

# ARGUMENTS BY WOMEN IN EARLY CHINESE TEXTS\*

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## *Abstract*

A corpus of ethical and political arguments specifically attributed to women in Warring States and Han texts are philosophically comparable to the arguments of the Masters-texts, but are not associated with teaching lineages. These hierarchical persuasions and instructive arguments cannot be attributed to ministers. They suggest new perspectives on contemporary discussions of the nature of philosophical debate, adversariality, and authority in Warring States China.

Ever since Plato positioned the truths of the philosopher against the persuasions of the poet, rhetor, or sophist, the Western philosophical tradition has had a second-order debate about argumentation. In contrast, the Warring States Chinese philosophical landscape presents no clear division between "philosophy" and "persuasion." By "philosophy" I mean simply study of or reflection on the concepts and presuppositions by which we approach the world, knowledge of it, and action within it, or, more colloquially, "thought about thought."<sup>1</sup> As is well known, Chinese "philosophy" prominently included reflection on, and debates about, the ethics of social and political life. There were a number of terms for such debate, including "rational discourse," discrimination (*bian* 辨), argumentation (*bian* 辯), discourse (*lun* 論), and explanation or persuasion (*shuo* 說).<sup>2</sup> Contem-

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<sup>1</sup> I do not use the term to mean systematic thought of a high degree of generality that exclusively and specifically uses reasoning, rather than observation or experience, to justify its claims. See Alan Bullock and Oliver Stallybrass, eds. *Fontana Dictionary of Modern Thought* (London: Fontana Press, 1977), 646.

<sup>2</sup> *Lun* had a specific technical meaning of "to judge or evaluate" and "to sentence and condemn" in the Shuihudi legal texts. See "Yunmeng shuihudi Qinmu bianxie

porary scholarship is divided over whether early Chinese philosophers had explicit notions of epideictic demonstration, a rhetorical art, or even a specific concern with debate.<sup>3</sup>

We can, however, identify several common features of early Chinese argumentation, especially within the "Masters" (*zi* 子) classification of Han librarians.<sup>4</sup> First, over time, arguments became progressively more structured in form and diverse in content. Second, most were political dialogues in the specific sense of "positive political rhetoric."<sup>5</sup> Third, the arguments of the Masters (even the *Zhuangzi*) were

zu" 雲夢睡虎地秦墓編寫組, *Yunmeng shuihudi Qinmu* 雲夢睡虎地秦墓 (henceforth YMSHD; Beijing: Wenwu, 1981; also published in *Wenwu* 1976.8). For translation and discussion of the *Fengzhen shi* 封診式, see Robin D. S. Yates and Katrina C. D. McLeod, "Forms of Ch'in Law: An Annotated Translation of the *Feng-chen shih*," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 41.1 (1981):111-63, and Robin D. S. Yates, "Social Status in the Ch'in: Evidence from the Yun-meng Legal Documents. Part 1. Commoners," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 47.1 (1987): 197-237. For translation of the entirety of the Shuihudi legal material see A. P. F. Hulsewé, *Remnants of Ch'in Law: An Annotated Translation of the Ch'in Legal and Administrative Rules of the 3rd Century B.C. Discovered in Yunmeng Prefecture, Hupei Province, in 1975* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1985). The first meaning appears in YMSHD slips 84, 98-99, 220-21, 363-66, and 572 (Hulsewé, *Ch'in Law*, sections A 9, 22, and 90; C 22 and 23; and D 182), for example, "For those who die without having been ill, this is to be reported to the office by means of an investigation report to judge it" (YMSHD slip 84; Hulsewé, *Ch'in Law*, section A 9). The second appears throughout *Qin Law* Group D (YMSHD slips 371-580).

<sup>3</sup> Terms such as epideictic demonstration and rhetoric have no exact Chinese equivalents, although the "Names and Objects" section of the Mohist canon gives brief definitions for *shuo* ("the means by which one makes plain") and *bian* ("contending over claims which are the converse of each other"). See Angus C. Graham, *Later Mohist Logic, Ethics and Science* (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 1978), sections A 720-75. On epideictic demonstration, see G. E. R. Lloyd, *Adversaries and Authorities: Investigations into Ancient Greek and Chinese Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), Chs. 2 and 4. Rhetoric, per se, is also a Greek invention, coined by Plato (*Gorgias* 449a6) to distinguish his methods from the sophists' (he outlines a "philosophical rhetoric" in *Phaedrus* 271c). See Jean-Paul Reding, "Light and the Mirror: Elements of Comparative Metaphorology," paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association for Asian Studies, Honolulu, Hawai'i, April 11-14, 1996, pp. 1-2). Recent Sinological scholarship has also dealt with the use of "rhetoric" to establish historiographic authority. See Wai-ye Li, "The Idea of Authority in the *Shih-chi* (Records of the Historian)," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 54.2 (1994).

<sup>4</sup> The *Yiwen zhi* 藝文志 or bibliographical treatise of the *Hanshu* 漢書 was written by Ban Gu 班固 (32-92 CE) based on the description of the Imperial Library established by Liu Xin 劉歆 (46 BCE-23 CE) and Liu Xiang 劉向 (79-8 BCE) in the *Qilüe* 七略 or *Seven Summaries*. See *Hanshu* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1962) 30:1701. The "Masters" was the third category in the *Seven Summaries*. See *Hanshu* 30:1724-46.

<sup>5</sup> This was not true of the Mingjia.

closely linked to positive notions of virtue.<sup>6</sup> They were not iconoclastic assertions of relativism or skepticism.<sup>7</sup> Quintilian defines rhetoric as *scientiam bene dicere*, "the science of speaking well," a definition that, in his view, includes both the virtues of oratory and the character of the orator, because *bene dicere non possit nisi bonus*, "no one may speak well without being good."<sup>8</sup>

The foregoing three points have been widely noted.<sup>9</sup> A fourth has not, namely the implications of the fact that all the Masters texts and most of the arguments in them were authored by, or ascribed to, men.<sup>10</sup> The Masters, their students, and their audiences were all men. Both the Masters texts and most subsequent accounts of Chinese philosophy give the impression that women did not engage in debate or philosophical activity, though nothing specifically precludes it.<sup>11</sup> This paper introduces a textual corpus of arguments by, or attributed to, women.

### Two Kinds of Argument

Recent discussion of the nature of debate in early China has focused on the prominence of persuasions directed toward a superior and

<sup>6</sup> For discussion of these three points, see Carine Defoort, *The Pheasant Cap Master (He guan zi): A Rhetorical Reading* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1997), 103-6.

<sup>7</sup> For discussion of relativism and skepticism in *Zhuangzi*, see Lisa Raphals, "Skeptical Strategies in the *Zhuangzi* and *Theaetetus*," *Philosophy East and West* 44.3 (1994): 501-26.

<sup>8</sup> Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* (London: n.p., 1920-22) Vol. 1, Book 2, 15:34-35, pp. 314-16. Defoort (*Pheasant Cap Master*, 105, n.2) cites a slightly different translation.

<sup>9</sup> Defoort, *Pheasant Cap Master*, 103-6.

<sup>10</sup> Greek philosophy and tragedy provide a number of interesting examples of substantial arguments ascribed to women. These include the speech of Diotima in Plato's *Symposium*, the arguments of the eponymous heroine of Aristophanes' *Lysistrata*, the account of fate and how to survive in adversity by Andromache and Hecuba in Euripides' *Trojan Women*, and Hecuba's appeal to justice and law in Euripides' *Hecuba*.

<sup>11</sup> I have argued elsewhere that in Warring States and Han narratives, women were represented as possessing the same virtues valued in men: moral integrity, intellectual judgment, the ability to admonish a superior, courage, and chastity, in the sense of single-minded loyalty. These Warring States and Han representations of virtuous women probably were composed and redacted by men, yet their narratives consistently emphasize a view that virtue was not gendered. See Lisa Raphals, "Gendered Virtue Reconsidered: Notes from the Warring States and Han," in Chenyang Li, ed., *Confucianism and the Second Sex* (LaSalle Ind: Open Court, 2000), 223-247.

the possible implications of that context.<sup>12</sup> These hierarchical arguments, however, were of two kinds: the first, which I call rhetorical persuasion, addressed to a superior, and the second, instructive argument, addressed to an inferior.

The standard version of rhetorical persuasion is the efforts of a minister to persuade a ruler of the merits of a course of action he deems virtuous, efficacious, or pragmatic, or to admonish him against behavior he deems unvirtuous or ill-advised. The dialogues between Mencius and the ministers and rulers he sought to advise fit this pattern, as do the arguments (though not the form) of the *Sunzi bingfa* 孫子兵法, and the arguments and form of much of the *Zhanguo ce* 戰國策. It is the difficulties of persuasion in this sense that are addressed in the *Shuo nan* 說難 (Difficulties in persuasion) chapter of the *Han Feizi* 韓非子 (The words of Han Feizi).

The standard version of instructive argument is a dialogue between a teacher or sage and a student or disciple who asks questions and receives instruction. Examples include the dialogues between Confucius and his students in the *Lunyu* 論語,<sup>13</sup> between Huang Di 黃帝 and Qi Bo 岐伯 in the *Huang Di neijing* 黃帝內經,<sup>14</sup> the "Ten Questions" medical text from Mawangdui,<sup>15</sup> the "Five Regulators" texts from Mawangdui,<sup>16</sup> and the questions of a first-century BCE

<sup>12</sup> G. E. R. Lloyd (*Adversaries and Authorities*, 77-92) has recently argued that different loci of debate in China and Greece affected the form of debate. Greek debates were conducted among equals in public assembly. Most Chinese "debates" took the form of persuading a ruler to a course of action, whether in face-to-face argument with the ruler or an antagonist, or in a written memorial.

<sup>13</sup> Examples of Confucius answering direct questions from his disciples and others occur throughout the *Lunyu*, in conversations with Zi Gong (1.15, 2.13, 3.17, 5.4, 5.12, 5.15, 6.30, 9.13, 11.16, 12.7, 13.20, 15.10, 15.24, 17.24), Fan Chi (2.5, 6.22, 12.21-22, 13.4, 13.19), Zi You (2.7), Zi Xia (2.8, 3.8), Ji Kangzi (2.20, 11.7, 12.17, 12.19), Zi Zhang (2.23, 5.19, 11.20, 12.6, 15.6, 17.6, 20.2), Yan Hui (9.11, 12.1, 15.11), Zi Lu (11.22, 14.12, 14.22), Ji Ziran (11.24), Sima Niu (12.3-5), and Duke Jing of Qi (12.11). An example of Confucius declining to answer a question appears in 14.5. Citations are according to D. C. Lau, trans., *Confucius: The Analects* (London: Penguin, 1984).

<sup>14</sup> The *Huang Di neijing* begins with a series of questions by Huang Di to Qi Bo. See *Neijing suwen* 內經素問, Sibei beiyao ed., 1:1b.

<sup>15</sup> "Shiwen" 十問 in Mawangdui Hanmu boshu zhengli xiaozu 馬王堆漢墓帛書整理小組, *Mawangdui Hanmu boshu* 馬王堆漢墓帛書, Vol. 4 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1983). For translation, see Donald Harper, *Early Chinese Medical Literature* (London: Kegan Paul International, 1998).

<sup>16</sup> "Wu zheng" 五正 in Mawangdui hanmu boshu, Vol. 1/2 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1980). For translation, see Robin D. S. Yates, *Dao, Yin-Yang and the Law: Essays on Philosophy, Cosmology, and Government, Translated from the Silk Manuscripts of Mawangdui* (New York: Ballantine, 1997).

mathematical work, the *Zhoubi suanjing* 周髀算經 (Arithmetical classic of the gnomon and the circular paths of Heaven).<sup>17</sup> In all these texts, the student has come seeking knowledge and presumably does not need to be persuaded to take it. Instructive argument *texts*, however, must persuade a second, indirect audience, the reader, whether a ruler (in the case of a memorial) or a quasi-philosophical interlocutor.

