Chen links her narrative to a few larger themes. The book is most successful in its exploration of the question of how state-imposed legal and institutional regimes affect the long-term development of community, identity, and economic structure. She has ably demonstrated how a set of political choices made by one regime can have lasting impact on a particular place and group of people. Her choice in the book's epilogue to draw comparisons between Qing Shuangcheng and the contemporary *hukou* 户口 system is convincing, and she does not take the parallel farther than it can hold up. Somewhat less satisfying are her occasional suggestions that Shuangcheng serves as a case study for understanding local community in China writ-large, or even community on the Chinese frontier alone. The vastly expanded role of the state in the lives of banner communities in general, and Shuangcheng specifically, make it difficult to see Shuangcheng as anything like a "normal" Chinese village. In all, though, this book is a valuable addition to the literature on Chinese historical demography, the banner system, and community development.

Ancestors, Kings, and the Dao. By Constance A. Cook, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2017. 337 pp. (hardcover)

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In *Ancestors, Kings, and the Dao*, Professor Constance Cook has provided an in-depth analysis of ritual performance and its history as depicted in a wide array of writings, ranging from bronze inscriptions dating to the Western Zhou and Spring and Autumn periods (1046–481 BCE) to bamboo and received texts from the Warring States period (475–221 BCE). Cook's unique, longue-durée narrative of Zhou religious history focuses on ancestor worship and the cultivation and bestowal of *De* 德 (as a divine blessing or virtue) through this process. Music plays a special role: Cook draw links between the rhetoric found in early Zhou bronze inscriptions (in particular eulogies), the subsequent compilation of the *Odes*, and the eventual use of music as a vital means of self-cultivation half a millennium later. Her interpretations of a wide array of evidence—including detailed accounts of numerous bronze inscriptions and recently found or excavated bamboo strip texts—in terms of a coherent set of religious practices and beliefs is distinctive, and she presents a compelling view of the history of the first millennium BCE in terms of a continuity of religious practices, teachings, musical performance, and rhetoric.

While Cook states in the Introduction that the study's primary endeavor is to outline the "development of musical performance as a crucible for displaying De," (4) it is not at all clear that musical performance is the sole link among the many different parts of the book. What is clear is that this book provides ample discussion of early Zhou ritual practice and the possible theology underlying such practice, just as it imparts perspectives and insights into how such practices were transmitted for the next 800 or so years. The modes

of transmission that Cook pays special attention to are rhetorical structures, rhyme patterns, and the behaviors of social actors in rituals such as the capping (coming-of-age), promotion to ancestral lineage, and inner cultivation rituals.

The book's two parts are arranged chronologically, with the period of the Western Zhou under analysis in Part I and the periods of the Spring and Autumn and Warring States, or "post-Zhou-dominated world" (5), in Part II. In both Parts, Cook examines scores of bronze inscriptions to establish a detailed picture of the evolution of both ritual context and the rhetoric of ritual genres, especially eulogy. She makes an interesting case for the connection between the musical aspects of eulogistic narratives (the eulogistic song) in the Western Zhou and the development of literary and ritual practices reflected in the performance of the *Odes* in the Eastern Zhou. In the book's second part, in particular, in addition to the use of bronze inscriptions, Cook turns to bamboo and received texts to delineate how later thinkers, mostly Confucian, or Ru practitioners, make use of earlier rhetorical forms and references in their programs for the inner cultivation of De.

The strength of the book lies in its detail, as well as in its translations and insightful discussions of important inscriptions, ritual texts, and passages. In the first part, which analyzes the relationship between ancestor rites and the maintenance of Zhou political power, Cook examines how a lineage heir, or *xiaozi* 孝子, ascends to his position in the ancestral Zhou lineage and court. Her elaborate descriptions reveal how Zhou ritual practice corresponded to a particular theology about Heaven and its ability to bestow De on various individual actors in life, especially through ritual and the performance of what Cook thinks is likely a dance: the *wei-yi* ("awesome decorum"). Cook also postulates how the rhythms and rhymes of eulogy suggest musical accompaniment, and how the eulogies themselves were likely sung or chanted. But given the scarcity of evidence that lays out how song and music fit into early ritual, there is very little that might prove Cook's intuitions and claims. The mere existence of rhythms and rhymes in the language of a eulogy, for instance, does not determine whether or not it recorded or was used in an actual musical performance. However, one need only adopt a more expansive notion of musical context, one that includes chant, rhyme, poetry, and choreographed, ritualistic body movements, to accept Cook's most basic assertions that the eulogistic genre was deeply musical and connected to ritual music in some way.

Another important insight conveyed in the earlier part of the book concerns the theology of De and how it serves as a primary currency in early Zhou ritual. Most scholarly discussions approach De philosophically, as a virtue or power that is central to Warring States views on self-cultivation and the Dao. While David Nivison has written extensively on its religious roots in the Zhou, even his account ultimately extracts it from its original contexts to deconstruct it in terms of systematic philosophies. Cook's more embedded perspective portrays De to be the centerpiece of the ritual transaction between humans on the one hand and ancestral spirits and Heaven on the other. This makes De closer to the English term "grace" or "blessing" than "virtue," and places De at the forefront of any explanation of ritual. As the primary motivation for ritual action to communicate with and call upon the spirit world, De justifies the choreographed solemnity of ritual occasions, giving underlying meaning to all sorts of specific actions, objects, and forms.

