



## Founding Myths

Founding myths were encountered in several narratives presented in preceding chapters. Here those separate strands will be brought together in conjunction with new material on the motif of founding a city, a dynasty, a people, or a country. The myth of the Lord of the Granary relates the institution of a city; that of the Meng Hsi (or Meng Shu) narrates the founding of a new country; that of P'an Hu recounts the foundation of a tribe; that of Po Yi traces the divine ancestry of the dynastic line of the Ch'in people; that of Ts'an Ts'ung outlines the divine ancestry of the Shu kings; and that of Hou Chi narrates the divine origins of the Chou people. In his monumental study, "Legends and Cults in Ancient China," Karlgren demonstrated that the great clans and aristocratic families of antiquity traced their descent from legendary heroes, demigods, and gods, who were regarded as the founders of their noble house and family line (1946, 213). Granet proposed a similar thesis (1959, 39, 389).

Like the founding myth of Rome, which relates that a she-wolf sacred to Mars suckled the abandoned twins Romulus and Remus, Chinese founding myths are characterized by bird and animal motifs. Chien Ti became pregnant from the egg of a dark or black bird sent by the god Ti K'u and gave birth to the Shang ancestor, Hsieh. The divinely born Hou Chi was abandoned by his mother, Chiang Yuan, but was

protected by birds and beasts and became the founder of the Chou. P'an Hu was a divine dog, who founded a new people of canine and human descent. Yü changed into a bear at the moment of his courtship of and mating with the T'u-shan girl, who gave birth to Ch'i, Yü and Ch'i being the first founders of the legendary Hsia.

Other motifs characterize founding myths. The person of the founder is invested with heroic qualities that mark him as a leader of men. Such a hero is shown to be favored by God and endowed with the power of performing miracles, changing shape, invoking supernatural aid, and conquering enemies obstructing his path to triumph. This motif is illustrated by the mythic narratives of Hou Chi, T'ang the Conqueror, and King Wen and King Wu of the Chou. The founder in the heroic mold is also one who is distinguished by a gift for attracting or winning over or selecting a wise adviser, a man often identified in a divinely inspired dream and plucked out of obscurity. Such is the case with T'ang the Conqueror with his brilliant minister Yi Yin, King Wen with his supernaturally intelligent counselor, the Great Lord Chiang (also known as the Great Lord Wang), and King Wu with his resourceful younger brother and adviser, the Duke of Chou. Sarah Allan has explored this relationship between leader and adviser in *The Heir and the Sage* (1981, 91-121).

Although various myths relate the founding of a city or a dynasty or a country, it is usually impossible to identify their location or existence. The Lord of the Granary's city of Yi, for example, cannot be located. No evidence yet exists for the historicity of the Hsia. Equally, no archeological sites of ancient Hsia or early Shang cities have yet been identified. In archeological and historical terms, what was previously thought to represent Hsia culture is now more cautiously referred to as Erh-li-t'ou culture datable to the third to second millennium B.C. As far as Shang cities are concerned, the location of the ancient Shang capitals of Ao and Po, which are mentioned in Shang inscriptions, has yet to be ascertained. The archeological and historical evidence for Shang cities commences only with the late Shang capital city of Yin, the last capital of the Shang, situated near An-yang in Honan province. The Yin site yielded inscriptions identifying eight (or nine) Shang rulers from King Wu, a period dating from circa 1200-1050 B.C. This amalgam of archeological evidence and a historical written record is the earliest for the Shang state or city (Keightley 1983, 524).

No known city of ancient China's legendary Hsia, protohistorical early Shang and historical late Shang, or other city such as Yi is linked

to an illustrious mythological founder, as Romulus and Remus are with Rome. On the link between mythic narratives and historical fact, Hsu and Linduff conclude in their study of the Chou that many Chinese founding myths are based on migration myths or exodus myths that tell of a leader or hero who moves to a new region and is followed by the entire population. This migration myth finds its historical expression in "the general pattern of Chou expansionism" (Hsu Cho-yun and Linduff 1988, 163).