### *The Exclusion of Women*

At this point it would seem banal to remark that, since women were neither teachers, students, rulers, nor ministers, we could hardly expect them to appear as agents in or authors of philosophical debates. Even thinkers and moralists who stressed the importance of education for women did not emphasize skill in debate and discrimination. Ban Zhao 班昭, author of what may be the first argument for female literacy in world history, contrasts the admonitions of virtuous men with "womanly virtue" (*nüde* 女德), which "does not require brilliant talent or remarkable difference. Womanly language need not be clever in disputation or sharp in conversation."<sup>18</sup>

This sentiment came to receive more extreme, and influential, expression by Song and Ming Neo-Confucians, most notably Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130-1200). Zhu Xi advocated education for women, but for the purpose of maternal (including prenatal) instruction, within the proper limits of moral tracts, and directed toward assisting a husband. He stressed the dangers of women's participation in political life and held that women should "never initiate affairs or take action on their own."<sup>19</sup>

<sup>17</sup> See *Zhoubi suanjing* Qian Baocong 錢寶琮, ed., *Suanjing shishu* 算經十書 (Beijing: Kexue chubanshe, 1963), and Christopher Cullen, *Astronomy and Mathematics in Ancient China: The Zhoubi suanjing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). The *Zhoubi* begins with a request for instruction by the Duke of Zhou 周公 to a certain Shang Gao 商高: "I have heard, Sir, that you excel in numbers. May I ask how Bao Xi laid out the successive degrees of the circumference of heaven in ancient times? Heaven cannot be scaled like a staircase, and earth cannot be measured out with a footrule. Where do the numbers come from?" (*Zhoubi* 1:13, Cullen, *Zhoubi* #A1).

<sup>18</sup> Ban Zhao (48-116? CE), *Nüjie* 女誡, in *Hou Hanshu* 後漢書 84 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1965), 2789.

<sup>19</sup> Zhu Xi, *Xiaoxue jiyi* 小學集解, Congshu jicheng ed., 5:118 and 2:35, and *Zhu zi yulei* 朱子語類 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1986) 7:127. The *Xiaoxue* articulated what was to become a standard position on women: "A wife is one who bends

This tacit and ongoing consensus that philosophical, political, and ethical debate should be conducted by and for men has considerable implications for a wide variety of claims that men and women reason differently, particularly in the nature of their respective capacities for moral reasoning. Variants of this claim are legion. According to the *Liji* 禮記, fathers judge their children according to merit, mothers according to affection.<sup>20</sup> Freud states that the level of what is ethically normal is different for women and men; women's super-egos are less inexorable, impersonal, and independent of their emotional origins than men's.<sup>21</sup> Feminist philosophers have voiced (and criticized) various claims for a distinct "female ethic."<sup>22</sup> Many more

to the will of another and so her rectitude lies in not following her own will" (*Xiaoxue* 2:66). Zhu Xi's attack on self-willed women (*Xiaoxue* 5:45) draws on the *Yan shi jiaxun* 顏氏家訓. In his critique of Ban Zhao's *Nü jie*, he suggests eight chapter headings of his own, which emphasize familial roles over intellectual and moral judgment. They are propriety, subordination, filiality, harmony, diligence, frugality, generosity, and learning. For discussion, see Wing-tsit Chan, *Chu Hsi: New Studies* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1989), 542 and 546, n.37; and Bettine Birge, "Chu Hsi and Women's Education," in William Theodore de Bary and John W. Chaffee, eds., *Neo-Confucian Education: The Formative Stage* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989). For the realities of Neo-Confucian education in Song times, see Patricia Buckley Ebrey, *The Inner Quarters: Marriage and the Lives of Chinese Women in the Sung Period* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993). Two more recent studies are particularly noteworthy for their discussions of very different realities of women's education in late imperial China. See Kai-wing Chow, *The Rise of Confucian Ritualism in Late Imperial China: Ethics, Classics, and Lineage Discourse* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994) and Dorothy Ko, *Teachers of the Inner Chambers: Women and Culture in Seventeenth-Century China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994).

<sup>20</sup> "The mother deals with them on the ground of affection and not of showing them honour; the father on the ground of showing them honour and not of affection." *Liji*, Shisan jing zhushu ed. 32, 54:15a-b. For translation, see James Legge, *Li chi: Book of Rites*, in *Sacred Books of the East*, Vols. 27 and 28 (1885; reprint, New York: University Books, 1967), Vol. 2, 341. The passage then analogizes these traits to the natures of water and fire. Roger Ames argues against the view of water as feminine in the *Daodejing* 道德經, but does not discuss this passage per se. See Roger Ames, "Taoism and the Androgynous Ideal," in Richard W. Guisso and Stanley Johannesen, eds., *Women in China: Current Directions in Historical Scholarship* (Youngstown, N.Y.: Philo Press, 1981), 39-41.

<sup>21</sup> Sigmund Freud, "Some Psychological Consequences of the Anatomical Distinction between the Sexes," in A. Richards, ed., *On Sexuality*, Pelican Freud Library, vol. 7. (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1977), 342, quoted in Jean Grimshaw, *Philosophy and Feminist Thinking* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), 187.

<sup>22</sup> For discussion of the developmental models of moral reasoning in the works of Jean Piaget, Erik Erikson, and Lawrence Kohlberg and their critique by Carol Gilligan, see Jean Grimshaw, *Feminist Philosophers* (Brighton, England: Wheatsheaf Books, 1986), 190. For further critique of the "Feminist Ethic," see Jean Grimshaw, "The Ideal of a Female Ethic," *Philosophy East & West* 14.2 (1992):221-38, and Lisa Raphals, "Gendered Virtue."

examples could be mentioned. Contemporary scholars of Chinese philosophy also have entered the fray. Some argue that "Confucian" ethics, however male-dominated, corresponds more closely to the female ethic than to the hegemonic "male philosophy" of the West.<sup>23</sup> Others argue that Confucian "aestheticism" is preferable to the female ethic because, while sexist, it is nevertheless "androgynous" in the sense of viewing gender traits as interdependent modalities rather than immutable essences.<sup>24</sup> Chinese rulers portrayed themselves as "father and mother of the people (*min zhi fumu* 民之父母)." <sup>25</sup>

Nonetheless, a corpus of ethical and political arguments specifically ascribed to women appears in the *Lienü zhuan* 列女傳 or (Collected life stories of women; ca. 25 BCE).<sup>26</sup> The *Biantong zhuan* 辯通傳 or "Skill in argument" chapter contains fifteen persuasions attributed to women whose exemplary virtue explicitly consisted of skill in argument. Some of these women and girls directed their arguments toward husbands and fathers; others tangled with kings and advised them to good effect. The *Lienü zhuan* also contains examples of instructive argument in the chapter titled "Maternal rectitude" (*Muyi zhuan* 母儀傳).

I begin with an analysis of five arguments from the *Lienü zhuan*: three rhetorical persuasions from the "Biantong zhuan" and two instructive arguments from the "Muyi zhuan." I show that these are good arguments in several senses, starting with Quintilian's ethical sense. They are also philosophically good arguments in that they are detailed, coherent, persuasive, and logically sound. Most are also good arguments in the pragmatic sense that they succeed. I argue that the *Lienü zhuan* arguments are philosophically comparable to

<sup>23</sup> Henry Rosemont, "Classical Confucian and Contemporary Feminist Perspectives on the Self: Some Parallels, and Their Implications," in Douglas Allen, ed., *Culture and Self: Philosophical and Religious Perspectives East and West* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1996), 63-82.

<sup>24</sup> David Hall and Roger Ames, "Chinese Sexism," in *Thinking From the Han: Self, Truth, and Transcendence in China and the West* (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1998), 79-100; and Ames, "Taoism and the Androgynous Ideal."

<sup>25</sup> *Xunzi yinde* 荀子引得 (Shanghai: Guji chubanshe, 1986) 75/19/110. The phrase first appears in the *Shijing* 詩經 ode *Jiongzhuo* 洞酌 (Mao 251). Xunzi uses the couplet as a gloss for the term *junzi* 君子, who takes on the role of father and mother of the people.

<sup>26</sup> Liu Xiang 劉向 (79-8 BCE), *Lienü zhuan jiaozhu* 列女傳校注 (hereafter, LNz), Sibuy beiyao ed. For translation, see Albert Richard O'Hara, *The Position of Women in Early China according to the Lieh nü chuan* (1945, Taipei: Mei Ya, 1971).

the arguments of the Masters texts in content, form, and coherence but differ from them in place and in authority. They use the same modes of argument, rhetorical devices, and appeals to authority but are not associated with teaching lineages. Occasionally, both these arguments and the virtues of the women to whom they are attributed are used as examples by male philosophers. Next, I examine the case for attributing the arguments to women, including the claim that the *Lienü zhuan* presents the arguments not of women but of ministers. Finally, I reconsider the hierarchical persuasions and instructive arguments of the *Lienü zhuan* in the light of recent arguments about the nature of debate, adversariality, and authority in early China.

#### *Rhetorical Persuasion in the Biantong zhuan*

Nine of the fifteen *Biantong zhuan* arguments are rhetorical persuasions. (See Appendix 1 for a tabular analysis of these arguments.) Seven are to a ruler on behalf of a father (three cases), a husband (one case), a son (one case), or on behalf of the woman herself (two cases). These women are doubly subordinate: as subjects in the political hierarchy and as women in the gender hierarchy. They have that much more persuading to do.

#### *The Wife of the Bow-maker of Jin*

The wife of the bow-maker of Jin (LNZ 6.3) intercedes with Duke Ping of Jin 晉平公 when her husband is condemned for making a bow which the duke cannot shoot straight.<sup>27</sup> She asks to speak with the duke and argues that the fault is with him, not with the bow:

Its wood grew on [Mt.] Tai Shan, and in a single day it was [repeatedly] exposed three times to the yin and three times to the yang. Its horn came from an ox from Yan, it was bound with the sinews of an elk from Jing [Chu] and glued with glue from the fish from the river. These four things are the most select in the world. If My Lord cannot use them to shoot an arrow through one

<sup>27</sup> The table of contents of the *Lienü zhuan* names the daughter, 晉弓工女 with the comment "should be wife." The *Hanshi waizhuan* 韓詩外傳 version attributes the argument to the wife of the bow-maker. See Han Ying 韓嬰 (first century BCE), *Hanshi waizhuan*, Sibū cōngkān, ed. (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1919-36). For translation, see James R. Hightower, *Han Shih Wai Chuan, Han Ying's Illustration of the Didactic Application of the Classic of Songs* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1952). I use Hightower's numbering for ease of reference.

scale of armour, it can only be because My Lord does not know how to shoot, but nonetheless wishes to kill my husband. How could that be right! I have heard something of the way of archery. Make your left hand as if pushing away a stone and your right hand as if leaning on a branch. The right hand lets fly and the left hand does not know [remains firm]. This is the way of archery.<sup>28</sup>

The duke's shooting improves, and he rewards her husband.

The bow-maker's wife argues that Duke Ping stands to compound a fault of skill with a fault of ethics by killing an innocent man. Her archery lesson provides a face-saving solution to the real cause of his difficulty. This passage is also of incidental interest because of her detailed knowledge of archery and because it is one of the few places in the *Lienü zhuan* where yin and yang are mentioned.

Duke Ping's argument that the bow-maker deserves death is logically valid (by both *modus ponens* and *modus tollens*; analytical summaries of these arguments are given in Appendix 2). It is, however, unsound because it lacks a necessary element to describe the situation. This element is the ruler's skill in archery, which figures in the counter-argument of the bow-maker's wife. Her argument also lacks the same necessary element, namely an account of her husband's skill in his own craft, which may have left something to be desired. The bow-maker's wife never disputes Duke Ping's implicit claim that if the bow is not well made, the bow-maker deserves death, though the ethical status of this judgment is dubious to say the least. Does her not challenging the king's ethics directly indicate that this a case of realpolitik, saving face, or something else?

