemporary China. The spirit of traditional rituals such as respect, solemnity, sacredness and harmony should be kept and the modern elements of loving country and sense of law added. After that a new structure of ritual culture with respecting traditional and national culture and filled with modern logic will be built. Guan Li and Ji Li as the main rituals in ancient China have the characteristics of gravity and sanctity. It is said in *Li Ji and Guan Yi* that the orientation of rituals are to rectify the features, to unify the complexion and to order the expression. The complex steps in Guan Li strengthen the sanctity of the ritual and enlarge the influence of its culture. On the contrary, when we look at the contemporary ritual of Eighteen-year-old Oath Ceremony we will see negative side of the ritual. Students wear the normal school uniforms following the simple and boring procedure. This ritual is so uninteresting that the participants cannot feel solemn, sacred or proud to be an adult.

To my mind the following are useful suggestions for the development of Chinese

initiation rituals:

- The central meaning or spirit (inner power) of Chinese initiation rituals cannot be changed and reduced, but we could apply different forms.
- We should not overlook the power and authority in rituals brought by the supernatural objects and methods including nation, family, ancestors, morality and politics.
- Understand the basis of ancient rituals, *Li* (family rules), and the modern basis of the rule of law.
- Reduce the passive factors in contemporary initiation ritual and make the ritual participants more active.
- Enlarge the areas of ritual practice.
- Allow more and more young people to have the chance to take part in the initiation ritual, not only students in schools.
- Add more performative elements to the rituals and try to integrate more traditional forms and contents into the modern rituals.
- Pay more attention to the influence of mimesis in the rituals.
- Balance the positions of individual participants and the collective group.
- If we think that politics play a leading role in initiation ritual in contemporary China, then new forms and creative procedures are required.

Chinese initiation rituals face many difficulties and challenges. The future of Chinese initiation rituals is unclear. People are becoming increasingly aware of the functions and significance of this kind of 'rites of passage'. Chinese people, society and culture can not discard initiation rituals and a way forward must be probed and found out. All the efforts surely are not for the rituals, but rather for ourselves.

Chapter 7

Review and Outlook

Initiation rituals are being held in contemporary China and even experience a certain broadening. In the midst of this exciting rebirth of social ritualization, some questions arise. What is the role of initiation rituals in contemporary China? How do Chinese initiation rituals develop? What kind of influence do initiation rituals have on the Chinese people? What is the role of Chinese initiation rituals? How we should face initiation rituals and deal with them is the central part of my research. There is an old Chinese saying: 'To do a good job, one must first sharpen one's tools.' The process and the results of research are depending on theories and methods. Chinese initiation rituals are not a new social phenomena arising suddenly; they have a very long history and a variety in form, and they are influenced by many factors. Fortunately, historical anthropology offers a proper opportunity to approach this complex subject. Historical anthropology is not limited to a single field; it takes human behavior and social and cultural phenomena as its research objects and is characterized by historicity, self-reflexivity, culturality, and sociality. Although historical anthropology is mainly a concept of Western origin, its range of research is broad and international. Chinese initiation rituals find their place in the areas of research created by historical anthropology, too, and as a result we can represent and deconstruct Chinese initiation rituals to find their hidden dimensions and their relationship with other elements in different directions and different levels. Concerning the entire study, there are some characteristics, research structures and themes to be pointed out.

7.1 Historicity

Historical anthropology stands in the tension between history and human science. Historical anthropology has a double-historicity: the historicity of its perspectives and

methods and the historicity of its objects. Additionally, historical anthropology attempts to bridge the gap between history and human science. Cultural and social phenomena and events should be investigated and analyzed in their historical contexts, as is required by the aims of historical-anthropological research.

From the perspective of historical anthropology, rituals help to form society, to sustain the stability of society and to push society forward. Behind their phenomenal appearance, we find the historicity of rituals. Thus, rituals connect past, present and future. Wulf argues that mental memory images of ritual staging have a double historicity: on one hand, the historicity of ritual behaviors, on the other hand the historicity of the person who has the memories.¹ Analogously, the historicity of Chinese initiation rituals consists of the historicity of the ritual itself and the historicity of the people who take part in the ritual. Initiation rituals as a cultural and social activity are historical objects sustaining the rules, hopes, beliefs and memories of human beings from one generation to the next.

Historical anthropology is not limited to a certain cultural field and a singular point in time. Perspectives and methods taken by historical anthropology are flexible and various, and are always inter- and transdisciplinary. To investigate Chinese initiation rituals, history, philology, architecture, aesthetics, media, video analysis and other fields and methods are applied in historical-anthropological research.

