



Myths of Yü the Great

Of all the major primeval figures, including the Yellow Emperor, Yi the Archer, and Yao and Shun, Yü the Great has attracted the most mythological stories and legends. Unlike Yi the Archer, Yü is not an ambiguous figure; he is consistently presented as a beneficent demi-god, savior of humankind, and, in some early traditions, the exemplar of the dutiful minister who put public duty before private interests.

It will be apparent from earlier readings and in discussions thus far that there are four flood myths in the Chinese tradition. The first has Kung Kung as its central figure and is narrated in *Kuan Tzu*, *Kuo yü*, and *Huai-nan Tzu*. In a second flood myth, Nü Kua plays the major role. The third is the Kun flood myth, and the fourth is the Yü myth.

Yü Controls the Flood

Yü is mainly associated with the Kun-Yü tradition of the flood myth which is told in many versions in most of the early texts. The first two readings from the "Questions of Heaven" and *The Classic of Mountains and Seas*, focus on the myth of the orphaned son born by a miracle who carried on the work of his disgraced and executed father. The third reading, from *The Classic of History*, underscores the topographical reconstruction and hydraulic work of the hero as he controls the world

flood. In this version, Yü appears not so much a demigod as a humanized minister of Shun. The fourth reading, from *Shih Tzu*, corroborated in *Chuang Tzu*, chapter 33, gives a graphic account of the physical extremes Yü suffered when delivering the world from the misery of the flood. Yü's heroic labors are the subject of a joke in the *Chronicle of Tso*, when Duke Ting, Prince of Lu quipped in the year 540 B.C., "If it had not been for Yü, we would just be fishes!" (*Chao kung* First Year, Couvreur 1914, 3.19).

If Kun was not fit to control the flood, why was he entrusted with this task? They all said, "Do not fear! Try him and see if he can accomplish it." . . . Lord Yü issued from Kun's belly. How did he metamorphose? Yü inherited his legacy and continued the work of his father. Why was his plan different, even though the work was already in progress? How did he dam the flood waters at their deepest? How did he demarcate the Nine Lands of the earth? Over the rivers and seas what did the Responding Dragon achieve, and where did he pass? What plan did Kun devise? What did Yü succeed in doing? (*Ch'u Tz'u, T'ien wen*, SPTK 3.5b-7b)

Floodwater dashed up against the skies. Kun stole God's self-renewing soil in order to dam the floodwater, but he did not wait for God's official permission. God ordered Chu Yung to kill Kun on the approaches to Feather Mountain. Yü was born from Kun's belly. So in the end, God issued a command allowing Yü to spread out the self-replacing soil so as to quell the floods in the Nine Provinces. (*Shan hai ching, Hai nei ching*, SPPY 18.8b-9a)

The Nine Provinces were standardized. The four quarters were made habitable. The Nine Mountains were deforested and put down for arable land. The sources of the Nine Rivers were dredged. The Nine Marshes were banked up. The Four Seas had their concourses opened freely. The Six Treasuries were well attended to. All the soils were compared and classified. Their land values and revenues were carefully controlled. (*Shang shu, Yü kung*, SPPY 6.16b)

In ancient times, Dragon Gate had not been cleft open, Lü-liang had not been bored through, and the river passed above Meng-men, its waters greatly swollen and its current irregular, so that it destroyed all in its path, the hills and high mounds, and this was what was known as the Flood. Yü channeled the river and sluiced off the Great River. For ten years he did not visit his home, and no nails grew on

his hands, no hair grew on his shanks. He caught an illness that made his body shrivel in half, so that when he walked he could not lift one leg past the other, and people called it "the Yü walk." (*Shih Tzu*, SPPY 1.16b)