### The Founding Myth of the Shang

Several motifs appear in narratives of the founding of the Shang. The readings are taken from the main accounts in *The Classic of Poetry*, circa 600 B.C., the *Annals of Master Lü*, of the third century B.C., and the *Historical Records*, of the late second century B.C. The motif of the black bird in the poetry is taken up by the two prose narratives. They contain the motifs of a tall tower protecting the virginity of two well-born girls, a feast with drum music presaging a wedding, a swallow laying two eggs, and, in the second prose passage the fertility act of the girls bathing, pregnancy following the act of swallowing the egg of the black bird, divine birth, the hero's success in accomplishing his tasks, the gift of the territory of the Shang, and the popularity of the hero with the people.

Sarah Allan argues that "the Shang rulers had a totemic relationship with the ten suns which were also thought to be birds" (1991, 46). Her definition of totemism in this context, however, is too vague to serve as evidence for her argument: "'totemism' [is] a system of classification rather than a social institution" (ibid., 46, 172). To substantiate her argument, Allan combines the myth of the ten suns with the myth of a crow bearing the sun to the top of Leaning Mulberry each dawn. From this amalgamation of separate myths she deduces that just as there are ten suns, so there are ten birds, one in each sun, representing the power of the sun and, ultimately, representing the totemic relationship between the Shang, the ten suns, and the ten birds. The textual evidence does not support such a deduction, however, for the various versions of the myth of the suns and crow are as follows: (1) a sun bears a crow; (2) a crow bears one sun each dawn to the top of the world-tree; and (3) the crow is sometimes said to be three-legged. It should be made clear that nowhere in the classical or postclassical texts are ten crows in the ten suns ever specified or implied. Thus the transforma-

tional theory Allan uses to force the conclusion that the Shang had a totemic relationship with the ten suns believed to be birds is invalidated, since it is not justifiable to merge several myths and to inject a totally new motif (ten birds) to create a neomyth to suit one's theory. I have discussed the motifs of the readings in chapter 5.

Heaven ordered the Black Bird

To come down on earth and give birth to the Shang.

(*Shih ching*, *Hsuan niao*, 303, SPPY 23.9a)

The Yu-Sung clan had two glamorous daughters. They built a nine-story tower for them. When they ate and drank, drum music was always played for them. God ordered a swallow to go and look at them, and it sang with a cry like "Yee-yee!" The two daughters fell in love with it and each tried to be the one to catch it. They covered it with a jade box. After a moment they opened it up and looked at it. The swallow had laid two eggs. It flew away to the north and never came back. The two daughters composed a song, a line of which went, "Swallow, Swallow, you flew away!" This is, in fact, the first composition in the style of Northern Music. (*Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu*, *Yin ch'u*, SPTK 6.6b)

Yin Hsieh's mother was called Chien Ti. She was the daughter of the Yu-Sung clan and the second concubine of Ti K'u. Three of them went to bathe. They saw a black bird drop its egg. Chien Ti picked it up and swallowed it. Then she became pregnant and gave birth to Ch'i. Ch'i grew up and gave meritorious service in helping Yü control the floodwater. Emperor Shun therefore gave this command to Ch'i: "The people do not have close family relationships, and the five social relationships are in disorder. You will serve as my director of retinue." He gave him the Shang fiefdom and conferred on him the surname Tzu-shih. Hsieh flourished in the reigns of Yao T'ang, Yü Shun, and Yü the Great. His accomplishments were well known among the people, and so the people became peaceable. (*Shih chi*, *Yin pen chi*, SPPY 3.1a-b)

### T'ang the Conqueror Attacks the Hsia

The image of the hero is more developed with the mythical figure of T'ang, a later founder of the Shang. The mythological line moves from the divine bird to the girl Chien Ti, from her to her son, Hsieh,

and then to a later Shang king, T'ang. With this mythical figure the epic of the Shang evolves from a people descended from God to a dynasty founded by a hero. Whereas the demigod, Hsieh, or Ch'i, belongs to archaic mythological time, T'ang is closer to historical time. He is an earthly ruler who wrests power from the evil tyrant, Chieh of the Hsia, and goes on to overthrow the Hsia and establish a glorious dynasty. T'ang's qualities as a hero are as numerous as Chieh's qualities as a villain. The *casus belli* between the two is projected in the mythic narratives as a moral campaign, a point emphasized in the first of the following readings, from *Annals of Master Lü*. The second reading is from *Historical Records*. The third is from a first-century A.D. chapter of *The Classic of Mountains and Seas*. The last is from *Biographies of Women*, dating from about the third to the fourth century.