7.2 Culturality, Sociality and Education

Chinese initiation rituals take on different forms and represent various structures and contents in the long historical process. Reasons for the historical change of initiation rituals we find in culture, society and different education of people. There are two dimensions to describe the driving forces behind Chinese initiation rituals. One is in horizontal direction, and the other is in vertical direction. The horizontal dimension refers to different representations of initiation rituals in different peoples or areas in China, as well as other Eastern countries such as Japan and South Korea. Comparison

¹ Wulf, c.f. *Bilder des Sozialen*, in Hüppauf /Wulf (eds.), 2006a, pp. 203-215.

indicates that initiation rituals of some minorities in China contain more cultural and national elements. Initiation rituals in Japan and South Korea are more traditional and symbolic. Initiation rituals held in big cities in China are mainly directed and organized with political intention, and therefore have more educational and social elements. The vertical dimension is considered as the historical development of Chinese initiation rituals. Chinese initiation rituals have existed for a long time. However, they can be divided into two stages. One is the traditional form named Guan Li, the other one is the Eighteen-year-old Oath Ceremony. The former is the result of a Chinese traditional moral philosophy which solidified the foundation of ancient China. The later was generated in the 1990s. By holding the 'Oath Ceremony', the Chinese government wants to transform young people into adults who will take on the duty to build a socialist state with Chinese characteristics. Although all changes appear under influence of Chinese culture, the China of today differs from the China of yesterday. Chinese initiation rituals can be seen as an epitome of Chinese ritual culture which is tottering between the opposites of tradition and modernity, limitation and freedom, practicality and symbolism.

7.3 Process and Structure

What we should deal with is the relation between practices and theories. Initiation rituals consist of many steps and we should not neglect any of them. Analysis of process plays a central role in the research. Figure 1 shows the structure and the proceeding of my study in detail.