The Signs of Yü's Divine Favor

The many and diverse accounts of Yü are rich in mythic themes. The flood myth, of course, has numerous parallels in traditions worldwide, but the Chinese flood myth is distinctive in the sense that the flood is eventually controlled not by a supreme deity but by a demigod with a nature nearer to the human than the divine. Kun's theft of the miraculous substance from God and the subsequent punishment of the altruistic thief also has parallels, such as Prometheus's theft of fire and Tantalus's theft of the food of the gods. The first reading, from "Questions of Heaven," relates the myth of divinely endowed creatures, such as the Responding Dragon and the turtle, who help Yü by signaling a passage through the floodwater. The second reading, from a fourth-century A.D. text, elaborates this myth. There is also Yü's miraculous birth from the belly of his father's corpse and the birth of his own son from a mother turned to stone, and these miracles mark Yü as the hero favored by God and nature. Yü's metamorphosis into a bear echoes that of his dead father (following one of several versions of Kun's metamorphosis).

How did he dam the floodwaters at their deepest? How did he demarcate the Nine Lands of the earth? Over the rivers and seas what did the Responding Dragon fully achieve and where did he pass? What plan did Kun devise? What did Yü succeed in doing? (*Ch'u Tz'u*, *T'ien wen*, SPTK 3.6b-7b)

Yü exhausted his strength in cutting dikes and ditches and in conducting the courses of rivers and leveling mounds. The yellow dragon dragged its tail in front of him, while the dark tortoise carried green mud on its back behind him. (*Shih yi chi*, HWTS 2.2b)

Yü's Function as Warrior

A further image emerges from the narratives of Yü the warrior in his punishment of Fang-feng, Kung Kung, Hsiang Liu, and the Wu-chih-ch'i beast. In this punitive aspect, his function of warrior-god

most nearly coincides with the warrior function of the Yellow Emperor. The chastisement of the god Fang-feng is linked to the story of the first assembly of the gods, told in the first reading, from a first-century A.D. text. The second reading, from a late Chou era text circa the fifth century B.C., purports to cite Confucius's (551-479 B.C.) explanation of the Fang-feng myth. According to this account, the god must have been a giant.

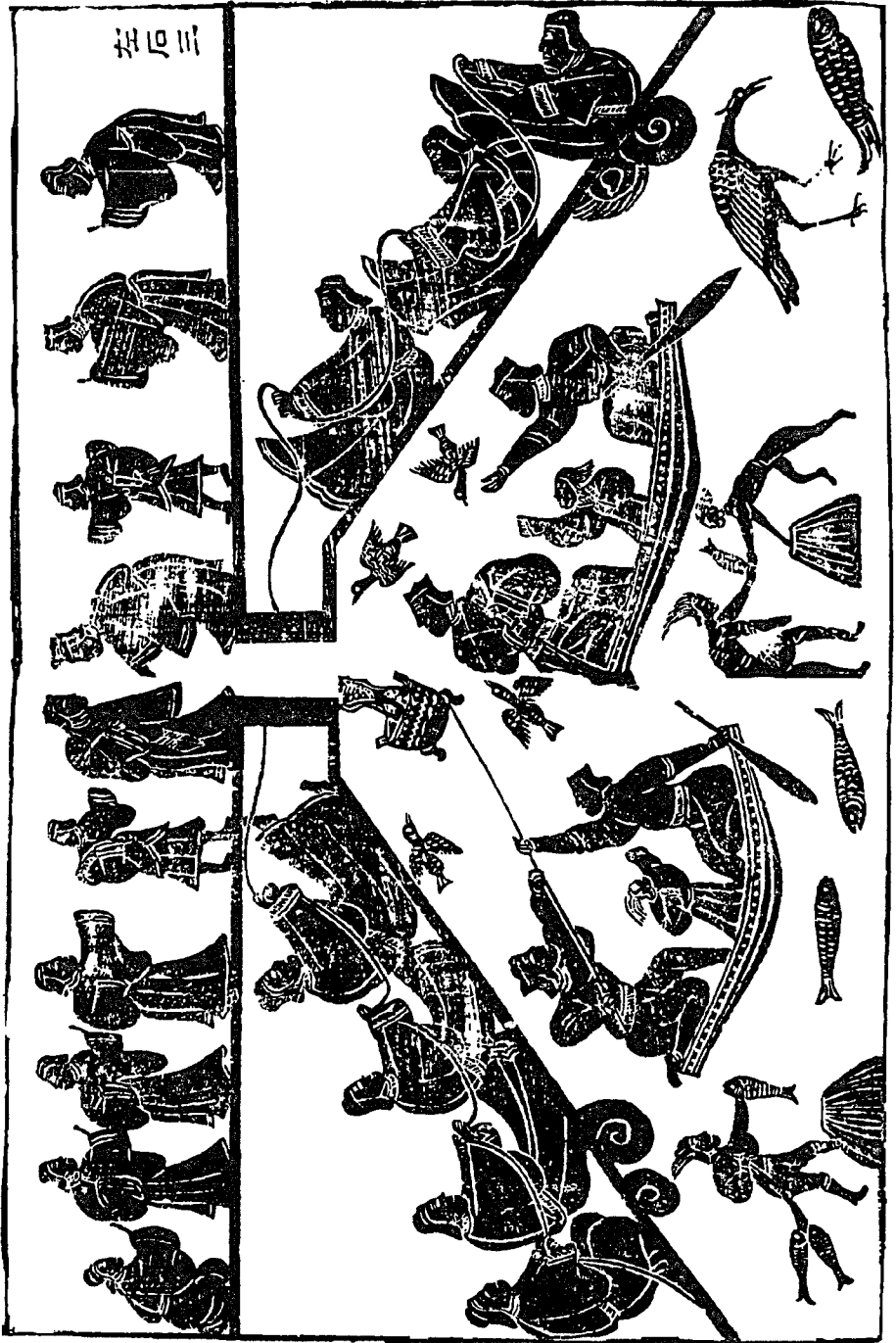
The third reading, from a second-century B.C. text, recounts how Kung Kung caused an inundation that disturbed the cosmos. The fourth reading, from a philosophical work of the Confucian school dating from the third century B.C., tells briefly how Yü punished the marplot Kung Kung to save the people.