The gist of her admonition is that Duke Ping has erred because he has omitted an essential condition. The duke assumes that a well-made bow means the ruler will shoot straight. She questions this link between bow and accuracy, and adds the requirement that the ruler be a skillful archer. Next, she argues that the duke stands to turn an error of understanding (of causality) into an ethical error by killing an innocent man. Her argument is logically valid (if unsound) on the same grounds as Duke Ping's. At this point, she might

<sup>28</sup> LNZ 6:3a, Joseph Needham and Robin D. S. Yates, *Science and Civilization in China*. Vol. 5, *Chemistry and Chemical Technology* Part 6, Military Technology and Missile Sieges (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 111. Needham and Yates read the passage as satirical: that the bow-maker was inept and that the duke was open to argument only because the bow-maker's wife was the daughter of an official. Her lineage may well have emboldened her to act and made the duke more receptive toward her, but it does not affect the reasonableness of her argument.

be said to have won the argument. Her additional offer of instruction in archery offers Duke Ping a face-saving remedy for the real cause of his difficulty. The archery lesson's combination of explanation and action is valid, sound, and pragmatic; her goal is to save her husband, not to win an argument! In summary, she combines a well-articulated ethical argument with careful attention to the self-interest of the ruler.<sup>29</sup>

### *Xuwu of Qi*

The life story of Xuwu of Qi 齊女徐吾 (LNZ 6.14) shows skill in argument in the quotidian interactions of commoners. Xuwu was a poor woman of Donghaishang in Qi. She belonged to her neighbor Liwu's 李吾 association of women who met at night to weave by candlelight. Xuwu was so poor she could not bring her share of candles. This is an argument made by a woman to other women, a group of her approximate peers:

Liwu said to the other members: "Xuwu is not bringing enough candles; please do not share light with her."

Xuwu replied: "I am poor and cannot bring my share of candles. Yet I always rise early and retire late; I wash, sweep, arrange your mats, and wait on you. I always sit in the lowest place, all because I am poor and cannot bring my share of candles. Yet the light of a single candle in the center of the room is not diminished by adding one more person, and the light is no brighter for one person less."

Liwu could not respond, so in the end, she came back and there was nothing more to be said.<sup>30</sup>

According to the eulogy (*song* 頌) at the end of the account, Xuwu "explained herself in eloquent language with deep distinctions," and when she spoke no one could answer her.<sup>31</sup>

Xuwu does not dispute her obligation to bring the candles or that she has failed to do so. Her persuasion takes the form of a twofold demonstration that she should not be excluded from her neighbors' association. She shows that her presence has positive consequences: she tidies their rooms and arranges the mats so as to reaffirm their higher social status and her own position at the bottom of the social

<sup>29</sup> The bow-maker's wife also appears in the *Hanshi waizhuan* (8.27, 73b). The *Taiping yulan* 太平御覽 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983, 347:8b and 746:1b) refers back to the *Lienü zhuan*.

<sup>30</sup> LNZ 6:13a-b.

<sup>31</sup> 自列辭語甚分. LNZ 6:13b.

hierarchy. She also shows that her presence has no negative consequences and her failure to bring her share of candles causes no harm to the association. Her presence does not diminish the light.

The story of Xuwu of Qi is a persuasion among quasi-equals on a matter that has little ethical purchase. Xuwu desires to be included in the association and persuades Liwu and the rest to admit her, despite her deficient contribution, by direct and indirect appeals to self-interest. At worst her presence diminishes no light, and at best it benefits them. Xuwu persuades the others to include her by eloquence, not by appeals to any specific ethical virtue or by any claim that excluding her would be "wrong." The rhetorical point is that the "generous" benefactor is in fact the beneficiary.<sup>32</sup>

### *Ti Ying of Qi*

Other stories in the "Biantong zhuan" portray young girls who successfully intercede with rulers and win ethical arguments by eloquence of speech. The story of the persuasion of the daughter of the Granary Master of Qi 齊太倉女 (LNZ 6.15), the physician Chunyu Yi 淳于意, appears in the *Lienü zhuan*, the *Shiji* 史記, and the *Hanshu*.<sup>33</sup> When relatives of people he has refused to treat denounce him to Emperor Xiao Wen, Chunyu Yi is transferred to Chang'an for mutilating punishment. His youngest daughter Ti Ying 緹縈 follows him to Chang'an and offers the following petition:

Your servant's father is an official. In the kingdom of Qi he is known for his integrity and justice. Now he has fallen into the hands of the law and awaits punishment. Your servant is deeply afflicted by the fact that those who die [as a result of punishment] cannot return to life and those who are punished [by mutilation] cannot recover their [physical] integrity. Then when we desire to correct errors, there is no longer a way to do so, and in the end we cannot succeed. I wish to enter the ranks of female slaves in order to redeem my father's corporal punishment; this will allow him to change his conduct and reform himself.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>32</sup> I owe this useful terminology to Henry Rosemont.

<sup>33</sup> Sima Qian 司馬遷 (145?-86? BCE), *Shiji* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1959) 105:2794-5, *Hanshu* 23:1097-99. A summary of these events also appears in LNZ 6:13b-14a. For the pronunciation "ying," see *Shiji* 105:2795 and *Hanshu* 23:1098. Chunyu Yi was born in 216 BCE and held the office of *Taichang* 太倉 (an office connected with the imperial granaries) in Qi. He is known to have practiced medicine during the early Han. This incident is dated to 167 BCE, during the reign of Han Wendi 漢文帝 (r.180-157 BCE), named here as King Xiao Wen 孝文.

<sup>34</sup> LNZ 6:13b-14a.

It is not clear precisely what crime Chunyu is alleged to have committed. The *Hanshu* merely states that he had committed "a crime deserving of mutilating punishment."<sup>35</sup> Ti Ying does not deny her father's fault and indeed offers to redeem it herself. She admonishes the emperor indirectly for his promulgation of laws that make it impossible for a man convicted of a crime to redress his fault or improve his conduct. In arguing that punishment by death or mutilation leaves no opportunity for the correction of faults, she shows that the emperor's ends are inconsistent with his means. She herself presents the written document. Her clarity of expression (and reasoning) persuades the emperor to change his laws and reject corporal punishment.

Hearing her request, the emperor was moved by her intention, and that year he rescinded the law on corporal punishment.<sup>36</sup>

The eulogy remarks that the petition submitted by Ti Ying was "most complete in literary refinement. The young girl's words stirred the mind of the ruler."<sup>37</sup>

Ti Ying effectively persuades the emperor to adopt a corrective theory of punishment in lieu of a retributive theory. This is what underlies her claim that his ends (justice) are inconsistent with his means (mutilating punishments). She never disputes that Chunyu Yi is at fault. Rather she tries to show that condemning Chunyu Yi to death or mutilation in the name of justice contravenes the emperor's broad intentions.

As in the case of the bow-maker's wife, the ethical status of the emperor's actions comes into immediate question. On what basis does Ti Ying assume that the emperor desires justice to prevail in the empire? While she emphasizes her father's reputation for justice and integrity, she mentions no such specific reputation on the part of the emperor. What she does do is transform an "ought" into an "is." Instead of saying that the emperor *should* desire justice, she states that he does. Why? By tacitly praising him for doing what he

<sup>35</sup> *Hanshu* 23:1097.

<sup>36</sup> LNZ 6:13b-14a, *Shiji* 105:2794-5. For translation of the *Shi ji* version, see R. F. Bridgman, "La Médecine dans la Chine antique," *Mélanges chinois et bouddhiques* 10 (1955):24-117. See also Elisabeth Hsu, "Prognostics or diagnostics? Medical Reasoning in the *Shiji*," in Elisabeth Hsu, ed., *Chinese Medicine: Innovation, Convention, and Controversy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming). For translation of the *Hanshu* version, see A. P. F. Hulsewê, *Remnants of Han Law*, Vol. 1 (Leiden: Brill, 1955), 334-35.

<sup>37</sup> 文雅甚備, 小女之言, 乃感聖意. LNZ 6:14a-b.

has not done, and presenting him with a way to do it (accepting the payment of her own person), she offers an admonition that is face-saving, practical, and self-defending. Her arguments and actions—she herself presents the written document—persuade the emperor not only to spare her father but to alter the laws on corporal punishment. In both cases, the facts of political power constrain the choice of argument. Ti Ying's father may well have been innocent of the charge, but Ti Ying herself lacks the power to contend with those who denounced him. Similarly, the bow-maker's wife, although the wife of an official, lacks the actual power to contend directly with a king.

The persuasions of the wife of the bow-maker of Jin and the daughter of the granary master of Qi differ from Xuwu's for three reasons. First, they are more hierarchically polarized. Xuwu is a woman persuading another woman of only slightly higher social status; the bow-maker's wife and the (granary master) physician's daughter are persuading men who are emperors or rulers of states. Second, the stakes are higher; in the stories of these two women, their "self-interest" is in the survival of a husband and a father. Third, their arguments appeal only indirectly to the self-interest of the ruler; rather, they appeal to the ruler's presumed sense of righteousness. These stories show women using persuasion and argument for more explicitly ethical purposes: to reprimand rulers' negligence in the form of unjust laws or policies. Sometimes they save a husband or a father, sometimes themselves.

Strategic approaches that combine an ethical argument with an appeal to the self-interest of a ruler typify many of the arguments attributed to Warring States Masters and Han dynasty historians. Han Fei's systematic summary of the difficulties of persuasion (*Shuonan*) points out that they tend to involve not knowledge of persuasion (*zhishuo* 知說), skill in argument (*bianming* 辯明), or daring (*gan* 敢), but rather "knowing the heart I am speaking to [persuading] so I can meet it when I am speaking."<sup>38</sup>

The *Biantong zhuan* also contains six instruction pieces. Four are addressed to rulers who use marriage to incorporate the wisdom of these (exceptionally ugly) women into the state. These pieces are interesting for many reasons, but they do not present detailed argu-

<sup>38</sup> 知所說之心可以吾說當之. *Han Feizi*, Sibu beiyao ed., 4:12:6a, cf. W.K. Liao, *The Complete Works of Han Fei Tzu*, vol. 1 (London: Arthur Probsthain, 1939), 106.

ments. They are similar in context to rhetorical persuasions because of the double subordination of the woman (as subject and as wife). For these reasons, I do not examine them here. All these arguments to a hierarchical superior address this problem of "knowing the heart I am persuading," described by Han Fei.

#### *Instructive Arguments in the Muye zhuan*

Several arguments from the *Muye zhuan* chapter of the *Lienü zhuan* depict the instructive arguments of mothers to their sons. (The mothers were hierarchically inferior in gender but hierarchically superior by virtue of age and parental status.) Two use particularly detailed arguments and analogies: Jing Jiang of the Ji of Lu 魯季敬姜, the mother of the minister Gongfu Wenbo 公夫文伯, of Lu, and Meng Mu 孟母, the mother of Mencius.<sup>39</sup>

#### *Jing Jiang of the Ji of Lu*

The story of Jing Jiang of the Ji of Lu (*Li Ji Jing Jiang*) (LNZ 1.9) is the longest in the *Lienü zhuan* and consists of five narratives with close parallels in the *Guoyu* 國語.<sup>40</sup> Jing Jiang was the wife of Gongfu Mubo 公夫穆伯, the mother of Gongfu Wenbo, and the paternal grandaunt of Ji Kangzi 季康子 (d. 479).<sup>41</sup> Widowed young, she

<sup>39</sup> Zhu Xi cites the *Lienü zhuan* accounts of both as examples of maternal instruction (*Xiaoxue* 4:1-2 and 4:28). He uses Jing Jiang, whom he calls "the aunt of Ji Kangzi," as a model of separate spheres, the separation of men and women.

<sup>40</sup> The *Guoyu* (Shanghai: Guji chubanshe, 1988) contains eight separate stories about her, all in the second book of Lu (*Guoyu* 5.10-17). They are her discourse to Ji Kangzi on humility (5.10); her admonition to Wenbo regarding a feast of undersized turtles (5.11); her discourse to Ji Kangzi on the inner and outer court (5.12); her discourse to Wenbo on work and self-indulgence (5.13); her discourse to Ji Kangzi on the *li* of men and women (5.14); her plans for Wenbo's marriage (5.15); three discourses concerning death: her instructions to Wenbo's concubines after his death, her refusal to weep at his funeral, and her remarks at the occasion of the funeral of Ji Kangzi's mother (5.16); and her discourse to the concubines of Wenbo on mourning (5.17).