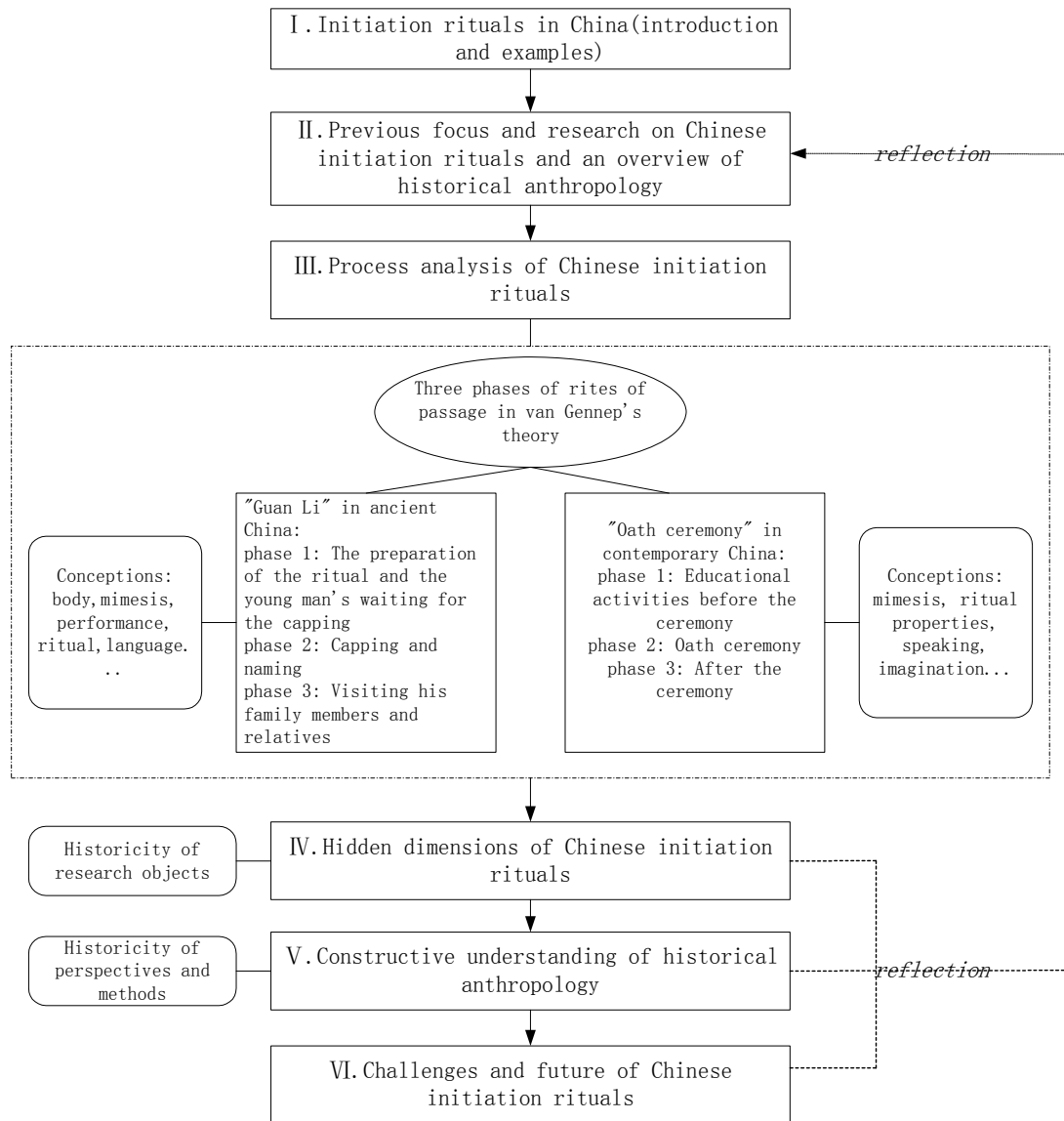


Figure 7.1: Structure of the study presented in my dissertation

7.4 Main Theses

Chinese Initiation Rituals

Chinese initiation rituals as a kind of *Les rites de passage* have taken a very long historical journey of at least 2,000 years. However, their development has not gone smoothly. Generally speaking, Chinese initiation ritual can be divided into two stages according to its history: Guan Li and Eighteen-year-old Oath Ceremony. This change evokes many questions and represents the revolutions taking place in the fields of

Chinese society, education and culture.

Historical Anthropology as a New Perspective for the Analysis of Chinese Initiation Rituals

Historical anthropology analyzes the phenomena and conditions of human beings in the dimensions of history and culture. It is not limited to the history of anthropology and the contribution of historical science to anthropology.² Historical anthropology takes the human body as its central research object and constructs a frame of research by using several main concepts such as mimesis, performance, ritual, gesture, image, and fantasy. Historical anthropology provides a new perspective to probe into the history, procedure, function and other hidden dimensions of Chinese initiation rituals.

Two-Fold Strategy Approach

One approach refers to the development of Chinese initiation rituals in the dimensions of time and space. The perspectives and methods of historical anthropology can be seen as the other approach which is characterized by multidisciplinary strategy and openness. As historical anthropology is adopted in different fields, various objects and situations will create new possibilities of practices and thoughts for historical anthropology. Yet the growth of historical anthropology as one study may not be straight forward, and there are many difficulties and challenges ahead, so its development will face periods of ups and downs. Additionally, there is a close dynamic relationship between the research object of Chinese initiation rituals and historical anthropology. On the one hand, through the perspective of historical anthropology the traditional Chinese initiation rituals are rediscovered and investigated from under the thick dust of history, and all the ritual elements related are represented including place, people, language, and clothes, in their historical contexts. On the other hand, in this area of study some new ideas are yielded and a reconstruction of theories of historical anthropology is proposed.

Reconstruction of the Concepts of Historical Anthropology

The historical-anthropological approach is working with certain basic concepts and ideas. In the context of the study of Chinese initiation rituals, a system of these

² Kamper/Wulf, c.f. Reihe Historische Anthropologie, in Kamper/Wulf 1988, Vorwort.

concepts is established (see Figure 5.1). The concepts of body, ritual, performance, gesture, image, imagination, mimesis, and language form the basic dimensions and starting points of historical anthropology. This structure, like a net, has open and transparent characteristics. Every concept is an interconnected point having a special function for the structure. For example, the body is the material foundation, ritual integrates many divergent aspects, mimesis is the communicative power and connecting system between inner and external world, language and gesture are the tools that make the performance possible, image and imagination are important elements for the process of cognition and interaction between the body and the world.

Problems, Suggestions and Openness

Historical anthropology gives us a systematical interpretation and analysis of Chinese initiation rituals. However, some problems need to be considered further, such as the role of modernity and tradition in contemporary initiation rituals, the role of culture in initiation rituals, etc. These questions influence the quality of Chinese ritual culture and the process of ritualization. China is increasingly influenced by the world wide process of globalization and as a result Chinese culture, including Chinese ritual culture, is under pressure from Western popular culture. How can Chinese ritual culture survive in the tension between globalization and localization? Openness is the strongest characteristic of today's world. *The other* is of central importance, and no person, no country, and no culture can survive without others. Variety makes our world a more beautiful place to live. More and more people are realizing that we should be culturally conscious and strive for harmony, but not sameness. Indeed, our world itself is going through an own initiation ritual in a sense.