The fifth reading is linked to the myth of Yü's punishment of Kung Kung. The account, from a second-century B.C. chapter of *The Classic of Mountains and Seas*, states that the poisonous monster Hsiang Liu was Kung Kung's official. The execution of this nine-headed, serpentine monster is one of the tasks of Yü in the concatenation of stories in the myth of Yü and the flood.

The sixth reading illustrating the warrior function of the demigod Yü is notable more for its literariness than for its mythological form. It is from Li Kung-tso's narrative "Prefect Li T'ang." It relates Yü's struggle with the Wu-chih-ch'i beast in his effort to control the flood. It is the first written occurrence of this legend. Probably based on the classical myth of K'uei, the one-legged storm god, it constitutes an interesting example of fiction based on myth, which itself inspired numerous pieces of mythopoeic literature. The Yuan dynasty dramatist Wu Chang-ling, for example, cast Wu-chih-ch'i in the role of the sister of the legendary character of the Monkey King, whereas the Ming novelist Wu Ch'eng-en (ca. 1506-ca. 1582), converted Wu-chih-ch'i into Monkey, Sun Wu-k'ung (Lu Hsün 1964, 109-10).

From the beginning, Yü was so anxious for the people that he rescued them from the flood. He reached Great Yueh. He went up Mao Mountain and held a major assembly [*k'uai-chi*]. He rewarded the virtuous and gave fiefdoms to the meritorious. He changed the name of Mao Mountain to K'uai-chi. (*Yueh chueh shu, Wai chuan chi ti*, SPPY 8.1a)

Confucius said, "I have heard this said about it. Long ago, Yü assembled all the gods on the Mountain of K'uai-chi. Fang-feng arrived too late. Yü killed him and beheaded his corpse. One joint of his



skeleton filled up a whole cart because it was so huge!" (*Kuo yü, Lu yü*, 2, SPTK 5.13b-14a)

In the era of Shun, Kung Kung stirred the floodwater to make crashing waves, so that they rose as far as K'ung-sang [Hollow Mulberry]. (*Huai-nan Tzu, Pen ching*, SPPY 8.6a)