The narratives relate that T'ang was a military hero whose army was ready to fight and die for him, while Chieh's army refused to engage in battle. They show that T'ang was an exemplar of moral virtue who attracted men of worth, such as Yi Yin, and who, when he became king, offered himself in sacrifice for rain during a drought of many years. In many of these narratives several figures are dramatically polarized: T'ang against Chieh, Yi Yin against the favorite, Mo Hsi, and Mo Hsi in the end against Chieh. These polarities create patterns of binary opposition in the mythic struggle between good and evil. Sarah Allan has analyzed this myth in *The Heir and the Sage* (1981, 77-101).

Chieh committed more and more wrongdoing and transgressed the right way of the ruler, bringing harm and destruction to his country and his people. So T'ang, in anxious concern for the stability of the empire, ordered Yi Yin to go and observe the mighty Hsia. But he was afraid that the Hsia would not trust him, so T'ang personally shot at Yi Yin, and then Yi Yin fled to the Hsia. Three years later, he returned and reported in Po, the Yin [Shang] capital. He said, "Chieh used to be bewitched by Mo Hsi, and now he is in love with Wan and Yen. He shows no pity toward the masses, and the will of the people is that they won't endure it. Everyone from the top level of society to the bottom loathes him. The people's hearts are full of resentment, and they all say, 'Unless Heaven up above is without pity, the days of the Hsia will come to an end.'" T'ang said to Yi Yin, "What you tell me about the mighty Hsia is just what I want." T'ang swore an oath with Yi Yin to show that they would destroy the Hsia. Yi Yin went back again to observe the situation in mighty Hsia and learn

what Mo Hsi had to tell him. (*Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu*, *Shen ta*, SPTK 15.1b-2a)

Then T'ang raised an army and took command of the nobles. Yi Yin went with T'ang's army, and T'ang himself held the great ceremonial ax, to attack K'un-wu and then to attack Chieh. (*Shih chi*, *Yin pen chi*, SPPY 3.3b)

There was a headless person called the Corpse of Hsia Keng, who stood holding a spear and shield. Long ago, when T'ang the Conqueror attacked Chieh of the Hsia at Mount Chang and captured Mount Chang, he cut Keng in two in front of the mountain. When Keng stood up, he was headless, so he ran away to hide his shame and then sank without a trace into Mount Wu. (*Shan hai ching*, *Ta huang hsi ching*, SPPY 16.7a)

Then T'ang received the mandate to rule, and he attacked the Hsia, and the battle was fought at Ming-t'iao. Chieh's army refused to do battle, so T'ang sent Chieh into exile. Chieh sailed out to sea in the same boat as Mo Hsi and his other favorites. He died on the Mountain of Nan-ch'ao. (*Lieh nü chuan*, *Hsia Chieh Mo Hsi*, SPPY 7.1b)

### Hou Chi, Founder of the Chou

The mythic motifs of the founding of the Chou people were discussed in several early chapters. The most significant are: divine descent, miraculous birth, the trials of the hero as an infant, divine intervention through the charity of simple folk and the creatures of nature, and the success and popularity of the hero. The reading is from *Historical Records*, of the late second century B.C.

Hou Chi of the Chou was named Ch'i, the Abandoned. His mother, the daughter of the Yu-t'ai clan, was called Chiang Yuan. Chiang Yuan was Ti K'u's first consort. Chiang Yuan went out to the wild fields and she saw the footprints of a giant. Her heart was full of joy and pleasure, and she felt the desire to tread in the footprints. As she trod in them there was a movement in her body as if she were with child. She went on until her due time and gave birth to a baby boy. . . . Chiang Yuan thought he might be a god, so she took him up at once and brought him up until he was fully grown. Because she had wanted to abandon him at first, his name was Ch'i. When Ch'i was a child, he looked imposing, as if he had the bold spirit of a giant.