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Five years ago I was glad to set foot in beautiful Germany, bringing with me many dreams. At the beginning anthropology was so strange and novel and it was really a great challenge for me to do a research on Chinese initiation rituals. Now, however, when the work and results are presented in front of me, I am excited and confident. China is standing at an important historical turning-point and is affected by many different internal and external factors. What will China look like tomorrow? Which path should the Chinese people follow? China must not lose itself in the rapid economic and social development, and at the same time Chinese people must recognize the circumstances of their own existence and progress. The maxim of “know thyself” brings Chinese people to raise a significant question: “how can we grow up?” Fortunately, I encountered a new vigorous discipline - historical anthropology. With this powerful key, the mysterious and heavy door of Chinese initiation rituals can be opened.

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Appendices

Appendix I: Zusammenfassung

Initiationsrituale werden im zeitgenössischen China aus der Tradition fortgeführt und breiten sich weiter aus. Mit Blick auf diese interessante Seite sozialer Rituale und Ritualisierungen gilt es, einige wichtige Fragen aufzuwerfen und zu überdenken. Welche Funktionen übernehmen Initiationsrituale im zeitgenössischen China? Wie ist deren Ablauf? Wie ist der Einfluss innerhalb der Gesellschaft einzuschätzen? Wohin geleiten solche Initiationsrituale? Die Fragen, wie solche Rituale betrachtet werden können und wie mit ihnen umgegangen werden kann, bilden das Zentrum meiner Untersuchung.

Es gibt ein altes chinesisches Sprichwort: „Um etwas gut zu machen, muss man zuerst seine Instrumente schärfen.“ In der Historischen Anthropologie liegen vielfältige Möglichkeiten, die komplexe Arbeit der Analyse anzugehen. Dabei kann die Historische Anthropologie nicht auf ein singuläres Forschungsfeld reduziert werden: die Forschung zielt ebenso auf das menschliche Verhalten wie auf soziale und kulturelle Zusammenhänge und ist charakterisiert durch ihre Historizität, ihre Selbst-Reflexivität, kultur- und sozialwissenschaftliche Ausrichtungen etc. Chinesische Initiationsrituale werden hier innerhalb dieses großen und vielseitigen Raums der Historischen Anthropologie verortet, um diese zu beschreiben und zu analysieren und ihre verborgenen Dimensionen und Beziehungen aufzuspüren. Bezüglich der gesamten Studie gilt es dabei, einige zentrale Begriffe und Aspekte hervorzuheben:

Historizität

Die Historische Anthropologie reflektiert eine Spannung zwischen Geschichtlichkeit und den Humanwissenschaften. Sie selbst ist geprägt durch eine doppelte Historizität: der Geschichtlichkeit ihrer Gegenstände und der Geschichtlichkeit ihrer eigenen

Perspektiven und Methoden. Die Historische Anthropologie versucht, über beide eine Brücke zu schlagen.¹ Kulturelle und soziale Phänomene und Ereignisse werden auf eine reflexive Art in ihrem historischen Kontext untersucht und analysiert, wie es dieser Anspruch erforderlich macht.

Aus dieser Perspektive tragen Rituale dazu bei, Gesellschaft zu bilden, Stabilität zu bewahren und auch dazu gesellschaftlichen Fortschritt zu ermöglichen. Hinter den Phänomenen selbst wirkt die Geschichtlichkeit der Rituale, in denen eine Verbindung zwischen Vergangenheit, Gegenwart und Zukunft gezeichnet wird. Die Historische Anthropologie beschränkt sich dabei nicht auf einen konkreten Ort und eine konkrete Zeit; ihre Perspektiven und Methoden sind flexibel und vielfältig und stets inter- und transdisziplinär. Um chinesische Initiationsrituale zu untersuchen, werden Geschichte, Sprachwissenschaft, Architektur, Ästhetik, Folklore-Entwicklungen, Medien, Mikroanalysen per Video und weitere Felder für die historisch-anthropologische Untersuchung berücksichtigt und zueinander in Bezug gesetzt.