Yü achieved success in his labors. He curbed the inundation and so he rescued the people from disaster, and he exiled Kung Kung. (*Hsun Tzu, Ch'eng hsiang*, SPPY 18.3b)

Kung Kung's official was called Hsiang Liu. He had nine heads, so he ate from nine mountains at the same time. Whatever Hsiang Liu knocked against became marshy or a ravine. Yü killed Hsiang Liu. His blood stank, so that it was impossible to plant the five grains. Yü excavated the area and filled it three times, but it leaked three times. He therefore created out of that place a terrace for the gods north of K'un-lun and east of Jou-li. This Hsiang Liu had nine heads with human faces and a snake's body, and he was green. (*Shan hai ching, Hai wai pei ching*, SPPY 8.1b-2a)

When Yü was controlling the floods, he came to T'ung-po Mountain three times, and each time there were terrifying windstorms and rolling thunder, so that the rocks roared and the trees groaned. The Five Lords [var. The Earth Lord] blocked the rivers and the Old Man of Heaven summoned his army, but to no avail. Yü grew angry and ordered all the spirits to assemble before him, and he entrusted his command to K'uei-lung. T'ung-po and the thousand rulers bowed low and sought his orders. Yü then imprisoned Master Hung-meng, Master Chang-shang, Master Tou-lu, and Master Li-lou. And he hunted down the river god of the Huai and Wo rivers, whose name was Wu-chih-ch'i.

This god was expert in formal rhetoric and could distinguish between the shallows and deeps of the Yangtze and Huai rivers and between the proximity and distances of plains and lowlands. He was shaped like an ape with an upturned snout and a high forehead. He

Figure 8 (opposite). The unsuccessful attempt by the First Ch'in Emperor (c. 221-210 B.C.) to recover one of the nine sacred cauldrons of Yü from the river; a dragon's head appears in the tilting cauldron. Funerary stone bas-relief, Wu Liang Shrine, Chia-hsiang county, Shantung province, A.D. 151. From Feng and Feng, *Research on Stone Carving* (1821) 1934, chap. 4.

had a green body and a white head with metallic eyes and snowy teeth. His neck stretched out for a hundred feet. He was stronger than nine elephants. He lunged out with his fists and leapt about in a sudden frenzied rush, so swift and fast that now you'd hear him, now you wouldn't, now you'd see him, now you wouldn't.

Yü handed him over to T'ung-lü but he could not control him. He handed him over to Wu-mu-yu but he could not control him. He handed him over to Keng-ch'en and he was able to control him. The Ch'ih-p'i and Huan-hu, wood demons and water sprites, mountain trolls and rock monsters rushed forth screaming in a circling mass numbering several thousand. Keng-ch'en chased him with his spear. Then he chained his neck with a huge rope and threaded a metal bell through his nostril, and he banished him to the south of Huai River to the foothills of Tortoise Mountain. So Huai River was able to flow peacefully out to sea for ever more. Afterward, people made images of the monster, and they no longer suffered from the stormy waves of Huai River. (*T'ai-p'ing kuang chi*, Li T'ang, citing Jung-mo hsien t'an, JMWH 467.2b)

Yü Measures the Whole World

A theme of special significance in the Chinese mythological tradition concerns mythological geography. Some early accounts of Yü's divinely inspired flood control work throughout the area first demarcated by him as the Nine Provinces constitute the beginning of Chinese geography. The term, *geography*, in its basic meaning of the delineation of the land or the earth, may be said to form the substance of such accounts. The earliest texts on water control and on cartography occur in two chapters of *Kuan Tzu*, dating from the seventh century B.C., "A Consideration of Land" and "Maps," besides the later texts of *The Classic of History*, *Chou Ritual*, and *Intrigues of the Warring States* (Rickett 1965, 72-82, 232-35).