When he went out to play, he liked planting hemp and beans, and his hemp and beans were very fine. When he became an adult, he also grew very skilled at plowing and farming. He would study the proper use of the land, and where valleys were suitable he planted and he reaped. Everyone went out and imitated him. Emperor Yao heard about him and promoted Ch'i to master of agriculture, so that the whole world would benefit from him and have the same success. Emperor Shun said, "Ch'i, the black-haired people are beginning to starve. You are the Lord Millet [Hou Chi]. Plant the seedlings in equal measure throughout the hundred valleys." He gave Ch'i the fiefdom of T'ai with the title of Lord Millet, and he took another surname from the Chi clan. (*Shih chi*, *Chou pen chi*, SPPY 4.1a, 4.1b)

### King Wen of the Chou

As the Shang had divine origin through miraculous conception and divine birth and emerged as a conquering people, so too did the Chou. The ancestors of the Shang and the Chou, Hsieh and Hou Chi, are parallel figures. In the same way the triumphant conquerors of the Shang and the Chou, T'ang and King Wen, are complementary hero figures. But whereas T'ang is a mythical figure, King Wen belongs to the historical era, though this does not mean that his character and his career are not imbued with mythological features. Thus both historical dynasties possess their myths of divine kingship and of temporal power. The myths surrounding King Wen emphasize his wisdom in acquiring an adviser, the Great Lord Chiang (also known as the Great Lord Wang, Lü Wang, or Wang the Counselor). He was a man chosen by God, as discovered through divination or a dream, to steer the king through successive campaigns against the Shang, whose last ruler was a tyrant. In fact, some accounts tend to portray the character of this adviser in such sympathetic terms that he threatens to upstage the heroic figure of the king himself. The first reading below, from the fourth-century B.C. text "Questions of Heaven," marks the earliest version of the mythic encounter between King Wen and the counselor. This version alludes to the fact that the future Great Lord Chiang (known as the Great Lord Wang) had the low status of a butcher. In the second reading, taken from *Historical Records*, the social status of the adviser becomes that of a fisherman. Although this appears to be lowly, it is enhanced by the noble mythos of the fisherman in the *Songs of Ch'u* (Hawkes 1985, 206-7). The third reading is a late fictional narrative,

based on early mythical material, from Kan Pao's collection of the fourth century A.D. Here the adviser acquires the supernatural power to deflect a goddess's elemental force, which might otherwise have destroyed his city.

When Wang the Counselor was in the market, how did Ch'ang [King Wen] recognize him? (*Ch'u Tz'u, T'ien wen*, SPTK 3.31a)

King Wen intended to go hunting, so he had his augurer prepare divination for it. It said: "What you will catch won't be a dragon, and it won't be a hornless dragon. It won't be tiger and it won't be a bear. What you will catch is one who will help the mighty King." So King Wen drove toward the west and went hunting. It did indeed turn out that he met the Great Lord north of the River Wei. After having a discussion with him, he was very pleased and said to him, "Ever since the time of his lordship my late father, it has been said that 'when the wise man goes to the Chou, the Chou will prosper.' Are you really that man? His lordship my father was a long time hoping for you!" He therefore gave him the title of the Great Lord Wang [Hope]. Getting into the carriage, they returned together. King Wen installed him as his guiding mentor. (*Shih chi, Ch'i T'ai-kung shih chia*, SPPY 32.1b)

King Wen made the Great Lord Wang the Great Lord Governor of Kuan-tan. After a year of his being governor, even the wind did not make a noise in the branches of trees. King Wen dreamed that an extraordinarily beautiful woman was standing on the road weeping. He asked her why, and she said, "I am the daughter of the spirit of Mount T'ai, and I became the wife of the spirit of the East Sea. I want to go back home, but my road is blocked because of the governor of Kuan-tan. He is a good man, but even if he obstructs me in my journey I shall have to continue my journey, but there is bound to be a terrible storm. And then his good reputation will suffer." When King Wen woke up he summoned the Great Lord to question him. On that very same day it turned out that there was a terrible storm, but it passed by the Great Lord's city and broke out over the outskirts of the city. Then King Wen honored the Great Lord by making him his commander in chief. (*Sou shen chi*, TSCC 4.25)