Kulturalität und Sozialität

Die chinesischen Initiationsrituale nehmen im historischen Verlauf unterschiedliche Formen an und verweisen auf unterschiedliche Strukturen und Inhalte. Kultur und Gesellschaft, gerade auch die Bildung, wirken sich auf solche Initiationsrituale aus. Diesbezüglich erscheinen zwei Dimensionen für eine Beschreibung der Kräfteverhältnisse in Hinsicht auf chinesische Initiationsrituale als maßgeblich: bildlich gesehen eine horizontale (synchrone) und eine vertikale (diachrone) Dimension. Die horizontale Dimension bezieht sich auf unterschiedliche Ausgestaltungen zwischen verschiedenen Populationen oder Gebieten innerhalb Chinas, sowie anderen Ländern im asiatischen Raum wie Japan und Süd-Korea. Im Vergleich wird aufgezeigt, dass die Initiationsrituale einiger chinesischer Minderheiten verstärkt gegenwartskulturelle und nationale Elemente enthalten, wohingegen insbesondere in Japan und Süd-Korea die Initiationsrituale stärker

¹ Vgl. Dietmar Kamper/Christoph Wulf (Hg.): Die Erloschene Seele-Disziplin, Geschichte, Kunst, Mythos, Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag, 1988, Vorwort.

traditionell und symbolisch gefärbt sind. Die in chinesischen Großstädten abgehaltenen Initiationsrituale sind vorrangig mit politischen Intentionen ausgerichtet und organisiert, wobei Bildungs- und soziale Faktoren besonders hervorgehoben werden. Die vertikale Dimension bezieht sich auf die historische Entwicklung chinesischer Initiationsrituale. Diese erstreckt sich über eine lange Zeitspanne, kann aber in zwei Formen innerhalb der jüngeren Geschichte unterteilt werden: Eine traditionelle Form, die „Guan Li“ genannt wird, und eine „Schwur-Zeremonie im 18. Lebensjahr“. Die erste resultiert aus der traditionellen chinesischen Moralphilosophie und sollte die Fundamente des „alten“ China festigen. Die zweite wurde in der kritischen Zeit der 1990er Jahre hervorgebracht. Mit ihrem Vollzug bezweckte die chinesische Regierung aus jungen Leuten Erwachsene zu machen, welche die Pflicht auf sich nehmen, ein sozialistisches Land chinesischen Charakters zu gestalten. Obwohl aller Wandel unter dem Zeichen der chinesischen Kultur steht, ist das heutige China kaum noch mit dem China von gestern vergleichbar. Die chinesischen Initiationsrituale können diesbezüglich wie ein Abriss in verdichteter Form innerhalb der chinesischen Ritualkultur betrachtet werden, die zwischen Tradition und Moderne, Einschränkung und Freiheit, Pragmatik und Symbolismus schwankt.

Prozess und Struktur

Nachdem Forschungsgegenstand und Herangehensweise gewählt und dargelegt sind, werden die Verbindungen zwischen Praktiken und Theoriebezügen behandelt. Initiationsrituale bestehen aus mehreren Schritten, und keiner sollte als weniger zeremoniell vernachlässigt werden. Eine Prozessanalyse spielt daher eine zentrale Rolle in der Untersuchung, und um diese detailliert einsichtig zu machen, wird diese in einem schematischen Diagramm illustriert (siehe Fig. 1).