The best account of this pseudo-geography occurs in a long narrative in *The Classic of History*, in the chapter entitled "The Tribute of Yü," and a similar one occurs in *Mencius* (3.11) and elsewhere. Some of the place-names in these texts are recognizable, such as the Yangtze, Huai, Han, and Yellow rivers, as well as the names of some early states and principalities. But the majority belong to mythology rather than to the science of geography based on a real knowledge of the world. The reports of Han travelers and post-Han surveyors were the first to provide

proper information based on firsthand accounts. A fine example is chapters 61 and 96 of Pan Ku's *History of the Han* (first century A.D.), which record diplomatic and military expeditions to the western regions of Central Asia (Loewe and Hulsewé 1979). For the rest, as Karlgren forcefully emphasizes, the attempts by Han and post-Han commentators on the late Chou classics to identify mythological place-names, especially in the pseudo-geographical accounts of Yü controlling the flood, are quite "void of value" (1946, 208). Nevertheless, the chapter entitled "The Tribute of Yü" and other related texts on the flood myth are of major importance in terms of mythological material. It may be argued, moreover, that these major myths stimulated a curiosity and intellectual interest in formulating a more scientific foundation for the science of geography in later times.

Apart from "The Tribute of Yü" and the account in *Mencius*, a mythic narrative of Yü the World Measurer appears in *Huai-nan Tzu*, a motif that has its Vedic parallel in Vishnu (Puhvel 1987, 183). This valuable account constitutes a prototype of mathematical geography. In classical Chinese mythology the earth was conceived of as a square, sea-girt plane vaulted by the sky (and, in some accounts, with the Yellow Springs below). In the second-century B.C. *Huai-nan Tzu* account, Yü orders two officers, whose names signify 'building' and 'design', to measure the longitude and latitude of the square earth and to fathom all stretches of water. The measurements are different in various versions of the myth (for a résumé see Mathieu 1989, 108 nn. 1-2).

Yü then commanded T'ai Chang to pace out from the east pole as far as the west pole, making 233,500 leagues and 75 paces. He commanded Shu Hai to pace out from the north pole as far as the south pole, making 233,500 leagues and 75 paces. Of all the vast waters to the deepest abyss from twenty-four feet and higher he fathomed 233,559 stretches of water. Yü then dammed the vast waters with self-renewing earth, and these banks became famous mountains. (*Huai-nan Tzu*, *Chui hsing*, SPPY 4.2a)

Yü Casts the Nine Cauldrons

Another significant myth in the Yü cycle is the forging of the nine metal cauldrons. There are several versions as to the identity of the divine forger, but the Yü version is more generally accepted as orthodox. In *Mo Tzu*, however, it is Yü's son K'ai, also known as Ch'i, who

is said to play that role in conjunction with one Fei Lien (Yi-pao Mei 1929, 212-13). The reading presented in this section is from the *Chronicle of Tso*, dating from the fourth century B.C., as with the *Mo Tzu*. Its narrative contains several motifs: Yü as the divine smith, the divine wisdom of Yü in teaching humans how to distinguish between harmful and benign gods, the symbolic value of representing images of gods on the nine cauldrons, the number nine, which reflects the celestial sphere, and the moral value of the cauldrons in gauging the rise or decline of sovereign power. This moral worth of the cauldrons is expressed metaphorically through their weight. For example, in the third-century B.C. text *Intrigues of the Warring States*, it was stated that the victorious Chou people waged their war against the Shang, conscious of the Chou's moral supremacy; it was also stated that the Chou "captured the nine cauldrons [from the Shang] and it took ninety thousand men to haul one cauldron" (Crump 1970, 38). Conversely, when in turn the Chou were overthrown by the Ch'in, it was stated that "in the nineteenth year of King Nan of the Chou, King Chao of the Ch'in captured the nine cauldrons. Then one cauldron flew into Ssu River and the other eight went into the territory of Ch'in" (*Historical Records*, official commentary on the "Basic Annals of the Ch'in," SPPY 5.26b). Thus the divinely forged cauldrons of Yü passed from dynasty to dynasty, becoming heavy with moral virtue and light with moral turpitude. K. C. Chang has observed that the nine cauldrons "became a symbol of legitimate dynastic rule," being "symbols of wealth . . . symbols of ritual . . . and symbols of the control of metal" (1983, 95-97). The function of Yü as the divine smith links him to Nü Kua when she repaired the cosmos and to Ch'ih Yu, inventor of metal and weapons.