<sup>41</sup> According to the *Lienü zhuan*, Jing Jiang was the wife of the younger brother of Ji Kangzi's paternal grandfather (his *congzu shumu* 從祖叔母, LNZ 1:6b). Her husband Gongfu Mubo thus would be a younger brother of Ji Pingzi 季平子 (Jisun Yiru 季孫意如 or Yinru 隱如, d. 505 BCE), the son of Ji Daozi 季悼子 (d. 529). This genealogy would make Ji Daozi the grandfather of Wenbo and the great-grandfather of Ji Kangzi. It is consistent with commentaries that refer to Ji

raised and instructed her son as well as her paternal grandnephew and her son's concubines. Though she does not appear in the *Analects*, in other sources Confucius repeatedly praises her expertise in the rites.<sup>42</sup> A striking example of her style of instruction is a detailed analogy between government office and the apparatus of weaving.<sup>43</sup> She uses the analogy to instruct her grown son Wenbo, Minister of Lu, on how to rule a kingdom and manage others:

When Wenbo was minister in Lu, Jing Jiang said to him: "I will inform you about what is important in governing a country; it is entirely in the warp [*jing* 經]. The selvage [the straight border of woven cloth, *fu* 幅] is the means by which you straighten what is twisted and crooked. It must be strong, therefore the selvage can be considered as the General [*jiang* 將]. The pattern [*hua* 畫] evens what is uneven and reconciles what is not adjusted."<sup>44</sup> Therefore the

Daozi as Jing Jiang's father-in-law and Ji Kangzi's great-grandfather (cf. LNZ 1:8b and *Guoyu* Lu 5.10, p. 202, n.1 and 5.14, 210, n.4). Thus we might estimate her birth as circa 540 BCE, and the birth of Wenbo some time between 525 and 515.

<sup>42</sup> For a detailed study of Confucius and Jing Jiang, see Lisa Raphals, "A Woman Who Understood the Rites," in Bryan W. Van Norden, ed., *Essays on the Analects of Confucius* (London: Oxford University Press, forthcoming).

<sup>43</sup> This translation has been revised from an earlier version that appeared in Lisa Raphals, *Sharing the Light: Representations of Women and Virtue in Early China* (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1998), 31. The exact meaning of the technical terminology in this passage is difficult to determine because we do not know the exact kind of loom to which the passage refers. One difficulty concerns scholarly controversies surrounding the development of weaving technology in early China. See Dieter Kuhn, "The Silk Workshops of the Shang Dynasty (16th-11th century B.C.)," in Li Guohao, et al., eds., *Explorations in the History of Science and Technology in China: In Honour of the Eightieth Birthday of Dr. Joseph Needham* (Shanghai: Guji chubanshe, 1982), 367-408, and Dieter Kuhn, "Silk Weaving in Ancient China: From Geometric Figures to Patterns of Pictorial Likeness," *Chinese Science* 12 (1995):77-114.

Another difficulty involves the dating of the passage. The incident would appear to be set in the late Spring and Autumn period, but the passage may be a later interpolation and may refer to later types of looms and official titles. A third problem is the anachronism introduced by later accounts of weaving technology, particularly the seventeenth-century *Tiangong kaiwu* 天工開物 of Song Yingxing 宋應星 (hereafter TGKW; Taibei: Zhonghua, 1955). For translation, see E-tu Zen Sun and Shiou-Chuan Sun, *Sung Ying-hsing: Chinese Technology in the Seventeenth Century*, [*Tiangong Kaiwu*] (1966; reprint, Dover, 1997).

<sup>44</sup> According to the commentary, the pattern is that which one relies on (*pang* or *bang* 榜) and probably refers to some kind of a pattern or painted design copied onto the cloth. In the seventeenth-century looms described in the *Tiangong kaiwu*, a design was painted in color onto paper (*hua* 畫), which was copied into a pattern hung in the figure tower (*hualou* 花樓) of the loom (TGKW 64, Zen Sun and Sun, *Chinese Technology*, 56), but there were no figure towers in Spring and Autumn or Han looms (Kuhn, "Silk Weaving," 95).

pattern can be the Director [*zheng* 正].<sup>45</sup> Now the marking [*wu zhe* 物者] is the means by which you rule weeds and align tendons [*zhi wu yu mo* 治蕪與莫].<sup>46</sup> Therefore the marking can be Prefect of the Capital [*du daifu* 都大夫].<sup>47</sup> The thing that can pass firmly from hand to hand without loss and go in and out without interruption is the shuttle [*kun* 杼]. The shuttle can be Director of Messengers [*da xing* 大瀆]. That which you push when you make it go and pull when you make it come is the heddle [*zong* 綜]. The heddle can be the Regional Mentor of Guannei [*Guannei zhi shi* 關內之師].<sup>48</sup> The one that regulates the numbers of great and small is the reed comb [*jun* 均].<sup>49</sup> The reed

<sup>45</sup> Titles are taken from Charles O. Hucker, *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985). During the Zhou, *zheng* referred to a minister of the rank of "First Class Administrative Official," the highest of eight categories in a separate hierarchy from that of the Nine Honors (Hucker, *Dictionary*, 122).

<sup>46</sup> The meaning of this term is particularly difficult to determine. The commentary states that the marking (*wu*) was one *zhang* 章 of ink, referring to an inked string used for measurement. On this reading, the weeds (*wu* 蕪) in the phrase "rule weeds and align tendons" (*zhi wu yu mo* 治蕪與莫) may refer to "wild" silk from wild silkworms whose silk cannot be reeled, only cut. (For possible origins of the use of wild silk, see Kuhn, "Silk Workshops") Weeds and tendons, understood as a compound, may refer to the plant and animal-derived fibers as the totality of fibers from which all clothing is made. The *Tiangong kaiwu* describes the fibers used to make clothing as equally divided between plant and animal sources. As plant sources, it lists cotton [hemp] (*xi* 枲), hemp (*ma* 麻), *meng* hemp (*meng* 蔞), and creeper hemp (*ge* 葛). Its animal-derived fibers, from birds, animals, and insects, are furs, woolens, silk (*si* 絲), and spun silk (*mian* 綿, TKGW 45, Zen Sun and Sun, *Chinese Technology*, 35). Alternatively, Kuhn suggests that it may have been traditional to name parts of the loom after the analogous features of insects, birds, and four-legged animals (*wu* 物, Kuhn "Silk Weaving," 100 and n. 59).

<sup>47</sup> During the Zhou, the *daifu* was a "Grand Master," the second highest category of official below minister (*qing*), described in the *Zhouli* as a "prefect" (Hucker, *Dictionary*, 465). According to the Liang Duan commentary, the *du daifu*, which I translate Prefect of the Capital, "treats the maladies of the people and governs the multitudes" (主治民理衆也, LNZ 1:7b).

<sup>48</sup> This title does not appear in the *Zuo zhuan* or *Guoyu*, and I can find no Zhou dynasty use of it. From the Qin through the Sanguo periods, the title *guannei hou* 關內侯 referred to the Marquis of Guannei, the nineteenth of twenty (second rank) titles of nobility awarded to exceptionally meritorious individuals (Hucker, *Dictionary*, 286). If the title dates from the Han, it might provide evidence that Liu Xiang (or a later commentator) created this argument. I am grateful to an anonymous reader for suggesting this possibility.

<sup>49</sup> The commentary indicates that the *jun* refers to the teeth of the comb. According to Sun Yutang, the term *jun* 均 in the *Lienü zhuan* is equivalent to "reed" (*gou* 筥) in the *Tiangong kaiwu* (Sun Yutang 孫毓棠, "Zhanguo Qin-Han shidai fangzhiye jishu de jinbu" 戰國秦漢時代紡織業技術的進步, *Lishi yanjiu* 歷史研究 3 (1963): 152. Similarly, the *Tiangong kaiwu* states that the reed comb regulates the breadth and density of the cloth (TKGW 62). The reed consists of eight hundred teeth for gauze and twelve hundred for damask or pongee. Each tooth has a hole or eyelet which holds four unsized threads (or four sized threads combined into two warp yarns). The comb of a draw loom regulates the breadth and density of the cloth. See Zen Sun and Sun, *Chinese Technology*, 53.

comb can be the Royal Annalist [*neishi* 內史].<sup>50</sup> The one who can fill an important office, travel a long road, and is upright, genuine, and firm is the cloth beam [*zhou* 軸].<sup>51</sup> The cloth beam can be deemed Minister [*xiang* 相]. The one that is inexhaustible in unfolding is the warp beam [*zhai* 摺].<sup>52</sup> The warp beam can be the Three Dukes [*sangong* 三公].<sup>53</sup> Wenbo bowed to her repeatedly and received her instruction.<sup>53</sup>

This passage makes a detailed and coherent analogy between eight offices and eight parts of a loom. It begins with the General, who determines the edge and shape of the fabric and keeps it in formation. The Director sets the overall shape of the weaving. The analogy is to the pattern or painted design that determines the design. The Prefect imposes order on disorder and governs "wild" areas as well as the city. The Director of Messengers sends envoys back and forth without interruption or damage, like the shuttle. In the Han meaning of the title, the Regional Mentor of Guannei, a liaison officer, ensures that the way is clear, like the heddle, which separates the sections of the warp through which the shuttle will pass. The Royal Annalist "regulates the numbers of great and small" by accurately recording royal edicts.<sup>54</sup> The Minister, like the cloth beam, is responsible, enduring, upright, and firm and guides the kingdom by these qualities. This was Wenbo's own position at the time. The Three Dukes, like the warp beam, are endless in their virtue and

<sup>50</sup> During the Zhou, the *neishi* was a "Royal Annalist," a member of the Ministry of Rites, who prepared all royal documents (Hucker, *Dictionary*, 286, following the *Zhouli*). During the Qin, the *neishi* was a Minister of Agriculture, under the Department of Finance (Hulsewé, *Ch'in Law*, section A 9, p. 30, n. 225 and n. 235.)

<sup>51</sup> I take *zhou* 軸 as *juanzhou* 卷軸, or "cloth beam," following Dieter Kuhn, *Science and Civilization in China*, Vol. 5, *Chemistry and Chemical Technology*, Part 9 Textile Technology: Spinning and Reeling (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 200. Alternatively, reading *zhou* 軸 as 轉, it could be translated "round beams." See Kuhn, "Silk Weaving," 100. Kuhn names three "round beams": the warp beam *sheng*, the back roller, and the cloth beam (*fu* 復). The context of the passage clearly requires one type of beam, not three. The warp beam is used later in the passage.

<sup>52</sup> Liang Duan's commentary glosses *zhai* 摺 as *sheng* 勝, warp beam (LNZ 1:7b), and adds that being able to unfold [stretch] without limit is an example of the virtue (*daode* 道德) of the *san gong*. For description of the drawloom, see Sun Yutang, "Zhanguo Qin-Han shidai fangzhiye jishu de jinbu," 155, and TKGW 63-64, (translated in Zen and Zen Sun, *Chinese Technology*, 55).

<sup>53</sup> LNZ 1:7a-b.

<sup>54</sup> In this case, there is a significant difference between the Zhou and Qin offices. In a Qin reading of the analogy, the Minister of Agriculture would "regulate the numbers of great and small" by the management of government agricultural inventories and record-keeping. See YMSHD slips 83-87, 95, 102-3, 153-55, 178-79, 241-43, and 253-63; Hulsewé, *Ch'in Law*, sections A 9, 20, 25, 47, 61, 87, and 97-107.

ability. The warp beam gathers up the unused warp and holds it evenly in place.

In this passage, Jing Jiang claims an analogy between government and weaving. There are two bases for the similarity. First, government is the primary activity of men and weaving of women. Second, each activity consists of component functions, all of which must be performed adequately and correctly for the overall activity to succeed. The requisites for each component activity are particular and specialized. For cloth to be woven effectively, the component parts of the loom must adequately fulfill their various functions, which are quite different from each other and demand different qualities. For example, the reed comb must be notched finely enough to separate hundreds of threads; the warp beam must be strong enough to bear the tension of all of the threads wound around it. A reed comb would make a terrible warp beam and vice versa. Similarly, if a state is to be governed effectively, the component offices must be staffed by men whose qualities are those required by the specialized tasks of the offices.

Implicit in this narrative is the claim that her son does not understand government and that Jing Jiang herself is competent to instruct him in the appointment of officials. When Wenbo bows and accepts her teaching, he also presumably accepts her premises. It is noteworthy that neither the text nor its various commentaries remark on where she learned to understand the analogy so well.