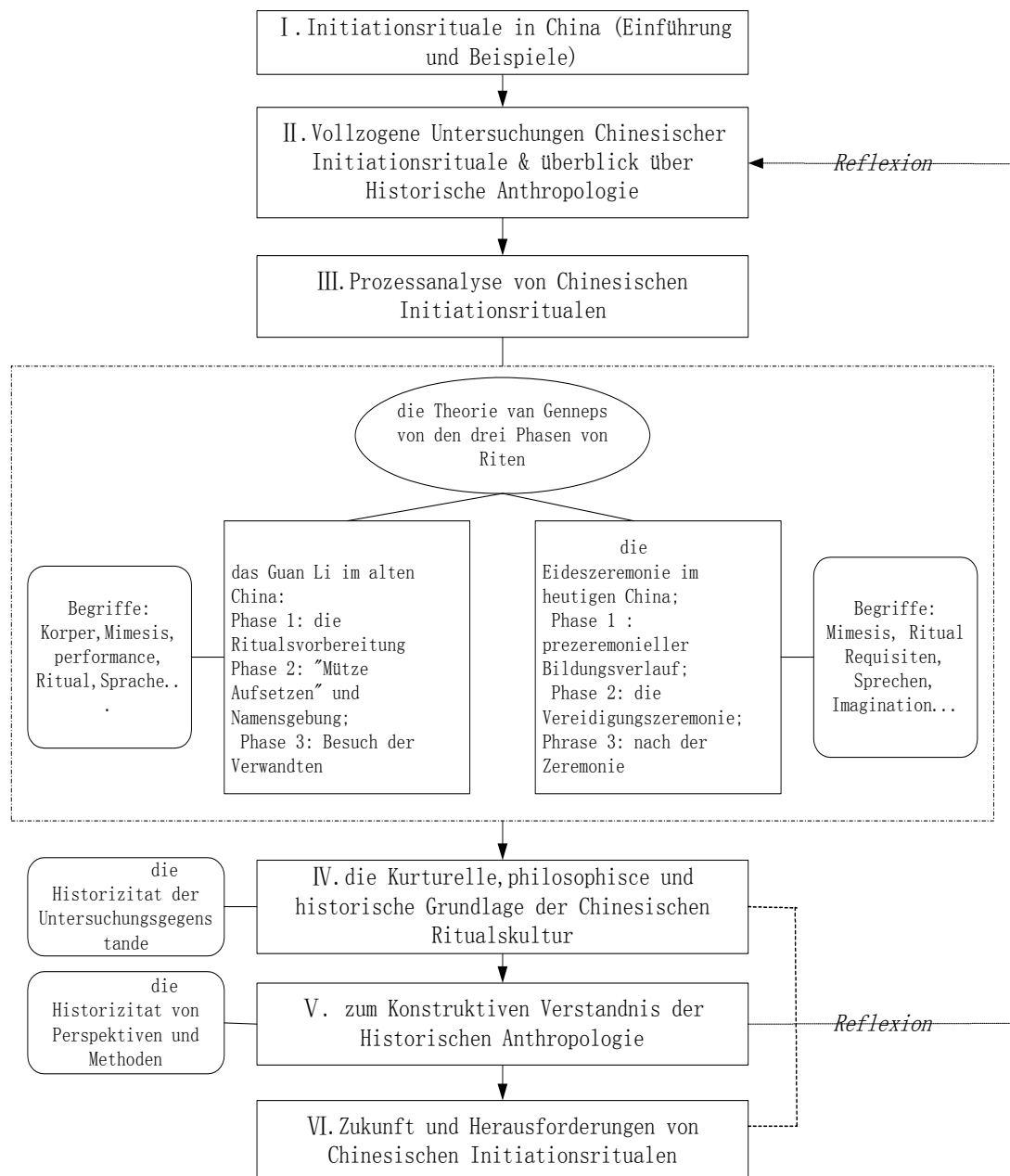


Fig. 1: Aufbau der Untersuchung

Hauptthemen

Chinesische Initiationsrituale

Die chinesischen Initiationsrituale als eine Art von Übergangsritualen haben eine lange Geschichte von mehr als 2000 Jahren. Dabei lässt sich nicht von einer kontinuierlichen Entwicklung sprechen. Ein wichtiger Umbruch in der jüngeren Geschichte zeichnet sich zwischen den Ritualen „Guan Li“ und der

„Schwur-Zeremonie im 18. Lebensjahr“ ab. Dieser Umbruch wirft viele Fragen auf und verweist auf Umwälzungen in der Gesellschaft, der Bildung und der Kultur Chinas. Vor dem Hintergrund eines vergleichenden Blicks auf unterschiedliche Ethnien in China und andere Länder, erscheint dieser Umbruch noch interessanter, so dass wir das neue und das „alte“ Initiationsritual fokussieren.

Die Historische Anthropologie als eine neue Perspektive zur Analyse von chinesischen Initiationsritualen

In der Historischen Anthropologie werden Phänomene und Bedingungen des menschlichen Lebens in ihrer Geschichtlichkeit und Kulturalität analysiert. Es handelt sich um ein noch junges, inter- und transdisziplinäres Forschungsgebiet. Sie erschöpft sich weder in einer Geschichte der Anthropologie als Disziplin noch im Beitrag der Geschichte als Disziplin zur Anthropologie.² Die Historische Anthropologie nimmt den menschlichen Körper als ihren zentralen Untersuchungsgegenstand und nutzt Konzepte wie Mimesis, Performativität, Ritual, Geste, Bild, Phantasie etc. zur Konstruktion eines Untersuchungsrahmens. Um die Geschichte, die Prozeduren, Funktionen und weitere, verborgene Dimensionen von chinesischen Initiationsritualen zu erforschen bietet die Historische Anthropologie neue Perspektiven.