The myth of Yü and the nine sacred cauldrons is also connected with another important motif, Yü's role as dynastic founder of the Hsia, and this brings him into the nexus of founding myths. (The Yü cycle has been identified by Eberhard with the Yueh culture of South-east China [1968, 348-62].) This in turn is linked to Yü's prominent role in the important myth of the Golden Age, when first Yao, then Shun, and lastly Yü ruled the world with suprahuman wisdom. Unlike the Golden Age of Greek myth, when humans enjoyed a long life free from disease, toil, and old age, the Chinese myth presents a utopia of peace and good government, when rulers were benevolent and just.

[The prince of Ch'u asked Wang-sun Man of the royal state of Chou about the size and weight of the nine cauldrons. Wang-sun Man gave this reply.]

Long ago, when the aspect of the Hsia showed virtue, people from distant areas made illustrations of objects and creatures and made tributary offerings of metal to the nine regional stewards. So he [Yü] forged cauldrons in the image of these creatures. He took precautionary measures against all living things on behalf of the people, to make sure that they knew which were the malign spirits. Therefore, when the people went on rivers or entered marshes, or went on mountains or into forests, they never came across adverse beings; neither goblins or trolls could ever run into them. They also enjoyed the grace of harmony between Heaven above and earth below, and received blessings from Heaven. Chieh [of the Hsia] was wicked, so the cauldrons and their sovereign power passed over to the Shang for six centuries. Chou [last ruler of the Shang] was a harsh despot, so the cauldrons passed over to the Chou. If the virtue of the ruling house is pure and true, even though the cauldrons might be small, they weigh heavily. If the ruling house is perverted and prone to instability, even though the cauldrons may be large, they are light-weight. Heaven protects pure virtue and keeps it safe. (*Tso chuan*, *Hsuan kung* Third Year, SPPY 21.8b-9a)

Yü collected metal from the nine regional stewards and forged the nine cauldrons. (*Han shu*, *Chiao ssu chih*, SPPY 25.1.21a)

Yü and the T'u-shan Girl

Although the main stories of the myth of Yü and the flood are written in the heroic mode and accentuate the labors of the demigod and his selfless devotion to duty, an account from the earliest phase of the mythological tradition portrays the hero's lyrical and romantic character. This does not mean that the rougher, more abrupt, and brutal mythic elements are absent, as the third reading shows.

The first reading, from the fourth-century B.C. text "Questions of Heaven," is one of the few mythic narratives that tell of physical desire. Its final wording is, however, garbled, and the translation must be considered as only a tentative rendition of its obscurities. The second reading, from about the first century A.D., provides an explanation for Yü's romantic interlude: that time and youth and virility were running out.

The account establishes that the mating was for dynastic rather than passionate considerations. This account moves from the mythic mode of "Questions of Heaven" to a legendary one. The third reading bears all the hallmarks of a mythological account, referring as it does to metamorphosis, bestiovestism, divine error, and miraculous birth. The motifs and the textual source were discussed in full in chapter 5.

Yü labored with all his strength. He came down and gazed at the earth below. How did he get the T'u-shan girl and lie with her in T'ai-sang? His consort became his mate and her body gave forth a child. Why did they hunger for the same food, when they had satisfied their hunger for the food of love at dawn? (*Ch'u Tz'u, T'ien wen, SPTK 3.13b-14a*)

By the age of thirty, Yü still had not married. On his travels he reached T'u-shan. Because he was afraid that time was running out, he abandoned his vow. So he announced, "If I am to marry, let there be an omen." Then a white fox with nine tails came in front of Yü. Yü said, "White is the color of my robes, and the nine tails are the emblem of a ruler. A song of the T'u-shan goes:

The white fox loiters and prowls,
His nine tails are firm and bushy.
My home is welcoming,
The guest who comes will be king.
His family will succeed, his house will succeed.
I will make you wealthy,
For this is a time when Heaven favors a man.
We should go ahead right now!