In examining the role of rhetoric and formulas in inscriptional text, Cook painstakingly tries to link rhyme and written structures to musical performances. While it is apparent

that music was an integral aspect of early Zhou ritual performance, there simply isn't sufficient evidence to assert such a connection. This lack of conclusive evidence concerning the connection between specific ritual forms and musical performances can also be seen in the following statement (140): "The fact that food vessel inscriptions included eulogistic narratives seen more prominently on bells confirms the use of both vessels in musical performances during sacrifices." Here, Cook "confirms" the use of certain food vessels in sacrificial musical performances. But the evidence provided for this link is a mere association between the inscriptions on the food vessels and eulogies that were also used on bells. The fact of the matter is that we cannot know for sure.

A clear strength of the book is its use of a consistent language drawn from religious contexts to discuss the Zhou culture and to weave early-period religion into later-period religious developments. For example, Cook speaks of Ru (Confucian) practitioners not as sophistic philosophers but as "acolytes," portraying them as pious members of a spiritual community while also shedding light on the sort of intentional spiritual path that these men embarked on. However, there are also a few terms Cook uses that do not convey an adequate sense of the history of the Zhou period. One example is when she refers to the establishment of the Zhou "nation," translating *bang* 邦 as "nation" instead of state. Without theoretical elaboration or qualification of what Cook means or gains by using this term, the reader cannot but think of the recent nation-state structure and all that goes with it in the modern world, which indeed has nothing to do with the early Zhou period. A similar criticism can be invoked about Cook's reference to later Zhou elite men as the "literati" of the period, which is a term that is perhaps more appropriate for the specific sociopolitical world of later, imperial China (if appropriate at all). And lastly, another misleading use of terminology is Cook's reference to "ecstatic ritual" forms, which I understand as emphasizing trance-like states that disconnect the individual from his or her surroundings. This type of description for ritual in ancient China is arguably only relevant in a small number of contexts, as most ritual forms served as a means for individuals to plug into their environments and surroundings more effectively while also enriching one's internal state.

Because Cook is mainly interested in finding areas of connection and influence rather than discontinuity and radical difference among religious beliefs, on the whole she seems to conjure an overly stable image of Zhou continuity and connection. Moreover, she speaks of "Zhou ritual practice" in the singular, as though she were examining a single, finite entity and its evolution through time. Despite these tendencies, Cook is quite careful to stick to the sources and make note of key moments of transformation in Zhou ritual cultures. The documentation she provides of the successful transmission of many elements of Zhou ritual and theology regarding Heaven, Shangdi, ancestors, and De (virtue, grace, power) is mostly convincing, and the solidly religious perspective she uses to connect archaic sources to more recent bamboo finds and the later, Warring States "Hundred Schools" period provides a rare glimpse into ancient Chinese culture that has previously been obscured by scholarly obsessions with "schools" and "isms" such as Confucianism, Daoism, Mohism, and so forth.

In sum, this is a worthwhile book to learn from, study, and consult. It contributes to a broader understanding of Chinese religious history by outlining a coherent, chronological transmission of what Cook dubs the "Zhou Way" in various regional or local spheres throughout the ancient East Eurasian world. Whether or not one agrees with its specific

narrative of ritual evolution (i.e., from political and religious practices of the early Zhou, to the creation of classics such as the *Odes*, and then to Warring States philosophies of self-cultivation), one can nonetheless learn much from the knowledge and expertise conveyed in every page.

Four Seasons: A Ming Emperor and His Grand Secretaries in Sixteenth-Century China. By John Dardess. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016. 287 pp. $38.00 (paperback).

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It takes an exceptionally skillful historian to present the most prominent political issues and figures of the long Ming Jiajing reign (1521–1567) without reducing human emotions and relations to stereotypes and moral judgments. In *Four Seasons*, John Dardess not only accomplishes this but also seamlessly weaves historiographical questions into captivating storytelling.

Four Seasons is organized around the various stages of the Jiajing rule and the tenures of four officials who rose to the position of chief grand secretary. From "spring" to "winter," each chapter delineates the personality and career of one of these men and, by detailing his collaboration with the emperor, explores a cluster of issues that challenged the Ming empire in the sixteenth century. These issues, which include the Great Rites controversy and the demise of the notorious Yan Song, have been the subjects of many monographs. In a refreshing way, Dardess's biographical approach compels the reader to explore the nitty-gritty aspects of policy and political questions by looking at how they were shaped by these powerful individuals' personal style, preference, and habit.

Chapter 1 introduces the thirteen-year-old prince, Zhu Houcong, who was selected by a group of officials led by the chief grand secretary Yang Tinghe to succeed to the throne after the Zhengde emperor died without an heir. Appropriately titled "A Young Emperor Shows His Teeth," this chapter shows Zhu Houcong to have been an intelligent teenager with exceptional stamina. He persisted and prevailed with astonishing political success in demanding a series of changes to the imperial rituals regarding ancestor worship and filial expression. "Young as he was, he instinctively understood power: how to use his personal resources to get his way over men (and women) much older and vastly more experienced than he" (11). Dardess describes the so-call Great Rites debates, a series of negotiations over imperial rituals, from the perspective of a young ruler whose strong filial feelings towards his parents found support in his classical studies and among a few sympathetic—and perhaps opportunist—officials. Ritual norms had always been subject to negotiation; Ming history had witnessed many instances in which political and intellectual power enabled meaningful reinterpretation of Confucian rituals. Yang Tinghe's weakness as a bureaucratic leader lay not so much in the technical ritual