Although we might not expect a man to use a loom in such an analogy, Jing Jiang's instruction to her son is entirely consistent in tone with a variety of teacher-student discourses on technique, including Confucius's advice to Wen Hui in the *Analects* and Qi Bo's answers to the questions of Huang Di in the *Huang Di neijing*. We also can situate this passage within a range of classifications of offices and types of individual and ability in Warring States, Han, and Six Dynasties texts. Descriptions of offices appear in the *Xunzi* and *Zhouli*. *Xunzi*'s "Regulations of a King" (*Wang zhi*) describes the hypothetical or ideal duties of a range of offices.<sup>55</sup> The *Zhouli*, an ostensible description of the government and administrative structures of the Zhou state, simply lists a range of offices and duties.<sup>56</sup> Neither text

<sup>55</sup> *Xunzi* 29/9/88. For translation, see John Knoblock, *Xunzi: A Translation and Study of the Complete Works*, Vol. 2 (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), 106ff. For discussion of the possible interpolation of this paragraph see Knoblock, *Xunzi*, Vol. 2, 297, n. 84.

<sup>56</sup> The dating of the *Zhouli* is a matter of considerable scholarly controversy.

contains explanations, analogies, or discussion of the particular abilities suitable for each office. Descriptions of types of individuals, but not linked to specific office, first appear in the *Analects* and resurface in the *Shuoyuan* 說苑, the *Hanshu*, the *Renwu zhi* 人物志, and *Yanshi jiaxun*.<sup>57</sup> None of these passages contains the kind of analogy we find in the voice of Jing Jiang.<sup>58</sup>

In the *Lienü zhuan*, Confucius praises "the woman of the Ji clan" for admonishing Wenbo (as evidenced by the discourse on weaving) when he was alive and for "brightening" his virtue by refusing to mourn him at the time of his death. He also praises her understanding of ritual and hierarchy, as demonstrated by her continuing to mourn both husband and son after their deaths. At the heart of all this praise are her relentless efforts at "improvement," specifically, the improvement of her son. In his admonitions to his disciples and in his statements about himself, Confucius constantly emphasizes that self-cultivation is a necessary prerequisite for the instruction of others. Yet Confucius shows a curious lack of interest in this woman's efforts at self-cultivation; his praise is confined to her in-

See William Boltz, "Chou li 周禮," in Michael A. N. Loewe, ed., *Early Chinese Texts: A Bibliographical Guide* (Berkeley: Society for the Study of Early China and The Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California at Berkeley, 1993), 24-32.

<sup>57</sup> Confucius classed individuals into four types: those born with wisdom, those who acquire it by study, those who learn despite limitations, and those who have ability but do not learn (*Lunyu* 16.9, as well as 5.18, 6.28, 7.33, and 17.3). The chapter headings of Liu Xiang's *Shuoyuan* combine occupation and activity in a quasi-classification of human behavior, for example: (1) the way of the ruler, (2) the arts of the minister, (9) straightforward remonstrance, (13) wily plots, and (15) pointers on the martial. The "Table of Ancient and Modern Persons," which comprises *Hanshu* 20, classifies some two thousand individuals from legendary times to the Qin dynasty, based at least in part on the four types described by Confucius. Liu Shao's 劉邵 (ca. 240 - 250) *Renwu zhi* categorizes officials into twelve types of ability, with historical examples and assessments of the most suitable occupation for each. The "Managing Practical Affairs" chapter of the *Yanshi jiaxun* lists six types of official position, reflecting six kinds of talent. See Yan Zhitui 顏之推 (531-591), *Yanshi jiaxun* (Zhuzi jicheng ed.), 11:24. For translation, see Teng Ssu-yü, *Family Instructions for the Yen Clan: Yen-shih chia-hsun* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1968), 114-15. For further discussion of classificatory schemata, see Lisa Raphals, *Knowing Words: Wisdom and Cunning in the Classical Traditions of China and Greece* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), 20-25.

<sup>58</sup> It is worth noting that, unlike most of the *Guoyu* and other stories about "the mother of Wenbo," this passage is unique to the *Lienü zhuan*. That fact, and the description of the loom therein, may suggest that this passage was added to the life story well after the date of the original compilation ascribed to Liu Xiang (ca. 25 BCE). Its affinities with typologies of offices and types of individuals and ability may also suggest a Han, Later Han, or even Six Dynasties provenance.

struction of her son. The implication is that women are capable of effective teaching without explicit self-cultivation—an extraordinary gendering of virtue!

### Meng Mu

The most eminent sage whose female relative's life story appears in the *Lienü zhuan* is Mencius or Mengzi 孟子.<sup>59</sup> His mother Meng Mu 孟母 (LNZ 1.11) uses the example of her own work in another analogy, this time between weaving and livelihood, to instruct her son:

When Mengzi was small, he had just come back from studying, and his mother was weaving. She asked him: "How did the studying go?" He said: "So-so." Mengzi's mother took a knife and cut her weaving. Mengzi was frightened and asked the reason. She said: "Your neglecting your studies is like my cutting this weaving. The *junzi* studies in order to establish his name and investigates in order to make his knowledge vast. Therefore if you sit still you will be peaceful, if you are active you will keep harm afar. If you now neglect your studies you will not avoid becoming a lackey, and you will not have the means to escape from calamity. Just as if a woman neglects that by which she eats, if a man is negligent in the cultivation of virtue, then if he does not become a thief or a robber he will become a captive or a corvee laborer." Mengzi was afraid, and morning and night he did not cease to be diligent in his studies. He served his teacher Zi Si and consequently became the most celebrated Ru of the empire.<sup>60</sup>

Meng Mu's use of the analogy focuses not on the skill of weaving but on weaving as livelihood. It is her teaching, we are told, that causes her son to become foremost of the Ru.

Meng Mu's argument is that men's study and self-cultivation is like women's weaving. The story at least implies that, by cutting her weaving, she is making the young Mencius pay for his negligence in hunger now to avoid paying for it in later misfortune. We are not specifically told whether they went hungry that night. If they did, she completes her analogy by a wonderful demonstration of the power of persuasive action, insofar as she deliberately brings about the consequences of a woman neglecting her work. Hungry or not, he learns the lesson.

<sup>59</sup> The story consists of four narrative elements: (1) her repeated changes of abode in order to provide an appropriate environment for her son; (2) her successful exhortation to the young Meng Ke 孟軻 to diligent study, by equating his study and her weaving; (3) her reprimand to him for criticizing his wife when he himself has failed to knock on her private door; and (4) her definition of their respective roles (by encouraging his desire to travel, despite her age).

<sup>60</sup> LNZ 1:10b.

According to the eulogy, Meng Mu's teaching was exhaustive in every detail. She made her son understand the importance of learning, and as a result he perfected his virtue (*chengde* 成德) and gained eminence within his generation. Meng Mu appears in accounts of these incidents in both Warring States accounts and later compendia.<sup>61</sup> The biography of Mencius in *Shiji* 74, by contrast, does not mention her.

Both Jing Jiang and Meng Mu make analogies between the activities of women and of men, but the analogies are very different. Meng Mu's is the simpler; it merely claims that two activities correspond, so that the fruits of inactivity will also correspond. Jing Jiang posits a detailed correspondence between whole and parts.

The use of a particular craft or skill as an analogy for sagacity, or good government, is a common feature of Warring States philosophy. Scattered through the *Lunyu*, *Mengzi*, and *Zhuangzi* in particular, we find many stories in which some aspect of wisdom is compared to skills and arts such as: archery, butchery, cooking, engineering or technological innovation, farming, hunting and trapping (more properly, catching cicadas), military strategy (defensive and offensive), music (creation and interpretation), and wheel-making.<sup>62</sup> Comparisons of this kind are particularly prominent in the *Mengzi* and *Zhuangzi*, as a few examples from the domains of archery, cooking, and agriculture demonstrate. These stories take several forms: (1) Wisdom is like X. For example, in *Mengzi* 5B1, Mencius compares wisdom to skill and sagacity to strength using an analogy based on archery.<sup>63</sup> (2) Wisdom/skill in A is like (craft) B; for example, the

<sup>61</sup> She appears in the versions of the story in the *Mengzi* (1A12) and *Hanshi waizhuan* (9.1 and 9.17, pp. 76a and 80a) and later compendia, such as the *Wen xuan* 文選 and *Taiping yulan*. See Xiao Tong 蕭統 (501-31), *Wen xuan* (Taipei: Wenjin chubanshe, 1987) 11:531, and *Taiping yulan* 511:8ab, 517:5ab, and 826:2b-3a.

<sup>62</sup> I explore some of these in Lisa Raphals, "Weaving and Archery: Craft Analogies in Early Chinese Argumentation" (paper presented to the Premodern China Seminar, Harvard University, April 29, 1996). The subject warrants a separate study.

<sup>63</sup> "Wisdom (*zhi* 智) is like skill (*qiao* 巧), shall I say, while sagacity is like strength. It is like shooting from beyond a hundred paces. It is due to your strength that the arrow reaches the target, but it is not due to your strength that it hits the mark" (5B1). *Mengzi* 6A20 stresses the central role of naturalness (*ziran* 自然) in the teaching of the expert archer and the intuitive learning of the student. The *Guanzi* 管子 (Sibu beiyao ed., *Xiao cheng* 11) compares the intuitive knowledge of the craftsman using axe and adze and Archer Yi's use of bow and arrow. Other accounts of archery center on ambivalent portrayals of Archer Yi, as both a savior of humankind and a neglectful ruler. See *Shanhaijing jiaozhu* 山海經校注 (Shanghai: Guji

story of the cook Pao Ding 庖丁 butchering oxen in *Zhuangzi* 3 and the statement in the *Daode jing* 60 that "governing a large state is like cooking a small fish." (3) Acquiring wisdom is like X, for example, the Mencian analogy of the four sprouts: the origins of virtues correspond to the growth of young sprouts, which mature if tended and die if they are neglected or happen to fall on arid soil (*Mengzi* 2A6).

### The Lienü zhuan Arguments

These arguments concern the "outer" sphere of public life: ethics, statecraft, and political rectitude. These examples also show that the arguments attributed to women in the *Lienü zhuan* closely parallel the form and logic of other arguments used by men in what are generally considered philosophical works of the Warring States and Han. Christoph Harbsmeier has shown that *modus tollens* (p implies q, not q, therefore not p) was particularly popular in ancient China, as was *modus ponens* (p implies q, p, ergo q), to a lesser extent.<sup>64</sup>

Arguments from the *Biantong zhuan* clearly fall within the spectrum of styles and modes of argument used by ministers in rhetorical persuasion to a hierarchical superior. Similarly, the instructive arguments of the *Muyi zhuan* parallel the instruction by masters to disciples within a range of Masters texts. At this point it is tempting to make two fairly radical assertions: (1) that the Warring States and Han textual record represents women as engaging in much the same kind of philosophical argument as has been attributed to men, and (2) that these texts present women as using the same kind of moral reasoning as their male counterparts; in other words, that the early Chinese philosophical tradition did not "gender" moral reasoning.

chubanshe, 1980) 18; *Huainanzi* 淮南子 (Zhuzi jicheng ed.) 8, 13 and 17; *Zuo zhuan* 左傳, Xiang 4 (in *Chunqiu Zuo zhuan zhu* 春秋左傳注, Yang Bojun 楊伯峻, ed., Gaoxiang: Fuwen tushu chubanshe, 1991), and *Tian wen* 3 (in *Tianwen zuanyi* 天文纂譯, You Guo'en 游國恩, ed., Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1982).

<sup>64</sup> Christoph Harbsmeier, *Science and Civilisation in China*. Vol. 7, Part 1. *Logic and Language* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 283-85. He notes examples of *modus tollens* in *Analects* (6.12) and *Mencius* (4A18, 6A10, and 6B6[5]) and of *modus ponens* in the *Analects* (17.7) and *Mozi*. See *Mozi yinde* 墨子引得 (Shanghai: Guji chubanshe, 1982) 87/48/76, and Yi-pao Mei, trans., *The Ethical and Political Works of Motse* (1929; reprint, Taipei: Confucius Publishing Co., 1983), 480.

### Women or Ministers

One interesting counter-argument to this approach draws on the striking resemblance between *Lienü zhuan* arguments and the arguments of ministers in the texts of the Masters. In this view, the *Lienü zhuan* represents (and defends) not women but their "structural" hierarchical equivalent, ministers.