Wie die Struktur einer Doppelhelix

Basierend auf der Interaktion zwischen Theorie und Praxis, ergibt sich im Rahmen dieser Arbeit die Struktur zweier Helices, welche sich zu einer DNA-Doppelhelix formieren. Eine Helix bezieht sich dabei auf die Chinesischen Initiationsrituale deren Entwicklung durch die Faktoren Zeit und Raum beeinflusst wurden. Die Perspektiven und Methoden der Historischen Anthropologie bilden den zweiten Teil der Helixstruktur, welcher charakteristisch für Multidisziplinarität und Uneingeschränktheit ist. Durch die Aufnahme der Historischen Anthropologie in unterschiedliche Bereiche, kreieren verschiedene Objekte und Situationen dieser, neue

² Vgl. Dietmar Kamper/Christoph Wulf (Hg.): Die Erlöschene Seele-Disziplin, Geschichte, Kunst, Mythos, Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag, 1988, Vorwort.

Möglichkeiten der Anwendung und Betrachtung der Historischen Anthropologie. Dennoch ist die Entwicklung der Historischen Anthropologie aufgrund zahlreicher Schwierigkeiten und Herausforderungen sowie unstem Wachstum geprägt von variierenden *Charakter*. Zudem besteht eine enge dynamische Beziehung zwischen den zu untersuchenden Gegenständen, den Chinesischen Initiationsritualen und der Historischen Anthropologie. Vor der Perspektive der der Historischen Anthropologie. werden die Chinesischen Initiationsrituale einerseits unter der dicken Staubschicht der Historizität unter Berücksichtigung der rituellen Elemente bezüglich Ort, Mensch, Sprache, Kleidung etc. wiederentdeckt und untersucht. Andererseits soll im Verlauf dieser Studie eine Rekonstruktion von Theorien der Historischen Anthropologie unter Implikation neuer Ideen vorgeschlagen werden.

Eine Rekonstruktion der Konzeption der historischen Anthropologie

Im Kontext dieser Untersuchung konstruiert sich die Historische Anthropologie aus wichtigen Begrifflichkeiten und Ideen. Die Untersuchung chinesischer Initiationsrituale bedarf der Formulierung entsprechender Konzeptionsentwürfen. Dabei bilden Körper, Ritual, Performativität, Geste, Bild, Imagination, Mimesis, Sprache und andere Begriffe die grundlegende Dimension sowie Ausgangspunkt für die weitere Entwicklung der Historischen Anthropologie. (siehe Fig. 2) Diese netzähnliche Struktur ist gekennzeichnet von offenem und transparentem Charakter, wobei jeder Begriff interaktiv sowie in seiner speziellen Funktion innerhalb dieser Konzeption funktioniert. So stellen beispielsweise der Körper die physische Grundlage, das Ritual die integrative Erscheinung dar, während die Mimesis als kommunikative Kraft zwischen interner und externer Welt fungiert. Sprache und Geste dienen als Instrumente der Performativität, Image und Imagination verkörpern wichtige Elemente im Prozess der Kognition und Interaktion zwischen dem Körper und der Umwelt.