"Now I understand!" exclaimed Yü. So Yü married into the T'u-shan, and he called his bride Nü-chiao. (*Wu Yueh ch'un-ch'iu, Yueh wang Wu Yü wai chuan, SPPY 6.2b*)

When Yü was controlling the floodwaters and was making a passage through Mount Huan-yuan, he changed into a bear. He spoke to the T'u-shan girl: "If you want to give me some food, when you hear the sound of a drumbeat, come to me." But Yü leaped on a stone and by mistake drummed on it. The T'u-shan girl came forward, but when she saw Yü in the guise of a bear she was ashamed and fled. She reached the foothills of Mount Sung-kao, when she turned into a stone and bore Ch'i in her womb. Yü said, "Give me back my son!" The stone then split open on its north flank and Ch'i was born. (Yen

Shih-ku's commentary on *Han shu*, *Wu-ti chi*, referring to a nonextant passage in *Huai-nan Tzu*, SPPY 6.17b-18a)

The Deities Help Yü to Control the Flood

The transformation of myth to legend and the use of mythic material for literary purposes are most clearly evident in the late narratives of the myth of Yü and the flood. In the transition from myth to literature, the eternal verities of myth become the impermanent values of fiction, poetry, and drama as style and value alter from age to age. The most interesting contribution to this aspect of the literary use of myth is Eric Gould's *Mythical Intention in Modern Literature* (1981), which explores motifs borrowed from the Western classical tradition of myth in modern works such as the novels of James Joyce and D. H. Lawrence and the poetry of T. S. Eliot. In the Chinese tradition this transmutation from myth to literature is exemplified by the account of the myth of Yü and the flood in *Researches into Lost Records*, dating from the fourth century A.D. It is particularly manifest when compared with similar mythic narratives of a much earlier period, some eight centuries earlier in the case of "Questions of Heaven," or three centuries earlier in the case of chapter 18 of *The Classic of Mountains and Seas*, which were the first readings in this chapter. In the later, literary miscellany of *Researches*, several legendary features are added to the basic myth: a dark cavern, a hoglike beast, a bright pearl, a green dog, metamorphoses from animal to human shape, a multiplicity of minor deities, a jade tablet and a river chart, divine genealogy, and so forth. Moreover, when compared with the earlier texts, this later account reveals a number of sophisticated stylistic features: an integrated, consecutive narration, color motifs, similes, dialog, besides magic and precious substances. The shift in Yü's role from demigod to human hero, aided by the gods rather than acting as a god, marks the transmutation from myth to literature.

Another such account that is notable for its literariness rather than its mythological form is the narrative of Tu Kuang-t'ing (A.D. 850-933). Tu's account in *A Record of Immortals, Compiled in Yung-ch'eng* reveals several elements in the evolution from classical myth to literary fiction. Tu's mythopoeic inventions include the dominant role of a goddess named Jasper Lady, her miraculous birth, her five metamorphoses, Yü's inability to change shape, the five sorcery arts of the goddess, the arcane text charting river courses, and various Taoistic motifs. The most important element is the shift in emphasis to Yü's subservient role toward

the goddess compared with his dominant, masculine role in classical narratives. This marks the evolution from myth to religion, as new legendary personages from the Taoist pantheon color the account with quasi-religious terminology.