Most of what we consider Chinese scientific and philosophical arguments were made by ministers, either by men who held specific office (for example, Lü Buwei 呂不韋 and Han Fei) or by individuals who were trying to assume the *role* of minister (for example, Confucius, Mencius, and most other Warring States thinkers, with the notable exception of Zhuangzi). When we turn to ministers whose arguments were purely political and arguably outside of philosophical and scientific discourse, we still find a wide range of appeals to the past and a general avoidance of explicit adversariality, combined with a general willingness to take the risk of admonition. These appeals to the authority of the past included textual authority, such as quotation from the *Odes* or from Confucius, and appeals to the precedents of history, for example, the actions of the sage kings. Other political persuasions, however, are more pragmatic, in the sense that they appeal to logic or practical reasoning. Examples include much of the *bingfa* tradition and works of fictionalized history such as the *Zhanguo*.

In a recent study, Catherine Gipoulon suggests that while the *Lienü zhuan* appears to be a defense of women, it may in reality be a defense of ministers against the potentially tyrannous authority of rulers.<sup>65</sup> She stresses the analogous roles of wives and ministers in the family and the state.<sup>66</sup>

La fonction d'épouse est par analogie avec celle de ministre. L'épouse assume dans la famille la même fonction que le ministre dans le gouvernement de l'état.

<sup>65</sup> Catherine Gipoulon, "L'image de l'épouse dans le *Lienü zhuan*," in J. Gernet and M. Kalinowski, eds., *En suivant la voie royale: Mélanges offerts à Léon Vandermeersch* (Paris: École Française d'Extrême-Orient, 1997), 1-15, especially 13-15. She ascribes striking differences between the *Lienü zhuan* and Ban Zhao's *Nijie* to a contrast between an early Han sensibility that strove to persuade emperors toward moral self-constraint and a greater acceptance of unbridled authority in the Later Han.

<sup>66</sup> Gipoulon, "L'image de l'épouse," 4-5.

Par une analogie constante avec le ministre, et une identification possible avec le Sage, l'image de l'épouse est celle d'une autorité morale forte et influente.<sup>67</sup>

*Lienü zhuan* women resemble ministers in that they possess the qualities of intellectual and moral virtue that enable them to act as moral agents. Both are sagacious (*xian* 賢); they understand people (*zhiren* 知人), circumstances (*zhishi* 知事), and long-term consequences (*zhiyuan* 知遠); and they know how to avoid danger (*yuanhuan* 遠患) and penetrate to the nature of things (*datong* 達通).<sup>68</sup> Gipoulon points to a standard pattern for this admonition: "Dans les textes du *Lienü-zhuan*, l'incitation morale est une caractéristique du féminin, du Yin, de l'inférieur, du ministre, de l'épouse."<sup>69</sup> A husband or a ruler transgresses the moral code. His wife or minister protests the transgression but does so by accepting responsibility for the error. (S)he thereby stirs the conscience of the husband or ruler, causing him to improve his conduct.<sup>70</sup>

This argument is perspicacious in its account of the similarity between the arguments of wives and ministers. I want to argue, however, that it draws the wrong conclusion, with unfortunate consequences for the understanding of the *Lienü zhuan* arguments. First, its method of using wife metaphors to analyze the arguments of ministers makes an unjustified prior assumption: that the arguments are about ministers, not wives. Second, the analogy between wife and minister is only partially applicable to the arguments of the *Lienü zhuan* and to none of the five discussed herein. By definition, it excludes what I have called instructive arguments, since instructive arguments are made by a superior to inferior. Meng Mu uses an instructive analogy to reprimand her young son because she is wise, not because she is powerless and needs to persuade. Wenbo and Ji Kangzi are adults and holders of office, but they treat Jing Jiang with a respect not untouched by fear; all the accounts suggest that her age and personal authority command their respect and deference.

<sup>67</sup> Gipoulon, "L'image de l'épouse," 2.

<sup>68</sup> See Gipoulon, "L'image de l'épouse," 8 and Raphals, *Sharing the Light*, especially Ch. 1.

<sup>69</sup> Gipoulon, "L'image de l'épouse," 8.

<sup>70</sup> As examples of this kind of admonition, Gipoulon cites the first two life stories from the second chapter of the *Lienü zhuan*, those of Jiang, wife of King Xuan of Zhou (LNZ 2.1) and Ji of Wei, wife of Duke Huan of Qi (684-642), and the duke's minister Guan Zhong (LNZ 2.2). For further examples, see Raphals, *Sharing the Light*, especially Ch. 2.

All the passages in Gipoulon's discussion come from the first five chapters of the *Lienü zhuan*.<sup>71</sup> The omission of the arguments of the *Biantong zhuan* is significant because most are attributed to unmarried girls or widows, who fall outside the wife-minister analogy. The bow-maker's wife and Ti Ying resemble ministers in their use of persuasion and psychological subtlety, but their persuasions are addressed directly to rulers, not to husbands. Xuwu's persuasion is addressed to another woman of only slightly higher status than herself. (Her wealthier neighbors are members of the same association.) Xuwu resembles not so much a minister persuading a ruler as an official persuading colleagues of equal rank to a common position or course of action.

In summary, these accounts of philosophical debate as hierarchical persuasion leave out the possibility that women contributed to the repertoire of early Chinese arguments about ethics, statecraft, and realpolitik. In one case, women disappear from the picture; in the other, they never enter it.

### Female Subjectivity

An ostensibly feminist reading might hold that these arguments cannot represent the moral reasoning of women because they were compiled by male authors; they cannot represent the views of female subjects because they do not display "female subjectivity." Gipoulon's account of the *Lienü zhuan* also relies on unstated assumptions about femininity or female subjectivity that bear further scrutiny. First is the claim that the women in the *Lienü zhuan* are not "feminine" enough (and therefore must be men), in part, because of the absence of jealousy in the stories.<sup>72</sup> An opposite conclusion is also possible: that the *Biantong zhuan* portrayed women as using the same kind of persuasion and moral reasoning as men. In the *Lienü zhuan*, Xuwu persuades her colleagues to retain her despite her poverty; in the *Zhangguoce*, Gan Mao 甘茂 uses the same argument to gain protection from Su Qin 蘇秦.<sup>73</sup> In this view, women who engage in political argument underscore the similarity of the intellectual and

<sup>71</sup> See Gipoulon, "L'image de l'épouse," nn. 6, 7, 8, 9, 13, 16-19, 21-38, and 42-55.

<sup>72</sup> Gipoulon, "L'image de l'épouse," 13.

<sup>73</sup> Gan Mao, in flight from Qin, makes an analogy between his own situation and the poor "virgin of Jiangshang" to obtain the patronage of Su Qin. See Liu Xiang, *Zhangguoce* (Shanghai: Guji chubanshe, 1985) vol. 4 (Qin 2), 158-61;

moral sensibility attributed to sagacious individuals, male and female.<sup>74</sup>

Finally, scholars of Chinese philosophy have a history of separating an essentialized "feminine" (which is praised) from actual female persons (who are ignored), often in order to argue for the "feminism" of Confucian thought through its praise or reification of the "feminine."<sup>75</sup> Gipoulon locates moral exhortation in the realm of the feminine; on the other hand, she denies *prima facie* that actual women might be the authors of effective persuasions.

### *Ti Ying and the Question of Historical Plausibility*

Like so many of the *Lienü zhuan* arguments set within a family residence, the arguments ascribed to Xuwu, Meng Mu, the wife of the bow-maker of Jin, and Jing Jiang cannot be verified independently, however much they may be repeated from text to text. Xuwu's argument is an appeal for goodwill on the basis of self-interest; such appeals pervade the pages of the *Zhanguo*. Does the story of Meng Mu come from the memory (or invention) of the grown Mencius, or is it a later invention by another? No annals record the argument ascribed to the wife of the bow-maker of Jin in the court of Duke Ping; an almost identical version of the story appears in the *Hanshi waizhuan*, but it is equally didactic in tone.

Jing Jiang's case is more complicated because she is mentioned extensively in the *Guoyu* and other Warring States texts.<sup>76</sup> One possible reason that Jing Jiang receives so much attention in these texts is a direct association with Confucius and his disciples. The *Hanshi waizhuan* and *Zhanguo* indicate that Wenbo was a student of Con-

No. 77 in James Irving Crump, *Ch'an-kuo ts'ü* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970). The story of the virgins of Jiangshang is from the reign of King Zhao Xiang of Qin (r. 306-251 BCE). The *Zhanguo* and *Lienü zhuan* versions of the argument are paraphrased in the *Taiping yulan* (485/3b, 826/6a, 870/5b) and in the *Chuxueji* 初學記, Vol. 3, *qiwubu* 器物部, (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1962) 25:616-17, as cited in LNZ 6:13a.

<sup>74</sup> For a detailed account of this argument see Raphals, *Sharing the Light*.

<sup>75</sup> For example, Ames, "Taoism and the Androgynous Ideal"; Rosemont, "Classical Confucian and Contemporary Feminist Perspectives on the Self"; and Hall and Ames, "Chinese Sexism."

<sup>76</sup> The *Zuo* mentions Wenbo briefly (Wen 14), but without reference to Jing Jiang. She receives extensive treatment in the *Guoyu* (5.10-17), and her arguments are paraphrased in the *Zhanguo*, *Hanshi waizhuan* (1) and *Kongzi jiyu* 孔子家語 (9 and 10). She is praised for her knowledge of the rites in the *Lienü zhuan* and in *Li ji* 3. Neither Wenbo nor Jing Jiang appears in the *Analecs*.

fucius, that he was sent to Confucius by his mother, and that he was wanting in his behavior toward his teacher.<sup>77</sup> In the *Lienü zhuan* account, Confucius respects Jing Jiang enough to use her as an example to instruct his disciples.<sup>78</sup>

By contrast, the story of Ti Ying's intervention on her father's behalf is less easy to dismiss because Sima Qian underscores her importance in repeated references to her actions in his account of her in the postface to the *Shiji*. Both the *Lienü zhuan* and *Shiji* agree that the argument of Ti Ying was advanced in the court of Emperor Xiao Wen, and identical versions of the argument appear in both texts and in the *Hanshu*. Ti Ying's petition and records of the event may have been preserved in court documents. Whatever Sima's sources for this story—and his inclusion of the physician's cases raises many questions in this regard—the postface to *Shiji* 105 makes it clear he has more than a little interest in the story of Ti Ying's defense, which bears indirectly on his own circumstances.

... Bian Que suffered calamity because of his art, and the Master of the Granary [Chunyu Yi], although he hid his traces and kept himself secret, still was bound for punishment. It was only because Ti Ying sent forward a document of petition that her father was able live out his days in peace.<sup>79</sup>

The passage ends with the puzzling statement that the Master of the Granary "could be said to come close" (*ke wei jin zhi yi* 可謂近之矣) to Bian Que. This is the apparent reason for including these two life stories in the chapter. Chunyu Yi "comes close" to Bian Que in two senses: in his medical skill and in his experience of judicial persecution. Bian Que perishes; and, for all his secrecy and precautions, Chunyu Yi is spared only because of the intervention of Ti Ying. Sima's reference to her by name rather than simply as "the daughter of Chunyu Yi" underscores her agency in her father's happier fate.<sup>80</sup>

Sima Qian may have felt sharply the contrast between Ti Ying's intervention and Chunyu Yi's memorial and his own personal fate.

<sup>77</sup> *Hanshi waizhuan* 1.19, 6b-7a and *Zhanguo* 20 (Zhao 3), 692-99. Herc, Lou Huan of Qin uses the story to avoid giving advice to the King of Zhao about Zhao's prospects after a defeat by Qin. In this version, Wenbo's [former] wet nurse asks Ji how she can forbear to mourn for her son.

<sup>78</sup> For detailed discussion of textual sources for Jing Jiang and her possible connection with Confucius, see Raphals, "A Woman Who Understood the Rites."

<sup>79</sup> *Shiji* 105:2817.