## King Wu of the Chou

The mythological accounts of the successful military campaigns that led to the founding of the Chou dynasty again polarize the protagonists in a great moral crusade: King Wu carries on the task of his father, King Wen, with the help of a brilliant and wise adviser, the Duke of Chou, King Wu's younger brother. The names of the two kings are also polarized: King Wen means 'King Civility', and King Wu means 'King Military'. King Wu's adversary is King Chou, the last ruler of the Shang. The readings accentuate the moral prerogative of King Wu, who is aided by supernatural powers, such as a river god, and is guided by his brother, who demonstrates resourcefulness and cunning in tactical and psychological warfare. Again, as with the Chou King Wen and his adviser, the roles of King Wu and the Duke of Chou are at times complementary, at times ambiguous. For example, in the first and fourth readings below, from two Han sources, King Wu is portrayed as a subordinate character and even appears ridiculous in his inability to lead men or to control events.

The first reading is from Wang Ch'ung's *Disquisitions*, of the first century A.D. The second is from the *Six Sword Bags*, a fragmentary work attributed to the Chou hero the Great Lord Chiang but more likely to date from the late Ch'in to early Han era (ca. late third century B.C.). The third reading is from *Huai-nan Tzu*, of the late second century B.C. The fourth is from Han Ying's commentary on and exposition of *The Classic of Poetry*, of the second century B.C. The fifth and sixth readings belong together: the fifth is a citation of an old text by Yü Shih-nan (A.D. 558-638) in his *Collation from the North Hall*; the sixth is a narrative of King Wu's divine mandate to commence his campaign against the Shang, aided by the wisdom and divine percipience of the Duke of Chou.

When King Wu of the Chou was about to attack King Chou of the Shang, he had divination made using stalks, but the result was negative, and the diviner declared, "Very bad luck." The Great Lord pushed aside the milfoil stalks and trod on the tortoises and said, "What do withered bones and dead plants know about good luck or bad luck!" (*Lun heng, Pu shih*, SPTK 24.9b)

When King Wu was going to attack the Yin, he boarded a boat and crossed the river. The troops and carriages set off and then smashed their boats up in the river. The Great Lord said, "The heir apparent

will avenge his father. Today they will all die—let there be no survivors!" As the troops passed the bridges of the ferry port, they burned them all down. (*T'ai-p'ing yü-lan*, citing *Liu t'ao*, SPTK 482.1a)

King Wu went to attack King Chou. As he was crossing the river at Meng Ford, the river god, Lord Yang, made strong waves turn the current and dash against the boats. A fierce wind blew up and it grew pitch dark, so that men and horses could not see each other. Then King Wu held the yellow ax in his left hand and clenched the white command spear in his right hand. His eyes glared. Brandishing his spear, he said, "I have been entrusted with the defense of the world. Who dares to oppose my will?" At this, the wind died down and the waves subsided. (*Huai-nan Tzu*, *Hsien ming*, SPPY 6.1b)

King Wu went to attack King Chou. When he reached Hsing-ch'iu, his shield broke in three and the heavens poured with rain continuously for three days. King Wu's heart was filled with dread. He summoned the Great Lord and asked him, "Does this mean that King Chou cannot be attacked yet?" The Great Lord replied, "Not at all. The fact that your shield broke in three means that the army ought to be divided into three sections. The fact that the heavens poured with rain continuously for three days means that it will freshen up our troops." King Wu said, "If you are right, how will we do what you suggest?" "If people like a man, they will even like the crow on the top of his house. But if they hate him, they will also hate the very walls of his house. Let everyone slaughter the enemy! Let there be no survivors!" (*Han shih wai chuan*, TSCC 3.32)