Yü forged the Mountain of Dragon Pass and then called it Dragon Gate. He came to an empty cavern several tens of leagues deep and so pitch black that he could go no further. So Yü carried a fire torch on his back and went forward. There was a beast that looked like a hog, and it held a night-shining pearl in its mouth, the light of which was like a torch. There was also a green dog, which barked and ran on ahead. Yü reckoned that he must have gone ten leagues, and he lost track of whether it was day or night. Suddenly he was aware that it was gradually getting a bit lighter, and he noticed the hog and the dog coming toward him, and as they did, they changed into human form, both wearing dark clothes. He also noticed a god with a serpent's body and a human face, and so Yü had a talk with him. The god at once showed Yü a chart of the Eight Trigrams spread out on top of a bench of gold. And there were eight gods in attendance on all sides. Yü said, "Hua Hsu gave birth to a sage-child—was it you?" He answered, "Hua Hsu is the goddess of the Nine Rivers and she gave birth to me." Then he reached for a jade tablet and handed it to Yü. It was one foot, two inches long, and it contained all the numbers of the twelve hours, which would enable Yü to make calculations of Heaven and earth. As soon as Yü held the tablet, he brought order to the flooded land. The god with the serpent's body was [Fu] Hsi the August. (*Shih yi chi*, HWTS 2.2b-3a)

Lady Yun-hua was the twenty-third daughter of the Queen Mother and the younger sister of Princess T'ai-chen. Her personal name was Yao-chi, Jasper Lady. She had been granted the techniques of causing whirlwinds, fusing substances, creating myriad visions, refining divine beings, and flying away in different shapes and forms. She happened to be roaming away from the area of the east sea and was passing by the river when Mount Wu came into view. Its peaks and cliffs jutted out sharply, and wooded ravines were darkly beautiful, with gigantic rocks like an earthly altar. She lingered there for a long while. At that time, Yü the Great was controlling the floods and was living near the mountain. A great wind suddenly came, making the cliffs shudder and the valleys collapse. There was nothing Yü could do to prevent it. Then he came upon the lady, and bowing to her, he

asked her for her help. She at once commanded her handmaid to bring Yü the *Book of Rules and Orders* for demons and spirits. Then she ordered her spirits K'uang-chang, Yü-yü, Huang-mo, Ta-yi, Keng-ch'en, T'ung Lü, and others, to help Yü to hew rocks in order to clear the spurting waves and to dredge blocked riverbeds to conduct water through the narrow places, so as to ease the flow of water. Yü bowed to them and thanked them for their help.

Yü wished to visit the lady on the summit of the soaring pinnacle, but before he could look around, she had turned into a rock. Now she suddenly flies around, dispersing into light cloud, which grows dense, then stops, and condenses into an evening shower. Now she turns into a roving dragon, now into a soaring crane. She takes on a thousand appearances, ten thousand shapes. It was impossible to approach her. Yü suspected she might be a treacherous phantasm, not a true immortal, so he asked T'ung Lü about her. Lü said, ". . . Lady Yun-hua is the daughter of the Mother of Metal. . . Hers is not a body that dwelt naturally in the womb, but it is the vapor from the pale shadow of West Hua. . . When she comes among humans, she turns into a human, among animals she turns into an animal. Surely she is not limited to the shape of clouds or rain, or a dragon, or a stork, or a flying swan, or wheeling phoenix?" Yü thought what he said was right.

Later on, when he did go to visit her, he suddenly saw a cloudy tower and a jade terrace, a jasper palace with jade turrets, which looked magnificent. Standing on guard were spirit officers whose names were unknown: lions held the gates, horses of Heaven made way, vicious dragons, lightning animals, eight guards stood by the palace pavilions. The lady was sitting quietly on the jasper terrace. Yü bowed his head very low and asked about the Way. . . Then the lady ordered her handmaid, Ling Jung-hua, to bring out a small cinnabar-red jade box. She opened it and lifted up a priceless document in a distinguished script and presented it to Yü. Yü bowed low as he accepted it and then he left. He also gained the help of Keng-ch'en and Yü-yü, so that in the end he managed to direct the waves and contain the rivers, and he succeeded in accomplishing his task. He made fast the Five Peaks and demarcated the Nine Provinces. Heaven therefore conferred on him the Black Jade insignia and made him the True Man of the Purple Palace. (*T'ai-p'ing kuang chi*, citing *Yung-ch'eng chi hsien lü*, JMW 56.347-49)