<sup>80</sup> A similar example comes from the biography of the assassin Nie Zheng 聶政 (d. 397) and subsequent self-sacrifice of his elder sister to complete his honor by public recognition (*Shiji* 86:2525). Sima Qian refers to her by name as Nie Rong 聶榮 and declares her to be a *lienü* 烈女 or "virtuous woman"; indeed, this story

The defense and explanations offered in Chunyu Yi's memorial apparently give satisfaction, especially since there is no account of any subsequent action against him. In Sima's letter to Shao Qing, included in Ban Gu's biography in *Hanshu* 62, he repeatedly states that he was unable to give a satisfactory account of himself. In his attempted defense of the disgraced general Li Ling 李陵, he was "unable to clarify matters fully" (*wei neng jin ming* 未能盡明), the emperor "did not perceive [the situation] fully" (*bu shen xiao* 不深曉); he was put in prison and was "unable to explain himself" (*bu neng zi lie* 不能自列) or make clear his loyalty.<sup>81</sup> The comparison between the two cases is amplified later in the same passage, where Sima describes mutilation as the worst disgrace, second only to castration.<sup>82</sup> Even allowing for the facts of Chunyu Yi's higher office, nobler family, and less extreme judicial circumstances, Sima modestly presents himself as lacking the rhetorical skills to plead his own innocence when given an opportunity to do so! An even harsher contrast emerges between Ti Ying and Sima Qian's own friends and associates:

My family was poor and our wealth was insufficient to commute the punishment. Of those nearest to me, no one sought to help and none of the officials near to the throne spoke a single word for me.<sup>83</sup>

In the case of Ti Ying, Sima Qian's repeated and explicit references to her by name and his contrast between her and his own friends and relatives strongly suggest that he, at least, believed that these events had actually taken place, presumably less than a century before.

The point of the foregoing lengthy discussion is a simple one. Virtually all commentators on the subject have not considered, or have dismissed outright, the possibility that the *Lienü zhuan* arguments represent ethical reflection by women. I have argued to the contrary: (1) that some degree of female authorship may be attributed to the arguments in the *Lienü zhuan*, despite its compilation and transmission by men;<sup>84</sup> (2) that these arguments cannot be dismissed

is the locus classicus for the term. Neither the *Lienü zhuan* life story of Nie Ying (LNZ 8.3) nor the *Zhanguo* account of Nie Zheng (*Zhanguo* 27 [Han 2], 993-1000) accord her this recognition, but refer to her only as "the elder sister of Nie Zheng."

<sup>81</sup> *Hanshu* 62:2730. Li Ling incurred disgrace because he surrendered to the Xiongnu after a heroic defense in 99 BCE Cf. *Hanshu* 54:2450f.

<sup>82</sup> *Hanshu* 62:2732.

<sup>83</sup> *Hanshu* 62:2730.

<sup>84</sup> For a comparable argument for Greek medical texts, see G. E. R. Lloyd,

as arguments in defense of, or by, ministers; and (3) that claims for the presence or absence of female subjectivity make assumptions in advance of the evidence.

#### *Archaeological Evidence of Arguments by Women*

Another approach to the verisimilitude of the arguments and persuasions of the *Biantong zhuan* is to contrast them to actual accounts of either persuasion or legal argument. Such evidence would be particularly valuable in the case of arguments among commoners, such as the example of Qiwu, for whom so little independent evidence is available.

The tomb excavations from Shuihudi, dated 217 BCE, contain over six hundred bamboo strips of legal documents. These include digests of Qin legal codes, instructions to officials, and a section titled "Models for sealing and investigating" (*Fengzhen shi*), a compendium of brief digests of twenty-five summary reports of actual legal cases on ninety-eight strips.<sup>85</sup> Several of these deal with the treatment of male and female slaves (*chen* 臣 and *qie* 妾, respectively), who were privately owned, and male and female bondservants (*lichen* 隸臣 and *liqie* 隸妾), who were held by the government. For example, the section "Eighteen Qin Statutes" 秦律十八種 specifies that bondwomen can be lent to commoners and held responsible for the cost of lost government tools.<sup>86</sup> This section discusses the redemption of male and female bondservants but specifically proscribes the redemption of (skilled) female bondservants engaged in embroidery and clothing work.<sup>87</sup> It also sets relative rates for the value of the labor of male and female bondservants: the performance of one (male) artisan was set as equivalent to two bondwomen. With skilled female workers, however, the situation changed; in the case of a seamstress (a skilled female laborer) and an artisan, one woman was equivalent to one man.<sup>88</sup> Three cases in the *Fengzhen shi* section specifically deal with the treatment of slaves and bondwomen and permit contrast with the treatment of women and

*Science, Folklore and Ideology: Studies in the Life Sciences in Ancient Greece* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 60-61.

<sup>85</sup> See YMSHD, slips 581-678b; Hulsewé, Group E.

<sup>86</sup> YMSHD slips 115 and 144-46, trans. Hulsewé, A 11 and 39.

<sup>87</sup> YMSHD slips 128-29, trans. Hulsewé, A 35.

<sup>88</sup> YMSHD slips 176-77, trans. Hulsewé, A 59-60.

men under Qin law. One account of the sealing of a house registers both a male and a female slave as sealed property.<sup>89</sup> Others summarize the punishment of both male and female slaves at the request of their owners.<sup>90</sup> Several concern the activities and status of women, including the mention that a slave woman assisted in a police enquiry.<sup>91</sup>

Most interesting for purposes of the present discussion is one commoner woman's denunciation (*gao* 告) of another for causing her to miscarry:

I had been pregnant for six months. Yesterday, in the daytime, I fought with the adult woman C of the same village. I and C grabbed each other by the hair. C threw me over and drove me back. A fellow-villager, the *gongshi* 公士 D, came to the rescue and separated C and me.<sup>92</sup> As soon as I had reached my house, I felt ill and my belly hurt; yesterday evening the child miscarried. Now I have wrapped up the child and I have come to bring it, and to denounce myself and to denounce C.<sup>93</sup>

The report adds that the presiding official ordered the arrest of C, examined the dead baby (and placenta), brought in a bondswoman who had experience of childbirth to examine both mother and child, and had the complainant's family questioned as to her condition when she arrived home.<sup>94</sup>

The central protagonist of this case, like several of the *Lienü zhuan* women, comes forward on her own initiative to report the incident and denounce the culpable parties, possibly including herself. She clearly has access to the judicial process and her testimony is taken seriously and investigated thoroughly. The subsequent procedures not only verify her account of events, but attempt to gain independent information as to her condition at the time of the miscarriage.

The women's treatment is not noticeably different from that of a group of male complainants in the next case, a group of men accusing a neighbor of "poisonous words." Most of the record consists of the statement of the accused, who argues against the charge by revealing a history of ostracism of his family ever since his grandmother's denunciation and exile on the same charge, thirty years

<sup>89</sup> YMSHD slips 588-92, trans. Hulsewé, E 3.

<sup>90</sup> YMSHD slips 617-21 and 622-25, trans. Hulsewé, E 15 and E 16.

<sup>91</sup> YMSHD slips 653-63, trans. Hulsewé, E 2.

<sup>92</sup> The *gongshi* was the first and lowest rank of the aristocracy. See Hulsewé, E 23, n. 7.

<sup>93</sup> YMSHD slips 644-70, translation slightly modified from Hulsewé, E 23.

<sup>94</sup> YMSHD slips 644-70, Hulsewé, E 23.

before.<sup>95</sup> In both cases, the complaining party has access to the judicial process, the complaint is recorded in detail, and an investigation is made to determine the facts of the case to the satisfaction of the examining officials.

Women also speak in their own voices in casebooks (*zouxian shu* 奏獻書) excavated from Zhangjiashan 張家山 at Jiangling in Hubei.<sup>96</sup> The second case in the corpus is a complaint against a Slave Mei 婢媚 for absconding after being sold to the *daifu* 大夫 祿 by a commoner Dian 士五點 for 16,000 cash in the sixth year of Gaozu's reign (201).<sup>97</sup> Her argument is not to deny her flight but to justify it on the grounds that Dian enslaved and sold her in violation of an edict of 202, which freed persons previously sold into slavery because of widespread famine.<sup>98</sup>

The cause of my becoming Dian's slave is that at the time of [the defeat of] Chu, I had fled and absconded and gone down into Han and did not write my name in the population register.<sup>99</sup> Dian detained me, entered me in the register, re-enslaved me, and sold me to Lu. Since I had been re-enslaved improperly, I fled and absconded forthwith, this as in [the statement of] Lu.

Dian claims that the re-enslavement was valid because Mei had not registered herself as free:

Dian said: "The reason Mei is my slave is that at time of [the defeat of] Chu when she fled and I detained her in the sixth year in the middle of the second month, she did not yet have her name in the population register, whereupon I had her entered in the register and sold her to Lu, this as in [the statement of] Lu." He said to Mei: "The reason you are my slave is that, although at the time [of the defeat of] Chu you had fled and gone to Han, you did not write your name in the population register, [so when] I detained you and re-enslaved you, my selling you was proper. You fled and absconded, what is there to explain?"<sup>100</sup>

<sup>95</sup> YMSHD slips 671-74, Hulsewé, E 24.

<sup>96</sup> See Jiangling Zhangjiashan Hanjian zhengli xiaozu 張陵張家山漢簡整理小組, "Jiangling Zhangjiashan Hanjian 'Zouxianshu' shiwen" 張陵張家山漢簡奏獻書釋文, *Wenwu* 447 (1993.8): 22-25 and *Wenwu* 466 (1995.3): 31-36. Because of the considerable time between excavation and preliminary publication, these texts have received relatively little study. For an account of some of these in English is given by Susan R. Weld, "The Han Casebooks from Jiangling" (paper presented at the Association for Asian Studies, Chicago IL, April, 1997).

<sup>97</sup> For this translation of *shiwu*, see Yates, "Social Status in the Ch'in," 201-3.

<sup>98</sup> *Hanshu* 1B:54. This edict by Han Gaozu followed the pacification of the empire and the defeat of Chu. An earlier edict of 205 BCE had permitted people to sell their children and go to Shu and Han for food (*Hanshu* 24A:1127).

<sup>99</sup> See T'ung-tsu Ch'ü, *Han Social Structure* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1972): 141, 334, and 337.

<sup>100</sup> "Jiangling Zhangjiashan Hanjian 'Zouxianshu' shiwen," 22.

In both the Zhangjiashan and Shuihudi materials, the women's remarks all conform to the forms prescribed by the Qin state authorities. The brevity thus imposed on them would have precluded the kind of sustained argument found in the *Lienü zhuan* narratives, the *Mengzi*, or any other text that foregrounds literary and philosophical arguments that have been crafted to such a high degree. The arguments are less detailed than those of the *Lienü zhuan*, but they do show women arguing in their own defense, and the voices of actual women retain a sense of authenticity that the more elaborate arguments of the *Lienü zhuan* may not. These differences between the *Lienü zhuan* arguments and the statements in case books from excavated texts underscore the literary and philosophical qualities of the *Lienü zhuan*. Ironically, the sophisticated construction of these narratives makes them sound less "genuine" than the historical statements of female commoners.

#### Conclusion

In conclusion, I want to reconsider the distinction between hierarchical persuasion and instructive argument in the contexts of state politics and teaching lineages. Arguments within the context of state politics tend toward hierarchical persuasion of an inferior (a minister or woman) to a superior, a client addressing a patron. Effective strategies for this kind of argument include the psychological manipulation described in the *Shuonan* chapter of the *Han Feizi*, appeals to the self-interest of the ruler of the kind demonstrated in the *Biantong zhuan*, appeals to the example or authority of rulers of legendary political efficacy and rectitude, and the specific avoidance of adversarial argument. Our major sources for hierarchical persuasions in state politics are quasi-historical narratives, including the *Zuozhuan*, *Guoyu*, *Lienü zhuan*, *Shiji*, and *Zhanguo*.

The context of teaching lineages, by contrast, favors instructive argument by a teacher or sage to an inferior disciple or interlocutor. Effective strategies for this kind of argument include appeals to the rectitude and authority of the sages, claims for one's own position within a teaching lineage and access to its secrets and esoteric meanings (for example, Mencius) or texts, and the use of adversarial arguments against competitors, either inside the lineage (for example, Xunzi's attacks on Mengzi) or to defend the lineage against attacks from without (for example, Zhuangzi's attacks on the Ruhists and

Mohists). Our major sources for instructive argument within teaching lineages are the texts of the Masters category, supported by anecdotal traditions within the teaching lineage. Several points about the distinction between these two contexts are worth making.