In the capital city of King Wu of the Chou, the snow was more than ten inches deep. The Revered Father [the Duke of Chou] [textual lacuna: ? was informed of strangers] riding horse-drawn carriages. He sent a messenger to hold a vessel of rice gruel and go out to them. He opened the gates and admitted them. He said, "It is cold today, so why don't you come in for some hot rice gruel to ward off the cold?" (*Pei-t'ang shu-ch'ao*, subcommentary of K'ung Kuang-t'ao, referring to *T'ai-kung chin kuei*, KC 144.12b)

King Wu of the Chou attacked King Chou of the Shang. King Wu was establishing his capital, Lo City, but before it was completed, there were storms for over ten days with ice-cold rain and snow over ten inches deep. On the day of *chia-tzu*, just as day was about to break—no one knows who they were, but five officers riding in

horse-drawn carriages with two horsemen riding behind halted outside the royal palace gates and expressed their wish to have an audience with King Wu. King Wu was about to refuse to go out and see them, but the Revered Father [the Duke of Chou] said, "You must not do that. The snow is over ten inches deep, but the carriages and riders have left no tracks. They are probably wise men." The Grand Master and Revered Father then sent a messenger to go outside and hold a vessel of rice gruel. He opened the gates and admitted the five carriages and two horsemen and said, "His Majesty is in his private rooms and does not wish to come out for the time being. But the weather is cold, so why don't you come in for some hot rice gruel to ward off the cold? I'm sorry, but I do not know how you gentlemen are ranked in precedence?" The two horsemen said, "Our senior man is the Lord of the South Sea, next is the Lord of the East Sea, then the Lord of the West Sea, then the Lord of the North Sea, then the River Earl with the Rain Master and the Earl of the Winds."

When they had finished their rice gruel, the messenger told the Revered Father everything in detail. The Revered Father said to King Wu, "You may now have an audience with your visitors. The occupants of the five carriages and the two horsemen are the gods of the Four Seas, besides the River Earl, the Rain Master, and the Earl of the Winds. The God of the South Sea is called Chu Yung, the God of the East Sea is called Kou Mang, the God of the North Sea is called Hsuan Ming, and the God of the West Sea is called Ju Shou. The River Earl's name is Feng Yi, the Rain Master's name is Yung, and the Earl of the Winds's name is Yi. Please ask our Guest Master to summon each of them in by his name." So when King Wu was at the top of the hall, the Guest Master stood outside the gates leading into the lower end of the hall and called for Chu Yung to enter. The five gods were all amazed, and they looked at one another and sighed. Chu Yung made a deep bow. King Wu said, "You have come from far in dire weather; what instructions do you wish to give me?" They all said, "Heaven is going to attack the Yin dynasty and establish the Chou dynasty. We have come here humbly to receive your commands. Please advise the Earl of the Winds and the Rain Master of your wishes, and they will each carry out their duties." (Yuan K'o, SHHYPT 88.247-48)

## The Beginning of the Yao People

The myth of the inception of the Yao people was discussed in chapter 5 with reference to the miraculous conception of P'an Hu, the divine dog. Franz Boas recorded a similar dog myth among the Dog-Rib Indians of North America (1966, 438). The narrative of the reading is from Kan Pao's collection, of the fourth century A.D.

Kao Hsin had an old wife who lived in the royal palace. She developed an earache. After some time the doctor cleared her ear out to cure her and he removed a knob-worm as big as a cocoon. After the wife had gone out, she put it in a gourd basket and covered it with a plate. Soon the knob-worm changed into a dog and it had five-color markings. So it was named P'an Hu, Plate-Gourd, and she looked after it. . . . [The king] ordered his youngest daughter to be a dutiful wife to Plate-Gourd.