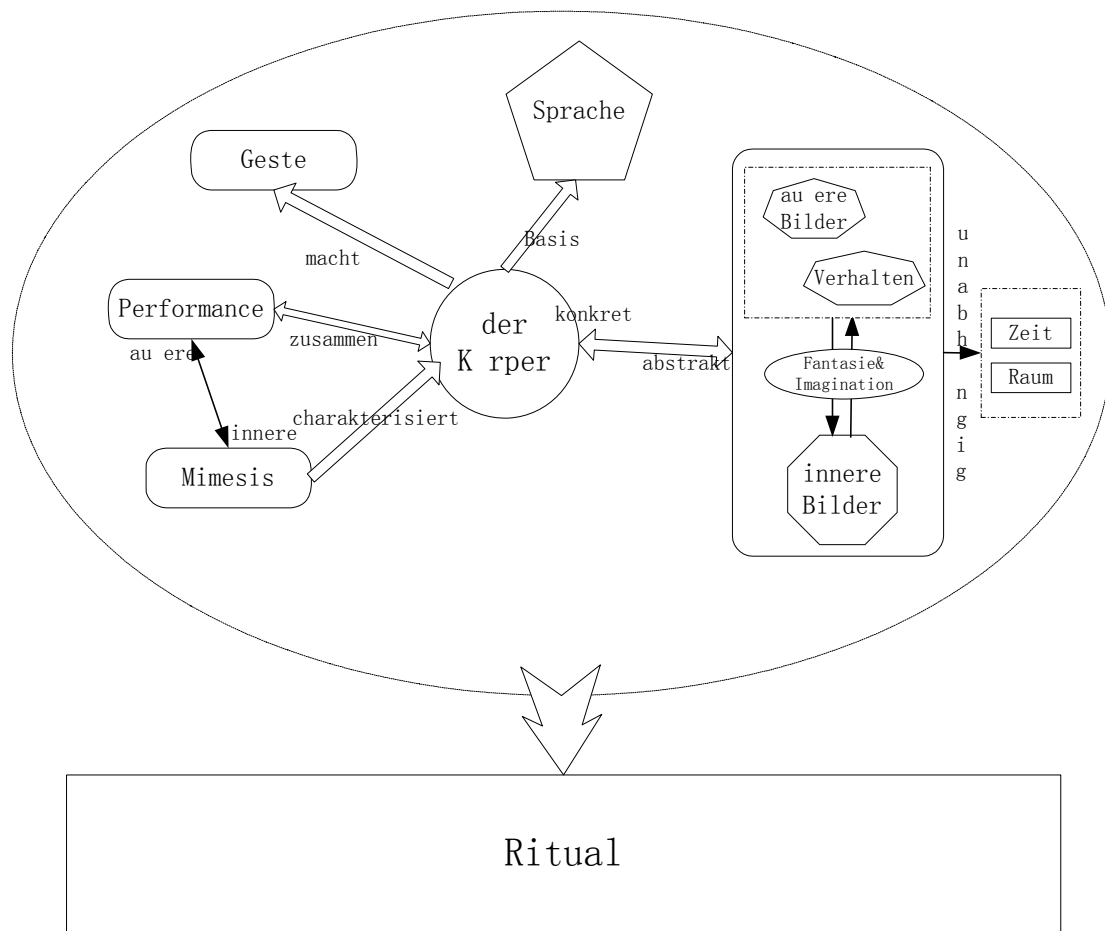


Fig. 2: die Konzeption der historischen Anthropologie zur Untersuchung Chinesischer Initiationsrituale

Problemstellung, Vorschläge und Ausblick

Ausgehend vom Interesse und Sorge an Chinesischen Initiationsritualen, vermittelt die Historische Anthropologie eine systematische Interpretation und Analyse. Bestehende Besonderheiten, welche Qualität und Entwicklung chinesischer Ritualskultur beeinflussen sollen folgend betrachtet und erläutert werden. Dazu gehören unter anderem der Stellenwert von Tradition und Moderne sowie ländlicher und städtischer Umgebung, damit ist die Phrase der „Schwur-Zeremonie im 18. Lebensjahr“ abgedeckt, als auch die Bedeutung von Kultur bei gegenwärtigen Initiationsritualen. Resultierend aus der Implikation Chinas in den Strudel der Globalisierung wird die Chinesische Ritualskultur zunehmend von der westlichen Kultur berührt, wobei zu hinterfragen wäre, inwiefern die Spannungen zwischen globaler und lokaler Implementation auf die chinesische Ritualskultur Einfluss

nehmen. Dies ist eine offene Frage, deren Beantwortung die Zukunft bringen wird. Die Schwierigkeit konkreter Antizipation solcher Probleme bleibt ein dominantes Charakteristikum in unserer gegenwärtigen globalen Gesellschaft.

Curriculum Vitae

Mein Lebenslauf wird aus Gründen des Datenschutzes nicht online veröffentlicht

PUBLICATIONS

Zhang, Zhikun: The Fate of Black Hair — Hair in Rites of Passage in China, in Wulf, Christoph/Werler, Tobias (eds.): *Hidden Dimensions of Education: Rhetoric, Rituals and Anthropology of Education*, Berlin: Waxmann 2006, pp.165-181.

Zhang, Zhikun: Guan Li: Chinese Ancient Ritual Culture and its Performative Dimensions, in Wulf, Christoph/Suzuki, Shoko (eds.): *Mimesis, Poiesis, and Performativity in Education*, Berlin: Waxmann 2007, pp.122-133.

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Appendix III:

Erklärung

Hiermit versichere ich, dass ich die vorgelegte Arbeit „From Guan Li to Eighteen-year-old Oath Ceremony-A Study of Chinese Initiation Rituals in the Perspective of Historical Anthropology“ selbständig verfasst habe. Andere als die angegebenen Hilfsmittel habe ich nicht verwendet. Die Arbeit ist in keinem früheren Promotionsverfahren angenommen oder abgelehnt worden.

Zhikun Zhang

Berlin, 16. Juni 2008