First, arguments by women fit squarely into the context of state politics and are absent or excluded from the context of teaching lineages. Within quasi-historical narratives, women address rulers in the same texts, contexts, and terms as men do. Women appear in Masters texts, but as examples or objects of discussion, not as agents: Mothers instructing sons are also examples of instructive argument, but these mothers are not part of teaching lineages. Second, narratives about state politics and narratives in teaching lineages are potentially competing traditions. Part of the difficulty in distinguishing the two contexts is that "teachers" appear in both, but in opposite roles. In the context of state politics, a teacher or sage who discusses virtue and politics with a ruler is an inferior; the narrative is focused on the ruler, not on him. In the context of the texts of his teaching lineage, the same individual is a superior instructing disciples (or attempting to do so). In this context, a ruler is reduced to the status of disciple/interlocutor. Mother-teachers appear rarely in teaching lineage stories, but they are similarly polyvalent in that they are inferior to their sons by gender and superior as parents and as teachers. The overlap between the two contexts and the exclusion of women from teaching lineages obscures our view of the role of women in early argumentation.

In a study of the contexts for debate in China and Greece, Sir Geoffrey Lloyd has argued that specifically philosophical argumentation played a minor role in the development of textual teaching lineages, which were primarily concerned with the transmission of texts; they avoided criticizing predecessors and legitimated their own views by appeals to authority.<sup>101</sup> The arguments of the *Biantong zhuan* throw an interesting light on this claim: do the women in the *Biantong zhuan* engage in adversarial argument, to what kind of authority do they appeal (if any), and finally, do their arguments fall under the broad rubric of philosophy?

Jing Jiang disparages her son's competence as minister of Lu;

<sup>101</sup> Lloyd, *Adversaries and Authorities*, 30-44. By contrast, debate, and the audience for debate in potential pupils, was fundamental to the self-definition of Greek schools, but Greek philosophers as a whole sought to maintain independence, rather than patronage, from rulers.

Meng Mu upbraids her son for neglecting his studies; the bow-maker's wife and the *Taicang's* daughter accuse the rulers of their states of vicious and immoral conduct; and even Xuwu disparages her wealthier neighbor's grasp of essentials. Yet none of these arguments are directly adversarial in the manner observable in Greek debates. How could they be? Arguments motivated by real needs and addressed to powerful superiors are necessarily diplomatic.

These arguments are more than merely nonadversarial. They also are arguments that—to varying degrees—solve the problems they describe. Ji's instruction teaches Wenbo how to govern effectively. Meng Mu's slashed weaving cures Mencius of negligence for the rest of his life. The archery lesson of the bow-maker's wife cures the maladroit shooting that caused Duke Ping to condemn her husband. Ti Ying offers to "pay" for her father's crime, even as her arguments eliminate the charges brought against him.

The arguments of the *Biantong zhuan* differ from Masters text arguments in the nature of their appeals to authority. They appeal to the *Five Classics* (especially the *Changes*, *Odes*, and *Rites*), to the sage kings, and to the examples of sagacious women of the past. Nonetheless, the arguments rely more on internal logic and ethical values than on appeals to textual or personal authority. They use analogy but do not center on exact correspondence between analogized qualities for their force, as does, for example, Mencius' dispute with Gaozi.<sup>102</sup> Finally, their appeals to authority do not invoke the specific authority of teaching lineages.<sup>103</sup>

These arguments treat the same subject matter as the canonical texts of Chinese philosophy: the nature of government (Jing Jiang), the goals of life (Meng Mu), and the practice of justice in government (the bow-maker's wife and Ti Ying). Advocates of a "female ethic" might emphasize the importance of the particularity, pragmatism, and relational nature of these arguments. An interesting alternative is to grant, *arguendo*, the claim that intellectual debate for its own sake was not the central feature of Chinese philosophical thought. In this case, we can hardly, as it were, demand of the women what we do not expect of the men. Admitting these arguments

<sup>102</sup> For a vitriolic critique of Mencius' use of analogy, see Chad Hansen, *A Daoist Theory of Chinese Thought* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 188-93.

<sup>103</sup> I follow Lloyd (*Adversaries and Authorities*, 27) in using the terms authority, textual authority, or authority figure to mean individuals, texts, or ideas invoked to justify ideas or practices.

and others like them into the corpus of Chinese philosophical speculation can only serve to broaden the range of material with which to investigate questions of philosophical debate, adversariality, and authority in Warring States China.

*Appendix 1: Analysis of the "Biantong zhuan" and "Muyi zhuan"*

Title	Rhetorical Persuasion	Instructive Argument	Topic of Admonition or Instruction
<i>Biantong zhuan</i>			
6.1 Jing, Concubine of Guan Zhong		to consort	explanation of cryptic behavior of a talented man seeking employment
6.2 Mother of Jiangyi of Chu	to ruler for son		corrupt magistrates
6.3 Wife of the Bow-maker of Jin	to ruler for husband		compounding one fault (poor archery) with another (killing an innocent)
6.4 Daughter of Shanghuai of Qi	to ruler for father		argument against valuing a tree over a human life
6.5 Discriminating Woman of Chu Country	to official for self		compounding one fault (monopolizing the road) with another (beating her)
6.6 The Girl of Agu		to disciples of Confucius	understanding and propriety
6.7 Juan, Girl Ferry Officer of Zhao	to ruler for father		killing a man who is innocent (by virtue of being unaware of his fault)
6.8 The Mother of Foxi of Zhao	to ruler for self		retributive punishment against rebels' families (including hers)
6.9 Yu of Wei of Qi	to ruler for self		argument for government reforms (in self defense)
6.10 Zhongli Chun of Qi		to ruler, consort	use of enigmas to show dangers to kingdom and need to employ able men
6.11 "Su of the Goitre," a Girl of Qi		to ruler, consort	arguments against adornment, admonitions on wellbeing of the state
6.12 Outcast Orphan of Qi		to ruler	use of riddles, king recognizes exceptional

## Appendix 1. Continued.

Title	Rhetorical Persuasion	Instructive Argument	Topic of Admonition or Instruction
<i>Biantong zhuan</i>			
			qualities, marries her to his minister
6.13 Niece of Zhuang, a Dweller of Chu		to ruler, consort	use of allusions to predict calamity and rebellion
6.14 Xuwu of Qi	to neighbors for self		argument for admittance to weaving association
6.15 Daughter of the Taicang of Qi	to ruler for father		release of father, laws on corporal punishment
<i>Muyi zhuan</i>			
1.9 Jing Jiang of the Ji of Lu		to son	weaving-government analogy
1.11 Meng Mu		to son	weaving-government analogy

rhetorical persuasion: 9: to ruler 7, to official 1, to neighbors 1  
instruction: 6: to ruler 4 (of whom 3 marry her), to consort 1, to stranger 1

*Appendix 2: Logic of the Arguments*

### I. The Wife of the Bow-maker of Jin Duke Ping's argument

1. If the bow is not well made, the bow-maker deserves death.
2. If the bow is well made, the ruler can shoot straight.
3. The ruler cannot shoot straight.
4. Therefore (a) the bow is not well made, and (b) the bow-maker deserves death.

It is valid by *modus tollens* and *modus ponens*.

*Modus tollens* (2, 3, therefore 4a)

- 2 If the bow is well made, the ruler can shoot straight.
- 3 The ruler cannot shoot straight.
- Therefore (4a) the bow is not well made.

*Modus ponens* (1, 4a, therefore 4b)

- 1 If the bow is not well made, the bow-maker deserves death.
- 4a The bow is not well made
- Therefore (4b) the bow-maker deserves death.

### The first argument of the bow-maker's wife

1. If the bow is well made, the bow-maker does not deserve death.
  2. If (a) the bow is well made and (b) the ruler is a skillful archer, then (c) the ruler will be able to shoot straight.
  3. (a) The bow is well made, and (b) the ruler cannot shoot straight.
  4. Therefore (a) the ruler lacks skill, and (b) the bow-maker does not deserve death.
- Her argument is also valid by *modus ponens* and partially valid by *modus tollens*.

*Modus ponens*

- 1 If the bow is well made, the bow-maker does not deserve death.
- 3a The bow is well made.
- Therefore (4b) the bow-maker does not deserve death.

*Modus tollens*

- 2 If the bow is well made and the ruler is a skillful archer, the ruler will be able to shoot straight.
- 3b The ruler cannot shoot straight.
- Therefore (4a) the ruler lacks skill [and the bow is not well made]. Her emphasis on (4a) seeks to draw attention away from the contradiction of her claim at (3a).

### The second argument of the bow-maker's wife

1. If the bow is well made, the bow-maker does not deserve death.
2. If the bow is well made and the ruler is a skillful archer, the ruler will be able to shoot straight.
3. The bow is well made, and the ruler shoots straight (by virtue of her instruction).
4. Therefore the bow-maker does not deserve death.

*Modus ponens* (1, 3A, therefore 4):

- 1 If the bow is well made, the bow-maker does not deserve death.
- 3a The bow is well made.
- Therefore (4) the bow-maker does not deserve death.

and, in passing

- 2 If (a) the bow is well made and (b) the ruler is a skillful archer, (c) the ruler will be able to shoot straight.
- 3 The bow is well made, and the ruler shoots straight.
- Therefore (2b) the ruler is a skillful archer.

### II. Xuwu of Qi Liwu's argument

1. Weaving at night requires sufficient candlelight.
2. Each member must bring a candle to ensure sufficient light.
3. Xuwu has not brought a candle.
4. The light is insufficient, or Xuwu consumes more than she contributes.
5. Xuwu's presence harms the association.
6. Xuwu should be excluded.

**Xuwu's counter-argument**

1. Weaving at night requires sufficient candlelight.
2. If the light is sufficient, weaving can proceed.
3. Xuwu has not brought a candle.
4. The light is already sufficient; Xuwu's presence does not diminish it, and Xuwu benefits the association in other ways than bringing a candle.
5. Xuwu's presence benefits the association.
6. Xuwu should not be excluded.

**III. Ti Ying****The king's argument**

1. The king desires justice to prevail in the empire.
2. The king convicts a man of a crime if and only if he has serious faults.
3. If the king convicts a man of a crime, he sentences him to death or mutilation in the name of justice.
4. Chunyu Yi has been convicted of a crime.
5. Therefore Chunyu Yi has serious faults, and
6. Chunyu Yi deserves death or mutilation in the name of justice.

**Ti Ying's counter-argument**

1. The king desires justice to prevail in the empire.
2. Justice and integrity are (partially) defined as the desire to correct one's faults.
3. Chunyu Yi has a (deserved) reputation for justice and integrity.
4. Therefore Chunyu Yi desires to correct his faults.
5. If a man suffers death or mutilation, he cannot return to life or physical integrity.
6. If he cannot return to life or physical integrity, he cannot correct his faults.
7. If Chunyu Yi suffers death or mutilation, he cannot correct his faults.
8. Therefore whoever causes Chunyu Yi to suffer death or mutilation prevents him from correcting his faults.
9. The king has sentenced Chunyu Yi to mutilation in the name of justice.
10. Therefore, in the name of justice, the king prevents Chunyu Yi from doing that which makes him just (correcting his faults).
11. Therefore the king cannot desire justice to prevail in the empire.

**IV. Jing Jiang's analogy**

1. Government (A) is the primary activity of men.
2. Weaving (B) is the primary activity of women.
3. Government requires the correct function of eight components  $A = \Sigma(A1...A8)$ .
4. Weaving (B) requires the correct function of eight components  $B = \Sigma(B1...B8)$ .  $A:B::\Sigma(A1...A8):\Sigma(B1...B8)$ .
5. Men's governing is like women's weaving; key offices correspond to key parts of the loom.
6. I am a woman, and I understand weaving.
7. You are a man, and you do not understand government.

8. I understand the necessary qualifications for each component of the loom, and the correspondences between them and the various offices of the government.
9. Therefore I am competent to instruct you in the appointment of officials.

**V. Meng Mu's argument**

1. Men's studying and self-cultivation is like women's weaving insofar as both are: (1) the goal of activity, (2) the source of livelihood and recognition, and (3) protection against misfortune in an unpredictable world.
2. As a woman, if I neglect my work, I will pay the price in misfortune later and hunger now.
3. If as a man you neglect your work, you will pay the price in misfortune later.
4. By cutting my weaving now, I make you pay the price in hunger now, with me, so you will learn by it and not have to pay the price in misfortune later.