Plate-Gourd led the girl up South Mountain. The grass and trees were thick and bushy and there was no trace of human footprints. Then the girl took her clothes off and became bonded to him as his servant, wearing clothes that she made as best she could, and she followed Plate-Gourd up the mountain. They entered a valley and stopped in a stone house. The king was sorrowful when he thought about it, and he sent his men to go and look out for her. But the sky at once grew stormy, the mountain ranges thundered and the clouds grew black. Those who had set out refused to go any further. After three years or so had passed, she had given birth to six sons and six daughters. After Plate-Gourd died, they paired off as mates and became husbands and wives for each other. (*Sou shen chi*, TSCC 14.91)

## The Ancestor of the Shu

The myth of Ts'an Ts'ung, divine ancestor of the kings of Shu, was discussed in chapter 2. The first two readings are from *Basic Annals of the Kings of Shu*, a fragmentary text dating from the Han period. The third is from the tenth-century miscellany *A Continuation of "The Origin of Things,"* compiled by Feng Chien following on from *The Origin of Things* by Liu Ts'un, of the T'ang era. The fourth reading is from a late source of the Yuan dynasty, *A Compendium of Information on the Gods of the Three Religions* (Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism). This is an illustrated source book of popular hagiography recounting the lives of the gods and saints of China's three main traditions of belief.

The first ancestor of the Shu kings was called Ts'an Ts'ung. In the next era his descendant was called Po Huo, and in the era after that his descendant was called Yü Fu. Each of these three eras lasted several hundred years. In each era they became gods and did not die. Their people followed their kings, taking another shape and vanishing like them. (*T'ai-p'ing yü-lan*, citing *Shu wang pen chi*, SPTK 888.2b)

The first ancestors of Shu with the title of king were Ts'an Ts'ung, Po Huo, and Yü Fu. In the K'ai-ming reign people used to pile their hair up, and they wore their collar on the left. They did not understand writing and they did not yet have ritual or music. From the K'ai-ming reign back to Ts'an Ts'ung was an aeon of 34,000 years. (*Ch'üan Shang-ku*, *Ch'üan Han wen*, citing *Shu wang pen chi*, 53.5a)

Ts'an Ts'ung set himself up as king of Shu. According to tradition, he taught the people about silkworms and mulberry. He made several thousand golden silkworms. At the start of each year, he took the golden silkworms and gave the people one silkworm each. The silkworms the people raised always multiplied prolifically, so that in the end they could return the gift to the king. When he went on a royal tour of his realm, wherever he stopped on his journey, the people created a market town. Because of his legacy people in Shu hold a silkworm market every spring. (*Hsu shih shih*, citing *Hsien chuan shih yi*, *Shuo-fu* 10.45a)

The god in the green clothes is Ts'an Ts'ung. According to tradition, Ts'an Ts'ung began as the lord of Shu and later took the title of king of Shu. He always wore green clothes. When he conducted a royal tour of the city limits and countryside, he taught his people the management of silkworms. The countryfolk appreciated his kindness, and so they set up a temple to sacrifice to him. Shrines to his name spread all over the western region, and they proved without exception to have miraculous powers. He was generally called the god in the green clothes, and that is how Green-God County got its name. (*San chiao sou-shen ta ch'üan*, *Lien-ching* 316)

## The Founding Myth of the Pa People

The founding myth of the Pa people and the migration of the Lord of the Granary to found his new city of Yi were discussed in chapter 9, and also in chapter 12 in connection with the Goddess of Salt River and

his amorous encounter and battle with her. The first reading below is a narrative collated from fragments of *The Origin of Hereditary Families*, commentary by Sung Chung (ca. third century A.D.) and edited in a reconstructed text by the Ch'ing scholar Ch'in Chia-mo. The second reading is from *A History of the Chin [Dynasty]* [A.D. 265-419] by Fang Hsuan-ling (A.D. 578-648).

The ancestor of the Lord of the Granary originally came from Wu Tan. The Man tribe of Pa commandery and Nan commandery originally had five surnames: the Pa clan, the Fan clan, the Shen clan, the Hsiang clan, and the Cheng clan. They all came from Mount Wu-lo Chung-li. On this mountain there were two caves, one scarlet and one black, like cinnabar and lacquer. The children of the Pa clan were born in the scarlet cave, and the children of the other four surnames were all born in the black cave. Before there were chieftains, they were all subjects of the spirits and gods. The Lord of the Granary's given name was Wu-hsiang; his surname was that of the Pa clan. He set out together with the Fan clan, the Shen clan, the Hsiang clan, and the Cheng clan—five surnames in all—and they all competed for divine power to rule. Then they all together threw their swords at a rock and agreed that whoever could hit the target would be elevated to be their lord. When the son of the Pa clan, Wu-hsiang, was the only one to hit the target, they all sighed. Then he ordered each clan to sail in an earthenware boat, carved with designs and painted, and to float the boats in the river. They made an agreement that whoever could stay afloat would become their lord. The other clans all sank, and Wu-hsiang's was the only one to stay afloat. So they unanimously made him their chieftain. He became the Lord of the Granary. Now he sailed the earthenware boat from Yi River to Yen-yang. (Ch'in Chia-mo's reconstructed text, *Shih pen*, *Shih hsing* 1:93-94)

The Lord of the Granary once more sailed in his earthenware boat and went downstream till he reached Yi City. At Yi City the rocky cliffs zigzagged and the spring watercourse also meandered. The Lord of the Granary looked at what seemed like a cavern. He sighed and said, "I've just come out of a cave, if I go into another one now, what will happen?" The cliff all at once collapsed thirty feet or more across, but some steps were within reach of him. The Lord of the Granary climbed up them. On the clifftop there was a flat rock, ten feet square and five feet long. The Lord of the Granary rested on it. He threw bamboo slips to make calculations and they all touched the

rock. So he established his city next to it and lived there. Later on all manner of people followed him there in crowds. (*Chin shu*, Li T'ê, *Tsai-chi* 20, SPPY 120.1b)

## The God Shao Hao Finds the Niao Kingdom

The myth of Shao Hao was discussed in connection with his mother, Huang O, and his father, the Son of the White Emperor, in chapter 12. The narratives are significant for the repetition of the bird motif (*Niao* of Niao Kingdom means 'Bird'), which itself accentuates the recurring pattern of ornithological myths in the classical repertoire. The first of the readings in this section is from a first-century A.D. chapter of *The Classic of Mountains and Seas*. The second is from *Shih Tzu*, a fourth-century B.C. text. The last is from another fourth-century B.C. text, the *Chronicle of Tso*.

The great waterfall pool beyond the eastern sea is Shao Hao's kingdom. Shao Hao had the god Chuan Hsu suckled here, and he threw away his lute and zither. (*Shan hai ching*, *Ta huang tung ching*, SPPY 14.1a)

Shao Hao, Master Metal Heaven, founded his city at Ch'iung Sang [Exhausted Mulberry]. The five colors of the sun's light shone down below on the radiance of Ch'iung Sang. (*Shih Tzu*, SPPY 1.16a)

Autumn. The Duke of T'an came to court and Duke Chao of Ch'in held a banquet for him. The duke asked him, "Why were Shao Hao's government officials named after birds?" The Duke of T'an said, "He was my ancestor, so I know about it. In olden times, the Yellow Emperor used an auspicious cloud as his official emblem; that is why he had a cloud minister and cloud for official titles. The Flame Emperor used fire as his official emblem, so he had a fire minister and fire for official titles. Kung Kung used water as his official emblem; that is why he had a water minister and water for official titles. T'ai Hao used a dragon as his official emblem; that is why he had a dragon minister and had the dragon for official titles. When my ancestor Shao Hao came to the throne, phoenix birds suddenly appeared. He therefore took the birds as his emblem, creating a bird minister and the birds for official titles. The Phoenix Bird clan became astronomers principal. The Primeval Bird clan became controllers of the equinoxes. The Po-ch'ao Shrike clan became controllers of the sol-

stice. The Green Bird clan became controllers of [spring] inaugurations. The Cinnabar Bird clan became controllers of the [winter] closures. The Partridge clan became controllers of retinue. The Vulture clan became controllers of the cavalry. The Wood Pigeon clan became controllers of the K'ung-harp. The Hawk clan became controllers of crime. The Falcon clan became controllers of home affairs. The Five Pigeons became assemblymen for the people. The Five Pheasants became the five artisans principal, to create revenues from the use of tools, to regulate measures and weights, and to observe order among the people. The Nine-Tailed Birds became the nine agriculture principals, to restrain people from vice." (*Tso chuan*, *Chao kung* Seventeenth Year, SPPY 17.7b-9a)